

"Taking part in society the way I am"

An exploration of active citizenship norms in Denmark and Norway

Noor Jdid

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)
University of Bergen, Norway
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UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN



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Scientific environment

My PhD was part of the interdisciplinary research project Active Citizenship in Culturally and Religiously Diverse Societies (ACT), funded by the Research Council of Norway and led from the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) by Dr. Cindy Horst, in collaboration with the Department of Philosophy at the Arctic University Tromsø and the Department of Political Science at Aarhus University.¹

Research Professor Cindy Horst (Social Dynamics Department, PRIO) was my main supervisor and Professor Christine M. Jacobsen (Centre for Women's and Gender Research, University of Bergen) was my second supervisor.

During my PhD, I was employed and had my workplace at PRIO from 2014 to 2018 and at the Centre for Women's and Gender Research (SKOK) at the University of Bergen from 2018 to 2020. At PRIO, I participated in the Migration Research Group led by Jørgen Carling and Marta Bivand Erdal. At SKOK, I participated in the Foundational Questions in Gender and Sexuality Studies research group led by Kari Jegerstedt and Redi Koobak. I was also part of the Bergen International Migration and Ethnic Relations Research Unit (IMER Bergen). I was admitted to and followed the doctoral education at the Faculty of Humanities, Centre of Women's and Gender Studies (SKOK), University of Bergen. From January 2016 to June 2016, I was a visiting academic at the Centre for Advanced Migration Studies (AMIS) at the University of Copenhagen.

¹ The overall aim of the ACT project was to explore active citizenship from the everyday perspectives of residents living in various neighbourhoods in Copenhagen and Oslo, and to juxtapose these with Danish and Norwegian official citizenship-promoting policies and discourses. See Appendix 1 for a full project description and Horst, Jdid, Erdal et al. (2019) for a summary of the ACT project's research insights.

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Writing this dissertation has been the most challenging endeavour in my life, yet it has also been the greatest privilege. Many people have contributed to my dissertation in different ways, and they all deserve a big thank you.

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Summary of dissertation

Active citizenship is a seductive concept alluding to unquestionably positive values such as neighbourliness, community work, solidarity, and democratic participation. Although it might seem like a descriptive term, active citizenship is used in political rhetoric and carries normative expectations towards citizens who must demonstrate certain qualities and attitudes that are deemed desirable for the nation. In this normative way, the concept is often applied to specific segments of the population, such as the poor, disabled or immigrants, producing morally loaded differentiations between ‘desirable’ citizens who are active in the ‘right’ ways, and ‘less desirable’ citizens who are presumably passive and need to be activated.

In this dissertation, I explore how individuals living in Norway and Denmark subscribe to, contest, and resist prevalent norms of active citizenship. I focus specifically on civic engagement, looking at how the lived experiences of people impact their understandings of what it means to be an active citizen. My fieldwork is ethnographic, and consists of interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations in five different localities in Oslo and Copenhagen with 123 individuals.

I find in my study that participation norms articulated in Danish and Norwegian policy discourses are widely asserted, yet they are also contested and resisted by variously situated individuals. On the one hand, people expect themselves and others to contribute to society in ways that are highly aligned with national policy aims. On the other hand, individuals, most particularly those occupying minoritized positions and living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, challenge and resist exclusionary participatory norms and argue for the recognition of currently ‘invisible’ ways of contributing to society.

I draw mainly from scholarship on feminist citizenship and citizenship geography that conceptualizes citizenship as a lived experience embedded in power relations, identities, and places (Desforges, Jones, & Woods, 2005; Lister, 2007; Wood, 2013; Young, 2000). By engaging in this study, the dissertation aims to advance existing research on the *participatory dimension* of citizenship from a perspective intended to stimulate reflections about dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in the Norwegian and Danish societies. My contribution to feminist scholarly citizenship debates is two-fold. First, drawing on the recent work of Bridget Anderson (2013, 2014), I empirically demonstrate that active citizenship is more than just a civic obligation and a democratic right; it is also a norm that creates internal boundaries between the ‘good citizens’ and the ‘not-good-enough’. Applying West and Fenstermaker’s (1995) approach of intersectionality, I analyse the multiple and intersecting power dimensions that inform active citizenship norms, and how such norms are (re)produced and challenged by individuals in both the private and the public spheres (Plummer, 2001, 2003). Second, my dissertation moves beyond binary discussions of active citizenship as either a disciplinary or an empowering practice (Isin, 2008; Newman, 2013; Newman & Tonkens, 2011; Segal, 2013) by demonstrating how people sustain, contest and resist active citizenship norms in a contextually situated way.

This doctoral research calls for taking seriously how everyday spaces of belonging and lived experiences impact practices of active citizenship and understandings of civic responsibility. By doing so, it widens the definition of what it means to be a contributing member of society to include marginalized practices and spaces that are often overlooked in dominant articulations of active citizenship. The dissertation concludes that active citizenship norms, although articulated through political, policy, and academic discourses, are also sustained, challenged, and resisted by individuals through their subjective experiences and across various spaces and scales of belonging both within and beyond the nation-state.

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Preface

In the fall of 2002, my family became proud owners of a little red booklet that we had waited to receive for more than seven years. We had finally ‘passed’ through ‘the port’ of state citizenship. But did we also ‘pass’ through ‘the port’ of community?

In 2012, a decade after obtaining the Norwegian passport, I was invited to participate in a debate on the state radio channel NRK. The topic was on immigrants’ civic engagement in Norway. Prior to the debate, I sought the advice of an associate who works on issues relating to diversity. During the phone call, we disagreed on the way that the civic engagement of immigrants is used as an indication of their integration in the Norwegian society. My argument was that lack of civic engagement among ethnic Norwegians does not imply that they are ‘less Norwegian’, yet that civic engagement seems to be employed as a ‘measuring stick’ for the societal integration of immigrants. My associate disagreed and stated that I was more integrated now than I was ten years before, because I was *more* active in society today – and that the proof of that was my upcoming participation in a radio debate. I remember thinking in that moment: ten years after acquiring formal citizenship (and 17 years after immigrating into the country), I am still perceived by some as being in a process of integration, which further can be ‘measured’ by the extent of my engagement. After I hung up the phone, I asked myself: how can one define ‘civic engagement’? Who has the power to draw such definitions? And what is the ‘acceptable’ level and kind of civic engagement that would allow others to define me as finally ‘integrated enough’ – or better, ‘Norwegian’? This phone conversation and my participation in the debate made me realize that ‘civic engagement’, although it may sound positive, is not simply a descriptive term but a normative one that is applied to specific segments of the population, creating delineations between idealized citizens who are active in the ‘right’ ways and those who are deemed passive.

I open my dissertation with this personal anecdote as these experiences sparked my research interest in active citizenship and how the concept relates to dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Much writing on citizenship has ignored the subjective and contradictory experiences of individuals, focusing instead on its legal-political aspects. This is problematic, as even when formally entitled to belong through citizenship status, “people who are constructed to be members of other ethnic, racial and national collectivities, are not considered ‘to belong’ to the national community” (Yuval-Davis, 2007, p. 563).

My own experiences as an ethnic minoritized² woman in Norway are not included in my dissertation, but they have served as a constant reminder of the exclusionary aspects of discourses on active citizenship, even though the concept may sound positive. While wholeheartedly agreeing with the optimistic values that contemporaneous understandings of active citizenship promote, such as inclusion, cooperation, individual and collective responsibility and neighbourliness, this thesis argues that the concept of active citizenship also constitutes a highly selective understanding of who ‘counts’ as a contributing member of society and what ‘counts’ as a contribution to society, which serves to exclude those who are understood not to live up to it.

² The term ‘minoritized’ is borrowed from Yasmin Gunaratnam (2003), who understands the categories of ‘minority’ and ‘majority’ as socially constructed rather than descriptive. The term ‘minoritized’, she argues, makes visible “the active processes of racialisation that are at work in designating certain attributes of groups in particular contexts as being in a ‘minority’” (p.17). Similarly, Gullestad uses the term ‘majoritized’ to signal that “the majority is constituted as a majority by virtue of its power to, simultaneously, define the rules, be a fellow player and act as judges” (Gullestad, 2002b, p. 100 translated and quoted in Predelli, Halsaa, & Thun, 2012, p. 212). I use the term minoritized (sometimes interchangeably with marginalized) and majoritized throughout my thesis to make visible the power relations and power differentials between different minority and majority groups in the Norwegian and Danish contexts, such as ethnic, racialized and classed groups, and to stress that these categories are constituted in relation to each other.

1. Introduction

A key concern behind the political discourse on active citizenship is the health and stability of modern democracies, which depends not only on the degree of justice provided by the state, but also on the qualities and attitudes of the citizenry (Kivisto & Faist, 2007). Assessing social and political participation has therefore become a means to ‘measure’ the quality of people’s citizenship (Beasley & Bacchi, 2000). Empirical observation shows that there is a decline in political participation in many Western democracies (Kivisto & Faist, 2007). Moreover, major cuts in public sector services and the increasing privatization of the welfare state across many Western European states has led to a relegation of responsibilities from the state to citizens, where neighbourliness, volunteerism and charity are encouraged (Lister, 1997; Newman & Tonkens, 2011). Parallel to these developments is the increase of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in many Western European states, who, as a response to these pressures on their welfare states, are adopting integration and naturalization policies that focus on the need for immigrants to actively participate in society (Mouritsen, 2012; Vollebergh, 2016). At the centre of all these developments is the notion of the *active citizen*: one who is not dependent on the welfare state and who is willing to actively contribute to society (Newman & Tonkens, 2011).

While the term ‘active citizen’ may seem positive at first glance, feminist scholars in particular have argued that it carries specific norms of participation, where the citizen is “invited, cajoled and sometimes coerced to take on a range of responsibilities for the self, for the care of others and for the well-being of communities” (Ibid.: 9). They claim that the concept of active citizenship discursively displaces notions of ‘*activist citizenship*’ that are embedded in feminist empowerment and equality projects, and that governments have co-opted feminists’ calls for inclusion and recognition for the purposes of state modernization and social cohesion (Newman, 2013). In this way, the governmental image of the participating citizen is not quite what feminist movements

had envisioned, as governments seek to shift responsibility for societal challenges from state to citizen while drawing on the claims of feminists (Ibid.).

Norway and Denmark, with their specific combination of comprehensive social-democratic welfare states, egalitarian traditions, and strict immigration policies, provide a particularly interesting context for examining normative expressions of participation. The welfare state in these countries represents a strong normative image that paints the good citizen as an active contributor who is highly committed to working and paying taxes (Ryner, 2007). This image is often coupled with a *civic* sense of nationhood or community and beliefs about how such norms are fostered – most specifically among the immigrant population (Jensen, Fernández, & Brochmann, 2017a). The two countries have in recent years experienced pressures on their welfare states as well as increased ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. These developments have resulted in a ‘civic turn’ in integration policy and discourse (Mouritsen, 2008), which is characterized by a strong emphasis on citizen participation and individual responsibility. Interestingly, prior to 2011, neither country had any formalized integration requirements (Jensen et al., 2017a), suggesting that access to citizenship is increasingly conditioned upon active participation (albeit, not for all groups in society). While the focus of my study is not on immigrants or on integration norms and processes, the countries’ civic integration policies can be understood as a certain kind of governing mechanism with the aim of turning immigrants into good citizens who are active. As such, these policies not only provide an indication of who the good citizen is imagined to be, but also who is *not* considered to be a good citizen.³

³ Inspired by the work of Bridget Anderson (2013, 2014), I use the term ‘good citizen’ not in a descriptive way but rather as an analytical concept that points to the normativity of active citizenship. I return to a more thorough discussion on how Anderson uses this term on page 63.

This study empirically explores conceptions of the good citizen in Norway and Denmark. Who is this good citizen? How is s/he imagined? Who is excluded from these imaginations? What norms underpin conceptions of the good citizen? These questions will be investigated using a qualitative dataset based on interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations with 123 individuals with highly diverse backgrounds. The insights drawn from the material suggest that active citizenship is not just a civic obligation or a democratic right but must also be understood as a *differentiating norm* that privileges a model citizen against which certain people are ‘measured’. This model citizen is imagined as someone with specific gendered, classed, racialized, and ableist characteristics, who actively takes responsibility and contributes towards the national common good.

In this dissertation, I use the concept of good citizenship interchangeably with active citizenship, since my research participants view the active citizen as a good citizen and vice versa. By ‘good citizenship’ I refer to the practices and characteristics which my research participants deem as good for society and which they associate with being an active citizen. Moreover, the concepts ‘active citizens’ or ‘good citizens’ in this study are not limited to those with formal Norwegian or Danish citizenship only, and include all those who reside in Norway and Denmark, regardless of their citizenship status.⁴ Hence, the concept of the ‘good citizen’ is not employed in a descriptive sense as my research interest lies in exploring the *normative ideals* that make up people’s understandings of active citizenship.

My study shows that individuals widely subscribe to an idealized notion of the good citizen as they expect themselves and others to be active in ways that align with official policy aims. At the same time, I find that many individuals, most notably those

⁴ A central characteristic of the Norwegian and Danish welfare state models lies in the fact that key benefits include all residents with a residence permit, and not only citizens (Sümer, 2016). Those without a formal residence permit are excluded from my study.

who are marginalized or living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, contest and resist the idealized good citizen as they argue for the recognition of alternative ways of participation that are excluded from dominant formulations of active citizenship. The title of this thesis – “*Taking part in society the way I am*” – reflects these contestations and resistances. This study calls for taking seriously how lived experiences impact people’s understandings of themselves as ‘active citizens’ (Lister, Smith, Middleton et al., 2003, 2005; Smith, Lister, Middleton et al., 2007). In doing so, it widens definitions of what it means to be a responsible and contributing member of society beyond government definitions of the ‘active citizen’ and feminist conceptions of the ‘activist citizen’.

In this introductory chapter, I present the objectives and research questions of this study. I then outline the research on active citizenship in Norway and Denmark, as well as selected policy formulations on active citizenship in both countries. This will serve as a contextualization for my empirical insights. Lastly, I give an overview of the dissertation’s structure. But first, I situate my research within the field of gender studies – more specifically, within the feminist scholarship on citizenship – towards which this study aims to contribute.

Situating the study

This study is situated within the interdisciplinary field of gender studies and engages with theoretical and empirical studies from three subfields: feminist citizenship scholarship, feminist geography, and citizenship geography. The foundation of this study lies within feminist critiques of dominant citizenship theories.

Feminist scholars have effectively challenged mainstream liberal, republican and communitarian models of citizenship, arguing that they rest on a patriarchal and universalist notion of the active citizen that excludes people's geographically situated experiences, differences and intimate lives (Lister, 1997, 2003; Plummer, 2001, 2003; Sevenhuijsen, 1998, 2000, 2003; Wood, 2013, 2014a, 2014b; Young, 1989, 1990, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 1999; Yuval-Davis, 2007). As such, they criticize citizenship as a socially and geographically equalizing concept, revealing how it is inherently excluding towards those who do not live up to the idealized 'active citizen'. Drawing on this critique, this study looks beyond widespread understandings of active citizenship as an obligation, a democratic right and a set of practices and behaviours limited to the formal and public sphere. It analyses active citizenship as a normative concept that renders certain groups and practices of participation as 'less desirable', while discussing the variegated ways that differently positioned individuals interact with this norm.

On the one hand, active citizenship may seem like an intrinsically 'good thing' as it connotes to community development, practicing one's democratic rights, and enhancing deprived communities' and individuals' capacities to take collective action (Bellamy, 2008; Chanan, 1997; Lister, 1997, 2007). However, when participation becomes policy, it gains a level of normativity by creating an expectation that people participate and contribute to society in specific ways that are assumed to promote social cohesion and the welfare state. Such policies promote a one-size-fits-all model of participation that obscures the variegated ways in which people assume responsibility and contribute to society. Moreover, critics of active citizenship policies argue that it contributes to quieting dissent against the state and redirecting individuals and communities in such a way where they become depoliticized (Buire & Staeheli, 2017; Cruikshank, 1999; Gaynor, 2009; Isin, 2008; Kearns, 1995; van Houdt & Schinkel, 2014). Hence, active citizenship is often theorized in two different ways: as an inclusionary concept signifying democratic rights, participation, and empowerment,

and as a disciplining tool that coerces people into performing behaviours and activities that are deemed desirable by the nation-state. Taken together, these approaches to active citizenship assume a dichotomist understanding of the active citizen as someone who is either ‘moulded’ into being active in ways that comply with the state, or as a self-determining agent who challenges the state. Moreover, both approaches tend to frame active citizenship in relation to a public realm within which political debate and decision-making are conducted by autonomous individuals working towards the ‘common good’ (Bell, 1995).

Whilst much scholarly attention has been paid to active citizenship as *either* a tool that disciplines citizens or one that includes them in democratic structures, less attention has been paid to the power relations and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that underpin the concept of *active* citizenship. Moreover, very little is known about how the lived experiences of differently situated citizens in Norway and Denmark impact and shape their understandings of themselves as active citizens. It is toward this scholarly endeavour that this thesis offers new insights.

This dissertation seeks to contribute to feminist citizenship scholarship by exploring how active citizenship functions as a differentiating norm and how people sustain, contest, or resist this norm through their lived experiences. The main objective of my study is two-fold. First, I aim to broaden our perceptions and expectations of what ‘counts’ as participation and who ‘counts’ as an active citizen, by taking seriously people’s own conceptualizations of civic engagement and responsibility. Second, I wish to move beyond competing views of active citizenship as either a top-down governing practice or a bottom-up empowering practice, by recognizing individuals’ agency in sustaining, challenging, and resisting dominant ideas of the active citizen.

The insights of this research are built on a qualitative dataset taking the lived experiences of 123 individuals with highly diverse backgrounds as a point of departure. Common to these individuals is that they all reside in either Norway or Denmark. The participants in this study are individuals with unique intersections of identity categories, and not representatives of a specific group, such as national, ethnic, political, or religious groups. The dataset consists of 74 interviews (including 3 walking interviews and 14 expert interviews), 11 focus group discussions and participant observations in five different localities in Oslo and Copenhagen.⁵ The combination of these methods, as well as the diversity of participants recruited for this study, have contributed to showing the multiple and intersecting norms and conditionalities that inform people's understandings of active citizenship, and how their lived experiences in specific contexts impact the way they understand their responsibility beyond the disciplining/empowering binary.

Research objectives

The broader analytical ambition of this thesis is to explore the relationship between people's understandings and practices of civic engagement and their lived experiences of belonging to and participating in the Norwegian and Danish societies. I am interested in understanding how differently socially positioned individuals in Norway and Denmark understand their responsibilities and participation within the context of their everyday lives, while upholding a critical approach to the power structures and conditionalities that inform these understandings. By engaging in this inquiry, the dissertation aims to advance existing research on the *participatory dimension* of citizenship from a perspective intended to stimulate reflections about dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in the Scandinavian context.

⁵ I elaborate on my fieldwork and methods in Chapter 3.

Inspired by the work of feminist citizenship scholar Ruth Lister (2007), I explore active citizenship as a *lived experience*, considering “the meaning that citizenship actually has in people’s lives and the ways in which people’s social and cultural backgrounds and material circumstances affect their lives as citizens” (Hall & Williamson, 1999, p. 2 quoted in Lister, 2007, p. 55). Lister’s (2007) concept of lived citizenship offers a bridge between citizenship as a status and people’s experiences of their membership within the national community, allowing us to understand the different ways in which people give meaning to and practice the three dimensions of citizenship, namely rights, belonging and participation.

My study combines Lister’s approach with Anderson’s understanding of citizenship as a *normative* status related to ideas of deservingness and good citizenship, which produces specific types of social, political, and economic relations (Anderson, 2013, 2014). By combining these two approaches, I open up the possibility to study active citizenship as practiced and experienced in everyday life, while at the same time maintaining focus on the normativity that underlies people’s understandings of active citizenship, and how these produce differentiations between good citizens and not-good-enough-citizens.

However, as a number of feminist geography and citizenship geography scholars have pointed out, citizenship as a lived experience cannot be fully understood without considering the spatial contexts that constitute people’s “everyday world of citizenship” (Desforges et al., 2005, p. 447). Geographical enquiries into citizenship have certainly illuminated the ways that people’s belonging to communities on various scales shape their everyday experiences and civic participation, as well as their practices of civic responsibility (Lawson, 2007; Massey, 2004, 2005; Painter & Philo, 1995; Staeheli, 2008; Staeheli, Ehrkamp, Leitner et al., 2012; Wood, 2013, 2014a, 2014b). Drawing on these geographical enquiries, I empirically explore the ways in

which people's understandings of responsibility and practices of civic engagement are implicated with their experiences of belonging, as well as non-belonging, to a diversity of communities on local, national and transnational scales. In doing this, I endeavour to go beyond nation-centred framings of the common good, to include understandings of contribution and responsibility on alternative scales.

Whilst my study looks at people's interactions with widespread norms on active citizenship in Norway and Denmark, this work is not a comparison between these two contexts. The national context as well as national differences matter, yet the contribution of this study lies in demonstrating how people's understandings of civic responsibility and participation are shaped through their everyday socio-spatial realities (Warming & Fahnøe, 2017; Wood, 2013). The insights generated from this approach challenge one-size-fits-all models of participation as well as nation-centred understandings of the common good often promoted in policies and dominant academic discourses.

Another important aim of this study is to contribute to the scholarship on active citizenship that seeks to move beyond the disciplining/empowering binary. As already mentioned, feminist scholars have illuminated the ways in which citizenship participation has been caught between discourses and practices of solidarity and empowerment on the one hand, and state disciplining and governing agendas on the other (Buire & Staeheli, 2017; Newman, 2013; Newman & Tonkens, 2011; Segal, 2013). Rather than claiming that active citizenship is either one or the other, I am interested in exploring how people, through their lived experiences in different contexts, navigate and negotiate these tensions inherent in the concept of active citizenship. My ambition is to present people as "experts regarding their own citizenship" (Weller, 2003, p. 169), navigating and negotiating citizenship norms,

rather than viewing them as fully governed subjects who comply with state objectives of participation or as empowered agents who oppose the state.

This dissertation is also driven by several methodological aspirations. It aims to provide an alternative viewpoint to the scholarship on active citizenship in the Scandinavian context that all too often focuses on specific groups in society, such as women, youth, or ethnic and religious minorities. Instead of making certain groups the focal point of my study, I take varying localities as the starting point for my fieldwork. Moreover, I apply an intersectional approach following the work of Anderson (2013, 2014) and West and Fenstermaker (1995). By doing so, my study makes several methodological contributions to citizenship scholarship. First, it captures the multiple and intersecting power dimensions that inform norms on active citizenship, looking at how the good citizen is constructed as a specifically classed, gendered, racialized and ableist subject. Second, it shows how these norms are asserted, contested, and resisted by a diversity of people from both the majoritized and minoritized populations. By applying an intersectional approach, this study not only avoids the risk of reducing individuals and their citizenship practices to certain identity categories, but also makes visible *which, when and in what ways* social positions matter in people's articulations of active citizenship. Third, by taking differing neighbourhoods as a starting point, this study de-centres the nation-state while opening up for an exploration of active citizenship beyond nation-centred notions of the common good.

Research questions

Emanating from these objectives, the overarching research question guiding this thesis is:

In what ways do people in Denmark and Norway assert, contest, and resist norms of active citizenship?

The research question is divided into a set of five sub-questions, where each question is answered individually in a chapter. The sub-questions are as follows:

1. *What are the characteristics that constitute the idealized good citizen?* (Chapter 4)
2. *What practices and spaces constitute good citizenship norms?* (Chapter 5)
3. *How do individuals contest dominant norms on appropriate spaces for participation?* (Chapter 6)
4. *How do experiences of minoritization impact the ways individuals contest the idealized good citizen?* (Chapter 7)
5. *How do neighbourhood identities impact everyday resistance to good citizenship norms and practices?* (Chapter 8)

With these sub-questions, I aim to shed light on people's understandings of what it means to be an active and contributing member in society, and how their understandings sometimes align with established norms, and other times contest and resist such norms.

While I did not provide the research participants with specific definitions of the terms 'active citizenship' or 'civic engagement', a few definitions emerged from my data. These emic definitions may be summarized as taking an active part in society through formal volunteerism, membership in associations, contributing to child-related and local (leisure) activities, political participation, informal help, looking after or ameliorating one's neighbourhood and involvement in the neighbourhood. Although these definitions imply different practices, common to them is that they all carry positive connotations and were associated by my interlocutors with being a good citizen: someone who cares about society. Therefore, the focus of this research is on

the idea of the good citizen that makes up the various terminologies of active citizenship, rather than a ‘mapping’ of people’s conceptualizations of active citizenship. In other words, I am interested in what people’s understandings of active citizenship, regardless of terminology, tell us about normative ideals of contribution and participation, and how the good citizen is imagined.

Dominant discourses on active citizenship in Denmark and Norway

In Danish and Norwegian public discourse, civic engagement, political participation, community work, volunteering and participation in neighbourhood associations are all examples of ‘active citizenship’. In this section, I present the most prevalent perspectives on active citizenship in Norwegian and Danish academic and policy discourse. Before I do, it is important to note that overall, differences between Denmark and Norway regarding understandings and practices of civic engagement are small (Henriksen, Strømsnes, & Svedberg, 2019), as both nation-states share rather similar notions of the good citizenry (Jensen et al., 2017a). However, there are some differences in policies on active citizenship, which I will address in this section.

We may find notions of active citizenship in several Danish and Norwegian policy areas. For instance, active citizenship school pedagogies and curriculums aim to make children into democratically participating citizens. Criminal policies as well as social policies directed towards disenfranchised people aim to ‘activate’ and change the behaviour of ‘deviant’ citizens so they can become contributing members of society. However, it is within integration policies and welfare state policy that we arguably find the most powerful active citizenship ideals today. This is also reflected in the Norwegian and Danish scholarship on active citizenship, which is mostly focused on the welfare state and integration of immigrants as I will outline below. The two

countries have in recent years experienced pressures on their welfare states as well as increased ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. These developments have resulted in a ‘civic turn’ in integration policy and discourse (Mouritsen, 2008), which is characterized by a strong emphasis on citizen participation and individual responsibility. I therefore limit the scope of this introduction to articulations of active citizenship found in integration and welfare state academic and policy discourse.

Translations of ‘active citizenship’

The word ‘citizenship’ translates into two different concepts in the Norwegian and Danish languages: ‘*statsborgerskap/statsborgerskab*’ (state-citizenship) and ‘*medborgerskap/medborgerskab*’ (co-citizenship). The former is a narrow legal/political term referring to peoples’ membership in a nation-state, while the latter is a broader term describing the social and cultural aspects of citizenship, such as the way people act in their role as members of a society or community. *Medborgerskap/b* is therefore the most accurate translation of ‘active citizenship’ in Danish and Norwegian. The concept has a positive appeal to it and is associated with good citizenship, public spirit, responsibility, and participation, especially on the local level (Vabø, 2011). In addition to describing citizens’ rights, participation and the political culture, *medborgerskap/b* is a relational concept; it pertains to membership in society, and how the citizen (*medborger*) relates to other citizens (Strømsnes, 2003). *Medborgerskap/b* is thus also about belonging as a member of the society.⁶

It is only in the past two to three decades that the concept of co-citizenship has been used in both Norway and Denmark. In Denmark, *medborgerskab* appeared in around 2000 as a policy concept connected to the integration of Muslims, and later entered

⁶ Norwegian sociologist Grete Brochmann has suggested the term *samfunnsborgerskap*, which is similar to *medborgerskap* as it also connotes to the social aspects of citizenship, including participation (Brochmann, 2002, p. 56).

broader discourse (Mouritsen, 2012). Unlike the Danish term, the Norwegian *medborgerskap* has not been coined as a buzzword in Norway and is not used in common or policy language. However, in the Norwegian context, policymakers regularly evoke notions of the active citizen in the hope that people will cooperate with governments in providing welfare services (Vabø, 2011).

Similar terms to *medborgerskap* are *samfunnsdeltagelse/samfunnsdeltagelse* ('civic/societal participation'), *samfunnsengasjement/socialt engasjement* ('civic engagement' or 'engagement in society') and *frivillighet/frivillighet* ('volunteerism'). As the term *medborgerskap* is not commonly used in Norway, I chose to replace it with the wider term *samfunnsengasjement* when I conducted fieldwork, since *deltakelse* is also understood as participation in the labour market (which is not my main focus), while *frivillighet* refers to only one type of participation, namely formal and associational volunteerism. In Denmark, however, I used the term *aktiv medborgerskab* in my interviews, as the Danish term *socialt engasjement* seemed to be less commonly used.

However, as I will discuss extensively in my research design (Chapter 3), 'translation' of the concept of active citizenship is not simply a linguistic matter. One of my key research findings centres on the ways that people's social and spatial realities shape articulations of active citizenship. This means that although my intention at the start of this research was to compare 'Danish' and 'Norwegian' understandings of active citizenship, I quickly realized that differences in the way people assert, contest, and resist good citizenship norms were apparent on the local rather than the national scale. For instance, I noticed greater differences between people's articulations of active citizenship in two contrasting localities in Oslo than between 'Norway' and 'Denmark' as such. I also noticed more similarities between similar localities in Oslo and in Copenhagen, than between two contrasting localities within the same city. This is due,

among other factors, to the (class) historicity of each locality, its composition of residents, its material structures, and its associational and social life, which may result in different local articulations of good citizenship.

Research on active citizenship in Denmark and Norway

Most of the research on active citizenship in Norway and Denmark focuses on participation in the labour market and civic engagement in the form of political participation, volunteerism, and social movements. Overall, I have identified five dominant strands of literature. The first strand looks at the impact of ethnic diversity on volunteerism and community cohesion (see e.g. Fladmoe & Steen-Johnsen, 2018; Seggaard & Wollebæk, 2011; Ødegård, Loga, Steen-Johnsen et al., 2014; Ødegård & Svagård, 2018). These studies build mainly on the concept of social capital as defined by American sociologist Robert Putnam (2000), which refers to those features of social life – such as networks, norms and trust – that enable citizens to act together more effectively in pursuing the common good. The second strand of literature focuses on the civic engagement and integration of specific groups in society, most notably immigrants and youth, (see e.g. Aars, Nordø, Wollebæk et al., 2011; Eimhjellen, Bentsen, & Wollebæk, 2020; Ødegård, 2012; Ødegård & Svagård, 2018), while a third strand of literature explores changes in patterns and trends of participation, especially in relation to developments in the Scandinavian welfare states (see e.g. Boje, Fridberg, & Ibsen, 2006; Eimhjellen, Steen-Johnsen, Folkestad et al., 2018; Henriksen et al., 2019; Hvinden & Johansson, 2007). Common to these studies is that they mainly employ a quantitative approach and limit civic engagement to associational volunteerism or political participation, including voting and membership in political parties.⁷ The fourth strand of studies theorizes citizenship from a gender perspective,

⁷ One exception, however, is the work of Andersson, Jacobsen, Rogstad et al. (2012), which critically investigates young immigrants' political mobilization that takes place outside the conventional channels for political participation.

looking specifically at women's social movements and examining political and social inclusions and exclusions (see e.g. Halsaa, Roseneil, & Sümer, 2012; Hernes, 1987, 1988; Siim, 1994, 1999; Skjeie & Siim, 2000). Lastly, the fifth strand of research looks at civic participation in light of naturalization policies and the backlash against multiculturalism in Scandinavian countries, investigating the role that nationhood has played in state conceptualizations of active citizenship (see e.g. Brochmann, 2002; Jensen et al., 2017a; Mouritsen, 2008; Mouritsen & Olsen, 2013).

While all these strands of literature relate to my research topic, I rely first and foremost on research on patterns and trends of participation and on state conceptualizations of active citizenship to contextualize my research. I believe that in order to better understand the *normative dimensions* of active citizenship in Norway and Denmark, we need to understand how notions of the good citizen are implicated in welfare state and integration policies. This is particularly important as the Norwegian and Danish nation-states are searching for ways to maintain a national citizenry conducive to a well-functioning welfare state and liberal democracy in the context of public budget cuts and increased diversity (Jensen et al., 2017a). The politics and rhetoric around immigration and citizenship are thus intertwined with those of the future of the welfare state, producing conceptions of good citizenship that are deeply embedded in a particular construction of national identity (Mouritsen, 2012). In the next section, I present policy definitions of active citizenship expressed in official discourses on integration, highlighting the ways they produce a model good citizen.

Active citizenship in integration discourse

In Norway, we find participation ideals expressed in integration and welfare policy through for instance the refugee settlement programme (*Introduksjonsprogrammet*) (Brochmann & Djuve, 2013). This programme has been developed as an answer to the

increasing criticism of ‘failed’ integration of non-Western refugees and immigrants during the 1990s (Djuve & Kavli, 2007). Within this programme, emphasis is laid on the rights and obligations of refugees to participate actively in society and the need to ‘make them responsible’ (in Norwegian: *ansvarliggjøre*) – the latter implying that refugees are initially irresponsible and passive (Djuve, 2011). These participation ideals are centred on participation in work-life, voluntary associations, and politics, as well as child-centred local arenas. A green paper on integration defines participation (*‘deltakelse’*) as taking place in local and national contexts:

Participation concerns how residents in society use their formal rights in practice and how they contribute to building democracy. Participation in the neighbourhood/local community, in leisure- and cultural activities, in voluntary organizations and the media, can be defined as “the small democracy”. “Democracy at large” concerns political life – participation in political organizations and elections (Barne- likestillings- og inkluderingsdepartementet, 2011, p. 269, my translation).

In Denmark, all immigrants are expected to sign a ‘Declaration of Integration and Active Citizenship in Danish Society’. The sixteen-point Danish declaration is explicit in its expectations towards immigrants to take responsibility for becoming self-supporting and acquire knowledge of Danish language and society. Moreover, the declaration explicitly requires *active* and democratic participation as a requirement for obtaining permanent residency and legal citizenship,

depicting societal activity and civic engagement as starting in the responsible egalitarian family and extending outwards into the family- and child-friendly micro public spheres (institutions and schools) of the welfare society (Mouritsen & Olsen, 2013, p. 699).

The Danish Ministry of Refugees, Immigrants, and Integration (colloquially known as ‘Ministry of Integration’) published a report in 2011 entitled “*Medborgerskab i*

*Danmark*⁸. The report is based on a comprehensive survey with over 4,500 respondents⁹ and concludes by stating that co-citizenship is alive and well among immigrants and their descendants in Denmark. In the report, co-citizenship, or *medborgerskab*, is “fundamentally about all citizens being equal and full members of the societal collective”, and consists of rights and duties, participation and identity and belonging (Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration, 2011, p. 10, my translation).

Similar to the Norwegian ‘*deltakelse*’, the Danish *medborgerskab* is defined as political participation, engagement in local participatory democracy and participation in associational and cultural life, where the latter two are considered as ‘informal participation’ even if they take place within organized settings. The report further defines the participatory aspect of *medborgerskab* as

participation in elections, as well as participation in political parties, advocacy groups and leisure associations, workplace democracy, parent school boards and other user boards, as well as the public debate. The participatory aspect is moreover about the feeling of having the possibility to participate, to exert influence and to affect decisions that are of importance to the collective (Ibid., p. 29, my translation).

Unlike the Norwegian green paper on integration, the Danish report explicitly defines passive citizens as those who “stand outside of society in the sense that they are neither interested in politics, follow politics in the media, participate in politics in the broader sense, nor participate in leisure or associational life” (Ibid., p. 18, my translation). Moreover, the report conveys that being a citizen in Denmark is not only about communicating in a common language and paying taxes, but also about *being an*

⁸ Translation: “Co-Citizenship in Denmark”

⁹ The report categorizes the respondents in three groups: ‘ethnic Danes’, ‘immigrants’ and ‘descendants’. The ‘immigrants’ and ‘descendants’ are specified to have a background from seven out of the ten biggest so-called non-Western countries of origin.

active part of a community in society. Newcomers in Denmark are not only expected to participate in the labour market, but also to contribute to civil society as active citizens (Mouritsen & Olsen, 2013). In policy terms, the Danish *medborgerskab* is used as a tool to incorporate newcomers into a welfare state under financial pressure (Mouritsen, 2012), and carries narrow ideas on ‘what counts’ as desirable contributions to society, based on what is at stake in the welfare state.

While the intention of such policies may be to foster the social inclusion of immigrants, they are nevertheless increasingly used in an assimilatory and disciplining manner (Djuve, 2011; Mouritsen & Olsen, 2013). Both Norwegian and Danish integration programmes, where ideals of active citizenship are visible, are based on a *cultural* notion of equality (Olwig, 2011), rather than on socio-economic equality as commonly promoted in feminist citizenship struggles (Halsaa et al., 2012). Moreover, according to Joppke (2007) and Goodman (2014), civic integration policies and programmes often value a notion of the good citizen as a liberal-minded, autonomous and (economically) self-sufficient person who is independent of the welfare state. This might explain the strong normative connotations that the terms ‘active’ and ‘passive’ carry. Indeed, once pinned on a policy, these terms are effective rhetorical devices, where ‘active’ is commonly understood as the more positive, virtuous, and desirable of the two (Hvinden & Johansson, 2007). This has implications for the concept of *medborgerskab/b*, turning it into a coercive instrument that renders those groups who do not live up to the good citizen ideal morally questionable individuals, an argument I will further develop in my theoretical framework. In the next section, I explore another coercive aspect of active citizenship in the Scandinavian context: namely, responsabilizing citizens to contribute actively to the welfare state.

Active citizenship and the welfare state

Discourses on how to engage voluntary organizations in welfare production appeared at the end of the 1970s, yet these have become particularly salient since the financial crisis of 2008, which triggered an economic necessity for more resources (von Essen, Frederiksen, & Loga, 2019). Today, people in Scandinavian countries are facing new demands, as well as new opportunities, to become active citizens, as they are expected (and themselves expect) to play more active roles in promoting their own well-being, allowing for increased individual responsibility and agency, mainly through volunteerism. This may, however, also have exclusionary consequences, as the pool of volunteers often consists of well-educated and self-reliant individuals with the time and skills to volunteer. Research demonstrates the socio-economic constraints that may limit people's motivations for and paths for volunteerism (Henriksen et al., 2019; Wollebæk, Sætrang, & Fladmoe, 2015).

Norway and Denmark are characterized by a close cooperation between voluntary organizations and the state (Selle, Strømsnes, Svedberg et al., 2019). In some areas, the welfare state, which is increasingly characterized by neo-liberal government policies and governance principles such as New Public Management, is retreating from tasks that were previously its sole responsibility (Henriksen et al., 2019). Instead, Danish and Norwegian governments are actively encouraging individuals and voluntary organizations to contribute to tackling emerging social problems and to provide social services and protection for their communities. In both countries, national policies underscore the value of civic engagement and the responsibility of voluntary organizations to assist and complement state and local government responsibility.

Moreover, we find a high degree of decentralized power devolved to local governments in Norway and Denmark compared to other countries in Europe, promoting an egalitarian culture where lay people and groups are consulted in policy development (Hvinden & Johansson, 2007). This is also reflected in local decision-making processes, as public institutions actively involve lay people in local developments such as elderly care, health care, integration of immigrants, urban planning and housing development (Ibid.). In Norwegian, this process is called *borgermedvirkning*, while in Danish it is referred to as *borgerinddragelse*. These terms – which translate to ‘citizen-involvement’ (or resident-involvement when it is directed towards residents of specific communities) – were especially mentioned by interlocutors who work with community development and area regeneration projects led by the municipality, a topic I will explore in Chapter 8. However, differences between the two countries exist. Whereas in Denmark, the state has been much more instrumental in involving citizens and voluntary organizations as supplementary providers of welfare services, in Norway, the state has given more room for district variation and pursued policies for civil society that address not only welfare, but also cultural goals and social integration (Ibid., p. 17–18).

In the Scandinavian context, citizen-involvement is marked by a communitarian principle that defines the relationship between the state and citizen as organic and personal in character (Predelli et al., 2012; Vabø, 2011). The ideal social-democratic citizen is encouraged and expected to adopt and act upon certain values that are deemed desirable by the welfare state, such as democracy, autonomy, gender equality, children’s rights and participation in sports or healthy eating habits (Djuve, 2011; Jacobsen, 2018; Vabø, 2011). This citizen ideal allows the state to intervene in civil society by promoting certain collective moral principles, thereby defining certain activities as desirable (Vabø, 2011). In the next section, I give an overview of the central role that volunteering associations play in Danish and Norwegian local democracy. This will further provide a contextualization for my analysis, as

volunteerism is one of the most common practices of civic engagement my interlocutors articulated.

The tradition of volunteerism in Denmark and Norway

In the Scandinavian context, voluntary associations have traditionally been central for local communities in building local identities and civic connectedness, while also being democratic building blocks for the modern nation-state (Henriksen et al., 2019). Unlike other European countries, many collective problems in Denmark and Norway have historically been addressed by civil society, to the extent that one could say that these countries ‘suffer’ from an “organizational syndrome” (Selle et al., 2019, p. 33). This means that everything that is of importance to local communities should be – and in fact is – formally organized into associations. Indeed, several of my Danish interviewees proudly mentioned that Denmark is a *foreningssamfund* (associational society), while my Norwegian interlocutors mentioned the term *frivillighetssamfunnet* (volunteering society). These terms denote a democratic system that is coupled with a civil society consisting of many voluntary associations.¹⁰

Associational formation is not only financially supported by the Danish and Norwegian governments but is also culturally legitimated and encouraged by a certain cultural understanding and framing of civic engagement that differs from what is found in more liberal or conservative political and cultural contexts. Whereas in other European countries, volunteering often implies helping and supporting groups in need, in the Scandinavian context, volunteering is conceptualized as a leisure activity and a democratic practice. Although volunteerism in the political sphere, through for example local parties, labour movements and interest organizations, is strong in the

¹⁰ In 2006, voluntary organizations in Denmark counted at 101 000, with 83 000 being local and regional associations (Boje et al., 2006). In Norway, the number per 2007 was at 115 000 (St.Meld. 39, 2006-2007).

Scandinavian context, most of my interviewees place greater emphasis on the field of leisure, sports and cultural activities than in activities tied to the political sphere. Most importantly, the common conceptualization of civic engagement as cooperatively contributing towards the welfare state under a shared understanding of the common good fosters an understanding of active citizenship that promotes the sustenance of the status quo, rather than opening up for critical voices towards authorities. In other words, the Norwegian and Danish model citizen is encouraged to engage in cooperative democracy, everyday life equality (including gender equality), and volunteering associations as well as in local state institutions such as kindergartens and schools. As such, civic duties are “directed inwards towards family, outwards towards the welfare-state community, and upwards towards national democracy” (Mouritsen, 2012, p. 99). Active citizenship is thus reflected in a comprehensive welfare state society, creating a model citizen who is democratic, responsible, and autonomous, who fits in culturally, and actively contributes to the welfare state society.

Despite the similarities between Norway and Denmark in terms of volunteering culture, some differences nevertheless exist. In the Norwegian context, volunteerism is often seen as an *individual obligation* similar to the democratic duties of the citizen (von Essen et al., 2019).¹¹ In a study conducted by von Essen et al. (2019) on attitudes towards volunteering in Scandinavian countries, the authors conclude that the Norwegian respondents, twice as much compared to their Danish (and Swedish) counterparts, strongly emphasized the individual moral obligation to volunteer. Moreover, the notion of volunteering as active citizenship and democratic participation is more prevalent in Norway than in Denmark (Ibid.). However, the authors also note that the divergence between the Danish and Norwegian respondents concerning volunteerism as a moral obligation may be due to linguistic dilemmas in the comparison. For example, in Norway, the informal institution of *dugnad* (‘voluntary

¹¹ The term obligation must not be construed to mean duty, as volunteerism is not a compulsory activity. Whilst both terms are conflated into *plikt/pligt* in the Norwegian and Danish languages, according to Faulks (2000), obligations can be seen as “voluntary and as an expression of solidarity and empathy with others” (p. 82).

community effort') is particularly popular. *Dugnad* is a concept that carries a notion of moral obligation and refers to contributing to leisure activities and other social activities within the local community (Klepp, 2001; Lorentzen & Dugstad, 2011).

In addition to formal and associational volunteerism, we find traditions of informal helping in Denmark and Norway. Informal help is defined as various forms of practical support and care offered to a neighbour, friend or relative outside the institutional realm of associations and organizations. Whether informal help is viewed as civic engagement or not depends upon the research tradition and theoretical perspectives applied. The work of Hermansen and Boje (2015), for instance, recognizes the value of informal help performed outside of organizational settings. Nevertheless, these studies consider those who only perform informal help as passive, while those who perform informal help *in addition to* volunteering are considered as active. As I will demonstrate in my analysis, prevalent distinctions between active and passive are connected to narrow definitions of what 'counts' as societal contributions, serving to devalue the contributions of those who do not volunteer in organized ways or participate in *dugnad*. My data shows that informal help constitutes an important part of people's understandings of civic responsibility. Recognizing these practices as active citizenship in their own right can broaden our classification of what 'counts' as a societal contribution and who 'counts' as an active citizen.

Desirable spaces and arenas for active citizenship

As I have demonstrated so far in this chapter, policy formulations and dominant expressions of active citizenship privilege not only certain practices and activities, but also certain *arenas* that are associated with building democracy and where collective interest is thought to be found. Examples are associations on the local and national scale, political institutions and structures, voluntary and leisure associations, child-

related arenas, workplace boards, and parent school boards as well as the public (media) debate – as indicated in the policy quotations above.

In the Scandinavian context, active participation on the local scale (*nærmiljø/lokalsamfunn*) is powerfully linked to imaginations of the good civic life (Gullestad, 1993). The terms *nærdemokrati* (“near democracy”) and *lille demokratiet* (“little democracy”), which refer to local participatory democracy, are iterated in policy documents on integration and democratic participation in Norway and Denmark.¹² In these discourses, participation in neighbourhood associations and secular arenas is considered imperative for social cohesion and the accumulation of social capital (see Putnam, 2000; Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1994).

The promotion of local engagement in active citizenship discourses is not only limited to objectives of social cohesion and access to decision-making, but also encompasses the realization of highly held values that make up Scandinavian civil culture, such as consensus and egalitarianism. Gullestad (2002b) claims that these values constitute an idea of equality grounded in what she calls an ‘imagined sameness’. This egalitarian logic implies a notion of consensus where commonalities are underscored, while differences or contestations are downplayed. Values such as ‘to fit in together’ and ‘to share the same ideas’ often underpin this logic, and are enmeshed in state defined practices of active citizenship, such as taking an active part in locally embedded volunteering associations and child-centred leisure activities. These are in other words ‘soft’ arenas and activities that bolster ideals of consensus and cohesion rather than confrontation. Indeed, the terms *nærmiljø* (close surroundings) and *lokalsamfunn* (local community) “suggest social units with few internal dividing lines, units characterized by feelings of solidarity and commonality among the members”

¹² This is different from local democracy as ‘local politics’. *Nærdemokrati* or *lilledemokratiet* are characterized by a popular-democratic tradition of civil society engagement and a short distance between citizens and politicians in a municipality (Strømsnes, 2003). Its opposite is therefore ‘far democracy’ (*ferndemokrati*).

(Gullestad, 1992, p. 45), and are thought to ideally lead to shared experiences and cohesion.

The people I spoke with value these communal neighbourhood arenas and spaces as fostering a sense of belonging and community and can see their value in creating spaces for informal interaction. At the same time, they also argue that societal contributions can take place through other arenas and spaces that are not reflected in dominant discourses. Examples of these are homes, informal groups,¹³ faith-based arenas, ‘immigrant associations’, pubs, and other spaces that form an important part of people’s everyday lives.

Outline of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of nine chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter which provides a contextualization for my study. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework that this study builds on. Chapter 3 presents the research design. Chapters 4 to 8 are the empirical chapters where my findings are discussed and analysed, followed by Chapter 9, which presents the study’s conclusions.

In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework will be discussed. I will mainly outline feminist citizenship scholarship and citizenship geography studies that employ feminist scholarly perspectives. In Chapter 3, I explain my research design, including the methods through which the data was obtained, coded, and analysed. I also reflect on my positionality as a researcher, and the ethical dilemmas involved in conducting my fieldwork.

¹³ ‘Informal’ here refers to groups or meeting places that are not registered as associations.

Chapter 4 is the first of five empirical chapters of this dissertation. The chapter explores the desirable characteristics that individuals attach to the idealized good citizen. These characteristics, I argue, are (re)produced in the home and through child-centred arenas, as individuals stress the importance of raising children to become self-sufficient, respectable, and gender egalitarian citizens who contribute actively to society. Chapter 5 analyses idealized practices of civic engagement and spaces for participation. In line with Danish and Norwegian policies on active citizenship, my research participants view volunteerism in particularly local, child-centred, and secular arenas as desirable. Here, notions of cultural sameness are emphasized in their understandings of what constitutes a desirable contribution to society. These first two empirical chapters shed light on *assertions* of good citizenship norms. The focus is on people's understandings of what is *expected of them* as members of a community, and what they *expect of others*, and how these expectations create differentiations between idealized good citizens and morally questionable Others.

Chapters 6 and 7 explore how these expectations are *contested*, showing that people's understandings of responsibility are highly shaped by their lived experiences. In Chapter 6, I demonstrate how people define civic responsibility and societal contributions in ways that challenge notions of impartiality and imagined sameness. The chapter analyses how they contest dominant practices of active citizenship by arguing for the recognition of contributions that take place in informal and intimate spaces within and beyond the nation-state. Chapter 7 looks at how racially and classed minoritized individuals and people with disabilities strive to be fully recognized as active and contributing members of society, while simultaneously challenging the imagined homogeneity assumed to be a part of public citizenship.

The last empirical chapter (Chapter 8) focuses on the ways that collective neighbourhood identities have an impact on how people understand their civic responsibility and how they resist dominant norms and practices of participation. In this chapter, I present the voices of residents and experts from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These perspectives demonstrate that although people may act in cooperative ways with public institutions in developing their communities, they nevertheless demonstrate resistance towards active citizenship norms.

The final chapter of my dissertation (Chapter 9) is the concluding chapter, where I take a step back and review my insights and answer the main research question in light of my research objectives, the theoretical approaches, and the methodology. I also discuss my research contributions to gender studies and active citizenship studies in Norway and Denmark and suggest further avenues for research.

2. Theoretical perspectives

Active citizenship refers to the participatory dimension of citizenship, and is concerned with the participatory processes of citizens, such as enacting civic rights and claiming recognition (Peucker & Ceylan, 2017). Nonetheless, despite these positive connotations, active citizenship is an essentially contested concept that carries many meanings and nuances, pointing to a long tradition of normative discussion in European political theory on what it means to perform one's civic duty vis-à-vis the state and its citizenry (Kivisto & Faist, 2007). The term 'active citizenship' sits within a long tradition of republican and communitarian models of political membership. These models have been criticized by mainly feminist scholars for their exclusions and presuppositions. In what follows, I explore a specific vein of critical thinking on citizenship that has emerged through recent work by, among others, feminist citizenship theorists and citizenship geographers who employ feminist perspectives. I introduce five theoretical approaches which offer a framework for understanding my empirical insights: (1) lived citizenship, (2) spatial perspectives, (3) the community of value, (4) intersectionality, and (5) disciplinary versus empowering active citizenship. Before elaborating on these approaches, I first sketch conceptualizations of good citizenship in the three most common traditions of citizenship, namely the liberal, republican and communitarian traditions.

The good citizen in traditional citizenship theories

Traditionally, citizenship has been understood as a legal status defined by legal rights and obligations and as apparently connected to the nation-state (Bosniak, 2006). We can distinguish between three main citizenship traditions. Classical liberal theories of citizenship are associated with individual rights, autonomy, and social equality. Within this tradition, we find the influential scholar T.H. Marshall ([1950] 1992), who defined

citizenship as full membership in a community, consisting of a set of civil, social, and political rights – the latter including the right to participate and exercise political power. Republican traditions of citizenship understand participation as an obligation and a reflection of the quality of one’s citizenship (Isin & Turner, 2002; Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). Lastly, communitarian citizenship traditions understand participation as a way to achieve social cohesion and argue that the individual’s membership in the community is produced only through relations with others in their community (Gaynor, 2009). Unlike republicans, communitarians stress voluntary and unpaid activities as an expression of how the individual forsakes his or her own interests, acting altruistically for the common good.

Common to these citizenship traditions is the presupposition of a good citizen who contributes to a predefined common good. Whereas liberal theorists see good citizens as individuals who participate in paid work, obey the law and respect the rights and freedoms of others while pursuing their interests, republicans and communitarians see good citizens as ideally possessing certain virtues, with an obligation to be oriented primarily towards the collective good of the community in the public sphere. The public sphere here is conceptualized as pertaining to community, the polity and citizens, and consists of spaces that facilitate public interaction, such as civil associations (Staheli & Mitchell, 2007).¹⁴ Moreover, within these traditions, civic participation is understood as undisputedly a ‘good thing’ and as something that can be categorized into desirable practices, behaviours and spaces that are necessarily defined in terms of ‘other’ less desirable ones (Prokhovnik, 1998).

¹⁴ There are multiple meanings to ‘public’, as scholars take differing perspectives on what constitutes the ‘public realm’ or ‘public sphere’. For a review on the different uses of ‘public’ in everyday and academic discourses, see Staheli and Mitchell (2007).

In the Scandinavian context, active citizenship is arguably closer to the republican than to the liberal or communitarian tradition of citizenship (Skjeie & Siim, 2000), even though it still retains elements from liberalism due to the expansive nature of the Danish and Norwegian welfare states (Hvinden & Johansson, 2007). Mouritsen and Olsen (2013), for instance, describe notions of active citizenship in Danish integration policy as expressions of an ‘egalitarian republicanism’ that “incorporates elements from a perfectionist autonomy-focused liberalism” (p. 708).

Thus, a conception of citizenship, whether it is within the liberal, republican or communitarian tradition, is never merely descriptive, but also carries *normative ideas* of what it means to be a good citizen. Feminist scholarship offers valuable perspectives in understanding the normative dimensions of citizenship.

Feminist conceptions of citizenship

Mainstream citizenship theories, although they have often served as a blueprint to the vast field of citizenship studies, have also been questioned, most particularly by feminist citizenship scholars.¹⁵ Although feminist scholars recognize the inclusionary potential of Marshall’s theorization of citizenship as a status that grants social and political rights to all citizens, as well as appeals for political participation found in republican conceptions of citizenship, they have nevertheless been critical to some of their key principles. These criticisms revolve around narrow conceptions of ‘the political’ and ‘the citizen’. A main insight from this scholarship is that citizenship is not just an inclusionary status that grants rights and membership to people but must

¹⁵ It is important to note that feminist citizenship scholarship is not homogenous. While some scholars dispute the usefulness of the term ‘citizenship’, others suggest a rethinking of its parameters, which in practice leads to a reconceptualization of the meaning of participation in society (Beasley & Bacchi, 2000). I am aware of the contentions within this scholarship, and although I agree that public participation is essential to the inclusion of women and other minoritized groups (see for example Dietz, 1987), I do not equate public participation with normative expectations of participation expressed in mainstream discourses on active citizenship.

also be understood as an exclusionary mechanism. Feminist scholars have discussed the ways that the concepts of ‘citizen’ and ‘the political’ are originally constructed in a specifically gendered, classed, racialized and ableist way that renders women and minorities into deviant Others. They argue that to *be* a citizen and ‘act’ like one necessitates ‘the Other’ who is not a full citizen (Plummer, 2003). Moreover, feminist scholars have also critiqued how the concept of citizenship is predominantly applied in a state-oriented and Eurocentric way, ignoring people’s identifications to and participation in other forms of collectivities and contexts (Yuval-Davis, 1999). Furthermore, feminist writers have challenged notions of the ‘common good’, arguing that republican and communitarian traditions of citizenship are too demanding, with particular implications for those who do not demonstrate the idealized virtues and characteristics that are deemed necessary or desirable to participate in the public sphere.

To make the concept less homogeneous, feminist scholars have launched broader notions of citizenship such as inclusive citizenship (Kabeer, 2005), lived citizenship (Lister, 2007), differentiated citizenship (Young, 1989), multi-layered citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 1999), sexual citizenship (Weeks, 1998), intimate citizenship (Plummer, 2001, 2003; Roseneil, 2010), queer citizenship (Seidman, 1996), and the list goes on. These concepts challenge the dominant conceptions of citizenship which have an overwhelming tendency to pay attention to formal and public (male-dominated) spaces and expressions of social life, such as civil society organizations, volunteerism or political engagement, rendering ‘invisible’ the intimate, everyday and informal practices of individuals (Wood, 2014a, 2014b). Moreover, they challenge dominant ideas of the active citizen that rest on the assumption of the purely rational, autonomous, and disembodied citizen. In doing so, feminist scholars have effectively contested exclusionary oppositions inherent in traditional conceptualizations of citizenship, including questions of inclusion and exclusion, private and public, and emancipation and discipline, as well as how citizenship is simultaneously constructed

‘from above’ and contested ‘from below’ (Hernes, 1987; Lister, 2003; Siim, 1999; Strasser, 2012).

Feminist citizenship writers have pointed out, and attempted to destabilize, the notion of the male universal citizen all too often assumed in dominant schools of citizenship (Andrijasevic, 2013). This notion rests on the classical Western system of dichotomies such as public/private, active/passive, independent/dependent and reason/body, organized according to the logic of difference where difference is thought of as deviance (Ibid.). This binary logic privileges traits associated with ‘the masculine’, such as rationality, impartiality and autonomy, tying them to the public civic-political realm, while traits associated with ‘the feminine’, such as emotion, the body and subjectivity, are dismissed as ‘personal’ and irrelevant for citizenship. The following section elaborates on the feminist critique of the public/private divide and how this divide privileges certain understandings of participation.

Participation and the public/private divide

Feminist studies have been largely concerned with challenging narrow definitions of ‘the political’, which often rest on the public/private binary assumed in mainstream citizenship theories. Prominent scholars such as Lister (1997, 2003) and Young (1989, 1990, 2000) have argued for the importance of re-articulating the relationship between the public and the private spheres within a broad conception of ‘the political’. Such a re-articulation entails acknowledging that participation cannot be confined to any particular sphere of action, and that it must include informal forms and practices of politics and contributions (Lister, 2007).

The socially constructed distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ has several connotations and may mean different things to different scholars. For instance, it connotes to the separation of state and market sectors, or the ideological and patriarchal separation of the domestic life from the public life (Sümer, 2016). It is the latter that is pivotal to the feminist reinterpretation of citizenship (Lister, 2003; Pateman, 1989). Jones (1994) argues that in Western political thought, being defined as a citizen entitles, and sometimes obligates, an individual to behave and act as a citizen. These behaviours and actions, she claims, occur in a specific setting or place: namely, the public – supposedly ‘social’ and ‘neutral’ – sphere. Critical in this regard are the characteristics that are deemed as ‘fit’ for acting as a citizen in the public-political sphere, which include rationality, impartiality, autonomy, and the ability to provide for self and others without being a burden to the nation-state. These characteristics have been considered as a fundamental requirement of citizenship for centuries (Dahl, 1989; Lister, 2002). To the extent that citizenship is equated with the public sphere, feminist writers have argued that women, as well as various minorities, are not and cannot be (regarded as) ‘full citizens’ (Beasley & Bacchi, 2000).

The distinction between the private and the public also includes questions relating to diversity. As I argued earlier, an important contribution of feminist citizenship scholarship is challenging establishment understandings of the ‘common good’ (Lister, 1997). This includes destabilizing the widespread assumption in dominant citizenship theorizations – including liberal, republican and communitarian – that participation requires impartiality and the transcendence of group differences.

Iris Marion Young (1989, 1990, 2000) criticizes notions of universalism and impartiality as producing an exclusionary, rather than an inclusionary, public sphere. She points out how the public sphere, defined as the space of collective norms and values in traditional citizenship theories, is often assumed as equal for all. Equality in

this sense is understood as *sameness*, and the ‘common good’ as uncontested and unconnected to any specific culture or ideology. Moreover, to achieve a common good, the citizen is required to be ‘impartial’ from one’s position. Said differently, to be recognized as an active citizen requires trading one’s “particular identity for an abstract, public self” (Jones, 1994, p. 261). This means the subordination of particularized identities such as gender, race, class, and age, in favour of that which is considered as ‘common’ for everyone, such as a national or civic identity. Although the intention is to create a public sphere that is equal for all, such a narrow understanding of the ‘common’, according to Young, makes the interests of dominant groups appear as universal and those of marginalized groups as particular. In a society where some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, Young (1989) claims that the expectation that citizens adopt an ‘impartial’ point of view only serves to reinforce those power dynamics. The public/private distinction, therefore, bolsters hegemonic norms of gender, class, race, and ableism (among others). Hence, contrary to traditional conceptualizations of citizenship, Young claims that impartiality as a condition for participation in the public-political sphere is an exclusionary myth, as “people necessarily and properly consider public issues in terms influenced by their situated experience and perception of social relations” (Ibid.: 257). One conceptualization of citizenship participation that takes people’s situated and relational experiences across the public and the private spheres into consideration is Lister’s concept of *lived citizenship*. In the following sections, I introduce the five theoretical approaches that I employ in my analysis, starting with lived citizenship.

Active citizenship and lived experiences

The pervasive distinction between the public and the private spheres in traditional citizenship theories has resulted in the exclusion of persons, as well as aspects of persons, from public life, while masking the fact that *both* the private and the public domains are personal *and* political. Therefore, a study of active citizenship needs to

consider feminists' claim that the personal is political, and vice versa. In this vein, I agree with Yuval-Davis (1999) who argues that "no consideration of citizenship can be complete without examining the varied and changing ways in which people's intimate lives, their families and their networks of friendship affect [...] their activities as citizens" (p. 123). If citizenship is about full membership, as Marshall ([1950] 1992) contended, then it needs to encompass not only the public sphere, but also our intimate and affective lives (Roseneil, Crowhurst, Hellesund et al., 2012). Thus, inspired by Lister's work on *lived citizenship* (Lister, 2007; Lister et al., 2003, 2005), I understand active citizenship as a *lived experience*. This means acknowledging *all* aspects of people's lives which have been rendered 'invisible' by normative discourses of citizenship. Hence, I use lived citizenship as a sensitizing concept which "suggests directions along which to look" (Blumer, 1954, p. 7).

A central scholar within feminist citizenship studies, Lister proposes that citizenship is a lived experience which is not only limited to the relationship between the citizen and the state, but also encompasses horizontal citizen-to-citizen relations and non-state arenas of social movements, as well as civil society organizations. Emerging from a gender- and diversity inspired critique of Marshall's ([1950] 1992) theory of social citizenship (Warming & Fahnøe, 2017), lived citizenship refers to the ways that people understand and negotiate citizenship – that is, the rights and responsibilities that come with citizenship, as well as experiences of belonging and participation. The concept is developed from a core of empirical works that analyse the experiences of citizenship among particularly excluded groups, focusing on the ways in which social actors live, act and practice citizenship in their everyday lives (Cherubini, 2011). The usefulness of lived citizenship for my project lies in its ability to combine an "analysis of citizenship regimes 'from above' with study of the cultural, social and political practices that constitute lived citizenship 'from below'" (Smith et al., 2007, p. 168). In other words, it connects the macro-structural analysis of social hierarchies with the

micro-sociological analysis of individuals' lived experiences of citizenship, which provides a more holistic understanding of participation (Cherubini, 2011).

Moreover, the lived citizenship approach is concerned with the *concrete practices* through which people claim themselves as full members of a society, by for instance participating in the social and political life where they live (Smith et al., 2007). This means examining whether and how people perceive themselves as 'good citizens', 'active citizens', 'passive citizens', and so on. Furthermore, it recognizes 'the citizen' as a concrete embodied individual rather than an abstract category, thus challenging the false universalism where the norm for a 'citizen' is a white, non-disabled, self-sufficient male – a norm that fails to address the diversity of identities and contributions in society (Moosa-Mitha, 2017; Warming & Fahnøe, 2017).

As a conceptual approach, lived citizenship helps me shift the gaze from understanding participation as an obligation or a right, towards subjective experiences of *being* and contributing as a member of a community. As such, it challenges the public-private dichotomy that buttressed the traditional association of citizenship with the public sphere, revealing the interconnection between the two spheres. For my study, this is helpful for two reasons. First, it entails recognizing as part of participation the multiplicity of domains that constitute people's everyday lives, including the family life and social relationships. This opens up for recognizing how people understand their civic responsibility beyond traditional notions of the public sphere. Second, it involves understanding how the public and the private spheres are interconnected in specific ways that contribute to the (re)production of good citizenship norms, or to the contestations of these norms. In this vein, I couple Lister's approach with Plummer's (2001, 2003) concept of *intimate citizenship*, as it opens up for critically examining the ways in which private lives are increasingly becoming

sites for citizenship norms and practices. Related to Lister's concept of lived citizenship, intimate citizenship examines the

rights, obligations, recognitions and respect around those most intimate spheres of life – who to live with, how to raise children, how to handle one's body, how to relate as a gendered being, how to be an erotic person. It tries to sense that such arrangements are bound up with membership of different and complex groups and communities, bringing their own inevitable tensions and splits (Plummer, 2001: 238).

While Plummer's work focuses specifically on sexualities and sexual minorities, intimate citizenship, in the broader sense, is also about parenting, caring, friendships and health issues (Warming & Fahnøe, 2017). It has to do with choosing how and where to live, how to raise one's children, how to be a good citizen and how these choices are implicated in power dynamics and disciplining policies and norms. As such, it is a helpful conceptual tool to analyse how our intimate and embodied lives are also connected to moral ideas about what it means to act and be recognized as a good citizen. It also raises the issue of the relation between the private and public spheres and suggests a potential bridge between the personal and the political (Plummer, 2003).

A spatial approach to active citizenship

The second theoretical perspective I employ in my study is a spatial perspective with regards to lived citizenship. Geographers Desforges et al. (2005) and Häkli, Kallio, and Ruokolainen (2019) argue that citizenship as a lived experience cannot be divorced from the everyday and spatial contexts that constitute our lives, and that scholarly investigations must pay particular attention to place and scale. This also includes being reflexive to the interconnectedness of space, practices, and identities (Warming & Fahnøe, 2017). Citizenship geographers, most notably those who employ

feminist perspectives, have also stressed the importance of intimate spaces for citizenship, such as the everyday life in homes, neighbourhoods, and communities. Scholars such as Staeheli et al. (2012), Dyck (2005) and Wood (2013, 2014a, 2014b) have contested the formal spheres of political action and made visible the important role that informal and intimate spaces play for individuals' agency and participation. Moreover, these enquiries have challenged understandings of citizenship as a social and geographical equalizer by repeatedly demonstrating that citizenship is not the same everywhere. As I will demonstrate in my empirical chapters, people's understandings of their civic responsibility vary according to where they live, and their assertions, contestations, and resistance of good citizenship norms and practices are embedded in their experiences in and relationships to their neighbourhoods.

I am particularly inspired by the work of geographer Bronwyn Wood (2013; 2014a; 2014b), who studies young people's emotions in relation to experiences of "living, belonging and participating as citizens *in specific geographic locations*" (Wood, 2013, p. 51 my italics). Wood, who draws on Massey (2004, 2005), suggests that we focus both on the *where* of citizenship in terms of places and communities, and the *how* of citizenship, which includes social relations and material circumstances that underpin meanings of civic responsibility.

Massey (2004) proposes two ways of understanding place in relation to responsibility. One way is to turn our gaze *inwards* and recognize the internal multiplicities of identity that constitute a place. As such, we can understand civic responsibility as shaped through relationships that both constitute and are constituted by a given place, without homogenizing a place. Another way is to *expand* our gaze and understand responsibility beyond the immediate or the very local, as extending territorially (and temporally) beyond the individual neighbourhood or the nation-state. As such, space is understood as a product of social interrelations and interactions at every scale, "from

the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny” (Massey, 2005, p. 9). Along similar lines, Yuval-Davis (1999), who situates citizenship in a transnational context, suggests that the concept needs to be understood as a multi-layered construct, as people’s responsibilities are mediated by their belonging in collectivities within and beyond a given nation-state.

The geography perspectives that I have outlined so far allow us to view informal spaces, including the private sphere, and local places as intrinsic to people’s understanding of responsibility. Informal and intimate spaces, such as homes, pubs, or faith-based arenas, were mentioned and reiterated particularly among those participants who feel that they fall short of the good citizen norm. Thus, by investigating the spaces through which people define their participation, we can recognize certain practices as societal contributions. An example from my material is the practice of informal care as central to citizenship. Helpful here are the perspectives of Sümer (2014, 2016), Wærness (1987), Leira (1992), and Sevenhuijsen (1998, 2000), who conceptualize care as a relational concept that has to do with people feeling concern for and taking charge of the well-being of others as part of their citizenship. In her writings on the ‘ethics of care’, Selma Sevenhuijsen (1998) suggests a view of the citizen as a moral subject who “always already lives in a network of relationships, in which s/he has to find balances between different forms of responsibility (for the self, for others and for the relationships between them)” (Sevenhuijsen, 2000, p. 10). The scholarship on care and citizenship is useful in rethinking the concept of the citizen beyond the idealized rational, disembodied, and autonomous subject who is presumably divorced from ‘his’ affective relations. Moreover, it prompts an understanding of responsibility embedded in ethical social relationships, rather than the more disciplinary notions of responsibility often found in policy discourses on active citizenship where citizens are expected to perform care work on behalf of the welfare state in more formalized arenas (i.e. voluntary

associations) (Herd & Meyer, 2002, 2016; Martinez, Crooks, Kim et al., 2011; Newman & Tonkens, 2011).

However, in line with Plummer (2001, 2003), I also recognize the intimate and the domestic as spaces through which hegemonic norms of citizenship play out. For example, the family has traditionally been conceived of as the ‘birth place’ of the good citizen (Galston, 1991), while the care-work of citizen-mothers has come to be understood as vital for the reproduction of the nation-state (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Similarly, local spaces such as leisure associations can be used as resources for citizenship, but they may also be the site of (re)productions of governing citizenship norms and a variety of inclusions and exclusions (Desforges et al., 2005; Holt, 2008). This means that norms of active citizenship are not only produced on the national policy level but may also be (re)produced by people within their everyday contexts, which include the private sphere and the local scale. As my empirical chapters demonstrate, dominant active citizenship norms can be contested, and at times resisted, but also reiterated, in homes, in schools and in neighbourhood associations. Thus, I suggest that the private sphere and the local scale not only carry the potential for contesting, resisting, and even transforming hegemonic, and often excluding, discourses of active citizenship, but that they are also spaces for (re)producing these discourses.

Geographical perspectives on citizenship have put the spotlight on spatial processes of inclusion and exclusion on different scales, whether it is the nation-state, or within particular groups or neighbourhoods. As such, they reveal citizenship’s boundaries, which can be both physical (as in state borders), as well as less tangible structural and symbolic boundaries which shape people’s lived experiences. Moreover, these boundaries are gendered and racialized (Newman, 2013; Anderson, 2013), and as my findings demonstrate, also ableist and classed, producing differential privileges and

constraints for participation and recognition (Lister, 2003). By focusing specifically on notions of active citizenship expressed in predominantly Norwegian and Danish integration policies, and how a diversity of people relate to or interact with these, I bring attention to the *symbolic boundaries* that constitute these discourses, and how these boundaries produce differentiations between desirable citizens and less-desirable citizens. As I argue in the following section, these less-desirable citizens serve as a convenient symbolic boundary that upholds the idealized good citizen as a particularly racialized, gendered, classed and ableist subject.

Good citizens and the community of value

Based on the feminist scholarly discussions presented so far, I understand active citizenship as a *differentiating norm* that categorizes people into binaries, where the good citizen is imagined as active, impartial, autonomous, and self-sufficient, and the not-good-enough-citizen is imagined as a passive, dependent, particularized Other. We can see expressions of these differentiations in dominant discourses on active citizenship in Denmark and Norway, which stress the desirability of participation in political and associational arenas and promote impartiality (as in sameness) and a national ‘common good’. Moreover, disciplining notions of autonomy, individual responsibility and self-sufficiency are often emphasized in a wide range of policies in these countries, including citizen formation programmes (i.e. integration programmes). Such policies not only valorize certain practices of active citizenship and ways of *being* a contributing member of society, but also exclude or make ‘invisible’ those contributions performed outside of the hegemonic arenas of participation.

I also find implicit and explicit expressions of differentiating categories in my material, such as good citizens and the morally questionable, the deserving and the undeserving, the active and the passive. These binaries are reiterated by my research

participants, as they strive to act as good citizens who contribute to society in ways that align with official policy aims. What seems to be at stake in their narratives is the risk of being deemed as ‘passive’, in the sense that they benefit from society and are dependent on it without actively contributing to it. To be recognized as a good citizen thus depends on the individual’s ability to live up to those values, behaviours and traits that are upheld by society (White, 2006) – or what Anderson (2013, p. 2) calls “*the community of value*”.

According to Anderson (2013, 2014), the “Good Citizen” is not only a norm constructed in academic and political discourse, but also among people embedded in a community of value. Drawing on Benedict Anderson’s ([1983] 2006) theory of the nation-state as an ‘imagined community’, Bridget Anderson argues that modern states do not simply portray themselves as arbitrary collections of people held together by a common legal status only. Rather, states portray themselves as communities of value, made up of people who share common ideals and (exemplary) patterns of behaviour. These people are not simply citizens, but “*Good Citizens*”, who are assumed to have shared values and are “imagined as law-abiding and hard-working members of stable and respectable families” (Anderson, 2014, p. 3). Moreover, members of the community of value participate in certain forms of social relations and are active contributors to the community. As the community of value is one of the ways that states claim legitimacy, it often overlaps with ideas of the nation (Anderson, 2013). However, the notion of ‘community’ is not necessarily located on the national scale and is as much an imagined national community as it is an imagined local community. It is in other words an elusive, yet powerful notion that not only captures popular communitarianism but also implies the importance of daily practices and values that are discursively connected to ‘national identity’. Examples are the practice of *dugnad* (communal work) in Norway or *frivilliged* (associational volunteerism) in Denmark.

The usefulness of Anderson's concept of the community of value lies in its recognition of the power and privilege that members of the community have to judge who is 'deserving' of membership and who is not: "There is an implicit (or explicit) claim that citizens have some authority to determine the boundaries of membership, an authority that is seen as stemming from their real-world experience and knowledge of their community" (Anderson, Gibney, & Paoletti, 2011, p. 559). In other words, the boundaries of the community of value are not only drawn by the state and its institutions, but also by members of the community of value. Those who perform good citizenship and who have the 'right' kinds of values are ultimately more 'deserving' of membership than those who do not.

Other scholars understand 'the community' along similar lines. Young (1990), for instance, argues that the very notion of community tends to privilege the ideal of unity and sameness over difference. This results in boundaries being drawn to define those who are insiders from those who are not, as well as the privileging of particular spaces within the community. Another example is Schinkel (2010), who differentiates between 'society' and the 'outside society', where those who are to be integrated, rehabilitated, or educated are thought to reside in the latter. 'Society' here is characterized by active citizenship, which means that those who are discursively located 'outside' society are so because of their inactivity and their lack of ability to adhere to society's norms and values (Schinkel & van Houdt, 2010). Accordingly, an active citizen is one who demonstrates behaviours and practices associated with the society's upheld norms and values and is therefore a desirable subject within the community.

Whilst the community of value may overlap with ideas of the nation, foregrounding it serves to emphasize that not all formal citizens are good citizens. Indeed, the community of value has parameters, and is defined and constructed through that which

is Othered *internally*. In order to naturalize certain subjectivities as desirable (the good citizens), there needs to be a contrast to those who are *not* desirable, namely the “Non-Citizen”, the “Failed Citizen” and the “Tolerated Citizen” (Anderson, 2013, 2014; Anderson & Hughes, 2015). These undesirable subjectivities, although they are constructed through various hegemonic discourses, are often imagined as real. While I only use the concepts of the tolerated citizen and failed citizen in my analysis, I will briefly explain the concept of the non-citizen in order to provide a full explanation of Anderson’s conceptualization of the community of value.

The community of value is defined from *the outside* through the figure of the non-citizen. Just as the citizen is a normative category, so is the non-citizen. For example, the terms ‘foreigner’ or ‘asylum seeker’ are not simply descriptive legal categories but are value laden, signifying a lack in relation to the formal citizen. This means that part of being an outsider is the assumption that one does not share the same values or attributes associated with the good citizen – which easily becomes not having the ‘right’ values (Anderson, 2013). This is particularly visible in naturalization policies, where immigrants (most specifically so-called non-Western immigrants) must demonstrate *deservingness* to formally belong to the community of value.

Conversely, the community of value is also defined from *the inside*, through the figure of the failed citizen. The failed citizen describes “those individuals and groups who are imagined as incapable of, or fail to live up, liberal ideals [...] posing a threat to the local community and/or the nation” (Anderson, 2014, p. 4). These are the morally questionable people who may be formal citizens but who are strongly imagined as internal Others and considered as undeserving of membership in the community of value. Examples are ‘the criminal’, the ‘welfare dependents’ and the ‘dysfunctional/irresponsible families’, often imagined as passive, mentally/physically ‘unfit’ and a burden on the welfare state.

In addition to good citizens, non-citizens and failed citizens, there are also tolerated citizens. These are nearly-good-enough-citizens who are fragiley located on the discursive ‘borders’ of the community of value, and who are contingently accepted (Ibid.). The ‘well-integrated migrant’ is one example. These different groups and individuals “can slip in and out of the community of value, sometimes accepted, sometimes marginal, sometimes examples of fine institutions and national generosity, and other times a threat to national identity and themselves” (Ibid., p. 4). Common to the failed and tolerated citizens is that they are considered to lack the ‘right’ values and characteristics associated with good citizenship, and therefore have little or no worth in the community of value (Ibid.).

Like other feminist citizenship scholars, Anderson (2014) claims that the good citizen is firmly anchored in patriarchal ideas about the individual, where the (masculinized) ideals of autonomy, sovereignty and rationality are valued. This means that all four categories of the citizen described above – the good, the non-, the failed and the tolerated – are gendered, racialized, ableist and classed, where the non-citizen, failed citizen and tolerated citizen are considered as not (fully) living up to these ideals (Brace, 2015). Moreover, the non-citizen, failed citizen and tolerated citizen are often imagined as racial and classed Others (Anderson, 2014, p. 7). They are in other words ‘marked’ as ‘different’. Hence, the community of value is not just a community of good citizens, but a community of ‘unmarked’ people whose membership and belonging are taken for granted – rather than challenged – on the basis of their positionalities within societal hierarchies.

I understand ‘class’ here beyond socio-economic factors, as a category that also has to do with *moral evaluations* of individual and group lifestyles. The work of Beverly Skeggs (1997, 2004), which relies on a Bourdieusian approach to conceptualizing

social class (see Bourdieu, 1989), is particularly helpful in this regard. Like Skeggs, I understand class as a process of categorization in which culture, lifestyle, and the power to define the value of these are crucial. From this perspective, ‘class’ can be read as a symbol of the *moral status* of an individual, which translates into demands of the ‘right’ kind of *habitus*¹⁶ materialized in the bodies of citizens (Berg & Peltola, 2015). Other social categories such as gender, ethnicity, race, and ability can be understood in a similar way: as hierarchies produced by power relations and which shape the evaluations and expectations attached to certain individuals or groups. In other words, what is considered as morally valuable or desirable is defined in terms of power relations: good citizenship consists of the ‘right’ values and traits possessed by white, middle-class, able-bodied (male) good citizens, while the working-class, women, ethnic or racialized minorities, the disabled and the sick – the failed and the tolerated citizens – who are assumed to lack such values and traits are excluded from the community of value. Thus, through Anderson’s conceptualization of citizenship, we can clearly see how imaginations of the active citizen are normative and constituted in relation to an Other, and how these imaginations contribute to the cementation of existing social hierarchies. As the categories of good, failed and tolerated citizens are gendered, racialized, ableist and classed (Brace, 2015), a discussion on active citizenship norms and discourses needs to include an intersectional approach.

An intersectional approach to active citizenship norms

The concept of intersectionality originated from critical race theorists, who reject social categories such as race, gender, and class as separate and essentialist categories, and argue for their interconnections and interdependence (see Collins, 1990;

¹⁶ The concept of *habitus* is derived from the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1989), and consists of socially learned habits, dispositions, and skills that appear as ‘natural’ to an individual. These are both materially and discursively produced, giving or denying groups and individuals moral value (Skeggs, 1997, 2004).

Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1984). Intersectionality sheds light on how different social hierarchies interact *in the production of hegemonic norms* to limit or expand people's experiences of citizenship and agency, and how these shift depending on the time and place (Anthias, 2012, 2013; Yuval-Davis, 2007). An intersectional approach allows me to explore how norms of active citizenship are produced at the intersection of gendered, racialized, ableist and classed hierarchies, and how differently socially and geographically situated individuals interact with and navigate these norms.

Although intersectionality has been particularly helpful for feminist scholars in theorizing and analysing multiple forms of inequalities, the term has been subject to much contestation. A general weakness in most intersectionality studies is that they rarely combine multiple levels of analysis, where the focus is either exclusively on identities, or on discourse, or on structures (Orupabo, 2014). Moreover, intersectional arguments can also be part of an exclusionary framing, essentializing identity categories and constructing social differentiations between and within 'groups' (Christensen & Siim, 2010). Valentine (2007) notes that work on intersectionality often reinforces privilege, as scholars focus on the experiences of minoritized groups rather than on how privileged or powerful identities are constituted.

Being aware of these pitfalls, I use intersectionality in my study not as a tool to analyse intersecting social divisions, but rather *as an approach to understand the multiple and intersecting power dimensions that inform the good citizen norm* in my research participants' own narratives. In this vein, I follow West and Fenstermaker (1995), who argue that the focus on intersectionality should be on the ways that the social positions of individuals are *framed*. They conceptualize social identities such as race, gender, and class not as stable, naturally given, or socially and culturally constructed categories, but rather as *emergent* properties that occur in interactions. This means that I do not assume prior to data collection and analysis which social

positions are relevant for my research participants. Rather, I look at *which* social categories are relevant at *particular moments and in specific contexts*. Such an approach opens up for understanding individuals as actively involved in producing their own lives, where they cannot be seen as completely oppressed by power structures or as oppressing others (Valentine, 2007). By allowing my interlocutors to define their own identities, and by being attentive to *when* and *where* their self-defined identities matter, I can avoid (re)producing essentializing reductions in my study, while still being able to clearly name power relations embedded in good citizenship norms and practices.

Active citizenship as disciplining versus empowering practice

Understanding active citizenship as a normative concept that has profound implications for who is considered as desirable, good, or deserving of recognition suggests that active citizenship disciplines people into acquiring and performing the ‘right’ kinds of behaviours and values. This problematizes the positive connotations that are often uncritically associated with the concept of active citizenship. Several scholars have critiqued active citizenship as a disciplining or governing practice, drawing on Foucault’s (1980, 1989) writings on governmentality (Kearns, 1995; van Houdt & Schinkel, 2014; Desforges et al., 2005; Gaynor, 2009; Newman & Tonkens, 2011; Newman, 2013; Segal, 2013). Such criticism suggests that participation in state-led or official programmes essentially functions to ‘incorporate’ rather than empower citizens, and to shape subjectivities in line with state discourses of (active) citizenship (Jupp, 2008). Barbara Cruikshank (1999), for instance, argues that the citizen is not “simply a participant in politics”, but “an effect and an instrument of political power” (p. 5), claiming that participatory ideals are a strategy of governance concealed in a discourse of empowerment through what she calls the ‘technologies of citizenship’ (i.e. civic education curriculums and integration programmes). Through such

technologies of citizenship, citizens are ‘moulded’ into the right kinds of subjects with the ‘right’ values – as self-sufficient and responsible democratic citizens who comply with the state and its framework for participation (Newman & Tonkens, 2011; van der Land, 2014).

Another prominent critic of the concept of active citizenship is Engin Isin (2008), who distinguishes sharply between ‘active citizens’ and ‘*activist* citizens’, arguing that “while activist citizens engage in writing scripts and creating the scene, active citizens follow scripts and participate in scenes that are already created. While activist citizens are creative, active citizens are not” (p. 38). Isin claims that active citizens are actually passive, as they are accepting of the status quo, while activist citizens are political subjects who claim rights in ways that bring about societal transformation, a practice that he labels ‘acts of citizenship’, rather than active citizenship (Ibid.). In Isin’s (2008) view, ‘active citizenship’ is a disciplining instrument that advances state legitimacy and order, rather than an empowering practice by which political subjects push the boundaries of citizenship to create societal transformation. An example of this is government-led policies and programmes pertaining to community development, which aim to mobilize residents in ‘deprived’ neighbourhoods to volunteer and address their own needs, while “denying them a voice in querying how these needs have come about” (Gaynor, 2009, p. 38). As such, the state, together with a range of civic organizations who rely on public funding, effectively depoliticizes and de-activates citizens in local communities (Ibid.).

Feminist scholars in particular have argued against the concept of active citizenship, claiming that governments (and non-governmental organizations) have selectively appropriated feminist movements’ struggles for recognition and rights in ways that actually undermine people’s capacities to create change. Newman (2013) contends that notions of ‘responsibility’ as promoted in active citizenship policies draw on and re-

inflect “those formations of feminism that emphasize interdependence and mutuality [...] at the expense of feminist claims made in the name of equality and justice” (p. 95–96). She moreover argues that feminist moral and ethical vocabularies are appropriated to foster civic responsibility and social cohesion. As such, active citizenship policies focus more on what individuals, especially minoritized groups (i.e. disabled people, immigrants, and people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods), *should do*, rather than on questions of belonging, status, or recognition (Buire & Staeheli, 2017). Within this governmentality framework, the distinction between the public and the private is reinterpreted rather than challenged. Whereas feminist activists and scholars have highlighted the moral and ethical conceptions of politics and public life, revealing the entanglements between the ‘personal’ and the ‘political’, governmentality notions of active citizenship “seek to reconstitute personhood as a domain of responsible choices and behaviours” (Newman, 2013, p. 95). Rather than an expression of mutuality and interdependence, responsibility in this sense connotes to specific practices and behaviours that are deemed desirable by the state, such as being healthy, self-sufficient, bringing up one’s children ‘well’, and contributing to community and civil society through voluntary work and charitable organizations (Newman & Tonkens, 2011; Vabø, 2011).

When looking at selective political discourses on active citizenship in Norway and Denmark, such as those I introduced earlier, we notice a rather disciplining application of active citizenship that is adapted for explicit policy purposes, where people are encouraged to perform specific practices and engage in specific arenas. For instance, people are encouraged to take responsibility for their neighbourhoods through volunteering in associations, to be active in child-centred arenas, to participate in national and local democratic structures and so on. Moreover, citizen activation and integration programmes aim to create resourceful, autonomous and ‘culturally similar’ citizens, where marginalized individuals must learn to ‘change their ways’ in order to achieve empowerment and social inclusion (Bendixsen, Bringslid, & Vike, 2018;

Stubbergaard, 2010). In other words, civic rights come with a disciplining demand for conformity, rather than a transformation of institutionalized structures that create marginalization in the first place.

Is active citizenship, then, purely a disciplining practice that excludes those who do not fulfil expectations for desirable participation? Or can we also think of active citizenship as promoting inclusion, and as a concept that can be defined in people's own terms? While criticisms of the concept of active citizenship hold important warnings, they may also be misleading. This is because they tend to underestimate, if not deny, the ways that participation can be empowering and inclusive. Moreover, such criticisms risk ignoring the ways in which people who live up to dominant norms of active citizenship also contest and resist these. Participation, then, is reduced to a binary: it is either conceived of as enabling radical, disruptive acts or as complying with particular political goals. A better option, perhaps, might be to embrace the inclusionary potential of active citizenship, while critically examining its exclusionary aspects. In this vein, I draw on a growing body of research that suggests that active citizenship agendas are not just forms of state-led control; rather, they provide citizens with frameworks for aspiration and action (Buire & Staeheli, 2017; Hansen, 2015; Onyx, Kenny, & Brown, 2012; Wood, 2013, 2014a). As such, citizens may engage and behave in ways that reflect dominant good citizenship norms and discourses, while understanding and enacting their responsibility in ways that go beyond these.

van der Land (2014), for instance, views active citizenship as a two-way process, where (discontented) citizens take on responsibilities from public authorities to ameliorate their communities, while at the same time complying with state objectives for active citizenship. Similarly, de Koning, Jaffe, and Koster (2015) call for recognizing the plurality of non-state actors at varying scales in 'disseminating' and reinterpreting norms of active citizenship. Stubbergaard (2010) also understands citizenship beyond the disciplining/empowering binary, arguing that people are not

necessarily active citizens by default, but they *become* so. According to her, citizenship is constructed through specific political discourses, strategies, and policies to mean different things for different people. These discourses then interact with people who occupy different social positionalities, who react and relate to what is expected of them. These reactions may be expressed through, for example, loyalty, dissent, or indifference. In their study on young activists in South Africa, Buire and Staeheli (2017) suggest that rather than reducing the concept of active citizenship to de-politicization and individualization of politics, we must recognize “the openness and unpredictability to the ways in which [active] citizenship is deployed in mobilizations and individuals engaged in them” (p. 174). These middle perspectives are in line with feminist scholars who see potential in active citizenship as an empowering practice that carries the possibility for social inclusion and societal transformation, while remaining critical to the exclusionary and disciplinary aspects of it (Kabeer, 2005; Lister, 1997, 2007; Young, 2000).

Lister (1997, 2007), for instance, argues that active citizenship can strengthen deprived communities’ and individuals’ capacities to take collective action, as they come to see themselves as political actors and effective citizens. An example is local women’s consciousness raising groups during the 1960s and 1970s, where women learned to act on issues that concerned them, placing women’s personal experiences in a political context (Burgmann, 2003; Eto, 2012; Ollis, 2008). This kind of feminist activism has been operating through informal forms of participation and politics that cut across the public/private divide. Lister (1998) therefore proposes a feminist appropriation of the republican citizenship model that would promote a wider definition of (political) participation, one that embraces informal practices and contributions. This interpretation of participation, Lister argues, should not be construed to mean participation as obligation, as this would turn active citizenship into a disciplining practice that excludes those groups who are not able to fulfil such an obligation. Rather, Lister develops the concept of ‘differentiated universalism’ that would address

citizenship's exclusionary power and the public-private separation while maintaining its ideals of universal equality (see also Prokhovnik, 1998).

Differentiated universalism offers a flexible understanding of active citizenship based on lived experiences and which places human agency at the heart of participation (Lister, 1998). As such, citizenship as participation represents *the expression* of human agency, rather than contributions to a predefined common good, and enables people, including minoritized groups, to act as agents. At the same time, Lister (1998) understands agency as “embedded in and shaped by social structures and relations” (p. 73), and that people can be both constrained by oppressive power relations *and* empowered actors in their own lives who are capable of carrying out actions that benefit themselves and others in their communities. Thus, if we want to understand active citizenship beyond the discipline/empowerment binary, we need to pay attention to the variegated ways that individuals, including those who deviate from the good citizen norm, (re)construct, challenge, and defy dominant active citizenship norms.

‘Active citizenship’ – a differentiating norm

The theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter have revealed that the concept of ‘active citizenship’ is highly contested (Lister, 1997, 1998, 2003). Although the concept may appear to be unquestionably positive, conjuring images of community work, cohesion and democratic participation (Gaynor, 2009), it is nevertheless used in disciplining ways that may be excluding towards those who do not fit the norm of the good citizen.

Drawing on the feminist scholarship on citizenship, I understand citizenship as a differentiating norm which involves processes of negotiation and struggle over who

belongs in the national community (Predelli et al., 2012). Understanding active citizenship as a norm through which certain virtues, behaviours and practices are defined as desirable prompts an investigation of what this norm entails, and how it contributes to the construction of the community of value in which some are deemed as desirable good citizens and some as deviant Others. The fundamental inquiry in my research is therefore not what active citizenship ‘is’ or ‘should be’, but rather, who ‘counts’ as a good member of society and who are deemed not good enough? Who should change in order to be recognized as a valued member of society? What does it ‘take’ to potentially be recognized as a good member, and who is imagined as completely unable to become so?

The importance of my project lies in shedding light on the ways that active citizenship norms foster social hierarchies that shape our societies. By problematizing and unpacking the normative category of the good citizen, we can see that the concept of active citizenship is used as a measuring rod against which ‘other’ groups and categories are judged. My argument is that there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of active citizenship that considers the ways in which ideals of good citizenship are framed through an imagined community of value where women, migrants, the poor, the sick and multiple Others are at times contingently included and at times blatantly excluded. Anderson’s concept of the community of value helps us to see active citizenship as a boundary-making and differentiating process, while Lister’s concept of lived citizenship and Plummer’s notion of intimate citizenship allow us to see how these processes take place in both the private and public spheres.

However, these processes are not just created by the state in a top-down manner but are also (re)created, contested, and resisted by individuals through their lived experiences. My research shows that people cannot be reduced to either passive recipients of active citizenship norms or empowered actors who fundamentally

challenge the state or the normative social order. Rather, people maintain, dispute, and resist active citizenship norms through embodied, everyday, and informal contributions on multiple scales. The literature on (feminist) citizenship geography teaches us that citizenship norms are not universal. In other words, different social identities are met with different norms, and individuals or groups experience these norms differently depending on where they live.

Understanding lived experiences as inextricably linked to citizenship means taking seriously how people conceptualize active citizenship in their own words and through their lived realities in specific contexts. Moreover, paying attention to the impact of lived experiences on people's understandings of active citizenship opens up possibilities to widen the definition of what it means to be an active citizen, and to include practices and spaces that might be considered as 'non-civic'. One way to broaden the conceptualization of active citizenship to include lived experiences is to recognize the impact that informal interactions and relationships have on people's sense of civic responsibility, which can in turn bring about possibilities for participation and creating change (Jupp, 2008; Wood, 2013; Lister, 1998). Such a recognition also prompts a reconceptualization of civic responsibility and obligation beyond disciplining and excluding notions to include situated questions of responsibility across the public/private divide (Sevenhuijsen, 1998, 2000).

Recognizing the agency of individuals in defining their societal contributions allows us to move beyond conceptualizations of active citizenship as solely an obligation defined 'from above', and take seriously the much more informal rules and norms shared by people (Staeheli et al., 2012). These norms undoubtedly provide us with an idea of who 'counts' as a good citizen – one who fulfils desirable obligations and is hence worthy of inclusion in the community of value – and who does *not*, and the diverse and contextually situated ways that people navigate these differentiations. In so

doing, we can recognize the inherent tension in active citizenship as both an inclusionary and exclusionary concept.

3. Research design

This chapter discusses the production of the empirical material that constitutes the foundation of my thesis. My research design involved a flexible and exploratory, yet systematic, approach. The material consists of 74 semi-structured interviews (including 3 walking interviews and 14 expert interviews) and 11 focus group discussions with 123 research participants, in addition to participant observations in different localities within Oslo and Copenhagen. A strength of this study is the scope of its empirical material, including a highly diverse sample of research participants and the use of different data collection methods in multiple sites. This combination has allowed me to capture the variegated ways people understand their societal engagement and responsibility, and how these are contextual and shaped through both lived experiences and power relations within the Norwegian and Danish societies.

I start this chapter by considering the challenge of defining ‘active citizenship’ and reflecting on my position as a researcher in (co)producing the good citizen norm. I then move on to discuss the usefulness of having conducted fieldwork in different sites and applying an intersectional approach. Next, I present my recruitment and data collection methods, before I briefly explain my analysis process. Finally, I reflect on key ethical issues.

Defining ‘active citizenship’

A challenge in this research has been the lack of a definition of ‘active citizenship’ or ‘civic engagement’ while conducting data collection and analysis. While this has allowed me to be open to the diversity in people’s understandings of active citizenship, it nevertheless posed a challenge in narrowing down the focus of my research. On the one hand, having an *a priori* definition of active citizenship can be problematic as it

may risk reproducing dominant discourses on active citizenship and silencing alternative practices and orientations (Theiss-Morse, 1993). On the other hand, abstaining from a predefinition may lead to discovering a wide disparity in people's conceptualizations, making it hard to 'pin down' a concept of active citizenship (Ibid.). The latter became obvious as my interviewees defined everything from queuing in public transportation, to associational volunteerism, to raising one's child well, as 'active citizenship'.

Almost everyone I spoke with perceived themselves as active – that is, as people who participate in and contribute to society in one way or another. It may be that their responses were influenced by a wish to tell me what I wanted to hear. At the same time, this strong wish not to be seen as passive is also a crucial insight of the study. My research shows a strong desire to live up to unspoken societal expectations to contribute to society. For instance, some felt the need to 'justify' their self-defined civic engagement practices as 'good enough', while others conveyed feelings of guilt, insecurity, and embarrassment when I approached them with my research topic. On several occasions individuals stated, almost apologetically, that they may not be the 'right' person to interview, because they were not 'really engaged'. These recurring instances demonstrate the desirability in being perceived as a good citizen who cares about society and contributes to it. Not surprisingly, none of the participants viewed themselves as 'passive', even when they were not sure if their self-defined practices of civic engagement could 'count' as such.

Instead of working from a definition of 'active citizenship' as merely a set of practices and behaviours, my analysis has evolved around these subtle expressions of guilt, embarrassment, expectations, and justifications that expose the normative dimensions of active citizenship. Treating active citizenship as a normative concept, rather than a

descriptive term, allowed me to explore how people, *including myself*, play a role in the (co)production of the good citizen and active citizenship norms.

Positionality in fieldwork

The idea that the researcher's positionality and situatedness inform the research findings is a crucial insight in gender studies (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1987; Rose, 1997). A central voice in feminist methodological critique, Haraway (1988) claims that all scientific knowledge is situated, which implies that it is always *located* and *made* in a specific context and is constituted through a *particular gaze*. This is not to be construed as postmodern relativism, which suggests that one cannot make claims to knowledge. Instead, it is about acknowledging that the claims to knowledge we make are inevitably limited and partial (Harding, 1991). In this sense, the researcher is objective as she acknowledges her role in enabling a *certain kind* of knowledge. This feminist understanding of objectivity challenges the assumption of the impartial and disembodied researcher and "allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see" (Haraway, 1988, p. 583).

The concept of situated knowledge encourages us to be reflexive upon how we 'access' and produce data and how we interpret it. Moreover, it urges us to be sensitive to power dynamics between the researcher and the researched and how these dynamics affect the research process – from data collection, to analysis and writing. Reflexivity, according to Rose (1997), is a strategy that helps to make one's position known, "which involves making it visible and making the specificity of its perspective clear" (p. 308). Rose suggests two ways of being reflexive. One way is to look 'inward' to our identities as researchers, and the other is to look 'outward', reflecting on our relation to our research and 'the wider world' (Ibid., p. 309). In this section, I reflect on my role in the production of the data that this study builds on, focusing specifically

on the recruitment process and interview situation. Drawing on intersectionality approaches, I discuss how my positionality (in terms of race, age, gender, socio-economic status, health, etc.) in specific contexts and moments mattered for the production of the empirical insights presented in this study. In other words, I reflect on how my positionality may have impacted the interactions with my interlocutors in terms of what they chose to tell me (and what they may have omitted). I also consider the implications of my positionality as a researcher on the (re)production of good citizenship norms. However, and as Rose (1997) contends, “it is important to acknowledge that *transparent reflexivity* is not fully attainable – simply because our gaze is partial” (p. 307). I can never know the full effects of my identities on the knowledge that I produce. Yet, it is still possible to say something on when (some of) the abovementioned identities mattered.

Insider-outsider positions

Insider-outsider positions are relationally constructed in the encounter between researcher and research participant (Carling, Erdal, & Ezzati, 2014). In some contexts, I was perceived by research participants as an insider – as someone who was regarded as similar to them – while in other contexts I was perceived as an outsider, as someone who was different. I believe that each of these positions affected the interview and focus group processes. For instance, my name, as well as my being a ‘visible’ ethnic minority, has generated specific responses and attitudes in some of the interviews and focus group discussions. This was made clear in instances when interviewees with an ethnic minoritized background were curious about ‘where I come from’ or what ‘my religion’ was, or when they assumed that I shared their experience of being a racialized minority. In such instances, I chose to position myself as an ‘insider’ (Ibid.) by communicating my markers as a racialized minority and Muslim, as well as my migration experiences, in order to learn more about how experiences of Otherness and

questions of identity inform my interlocutors' understandings of active citizenship, a topic I explore in Chapters 6 and 7.

I also experienced instances where a few ethnic Norwegians or Danes also considered me as 'an insider', as they expressed that I "*do not look Muslim*" and that I am presumably "*not like other immigrants*" due to my position as a researcher, my light skin, and my clothing (i.e. not wearing hijab). These participants were concerned about challenges that come with diversity, such as lack of or the 'wrong kind' of participation among immigrants, and even made it clear that such concerns are not easy to communicate loudly without offending anyone. Hence, I believe that their perception of me as a 'good immigrant' may have created a space where they felt they could talk about issues relating to diversity and social cohesion, which I explore in Chapter 5.

However, in other contexts, I was perceived as an 'outsider', albeit in a way that facilitated access to participants. This was particularly evident in one of the localities where I carried out fieldwork, namely Sydhavn, a traditionally working-class neighbourhood in Copenhagen.¹⁷ There, I spent a considerable amount of time at SydhavnsCompagniet (SC), a community centre which consisted primarily of male volunteers who were socio-economically marginalized and/or who suffered from various (mental) health issues.¹⁸ Being in that context has made me especially aware of my own privileges as someone who is healthy and middle-class, as well as my position as a researcher. This awareness made me concerned that I would be perceived as an outsider who would not be able to understand their realities. This concern was accentuated when the leader of SC made it clear to me that if I wanted to conduct fieldwork there, I would have to volunteer, especially given that the centre receives an

¹⁷ I present the selected localities, including Sydhavn, in the following section.

¹⁸ I introduce this place in more detail further down in this chapter, and in Chapter 7.

influx of requests from researchers who wish to carry out studies there. During my time as a volunteer, I realized that being an ‘outsider’ helped me to forge relationships with the people at the centre. On several occasions, I was referred to as ‘the young woman’ (*den unge damen*) who presumably knew little about the neighbourhood. This was also the case when I would ‘hang out’ at pubs or cafés in Sydhavn, where I was approached by several retired men, one of whom noted that they rarely see “*smart girls on their computers*”. It is also crucial to mention that Sydhavn suffers from a bad reputation due to its high unemployment and poverty rates – something which I assume my interlocutors wished to counter by giving me an interview where they presented their neighbourhood in a positive light.¹⁹ As such, they may have perceived me as a researcher with the power to represent their neighbourhood positively in my study. Being aware of the power inscribed in my role as a researcher, I chose to emphasize that I was a “*PhD-student*” who wished to learn about what it means to live in Sydhavn or to be part of SC, thereby balancing humility and authority in the encounter with my interlocutors (see also Carling et al., 2014).

These examples illustrate the gendered and age dynamics of knowledge production in fieldwork. I believe that my positionality as a young female *and* a researcher not only granted me access to interviewees who were differently positioned than me in terms of gender, age, and class, but it may also have motivated them to talk about their neighbourhood in a favourable manner, enabling me to learn about the relationship between people’s neighbourhood affinities and their understandings of active citizenship (see Chapter 8).

¹⁹ See the section on ‘walking interviews’.

The risk of reproducing good citizenship norms

It is also worth reflecting on how my positionality may have influenced which voices were included in my research and which were potentially excluded. Indeed, recruitment processes are not only about collecting data, but are also “an integral part of the established methodological narrative in qualitative interview studies” (Kristensen & Ravn, 2015, p. 723), influencing the knowledge we (are able to) produce. Although I did not recruit individuals based on specific characteristics, I nevertheless ended up primarily interviewing those who carry characteristics associated with the idealized good citizen. This means that the majority of those I interviewed are not poor, are resourceful (in terms of time, health, money), speak Norwegian/Danish fluently, are able-bodied and so on. As is common in research, I had rather easy access to middle and upper middle class and able-bodied individuals, while working class’ and impaired individuals’ voices were more difficult to include.²⁰ I addressed this concern by working actively to include the perspectives of individuals with a racialized background, those with mental health challenges, and/or physical disabilities, and those who live in poverty through other methods that required more patience and time, such as long-term participant observation in Tøyen and Sydhavn, which facilitated spontaneous and informal conversations.²¹

Throughout the research process, I was sometimes worried that I would end up reproducing dominant understandings of active citizenship norms. Despite not having a predefinition of ‘active citizenship’, I nevertheless carried assumptions about which practices might be categorized as ‘active citizenship’, which may have shaped my

²⁰ As I did not actively seek out sexual minorities and none of the research participants mentioned their sexual orientation, I cannot say whether their voices are included in my research or not.

²¹ There were, however, specific groups that I decisively chose to exclude from my sample, such as those who suffer from drug and alcohol addiction and those without a Norwegian or Danish residence permit. As I will return to in Chapter 8, drug and alcohol addicts were visibly present in two of my designated localities of recruitment and were often mentioned in my participants’ representations of their neighbourhoods. However, because I had no intention of interviewing individuals who were under the influence of alcohol and drugs, their voices have been left out from this research.

research participants' answers. These assumptions may be connected to my own self-perception of being a good citizen – as someone who sees herself (and is seen by others) as contributing to society in desirable ways (through e.g. voluntary associations and in the public debate). This became obvious in the interviews where the research participants did not mention *specific* ways of being engaged or when their self-defined practices did not 'fit' policy formulations or my own experiences of being an active citizen. In such cases, I found myself asking those individuals to explicitly name *how* they were engaged. This may have contributed to (re)producing the societal expectation that people *should* be active (in specific ways), as I discussed earlier. Since the aim of my research has been to capture how people in Oslo and Copenhagen understand what it means to be an active citizen, it was sometimes impossible to refrain from asking people about their civic engagement. I therefore attempted to the best of my abilities to allow the interviewees to define 'civic engagement' in their own words, and to give ample space to their contestations of dominant participation norms.

Decoupling active citizenship from the nation-state

A central problem for this thesis is how the dominant scholarship on active citizenship has been embedded in methodological nationalism, which is understood as “the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 301). Studies on active citizenship that build on such an assumption contribute to the blind reproduction of the nation-state as the 'arena' where participation should take place, and where participation should be directed. This is the case for active citizenship studies within the Scandinavian context, which have primarily been concerned with the welfare state and the integration of immigrants. This is particularly problematic, as such academic discourses contribute to the problematization of immigrants. These studies often distinguish so-called immigrants or ethnic minorities from so-called nationals, reducing their civic engagement (or lack thereof) to their cultural, religious, or ethnic

identities. These approaches, moreover, tend to assume that immigrants' loyalty towards or belonging in the 'host-nation' is weakened if they do not participate in desirable ways. For instance, being active in so-called immigrant associations or faith arenas is often framed as problematic for social cohesion and integration (Horst, Erdal, & Jdid, 2020; Peucker & Ceylan, 2017). As such, these approaches tend to not only essentialize 'culture' in ways that have been criticized by a number of scholars (see e.g. Abu-Lughod, 2012; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992), but also ignore the ways that other social identities, such as class, gender, stage in the life cycle and ability, impact people's experiences of citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 1999). Also, focusing on immigrants or ethnic minorities turns attention away from the gendered, classed, racialized, and ableist boundaries of citizenship, assuming all citizens as fully and equally included, while ignoring how individuals from the ethnic majority are differentially included in the nation (Anderson, 2019). In this vein, I agree with Anderson (2019), who calls for methodological *de*-nationalism, which she defines as "an approach that does not assume difference between state differentiated categories and seeks to investigate what this does for theory, politics, and practice" (p. 6).

Anderson's methodological approach complements my conceptual framework as it allows for investigating the workings of the dominant category of the good citizen and its impacts on the experiences of individuals and groups. Moreover, it complicates the migrant/citizen binary, allowing us to see how the good citizen is constructed in relation to other minorities, and not just 'the migrant'. As I mentioned in the introduction, I do not use the concepts 'active citizens' or good citizens to denote those with formal citizenship, but rather to shed light on the *normative ideals* that undergird people's understandings of active citizenship. This means that one may have formal citizenship status, yet still be regarded as an internal Other. An example from my empirical findings is individuals with a disability or mental health challenges, who often experience being contingently accepted and having the need to constantly 'prove themselves' as contributing members of society. Hence, methodological de-

nationalism shifts our focus to query *what* makes the citizen (rather than ‘who’ the citizen is), which requires examining the desirable *values and behaviours* associated with citizenship. Thus, following Anderson (2019), I decouple the concept of active citizenship from the state differentiated categories of ‘citizen’ and ‘immigrant’ – without completely discarding these positions altogether, as they do have implications for how people are perceived and perceive themselves.

In order to fulfil this study’s methodological ambition of moving away from the nation-state as a given framework and entity of analysis, I employ two strategies. First, I use different localities, rather than nation-states, as units of analysis (Wimmer, 2007). This means that I recruited people from different neighbourhoods and used places (instead of specific ‘groups’) as the starting point of my data collection. Second, I ‘demigranticized’ (Dahinden, 2016) my sample by recruiting ‘everyone’ within these localities, and not just those with an international migration background. I elaborate on each strategy below.

A comparative and multi-sited approach

Conducting fieldwork in multiple neighbourhoods has allowed me to be sensitive to the diversity between and within the Norwegian and Danish contexts. This approach has proven crucial in my ability to understand people’s conceptualizations of active citizenship as geographically informed and how these vary according to where they live, thus challenging the dominant assumption that (active) citizenship means the same everywhere (see also Staeheli et al., 2012). This comparative perspective could not have been possible to the same extent had I taken the nation-state (Norway/Denmark) as the main unit of analysis. That said, this study does not question the relevance of the nation-state as a key community of political membership. My intention is merely to point to what may be obscured by a lens that foregrounds some

scales of participation over others (see also Horst et al., 2020). My multi-sited approach complements citizenship geographers de Koning et al. (2015), whose study inquires “by whom and at what levels of scale subjects are governed and from which sites [...] citizenship agendas are produced and negotiated” (p. 126). Rather than assuming the nation-state as the only actor in ‘disseminating’ active citizenship norms, my research design aims to capture the ways that people embedded within place-based communities participate in the (re)production and contestation as well as resistance of these norms.

The localities selected for this research are Røa, Tøyen and Holmlia in Oslo, and Sydhavn and Østerbro in Copenhagen. These localities were purposefully selected in order to work with manageable territorial units that are diverse in the socio-economic composition and ethnic and religious backgrounds of their residents. They were therefore not only sites for ethnographic fieldwork, but also entry points for diverse sampling and recruitment of research participants. The areas score very differently in terms of levels of education, income, employment rates, voting patterns and other relevant indicators. Moreover, all localities, except Holmlia and Røa, were undergoing substantial regeneration led by the municipality during the time I conducted fieldwork.²²

Oslo has historically been a class-divided city, with poorer living conditions in the east and better conditions in the west, which now increasingly coincides with the percentage of residents with backgrounds from Africa and Asia (Ljunggren, 2017). The centre of town displays a similar east-west division, combined with specific inner-city challenges. Tøyen and Holmlia are both situated on the east side of Oslo, while Røa is located on the west side of Oslo. Copenhagen is divided along similar lines,

²² Some individuals seemed particularly willing to participate in my study as an opportunity to share their opinions on the area regeneration process in their neighbourhoods.

where Sydhavn²³ is among the poorest districts in Copenhagen with a high level of unemployment, while Østerbro is among the wealthiest districts in Copenhagen. The two districts' composition of people with backgrounds from Africa and Asia, as well as the class background of the residents of these districts, differ significantly.²⁴

It is important to note that the purpose of conducting fieldwork in different areas was not to systematically compare people's civic engagement in the various localities, but rather to use these localities as *a starting point* to explore people's geographically situated understandings of active citizenship. Due to the challenges of conducting research in large areas, I focused my research on particular parts of these localities. This is worthy of attention in order to avoid homogenizing the localities and to recognize the diversity within them. This is particularly important in the case of Sydhavn, a district which has undergone considerable changes and expansion during recent years.

Sydhavn consists of a physically separated 'new' part and 'old' part, where the former is home to residents with affluent backgrounds while the latter is home to predominantly working class and poorer residents. I have chosen to focus solely on the older part of Sydhavn in my research (i.e. the area west of Engehøvevej and Sydhavnsgade, including the area around Mozarts Plads). This is due to several reasons. First, the newer parts of Sydhavn are mostly populated by residents who have not lived in Sydhavn for many years. Also, the older and newer parts of Sydhavn each have their own distinct culture, making it problematic to study both parts as one, especially considering that the residents in the 'old' part expressed aversion towards the residents in the 'new Sydhavn', claiming that they have no relation to them

²³ Sydhavn (or Sydhavnen) is the colloquial name for the district Kongens Enghave. My interlocutors rarely used the official name of their district. Hence, I use the common name Sydhavn throughout this dissertation.

²⁴ Whereas Tøyen, Røa and Holmlia in Oslo can be defined as *boroughs* that are located within different districts (Bydel Gamle Oslo, Bydel Vestre Aker and Bydel Søndre Nordstrand, respectively), Sydhavn and Østerbro in Copenhagen can be classified as *districts*.

whatsoever. In fact, one resident from ‘old Sydhavn’ believed that the two parts should not be even sharing the same postal code. Lastly, the area regeneration programme has been focused solely on the old part of the district, and it was therefore interesting for me to use that as an entry point to conduct fieldwork. Thus, when I mention the locality of Sydhavn in my research, I am referring exclusively to the older part of the district.

A ‘demigrantized’ recruitment and analytical approach

Another way to decouple active citizenship from methodological nationalism is through employing a ‘demigrantized’ approach to recruitment of research participants. Dahinden (2016) proposes this approach as a strategy to re-orient the unit of analysis and investigation from the migrant population to parts of the whole population, which obviously includes migrants and ethnic minorities. Since the aim of my study is to explore how active citizenship norms are implicated in dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in the Norwegian and Danish societies, and how power structures shape people’s lived experiences as active citizens, I did not purposefully target any group based on characteristics such as ethnic background, religion, gender, age, ability, or class. While I acknowledge the existence of unequal power relations between minority and majority populations in Norway and Denmark, my study seeks to not reproduce these categories in my data collection and analysis. This also means that rather than selecting participants on the basis of assumed identity-markers, and assuming that these impact their civic engagement, I treated people’s social positions in my analysis as framed and emergent, rather than externally defined and fixed, in line with West and Fenstermaker’s (1995) interpretation of intersectionality. Moreover, by using a ‘demigrantized’ approach, I have avoided the ‘normalization’ of majoritized positions and the ‘ethnicization’ of minoritized individuals (Valentine, 2007), while making visible how dominant perspectives on active citizenship are also

contested and resisted by those with an ethnic majoritized background who also carry other markers of ‘difference’, such as disability or working class identity.

The fieldwork process

I conducted fieldwork between April 2015 and June 2016 in Oslo and Copenhagen. The aim of my fieldwork has been to understand the ways in which people subscribe to, challenge, and resist active citizenship norms, and how their understandings of civic responsibility are shaped by their life experiences and the places in which they are embedded. To reiterate, my fieldwork consisted of 74 interviews (including 3 walking interviews 14 expert interviews) and 11 focus group discussions with 123 participants, in addition to participant observations.

I spent the first eight months of fieldwork collecting 42 interviews, three focus group discussions, and participant observations in Oslo. The last six months were spent in Copenhagen, where I obtained 32 interviews and six focus group discussions, along with participant observations.²⁵ During these last six months, I also returned briefly to Oslo and facilitated two additional focus group discussions. In addition to formal interviews, I had informal conversations with four individuals who had knowledge on the selected localities and who also functioned as mediators (or gatekeepers) in the field: two in Oslo and two in Copenhagen. All interviews were conducted by me.

The interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in Norwegian and Danish, with the exception of two interviews which were conducted fully in English, two in Arabic and three interviews where the interlocutor shifted between English and

²⁵ See Table 1 in Appendix 4 for a numerical overview of my data.

Norwegian/Danish. The data was transcribed in the original language, and only the parts that were integrated into the dissertation were translated into English.

Research assistance

Given the extensiveness of my dataset, I delegated most of the data transcribing and coding to research assistants. I engaged five research assistants who were all recruited on the background of their knowledge, experience and availability, and upon recommendations from colleagues.²⁶ They were encouraged to write their reflections on the data that they transcribed or coded, thus contributing to the preliminary analysis of the data. The fact that these research assistants were differently positioned in the Norwegian and/or Danish society enabled me to access a diversity of insights on the data as well.

The role of August Schwensen in particular has been integral for my research for several reasons. First, I struggled in recruiting people for particularly the focus group discussions in Denmark, due to my limited network there compared to Norway. Second, although the Danish and Norwegian languages share many similarities in written form, they differ substantially in oral form. Consequently, I initially experienced some challenges in understanding everything that was articulated in the group setting.²⁷ August was therefore helpful in the oral translation of words and expressions that I did not fully comprehend.

²⁶ Four of the five research assistants transcribed a substantial part of the data (I transcribed 6 interviews), while one assisted in the coding of the Danish data. The research assistants are Haben Helene Habte (transcription of Norwegian data), Teresa Marko Klev (transcription of Norwegian data), Ida Roland Birkvad (coding of Danish data), Sundus Osman (transcription of Norwegian data and recruitment of participants for two focus groups in Oslo), and August Schwensen (transcription of Danish data, recruitment of participants for focus groups and assistance in conducting focus group discussions in Copenhagen). August's primary role during the discussions was taking notes, as well as operating the recording device and dealing with practical matters. After each focus group, we had a 'de-briefing' where we shared our reflections on the discussions.

²⁷ This challenge was less pertinent in the one-on-one interviews.

Earlier in this chapter, I reflected on my own positionality in the production of my data. Following Gupta (2014) and Middleton and Cons (2014), I believe it is equally important to consider the ways my research assistants shaped the ethnographic knowledge in this study. Gupta (2014) claims that in qualitative data collection, the distinction between ‘data collection’ and ‘interpretation’ is never clear-cut, as there are different rounds of interpretative work that go into the making of an ethnographic work. As such, data is always “interpretative, relational, affective, and contextual” (Ibid., p. 398). This means that my research assistants have co-produced my ethnographic data through selecting whom I spoke to, the information that was conveyed to the participant at the time of recruitment, and how the data has been coded (Gupta, 2014; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Middleton & Cons, 2014).

The research assistants’ memorandum notes have nudged my analytical attention in specific directions. For example, although the Danish and Norwegian contexts are highly similar, subtle differences exist which were not always easy for me as a single researcher to spot. Here, the memos of August have been helpful given his knowledge on the Danish context. However, his positionality as an ‘insider’ might have also led to ‘blind spots’. Thus, what he chose to reflect on and what he did *not* reflect on have contributed to shaping the data analysis.

Recruitment strategies

Among the 123 participants recruited for this study, 64 are females and 59 are males, while 66 have an ethnic majoritized background and 57 have an ethnic minoritized background. They were from all age groups ranging from 17 to 74, with the majority

lying within the age bracket 45–65. 114 held either Norwegian or Danish citizenship, five had a permanent residence permit and four had a temporary residence.²⁸

I used multiple recruitment channels simultaneously and chose to include all who were willing to participate in my research, while making sure I included people of different backgrounds. My recruitment approach can therefore be described as simultaneously strategic and flexible. I spent a considerable amount of time in each locality, ‘hanging out’ in the streets and in different arenas.²⁹ Some of the people I approached in public spaces were open to giving me an interview, especially those who sat alone and had more time than others, such as pensioners and people who were unemployed. This approach, which I elaborate on further in the chapter, proved to be useful in ensuring that my sample also included individuals whose engagement I did not have presumption about.

I started with a basic mapping of each locality. One way of gaining valuable access to the neighbourhoods was then to collect a wide network of contacts through personal networks and the networks of friends and colleagues. Another was through participant observation and ‘hanging out’ at central locations. This gave me a broad starting point to employ snowball sampling. Some of the research participants referred me directly to people they knew in their neighbourhood, or, if they were engaged in a local association, they invited me to conduct a focus group after one of their meetings. I also used snowball sampling to gain access to participants in the localities where my own network proved to be limited (such as in Røa), and as a strategy to reach those outside of local associations.

²⁸ Of the 123 participants, 98 were recruited by me and 25 by Sundus and August.

²⁹ I also attempted to recruit participants online, through posting about my research on for instance Facebook groups and Facebook pages of specific neighbourhoods or associations, but to no avail.

I also sought out professionals working in the district council (*bydel*), in the area regeneration projects (i.e. urban planners, anthropologists, social workers) and in volunteer- and leisure time associations. In addition to being experts on the selected localities, they also functioned as mediators leading me to other potential participants.³⁰ The perspectives of these experts were of utmost importance for my research, as they not only helped me gain knowledge on the different localities, but also provided me with insights on the ways they interact with notions of good citizenship expressed in policy discourses.

Although it was relatively easy to recruit for one-on-one interviews, I nevertheless stumbled upon challenges when recruiting for focus group discussions (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999; Wilkinson, 1998). One challenge was ‘grouping’ people from various arenas. This was something I attempted in the beginning to ensure diversity of backgrounds and opinions within each focus group. However, it proved to be rather time-consuming, as people who initially agreed to participate often cancelled last minute. This may have been due to the perception that participation in a focus group discussion requires more ‘performance’ than in an individual interview. Another reason might have been the proposed length of the discussion. Whereas the invitation for an interview was for a duration of one to two hours, participation in a focus group required the interlocutors to set aside at least two hours.

In dealing with these challenges, I decided to seek out established groups (see also Shenton & Hayter, 2004). These groups consisted of individuals who were active in a specific arena, such as a neighbourhood association, or individuals who were friends. I came into contact with these groups either through a gatekeeper or through my

³⁰ The term mediator is borrowed from Kristensen and Ravn (2015) and refers to a person who uses their formal or informal position and relationships to facilitate contact between a researcher and potential interlocutors. As opposed to a ‘gatekeeper’, a term which is more commonly used in ethnographic research, the mediator is considered as part of the population under study (Ibid.).

research assistants, or through a person whom I had already interviewed.³¹ In some cases, however, the focus groups were not pre-established groups, and here the help of the experts who acted as mediators was crucial.

Seeking out established groups proved to be a practical strategy for several reasons. First, it speeded up the recruitment process and increased the probability for participation, as the interlocutors were already acquainted with one another and with the gatekeeper or mediator. Second, it saved time and energy in organization, as most of these groups had already scheduled a day, time, and place to meet. Third, it appeared to considerably lower the threshold for active participation in the discussion, as the participants seemed to be comfortable in exchanging opinions and experiences with others whom they were already familiar with.

Methods

In this section, I offer a concise description of each of the different methods employed in this study. My approach draws on a combination of semi-structured interviews, walking interviews, expert interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations.³² All participants received an information sheet about the project prior to each interview and focus group discussion.³³ The sheet explained the purpose of the study, the interview procedure and the implications of participating in the study. Upon meeting the participants, I explained the interview and focus group process, stressing that I was interested in learning about their own understandings of civic engagement, and that there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. Some asked what I meant by ‘civic

³¹ This implies that some participants were recruited twice: once for an interview, and once for a focus group discussion. However, these were not counted twice in the total number of participants.

³² See Table 2 in Appendix 4 for an overview of the methods.

³³ See Appendices 5–6.

engagement', or whether I was specifically interested in volunteerism. In these instances, I responded by explaining that I was not interested in any specific type of civic engagement, and that I was keen on learning about how they define civic engagement in their own words. Those who participated in an expert interview were given the same sheet but were informed that the purpose of the interview was not to know about their personal experiences, but to learn about their work in the locality.

With the informed consent of all participants, the interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and later transcribed, while impressions from participant observations were noted in my fieldwork diary. All participants were assured that the data would be anonymized and treated with confidentiality.

Semi-structured interviews

As I was particularly interested in exploring the relationship between people's lived experiences and their understandings of active citizenship, I drew inspiration from personal narrative methods when I conducted semi-structured interviews. This methodological style, which goes by various names, such as life story, life history, and biographical narrative, is used to examine varieties of individual selfhood and agency from below (Maynes, Pierce, & Laslett, 2008).

While firmly rooted in the field of sociology, personal narrative methods are also used in a range of other disciplines, including feminist studies, to centre the voices of marginalized people and groups. Feminist scholars employ this methodological style to highlight the diversity of women's and sexual minorities' experiences and to emphasize their voices in subjects where they have previously been overlooked (see for instance Roseneil et al., 2012). Researchers within migration and poverty studies also use the method to reveal the importance of temporalities and life trajectories (Ojermark, 2007). More importantly, personal narrative methods have the potential to

bridge micro and macro processes, allowing us to understand the individual's life history in relation to the social, economic, and political context in which they are embedded (Ibid.). Hence, this method can be used to explore the interplay between agency and structure in order to understand how people come to know their options, how they use their past experiences, the impact of emotions or values on their choices, and how they themselves recognize their capacity to act (Maynes et al., 2008). As such, personal narrative analysis is a complementary methodological tool for studying lived citizenship as it sees individuals as both unique and connected to social and cultural worlds and relationships that impact their life choices and stories (Ibid.).

I conducted an open form of semi-structured interviews, inspired by the personal narrative methods, which generated a diversity of voices and perspectives in my material. My approach entails that I did not decide beforehand the questions I would pose, but rather worked with an interview guide where I highlighted a few topics, such as upbringing, particular moments or phases in life, and what drives or motivates one's civic engagement.³⁴ This open approach to semi-structured interviewing gave the interviewees the possibility to steer the development of their stories and talk about what was important to them, while allowing me to elicit the *when, where and why* of their self-defined civic engagement practices. I commenced each interview with the question "*tell me the story of your life*", as a way to elicit understandings of civic engagement beyond specific practices and arenas. A few individuals were unsure where to start when I asked them this question. To that, I responded with "*you can start from the beginning, or wherever you feel it's right*". On the (rare) occasions when participants seemed to resist the opening question of the interview or did not talk at length about their life, I employed a more structured approach to the interview. In these instances, I used probing questions that encouraged the interviewee to tell me more about their backgrounds and upbringing, what motivates them to engage, how they define civic engagement and where they engage.

³⁴ See interview guides in Appendices 7–8.

This approach to interviewing complemented my understanding of intersectionality. Since personal narratives build from the individual and the personal rather than a cluster of variables (Ibid.), it allowed me to treat social categories as emergent. For instance, rather than assuming that the person's gender or ethnic identity affects their understanding or practice of civic engagement, I allowed the participants to talk about experiences that were important to them. These experiences would often centre on one or several identities. For example, some women talked about upbringing in terms of having been *a girl*: how they were raised by their parents *as girls* in a way that shaped their civic engagement today, or how they wish to raise their daughters in a way that would encourage them to become active citizens. Others would mention how their experiences of poverty and disability shape their everyday lives, and how these experiences impact their understandings of contribution and participation. This also entails that not all topics were equally covered in every interview. For instance, in the cases where the interviewee would talk about their own or their family's international migration history, I would ask follow-up questions to explore whether these experiences have shaped the person's understandings of active citizenship. As such, every interview is unique, as each life trajectory is, yet they all revolved around common themes.

The interviews lasted about 1–3 hours each, depending on how the conversations flowed and how much the interviewee shared about themselves. At the end of the interview, participants were asked to fill out an attribute form to make sure that I have recruited from a wide range of backgrounds.³⁵ The form also included a section where they could write a few words about the ways and places they engage. Although this form was used primarily to keep track of my sampling process, it sometimes (and unexpectedly) complemented the interview. An interesting example is the interview with Nadia.

³⁵ See Appendices 11–12.

Throughout the interview, Nadia recounted her life story, focusing especially on her migration history and her past experiences of loneliness and exclusion. She talked about her initiative of establishing an informal local “*Pakistani women’s group*” as her civic engagement.³⁶ Towards the end of the interview, I asked Nadia to fill out the attribute form, where, to my surprise, she listed a series of activities, including formal volunteering, board membership in several associations, and participation in public debates. I wondered why she did not mention this impressive list of activities during the interview, to which Nadia responded:

Nadia: Because engagement can be on several levels [...] one can contribute in different ways, right? So I have these activities, but I can also help in other ways... like I told you, to me, it feels more important to help a single mother who is having a hard time understanding the system than to talk about the organizations that I am a board member of, because [the latter] is quite familiar. You can read in the newspapers what this and that organization does, but you do not read about the 28-year-old woman with three kids who has never been outside her apartment, who does not know where to go or what to do [...]. I remember when I was in that situation myself.

Nadia’s quote points to several important methodological insights. It shows the value in focusing on the participant’s life experiences, as they are given the opportunity to share deeply personal experiences that may have shaped their understandings of civic responsibility. More importantly, this example demonstrates the usefulness of not having a predefinition of active citizenship, which opened up a space for Nadia to talk about the activities that were important to *her*. There is a possibility that had I asked Nadia to explicitly talk about her civic engagement, rather than her life story, our

³⁶ I refer to this group as ‘informal’ because it was not officially registered as part of any association and was established and run by the initiative of Nadia.

conversation might have been directed towards the more formal activities which she noted on the form.

My general experience is that the people I spoke with were eager to share with me their opinions and intimate details of their lives, and that they also found it to be an enjoyable process. In some cases, however, starting the interview with “*tell me the story of your life*” seemed to make some people feel uncomfortable or exposed. One of them is Hanne, who stated: “*I thought this was an interview about civic engagement – not about myself*”. Throughout the interview, Hanne struggled with articulating her motivations behind her civic engagement against racism in the Norwegian society, claiming that it is “*just natural*” for her to believe in justice and equality. A few days after the interview, I received an e-mail from Hanne in which she shared with me some personal reflections:

Hanne: I did not have time to think so much in advance [of the interview] and a lot of things just happen without one having a conscious relationship to them... when you asked what it was that motivated me to engage, I was convinced that it was just the way it was. But I think my perspective... wanting an anti-racist and inclusive society, has to do with my children. I remember at one point I thought that my children should definitely not accuse me of not doing anything. It was actually for them that I decided to do whatever I could to create a better society that was also safe for them. They are dark, they grew up during the 80s, there was a lot of racism, ignorance and weird things at that time. I didn't think of this until after [the interview].

This example demonstrates how focusing on the person's life experiences contributed to a reflection process in my interviewees, either during or after the interview, giving them an opportunity to see the connections between their understandings of contribution and responsibility and their lived experiences.

Walking interviews

The walking interview, or go-along interview, is

a form of in-depth qualitative interview method that, as the name implies, is conducted by researchers accompanying individual informants on outings in their familiar environments, such as a neighbourhood or larger local area (Carpiano, 2009, p. 264).

It can therefore be considered as a hybrid between a personal interview and participant observation (Jones, Bunce, Evans et al., 2008). The choice of this method was not planned and was initiated by the research participants themselves. Although I only carried out three walking interviews, I believe this technique merits attention, as it provided me with the opportunity to learn about the participants' relationship to their neighbourhoods, and how this produces meaningful understandings of people's everyday citizenship practices (Wood, 2014b).

All walking interviews took place in Sydhavn,³⁷ giving me the impression that those who initiated the walk wished to introduce me to the positive things their district has to offer, perhaps as an attempt to counter the negative reputation that it suffers in media outlets.³⁸ The interview commenced in the home of the interviewees and continued outside, allowing them to go about their daily routines while giving me an interview, such as walking their dog or child. Although the participants determined the direction of our walk, they often asked me whether I had visited a certain area. If my response was “no”, they would instantly take me there. These ‘walk-and-talks’ gave me far more insight on the locality than a sedentary interview and independent participant observation.

³⁷ The reason for this is that none of the interviewees in the other localities asked to go for a walk while giving an interview. This does not mean, however, that the understandings and practices of active citizenship among participants from other localities were not shaped within the context of their neighbourhoods. Yet, the interlocutors in Sydhavn demonstrated a more *reflexive* relationship to their places, as I demonstrate in Chapter 8.

³⁸ See Chapter 8 for a detailed contextualization on Sydhavn.

Expert interviews

A total of 14 expert interviews were conducted: three in Tøyen, two in Holmlia, five in Sydhavn and four in Østerbro. No expert interviews were carried out in Røa as I failed to establish contact with any experts in that locality. Eight of these experts worked in various publicly funded civil society or local associations, five were employed in the municipality (*bydel*) and one was an independent author who frequently writes on issues of social equality in Oslo. Three of those employed in the municipality worked specifically on the area regeneration in Sydhavn and Østerbro as urban planners or anthropologists. The interviews were conducted as informal and recorded conversations. I did not use an interview guide, but informally explored the individual's knowledge on the area. This exploration was based on prior participant observation, which I elaborate on below.

Since the experts were presented with the information sheet on my project prior to the interview, they were well aware of the objectives of my research and openly shared their take on my research topic from their own professional standpoints. I soon realized that several of them, most notably those working in the municipality, talked about active citizenship in ways that aligned with the policy formulations on active citizenship presented in the introduction to this dissertation. The expert interviews were therefore useful in providing insight on understandings of active citizenship from an 'expert's perspective', as I discuss in Chapters 5 and 8. These experts' perspectives provided interesting points of contrast and comparison to residents' understandings of active citizenship, adding another dimension to the contestations of active citizenship norms, which I also explored through the method of focus groups.

Focus group discussions

The 11 focus groups with 53 participants were carried out with the intention of teasing out frictions, disagreement, and consensus on the meaning of active citizenship. This was done by presenting the participants with various excerpts from policy documents on active citizenship³⁹ and encouraging them to share their thoughts and opinions about these. The participants were informed in advance that the aim of the focus group discussion was not consensus, but rather to bring out as many differing views as possible, thus lowering the threshold for articulating views that may oppose those of other participants. My role during the discussions was that of a facilitator, ensuring that every participant had the chance to talk and share thoughts on their fellow participants' opinions and on the policy quotes.

Each focus group had four to eight participants and lasted about 1.5–2 hours. All discussions took place at either PRIO, a community house or at the premises of the local association to which the groups belonged, or at the private residence of my research assistant in Copenhagen. To maintain confidentiality, I do not reveal the names of the arenas from which the focus group participants were recruited.

The discussions comprised two to three parts, depending on the time and group size.⁴⁰ The first part focused on learning more about the discussants' neighbourhoods and how they understand active citizenship within the context of their everyday lives. This was done by handing out post-it notes, where discussants were asked to write how and why they are active/engaged. The discussants were then asked to place their sticky notes onto two large sheets representing two categories. The first sheet included the sticky notes that related to motivations for civic engagement, while the second sheet

³⁹ See Appendices 2–3.

⁴⁰ See focus group guides in Appendices 9–10.

included those notes that related to arenas for civic engagement.⁴¹ Attention was drawn to the scale of the participants' citizenship orientations by dividing the second sheet into five 'zones': home, local/neighbourhood, city, national and global/international. Each person was then encouraged to explain what they wrote on their post-it notes and, for the second sheet, where they chose to place them in relation to the five zones.

The second part of the discussion centred on the policy quotes. Depending on the time, the discussants were asked to reflect on two to three quotes. The quotes in the Norwegian and Danish interview guides differed. For instance, whereas I found definitions for 'active' and 'passive' in the reviewed Danish official report on active citizenship, the Norwegian official reports lacked such explicit definitions, and provided only examples of what might constitute active participation in the Norwegian society. I therefore attempted to steer the discussions in ways that 'evened out' the differences between the two sets of quotes. One way of doing this was to focus on the participants' thoughts on the *arenas* that are defined in the policy quotes as desirable for active citizenship (as these were highly similar in both sets of quotes), and how these contrast to their own post-it notes. Another way was to juxtapose in my analysis their experiences of participation with the policies' aims to create equal opportunities for participation. Also, when time allowed, I asked the groups to explicitly define the 'active citizen' (*aktiv medborger*) and the 'passive citizen' (*passiv medborgerer*). These different techniques made visible and elicited collective knowledge and experiences in the group. As Kitzinger (1994) notes, focus groups privilege the participants' language, concepts, and frameworks for understanding the world. An example of this is a focus group discussion in Østerbro (Chapter 4), where 'respectability' (*ordentlighed*) was reiterated as a fundamental characteristic of good citizenship.

⁴¹ In addition to the sheets and post-it notes, I also actively used a flipchart or a whiteboard (when available) to make visible the different concepts of active citizenship that were elicited within the group.

As the selected quotes were primarily extracted from policy reports on the integration of immigrants, I was concerned that the discussants would focus on the civic engagement of immigrants, rather than on their own experiences, regardless of whether or not they self-identified as immigrants. I therefore tweaked the quotes where the term ‘immigrants’ was used, replacing it with ‘all’ or ‘some groups’. In doing this, I gained insight on how different identity categories, such as place identities, class identities, and disabilities, shape conceptualizations of active citizenship. This was also a conscious ‘demigranticizing’ strategy that I employed to avoid reproducing the problematization of immigrants. However, some participants did talk about what they perceived as a lack of participation, or the ‘wrong kind’ of participation, among the immigrant population, as I discuss in Chapter 5. Yet, I believe that slightly tweaking the policy quotes has contributed to generating opinions and perspectives beyond the migrant/citizen binary.

The advantage of using focus group discussions as a method was particularly evident in their capacity to generate contestations of active citizenship norms. Wilkinson (1998) points out that since focus groups involve the interaction of group participants *with each other*, the participants

often assist the researcher by asking questions of each other (perhaps more searching than those the researcher might have dared ask); by contradicting and disagreeing with each other (in a manner which, coming from the researcher, might have seemed authoritarian); and by pointing to apparent contradictions in each other’s accounts (often in a manner which the “empathetic” and “sensitive” researcher might feel to be inappropriate coming from her) (p. 118).

An example is the discussion in Chapter 5 among five high school students, who had a heated debate on what constitutes a societal contribution. Since this group of young people knew each other well, they did not shy away from challenging one another’s opinions, making my role as a facilitator into an almost passive one. The dominant

voices in the group assumed dichotomist positions in the beginning of the discussion, but were eventually challenged by the opinions of the other participants, who nudged them towards a more inclusive definition of the active citizen. In my analysis, I included lengthy passages from the focus groups to shed light on the interactive nature of the discussions. These passages offer unique insights into the relational aspects of data production, and the processes by which meanings and knowledges are constructed through interactions with the other participants. As such, the method of focus group discussions is highly aligned with feminist ethical concerns about power relations within the field, offering the possibility to shift the balance of power from the researcher to the research participants (Ibid.).

Participant observations

Ethnographic fieldnotes constitute an important part of my data and were collected through being a participating observer in the different localities. Participant observation entails a dialectic of participation and observation (Passaro, 1997). I employed this method for different purposes. The first purpose was for ensuring a diverse sample of research participants. The second purpose was to become familiar with the particularities of each locality and how these may shape people's practices and understandings of civic engagement. The third purpose was to minimize the power relation between myself and the participants.

As my research design did not entail a preselection of arenas for civic engagement (i.e. civic or local associations), it was important for me to spend time 'hanging out' in each of the localities for the purpose of recruiting people from a wide range of arenas. The arenas included cafés, libraries, metro stations, shops, pubs, parks, squares, community centres, churches, meetings in neighbourhood/local associations, and local events (the latter were sometimes organized by residents and sometimes by professionals working in the municipality and area regeneration projects).

The second purpose (becoming familiar with the localities) complemented the expert interviews and statistical reports. Through ‘hanging out’ in the various arenas, I talked to people who were not necessarily recruited for interviews or focus group discussions, but whose valuable perspectives I noted in my fieldwork diary, which went on to shape my analysis. Moreover, some of my participant observations were virtual. I followed certain Facebook groups from each locality and searched for events that were posted through Facebook, many of which I attended. This also allowed me to develop an *impression* of the (nature of) activities that took place in each locality, and the ways this may have shaped people’s understandings and practices of active citizenship.⁴² Whereas for Østerbro I found several events and pages that focused on the environment, such as recycling and common gardening, for Røa, events and pages seemed to be more preoccupied with local sports activities, while in the case of Tøyen, Sydhavn and Holmlia, my impression of the events and pages was that of bringing people together and promoting a local identity (these impressions were also confirmed through my conversations with experts).

The third purpose (minimizing the power relations in the field) proved to be particularly important in developing trust between myself and the participants. For instance, expressing that I had participated in a neighbourhood event, or that I was familiar with what is ‘going on’ in the neighbourhood, seemed to facilitate some of the conversations and generate excitement among participants.

In addition to general participant observations, I conducted more focused observations in one particular arena, namely SydhavnsCompagniet (SC), which I discovered during one of my first days of walking around in Sydhavn. SC is a small non-governmental organization that works with promoting the rights and participation of marginalized residents in Sydhavn and giving them the opportunity to be volunteers.⁴³ I volunteered

⁴² I emphasize the word *impression* as I did not perform a systematic approach to online ethnography.

⁴³ I introduce the case study in more detail in Chapter 7.

at SC between February and June 2016. Together with other volunteers, I assisted with various tasks connected to the centre, such as cooking, cleaning, and gardening. I also joined meetings, social activities, and events. Many of the volunteers were in vulnerable life situations. At the time of the interview, some were long-term unemployed and received social support and some suffered from (mental) health challenges and loneliness. Therefore, my role as a volunteer and as someone who visited the centre at least once a week proved to be key in building trust and a connection between myself and the people I interviewed.

The analytical process

My research insights are based on the analysis of the transcribed interviews and focus group discussions, as well as the ethnographic fieldnotes. The analysis was conducted in all phases of the research – starting in the field and continuing as I coded the transcribed material and while reading literature and writing. The coding of the data was exploratory, yet systematic and detailed. I took an open approach in the beginning, identifying as many themes as possible from the interview/focus group guides and the pilot interview transcriptions. These themes were then structured into a codebook in the software NVivo. As my fieldwork progressed and I read more data material, my coding became more focused, adding sub-categories to each theme.⁴⁴ While coding the transcripts, I typed reflections in the form of memorandum notes in NVivo for each transcription, which were also coded.⁴⁵ The ethnographic fieldnotes, however, were not coded, but they nevertheless constituted an important part of my overall reflections. Writing memos and fieldnotes was the first step in moving from raw data and categories to linking them to other ideas, theories, and concepts.

⁴⁴ Each theme and sub-category included a description in NVivo, which allowed the research assistant who coded the Danish data (Ida Birkvad) to have a good understanding of the codebook. Ida was encouraged to add new sub-categories where she saw fit. Continuous dialogue between myself and Ida ensured that we were both on the same page concerning how the Danish data was coded.

⁴⁵ I also copied my research assistants' reflections in memorandum notes and coded these.

My analytical process entailed a constant back-and-forth between data collection, coding, (memo-)writing and the scholarly literature. This means that the research questions and chapter topics that emerged were highly inspired by my research interests in feminist citizenship scholarship. At the same time, I maintained an open and curious mind, allowing myself to be guided by emic concepts, perspectives and topics that emerged from the data. An example of this can be seen in Chapters 4 and 8, where I explore the emic concepts of *overskud* ('surplus'), *trygghet* ('security') and *rummelighet* ('spaciousness'). Another example is my use of feminist perspectives within citizenship geography, a strand of literature which I discovered after re-reading my coded material. This analytical approach is in line with one of the central aims of this research: namely, to move beyond narrow and predefined conceptions of active citizenship and understand how individuals conceptualize active citizenship through their subjective experiences and in their own words.

When conducting qualitative research, it is generally advised to query one's pre-knowledge and positionality. My positionality as a minoritized woman in Norway and my interest in questions relating to dynamics of inclusion and exclusion has undoubtedly shaped the choices of conceptual and theoretical perspectives made throughout the analysis. These choices allowed me to grasp the constitutive role of lived experiences, places, discourses, and norms in people's conceptualizations of active citizenship.

Ethical considerations

Throughout the research process, I have strived to comply with the ethical norms and guidelines for conducting qualitative research as laid out by Norway's National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences (NESH, 2006). I followed the standard approval procedures of the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) to

ensure that necessary measures were taken to secure research participants' confidentiality during data collection and in research outputs (e.g. presentations and dissertation), and to ensure safe computer storage of the data (both voice-recordings and transcripts). I strived to ensure the anonymity of the research participants by giving them pseudonyms and omitting the arenas where they were recruited from (e.g. associations or political parties).

However, ensuring full anonymity while also presenting rich and detailed personal narratives presented a particular challenge for my research, as removing details would inevitably also have removed contextual information that has potential value to the research and the reader. For instance, since the localities constituted a central aspect of people's understandings of active citizenship, I often found it necessary to include which neighbourhood the participant resides or works in *when it seemed relevant* to their story and the argument I was making in the text. Therefore, even though I assigned my participants pseudonyms, contextual identifiers in their stories remain, making disclosure a risk. In these cases, I chose to either omit, change, or alter what I considered non-essential characteristics (i.e. gender, age, country of immigration, locality). I also chose to assign several pseudonyms to the same interlocutor in the cases where using the same interview more than once posed a risk of disclosure. In the case study of SydhavnsCompagniet, however, I chose not to assign pseudonyms to the employees, opting instead to refer to them as 'Employee 1', and 'Employee 2', and so on. This is to avoid assigning them any potential identity marker associated with a name that could risk disclosing their gender or possibly their identity.

Another challenge when writing about people's personal narratives is the issue of representation. A few interviewees demonstrated emotional vulnerability, sadness or anger when recounting painful memories from the past or difficult experiences that they were undergoing at the time of the interview. I found it important to include some

of these affects in my analysis, as they clearly demonstrate how people's emotions are implicated in their experiences of citizenship (Ho, 2009; Wood, 2013). In such cases, I asked the participant for permission to use these parts of their stories.

Lastly, a crucial ethical dilemma worth considering is the risk of reducing individuals into the categories of good, failed and tolerated citizen – categories which they did not use to describe themselves. My intention with using Anderson's (2013, 2014) concepts is to expose the power dynamics involved in the production of dominant active citizenship norms which exclude or make invisible certain kinds of practices and characteristics while making others desirable. By using these analytical concepts to understand how these norms are reflected, contested, and resisted in my material, I may have unintentionally alienated some individuals while privileging others, thereby reproducing the very power dynamics that both they and I wish to challenge.

Moreover, as discussed earlier, given the unequal power relation between myself as a researcher and the participants, and given the normativity of the concept of active citizenship, there is a risk that some participants may have refrained from being critical of my research topic. These dilemmas could not be fully resolved given the topic and aim of my study: namely, to shed light on the power dynamics involved in defining some as 'active' and others as 'passive'. However, I hope that I have used my privilege as a researcher to make visible how individuals, especially the minoritized, contribute to society in ways that are concealed in dominant discourses. The ensuing analysis hopefully demonstrates that people are not merely submissive recipients of active citizenship norms that frame some as good and others as not-good-enough, but that they also participate in the reproduction, contestations and resistance of these norms, thus widening our own scholarly conceptions of participation and contribution.

4. Characteristics of the good citizen

“My role is to make sure that my daughters have the best starting point to become proper citizens; that they have the possibility to develop their abilities... Make them into good citizens” – Carl

Many of the people who participated in this study emphasized certain characteristics that they deem as desirable and necessary for active citizenship. They believed that to be able to contribute to society and be *recognized* as a good citizen, one must develop these characteristics from childhood. In the first chapter of my analysis, I explore what the emphasis on certain characteristics may tell us about how the idealized good citizen is imagined. I argue that these characteristics, while they may seem ‘positive’, also involve boundary-making that requires defining some groups as less desirable. This boundary-making is intertwined with hegemonic norms of gender, class, ableism, and ethnicity that privilege certain ways of *being* a citizen. The leading sub-question of this chapter is the following: *What are the characteristics that constitute the idealized good citizen?*

To answer this question, I focus on the themes of childhood and childrearing in my data, drawing out the characteristics that people find important for becoming an active citizen. The first section of this chapter looks at emic concepts related to ideals of *self-sufficiency*, while the second section looks at *respectability* and *gender egalitarianism* as expressions of good and responsible citizenship. In these sections, I draw examples primarily from interviews with parents and child-carers who recount memories of their own upbringing and who talk about raising children to become good and responsible citizens. The third section discusses my findings in the first two sections and argues that my participants’ emphasis of these characteristics renders active citizenship into a differentiating norm that reproduces the boundaries of the community of value.

Growing up with desirable characteristics

Being an active citizen is repeatedly thought of among my research participants as a combination of desirable characteristics that are nurtured from childhood and which enable one to participate in society. These include growing up in a socio-economically resourceful home, receiving emotional support as a child, or being instilled with skills such as independence and confidence. The narratives largely reflect a dominant conviction in the Scandinavian context that a person's entire life is determined during childhood (Bach, 2014). Within this context, parents (and child-carers) are considered as key figures in children's upbringing and as having the main responsibility for the quality of childhood (Dannesboe, Kjær, & Palludan, 2018). Moreover, children and childhood are central aspects of national symbolism in the Scandinavian context, where parents are held accountable for the task of creating future citizens equipped with the 'right' kind of attributes (Berg & Peltola, 2015; Kryger & Ravn, 2009). According to this rationale, whether a person becomes a well-functioning member of society in the future or a burden is determined by the quality of one's upbringing. Below, I introduce a series of emic concepts that emerged from my material, which point to the desirable characteristics that 'ought to be in place' to become, and be recognized as, a contributing member of society.

'Overskud' and 'det lille ekstra'

Overskud and *det lille ekstra* are among the characteristics that were reiterated by my participants as desirable for active citizenship. The Danish emic term *overskud* can be translated as 'surplus', while the Norwegian emic term *det lille ekstra* can be translated as 'something extra'.⁴⁶ Both concepts refer to the accumulation of tangible resources,

⁴⁶ *Overskud* appears to a larger degree in the Danish material compared to the Norwegian. Although the emic term exists in the Norwegian language (*overskudd*), the Norwegian interviewees used other words to describe something similar, such as *det lille ekstra* ('something extra') and *kapasitet* ('capacity', in the form of money, health, time and energy).

such as money, and intangible resources, such as time, good health and energy (Bach, 2014). In her study on parenting in middle-class Danish families, Dil Bach (2014) discusses *overskud* as a central characteristic that parents tie to notions of ‘being civilized’. In a highly similar fashion, my research participants, regardless of their class background, emphasize various types of surplus as necessary for the child to become a contributing and responsible member of society. To demonstrate this, I draw mainly on individual interviews with three fathers: Erik and Magne from Copenhagen and Anwar from Oslo.

Erik works with people who suffer from mental health challenges and drug addiction in the largely socio-economically marginalized borough of Sydhavn. He tells me how his profession as well as being a father to young children has shaped his understanding of active citizenship. Throughout the interview, Erik stressed the importance of growing up with *overskud* as a precondition for participating in society:

Erik: I would say [...] that the more of a normal life people have in their childhood, the bigger the chance that they can contribute [to society]. And what I mean is that, if people have had a childhood where they somehow...where there has been a structure... that they have felt loved, and in one way or another experienced a normal family life. If they reached far, they had jobs, or if they had jobs before they became drug addicts, or before they suffered psychologically, then it's much easier to go back [to being active], because they have overskud. Those who had a bad upbringing, maybe with violence and abuse in childhood, they don't have that inner understanding of what it is [to be active]. It's so hard for them to build that, because they have never known it or felt it [...] it's really important to have this understanding, especially considering what demands one could ask of people. People who have had a quality life and some structures, can be expected to fulfil some demands. But those who never had this... you can't... I mean it makes no sense to demand that they participate equally in society. Other things should be in order first [...].

You don't necessarily have to have mental health challenges or drug addiction [to not have overskud]. It can be other things that you see in this neighbourhood, like... money is always a limitation. It limits the overskud that you feel you have in daily life. Because there are many people who are on social benefits, who can't create a quality life with their children, go to football or amusement parks [...] I mean... those who don't have overskud in their everyday life to do these kinds of things, they never make it. And it's their children who will never do sports, who won't do their schoolwork well, and all these things, you know?

Noor: But what is it that creates overskud to participate in society and what is it that takes it away?

Erik: That's very difficult to say. I mean of course, drug addiction removes overskud. But I also think a lot of it is about having that feeling of self-worth, and the upbringing one has had.

Erik stresses the idea of a 'normal' upbringing with a 'normal' family life. His idea of normality includes growing up in a nuclear family that has financial resources and good (mental) health and is emotionally supportive of the child, characteristics which he groups into the overarching concept of *overskud*. To be an active citizen, according to Erik, requires a *certain kind* of upbringing with the 'right' amount of resources at your disposal. Without that *overskud* from childhood, Erik believes it would be challenging, if not impossible, to be recognized as an active citizen later in life. Magne, a father who resides in the wealthier Østerbro, stresses the same characteristics:

Mange: I really think that a lot of what you give [to society], that you don't get anything in return for – like voluntary work or community work – it comes from having some overskud. It may come from being loved as a child. Having been taken care of or having had role models. It's a resilience... It can be difficult if you are a child of parents with drug addiction, or if you don't have anything that gives you joy... [It can be difficult] to find the overskud to help everyone else, when you yourself have the need for some sort of social mobility. But in reality, overskud really has nothing to do with wealth, it's more like an attitude.

Magne defines *overskud* in terms of feeling loved and cared for from childhood, but unlike Erik, his understanding of *overskud* is somewhat divorced from socio-economic structures. The understanding of *overskud* as an attitude or resilience (something inherent), mirrors a general perspective among those interviewed living in more prosperous areas, where socio-economic differences are less visible. This perspective diverges from that of participants residing in areas where socio-economic differences are more visible, such as Tøyen.

Like many of the residents with a Somali background whom I interviewed in Tøyen, Anwar is highly preoccupied with ameliorating the living conditions of specifically the minoritized Norwegian-Somali community in Tøyen. During the interview, Anwar talked extensively about the racialization and socio-economic exclusion that many Norwegian-Somali parents in Tøyen experience, which he argues has a great impact on their children's future. This experience of exclusion from the larger society takes away surplus – or *det lille ekstra*, in Anwar's words:

Anwar: Tøyen is also quite... people have very low means, they lack det lille ekstra. I can talk about my community: the Somali community. We are overrepresented in the poverty statistics. [The parents] are very scared, very anxious, disappointed. We did not know what to expect of Norway [when we arrived], but at the same time we felt

that we were chased by the media, which has tarnished our image quite badly. That has really set us back as a community [...] not just the media, but also the Child Welfare Services [Barnevernet] explains a lot why the Somali community is the way it is today.

We have somehow built a ‘mental wall’ to the Norwegian society [...] We are afraid of being characterized as the worst people on earth. That has caused us to pull back and just stay there... It’s like our bodies are in Norway, but our souls are somewhere else. Our only hope for support is NAV,⁴⁷ which is not a real support. Statistically, children of parents who have received social support over a long period of time end up at the social office themselves. I see this cycle. My children or other people’s children will end up in NAV because it was okay for mum and dad [...] The Somali people are actually good people, very resourceful and active, but we just lack det lille ekstra.

The challenges Anwar mentions are confirmed by a report published by Open Society Foundation (Horst, Ibrahim, Baumbach et al., 2013), which states that Norwegian-Somalis struggle in gaining access to the labour market. As a large and visible immigrant group, Norwegian-Somalis often bear the brunt of lingering stereotypes and prejudice, which is visible in their negative representations in Norwegian media (Ibid.). The report also discusses the often-problematic relationship between Child Welfare Services and the Norwegian-Somali community, where a lack of trust and misunderstandings occur on both sides. These challenges, according to Anwar, make it difficult for the Norwegian-Somali community to contribute actively to the Norwegian society, and to be recognized as contributing members. Indeed, Stubbergaard (2010) claims that when people are socially excluded, or even viewed with outright suspicion, they often react by mistrusting institutions (or, in Anwar’s words, building a “mental wall”). To be recognized as active citizens, then, Anwar believes that his community needs *det lille ekstra*, a resource that is neither big nor trivial, yet crucial. However,

⁴⁷ Norwegian Labour Welfare and Administration (public welfare agency).

this resource is hard to acquire, as being negatively framed in the public eye makes it difficult to acquire this characteristic in the first place.

'Trygghet' and 'ballast'

A stable and emotionally secure childhood is often brought up by the research participants as a disposition for active citizenship. This is often expressed as memories of a childhood that is remembered as safe, structured and predictable. In their narratives, my participants emphasize affects such love, care and belonging as necessary for active citizenship. Some recalled memories of having received love and support from home, and that this has been decisive for their sense of civic responsibility later in life, while others stress the importance of transferring such affects to children in an effort to 'make' them into future active citizens. A recurring emic concept in my material is *trygghet* ('security'), which is widely used among my Norwegian interviewees, such as Niklas.

A young man in his early 30s, Niklas grew up in a small town in southern Norway, in a family that he describes as "typically middle-class". He talked about his childhood in positive terms as he recalls participating in local leisure time activities as a child. He refers to his parents as being highly supportive and "locally engaged", having inspired in him a sense of confidence, or *trygghet*, which he believes has shaped his ability to take on a leadership role in various volunteering activities as he became an adult:

Niklas: I believe when you have a trygg background, it is easier to take the next step, than if you were standing on uneven ground. I believe this has been important to me: that I felt trygg all the time [...] This is something I have taken with me in my civic engagement.

Trygghet is a central value in Norwegian political rhetoric that relates to child-rearing and a good childhood (Gullestad, 2006). Similar concepts in English might be ‘security’, ‘safety’ or ‘protection’.⁴⁸ The Danish language has the same emic term, namely *trygghed*. However, this term was not widely used by the Danish interviewees, which tells me that it is an emic concept specific to the Norwegian context. Still, they used similar terms, such as social acceptance (*anerkennelse*) and confidence (*tillid*). Moreover, *trygghet* is associated with the modern childhood, ideally characterized by stability and structures that allow for the freedom to play and the development of the child’s potential (Ibid.). This is usually juxtaposed against a childhood that lacks structures, which is considered to place children and youth at a higher risk to become involved in gang-activity and violence, as Carl from Østerbro explains:

Carl: If they’re part of a football club for example, then [youngsters] won’t loiter in the street corner, they won’t [create disturbance] on the trains, they won’t become criminals down at Blågårds Plads or other places. They would have something sensible to do, they would get fresh air and daylight, and they would spend time with others [...] My role is to make sure that my daughters have the best starting point to become proper citizens [medborgere]; that they have the possibility to develop their abilities... Make them into good citizens.

Blågårds Plads is a square in Copenhagen’s district of Nørrebro, Østerbro’s neighbouring and less affluent district. The district in general, and the square in particular, suffers from a negative reputation due to criminal activity and gangs, as well as the high number of residents with so-called non-Western immigrant background. In Carl’s quote, the responsibility of creating “good citizens” is laid solely on the parents, while the alleviation of social inequality is given less importance. The “good citizen” here is imagined as someone who is “proper” in the

⁴⁸ *Trygghet* can be used to refer to both material and emotional safety/security. I only focus on the emotional aspect of *trygghet*.

sense that they have lived a good childhood (i.e. a childhood with structures). This is often contrasted against ‘immigrants’ who are presumed to not be raising their children in the ‘right’ way, thereby creating irresponsible future citizens. Childrearing as such becomes a *boundary-making process* where ‘good parents’ who create disciplined, well-developed and law-abiding children, are differentiated from ‘immigrant parents’ who do not. Hilde, a mother from Oslo, draws a distinction between her perceptions of the ‘Norwegian way’ and the ‘immigrant way’ of raising children, emphasizing the necessity of *ballast*⁴⁹ for the creation of responsible citizens:

Hilde: But in a way we have this in Norway... that one needs to know one's children and make sure they have a good ballast. And immigrant children ... there were many Pakistanis and Moroccans where we used to live ... I'm not sure if it's possible to say it so bombastic...but us Norwegians, or our culture has a very... we believe that children should have clear boundaries, structured activities, and then we increasingly let go as they become older. That's like our thing. If you have a good fundament when you're a child, you have a ballast which makes it [easier] to have looser reins when you're grown up. But we see the opposite... that the immigrant children [in our neighbourhood], they have extremely loose reins as children! They're out and they play until late hours, and suddenly they ring our doorbell to play and it's like 10 PM, and we think like...no, it's not our thing. But when they become teenagers, their reins are tightened. While in our culture we think that if you haven't had a good ballast earlier, then you won't have it when you're a teenager, because then you're per definition on your way out, opposing your parents and society.

Trygghet and *ballast* in the examples I have included so far suggest a rather disciplining understanding of active citizenship, where the more rigid and structured one's upbringing is, the less opposing one becomes as an adult. In “A Passion for

⁴⁹ *Ballast* is an emic Norwegian term, which carries the same connotation as the English term ballast: namely, a fundament – something that provides stability and weight. This term resembles *trygghet* in the sense that it also refers to the idea of security, pointing to the emotional work involved in raising children well in Scandinavia.

Boundaries”, Gullestad (1997) claims that conventional signs of good parenthood in the Scandinavian context involve disciplining the child through the creation of boundaries (*grensesetting*). This takes place through for instance regulating children’s play outside (by not allowing them to be outside ‘too late’ in the evening) and having structured leisure-time (preferably through sports activities that bring parents and children together). Boundaries are therefore required for a ‘good’ fundament (*ballast*) during childhood, which is understood by many as a crucial attribute for good citizenship. Paradoxically, it is precisely through boundaries and intense regulation that the child is thought to become self-sufficient (Gullestad, 2006), a contradiction which is largely hidden in dominant discourses of child-rearing (Reay, 2004).

Although affective characteristics such as *trygghet* and *ballast* are considered to be desirable for citizenship among a wide range of participants, not everyone understands them in the same way. Moreover, not all interlocutors who stress *trygghet* have necessarily experienced that feeling at all times while growing up. For example, some of those I spoke to who have experienced refuge from war stress the importance of *trygghet* because they at times felt a lack of it. An example is Abdi’s story:

Noor: I’m very curious about the life stories of people, and how that has impacted them to become engaged today. Could you tell me about the story of your life?

Abdi: My life story lies in what I look up to, what gives me strength and trygghet. Like I said, to understand my identity. My identity are my camels, the goats that I played with as a child [in Somalia], and that gave me milk. I am very attached to my identity in my home country. At the same time, I’ve been very lucky to grow up in Norway. I have been through the [different] phases, as a child, as a teenager, as an adult, and now as a father. What is important to me is that I can tell my children about my identity. When one knows one’s identity, one can be trygg and you can meet all kinds of people. It’s very important that one has pride. You are who you are.

Noor: Not everyone knows oneself, so where do you think you got your trygghet from?

Abdi: I was 14 years old when I moved [back] from Norway to Somalia. It was the first time and there was a civil war. That was the first thing I experienced as a teenager; I remember there was a lot of chaos [...] Listening to stories [from Somalia] and reliving my roots has made me hold on to my identity and build on it. I try to be in two worlds and try to make these two worlds understand each other.

When I met Abdi, he was in the process of preparing a public Eid-Al-Fitr⁵⁰ celebration – the first in his neighbourhood. I asked him why he chooses to spend his time and energy organizing such an event, to which he responded:

Abdi: My vision is to.... that my children realize that they can grow up with a multicultural identity and still feel trygg. Everyone needs to feel that they can be proud of something, that you feel that you are contributing in a way. That you feel ... ‘Oh! This is okay, I can be proud of that!’ Everyone needs that trygghet.

Unlike the dominant understanding of *trygghet* in Scandinavia, where *trygghet* is believed to come from structure and predictability (Gullestad, 1997, 2006), Abdi believes that *trygghet* can be fostered through being proud of and confident in one’s background, even if it is shaped through experiences of “chaos”. It is this pride and confidence that drives Abdi’s motivation to organize a local event, with the aim to bring together Muslims and non-Muslims in his neighbourhood. His story shows that active citizenship may also be driven by experiences and feelings of uncertainty and loss (Horst et al., 2020). These perspectives do not necessarily denounce the importance of *ballast* and *trygghet*. Rather, they expand the definitions of these

⁵⁰ Eid-Al-Fitr is an important religious celebration among Muslims that marks the end of Ramadan: the Islamic month of fasting.

characteristics, showing alternative ways of becoming an active citizen that do not necessarily fit into the idealized childhood in Norway.

Raising good citizens

In the second part of this chapter, I bring in the perspectives of parents who affirmed the importance of *raising* children to become *respectable* (*'ordentligt'*) and *gender egalitarian*. The examples below suggest that to be *recognized as* an active citizen in the Scandinavian context, one must (learn to) demonstrate these characteristics. Moreover, teaching these characteristics to children is understood among many of these participants as a valuable societal contribution, thus further asserting their desirability. I also include the perspectives of adults who work with children, as preschools, schools and children's leisure-time associations in Scandinavian countries play a major role in the establishment of parenting norms and are considered as 'training ground' for children's future citizenship (Berg & Peltola, 2015; Dannesboe et al., 2018; Gilliam & Gulløv, 2014).

'Ordentlighed'

Ordentlighed is an emic concept that can be translated as 'respectability', 'decency' or 'properness'. The term is reiterated among the Danish participants, especially those residing in the more affluent locality Østerbro, who believed that it must be taught to children so they may be recognized as responsible citizens in the future, as Joseph claims:

Noor: You've said several times that it's important to be a good citizen. What do you mean by that?

Joseph: To treat people ordentligt, both in relationships and at work, in schools and in traffic. So, it's a way of behaving. You can say it's a way of formation. You can't take for granted today that people know how to behave, or that they know from home why things are the way they are. And the more you teach this to your children, the easier it is for them to do well in society.

Similarly, Georg argues that children need to learn how to behave as 'co-citizens' (*medborgerskabeligt*) by acting and behaving decently towards others:

*Georg: If you tell me 'active citizenship', then I will tell you that it starts from childhood. It's like picking up your dog shit, otherwise I will step on it. That is active citizenship – to be considerate of others, to be ordentligt. When your dog shits on the pavement, you have to pick up the shit, no? You teach [children] that you just don't throw tissues on the train or on the street. Ideally, you should behave ordentligt and not expect others to clean up after you. But this is not the case. We throw tissues on the street, because the municipality will come and sweep it up the next day. To me that's strange, because if we all behaved as co-citizens [*medborgerskabeligt*], we would not need all these resources. Because if we all did that, there would be order. We would be considerate of each other. The youth wouldn't do graffiti on the wall and vandalize. They wouldn't throw beer cans in the parks... they would behave ordentligt. So this is a kind of active citizenship where you are considerate to others whom you don't know.*

In Georg's quote, children need to be disciplined early by teaching them *ordentlighed*, otherwise they might become irresponsible in the future. These perspectives place a heavy responsibility on parents, who are considered as crucial actors in the creation of a crime-free and 'clean' society.

In addition to parents, people who work with children in leisure associations also saw it as their responsibility to 'train' children to become responsible citizens (Nivala,

2006, in Berg & Peltola, 2015). Below are excerpts from two focus group discussions: one in Østerbro and one in Sydhavn. Both were presented with the same Danish policy quotes.⁵¹ However, while both groups stressed respectability as a crucial characteristic for becoming a responsible citizen, they did not equally recognize the role of social inequality in defining how the good citizen is imagined.

Åse: We spend a lot of time and energy teaching [children] how to behave ordentligt towards each other, that they don't have to create drama and be irritated at each other because one didn't get their way. One can still speak properly even though one is angry.

Noor: So, if I understood you correctly, you are saying that participation is not just about voting in elections, but also about how social [life] should be practiced?

Åse: Yes, it's like a 'little democracy'. I think that as a parent, and as a citizen, one has the obligation to teach [democracy] to future citizens [medborgere] – not only my own children, but also the children where I work. How do we do this well? For example, by teaching them some ordentligt [good] manners, a proper language; teach them that you can still speak decently, even though you're angry. You don't need to swear and all that. You can still speak properly.

Noor: So, for you the 'little democracy'...

Åse: The [leisure-time] association is a democratic playground. This is where they can learn [democracy] [...] In the 'little democracy' I can say like 'ok, one can raise good citizens' ... I mean it's what I can do with my children. I can make them into good people, and I hope that they can pass this on... My son who now has kids, I hope that

⁵¹ See Appendix 3.

he raises his children to be good citizens [...] It is my responsibility to make sure that my children become good citizens.

Martin: It starts with the children. It starts with one's own.

Åse: Yes, as far as I know, it's my responsibility to make sure that my children become good citizens [gode medborgere].

Marie: We also teach the pupils to keep the spaces clean – that they make sure there's toilet paper [in the restrooms] and that it looks more or less decent. It's about teaching them responsibility – that they just can't pollute the whole thing, just because someone can clean after them [...] I think children copy what they see. If they see someone smoking and throwing the cigarette butt on the ground without picking it up, they will learn that this is okay, that it's just a little piece of trash, what harm would it do to throw something [on the street]?

So, I think that one can make these changes quite early, change children's attitude to such things. So, parents [should] teach children from an early age that you're supposed to clean up after yourself [...] I have been raised not to throw trash on the street. But unfortunately, there are some who forget to raise their children, I think. This won't change overnight of course, but if parents become more aware of this maybe one could change [...] When the new generation grows up, maybe in twenty years, they would perhaps find it unnatural to throw something on the ground, because they were raised to see that people do not leave their trash behind.

By referring to the association as a 'democratic playground', the group in Østerbro exposes a dominant view on democracy in Denmark as both a form of government and as a specific way of relating to each other and being social (Bach, 2014). This is also apparent in the group's understanding of the 'little democracy' as *behaving decently*

towards one another. On the one hand, *ordentlighed* is understood as an individual behaviour that must be fostered in children through behavioural pedagogies. On the other hand, it is through the sum of individuals' decent behaviours that an 'ideal' society is created. The emphasis here is on maintaining positive social relations. The focus group in Sydhavn, on the other hand, stress the desirability of *ordentlighed*, yet the discussants argue that having this characteristic requires a certain amount of 'surplus', which in in Susanne's opinion, not everyone grows up with:

Susanne: I can see it already in kindergarten – if parents don't talk much to their child, they don't read to them bedtime stories, maybe they're too busy drinking beer or whatever – that impacts one negatively later in life. Maybe they don't do exciting things with their children, they don't have overskud, and then the children start school ... It's hard to become good then. They grow up and realize that they cannot participate and influence decisions, because the others are too good in communicating. It's difficult, because if you can't communicate ordentligt, then you might end up using violence and hitting people. You just don't know how to behave ordentligt and you become a troublemaker, no? So, you silently fall out [of society]. In that way, I believe that as a society we have a responsibility to include everyone, also those who do not have [the resources] from home. I don't know... It might be necessary to split people into 'active' and 'passive' citizens, but I don't like that, actually. I think that the young man across the street who plays really loud music from his apartment – I think that's his voice. That's him trying to tell us: 'look at me, listen to me!' He just doesn't have the words in his power.

Noor: So, you're using him as an example, as someone who might be considered as a 'passive' citizen? You think he's not active in any organization or political party, perhaps?

Susanne: I highly doubt that. He also looks like someone... someone whose family hasn't eaten vegetables or been physically active in generations, if you know what I mean.

Noor: So, you're saying that the definitions of 'active' and 'passive' can be too narrow?

Susanne: Yes, actually. People don't have the same opportunities.

The examples presented in this section demonstrate a rather deterministic view of the subject where one's recognition as an active and responsible citizen is believed to be highly determined by one's upbringing and formation. The interviewees and discussants generally assume an alignment between desirable behavioural and social norms, raising children 'well', and 'creating' good citizens. There is a persistent emphasis on disciplining, where the adults have the responsibility to teach children correct manners and rationality, as a way to uphold cultural norms and values and to protect the Danish society from perceived risks. Accordingly, civic responsibility is understood as *civilizing* children through the social norms that exist in the democracy and welfare system of Danish society (Gilliam & Gulløv, 2014).

However, there are some differences in the perspectives presented. While the participants from Østerbro regarded 'proper' behaviour as a necessary characteristic for good citizenship, the participants from Sydhavn argued that 'proper' behaviour is indeed desirable, yet contingent on socio-economic capital. Moreover, while the former group did not question the normativity in the categories of 'active citizen' and 'passive citizen', the latter group was highly critical of the normativity implicit in such categorizations, even though they still upheld them. According to Skeggs (1997), judgements of respectability and civility have historically been central to homes,

families, and childcare practices, scrutinizing especially practices of the ‘working class’. With respectability, certain modes of behaviour, language and appearance are judged as ‘good’, and those embodying such practices are classified as worthy, moral individuals (Ibid.). To *not* be respectable or to be *uncivil*⁵² is considered to have little social value or legitimacy in society, as it is associated with dirtiness, bad manners, family dysfunction and crime – characteristics often associated with failed citizens such as migrants, the poor and criminals (Anderson, 2014). Said differently, acting respectably is a signifier for *not* being working class, and, therefore, for being a good citizen.

Values of gender and sexual equality

Another characteristic that is reiterated as desirable for active citizenship is gender egalitarianism. The parents and youth workers that I interviewed talk about gender egalitarianism in mainly two ways. First, they believe that being an active citizen entails having certain masculinized characteristics. Secondly, they consider it as their civic responsibility to ensure that (their) children grow up learning gender and sexual equality. Some participants also recalled being raised in their homes in a gender egalitarian manner, which they believe enabled them to become active citizens today.

I understand my participants’ emphasis on gender egalitarianism as reflecting state discourses of egalitarianism and civic integration in Scandinavian countries, where gender and sexual equality feature as central national values and a source of national pride (Jacobsen, 2018; Peltola, 2016). Yet, they do not merely ‘mimic’ these discourses, as they are also aware that gender inequality does indeed exist in the Norwegian and Danish societies. By raising children in a gender egalitarian manner,

⁵² Interestingly, the English term ‘incivility’ stems from the Latin *incivilis*, which translates to ‘not a citizen’, and refers to “infractions of the moral order that sustains public life” (Dixon, Levine, & McAuley, 2006, p. 187).

they believe that they are *transforming* such inequalities. Thus, parenting also becomes a practice where, according to Young (2005), who draws on bell hooks (1990), resistance against dominant gender norms is created.

Baran, for example, recalls how her parents valued gender equality and made sure that she never missed the International Women's Day march while growing up, a tradition that she wishes to pass on to her daughter:

Baran: I hope to transfer that to my daughter. She has been on every Women's Day march since she was a baby, and she's only three years old. That's probably the most important thing I can do. I think in today's society you need a counterweight to the body hysteria, to [the trend of] showing off one's good sides only. You need a counterweight, and that should be to engage for others. I hope that she gets that from me and her father, and that she becomes influenced by us just like we were influenced by our parents.

Noor: You think this body hysteria is more salient for girls than for boys?

Baran: Yes, absolutely. I think it's this kind of narcissism in today's society that... I mean even I find myself being influenced by this hysteria sometimes. But it's important to offer something, a counterweight... [telling my daughter that] 'Yes, you are sweet, but you are also smart, so try to use that intelligence to engage in society'. I hope that reaches to her.

Baran is concerned that dominant gender norms in the Norwegian society may restrict her daughter's capacity to become an active citizen when she grows up. She gives the example of gifting among her daughter's peers, where girls usually receive Barbie dolls and dresses on their birthdays, while boys are given toys that involve physical

activity. Such practices, she believes, give value to her daughter's bodily appearance while downplaying her intelligence. To counter this, she sees it as her responsibility to be a role model for her daughter as well as to make sure that her daughter's kindergarten does not reinforce gender stereotypes.

Baran: I think it is important that girls have role models who can be pretty, as well as smart, strong and tough – who have all these elements. However, the most important thing to me is that one does not only think about oneself, that she does not end up as someone who only focuses on herself in everything that she does. It is fine by me if she likes pink Barbie dolls and princess gowns, but I also want her to be thinking of others. That is much more important to me.

While Baran wishes to transform hegemonic gender norms through raising her child in a gender egalitarian manner, she nevertheless articulates a gendered understanding of what constitutes the active citizen. She considers 'feminine' characteristics and behaviours, such as prettiness and liking dolls and gowns, to be related to passivity, while 'masculine' characteristics, such as toughness, strength, and smartness, are more desirable and even necessary traits for becoming (recognized as) an active citizen. This opposition between 'feminine' and 'masculine' attributes is only raised by my female participants, especially mothers, as they question their own and their daughters' self-worth and value as *citizens*. In their narratives, being (recognized as) an active citizen also means being 'free' from one's body, as Susanne's quote suggests:

Susanne: I remember as a teenager I sometimes wore really ugly clothes to school, and like I didn't even brush my hair and sometimes I did that to test how it is to not feel so pretty, and still be the same person, like be nice and kind and try to be extrovert and... to feel that these things are not always dependent on the exterior in a way. So, I remember doing this consciously quite often. I was [thinking] like, 'no, today I will not necessarily look ugly, but like I won't... I will sort of look like shit, I won't look my

best'. So that my self-image doesn't have to be connected to like... 'Oh I have nice shoes and I have nice' ... yeah [...] I hear of girls who almost don't dare to leave the house without makeup! I am just so happy that I do not think about that, like I can still wear whatever and just be out the whole day. So, it's liberating yourself from society, in a way. I have been preoccupied with that [and] trying to feel that I have the same value even though I don't look pretty in a way. I think it's important [to acknowledge] that people have the same value anyway, regardless of how pretty or ugly they are [...] And I think of my daughters, that they should hear that they are pretty anyways, that they are good and... that like it's not only about looking cute and wearing a nice dress.

Helene, who often participates in the public debate, sees it as her responsibility to raise her daughters in a way where they learn to think critically and independently. She argues that the larger society values the ability to debate and express opinions as 'typically male', making it easier for boys to be active in the public debate when they grow up. She presents these characteristics in contrast to material considerations and appearances (which are 'feminine' and should be 'secondary'):

Helene: While growing up, I felt like it was sort of accepted in society that boys can have an opinion, while girls should just accept it. But my father taught me to discuss and argue, and so I became very good at that. I never felt like I was worth less than men, and that's probably why [the public debate] has sort of become my arena today [...] Now that I have daughters, I think the most important thing to me is to strengthen their ability to think independently and critically [...] My hope is to create an identity in them, so that appearances become secondary. I also hope that they never undergo [cosmetic] surgery. My mother raised me with feminist values, I think. [She was] very preoccupied with other things than appearances and material [things].

Similarly, Nora, a young woman from Oslo, claims that it is easier for men to participate in the public debate, whereas women are taught from a young age to take up “less space”.

Nora: Boys are raised to have a higher tolerance for criticism, for disagreements, for taking space and being unpopular, or to come up with unpopular expressions, to be crass and still be accepted, while girls are raised to not fully take as much space, and to not fully be as crass. I think it has a bit to do with social sanctions if you break social codes, and this happens more to women than to men. The space for public expression is smaller for girls. You should be rounder around the edges and ‘soft’ to avoid being disliked. They take less space in national media. I think many boys are raised to believe that disagreements are okay, and that it is acceptable to be crasser, and this is something that is endorsed by national media as well...it’s all debate, debate, debate.

While these women challenge hegemonic gender norms, they simultaneously affirm a masculinized active citizen. Collectively, their narratives point to a gendered conception of what it ‘takes’ to *be* (recognized) as an active citizen. Said differently, they believe that the female needs to be ‘formed’ from childhood so she can ‘fit into’ the masculinized ideals of rationality and disembodiment. The stereotypically ‘girly’ attributes are consistently viewed as non-civic and even hampering for active citizenship and are associated with not caring about the society. On the one hand, the ‘burden’ of gender equality is primarily carried by daughters whose behaviours must be regulated to be considered as active citizens. Girls must be taught from a young age to think critically, to think about others, to feel and ‘act’ smart, strong and tough – characteristics that are associated with the rational and male citizen, in opposition to being ‘soft’ and caring about materiality, such as dolls or one’s own body. On the other hand, these narratives can also be understood as a transformation of pervasive gender norms (albeit only those imposed on girls), where the ‘making’ of female

active citizens through mothering work is understood by these mothers as a valuable societal contribution.

In addition to parents, a few youth workers, and teachers I interviewed viewed teaching gender and sexual equality to children as an important societal contribution. Matias, for example, tells me that many of his pupils have “strict Muslim backgrounds” and that they often carry conservative attitudes to gender and sexuality. To counter these attitudes, Matias teaches children gender and sexual equality through pedagogical school plays.

Matias: The main reason we dress up is partially because we think it's fun, but also because many of the children here don't think it's normal to dress up. Especially not for a man to dress up as a woman. That is like completely taboo. Many come from quite strict homes, who in a way have a strict Muslim background. Nothing radical, just very strict. They for example attend Qur'an school twice a week, and, there is nothing wrong with that, but they... one has to live in Norway, which is not an Islamic country [...] I think that at some point in their lives, these children are going to meet a transsexual person, at work for example. And [I want them to] think that 'oh yeah, I remember [Matias], he dressed up as a woman'. Many of them don't think that it's okay to do so, which for us is something completely innocent.

On the one hand, these plays inspire children to treat others as equals, regardless of their gender or sexual identity. On the other hand, they also demonstrate how teaching gender equality and homotolerance becomes interlinked with teaching children good citizenship. According to Jacobsen (2018), gender equality and homotolerance function as a litmus test to good citizenship in Scandinavian societies and are often used in an ‘othering’ and racializing way. This is also visible in dominant public discourses on gender egalitarianism, which often portray ‘non-Western’ immigrants as having backward ideas about gender and gender relations and representing allegedly

traditional and patriarchal cultures (Anderson, 2013; Peltola, 2016). Hence, these discourses draw the normative boundaries for citizenship, as norms of gender and sexual equality are linked with the boundaries of the nation (Bendixsen et al., 2018; Bygnes, 2012). Gender egalitarianism, in other words, becomes a way to discipline children into becoming good citizens.

Reproductions of the community of value in the private sphere

Returning to the sub-question of this chapter – *What are the characteristics that constitute the idealized good citizen?* – I have demonstrated that people imagine and define the good citizen as someone who embodies certain gendered, classed, ethnicized and ableist characteristics. These include good (mental) health, emotional and financial self-sufficiency (*trygghet, det lille ekstra* and *overskud*), as well as demonstrating rationality, respectability (*ordentlighed*), and values of gender egalitarianism. Regardless of their social positionalities, the participants uphold these traits as desirable for both becoming *and* being recognized as an active citizen. Moreover, the participants are convinced that these desirable characteristics are developed from childhood, where parents have the primary responsibility to inculcate these in their children.

Whilst ideals of gender and sexual equality were widely emphasised by my research participants (most notably women), masculinized characteristics such as rationality and crassness were considered more desirable for active citizenship, as opposed to feminized characteristics that were related to bodies and ‘softness’. Good citizenship is hence intertwined with an idealized upbringing, character, and lifestyle that is believed to ‘create’ future responsible and active citizens. It was also implied that those who do

not grow up with these desirable characteristics would not easily become or be recognized as a contributing member of society.

The participants often explained the ‘lack’ of desirable attributes, presumed particularly to affect lower class families or so-called non-Western immigrant families, by referring to socio-economic disadvantages. Yet, there was an underlying moral evaluation and distinction in these expressions. Indeed, these groups were implicitly judged as ‘failed’, in the sense that they are poor, sick, uncontrolled, indecent, ‘too feminine’ or carry conservative attitudes towards women and sexual minorities – characteristics considered as not conducive for good citizenship. The desirable classed, gendered or ableist characteristics that constitute the good citizen were in other words understood as a *habitus* materialized in the body (Bourdieu, 1989). As such, they can be read as a symbol of the *moral status* of the individual, which translates into a disciplining demand or expectation for the ‘right’ kind of lifestyle and behaviours in order to be recognized as a good citizen (Skeggs, 1997, 2004; Berg & Peltola, 2015).

These perspectives indicate that active citizenship is not just understood as a certain set of practices but also as constituting the boundaries of the community of value. Through their idealization of certain characteristics, my research participants differentiate between those imagined as good citizens and the Others who are not. Active citizenship is, in other words, a differentiating norm through which desirable good citizens and undesirable Others are defined. This differentiation makes minoritized groups who already experience structural barriers to inclusion responsible for not being able to acquire the ‘right kinds’ of attributes deemed necessary for participation in society. The onus is thus placed on the individual (or the family) to ‘rectify’ themselves so they can be recognized as active good citizens who contribute to the community of value.

The overwhelming emphasis on childhood, upbringing and parenting also suggests that the home is understood as a space where the community of value is nurtured and reproduced (Anderson, 2014). It indicates how intimate practices, such as childrearing, are crucial sites of citizenship discourse and practice for my interlocutors (Plummer, 2001, 2003), as they expect of themselves and of others to foster ‘new citizens’ who grow up to become active contributors to society. The importance of the home in creating good citizens is not a new argument. Moralists such as William Galston (1991) claim that the family is the primary place where civic virtue and morality are developed, arguing for a (heterosexual) two-parent family as necessary for children to become independent and contributing members of the community. The parents’ role, Galston argues, is to “raise children who are prepared – intellectually, physically, morally and emotionally – to take their place as law-abiding and independent citizens” (Ibid., p. 285). Independence, according Galston, entails personal autonomy, a sense of self-confidence and inner direction, traits that are reiterated in my material. In her critique of Galston’s argument, Young (1995) notes that the desirability of such characteristics “implies judging a huge number of people in liberal societies as less than full citizens” (p. 547) and renders people with physical and mental disabilities, sick and injured people, and poor people as second-class citizens. Thus, raising children to become active citizens and the parents’ responsibility in doing so shows how the assertions of certain practices in the private, intimate sphere produces a specific notion of the good citizen who embodies certain desirable characteristics.

Taking these perspectives into account, my material shows that the concept of active citizenship, although understood in positive terms among my participants, is also an exclusionary norm that delineates the boundaries of the community of value, where some are imagined as hard-working good citizens who come from stable and respectable families, while others are expected to change their ways in order to be recognized as contributing members of society.

5. Assertions of norms on good citizenship practices

“[It is] important that it’s not just a small part of the local population that makes the local community function, but that everyone’s in it together” – Sigrid

In the previous chapter, I explored the *characteristics* that my research participants ‘attach’ to the good citizen. In this chapter, I look at the *practices* that they associate with good citizenship. I explore which practices they define as desirable for society and how these definitions carry distinctions between the good citizens – those who participate in desirable ways – and those who are assumed to be ‘passive’ or not contributing to the common good. I find that the participants in my study articulate practices of local participation that are privileged in active citizenship policy discourses. These include (parental) involvement in local and leisure-time associations and both formal and informal community work in the neighbourhood. Although my participants do not disregard the importance of national or international engagement, they nevertheless reiterate local (associational) engagement as a desirable contribution to society.

The first section looks at my interviewees’ definitions of specific practices of local engagement that they deem as desirable contributions to society. The second section focuses on specific arenas that they deem as desirable sites of participation for the common good and how these evaluations connect to notions of imagined sameness in Norway and Denmark (Gullestad, 2002b; Jensen, Weibel, & Vitus, 2017b). In the third section, I discuss the findings and conclude that while expectations to participate in specific ways and arenas carry ideals of inclusion and equality, they nevertheless reproduce social hierarchies in society, making active citizenship into a differentiating norm that renders some as ‘active’ and contributing, and others as ‘passive’. The

guiding question of this chapter is: *What practices and spaces constitute good citizenship norms?*

The desirability of local volunteering

Local volunteering is often equated with ‘civic engagement’ among my participants and is considered a desirable way of exercising one’s responsibility in society. In this section, I present the different practices of local engagement that were articulated as desirable. Before I do so, I include a few examples from my material that illustrate the desirability of volunteering in one’s neighbourhood. I start with an excerpt from a focus group discussion in Tøyen:

Noor: Why do you think that you are expected to be active in [your local association]?

Maria: I think that, the way society is today, you’re expected to engage in something. I’ve experienced people asking me: ‘what do you do in your free time? What are you preoccupied with?’ And I guess they are expecting a response like ‘yes, I am really engaged in volunteerism’. It sort of gives credit.

Noor: Do the rest of you experience this expectation or...?

Thor: Yes, I would say that you get some credit if you’re engaged as a volunteer. Most people would look at it positively. Maybe one’s engagement can be very big, like beyond one’s city. It might be so big it becomes like a job. If you’re like the director of Red Cross, then that’s your job. But if you’re a volunteer in the local Red Cross then it’s something completely different.

Noor: Is that a good thing or a bad thing, or neither or?

Thor: Not necessarily good or bad, I guess [...] I think it's really great that someone actually bothers to make something big out of their civic engagement... as long as they keep their values and don't do it only for the money.

Noor: Do you agree?

Irina: Yeah, I do! It's not a bad thing if it's a business, but then it becomes something else... it's not the local.

Noor: So civic engagement should preferably be something local and voluntary?

Thor: You can create a job out of it and create positive values, but there's more credit to those who volunteer in the neighbourhood.

Irina: I actually agree, because money could quickly become the motivation [...] That could happen.

The discussion above points to local volunteerism as a 'criterion' that these residents use to evaluate the value of their own and/or others' participation. While they do not disregard the positive values that paid jobs can generate, they believe that local volunteerism carries "more credit" as it is assumed to be altruistic (i.e. not motivated by money or personal interest). The next example is from an expert interview with Sigrid, a municipality worker who works specifically with encouraging civic participation among residents in Holmlia.

Sigrid: What is important, I think, is to involve all residents in the daily life, so there won't be big [social] differences. Otherwise [people would] go like 'but they don't participate, and we need to do all the work...'

Noor: *What do you mean by ‘the daily life’?*

Sigrid: *By daily life, I mean everything that happens after 3.30 PM outside your home. That’s voluntary work. Everything that goes on [in the neighbourhood] is about volunteering, and that is the daily life. It’s about being a coach in the local soccer team, being part of the housing cooperative... all these normal things that people do. [It is] important that it’s not just a small part of the local population that makes the local community function, but that everyone’s in it together.*

Sigrid’s quote not only ‘normalizes’ local volunteerism, but also indicates how this assertion contributes to a differentiation between those who perform this type of engagement and those who do not. While local volunteerism is indeed a way to create community cohesion and inclusion by bringing residents of different backgrounds together, there is nevertheless an implicit *evaluation* in Sigrid’s quote that those who do not volunteer in local arenas are not ‘doing the work’ and not assuming responsibility for the local community.

These two excerpts indicate local volunteerism as more desirable than other forms of civic engagement. My participants often expressed that neighbourhood volunteerism ‘counts more’ as a societal contribution, as opposed to for instance a paid job, participation in faith-based arenas or so-called immigrant associations. Below, I present the two types of local volunteerism that my participants consistently assert as especially desirable contributions to society: namely, parental engagement, and communal work (*dugnad*).

Parental engagement in leisure-time associations

In the previous chapter, I explored raising good citizens as something that the parents in my research defined as their civic responsibility. In this section, I explore how parental participation in child-centred local activities becomes a differentiation between responsible parents and morally questionable parents. Responsible parents (and therefore responsible citizens), as the examples in this section demonstrate, are imagined as those who are actively involved in their children's leisure-time associations or clubs (Mouritsen & Olsen, 2013). The participants' insistence of parental participation in child-centred local activities reproduces a general culture of structured leisure time in Scandinavian countries, where children are expected to participate in organized leisure activities after school time as a way to promote a safe childhood (Gullestad, 2006). This type of participation is highly stressed in active citizenship policies in both Denmark and Norway. For example, people are encouraged to engage in *lilledemokratiet* ('little democracy') by being active in school boards and in child-related activities on the local level (Bendixsen et al., 2018; Gullestad, 1993; Mouritsen, 2012). I return to the interview with Sigrid, who underlines the desirability of parental engagement, tying it to responsible parenthood:

Sigrid: A lot of the activities in Norway concern parental involvement with their children. Not everyone understands this, and perhaps some people don't know about it because no one has shown them what it's all about... the football clubs, or sports clubs, they are in a different position here in Holmlia than in a small village. Here, you don't have as many who can do volunteer work, not many who can pay membership fees. You have children here who cannot be driven... there is no one who can drive them to matches and cups. You're going to play a match against a team in [another area] and no one can drive you there. What do we do then?

The sports clubs in this district are facing many challenges like these, and we of course wish to see more engagement from the parents. Not least it is important for the kids that the parents are there when they score a goal, run fast or throw the ball... so [we need to] communicate this message to the parents, encourage them to participate. This is something we work a lot on. There are many who are not active. I mean, there are many who are also active, but there is a big cleavage. And then we notice that some complain when parents are not there, because then it's easier for children to show disrespect. They are more respectful when parents are around. This is about a very big engagement that we need to work on.

In the extract above, participation in local child-centred arenas is not only considered as highly desirable, but it is also conceptualized as an obligation towards others (chiefly parents). Wollebæk et al. (2015) confirm the desirability of this type of participation in Norway through a statistical study showing parents engaging more frequently in voluntary work in sports, cultural and leisure time activities. While Sigrid recognizes that not all parents have the (financial) capacity to be involved as volunteers, she also understands parental volunteerism as a natural part of parenthood (Forsberg, 2010; Saglie & Segard, 2013). Parental volunteerism is indeed a powerful rhetoric in the Scandinavian context and is often understood as a middle-class norm prescribing that parents are expected to spend much time with their children and develop close relationships to them (Forsberg, 2010), as the interviews with Lene and Eivind illustrate:

Lene: Does one really need to go out in the big world to make a difference? Can't you work in the small [arenas]? It's my local area that is... it's there that one can actually make all these big changes by setting the conditions right within these small circles [...] I think there's work to do here as well, and I really had the need to spend time with my children [...] I had to think what is most important to me? It's the local neighbourhood [nærmiljø] and the children. Where are they spending their time?

They're at school. So I chose to be a parent representative at school. They're in the local sports team, in the school's marching band...

Eivind: It's important for me to volunteer in the children's leisure activities. [I]t's also very much about getting to know the kids, that part of them... be attentive to what they're doing, who they hang out with. When I volunteered in the football club of my boys, it was like, I saw how the interaction between all the kids went about. I saw how the kids...how my child was together with the other kids, and that's something that has [a] direct [influence] on how you raise your child. It was very useful. [It] strengthen[s] the relationship to the kids and the upbringing of my child [...].

Engagement in child-centred local arenas is not necessarily more acceptable than other types of participation among my participants, yet it is considered by many to be both the most desirable and responsible form of participation *once becoming a parent*. This is expressed as an expectation towards oneself as a parent, as well as towards *other parents*, as these focus group discussants argue:

Noor: Do you think there's an expectation that one should be engaged in society?

Thor: I expect for instance...if there's a place where the children are participating, then I expect that the parents contribute.

Maria: Bake cakes for various events for example.

Thor: But I would not expect the neighbour of 55 years to participate in the [local association]. So it depends where you are in life.

The discussion shows that it does not really matter what kind of contribution one makes to society. However, if one is a parent, participation in child-centred local

associations is expected. This may also be related to the fact that the existence of such arenas are primarily dependent on the voluntary efforts of parents, through for instance baking cakes for lotteries as a means to generate income for the clubs (Klepp, 2001), or driving children to activities, as Sigrid explained.

On the one hand, my participants' expectation of parental volunteerism carries egalitarian intentions, as it is believed to increase the social and cultural capital among children as well as create community cohesion. On the other hand, these expectations also carry implicit discernments between those parents who volunteer in their children's activities, and those who do not. The former parents are often imagined as responsible and contributing to the local community, while the latter are hinted to be morally questionable and passive. Moreover, parental engagement is often linked to practices of boundary-setting for children, which I discussed in the previous chapter. Here, we again find implicit differentiations between the good citizens who set boundaries for their children and the 'ethnic Others' whose lack of parental participation is tied to lack of control and traditional gender norms:

Jens: I have indeed been critical towards certain cultures in Norway that treat girls and boys differently. Girls are often held tightly in the reins and that is reflected in their... that they have succeeded at least. Those girls are often quite good at school, they complete [school] and do very well there. While boys for some strange reason don't have the same clear boundaries and struggle a lot more at school. These gender differences between girls and boys are much stronger in certain cultures, other cultures. So, paying attention to what the boys do, how they interact, how they behave, and taking responsibility for that. One can do that through engaging as a volunteer in children's leisure activities, as a team coach for example, or showing up at the [football] practice and actually paying attention to what is happening. I mean, there's something about being where the child is.

Jens' statement can be read as a concern towards a gender discriminating way of raising children, but also as a reflection of public media debates in Scandinavia that portray so-called non-Western immigrant parents as 'irresponsible' and 'passive' parents who do not contribute to children's activities in the neighbourhood,⁵³ and who are assumed to raise their children in a gender inequalitarian manner (Olwig, 2011; Peltola, 2016). Sigrid, however, suggests that the seeming lack of participation among many immigrant parents is not due to cultural differences, but rather due to not having enough capacity, or *overskudd*, that is required for such participation:

Sigrid: When children are young, the most important thing is to establish oneself, and become a family, find a place to live. So, all of that volunteering is a luxury thing. Before you can do what is useful to others, to do that volunteering for society, you must have the resources. You must have time. You must have the overskudd to do it. When you have overskudd then you can start engaging in something... or change something you're passionate about or... I think that these immigrant parents, they have focused on settling down and establishing themselves and all that [...] One might have too much to do, too many thoughts, too much baggage [...] I think that the demands for being a parent [in Norway] is so huge in all areas today, and if you in addition to that come from [a country] where that kind of volunteering doesn't exist... and here you are expected to be present at the school, at the football field... it takes time.

Sigrid's quote points out the differentiating effects of parental engagement, where only parents with *overskudd* can live up to ideals of engagement. Her understanding of *overskudd* in this context is less related to tangible (economic) resources, and more contingent on intangible resources, such as time and energy. Although she expresses understanding towards the 'absence' of immigrant parents from local clubs, she still

⁵³ See for instance Fekjær (2014).

claims local parental participation as desirable when she later in the interview expresses hope that children of immigrant parents might “get the gist” in the future and contribute actively to local clubs.

The recurring perception of immigrant parents’ lack of local participation suggests that parental participation is understood as a dominant expression of good citizenship and an ‘admission ticket’ into the nation-state (Strømsø, 2019). This is especially visible in the accounts of the minoritized mothers I spoke with, as they strive to prove that they indeed contribute to society by being actively involved with their children in local arenas. Deeyah, for instance, understands her contributions in her children’s school and kindergarten as an obligation that comes with being a member of the Norwegian society:

Deeyah: I’m an immigrant who lives in Norway, but I have lived here for more than 20 years, so I’m a little... I’ve become quite a bit Norwegian. I would say that when I live in this society, I am supposed to comply with the rules that exist here [...] I’ve been active in kindergartens and things like that. I like to cook food for the little kids, and I show up every now and then in [my children’s] kindergarten. I like to contribute to society like that. Also, communal work [dugnad] at the school. I like to show up to that.

In general, the ethnic minoritized mothers whom I interviewed often felt that their membership in the Danish and Norwegian societies is contingent on fulfilling the expectations of parental engagement. Discursively situated near the boundary of citizenship (Erel, 2011), these mothers are often viewed as either potentially weakening or undermining the continuity of the nation, or as revitalizing it by creating ‘new citizens’. This contingency is especially visible in the story of Sumanya, a mother in Denmark who was expecting a child at the time of the interview. With tears in her eyes, she shares with me the fear she has of her child growing up being excluded

in the Danish society. Being a racialized minority, Sumanya explains that she herself has felt excluded in Denmark, which makes it hard for her to feel belonging. She reckons that maybe by volunteering in the neighbourhood, she might be able to develop a sense of belonging. However, she is not completely convinced that local volunteering would actually help her ‘grow roots’ in Denmark:

Sumanya: Constantly being excluded is just not fun, simple as that. But now we are having a kid and it's sort of sinking in that we may stay longer in Denmark.

Noor: So, engaging in local activities is about creating a social life?

Sumanya: No, I don't give a shit! Like I will never talk to these people [whom I volunteer with]. Do you see what I mean? Like I don't care about not knowing any Danes because I've reached the stage where I don't fucking care about integrating. I have my expats, they're from all over the world, I get to learn about different cultures, I get to meet interesting people, you know. It's so much fun. And I wouldn't have bothered to volunteer in the community with local people, actually. But I'm married to one, and I'm going to have a child who is probably going to be in this community, and it does change your perspective. I just don't want my child living in this horribly segregated society.

Noor: If we take this association as an example, how do you feel that your role there is connected to the future of your child?

Sumanya: If I'm involved of course they [the Danish volunteers] will have to deal with me; a person who is not from here. I think they are much more accepting of Nordic people. But if I become involved, then I have some influence in what kind of things we do in the neighbourhood [...] And I think... maybe I'm just bullshitting, I don't know... I want to see if I can change [the Danish society]. It's also strange because I had to change my mind-set. I mean we got pregnant, and it changed the way I think about

being here. Yeah, I want to do something about it. I just don't want to say like 'fine, fuck you, whatever'. I want to do something about it.

For Sumanya, bringing forth a child into a society that she experiences as “horribly segregated” has required her to rethink her attachment to Denmark, driving her to become a volunteer in the hope of making some changes in the way the ethnic majoritized people relate to her as a racialized Other. However, Sumanya knows that no matter how ‘good’ she is, she will never be fully recognized as a *full* member of the Danish nation-state.

Parental participation is also considered as an ‘admission ticket’ into the dominant middle-class society, as several minoritized mothers wish to provide their children with the idealized middle-class childhood by being active with them in various leisure activities, even when it proves costly. A working-class single mother to three boys, Leyla talks about how important it has been for her to give her children the “normal life” despite lacking the time and financial resources after a taxing divorce. To Leyla, the “normal life” involved sending her children to costly leisure activities, which often required her to work double shifts in a nursing home:

Noor: You mention that when your children were younger, you participated with them in their leisure activities. Why did you do that?

Leyla: Yes, yes, I drove them here and there. I was there during football and handball... there were so many activities you have no idea! They were even attending horse riding school! In addition to Quran school in the mosque. It was important to me. Thank God... that is why my children today are... they are good, and I am very proud of them. Never make any trouble, never. I have not done all this work for

nothing you know! [laughing] It was tough as a single mum, I had to be everything for them. After the divorce, I lost everything. Everything.

Noor: It's interesting, despite having economic hardship and being a single mother, you prioritized your children's activities.

Leyla: I worked a lot so that they would not feel that they were below anyone, you know? [...] All the other children were in activities, and when I went to parent-teacher meetings, I always heard that one must ensure that children do something, not just stay at home. So, like, I have always listened to these things, plus I liked doing it. I liked to see them do the things that the other kids were doing.

Leyla's story sheds light on the exclusivity and normativity of being an engaged parent in Norway, which was articulated by her children's teachers. Although Leyla experienced such expectations as (financially) demanding, she nevertheless wished to live up to them, arguing that it has been crucial for her that her children felt no different than their peers.

“You just don't skip ‘dugnad’!”

Taking responsibility for one's neighbourhood is not only limited to parental engagement, but also includes other forms of local volunteering, such as *dugnad*. The Norwegian term *dugnad* refers to community work that is usually unpaid and voluntary and is commonly performed on the local scale in order to support the collective or at times individuals within it (Klepp, 2001; Lorentzen & Dugstad, 2011). Although *dugnad* is unpaid, participation is commonly understood as a mandatory civic obligation and responsibility, as asserted by a group of elderly residents in Røa:

Roger: There is an essential difference between Norway and abroad. We have a word in Norwegian which you might know: it's called dugnad. It is impossible to translate it to other languages. It does not exist in English, German, French. You can ask everywhere, but dugnad only exists in Norwegian. I don't think it exists in Swedish or Danish either.

Noor: But in English you have 'community work' or something like that.

Roger: Yeah, yeah, yeah... but that is something completely different.

Noor: But what is it that makes it completely different?

Roger: I guess it has a lot to do with... It is a natural cultural conditioning. That it is expected from each person to show up when there is an invitation to a dugnad. It is absolutely a moral obligation. You could say that this is weakening with time, but... [The others express agreement].

Arild: Sports clubs, the school's marching band, housing associations... everyone is invited to dugnad, because paying someone to do this job – it's just not possible.

Roger: But what is important about the Norwegian dugnad is that the work is unpaid.

Arild: There is a moral obligation behind a lot of the dugnad; it's about giving back to society.

Noor: This moral obligation... is it something that is implicit or is it explicitly expressed? How does it work?

Roger: It's implicit. No one can say 'now you need to do this...'. You don't go around telling others 'now you need to do your civic obligation'.

Arild: Yeah like, 'now you have to volunteer!'

[The group laughs].

Roger: But it's still an obligation. It's something inherent in the human; you just have it in you that you should give something to others. If you don't have [this understanding], well...

The group understands the activity of *dugnad* as both a cultural practice that is specific to Norway (even though traditions of communal work do indeed exist in many other countries⁵⁴), and something that is inherently human. The responsible citizen in this context is imagined as someone who 'just knows' what *dugnad* is and fulfils that obligation. In contrast, those who do not participate in *dugnad* are often imagined as not 'properly' Norwegian and need to be taught how to participate in and contribute to the local community, as Lucas' quote below suggests:

Lucas: I think, in a way, one must include [immigrants] much more and make much stricter demands. Hmm... people complain about... I remember I had a conversation with my mother. She said that she thinks it's a pity that not many of her foreigner neighbours helped out with dugnad in the neighbourhood, and that many times they just don't understand what it means to show up, despite having lived half of their lives here, and should by now understand what dugnad means. And I told her 'yes, I totally agree. But one cannot expect that [of them], because we forgot to tell them what it means to be Norwegian when they came here'. We are a country obsessed with dugnad. I mean, dugnad, you just have to show up! You just don't skip dugnad! Dugnad is the shit!

⁵⁴ The group is correct in their claim that the word *dugnad* only exists in Norway. However, communal work does indeed exist in Denmark, even though my Danish research participants did not employ a specific term for this type of activity.

Noor: So, there's like a shame around it, if you don't show up?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, yeah... it's like the worst thing [not showing up at dugnad]! I think the Norwegian people probably forgive murder more easily than not showing up at dugnad! I'm pretty sure of that! [We both laugh].

Lucas: But seriously, as a country... we have forgotten to tell them what it means to be Norwegian. We forgot to give them an introduction. We forgot to send the women out to work, we forgot to... umm... include them in the local clubs, in the sports clubs, in women's associations... I mean in a way, we live separate lives.

Lucas' call for "stricter demands" reflects wider societal debates and policies on integration that define active participation as crucial for a well-functioning diverse society (Jensen et al., 2017a). While such demands for participation are meant to be inclusionary, they often place expectations on already marginalized groups to conform to dominant participatory practices. Such discourses problematize the presumed lack of societal contributions among immigrants, especially minoritized women, who are often portrayed as passive 'objects' oppressed by patriarchal traditions (Bredal, 1993) and therefore need to be 'activated' (Stubbergaard, 2010). Hence, *dugnad* is understood as a *moral* practice which involves a boundary-making that defines some groups of Others as passive, culturally uninformed and not having the 'right' values. The following section demonstrates how this boundary-making is also tied to imaginations of (cultural) sameness.

The desirability of 'majority arenas'

Although local volunteerism is clearly defined as a practice of good citizenship among my participants, they do not consider all local arenas to be equally desirable. Their ideas on *where* contributions 'should' take place are highly aligned with state

discourses on active citizenship, which often exclude faith-based arenas and so-called immigrant associations⁵⁵ as desirable spaces for civic participation (see policy quotes in Appendices 2–3). Policy makers and the wider public often view such arenas as “socially isolated ‘islands’ that promote division and self-segregation” (Peucker & Ceylan, 2017, p. 2421), thereby weakening cohesion and trust in society (Foner & Alba, 2008; Putnam, 2000; Putnam et al., 1994). I find that these widely held assumptions are mirrored in my material, as some of the participants, most notably expert interviewees, view participation in so-called immigrant associations and faith-based arenas as contributions to ‘one’s own group’ rather than to society. In this section, I explore this opposition, arguing that not only certain practices, but also *certain arenas* are imbued with norms of good citizenship, further constituting moral evaluations on who can be defined as a good citizen.

Engaging ‘here’ versus ‘there’

In an expert interview, Henrik shares with me his concern about governmental financial support to so-called immigrant associations, arenas which he regards as separate from the Norwegian society and therefore undesirable for social cohesion:

Henrik: The Norwegian society is built on different things...activities... like sports and the scouts and so on and... what is happening now, is that [immigrants] create sports clubs inside a country... like for instance a Pakistani sports club, a Somali, and so on. It creates integration, but at the same time you see that a good deal of people [...] from different ethnicities, they are active, but they are active inside that little... inside that little frame that they are in, right? [...] There are many non-ethnic Norwegian

⁵⁵ In a research overview published by the Centre for Research on Civil Society and Voluntary Sector (2016), the term ‘immigrant association’ (*innvanderforening*) is used to define organizations where immigrants and their descendants participate. The activities in these organizations can be cultural, religious, leisurely, or connected to the homeland. The term is employed in a rather homogenizing manner, as it is not the activity that is in focus but the associations’ composition of non-ethnic Norwegians.

parents who are engaged, but they are engaged over there. They should be engaged here [...] They participate within their own organizations or their own countries. Take for instance Turk[s]... there's this cultural centre in our district, and there [you find] only Turkish children, youth and adults. But what does that have anything to do with integration? They're only Turks! [...] There aren't even Norwegians there. What kind of integration is that? [...] One doesn't integrate by being with one's own... [O]ne has to build on the Norwegian traditions and values. For example [...] Pakistanis like cricket. So why not make a cricket club within the [local] sports club, and make it attractive to everyone who wants to join in on cricket? Instead, what's happening is that there's an independent Pakistani cricket club [...] they should have joined in here [the local sports club] and become part of the community.

Henrik brings out a piece of paper and draws two circles – one that represents the local sports club (which he refers to as “here”) and one representing the local Pakistani cricket club (“there”), arguing that if the people “over there” were engaged “over here”, the local sports club would have a more cohesive force in the neighbourhood. His labels of ‘here’ and ‘there’ suggest that certain local arenas of participation are more desirable than others. Even though the sports club and the Pakistani cricket club are both located on the same scale and encourage parental engagement, he considers only the local sports club as “part of the community”.

The concerns of Henrik as well as other expert interviewees point to the contestation around the politics of multiculturalism, where multiculturalism “is often misconstrued as synonymous with minorities, with the image of different communities living separately from one another” (Kiwani, 2010, p. 103). According to this understanding, multiculturalism is seen as a threat to ‘shared values’, integration and social cohesion. While proponents of multiculturalism have often been suspicious of appeals to active citizenship, which they see as reflecting a demand that minorities should play by the majority’s rules, critics of multiculturalism, on the other hand, have often been

suspicious of appeals to minority rights, which they see as reflecting a politics of narrow self-interest (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000). Moreover, the perspectives of my expert interviewees echo ideas on ‘social mixing’ that dominate public debates and policy discourses, where the ‘right kind’ of mixing and a ‘balance’ between ethnic minority and ethnic majority are viewed as the best strategies to prevent segregation in neighbourhoods (Bygnes, 2012; Sundsbø, 2016; Ødegård et al., 2014). Their evaluations of what ‘counts’ as a desirable contribution to society are thus intertwined with notions of integration and social cohesion, as certain arenas are assumed to promote commonalities among people while others promote difference.

‘The little society’ versus ‘the Norwegian society’

The opposition between desirable local arenas and non-desirable ones is also stressed among non-experts, such as this focus group of five high school students, who had a lengthy heated debate on whether contributions to a mosque may ‘count’ as active citizenship:

Khaled: I shouldn't be generalizing, but... some of them [Pakistanis] go to the mosque and donate a lot of money every Friday. And yes, they're active, but it's like something personal. They choose which society they want to be active in. There's the Norwegian society, and there's that little cultural Islamic society.

Ahmed: Yes, I would also say they're active, but they're so in one society over the other.

Jenny: I would say that that would be engaging in a subculture of the Norwegian society.

Ahmed: I totally agree.

Jenny: It's of course part of the Norwegian culture, but it is like... it's not the common...

Reza: I totally agree with [Jenny], because these are Muslims who are Norwegian citizens. So, as Norwegians, they participate in a cultural society in Norway, even if it is not a place for everybody, but it is still part of the Norwegian society.

Khaled: I just think that this is essentially about belonging. Since we live in a multicultural society, there are many people who feel belonging to one part of society but not the other part. So, let's just say that it's not a mosque... let's just think religion in general. So, if you are contributing within that religion, or that faith community, I believe that is not civic engagement because it's not the typical thing a Norwegian would do. Today most Norwegians I guess... this is not facts, don't take this [as a fact] ... but I think most Norwegians are not religious. They seldom go to church, except on special occasions like marriage or funerals, you know? So, participating actively and contributing in a religious community, that's not Norwegian culture.

Reza: No, it's not, I agree. But it's still part of the Norwegian society.

Noor: So, where should one contribute then?

Khaled: The welfare state. Paying taxes, participating in the neighbourhood, voting. That's where they should contribute. That's the common society.

Yousef: Yeah, I guess he's right.

Jenny: But we participate differently because we have different interests, even if we live in a common society.

Reza: Yes, I also believe it's a bit wrong to put one identity up against the other. It's not how it works in practice anyway. I think it's wrong to think that it's more a 'personal thing' if one chooses to practice one's religion actively. As if [one] is putting [their Muslim] identity before the Norwegian identity. I think it's wrong to put 'Muslim' and 'Norwegian' up against each other. I believe one can be a good Norwegian Muslim, contribute well to the welfare state, and to the Norwegian society, even if one chooses to practice one's own identity that separates one from other Norwegians. I believe this is a big part of democracy as well, that you can belong to the minority in that society. And one should have the right to be a minority in a society and still experience equal rights [...]

Khaled: I'm not saying that you can't be active in your ... I'm just saying that you should primarily contribute to that which is common, because you are receiving benefits from that, and so you must give back. After that, you can choose to contribute to your mosque, or your church, or whatever.

Reza: I agree that this is [the] rational [thing to do]. But I still believe that in practice it doesn't play out this way. It's not like you prioritize your religion over the Norwegian society, or the other way around. Take me for example who is a Muslim. I feel that both my identities, as a Muslim and a Norwegian citizen [...] they go hand in hand. You don't need to be disloyal to society because you prioritize your identity. So, they're equal, actually.

Jenny: Yeah, like, it doesn't have to be only faith communities...

Reza: Yeah, it also goes for... even though you only find minorities [in faith-based arenas], there are other [...] subcultures in society, like sports clubs or political parties. Even though those are particular groupings, [they] are still part of the larger society.

There is no disagreement within the group that the welfare state is unquestionably the ‘common arena’ of participation, maintaining a popular view in Norway of the social democratic welfare state as a symbol and provider of equality and sameness (Danielsen, 2010). However, one participant, Reza, raised the question of whether political parties and leisure associations might as well be classified as “subcultures” within the Norwegian welfare-state. His question challenges a dominant view in the group (and in my material in general) that faith-based arenas might not constitute a part of the larger nation. Although the group managed to agree on widening the definition of societal contribution, the discussion nevertheless points to a problematic connection between good citizenship and loyalty to the nation. This connection is often assumed in European integration discourse, where immigrants must prove that their activities in so-called immigrant associations or congregations are not subversive or in opposition to the ‘host’ state’s core values and norms (Pajnik & Bajt, 2013; Peucker & Ceylan, 2017). Moreover, contributing to an arena that is not defined as desirable by the dominant discourse is viewed as somehow coming at the expense of contributions to the nation. Muslims’ loyalty to the nation in particular is questioned within such discourses as they “are placed on the margins of citizenship” (Brown, 2010, p. 171). The perspectives I presented in this section demonstrate the ways that idealizations of certain spaces of participation contribute to reproducing distinctions of ethnicity and religion, as well as “assumptions about the essential homogeneity of existing citizens and of the alien otherness of newcomers” (Kymlicka, 2011, p. 282).

Reproductions of the community of value on the local scale

The aim of this chapter has been to explore which civic engagement practices and spaces my participants consider as desirable contributions to the common good and

how these evaluations create distinctions between those who are assumed to contribute to society, and those who are assumed to contribute to ‘their own group’.

The first section of this chapter finds that my participants’ definitions of what constitutes a desirable contribution widely reflect active citizenship promoting policies. For instance, local volunteerism through *dugnad* and in child-centred arenas (i.e. sports clubs, schools, kindergartens) are reiterated as highly desirable practices and are considered as contributions to society. These arenas and practices can be understood as facilitating social maintenance and community cohesion, rather than political confrontation or action aimed at societal change (Onyx et al., 2012). On the one hand, I understand their emphasis on local volunteering as an expression of wanting to contribute to the neighbourhoods and local communities in which they live and feel belonging to. On the other hand, it is also articulated as a morally loaded *expectation* or *obligation*. Those who do not participate in the desirable arenas are assumed to not have the ‘right’ (cultural) values or the ‘right’ resources (*overskudd*) and are considered as morally questionable. While local participation may lead to inclusion and social equality, when it becomes an expectation, it functions as a norm that reproduces intersecting ethnic, gendered, and classed differentiations in society. An example is parental engagement among minoritized mothers, which becomes an ‘admission ticket’ into the community of value. These mothers make visible the contingency of being recognized as a good citizen, which depends on the acquisition and spending of time and monetary resources on participating in children’s arenas.

In the second section of this chapter, I find that the desirability of local volunteerism among my participants is implicated in ideas of integration and social cohesion, as they view participation in ‘majority arenas’ as contributions to society, as opposed to participation in congregations and so-called immigrant associations, assumed mainly to be contributions towards a ‘separate’ (ethnic or religious) group. This opposition

implies an understanding of the national community as homogeneous, and that good citizens are seemingly ‘impartial’ actors who participate in arenas that are assumed to be unconnected to any specific group, culture, religion, or ideology.

As I argued in the theoretical framework, an important contribution of feminist citizenship scholarship is challenging the dominant assumption that civic participation requires the transcendence of one’s identities as well as group differences, and that it is precisely this assumed impartiality that is believed to create equality (Young, 1989, 1990, 2000). In her critique of the idealized ‘impartial’ citizen, Young (1989) claims that dominant understandings of the civic public are based on assumptions of the public realm being guided by ‘universal’ collective norms and values, excluding people’s ‘particular’ identities, such as ethnic or religious. This chapter shows that my interlocutors’ ideas of equality and inclusion are implicated in an imagined sameness (Gullestad, 2002b), making the contributions of minoritized or religious groups subordinate to those of the presumably non-religious majoritized group. The expectation to transcend particular identities through participation in majority arenas not only enforces notions of homogeneity, but also conceals the normative power that lies behind ideas of what ‘counts’ as a desirable contribution. For example, the parent who contributes to his children’s football club or the parent who bakes cakes for the school lottery are framed as ‘impartial’ good citizens working towards the common good, even though these parents would not be (expected to) participate in such arenas if they, or their children, did not benefit from these in one way or another. The practice of *dugnad*, even when it is performed within the neighbourhood or building where one resides, is also considered as desirable in the sense that it presumably benefits a ‘larger group’, even if that group only consists of one’s neighbours who reside within a limited geographical area.

As idealized practices and spaces of participation are enmeshed with notions of a common good connected to an imagined sameness, active citizenship becomes a boundary-making norm where ethnic and religious Others are viewed as not contributing in the ‘right’ ways and need to be taught to do so. As such, local arenas can be understood as resources for active citizenship and as spaces to belong, but they may also function as sites of (re)productions of governing citizenship norms and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion (Desforges et al., 2005; Holt, 2008).

In my analysis so far, I have explored how individuals participate in the (re)production of dominant active citizenship norms, demonstrating that differentiating notions of active citizenship are not only produced at the national scale through policy formulations, but also asserted by individuals who expect themselves and others to take responsibility for the well-being and welfare of communities through specific arenas on the local scale. The next chapter explores how dominant norms of active citizenship are contested through people’s identities and lived experiences.

6. Contestations of norms on good citizenship spaces

“I contribute with inspiring courage and a fighting spirit” – Linda

Dominant understandings of active citizenship found in policies, although widely articulated by individuals, as seen in the previous chapters, exclude or conceal other ways in which people understand and practice their civic responsibility. In this chapter, I explore how individuals’ identities, lived experiences and intimate relations shape their understandings of civic responsibility. I continue with Young’s (1989, 1990, 2000) critique of impartiality – the idea that civic participation should be divorced from self-identification with any particular group, culture, religion or ideology – arguing that while the expectation of impartiality for participation is upheld by some, it is also contested by others who engage in spaces and on scales that are unrecognized within policy discourses. Their contestations help us widen narrow conceptualizations of active citizenship to include arenas and scales that are often excluded from or made irrelevant within dominant active citizenship discourses.

As I demonstrated in the first chapter, policy formulations and dominant expressions of active citizenship privilege certain arenas or spaces that are associated with building democracy and where collective interest is thought to be found. Examples are the neighbourhood/local community, political institutions and structures, voluntary and leisure associations, child-related arenas, workplace boards, parent school boards and the public (media) debate. This chapter situates individuals as “experts regarding their own citizenship” (Weller, 2003, p. 169), paying attention to the spaces and places in which lived citizenship is practiced. It is guided by the following sub-question: *How do individuals contest dominant norms on appropriate spaces for participation?*

The first section of this chapter looks at intimate spaces where people, especially elderly participants, perform acts of care towards others, which they uphold as valuable societal contributions. The second section explores people's engagement in faith-based arenas and so-called immigrant associations, showing how people understand their civic responsibility beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. The interlocutors whose stories I present below have diverse backgrounds, yet what is common to them is that they practice participation, responsibility, and contribution in spaces that are overlooked by policy frameworks. Recognizing the actual spaces in which people practice their civic responsibility paves the way for a more inclusive understanding of active citizenship, grounded in diversity rather than sameness. I conclude the chapter with a discussion on how the expectation of impartiality for participation is contested as people give meaning to and practice participation through their lived and intimate experiences within social and political communities in which they live and belong, both within and beyond the boundaries of the nation-state.

Informal care in intimate spaces

This section looks at practices of care that individuals define as societal contributions, and which take place outside of organizational settings. Within dominant discourses of active citizenship, care can be understood in two rather different ways – as responsabilization or as an intimate practice. As I stated in the introduction, citizens are being increasingly responsabilized by governments to take on a range of responsibilities for the care of others and for the well-being of their communities on behalf of the welfare state through volunteerism in for instance associations, formalized networks and organizations (Newman & Tonkens, 2011; Martinez et al., 2011; Jupp, 2008). This understanding of care is widely proclaimed among my participants, as seen in the previous chapter, yet it is also contested by those who perform care in the sphere of social relations, which includes homes, streets, or local pubs. This section explores the latter understanding of care as active citizenship. It

looks at everyday and intimate practices of care such as helping one's neighbour, a friend, or a stranger. I share the stories of primarily senior citizens, as this segment of interviewees often expressed a feeling of not living up to participation norms, while at the same time framing their own informal care practices as valuable societal contributions.

“It's a strength to have a grandmother in one's life”

Kari, a woman in her mid-60s, recounted the many ways she has been an active citizen throughout her life, from participating in her children's leisure time arenas, to political activism and volunteering in (local) associations. However, Kari finds it increasingly challenging to be active at her age and wishes she had the “*overskudd*” to engage in society like she did before. She admitted that she felt a sense of guilt for not contributing to society like she used to, and that she is thinking of “*doing something about it*”. She thought that joining a local NGO chapter might be a good way for her to contribute to society again. After the interview, I wrote Kari a message, thanking her for sharing her perspectives with me. A few days later, she responded, telling me that the interview made her think about how people, including herself, may be contributing to society in unacknowledged arenas. I asked if she would be willing to share those reflections with me in another interview, to which she agreed. During the second interview, Kari admits that she downplayed her contributions to society during the first interview, as she realized that it is indeed possible to be engaged in arenas that do not always fit into prevalent norms of participation:

Kari: I think that there are many different places where one can do something important for society [...] There's this myth that it is only those people who save the world and work with poverty and climate change that are the engaged ones... But there are so many others who do lots of things that somehow contribute to a better society [...] [Y]ou don't need to be a volunteer to live out your values.

Noor: *So, you feel that there is some sort of norm or ideal that tells you the ‘right’ way to be an active citizen?*

Kari: *Yes, precisely so [...] I think it’s a bit scary to create these stereotypes... like [when] you’re engaged in politics or you’re a volunteer in an organization, then you’re doing something ‘proper’! But I think and hope that there are many arenas that can also be defined as part of civic engagement [...] For example, I have a friend from Iran [...] I was invited to dinner at her home. I thought to myself that her children... they do not have any relatives around them... let’s just say that there’s a family here that needs a grandmother – simply someone who could come and read a [bedtime] story, be a babysitter, or... I thought that this could be something for me! Instead of doing something that in a way is more organized.*

Noor: *So, you feel that this is a way of contributing to society actively?*

Kari: *Yes, because it’s a strength to have a grandmother in one’s life. It’s about the interpersonal meetings. There’s value in the human meeting.*

While in the first interview Kari expresses guilt for not being able to live up to participatory ideals such as volunteering, in the second interview, Kari challenges these ideals. She brings up her seniority as a resource for contributing to society in ‘other’ arenas, rather than looking at it as merely a limitation for not being able to live up to what she feels is expected of her. She argues that the care she offers to her friend’s daughter who has recently immigrated to Norway is a valuable contribution to society and should therefore ‘count’ as civic engagement.

Kari and other interviewees who have expressed guilt over not being able to be active in organizational settings, due to oftentimes challenging life situations, also claimed

other ways they contribute to society. These expressions can be read in two ways. On the one hand, they show how participation ideals can become differentiating – as I argued in the previous chapters – as people ‘measure’ themselves against what they believe is expected of them from the larger society. On the other hand, they can also be understood as challenging idealized spaces for participation. They demonstrate the importance of understanding one’s societal responsibility through lived experiences, often informed by one’s positions in social hierarchies, as the story of Linda below clearly illuminates.

“I contribute with inspiring courage and a fighting spirit”

During my fieldwork in Sydhavn, a highly diverse area which is home to many marginalized people, I met Linda, a woman in her late 50s who has struggled with alcoholism and suffered from severe illnesses. Like several other interlocutors whom I interviewed in Sydhavn, Linda self-identifies as “*working class*”, and her understanding of her civic responsibility is highly shaped by this self-identification.

Linda: I am not really your typical Dane... in a way I am typical for Sydhavn, because I am handicapped and poor, so it is not strange that someone like me ends up living in Sydhavn. I cannot afford living in anything but a one-room [apartment], I cannot afford anything else. So that's how it is... I receive social help from the municipality, but I am still poor. I could tell my story as someone with very low social status. But I could damn well tell my story as...hey! Look how I have overcome my struggles!

Linda takes great pride in having overcome alcoholism and her illnesses, and despite the fact that the consequences of these still affect her everyday life, inhibiting her from living a fully able-bodied life, she nevertheless sees it as her responsibility to inspire others in a similar situation to overcome such challenges.

Noor: How do you think these struggles have shaped you today? Have they shaped the way you think about civic engagement?

Linda: I have great, great understanding for the different starting points people have in life, because we are not all born with the same privileges [...] I have access to my own personal experiences [and] I know everything about exclusion and can help [...]. When I talk to people on the streets, I receive respect. I do not look like someone who suffered from alcoholism, compared to others in Sydhavn who have suffered from it. When I say 'yes, I have also had a problem with alcohol', I receive some sort of acknowledgement from these people... By talking to them about my past and showing them that I now go to work and look after my children. Because it is not normal here in Sydhavn.

Noor: To have a job?

Linda: No, it is not normal. It is also not normal that one's children do well, or that you yourself feel well. Here you meet families who are on social welfare. Many people give up. But I keep fighting. So I contribute with inspiring courage and a fighting spirit, if you can put it this way.

Linda sees her everyday acts of inspiration and dialogue on the street as her civic engagement and responsibility, which she understands in relation to her own lived experiences. Being poor, chronically ill, and dependent on social welfare support, Linda may be framed in public discourse as a failed citizen – as someone who is a ‘burden’ to society, rather than an active contributor. However, as Linda sees herself as someone who has overcome life challenges, rather than someone with “*low social status*”, Linda’s narrative challenges the idealized characteristic of *overskud* that is often attached to dominant understandings of participation that place value on self-sufficiency and able-bodiedness. Linda is not the exception, as several individuals I

spoke with in Sydhavn regarded themselves as active contributors to society, despite chronic illnesses and past addiction to drugs or alcohol. These interlocutors stressed the importance of ‘small’, everyday acts and generally being a good Samaritan by, for example, assisting one’s sick neighbour with everyday chores such as grocery shopping, visiting one’s neighbours to make sure they are well, or offering financial help or emotional support to other residents at the local pub, as the following group discussion illuminates.

A group of seniors who are involved in local politics were asked to reflect on the Danish policy quotes I presented to them (see Appendix 3). Prior to the discussion, I assumed that the group would merely assert the spaces of participation defined as desirable in the policy quotes, such as political parties or voluntary organizations. Interestingly, this personal bias was challenged when the group unilaterally claimed that definitions of active and passive citizens in Danish policy documents were incomplete (see quotes 1 and 3 in Appendix 3). They argued that they exclude practices of help and care that do not take place in the spaces mentioned in the quotes, yet are important contributions to the local community:

Astrid: I wouldn’t necessarily agree with this definition of active and passive. I think that, in my quarter at least, there’s so much activity and conversations on the street, people meet on the sidewalk. I should also mention that there are pubs in the quarter where the communication [between people] is excellent, and where we help one another. We keep an eye on each other, especially on those who are alone and maybe aren’t doing so well, health-wise or money-wise. There’s always someone to check up on you. And that’s a huge resource [...] I’ve seen it so many times that people are in trouble, whether it’s a health issue, money issue, or whatever. There’s always someone who steps in, and these are usually the people who hang out at these pubs.

Per: It's about creating friendships. There's no structure, it's just a place, and one doesn't need to offer anything, unless you really want to offer something. You just talk about whatever.

Astrid: We help each other, and it might sound a bit strange, that the framework is beer and wine, but that's where most of the help takes place.

Per: We sense and hear about this tendency where fewer and fewer people are being involved in organizations, but they also do things themselves through their networks for example, and that's not really visible... The clubs are complaining, sports clubs and such, that there is a decline [in volunteers] ... and there's a concern that there should be some space for the unorganized... for those who don't have any voice, such as the elderly. They operate on the streets and other places.

The group contested the definitions of 'active' and 'passive' in the policy quotes presented to them as failing to capture practices of help performed in spaces where potentially lonely individuals spend their time. By offering support to others at the pub, they gain the possibility to feel valued and to practice their situated responsibility (Sevenhuijsen, 2000). The group discussion shows 'feminized' and spatially informed citizenship responses to social issues (Dyck, 2005; Wood, 2013), such as poor health, loneliness, and poverty. Moreover, spaces of socialization such as the pub are inclusive in the sense that they cut through various forms of differences, such as financial status and age, as the group explains that people of all backgrounds and generations show up there. As such, these spaces foster the social trust and cooperation so highly sought after among civic engagement scholars (e.g. Putnam, 2000).

Engagement in faith-based arenas and ‘immigrant associations’

This section presents perspectives that challenge the dominant assumption that participation in congregations and so-called immigrant associations promotes the interests of ‘sub-groups’ – an assumption that is grounded in ideas of impartiality, as I argued in the previous chapter. The first case is of a group of Arab Christians in Copenhagen, while the second case presents the stories of two women with a refugee background who are active in two different ‘immigrant associations’. Both cases demonstrate how people understand their responsibility beyond the immediate local to include other scales, such as the transnational and the global, thus contesting narrow ideas of community and what might constitute a contribution to the common good.

“If we want to be good believers, we have to be good citizens”

One Sunday afternoon during my fieldwork in Copenhagen, I was invited to attend a sermon in a beautifully adorned church with a neighbouring community house. After the prayers, I conducted a focus group discussion with five individuals from different age groups. The discussion that ensued provides a great illustration of how faith can be a resource for active citizenship. The discussants all agreed that the church is a space that helps them “give back to the Danish society”, as one participant put it.

Mounir: All together, when we are here, we feel relaxed. You forget everything that is outside this door. What happens outside doesn't matter. We come here Sunday or Saturday or whatever time, and we pray. You feel relaxed. Then we sit and talk. This one may have an idea, and this one may help you solve a problem [...] So, we communicate, and we eat together [...] It's something small, but you feel it's a society,

something that comes from the roots of our country. Then you go outside, you re-start, you join the Danish society again. From time to time this is good for the nervous system.

Mariam: I think it's also good for the society, because as believers... we have a verse in the bible [...] it tells us to be honest towards society, so we learn to serve society. It's like part of our worship to God. So, if we want to be good believers, we have to be good citizens [...]. We have to be positive and have hope, we have to be active by learning the language, by working hard and raising our children in a good way. We learned that in the church since we were young, and maybe that's why our church is very important to us. For example, if I don't come here for two or three weeks, I feel negativity, also towards the Danish society. I can't give it love; I can't give it patience.

Abrar: You [would] feel down.

Mariam: Yes, and I wouldn't be positive. So, I need to re-charge my batteries to be able to give to society [...] Actually [Abrar] helped me so much when I came here [to Denmark]. I was alone with my kids. I didn't know anybody, anyone. I just had her phone number from a relative. So, I just called her, and she invited me to church. And she insisted on inviting me and my kids over for dinner, and actually that's... you know the culture of our country, Noor. And she makes me feel like warm and positive in church and towards this country and the people in this country. Of course, everything changed when I started meeting other people. But with [Abrar], I will never ever forget what she did for me. It was a very difficult time.

For these churchgoers, participating in their church does not imply exclusiveness or separation from the larger society. On the contrary, they view their church as the locus where they exercise their civic responsibility, and where they feel belonging. They describe their church not only as a haven where they 'tank up' motivation and energy (*overskud*) to give to society, but also as a place that helps them to be "good citizens"

in Denmark, as Mariam explains. The group's understanding of active citizenship largely echoes Danish policy definitions, which stress being part of the work force, raising children responsibly and learning the language. Later in the discussion, the group also points out other practices of good citizenship, such as voting in elections and volunteering. However, the group also challenges idealized spaces for participation, arguing that the church is a crucial arena for offering care and support to others, which ultimately would help foster a sense of belonging to the larger society. This is made clear in the experience of Mariam, who believes that her belonging to Denmark has been dependent on the invaluable support that she received from Abrar at church.

Everyone in the group expressed a feeling of being inferior in Denmark in one way or another. Mounir especially described Denmark as a "closed society", where ethnic minoritized individuals are expected to know the language perfectly and be exemplary model citizens to have the right for formal citizenship (Mouritsen & Olsen, 2013). Scholars argue that a sense of belonging to the nation-state is a prerequisite of participative citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2005); however, the group demonstrates the opposite: namely that people contribute to society despite having feelings of non-belonging towards the 'host nation'. Through their participation and belonging in their congregation, these individuals see themselves as agents who actively contribute to the larger society, and not just their 'own group'. Moreover, they are agents who actively contest dominant meanings of good citizenship beyond the boundaries of the nation-state:

Mounir: You have attended the prayers today. You heard the priest. And you can read [the prayers] in Danish or in Arabic. You can see we have been praying, although it's a church, we pray for the country, we pray for the land, we pray for the crops.

Noor: In Denmark?

Mounir: In Denmark. We say God bless it. It's not ours, but we live in it and we pray for it [...]. We pray for the president, in [country of origin] or any president. We pray for the prime minister here [...]. Even the priest says 'love your neighbour, whatever he is'. Whether he is Danish or [another nationality], I don't care what he is [...]. So, the prayer is not just for us, but for the whole society around us to have peace and everything.

Mounir and his fellow churchgoers demonstrate that one can indeed enact good citizenship by being a “good believer”, and that their participation in church is not practiced in isolation to the larger society. Their practices of prayer, care, love, and inclusion towards others within and outside the church suggest that a shared sense of humanity underlies their motivation to help others (Sinatti & Horst, 2014). The connection between religion and citizenship is certainly not new (see e.g. Fumanti, 2010; Nyhagen, 2015; Nyhagen & Halsaa, 2016). In many ways, lived religion and lived citizenship are deeply intertwined, as faith also provides guidance on how to be a good citizen (Nyhagen & Halsaa, 2016).

“I believe every one of us is responsible for preserving democracy”

Interviewees who have experienced war and refuge, and the losses that came with it, often expressed a deep wish to help others who are less fortunate than themselves (see also Horst, 2019). Their stories represent a larger narrative in my material where people engaging in so-called immigrant associations understand their involvement as an important contribution to the common good, rather than to a ‘smaller group’, as was assumed by other participants in the previous chapter and as critics of multiculturalism claim. Some were active in civil society organizations that worked with various humanitarian projects in countries such as Pakistan, Syria, or Somaliland, while others

were involved in cultural associations whose activities were directed towards specific immigrant groups. An example of the former is Amina, whose motivation to engage in a Norwegian-Somali civil society organization has been shaped by the tragic loss of her father during the civil war in Somalia:

Amina: My father died in the middle of the war. There was no sufficient healthcare in his village, so he died. I think dad could have been saved, like many others.

Noor: It seems like losing your father during the war motivates you to engage in this organization, or?

Amina: I cannot say that it was that one thing that motivated me to engage; it was a combination of several things. When I travel back to my homeland, I see things that make an impact on me, that there are mothers and children who die because they don't get sufficient help. So, every time I go there, I think 'when I return, I am going to do something'. I've always dreamed of building a hospital. I think dad could have been saved, like many others.

Noor: And do you feel that you contribute by being part of the organization?

Amina: I contribute with my opinions and experiences because I have been to the villages, and I've seen how people are living there. The others in the association have not done so.

Another woman with a refugee background, Agata, shares with me how her experiences of World War II in Poland have taught her the importance of assuming responsibility towards vulnerable others and standing up against injustices:

Agata: The most important thing to me is the feeling of having been exposed to injustice: when your freedom is taken away, when you're being silenced and controlled... I've experienced that while growing up; it's engrained in me [...]. We should all be engaged and strive for building a democracy. I believe every one of us is responsible for preserving democracy [...]. A democratic society is the ideal society for me, especially since I lived in a society that wasn't democratic.

Noor: What do you mean when you say that we should all be engaged?

Agata: That one helps those in need so they can help themselves. Help for self-help. One has an obligation to stand up against the exploitation that exists today. There are many forms of exploitation in Norway [...]. There is a lot of social dumping and severe exploitation in the work-life from actors who operate in a grey-zone where they can exploit people who are in a vulnerable position. So, each one of us has an obligation to resist, to stand up against and warn when this happens. Every person can and should do something.

Agata tells me how she has been active in Norway and Poland in various ways throughout her life, and that her primary motivation has always been to create a just society for all. Although she has been involved in politics and activism work, Agata claims that the most important arena for her today is a Polish association. This association, she explains, offers Polish immigrants in Norway the chance to integrate into the Norwegian society by offering them a social network, cultural events, legal help and informal support – or what Agata refers to above as “*help for self-help*”. She is concerned about the unemployment, exploitation, and discrimination that many Polish workers in Norway experience, which she believes is connected to prejudice that she has also experienced as a Polish woman living in Norway. She recalls how her family helped the first wave of Polish immigrants that arrived in Norway during the 1980s, and that having been a refugee herself has impacted her sense of responsibility to help Polish immigrants in Norway today:

Agata: And that is why I have worked a lot with Polish people. It has been necessary, and I feel that it's the natural thing to do since I immigrated from there [...]. I am actually very proud of the fact that my father was a big resource [when we arrived to Norway], and he continued helping others. For instance, during the huge refugee crisis in the 80s when Poles came to Norway [...] we housed about forty political refugees from Poland, at our own costs. We paid for everything and we helped them, [gave them] a network. That's probably the most integrated group of refugees today, because they received a lot of help from civil society, including the Polish civil society here.

When seen in light of policy discourses on active citizenship, Agata's self-defined societal contributions and civic engagement become 'invisible' or irrelevant, as they are performed in spaces that are not fully recognized as part of the larger society – such as the Polish association or even her family's home. Interestingly, when I was introduced to Agata through a gatekeeper, I was told that she is active in a Norwegian political party. Although Agata's involvement in this party constitutes a key part of her engagement, she did not speak much about it during the interview. This does not mean that political engagement is unimportant to Agata, but rather that her understandings of responsibility and contributions are intricately tied to her lived experiences as a refugee. Like Amina's story, Agata's story points to how despite – or even inspired by – experiencing numerous injustices committed by authoritarian regimes, individuals with a refugee background develop a resilience which they use to help others, both within and outside the nation-state in which they live (Horst & Lysaker, 2019). Moreover, these narratives demonstrate how affects such as pain, grief and horror caused by for instance injustice carry the potential for activism and empowerment (Braidotti, 2016; Eto, 2012). They are a reminder of how experiences of war can be deeply traumatic, while also functioning as points of reference for the actors, sparking responsibility and action, as well as providing knowledge that can be used to make a contribution, whether it is locally, nationally or transnationally.

Contesting expectations of impartiality

Using two case studies demonstrating how people exercise civic responsibility in both intimate spaces, and in faith-based arenas and so-called ‘immigrant associations’, this chapter has explored how people contest dominant norms of good citizenship by stressing the importance of spaces where they exercise a responsibility towards others. The stories represent a larger narrative in my study where people’s lived experiences and intimate lives, as well as the communities they are part of, shape their understandings of civic responsibility. In sum, these findings challenge a dominant understanding of active citizenship as requiring impartiality from one’s identities and personal life and relations.

As I argued in the introductory chapter, there is a strong tradition of volunteerism in the Norwegian and Danish contexts; the activity is often understood as an individual obligation (von Essen et al., 2019; Henriksen et al., 2019). Although help offered outside of organizational settings is recognized as a valuable contribution to society by scholars such as Hermansen and Boje (2015), those who offer such help are still considered ‘passive citizens’ as long as they do not perform associational volunteerism in addition (Ibid.). Moreover, while care is central to active citizenship state policies, as citizens are encouraged and sometimes even expected to perform care within their (local) communities (Newman & Tonkens, 2011), it is only the care performed within associations that is defined as active citizenship (Herd & Meyer, 2002). Voluntary organizations and hospices provide the exact same services that families, friends and neighbours provide, such as medical care, emotional support, shelter, and food (Ibid.). Yet, these services become ‘hidden’ in dominant active citizenship discourses, precisely because they are performed in the intimate social sphere. This norm excludes the everyday contributions of marginal groups in society, such as the elderly and the chronically ill, who are often rendered dependent and ‘passive’ citizens in need of

care. This dual meaning of care reinforces the active/passive dichotomy, as intimate practices of care are not considered as equally relevant contributions towards the common good in active citizenship policy discourse.

I would argue that the distinction between volunteerism and intimate forms of care is a gendered one and one which is contested as such in my participants' accounts in the first section. There is a difference between, on the one hand, volunteering to bake a cake for the school or to participate in *dugnad*, as we have seen in the previous chapter, and on the other hand, 'feminized' and intimate practices of interpersonal nurturing such as help extended to a lonely neighbour or the emotional labour that goes into inspiring people who suffer from addiction, as seen in this chapter. Both types of care highly value community and the social. However, within state discourses, the former type of care privileges the citizen who contributes in organized or structured settings, carrying more symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1977). The latter type of care, on the other hand, requires greater dependency and an emotional investment between people and is less recognizable as a contribution towards the larger collective. As one focus group participant commented on a policy definition of active citizenship (quote 1 in Appendix 3): "*the human aspect is missing*" – suggesting that the expectation of associational volunteerism renders affective and intimate expressions of responsibility 'invisible'. With this in mind, I argue for the recognition of intimate practices of care as inclusionary and democratic, and as constituting "the everyday world of citizenship" (Desforges et al., 2005, p. 447).

Whereas the first section of this chapter demonstrated how people contest the normativity of associational volunteerism, the second section explored how people contest ideas of a national common good. Through claiming their practices in 'immigrant associations' and religious spaces as important contributions, Amina, Agata and the churchgoers challenge idealized spaces for participation in dominant public discourses that are often implicated with ideas of national cohesion and

(cultural) sameness. Rather than understanding active citizenship as specific practices or behaviours that they expect themselves or others to perform, these participants argue that participation should primarily benefit those who are in *need*, such as the poor, the excluded and the oppressed. Their understandings of responsibility, therefore, reference a different set of ideals, objectives and values which diverge drastically from policies of active citizenship that aim to create social capital for the benefit of the nation only (Mustafa, 2016).

Moreover, they contest the meaning of civic responsibility as limited to the local and the national scale, as they draw on feelings of solidarity with people in distant countries. Studies on transnational civic engagements have certainly demonstrated how civic participation can be multi-sited and multi-layered, as people increasingly belong to, and therefore engage in, multiple communities (Andersson et al., 2012; Erdal & Borchgrevink, 2017; Horst, 2018; Ong, 1999; Yuval-Davis, 1999). The example of Mounir demonstrates how religion is an important resource for active citizenship, as it teaches care for fellow human beings, regardless of their nationality, while the stories of Amina and Agata show how refugee experiences can inspire work towards social justice and democracy within and beyond a given nation-state. More importantly, the stories recounted in the second section reveal the essential role of religious arenas and ‘immigrant organizations’ in providing a safety net for newcomers and in contributing to their integration. As such, I argue for acknowledging these spaces as crucial arenas for active citizenship, as participation in these constitute valuable contributions to the wider society, and not just to ‘sub-communities’.

As I argued earlier, an important contribution of feminist citizenship scholarship is challenging establishment understandings of the common good (Lister, 1997). This includes destabilizing the assumption in dominant citizenship theories that participation requires impartiality and the subordination of particularized identities

such as culture, religion, gender, or age in favour of a ‘civic’ identity (Young 1989, 1990; Jones, 1994). However, as Young (1989) convincingly argues, impartiality as a condition for participation in the public-political sphere is an exclusionary myth, as “people necessarily and properly consider public issues in terms influenced by their situated experience and perception of social relations” (Young, 1989, p. 257), as the narratives in this chapter clearly demonstrate. In contrast to the previous chapter, where understandings of civic responsibility were largely tied to engagement in more formalized or organized ways, civic responsibility here is expressed and practiced in less formal and structured ways, and is derived from relations with others through affective practices of help, support, and care. The participants demonstrate the way that intimate lives, which include relationships with friends and neighbours, and the feelings implicated in these (Plummer, 2003), are central to active citizenship.

In all the stories recounted in this chapter, we can see that the participants’ understandings of civic responsibility were driven by what gender scholar Sevenhuijsen (1998) calls an “ethic of care”, which values relationality and interdependence as core concepts, and places care as “part of a collective agency in the public sphere” (Sevenhuijsen, 2003, p. 193). Through caring for others within ‘one’s own’ group or in the intimate sphere of life, the participants challenge the expectations of impartiality embedded in dominant active citizenship conceptualizations. Moreover, they assume the moral orientation of care as constitutive of their active citizenship, acting individually or together to help others in near or distant locations. Their understandings of civic responsibility stretch beyond geographical boundaries of the individual citizen’s community, as seen in the examples of the churchgoers and Agata and Amina. Thus, spaces of participation are not fixed or closed, but are constituted through social relations that reach beyond specific localities, linking them to other places. This resonates with Massey’s (2005) relational approach to space/place and Yuval-Davis’ (1999) call for understanding citizenship as multi-layered, as people’s

responsibilities are mediated by their belonging in interrelated collectivities within and beyond a given nation-state.

Furthermore, an ethic of care, according to Sevenhuijsen, requires a commitment and capacity to question things one considers to be self-evident, and to “recognize dependency and vulnerability in oneself and others, as well as to pose the moral question ‘what is the proper thing to do?’” (2003, p. 186). Care ethics also carries values such as empathy, attentiveness, and responsiveness – values that are most easily harnessed in places which are most familiar (Lawson, 2007), such as neighbourhoods, streets, homes, and even pubs. Yet, as we have seen in the second section, care ethics also move beyond the interpersonal, and encompass a responsibility towards others in distant localities (Lawson, 2007; Massey, 2004). Moosa-Mitha (2017) underlines that issues of lived citizenship, which includes our social relationships, undercut, transverse, and even transgress borders assumed to have a natural existence within hierarchical notions of space. Drawing on Butler (2012), she claims that acting through a sense of sociality and relationality, rather than proximity, is a result of the condition of precariousness that all human beings experience.

Within an ethic of care, people acknowledge that they need each other to lead a good life, and that through supporting and caring for each other we can “repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible” (Sevenhuijsen, 2003, p. 184). The narratives suggest that *caring about* and *caring for* others near and far is based on a willingness and capacity to take responsibility. The participants contest normative expectations of impartiality in the public sphere and act from a place where they recognize others’ dependency on them and their dependency on others. To them, the ‘proper thing to do’ as responsible individuals is to care for those in need, even if the care does not take place in spaces that are framed as desirable in dominant discourses. The interlocutors in this chapter have clearly shown that there is no contradiction between engaging through one’s identities and intimate relations in the social sphere

and contributing to the society and world at large. To conclude this chapter, I suggest, in line with Lister, that whether or not we can ‘count’ an action as a societal contribution should have more to do with “what a person does and with what *public consequences*, rather than where they do it” (Lister, 2007, p. 57, my emphasis).

7. Contestations of the idealized good citizen

“People should be allowed to be Norwegian in their own way” – Viktor

This chapter demonstrates how racialized minorities, working class people, and individuals with disabilities strive to live up to active citizenship norms and practices while simultaneously challenging the imagined homogeneity assumed to be part of public citizenship (Young, 1989). It looks at how, through their experiences of marginalization, differently minoritized individuals contest the idealized characteristics of the good citizen. The participants whose stories I include here are highly diverse, yet what they all have in common is the feeling that despite participating in ways that adhere to good citizenship norms, they are not fully recognized as good citizens due to their ‘marked’ identities. Their stories tell of experiences of conditional belonging in the community of value, which is comprised of people who are assumed to share common ideals, characteristics and exemplary behaviour expressed through e.g. ethnicity, class, or culture (Anderson, 2013). The sub-question guiding this chapter is: *How do experiences of minoritization impact the ways that individuals contest the idealized good citizen?*

I focus on two different ‘groups’ who strive to be recognized as contributing members of society while challenging normative ideas of the ‘model’ active citizen as someone who is self-sufficient, ‘culturally similar’, middle-class, and able-bodied. The first section presents the experiences of those who may be framed in public discourses as tolerated citizens. These are racialized individuals who

can slip in and out of the community of value, sometimes accepted, sometimes marginal, sometimes examples of fine institutions and national generosity, and other times a threat to national identity and themselves (Anderson, 2014, p. 4).

The second section looks at the experiences of individuals from SydhavnsCompagniet (SC): a local and small non-governmental organization (NGO) that works with enhancing the rights and participation of poor residents in the working-class district of Sydhavn. Anderson refers to this ‘category’ of individuals as failed citizens – those who are imagined as incapable of, or failing to live up to, ideals of economic self-sufficiency, and who are regarded as ‘welfare dependents’ (Ibid.). Both tolerated and failed citizens have in common that they are formal citizens but are strongly imagined as internal Others and considered as undeserving of full membership in the community of value.

Although the experiences of these two ‘groups’ are highly similar, I choose to treat them separately as they illuminate and contest two different aspects of differentiation: whereas the first section focuses on racial/ethnic exclusion, the second section looks at exclusions based on class and (dis)ability. The chapter ends with a brief discussion on how minoritized citizens along different (and intersecting) axes of identities challenge the idealized good citizen while claiming their ‘difference’ as the basis of their societal recognition.

Asserting ‘difference’ through active citizenship

In this section, I present the stories of Victor, Moussa, and Ines. Although individually unique, taken together, their narratives shed light on two things. First, they point to an idealized good citizen which is constructed in a particularly racialized way that serves to exclude them. Second, through being active citizens, these individuals insist on their

‘difference’ in public spaces, thereby contesting the conditions for belonging in the community of value.

“The problem is when society doesn’t accept difference”

These words were uttered by Victor, a middle-aged local politician who immigrated to Norway as an adult 25 years ago. Victor proudly states that he has been “active since day one”. However, although he feels a sense of belonging to his local community and to Norway in general, Victor nevertheless experiences Otherness in his everyday life:

Victor: Whether you like it or not, when you are a visible minority, someone who looks like you and me, you are marked. I have been marked as an ‘ethnic minority’ or ‘immigrant’, and I live this identity. I have a good Norwegian friend whom I work a lot with, and when he sees me, he calls me ‘the African’. I usually joke with him and tell him ‘after 25 years in Norway, I’m still an African to you!’ But in my head, I am Norwegian! [...] So, my identity is a lot of things. I am also a father. A public debater. A politician. A music-lover. I’m also a human rights defender and an environmental activist. Many, many things! But there is a need in society to put you in a box and define your identity as one thing.

Victor’s use of the expression “marked” gives me the impression that his identities as ‘ethnic minority’ and ‘immigrant’ are not claimed by him, but imposed on him, and that this is something he must live with, despite the fact that he carries other identities, such as father, local politician and activist. Although Victor engages in desirable ways, e.g. participating in partisan politics and the public debate, he claims that he does not experience *full* recognition by the larger society. Said differently, despite living up to norms of good citizenship, Victor does not experience being accepted as a good citizen – a category reserved for the ‘unmarked’ (non-racialized). As Marianne Gullestad

(Gullestad, 2002a, 2002b) has argued, skin-colour is an identity marker that places non-white ethnic minorities outside the ‘Norwegian we’, where they often must bear the brunt of lingering stereotypes and prejudice. Thus, no matter how much Victor feels he has contributed to society in the past 25 years, he still experiences being tolerated, rather than fully recognized. Because of that, he constantly feels the need to ‘prove himself’ to claim full recognition in the Norwegian society, as such recognition highly depends on demonstrating certain racial and cultural-linguistic characteristics:

Victor: People should be allowed to be Norwegian in their own way. We should respect that. The problem is when society doesn’t accept difference. Then you must talk like Hadia Tajik⁵⁶ and maybe even be an apologetic Muslim, you know what I mean? Why is it an issue? Why can’t Hadia talk like me with an accent and be judged by what Martin Luther King said: ‘the content of you character’. Not your religion, not your background, but the content of your character, and the results you have [achieved]. Like Chinua Achebe wrote in his novel, Things fall Apart: “a man is judged by his personal achievement and if you wash your hands very well, you can eat with kings”. It’s a metaphor. It means that if you have done your obligation in society, then you can claim your right.

Noor: So civic engagement to you is about fulfilling your obligation?

Victor: No, it’s about claiming your rights! To make visible what we [immigrants] have brought to the table. Because when you hear Progress Party [FrP]⁵⁷ politicians talk about immigrants, it sounds like we are free riders. [As if] we just came to this country to steal public goods. That’s such a rude thing to say! Especially when

⁵⁶ Hadia Tajik is a Norwegian politician with a Pakistani background, who was appointed as Minister of Culture in 2012 and was the first minister in Norway to have a Muslim background. Tajik speaks a particular local dialect from Rogaland which she receives wide recognition for.

⁵⁷ Fremskrittspartiet (FrP), or the Progress Party, is a libertarian right-wing political party in Norway and the third largest political party in Norway. FrP was a partner in Norway's centre-right government coalition during the course of my research, until they withdrew in January 2020.

Norway has gained a lot from diversity. That's what makes it so rude... because they first talk about us in a negative way, while at the same time benefiting from diversity. We enrich their lives! And the powerful elite knows that very well [...]. So you know, Noor, it's not enough to give people power. You must also take it.

Noor: What do you mean 'take it'?

Victor: Take it! Nobody will give you power. Immigrants should go and take the power, because they will not just get it. You should put yourself in a power position! Go to a political party, nominate yourself for elections; that's how you take power! [...] If you do not participate, you won't get any power. That's how I see it.

By quoting Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, Victor argues that fulfilling one's obligation in society, in this case through achievements and contributions, should be enough to claim full recognition in society. Yet, despite his personal achievements and contributions to society, Victor often experiences being judged solely on the basis of his ethnic and racial traits in the public sphere. By repeatedly stressing the importance of performing one's obligation in society in order to claim one's rights, Victor affirms an influential ethos in Norway: namely, that the right to membership comes with the fulfilment of one's obligation (*gjør din plikt, krev din rett* – do your duty, claim your rights). On the outset, it might seem as though Victor is merely asserting a republican conception of good citizenship, where active participation in society is not only an obligation, but also a necessary condition for (political) membership. However, after probing further, I realized that Victor was emphasizing his lived experiences of misrecognition in the Norwegian society, where marginalized groups must 'walk that extra mile' to be recognized as good citizens worthy of belonging in the nation-state. This expectation, in other words, is directed towards specific populations in society, contributing to further marginalization. Victor sheds light on the Janus-face of active citizenship, where full membership in the nation is dependent on active participation in

desirable ways, yet, for the tolerated citizen, full membership seems unattainable no matter what.

Though Victor asserts dominant practices of good citizenship, he also contests *who* the idealized good citizen is. Active citizenship, from Victor's perspective, is also a way to *claim full recognition*, as he challenges what he experiences as assimilationist understandings of active citizenship, where racialized minorities are expected to demonstrate sameness in order to be regarded as 'good enough' (i.e. "*talking like Hadia Tajik*" – without an accent). At first, I understood Victor's encouragement for active citizenship as implying that it is the minorities' responsibility to ensure full membership in society. However, after re-reading his entire interview, I realize that his conception of responsibility differs from the neo-liberal one, where active citizenship has little to do with disturbing power dynamics and everything to do with assuming personal responsibility to be part of the nation-state (Schinkel, 2010). Through his active participation in partisan politics and public debate, Victor openly challenges such assimilationist notions of the good citizen by stressing his 'difference', rather than trying to become 'the same' in order to be accepted as 'good enough'.

"It is not a democracy if they do not accept us"

Moussa is what I would call the 'good immigrant': a racially minoritized person who claims to be different from 'other immigrants' in Denmark because he participates actively and is therefore worthy of belonging in the Danish nation. Like Victor, Moussa's understanding of active citizenship is deeply shaped by his experiences of marginalization, and his motivation to strive towards full recognition.

Moussa: I'm very active. I participate, I'm politically active in society. I am active in [my children's] school. I want to be part of the society. So, when they see [me], then

they can say 'Oh! Not all foreigners are like this, some are really contributing!' [...]
So, this is how it is for me. I'm a member of [a national association], I am a lay judge
as well. You know, I am part of the society, so I am just like a Dane. The only
difference is that I am black and Muslim. But I am part of the society. I decide with the
judges. That's the way, you know. That's the way for acceptance [...]

But I'm also proud to be a Muslim. I'm proud to be black, proud to be an African. My
colleagues at work, they have seen foreigners on the television, on the streets, but they
have never had a [close relationship] to a foreigner. So, when they meet me, they have
a different opinion about foreigners. It's [not] because they are racist like this, but...
they have no experience [with foreigners]. So, this is the way Noor, that's how it must
be. And because now, they have seen [me], they have a different mentality about a
black, a Muslim, and things like that. So, they are not as negative as before. I have
contributed a lot [...]. But they can only see that when you are there; they [ethnic
Danes] have you as an example. Otherwise they don't see it that way, they are totally
blind. You see, that's why it's good to be very active in society.

Noor: Yeah, yeah. Do you feel that you must be active because you have an immigrant
background?

Moussa: I think, to avoid complications, you must be active when you have this
immigrant background. Because the Danes who are right-wing, who don't like
foreigners, they are just talking like 'Oh they are not active, they just come to exploit
the country, take money'... But when you are active, you can confront them. This is
what I like. Because when I'm active, I pay tax like you, I don't feel like I use society.
So that's why sometimes, you know, the foreigners, they should contribute to society.
This is the way it is. If you just come as a refugee from Syria or, you know, if you just
keep quiet, you don't do anything – then you give the Danes who are more to the
[political] right... you know, they hate foreigners, but when you contribute to the
society there is nothing they can say about you. They can talk about your colour or

your religion, for me it's okay. That's part of life. But otherwise, let them go to hell. As long as I contribute, I don't have any problem with that.

Noor: So, you feel you're a representative?

Moussa: Exactly. And in a good way, too. That is very important.

Moussa is not the only racially minoritized individual I have interviewed who strives to be a 'good representative' for Denmark's immigrants. These narratives point to the social boundaries of belonging in the Danish context and how such boundaries are figured through differentiations between the good citizen and the tolerated citizen. Being aware that his racialized and Muslim identities mark him as a potential threat to the community of value – as an undeserving member who may be looked at as “*exploiting*” the welfare state instead of contributing to it – Moussa performs his civic engagement as ‘extra work’ in order to be accepted. When referring to Syrian refugees who “*keep quiet*” and “*don't do anything*”, Moussa draws a differentiation between himself and the ‘undeserving’, implicitly suggesting that those who experience racism and inferiority do so precisely because they do not contribute to the Danish society. However, later in the interview, Moussa articulates a different understanding of civic engagement. Similar to Victor, he also sees civic engagement as a way to assert his ‘difference’ – thus not only engaging to become included, as he previously implied, but also as a way to challenge the hegemonic sameness that is all too often imposed on minoritized individuals:

Moussa: You know they have this thing in Denmark, they call it Janteloven⁵⁸ [...] Janteloven is like this: 'yeah, you're a refugee, so don't come and tell us you know

⁵⁸ *Janteloven*, or the Law of Jante, is a code of conduct known in Nordic countries that “asserts that everyone is equal, everyone should be treated the same, everyone should conform and should not stand out” (Stokes-DuPass, 2015, p. 87). This implicit code is often used to discourage individual achievement as overriding collective welfare and the common good (Ibid.).

more than us', like this you know. But that Janteloven does not stop me [in engaging]. No, no, no. I fight it! And sometimes, when I see that someone doesn't like the way [I] do things, I do it more, so they get even more offended!

Noor: That's so great! [We both laugh].

Moussa: Yeah, you know, they get more offended because there's nothing they can do. We live in a democratic society. They say it is democracy. The way I see it, it is not a democracy if they do not accept us.

Noor: So, you want to provoke?

Moussa: Exactly. If you don't like what I'm doing, I will do it more, so I can finish that Janteloven in you [...]. Sometimes I 'attack' them in the Danish language, and when I want to make it more complicated, I spit the African language. I do it. So, I say this is the way of integration. First, I 'attack' in the Danish language, then I use my own native language. And when I really want to provoke, I wear my African attire. At the general assemblies, I go up to the podium in my African attire, I speak their [Danish] language, I come with good ideas... in this way I 'attack' them. It's so nice!

Noor: I would love to see that one day!

Moussa: You are welcome! I tell you, Noor, it is so nice. And I do it everywhere, whenever I go, I always have my African 'something'. I show them that I am Danish, but I am also proud of my culture.

By using the metaphorical expression “*attack*”, Moussa gives me the impression that not only does he have the need to continuously prove himself as a good citizen, but he also needs to claim his identities as African *and* Danish in public spaces. He works hard to remain in the zone of toleration and not slip into failure (Anderson, 2014),

while simultaneously choosing to affirm his ‘difference’ through being active in the public sphere. In clearly demonstrating his ‘Africanness’, Moussa defines ‘difference’ as the very essence of democratic participation (Young, 1990).

“Taking part in society the way I am”

Like Moussa and Victor, Ines’ experiences of being ‘different’ inform her understanding of active citizenship. An upper-class woman with an Arab-Muslim background, Ines volunteers in an international humanitarian organization in Oslo. Throughout the interview, Ines repeatedly stresses the importance of just being herself and not having to conform to expectations as an immigrant, something which she feels she is able to do through her involvement in the organization. In that organization, where (mostly) ethnic Norwegians with a relatively similar class background engage, Ines experiences being accepted as someone who is resourceful *because of* her ‘difference’, in contrast to the larger society, where she feels that she needs to conform to cultural norms in order to be accepted as a good citizen. She explains that being herself in the Norwegian society has been a constant challenge, as she does not fit into the prevalent stereotypes of the female Arab-Muslim immigrant, too often imagined as poor and oppressed by patriarchy (Anderson, 2014; Bredal, 1993).

Ines: If you are an Arab and a Muslim, then it’s very surprising for [Norwegians] if you are thin, if you look European, if you are educated... You don’t fit into any of the boxes they have in mind. And it is not only the person on the street, but also members of my husband’s [Norwegian] family. They are at a loss sometimes. If you do not fit into any of their stereotypes, they do not know what to do with you, so it is difficult for me to please people [...]. I’ve been told by Norwegian acquaintances that if I want to be part of society and be integrated, I need to join a political party. But I don’t want to be part of a political party. To me being part of a group and following rules is not me. I have always, always been against that. I vote, yes. But politics? No, I will not go into

this area. I know I am not changing so much of Norway this way, but at least I am not being changed.

Noor: And that is important to you – not being changed?

Ines: It is perhaps about taking part in society the way I am.

The last sentence in this passage revealed to me an understanding of active citizenship as a practice that is inseparable from experiences of being ‘different’ (in Ines’ case, being an upper-class Muslim woman of colour). Ines sheds light on the privilege of being able to ‘be who you are’ – in other words, taking belonging for granted, a privilege that is not afforded to all who took part in my research, regardless of their citizenship status and contributions to society. This act of ‘being oneself’ is also a way of exercising power in a situation where one’s belonging and place in society is questioned. Towards the end of the interview, Ines expressed to me how surprised she was that I was more interested in how “*foreigners bring change to society*”, as her experience is rather that “*Norwegians are more interested in how foreigners are going to change themselves to fit into the Norwegian society and culture*”. This last reflection from Ines tells a great deal about the disciplining facet of active citizenship, where active citizenship becomes an expectation to ‘make’ people fit into an imagined sameness (Gullestad, 2002b) – a sameness which frames ‘difference’ as problematic. Ines indeed engages in a way that is recognized in policy definitions of active citizenship (volunteering in an association), yet to her, being an active citizen is not just about volunteering, but about participating with one’s ‘difference’ – a perspective that was reiterated among research participants who are socio-economically marginalized and disabled.

Contesting the healthy good citizen norm

During my first day of wandering around in Sydhavn, I stumbled upon SydhavnsCompagniet (SC), a local NGO and community centre. The outside of the building reads “*Medborgercenter*” – co-citizen centre – and inside, the wall is painted with the following ethos:

*“SydhavnsCompagniet works for vulnerable co-citizens’ rights and needs – that everyone is treated with respect regardless of thought, ethnicity or belief – to ensure active participation in (local) society”.*⁵⁹

SC centres its work on social (local) work, community building and empowerment, providing stigmatized residents of Sydhavn with an open meeting space, a support network, free counselling, and social activities as well as volunteering activities. Moreover, SC’s aim is to promote active citizenship in the local district through encouraging volunteerism and mobilization of already existing social resources. The volunteering activities were mainly directed towards the larger community in the ‘old’ district of Sydhavn. Examples of such activities are working in the common garden, assisting in second-hand shops, or assisting in the kitchen at SC. The aim of such activities is to provide a community for those who experience isolation due to for instance mental and/or physical illness, long-term unemployment, and language barriers.

In this section, I focus on some of the insights gained from my fieldwork in SC, where I spent four months as a volunteer. In many ways, the research participants from SC contest the healthy and middle-class good citizen and argue for the recognition of

⁵⁹ The ethos is originally written in Danish: “*SydhavnsCompagniet arbejder for udsattes borgeres rettigheder og behov – at alle ydes respect uanset tanke, etnicitet og tro – for at sikre en aktiv deltagelse i (lokal)samfundet*”.

alternative ways of participating and conducting one's life that do not always fit into normative models of active citizenship.

Disputing the active/passive dichotomy

At SC there are various groups with each their unique function, but who are all equally essential for the centre. They are dependent on one another and cooperate, often on the same tasks. The first group consists of the paid employees, the second group are the volunteers and the third are 'regular users'⁶⁰ of the centre. The 'regular users' of the centre are those who are not formally volunteering, in the sense that they do not have a task specifically assigned to them nor a specific schedule they are expected to follow, but are nevertheless obliged to contribute to the centre in one way or another when they show up. In other words, there are no 'passive' recipients of services at the centre, as anyone who 'hangs out' at the centre is assigned a task. By performing a certain task, one has the 'right' to receive 'services' at the centre, such as counselling, social activities, or a meal. "There is no charity at SydhavnsCompagniet. Everyone has to work", one of the employees told me. The term 'work' denotes contributing to the centre in one way or another and is seen as a pathway to equality. This model of volunteering aims to blur the hierarchy between the employees, volunteers and 'regular users', although the employees were aware that it is not possible to do so perfectly. As a researcher doing participant observation, I was allowed to be a 'regular user'. The leader of the centre made it clear to me from the first day that if I am to conduct fieldwork at SC, then I am expected to "*contribute like everyone else*". Hence, I showed up unplanned at least once a week or whenever my schedule permitted.

⁶⁰ I use inverted commas because there are effectively no users at SC, since everyone at the centre is obliged to contribute in one way or another, even though one is not formally a volunteer or visitor. However, I employ the general term 'users' in parts of this chapter when referring to all those who are active in SC, but who are not paid employees (i.e. both volunteers and 'regular users').

I usually arrived at around eight-thirty in the morning and enjoyed an inexpensive breakfast with the employees, volunteers, and users, before being assigned a task by one of the employees. I performed anything from helping in the kitchen, to cleaning and re-organizing the centre's second-hand shop, to planting herbs in the district's organic garden, and staffing the reception. My fellow users were Sydhavn residents from different walks of life – many of them long-term unemployed with physical and/or psychological disabilities. After the completion of the tasks, we would all return to the centre around noon and enjoy a well-deserved and free lunch – another important social happening at SC.⁶¹ At times there were meetings before or during lunch; one of them was the 'citizen-meeting' (*borgermøde*), which took place every Monday, where the employees would inform us all about important developments in Sydhavn, or changes in the social welfare system that may affect users of SC. These meetings also provided a space for the volunteers and users to share concerns as well as ideas for future activities and projects. That way, they were not 'just' there to perform volunteering but were also 'active' in the sense that they were part of the centre's daily functioning.

Throughout my time at SC, I learned that participation is understood in a different way at SC than in other associations. SC uses a participation model that aims to deconstruct the power-relation between 'helper' and 'helped' – or, said differently, between 'active' and 'passive' citizens, as one of the employees explains:

Employee 1⁶²: Some of our users are alcoholics and drink, others have mental health challenges and sicknesses, while others simply don't have the psychological stability that is required to become a volunteer. Some days they have overskud [surplus], and other days they can be completely... they may find it difficult to sign up for activities beforehand, but they can show up spontaneously and say, 'I feel well today, I would

⁶¹ The lunch was free only for those who participated in an activity as a volunteer or as a user. Visitors of the centre who did not contribute that day paid a symbolic price.

⁶² To avoid revealing the identities of the employees at SC, I have not assigned them pseudonyms.

like to contribute'. If they go to the Red Cross or [other organizations] to volunteer, then it will be required of them to have full responsibility for a task and demonstrate continuity. It's difficult to volunteer when you sometimes can contribute and sometimes you can't.

The quote above makes visible the conditionality embedded in idealized participatory models, such as volunteerism, which is often more structured than the participatory model offered at SC. The latter, which is based on capacity (and need) and is more adapted to reality here and now, gives recognition to alternative ways of participating and *being* an active citizen. From their point of view, being an active citizen does not require a specific type or amount of *overskud*, but rather a wish to contribute with something – whatever that is on a given day.

“One can contribute with something”

Although I appreciated the opportunity to have access to SC and conduct observations for my research, I could not help feeling somehow bored with the tasks that I was assigned to do. The tasks just seemed too simple for me, and I was done with them long before the lunch break. I also struggled with recruiting research participants and felt that I could have used my fieldwork time more ‘efficiently’. During the four months I spent ‘hanging out’ at SC, I managed to conduct only one focus group discussion, three expert interviews, three interviews and a few one-on-one spontaneous and un-recorded conversations (which I thought to be a far less ‘efficient’ data collection process compared to what I had achieved in other arenas). At times, I wondered whether I should completely give up on SC as a case, since I was required to spend my time participating in activities that I thought did not ‘generate’ any ‘valuable data’, given that I struggled interviewing the other users. Eventually, after building a rapport with a few of the centre’s frequenters, I began seeing SC as a space for community and belonging for those who otherwise feel excluded in society. Being a

healthy person myself who indeed lives up to good citizenship norms, I came to understand my feelings of boredom at SC as an expression of privilege. Whereas to me, SC was a space to perform given tasks that would serve the local community, to my interlocutors, it is a space where they could gain a sense of *dignity*. More importantly, it is a space where they can feel as *empowered actors* contributing to their local environment, rather than ‘welfare dependents’, as another employee explains:

Employee 2: We experience in Denmark, I think, a volunteerism that is characterized by being very vertical, a vertical volunteerism with volunteers who have a life with a lot of resources and overskud, who help someone who is in a vulnerable situation. This asymmetrical power relation is only strengthened where it is the resourceful individuals who do things for those who are in a disempowered position. If we are to empower those who have it difficult, then we can't be always doing things for them. We need to do things with them, together with them, include them in some form of community. That is why we think that giving them the chance to unfold as active citizens is incredibly important [...]. Here in SC we have this horizontal volunteerism, where one volunteers by helping someone who is in a similar situation to oneself. They know what it is like to be broke, they know what it is to not have food the rest of the month. So, there is a strong solidarity and unity [...]. These people go from being 'users' of [activating measures], to becoming active co-citizens, where they become part of a community.

‘Empowerment’ is a term that I often heard at SC, both from employees and volunteers.⁶³ My impression is that they use it as a term that connotes being included and receiving recognition from others through participation. Another employee told me that the idea behind the creation of SC has indeed been to provide a “*meaningful and dignified alternative to those who are furthest away from the labour market*”. This alternative, she said, must be “*meaningful for the individual, and not just for the*

⁶³ They used the English term, and not the Danish one.

society”. She explained that one of the most important aims of SC is to find some volunteering tasks that users of the centre can perform according to their capacities:

Employee 3: We ask ourselves every day: how can one come here with nothing else but time, and still be regarded as active? We experience that some of the users were never allowed to – or perhaps it’s been long since they were allowed to – be part of a community. They have not been allowed to contribute with anything, because some suffer from mental illness, alcoholism, or drug addiction, or disorders or whatever. This makes many people feel lonely and useless. It breaks down one’s self-esteem. Yes, there is a welfare state that takes care of them, but at the same time, we have lost that which is being part of some community where you are allowed to do something for others, which is important [...]. We see this terrible loneliness here – that one does not feel included in a community, and one does not feel part of the Danish society. But here [at SC] one is part of a community where one is valued, even if one cannot contribute as much as others. But one can contribute with something.

Contributing according to one’s capacities is a recurring theme among the participants from SC. In a focus group discussion, the discussants argued that the Danish policy definitions of active citizenship carry demands for specific types of participation that might lead to more exclusion instead of inclusion. Rasmus, a war veteran, was critical to the positivity-laden term ‘opportunity’ (*mulighed*) that was repeated in the policy excerpt that I presented to the group (see quote 2 in Appendix 3):

Rasmus: How do we define ‘opportunity’? My history with the system... I was in the army and had been badly injured and was quite unlucky. I was shot in the head, I broke my neck and had other injuries. So during this process, you could say that the state and I had a love-hate relationship [...]. They grew tired of me, I grew tired of them... it started with “what are we going to do with you?” and ended with “but [Rasmus], we will never manage to get you back into the labour market”. And I just

told them laughingly: “yes, you are completely right. You can never make me active with the methods you’re using” [...]. I know very well that I am made to work, but I just couldn’t do it under their system.

Another war veteran at SC, Karl, talks about how many of his fellow veterans suffer from drug addiction, alcoholism, and post-traumatic stress syndrome. This is due, among other things, to lack of recognition in the Danish society, he argues. He tells me how their opportunities for work are limited, as their competences are not sufficiently recognized outside of the military, which turns them into clients of the welfare state where they become dependent on the help and support of social workers. To Rasmus, Karl, and the other discussants in the focus group, it seems like policy concepts of participation and active citizenship presuppose a model citizen who is independent and contributes to the welfare state in specific ways (through i.e. full-time employment). They contest the ideal of the ‘active citizen’ as an able-bodied and middle-class person – an ideal which they believe does not address different needs and contributions in society (Lister, 2003, 2007; Warming & Fahnøe, 2017). Moreover, they challenge the notion of ‘equal opportunities’, pointing out that people at SC lead highly diverse lives in terms of abilities. Their experiences reveal that norms of active citizenship, although intended to create social inclusion, may risk becoming an expectation that further excludes those with a diagnosis.

The people I spoke with at SC often understood active citizenship in terms of full recognition, rather than just participation through organizational volunteerism, political engagement, and a nine-to-five job. This does not mean, however, that they completely disregard the value of such desirable activities, but that they recognize the power dynamics implicated in policy definitions of active citizenship. As such, they express ambivalence about these definitions: they are aware that the way active citizenship is defined in policy documents is implicitly directed towards specific groups in society who are perceived as ‘passive’, and who are encouraged through

such policies to live in more ‘citizenly’ ways (Kennedy-Macfoy, 2012). Yet, they believe that through being active citizens, vulnerable individuals and groups can be recognized as full members who contribute with something meaningful to society. In other words, they contest binary conceptualizations of active citizenship as either an empowering or a disciplining practice.

In many ways, the employees at SC articulate a model of active citizenship which is very much in line with feminist re-workings of Marshall’s citizenship theory. These re-workings underline the importance of agency, providing a link between citizenship as active participation and as a set of rights (Halsaa et al., 2012). One of the employees at SC even mentioned explicitly that they base their work on Marshall’s ([1950] 1992) work, while stressing the importance of belonging and recognition:

Employee 3: When it comes to participation, we have borrowed some things from Marshall. When we say ‘participation’ it can be that you show up at your housing cooperative’s general assembly, that you exert influence and participate in the local and the national [elections]. But it can also be mundane things like your child’s participation in other children’s birthdays, that one can afford that, because we have people living in poverty here. And the third aspect is identity and belonging. Do co-citizens feel that they are part of a society? You can have your rights and do your obligation, but do you also feel part of a community? And then there’s identity – feeling included in the community which we call Denmark. It’s far from a given to feel included. As a social organization, and as social workers in the field, we see how policies affect people differently.

‘Participation’ here is not just about being present and contributing to the public sphere, as stressed in republican theories, nor is it just about achieving equal economic rights, as liberal theorists contend, but also encompasses belonging to a community as

a *full citizen*. The experience of recognition, belonging and dignity, then, is crucial to whether active citizenship norms become empowering or disciplining. Through questioning dominant norms of participation, the participants at SC also contest the idealized good citizen who carries specific classed and ableist characteristics that would make ‘him’ a valuable member of the community. Their contestation does not necessarily mean that they are against the concept of active citizenship, nor does it necessarily mean that active citizenship for them means being an activist fighting against social inequality. Instead, it is about opening up the concept and practice of active citizenship to include the *recognition* of those who are not active in the ‘right ways’. Moreover, it is about creating opportunities where one can still be an active citizen in ways that are promoted in state discourses (i.e. volunteering at a community centre), even if one does not comply with the ideal of the healthy, middle-class, active citizen.

Claiming recognition through ‘difference’

This chapter has shown how racial, religious, and classed minorities and those with disabilities are continuously positioned as ‘not good enough’ and as people who do not comply with norms about what is expected of a good citizen, potentially undermining their sense of belonging to the larger society. Yet, some of the practices and stories recounted here can also be read as attempts to contest widespread norms of sameness while claiming alternative ways of *being* an active citizen.

In the theoretical framework of my thesis, I presented feminist conceptions of citizenship, highlighting specifically Lister’s concept of lived citizenship, which encompasses rights and responsibilities, as well as participation, identity and belonging (Lister, 2007; Lister et al., 2003, 2005). I find that these interconnected dimensions of citizenship are reflected in the stories of the differently minoritized individuals I spoke

with. Although they all participate in ways that fit into active citizenship norms, thereby exercising their rights and responsibilities, they nevertheless experience that their identities and belonging are questioned. Through their experiences of being minoritized citizens, they reveal how the good citizen is constructed in a particularly gendered, ableist, classed, and racialized way, which places them at the borders or outside of the community of value.

While the marginalization that these individuals experienced positioned them at the borders of the community of value, these lived experiences and the ‘politics of difference’ (Young, 1990) were important motivations for their participation. Their narratives demonstrate how experiences of marginalization shape not only motivations to participate in society, but also understandings of what it means to be an active citizen in societies which value ‘sameness’. The participants were aware that they bear traces of their Otherness in their bodily hexis (Bourdieu, 1977), that is, in their accent, their skin colour, their clothes, their disability, and so on. Through their participation in the public sphere, they challenge the idealized attributes of the good citizen as someone who is non-Muslim, white, middle-class, and able-bodied. They insist on their ‘difference’ in public space through small, personal acts, such as talking with “an accent” (in Victor’s case), wearing “African attire” (in Moussa’s case) or simply contributing “with something” despite illnesses (as in the examples of the people at SC). Hence, they perform their active citizenship not only by participating in the public sphere, but by being there in all their ‘difference’. As such, they claim ‘difference’, rather than sameness, as the very core of participation (Jupp, 2008; Young, 1990).

Moreover, these minoritized interlocutors experience that their belonging is contingent on recognition from the majoritized society, which they feel that they themselves must ensure, through being active in ways that gain them recognition. The stories illustrate the significance of examining experiences of exclusion as part of citizenship practices,

rather than as something separate from active citizenship. In all the narratives, one can sense a strong sense of responsibility to challenge hegemonic norms of sameness, sometimes in visible ways, and sometimes not. For instance, Moussa's claim of being *both* a good Danish citizen and 'African' is his way of attempting to change the majority's perceptions of "blacks" and "Muslims", while Ines' refusal to conform to cultural norms and expectations demonstrates an agency to 'do things' differently. Their articulations of active citizenship were forged through experiences of being positioned as tolerated or failed in specific contexts. Moreover, rather than there being a causal linearity between recognition and participation, the stories in this chapter suggest that the situation is far more complex, and that one can still claim one's 'place' in society through active engagement while contesting the conditionalities of recognition.

Feminist scholarship has made a strong case in arguing that the contestation, and sometimes even subversion, of hegemonic norms and categorizations can come from the margins in empowering ways (Lister, 2007; Crenshaw, 1991; Young, 2000). This has been clearly demonstrated in this chapter, as my participants do not passively enact dominant good citizenship norms, but actively contest these in a number of ways, "showing a resourceful use of social capital within the liminal spaces they occupy in society" (Wood, 2014a, p. 592). As such, they argue for a conception of full citizenship that includes a politics of recognition and dignity (Lister, 2007). I therefore propose a consideration of Lister's (1997, 1998) concept of *differentiated universalism* – "a universalism which stands in creative tension to diversity and difference and which challenges the divisions and exclusionary inequalities which can stem from diversity" (Lister 1997, p. 39). Through this concept, Lister bridges citizenship's universalist aspirations with individuals' and communities' claims of recognition of difference. Rather than thinking of universalism in terms of impartiality or homogeneity, Lister (1997), drawing on Young (1990), argues for a universalism embedded in a moral commitment to the equal worth and participation of all. Participation, here, points to "people working together to improve their own quality of life and to provide conditions

for others to enjoy the fruits of a more affluent society” (Pahl, 1990 in Lister, 1997, p. 32). This is a form of active citizenship that disadvantaged people in particular exercise for themselves through for instance community groups (Lister, 1997), rather than having more privileged groups in society ‘help’ them. We can see this in the case of SC, where employees, volunteers, and users differentiate between horizontal and vertical volunteerism, thus disputing the dichotomy between ‘active’ and ‘passive’ citizenship.

This chapter has revealed how differently minoritized individuals challenge their positionings as tolerated or failed citizens and claim themselves as not just contributing members of society, but more importantly, as actors struggling against the discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice that renders them as such. With Lister’s (1997) concept of differential universalism in mind, we can acknowledge minoritized individuals’ demands to be recognized as different and at the same time as individuals who are worthy of full recognition. Indeed, the last thing people with a racialized background, with disabilities, or who live in poverty want is to be seen and treated as inferior and less-than-citizens (Lister, 1998). Those individuals in my research who experience minoritization are indeed aware of the ways that active citizenship ideals are implicated in hierarchical power relations, yet they insist on their right to be recognized as active citizens *on their own terms*.

8. Local resistances of good citizenship norms and practices

DO SOMETHING NOW THEN!!

– A frustration rant⁶⁴

*We say, ‘our children have too little space for playing,
almost nothing to play with...’*

*The school playground offers only 6 of the recommended 12 sqm city-schools should
have.*

Such things create ‘wars’

*You come here, talk about immediate measures,
pat us on the back because we voice our concerns*

‘Nobody knew about this’, you say.

Nothing happens.

Well, do something now then!

*We shout, ‘our children have no place for leisure activities,
To be active, we need a sports arena! Now!’*

Our youth roam the streets at night...

Such things create ‘wars’

And all of Norway is worried that

⁶⁴ This poem is authored by Eva, a resident in Tøyen. It was originally written in Norwegian and was published on Eva’s personal Facebook page. Eva, whom I became Facebook friends with after an informal conversation, has given me permission to use her poem in my thesis.

Tøyen and Grønland have become Sweden.⁶⁵

*We are invited to come with suggestions
to what an area renewal should include.*

*Despite everyone talking about the underlying conditions,
our children are labelled as criminals in the end.*

In that regard you choose to do something.

Crime prevention. More police...

*We cry, because our children receive no follow-up
after a murder in their building and drug-dealings in their hallways.
The school is struggling with kids who are unable to concentrate,
because the police and the district medical officer decided that
there is no need for psychologists' support here...?*

You shake your head and say,

'it can't be this way; this is not how children should grow up...'

Almost 60 children grow up in this building.

They still haven't received follow-up.

Nothing happens.

Well, do something now then!

*During official hearings we are told that
we are not following the agenda,
that we should use our time
to listen to what YOU think WE need.*

⁶⁵ The reference to Sweden here points to a political rhetoric in Norway that describes the challenges in specific neighbourhoods in Sweden as related to integration and gang-crime issues, rather than socio-economic inequality.

*To follow the process. And wait for the concept study.
And plans. And it's impossible to turn around a housing market...
But 'it's so great with engagement!
Now we have finally lifted Tøyen, people!'
YOU say.*

*But it hasn't cost you a DAMN THING!
Such things create 'wars'*

*'We did not know', my ass.
Oslo statistics:
We die earlier.
We have bigger health challenges.
Our children cannot afford to participate in after-school activities.
Murders happen in public housing projects.
Children grow up next to drug addicts and the mentally unstable.
We have the highest level of child poverty in the country.
Our youth are regarded as criminals.
They drop out of school.
They have a hard time getting a job after graduating.
One out of three [families] move away every year.
You know.
But you choose to do nothing.
God damn it!*

*'The district council cannot...'
'The city council does not have the possibility to...'
'We wish we could...'
'We have inherited a mess...'
'An economic chaos...'*

'And there are lists...'

'Others have waited longer...'

'Priorities have to be followed...'

In Bjørvika⁶⁶ the construction work goes as planned.

It's a choice to treat people with decency.

Or not.

Well, do something NOW THEN!

Something that costs you!!

Because it is costing us.

Too much.

Eva's powerful poem captures the main point I will discuss in this chapter: namely, that collective neighbourhood identities have an impact on how people understand their civic responsibility and how they resist dominant norms and practices of participation. My findings have so far demonstrated that although 'active citizenship' may seem like a positive and inclusionary concept, it is also exclusionary of marginalized ways of *acting* and *being* an active citizen (Lister, 2007). Whereas the two previous chapters looked at how individuals *contest* what it means to be a good citizen by widening definitions of contributions and the common good, this last empirical chapter looks at the collective ways in which good citizenship norms and practices are *resisted* within disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Resistance, here, does not mean civil disobedience or state-oppositional engagement, but rather disagreement

⁶⁶ Bjørvika is a recently developed area located in the centre of Oslo, and is home to business buildings, expensive apartments and the new Munch Museum, which has been moved from Tøyen. The uprooting of this cultural institution has provoked strong reactions among residents of Tøyen who are concerned that it will further deprive their neighbourhood. By mentioning Bjørvika, Eva points out the alleged hypocrisy of politicians who claim that there are not enough resources to develop Tøyen.

with, opposition to or reluctance about the expectations that come with good citizenship norms.

This chapter demonstrates that active citizenship as a lived experience cannot be divorced from its geographical context, and that there is a need to examine how people react to good citizenship norms in “spaces and places” (Ibid., p. 49). Here, I turn my gaze *inwards*, and explore the internal multiplicities and identities that constitute a place (Massey, 2004), and how a given place can be a site of resistance of good citizenship norms (Desforges et al., 2005; Wood, 2013, 2014b). The sub-question I attempt to answer is the following: *How do neighbourhood identities impact everyday resistance to good citizenship norms and practices?*

The examples that I include here are exclusively from my fieldwork in Tøyen and Sydhavn, where expressions of resistance were particularly evident. In contrast to residents living in more affluent localities, the residents I spoke with in Tøyen and Sydhavn expressed a sense of belonging and an emotional investment in their neighbourhood, through which they understood (their own) participation. Moreover, whereas active citizenship was understood among the participants residing in the more affluent areas as a form of social maintenance (i.e. volunteering in pre-existing associations and structures), residents in Sydhavn and Tøyen understood their engagement as a form of resistance and action aimed at social change, often creating local initiatives that did not previously exist.

The data that emerged from my fieldwork in Tøyen and Sydhavn is particularly interesting given that these two areas were undergoing considerable regeneration and

development at the time I conducted fieldwork.⁶⁷ These developments were often a source of contention in my interviews. On the one hand, the residents whom I spoke with take active responsibility for ameliorating their neighbourhoods. On the other hand, they also expressed resistance towards the developments, most notably towards participation agendas initiated and led by state institutions in their neighbourhoods. This chapter also discusses these tensions.

In this chapter, I start by presenting the context of my material. I then move on to explore people's everyday resistance of neighbourhood modernization as an expression of active citizenship. The third section investigates people's struggle to be heard within the municipality-led area regeneration processes in their neighbourhoods. Lastly, I discuss the importance of recognizing people's agency in negotiating active citizenship norms beyond the disciplining/empowering binary.

Introducing Sydhavn and Tøyen

Having conducted fieldwork in differing localities, I learned that the geographic communities in which individuals are embedded, as well as the classed dynamics and historicity of these, shape practices and understandings of active citizenship, often in ways that diverge from state discourses. It is therefore necessary to provide a concise contextualization and history of Sydhavn and Tøyen. While I introduce the areas individually below, they also exhibit many similarities in terms of being traditionally working class and socially deprived areas that are currently undergoing regeneration.

⁶⁷ Although Holmlia is also a disadvantaged neighbourhood and participants from there expressed a strong neighbourhood identity, I do not include data from this area as it was not undergoing any area regeneration at the time I conducted fieldwork.

Sydhavn

Sydhavn (which means ‘South Harbour’) is a historically working-class district that was originally built for Copenhagen’s industry workers in the first half of the 20th century. The old part of the district is characterized by rows of red and yellow brick buildings housing one-room apartments and allotment gardens (*haveforeninger*) that consist of tiny cabins. Although these colonies have recently become attractive due to the increasing demand for property with a garden within city proximity (Vording, 2017), historically, they were home to “criminals, gypsies, sailors, and others who were not treated as worthy citizens by the larger society” (Donohoe & Willersted, 2017, p. 3, my translation). The people I spoke with in Sydhavn never failed to mention the importance of these domiciles, giving me the impression that they are highly aware of the social exclusion that has taken place – and continues to take place – in modern Copenhagen.

Today, the district’s population of 20,000 residents is markedly different from the rest of Copenhagen, with a high number of single, elderly and socially vulnerable residents (Områdefornyelse Sydhavnen, 2015).⁶⁸ Statistically, Sydhavn residents consistently lie well below the average in terms of level of education, income and employment. Additionally, they have a life expectancy that is seven years lower than the rest of Copenhagen’s population (Donohoe & Willersted, 2017). However, Sydhavn’s population is highly diverse, as a municipality-authored report states: “Here are old workers, newcomers, young families with children [...] drug addicts, the vulnerable and the marginalized. Amazingly few students, surprisingly many rock stars and PhDs.” (Områdefornyelse Sydhavnen, 2015, p. 15, my translation).

⁶⁸ This is due, among other things, to the small size of the housings in the area and the heavy presence of public housing that marginalized citizens have the right to apply for.

Geographically, the district is cut off from the rest of the city by highways, railways, and waters, as well as uninhabited areas. The great distance to the rest of Copenhagen makes Sydhavn a somewhat isolated district, which contributes to a strong sense of local identity among the residents. In addition to Sydhavn being severed from the rest of the city, there are also divisions within Sydhavn itself. At the time I conducted fieldwork, the district had been experiencing an accelerating urban development as part of a comprehensive city renewal. One such development is the construction of new and architecturally modern areas such as Tegl – and Sluseholmen and Enghave Brygge – commonly referred to by my interlocutors as “the new Sydhavn”. Also, in 2017, one year after I concluded my fieldwork, a subway construction at the heart of Sydhavn had commenced, with the aim to provide a connection to the rest of the city by 2020. Although this renewal, which includes renovation of housing and revitalization of public areas and several cultural and social services, is intended to create a better quality of life for the residents, it has nevertheless sparked debates among the locals who are concerned about the impact that such developments may have on the culture in Sydhavn.

Alongside the area renewal, there had been many specific programmes led by the municipality and non-state actors, including around health and community development. Such programmes had an element of activation, where residents were taught to adopt certain lifestyles that would promote their health and well-being, as well as invited to share ideas on how to develop their community. Also, during the period I conducted fieldwork, several events and meetings were organized by the municipality-led area programme’s ‘expert team’, with the aim to involve residents in the planning processes. Learning about these programmes and initiatives, as well as attending some of the meetings and events, has given me insight on the social challenges in the district and allowed me to observe the relationship between different groups of residents and ‘the experts’, which was sometimes characterized by cooperation and other times by (mutual) tensions, as I will elaborate on in this chapter.

Tøyen

Like Sydhavn, the borough of Tøyen is a relatively poor working-class area and was also undergoing developments during the period I conducted fieldwork. However, unlike Sydhavn, Tøyen is in the heart of Oslo and is often characterized as a ‘transit area’, where one in three residents move every year (Holgensen, 2020). Since the 1800s, the borough has been marked by rampant social deprivation and a high level of poor and unhealthy living and housing conditions. Although relatively small, Tøyen is a densely populated area where half of the residents have an ethnic minority background, and the proportion of newly arrived immigrants is among the highest in the city (Brattbakk, Hagen, Rosten et al., 2015). Moreover, Tøyen has the highest rate of child-poverty in Norway, where one in three families with children live under the OECD poverty line (Ibid.). In addition to having low income and a low level of education, many of Tøyen’s residents have serious mental and/or physical health challenges and drug addiction and are highly dependent on various forms of social welfare support. This is partially due to the heavy presence of municipal social housing, psychiatric institutions and drug rehab facilities and clinics, creating a concentration of socially vulnerable residents in the area.

Despite recent gentrification⁶⁹ trends attracting highly educated and middle-class people, Tøyen’s population remains socio-economically divided, and differences in terms of quality of life are increasing (Huse, 2011; Sæter & Ruud, 2005). These socio-economic divisions largely follow ‘ethnic divisions’, as residents with backgrounds from Africa and Asia are poorer than residents with ethnic majority backgrounds (Brattbakk et al., 2015; Kriznik, 2015). A major consequence of the lack of safe living

⁶⁹ Gentrification is understood as a socio-economic development of a place, where older, often working-class areas receive an influx of new, middle-class residents (Sæter & Ruud, 2005). To meet the needs of the newcomers, the area goes through physical, social, and cultural changes and development within the retail sector, often leading to exacerbated socio-economic differences and tensions between the ‘old’ residents and the ‘new’ residents (Brattbakk et al., 2015).

conditions for children in Tøyen is the so-called ‘white-flight’ or ‘capital-flight’, where many socio-economically resourceful parents, often from the ethnic majority population, move away once their children reach school-age (Kriznik, 2013). Alternatively, they may send their children to a school in a wealthier part of Oslo or to a nearby private school with less ethnic minority and poor children. These tendencies exacerbate the already existing socio-geographic segregation within Oslo (Ljunggren, 2017). Furthermore, Tøyen has received significant and negative media attention due to street-crime and drug-trade. These discourses, which tend to focus more on race rather than class, were often experienced by my interviewees as stigmatizing.

To counter these challenges, the Socialist-Left Party (SV), backed by local activists and parents, have pushed for an area regeneration programme⁷⁰ with the aim to ameliorate the borough’s living conditions, arguably based on the needs and desires of the residents through a bottom-up approach (Holgersen, 2020). The local engagement of parents in particular has been key in the recent developments in Tøyen, specifically in countering the white/capital-flight and in encouraging other parents to enrol their children in the local, stigmatized public school. Local parents and activists formed campaigns, such as *Tøyeninitiativet* and *Tøyenkampanjen*, that were both directed at changing urban and local policies, and at bringing the neighbourhood together through various activities (street parties, meetings) and across social backgrounds, as a way to resist the media’s negative attention on the area. The following section looks at this resistance as a form of active citizenship.

⁷⁰ Officially named *Områdeløftet Tøyen*, which literally translates to Area Uplift Tøyen. The area programme was commonly referred to among my participants as *Tøyenløftet*, which carries a dual meaning. The first meaning of *løftet* is ‘the lift’, which points to the aim of the campaign: namely to lift Tøyen out of poverty and stigmatization. The second meaning of *løftet* is ‘the promise’, which refers to politicians’ promises to ameliorate living conditions in Tøyen.

Defending the neighbourhood identity

Many of the residents I spoke with in Tøyen and Sydhavn expressed a strong sense of ownership to their neighbourhoods and were eager to share with me all the positive things that their neighbourhoods have to offer. They often described their neighbourhoods as places of tolerance, inclusion and diversity, where it is easy – and acceptable – to be ‘different’. In Tøyen, for instance, I observed that schoolchildren are taught *Tøyensangen*, a children’s song aimed at eliciting a sense of pride, while adults often described Tøyen as a ‘village’ (*Tøyenbygda*), stressing the tight-knit nature of neighbourly relations that makes Tøyen a sociable place. In Sydhavn, my interlocutors never failed to mention the ‘Sydhavn spirit’ (*Sydhavnsånd*) – a spirit deeply anchored in Sydhavn’s working-class culture and a sense of community where people of different backgrounds have respect for one another. Yet, despite the positive changes that Tøyen and Sydhavn have undergone in recent years, there is a real concern that these changes might not only lead to displacement of the poor, but also weaken that which makes their neighbourhoods special. In this section, I explore people’s resistance against the negative reputation of their neighbourhoods, as well as their resistance against changes which they believe threaten a working-class way of being and living. These everyday resistances, I argue, are essential for people’s local engagement and understandings of their own civic responsibility.

Sydhavn – a place for ‘everyone’

Almost every person I spoke with in Sydhavn expressed frustration over the negative reputation of their district as a crime-ridden and socially challenged ‘ghetto’,

populated by residents who are considered as a ‘burden’ to society.⁷¹ They spoke positively of Sydhavn, emphasizing the strong sense of community, inclusion and solidarity – which they described as *rummelighed*. The Danish term can be literally translated as ‘spaciousness’, which can be physical or symbolic, carrying connotations related to practices of inclusion, such as tolerance, openness, and acceptance (Den Danske Ordbog, n.d.). There is a fear among the Sydhavners I spoke with that this practice may weaken or disappear altogether with the recent developments in Sydhavn:

Johan: So, what is the spirit in the old Sydhavn? It is the community, the rummelighed. And we see a development where Sydhavn is becoming modern and fashionable to live in – how do we protect some of the qualities that are part of this Sydhavn spirit?

Preserving the ‘old’ Sydhavn, which is characterized by a culture of inclusion, is reiterated as an expression of responsibility and local engagement. One way of protecting their district is to make sure that Sydhavn continues to be a home for the most vulnerable people – the ‘misfits’ who do not fit in or are not welcome in other districts in Copenhagen, such as the poor and drug and alcohol addicts, as Zakaria explains:

Zakaria: It happens that we are tired of those who sit and drink on the streets and shout slurs, and act stupid, but if someone comes and tells them to leave, I would tell them that they should not say that to them, because they are still part of the city, of this place [...] you just don’t throw people out, just because they act stupid. It takes a lot to be excluded here.

⁷¹ The Danish government employs the term ‘ghetto’ in its policy formulations and has published an official ‘ghetto list’. The government’s definition of a ghetto is an area with 1,000 residents or more, where at least fifty per cent are “immigrants and descendants of immigrants from non-Western countries”, and where unemployment exceeds forty per cent and crime occurs three times more than the country basis (Transport-Bygnings- og Boligministeriet, n.d.). Sjøløv Boulevard (a part of Sydhavn) was placed on the ‘ghetto list’ at the time I was conducting fieldwork.

In many ways, residents' understandings of inclusion often clash with the aims of area programmes, which are centred on 'lifting' the area out of poverty by making it attractive to middle-class newcomers (Holgerson, 2020). Merely being oneself, without having to fit into what is considered as acceptable or 'civil', is understood by many as that which makes Sydhavn special, and which needs to be protected.

Rummelighed is indeed a glaring contrast to the highly desirable civic attribute of *ordentlighed* (respectability), which interviewees in more affluent areas stressed, as I demonstrated in Chapter 4. Thus, those who are framed in the public eye as failed citizens, such as the poor and people suffering from addiction, who are often imagined as incapable of or failing to live up to liberal ideals, are not just tolerated in Sydhavn, but are considered to *deserve* membership in the local community. Such perspectives contest the idea of street-drinking as an act of incivility and deviance that does not belong in the public sphere (Dixon et al., 2006). In addition to tolerance, 'being social' is also reiterated as part of the Sydhavn spirit worth preserving:

Thomas: I think one of the things that makes this neighbourhood special is that people here are open and one talks more, and one sees each other more than one would do in other neighbourhoods. And you could say [that] it has to do with [the fact] that there are quite many in Sydhavn who have a lot of time because they don't go to work. Many living here are early retirees or unemployed. There are many people who drink a few too many stouts and... Yeah and that's why [they] have a lot of time. So, there's indeed a connection, but there's also a kind of... like another social community feeling, I think.

Noor: So, you feel that community feeling more here than in other parts of Copenhagen?

Thomas: Yes, I really think so. I do. This might also be the case in other parts of Copenhagen, but maybe in a different way. But I think that there is a bigger chance to come into conversation with people [in Sydhavn] and it doesn't seem weird or anything when you just talk to people. They have a desire to chat [in the convenience store] when they shop, or when you meet coincidentally. For example, in [my former neighbourhood], one would politely greet the neighbours who lived across the hallway, but it was just unthinkable that one knocked on their door and asked if they wanted to come over for a cup of coffee. You could surely do this here without people thinking that you are totally weird.

Being social as a way to demonstrate good citizenship in Sydhavn is an interesting contrast to official definitions that stress participation in organized settings such as associations. Here, mingling on the streets and sidewalks constitute an important part of Sydhavners' everyday practices of 'urban civility' (Amin, 2006), where being unemployed is considered a resource for good citizenship rather than an impediment. Although they may appear irrelevant to official structures of political debate and interaction, Young (2000) argues for recognizing the importance of everyday communication gestures such as greetings, making small talk and the offering of food and drinks to democratic participation, as people who publicly acknowledge others are "more substantively inclusive than those who do not" (p. 57). Being social is so fundamental to people's understanding of participation in Sydhavn that I found myself unintentionally being part of this practice. For example, while conducting walking interviews, my walking partner often stopped to greet people on the streets or in the convenience store and presented me as a researcher who is curious about Sydhavn. Moreover, while sitting alone in the older pubs or cafés⁷², people (mostly retired

⁷² The area programme has brought with it gentrification, as more 'modern' cafés and pubs attract middle-class people and young students who attend college nearby, but who do not necessarily reside in Sydhavn. Having observed that these stylish and newly opened places were empty most of the day (except for recess hours), I chose to hang out in the older pubs and cafés which were more populated during the day.

elderly) often invited themselves over to my table for a chat – something I did not experience in Østerbro.

A lot of the knowledge that I acquired on Sydhavn came from these spontaneous and small meetings, talks and walks, as my conversation partners were eager to share their views on what makes Sydhavn special. I understand this as their attempt to shed light on what they believe is at stake in the old part of Sydhavn in face of the area regeneration, such as specific buildings, parks and spaces that Sydhavners have historically fought to preserve.

“Fighting again and again”

As Sydhavn is a historically working-class district that is somewhat physically isolated and separated from the rest of Copenhagen, Sydhavners have often felt neglected and overridden by Copenhagen’s Municipality, the City Council, as well as large housing companies and businesses (Jessen, 2010). Many view these actors as threatening to the Sydhavn spirit, as they believe that their sole agenda is profit-making. For example, several Sydhavners referred to the continuous local resistance towards the municipality’s project to build a railroad or yet another highway that would cut through the old district, potentially diminishing vast areas of greenery and nature that make Sydhavn a unique district.

Alexander: I’ve been part of the fight for the preservation of our green areas. Every time someone from the municipality came and said that they have plans for building on the green areas, I joined the cause to preserve them. And through fighting again and again we managed to preserve the green areas [...]. And all these changes that you can see...where one has been part of it and made a difference or succeeded, that’s something you can be happy about, something one can be proud of. I can look at some

of these things and think to myself... Karens Minde [cultural centre], I've been part of the fight to preserve it. Or the children's animal farm – you cannot find that in any other big city. Or Tippen: the woods where people like to take a walk in. I've been part of fighting for these things. Most people living here really have a relationship to their district. They care about their district, they care for their co-citizens [medborgere], they want to do something good, they want to work together, and they love it when we stand together and unite around something.

Alexander is not alone in boasting about unique landmarks or institutions like the cultural centre Karens Minde, which functions as a rendezvous point for residents where they (often spontaneously) have a drink or lunch. The centre is also a venue for social events and activities, such as debates, concerts, knitting groups and quizzes, often bringing together residents with highly differing socio-economic backgrounds. Behind the building is a children's animal farm, which houses horses, rabbits, and goats, among other familiar creatures. Dating from the late 1800s, Karens Minde was previously an institution for children with disabilities, and preserving this beautiful and historic brick building surrounded by greenery has been one of the many causes that Sydhavners have been passionate about. The municipality of Copenhagen took over Karens Minde in the 1980s, but neglected it completely, leaving it to slowly decay over the next decades, before eventually deciding to tear it down. Alexander tells me how the residents of Sydhavn mobilized to save the building and turn it into a cultural centre, which they later succeeded in achieving through negotiations with the municipality. Others recounted to me how in 1991, residents from all ages and social backgrounds mobilized to form the longest coffee table ever registered in the Guinness World Records book, in protest against the planned construction of a railroad that would cut through the allotment gardens (see also Jessen, 2010). All these sites may be mundane to the outsider, yet much of what makes them special has more to do with a sense of responsibility infused with a common local identity and memories of how they had been protected by the community than with the physical sites themselves.

With this contextualization in mind, it becomes clear to me why Alexander, a long-term unemployed resident, repeatedly describes his locally embedded participation as a “fight”. Many residents from Sydhavn, including those who are elderly, sick and unemployed, articulate amazing resilience and tenacity in the face of numerous developments for modernization led by Copenhagen municipality. They clearly assume responsibility for the well-being of their own local community, yet in a drastically different way than a top-down governmentality framing of active citizenship that functions to ‘incorporate’ rather than empower people and which links participation to discipline (Jupp, 2008). Echoing Amin (2004), I argue that their understandings of active citizenship are derived from a politics of propinquity that is “shaped by the issues thrown up by living with diversity and sharing a common territorial space” (p. 39). Being an active citizen in Sydhavn goes beyond contributing to existing structures or activities in the ‘little democracy’ (*lilledemokratiet*) and includes resisting efforts of modernization that threaten the neighbourhood identity. It is important to note that this localism is not necessarily based on any kind of romantic essentialism or containment of place, and neither is it a total opposition to area renewal efforts, but it is nonetheless “a politics which is characterised over and over again as a ‘defence’ of place” (Massey, 2004).

In their strong commitment to protect the people and the place, the Sydhavners I spoke with demonstrate a sense of citizenship responsibility for their neighbourhood that resists norms and practices of good citizenship. Active citizenship for them unfolds through their personal affinities to physical common spaces, creating alternative and more inclusive understandings of living and being, where seemingly powerless people or ‘misfits’ can belong. In being experts on their own citizenship (Weller, 2003), Sydhavners expose everyday social interactions as a form of participation that generates both individual and group empowerment and brings about change within an underprivileged neighbourhood.

Resisting gentrification

A self-identifying working-class resident, Karoline is one of the local activists who make up the parent-led grassroots movement in Tøyen that calls for social change. Although she is supportive of the local activism in her neighbourhood, she is nevertheless critical towards mainstream understandings of community development, which she believes privilege the middle-class way of life:

Karoline: I notice that there are many great people here who want to do good, but we are sort of trapped in our perception of what we think is 'good' most of the time [...]. When people talk about how nice it is with all the new cafés in our area, I feel that... I can agree that they're nice the day when not only white middle-class people are sitting there. I think a lot about that when I engage in my neighbourhood: that change is important, but that it should include everybody. I grew up in a family with few economic resources. I am a child of parents who did not pursue an education, so I probably identify much more easily with those who struggle. So in this sense, I have a different... I think it's a little uncomfortable to have this kind of engagement where we sort of only understand and engage in that which is indisputably considered as 'good'.

Like other residents with few economic resources, Karoline fears that the rapid gentrification of her neighbourhood might lead to an increase in living costs, and consequently, displacement of those who would no longer be able to afford to live there, such as her family. She effectively points out what several scholars have noted about the Norwegian society, namely how the middle-class way of life has come to represent the norms against which everything is measured (Rugkåsa, 2012). In the context of Tøyen, this entails that older establishments are being replaced with trendy ones to better appeal to the lifestyles of the new middle-class residents, thus changing

the neighbourhood instead of alleviating the inequality that excludes people from fully participating and being part of society as equals.

Karoline: The changes [in Tøyen] must be directed towards those children who grow up here and who should have access to equal opportunities. I believe that if we do some structural changes, then maybe these children would have more equal opportunities, because I don't experience it this way today. So that is what I find uncomfortable.

For Karoline and the other parents whom I spoke with in Tøyen, parental engagement is not (just) about raising their children well or about participating in child-centred arenas, which is all too often stressed in active citizenship promoting policies. Rather, they understand their engagement as a resistance to urban policies and developments that stigmatize already marginalized residents of Tøyen, especially the children. In many ways, these parents take on the responsibility of public authorities in developing their own communities, while at the same time putting pressure on state institutions and politicians to develop urban policies that would protect the most vulnerable and ensure a safe future for disadvantaged children. This type of engagement, although it leads to some change, is also fraught with tension, as I touch upon in the following section.

The struggle to be heard

Whilst from the state's view the aim of active citizenship is to create cohesion and inclusion in society, several research participants in Tøyen and Sydhavn expressed feelings of disillusionment and of being unheard during meetings with the municipality, local politicians, and area programme professionals. Interestingly, these participants are the 'typical' active citizens who are visible in the media and in other

public spaces. They have ample social capital at their disposal and their engagement fits into a long Scandinavian tradition of cooperation between grassroots movements, the voluntary sector and the welfare state (Vabø, 2011). However, they often feel that their locally grounded experiences and knowledges are overridden by local institutions. In this section, I explore struggles for being heard in community development processes.

“They set the limits for what we should do”

Eva, whose poem I presented at the beginning of this chapter, was referred to by many as ‘the mother of Tøyen’. For several years she has been an outspoken local activist, working relentlessly to ameliorate living conditions in her neighbourhood. Despite being a resourceful resident who has managed to mobilize her local community in the fight against social inequality, Eva nevertheless finds it frustrating that politicians do not share the burden of this responsibility while applauding the engagement of Tøyen-residents. In many ways, Eva’s poem articulates a general feeling of discontent and frustration that I picked up from several residents in Tøyen. In the poem, she sheds light on the paradox of participation, where on the one hand, people are applauded for taking responsibility for their local communities (and this is especially applauded in marginalized neighbourhoods, such as Tøyen), and on the other hand, this ‘taking of responsibility’ is complicated by bureaucratic procedures, budgetary limitations, political agendas and tensions between professionals and residents. When I asked Eva for permission to use the poem, she responded positively, telling me that she thought the poem “*had its function*” and that “*it had worked*”. The poem was written and posted on her Facebook profile a few days prior to Oslo City Council’s budget negotiations and was intended as a pointing finger towards local politicians. “*There is a lot of feelings and cursing [in the poem]. It was written and posted in five minutes, I think. I was pissed off!*”, Eva writes to me on Facebook.

Eva's frustration and anger stem from the experience of not being taken seriously by state institutions. Moreover, these feelings also stem from the impression that even when residents are invited to meetings with local politicians, they do not receive any substantial solutions to the social challenges in their neighbourhoods. By referring to how politicians applaud Tøyen residents' civic engagement without offering any lasting solutions to the widespread poverty in the neighbourhood, Eva exposes the often-tokenistic nature of participatory ideals. Towards the end of the poem, she raises the crucial question of *who* is more entitled to set "the agenda": the residents of neighbourhoods affected by inefficient urban policies, or the district bureaucrats and elected politicians? Who is 'the expert' and whose knowledge carries more legitimacy?

These questions are also raised among neighbourhood activists in Sydhavn who often experience that the possibility to create change in their own neighbourhood and to have ownership of the development process is limited within the area programme's framework of participation, as Adam's quote suggests:

Adam: [The area programme] want[s] to be involved in everything, and it's both a good and a shitty thing you can say. They can learn from us, but they can also risk controlling us too much, so we won't have the chance to develop things ourselves. So, this is a balancing act, no? I mean they should of course support and help us realize things, but sometimes I think, like, why don't they just come with the money, give us the money, and we can just work insanely [hard], and they could just come and say like 'ok this is maybe too much, just make sure this is done right', instead of setting the limits from the beginning. They set the limits for what we should do, and then we are allowed to work on whatever we want within those limits. And I don't think that's good enough. I think that we should just be allowed to work, and later they can correct us if needed, because then we would have our own soul in it. Of course, this could be risky. There is a risk that it could go totally wrong – giving a load of money to people to

initiate projects. But I think the results... I mean it could be more expensive, but I think the results would just be so much better, because then you feel that you have fully participated. The way [the area programme] does it now totally undermines us. I cannot understand how they allow us to engage within certain limits only. It's sort of disciplining.

Eva and Adam question what they experience as the municipality's ways to discipline residents into taking action that is predefined by the area programme in their local communities. This points to the duality of active citizenship policies, as people are empowered by the state to take action while simultaneously manipulated into taking the right action (van der Land, 2014). In dealing with this tension, these local activists perform "a balancing act" between self-responsibilization on the one hand, by collaborating with local institutions, and self-reliance on the other, by mobilizing their own capacities to solve problems in their neighbourhoods (Ibid.) – a balancing act that is not straightforward to achieve.

In Sydhavn especially, I identified a fierce resistance towards the municipality, which was often described by Sydhavners as an overriding force. This antagonism could be related to Sydhavn being a somewhat isolated area from the rest of Copenhagen municipality, unlike Tøyen, which is located at the heart of Oslo municipality. The below quote from Zakaria, a young local activist from Sydhavn, reflects a general attitude of scepticism towards the professionals working within the area regeneration project in Sydhavn, perceiving them as outsiders who presumably do not genuinely care about the area and its residents. At times it seemed as though there existed a parallel resident-led movement or structure that tries to avoid (financial support from) the municipality and the area programme professionals, out of fear that their involvement would undermine their own interests and initiatives.

Zakaria: We are applying for funding [for our project] now, but actually our intention is that the district council (lokaludvalget) and the area programme office should be as little involved as possible. We have no interest in their involvement in our project at all. There is someone from the area programme office who really tries to involve himself [...] we are actually a bit annoyed, because they have this... we don't really experience that they recognize us. They have this sort of cocky, or self-important way of being [...]. We have been [working on this project] many months before [the area regeneration started]. And now this guy from the area programme comes and tells us that their project is running well, and if we really want to, we can join and participate in it. And we are thinking like... 'excuse me! We were here first! We don't need your... you don't need to come here and be this father figure!' We have not invited him to come here, and honestly, we just want these people to be far away. So that's sort of our relationship with the area programme.

Several activists from both Sydhavn and Tøyen told me that they experience the area programmes as a deductive top-down process, limiting 'authentic' resident-led development. Although they may be highly critical of the (intentions of) area programme professionals, most of the activists I spoke with nevertheless acknowledge the value in cooperation and receiving support from them. "We have to be the state", said a resident in Sydhavn, arguing that the municipality should preferably act as a support-system, rather than a driving force, in the regeneration of their neighbourhood. These perspectives illuminate how state-led resident-involvement initiatives can carry elements of patronage, as locals are not trusted to know what is best for them – a criticism that has been heavily discussed in the field of development studies (see for instance Hickey & Mohan, 2004).

“There are many groups in Sydhavn who don’t get their say”

There is a widespread concern among the people I spoke with in both neighbourhoods that the involvement of the state would further alienate vulnerable residents who may not fit into resident-involvement measures and the format of participation initiated by the area programme. These measures and formats, they claim, not only risk diminishing their sense of ownership to the development of their own communities, they also privilege specific groups or residents who more easily fit into this format. One of the expert interviewees in Sydhavn confirms this:

Karen: The type of people who show up [to our meetings] are often the resourceful ones. These are of course not representative for the whole borough, because these are the kind of people who can attend meetings that last three hours, they can all sit around the table, debate and socialize. They are all quite well-articulated and reflective.

Resident-involvement in state-led community development projects was a widely championed practice among the municipality and area programme professionals I interviewed. This type of participation is considered a way to legitimize the local government and strengthen local democracy and is highly characterized by the form of power Foucault refers to as governmentality (Raco & Imrie, 2000). Governmentality in relation to active citizenship can be understood as the “paradoxical combination of empowering citizens to take action while simultaneously manipulating them to take the right action” (Hodgson, 2001 in van der Land, 2014, p. 426). In Sydhavn and Tøyen, this meant, among other things, that residents were mobilized to attend meetings and events organized by the area regeneration office where they could express their needs, opinions and concerns about the developments in their neighbourhoods. Residents were also presented with community development plans and were somewhat involved in co-planning the renewal of spaces in their

neighbourhoods. This means that there are quite specific expectations regarding what local participation in community development consists of. As Karen's quote shows, resident-involvement can be a quite structured and formalized practice, creating a purification of knowledge where deviating forms of knowledge or people become excluded (Kothari, 2001). Within such a framework, resident participation may risk becoming a form of disciplining, with the aim to 'incorporate' individuals into a model of participation that reinforces pre-existing social inequalities. An example of those considered as deviant being excluded from the process is drug and alcohol addicts in Sydhavn: a group which is visible in the urban landscape yet is often missing in resident involvement initiatives. Not surprisingly, I did not meet any addicts at the meetings and activities that were initiated by the area programme office, despite continual efforts of the professionals to include the voices of marginalized people in Sydhavn and to avoid their displacement – an impression which was confirmed by another local activist:

Tore: I mean it's not easy for those who sit outside and suffer from drug addiction. It's not easy for those beer-drinkers at Mozarts Plads to involve themselves in the area programme. It's not easy enough. They should always have the opportunity to go in and say something, even though they're piss drunk! And it should also be easier to participate for those who are sick and maybe lying in bed [...]. I think there are many groups in Sydhavn who don't get their say. And it is them who are affected the most.

I don't think [the municipality] is open enough, transparent enough. I think they should change the way they do things [...] they should at least go out and seek advice from those who are not the 'typical' active citizens. It's easy enough to listen to an anthropologists' research on the neighbourhood and analyse stuff... but I simply don't think that it is enough. There is something about giving people opportunities to do something, like purely physical changes out here, like all the way down to the earth – something practical; like 'here is a shovel, dig a hole wherever you want'. I'm exaggerating now, but you get my point. I think this is important because there is a big

distance between the resident and the municipality. There are many levels before you can reach them. It's unclear in a way.

The “beer-drinkers”, Tore argues, should be regarded as experts simply by virtue of being residents in Sydhavn, yet their knowledge is often disregarded. People with addiction are often mentioned in the interviews and focus group discussions, making them a symbol of contention within community development projects. There is great concern that this particularly vulnerable group might be pushed out of their districts due to increasing gentrification that homogenizes neighbourhoods. During a workshop I attended at the area programme office in Sydhavn, there was an intense discussion between the residents and the professionals on how one could make sure that the drug and alcohol addicts’ (physical) space and belonging in Sydhavn is not threatened by the ongoing developments. I found it interesting how, on the one hand, Sydhavners and area programme professionals wish to protect this ‘group’s’ rights to be part of the local landscape, while at the same time excluding them from the very debates of which they are the subject (or object, for that matter), precisely because they do not fit into the predefined format of resident-involvement. Essentially, these discussions illuminate a highly selective interpretation of the interrelated concepts of active citizenship, community (development) and social capital (Gaynor, 2009). Despite the aim of active citizenship state-discourses to strengthen local communities’ capacities to alleviate social challenges, the divisions of power and opportunity and conflicts of interests that in fact characterize local (and national) communities become obscured (Lister, 1998). Vulnerable groups thus end up being effectively excluded from participatory structures, to the advantage of more privileged groups who more easily fit into these.

Negotiating the disciplinary/empowering binary of participation

The focus of this chapter has been on people's situated resistance of prevalent active citizenship norms and practices, where neighbourhood identities are central. Their resistance was not a radical dissidence or state-oppositional activism. Instead, it was about retaining a sense of collective neighbourhood identity in the face of developments that threaten to exclude ways of being and living that do not fit into ideas of good citizenship. The narratives in this chapter point to two important findings: first, active citizenship as a concept, norm or practice, is inseparable from the spaces and places where people live their everyday lives, and where power relations between the desirable and less desirable citizens are experienced. Second, resident-involvement initiatives, whether they are led by residents or by professionals, can be inclusionary as people are given the opportunity to shape their neighbourhoods. On the other hand, such initiatives may also contribute to further exclusion of those (already marginalized) residents who do not have the 'right' kind of resources to be actively involved.

The stories in this chapter show that lived citizenship is shaped through neighbourhood identities and belonging. Through exploring people's relationships to the places they live in and to everyday physical (and symbolic) sites, it was possible to capture people's "citizenship imaginations" (Wood, 2014b), which include a wish for inclusion and diversity – even towards those who might be considered as 'misfits' within the larger society. By caring for vulnerable others and for their place, through for example taking a stance against social inequality or fighting to preserve a space, these active citizens resist the idea of 'the good neighbourhood' populated by only middle-class and healthy good citizens. Moreover, their capacity to notice social issues in the context of wider societal factors and take responsibility for them is a clear manifestation of their "geographies of responsibility" (Massey, 2004). Their narratives

demonstrate that local engagement is not given and is always marked by resistance and competing definitions of who ‘counts’ as a good citizen and what constitutes a ‘good’ neighbourhood. To them, local engagement is not merely participation in volunteering activities and associations that bring neighbours together. Rather, it is about caring for and defending that which makes the neighbourhood unique, while fighting for belonging for all, and not just for the privileged few. This brings me to the second point, namely active citizenship as both an inclusive practice and a disciplining expectation.

As already mentioned, applying Lister’s concept of lived citizenship to a study on active citizenship entails paying attention to the ways in which people’s everyday experiences impact how they understand their civic responsibility and participate in society. The findings in this chapter have shown that these experiences cannot be divorced from the power hierarchies that exist within places. In the context of Tøyen and Sydhavn specifically, where there is an increasing gap between rich new residents and poor old residents, this means that participatory initiatives may promote either inclusion or exclusion – not just on a ‘factual’ level, but also in terms of how they are experienced by people ‘on the ground’.

Through my conversations with residents in these two localities, I have learned that they indeed fulfil expectations that come with good citizenship norms by acting in a communitarian spirit. Many are volunteers who take responsibility for their own communities and willingly cooperate with local institutions to create better neighbourhoods (Onyx et al., 2012). However, their active citizenship was also a form of resistance against gentrification trends and disciplinary participatory norms that render some ‘active’ and others ‘passive’, some ‘desirable’ and others ‘less desirable’. They stressed the importance of acknowledging the right to participate differently in the social institutions and culture of society (Warming & Fahnøe, 2017), as well as the right to lead a life that deviates from dominant middle-class and ableist norms. Their

resistance, thus, is also a negotiation of the Janus-face of active citizenship. They resist disciplinary active citizenship norms that expect people to participate locally in a certain way. However, their neighbourhood activism also shows active citizenship as an inclusive practice, as it enhances their sense of belonging to their neighbourhood and promotes their ownership of development processes. Thus, one should be careful not to assume either that the active citizen is fully disciplined into participating in desirable ways or that resistance is always progressive or radical (Buire & Staeheli, 2017; Staeheli, 2008). The participants demonstrate that one can take responsibility for one's neighbourhood while simultaneously resisting governing participation agendas.

Moreover, the tensions that residents experience in their meetings with professionals working in the area programmes demonstrate that active citizenship as a concept and practice is far from unproblematic, and that the way it is promoted by the state disregards, or at least controls, people's knowledge and capacities to create change in their neighbourhoods. Regardless of how inclusive attempts at resident-involvement are, conceptions of the good citizen continue to shape the conditions of participation in community development projects. As such, calls for participation need to consider issues of recognition and redistribution of resources, and not just participation in local and formal democratic structures – as echoed in the poem of Eva. Such a reconceptualization of active citizenship strikes at the heart of liberal, republican and communitarian traditions that only focus on people's responsibilities and obligations, but not their power.

9. Concluding discussion

In this dissertation, I have explored how individuals living in Norway and Denmark assert, contest, and resist norms of active citizenship. My research has been motivated by a concern about how the concept of active citizenship presupposes a certain model citizen, which suggests that those who do not fulfil this ideal may risk exclusion. I therefore set out to achieve two objectives through my research: the first objective was to take seriously people's own conceptualizations of active citizenship. I proposed to do this by looking at how lived experiences shape people's understandings and practices of civic engagement, contributions, and responsibility, looking specifically at how, when and which social positionalities matter. The second objective was to move beyond a binary understanding of active citizenship as either a governing or an empowering practice, by recognizing individuals' agency in sustaining, contesting, or resisting dominant ideas of the active citizen. To fulfil these objectives, I have asked the following overarching research question: *In what ways do people in Denmark and Norway assert, contest, and resist norms of active citizenship?*

In answering this question, I have argued that the concept of active citizenship, rather than only referring to an obligation or a right to participate in democratic structures, is also a differentiating norm that produces discursive boundaries between 'active' and 'passive' citizens, 'desirable' and 'less desirable' citizens. As such, discourses and debates on active citizenship reflect and reinforce existing power relations and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in the Norwegian and Danish societies. I have also argued that this norm, although it is formulated through policy discourses on the state level and through mainstream academic discourses, is also reproduced, challenged, and resisted by ordinary people through their socially and spatially situated experiences.

This concluding discussion begins with stating the theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions that this study provides to the discipline of gender studies, and more specifically, to studies on active citizenship in Norway and Denmark. I then move on to elaborate on my research insights and how these can be understood in light of the issues raised in the introduction, the theoretical framework and the research design. Next, I offer some reflections on what implications my study may have on policy development and suggest avenues for further research. I end this concluding discussion with a personal note on the unintended routes that this research has taken.

Contributions to gender studies and active citizenship studies

I have primarily engaged with debates within critical feminist citizenship, feminist geography studies, and citizenship geography studies in my dissertation. These three overarching strands of research have particularly helped me to address the relationship between participation and recognition, the inclusionary/exclusionary dynamics inherent in the concept of active citizenship, and the agency that individuals have in negotiating norms. This study is as such a contribution to the feminist citizenship literature that seeks to illuminate the normative dimensions of citizenship, and the conditions, norms, or expectations that underlie access to full membership and recognition.

In addition, this study has sought to explore the concept of active citizenship beyond the disciplinary/empowering binary. Feminist citizenship scholars have convincingly argued that the initially feminist calls for ‘active citizenship’, underpinned by inclusionary and emancipatory ideals, have been appropriated by governments that seek to modernize and reform their public sector while dealing with concerns related

to social cohesion and the sustainability of their welfare states (Newman, 2013; Newman & Tonkens, 2011; Lister, 1997; Segal, 2013). The main criticism is that the notion of the ‘active citizen’ has discursively displaced the feminist notion of the ‘activist citizen’, whose practices are potentially disruptive for governments and who challenges communitarian conceptions of social cohesion (Isin, 2008). Although I agree with this criticism, based on my analysis, I claim that this binary understanding of participation and what it means to ‘be active’ may overshadow, or even deny, the diverse ways that individuals and groups understand their civic responsibility.

My study has contributed to these discussions by demonstrating the different, and often contradictory, ways that people maintain, challenge, and resist expectations or norms of participation through their lived experiences. It shows that while some people assert disciplinary and excluding conceptions of active citizenship, others, most notably those who ‘fail’ to live up to the idealized good citizen, contest and resist such conceptions in subtle ways, showing inclusionary and empowering ways of practicing one’s responsibility. Moreover, this study has shown that even though people indeed act in ways that align with active citizenship policies *in some contexts*, they *also* hold practices and contributions that are unrecognized within such policies, such as intimate care, help, and support outside of voluntary associations or beyond the boundaries of the Norwegian and Danish nation-states. I argue that these practices are central ways in which residents of Oslo and Copenhagen aim to contribute to their communities and society at large.

This study is also a contribution to the Norwegian and Danish scholarship on active citizenship. The two countries, which are increasingly experiencing a ‘civic turn’ (Mouritsen, 2008), are searching for ways to sustain a national citizenry conducive to a well-functioning welfare state and liberal democracy in the context of public budget cuts and increased diversity (Jensen et al., 2017a). Inspired by the feminist critique of

the concept of active citizenship, I wanted to understand how selected Norwegian and Danish welfare state and integration policies are implicated in notions of the ‘model citizen’, and what specific understandings of participation these produce. Studies on civic engagement or *medborgerskap/b* in Norway and Denmark have mostly focused on specific types of (formal) participation, often limited to the public sphere, such as associational and local volunteerism, political participation, and activism. Although these studies are helpful in assessing the health of democracies and the conditions for participation in formal democratic structures, they nevertheless employ active citizenship in the descriptive sense, concealing its normative and disciplining dimensions.

Moreover, a majority of these studies employ quantitative methods, or they focus on specific groups, such as ethnic, religious or sexual minorities, women, and young people. My research has sought to complement these studies by examining through qualitative methods how participation is understood and defined among a diversity of people from different social ‘groups’, while maintaining a critical approach to the normative dimensions of active citizenship using feminist citizenship scholarship.

An ambition of this thesis has been to avoid compartmentalizing individuals into identity categories or assuming that people’s participation is motivated by specific identities. By employing an intersectional and spatial lens to the data collection and analysis process, this study also makes some methodological contributions to intersectional studies on citizenship. Following West and Fenstermaker’s (1995) understanding of intersectionality, I treated social identities as *emerging properties* that occur in specific contexts and relations, rather than focusing on a specific ‘group’ or social category. Using this intersectionality approach, I have shown how norms of active citizenship that frame some as ‘active’ and others as ‘passive’ are both implicated in and (re)produce intersecting social hierarchies. This has involved

discovering how powerful imaginations of the good, tolerated, and failed citizen are constituted through multiple and intersecting hegemonic norms articulated by highly differently socially located individuals.

Through this intersectional approach, I have also shed light on similar experiences of inclusion and exclusion across very different ‘groups’ in a single study. This has helped to avoid the majority/minority dichotomy that is often found in (active) citizenship studies, showing how individuals, regardless of their social position, contribute to the reproduction of hegemonic norms that constitute the good, tolerated and failed citizen, as seen in Chapters 4 and 5. Moreover, by applying a spatial lens, I have demonstrated how some arenas and places carry the potential for inclusionary and empowering practices (as seen in Chapters 6 and 8), while others may be imbued with exclusionary and disciplinary notions of participation (as seen in Chapters 4 and 5).

In sum, the insights resulting from my methodological choices have shown the complexities and ambiguities of people’s positionalities, and the futility of categorizing people into the binaries of ‘active’ or ‘passive’, ‘disciplined’ or ‘empowered’. My participants’ narratives complicate these categories, while challenging the assumption that norms are universal and that they apply the same way to everyone everywhere. In the following sections, I elaborate further on my research insights, tying them to wider theoretical discussions in the field.

Active citizenship as a differentiating norm

In Chapters 1 and 2, I argued that the good citizen is widely assumed in dominant formulations of active citizenship as a rational, decent, impartial, self-sufficient, and

culturally similar actor who actively contributes to ‘the national’ common good. These discourses are to a certain extent reflected in the narratives of my interlocutors, as shown in Chapters 4 and 5. In these chapters, the good citizen is imagined by my participants as a particularly gendered, classed, able-bodied, and ethnically and culturally similar subject who contributes to specific local and child-centred arenas. In other words, they claim that to be recognized as an active and contributing member of society, one needs to embody certain characteristics and participate in certain ways. This good citizen is often contrasted against those who (are assumed to) lack these characteristics, and who can therefore not be recognized as ‘active’.

Through defining certain characteristics, practices and values as desirable for active citizenship, my research participants discern between those with the ‘right’ kind of attributes who can be recognized as ‘active’ and contributing members, and undesirable others who are assumed to be ‘passive’ and ‘unfit’ for participation. These chapters thus illuminate the ways that dominant norms of good citizenship are asserted by different people, and how their imaginations of the good citizen are implicated in a boundary-making process which excludes certain individuals or groups from the community of value. The home and child-centred arenas are repeatedly brought up as spaces for raising good citizens and where parental responsibility is stressed. Their emphasis on the ‘good’ childhood and ‘responsible’ parenting demonstrate, in line with Plummer’s work (2001, 2003), how the domestic sphere and the intimate relation between the child and adult are sites of good citizenship norms.

These narratives challenge the widespread assumption in active citizenship policies and mainstream civic engagement studies that active citizenship is only about fulfilling one’s obligation or about exercising the democratic right to partake in society. They demonstrate that active citizenship is also *a norm* that constitutes the boundaries of the community of value in which some are included, and others are excluded. Moreover,

this norm is not only articulated ‘from above’ but is also (re)produced by individuals in their everyday spaces and on the local scale.

Nevertheless, although there is wide agreement among my participants on ‘what it takes’ to be recognized as a contributing member, many – most notably those occupying different types of (intersecting) minoritized positions or who feel guilty for not living up to participatory norms – contest and resist these conditions. In Chapter 6, we see how individuals broaden the scope of what ‘counts’ as a societal contribution. They challenge the ideal of the ‘impartial citizen’ who contributes to the national common good as they uphold intimate practices of care, help, and support that take place in spaces unrecognized in dominant discourses – such as ‘immigrant associations’, faith-based arenas, pubs and the homes of friends. To define their contributions, they draw on social and intimate relationships, as well as their belonging in transnational communities. In doing so, they demonstrate how other rationalities and values than those generally associated with the liberal, republican, or communitarian theorizations of active citizenship, such as love, faith, interdependency, and mutuality, constitute their sense of responsibility (Sevenhuijsen, 1998, 2000, 2003; Lawson, 2007). Moreover, their understandings of responsibility echo geography scholars Staeheli et al. (2012) and Massey (2004), who claim that citizenship, including its participatory dimension, is situated, and located in multiple sites and scales, both territorial and non-territorial. As such, my findings contribute to the scholarly perspectives that argue for the importance of understanding lived citizenship as cutting across the public-private divide and the borders of nation-states (Yuval-Davis, 1999, 2007; Häkli et al., 2019; Moosa-Mitha, 2017; Warming & Fahnøe, 2017).

Thus, by paying attention to the social positionalities and scales of belonging that are inscribed in the stories of people, one can perhaps begin to better understand the contingency of ‘active citizenship’, and move beyond oppositional discourses that

speak of some as ‘active’ and others as ‘passive’. We can acknowledge how people’s lived experiences in homes, churches and neighbourhoods not only complicate the active/passive dichotomy embedded in liberal, republican and communitarian citizenship traditions, but also show how impossible it is to split the concept of citizenship into ‘active’ and ‘passive’. The examples in Chapter 7 certainly demonstrate that such distinctions are not only unhelpful but also render ‘active citizenship’ into a measuring rod against which many (already marginalized) people would fall short.

Active citizenship beyond the disciplining/empowering binary

A central aim of this thesis has been to move beyond a binary conceptual understanding of active citizenship as either a governing instrument which ‘incorporates’ people by encouraging them to participate in desirable ways, or as an empowering practice where people act in ways that disrupt the state. The narratives told in the empirical chapters complicate this binary, as they show that people ‘mobilize’ discourses of good citizenship in contested, contradictory, and complex ways. As mentioned in the methodological chapter, virtually everyone who participated in my study wished to be perceived as good citizens who take responsibility and contribute to society in one way or another. However, while some asserted dominant norms of participation, and were indeed unintentionally reproducing its power dynamics, others were aware of the norms that underpin participatory ideals.

Chapters 4 and 5 show how active citizenship norms can be exclusionary as people expect themselves and others to *be* and *act* in ways that reflect dominant good citizenship norms. Participation in local associations and in *dugnad*, for instance, although they may have an inclusionary potential (e.g. meeting people or belonging to

an arena), also require a certain level of capital, competency, and health capacity (*overskud*), making them exclusionary to some individuals or groups.

Yet, participation also provides people with a framework for aspiration and action to create change, even if they rarely oppose the state or express political dissent, as seen in the examples of neighbourhood engagement in Tøyen and Sydhavn in Chapter 8. Creating change in these cases can be understood as something that happens *within* the framework of active citizenship agendas, and not necessarily outside of them. On the one hand, we see that residents of these neighbourhoods ‘summon’ themselves to take responsibility for their communities and act as co-participants in area programmes (Newman & Tonkens, 2011). On the other hand, they also resist modernization efforts and participatory models that might risk excluding the most vulnerable people, or that threaten the cultures, social practices and sites which make their neighbourhoods special. Their understandings of responsibility are not necessarily aligned with governmentality notions of responsibility that are criticized by feminist scholars. Rather, they are informed by moral and ethical vocabularies such as *rummelighed* and are motivated by a wish to include those who do not fulfil good citizenship norms (e.g. ‘beer-drinkers’).

These cases demonstrate that people can act in line with policy definitions of active citizenship (by participating in local associations, in the public debate and in resident-involvement initiatives), while being highly critical of the exclusionary and disciplinary aspects of these definitions and practices. It is important to stress that those in my study who resist or oppose narrow definitions of active citizenship do not fit the stereotype of activists demonstrating in the streets or disrupting the state order. Instead, and in line with the discussions by van der Land (2014), Desforges et al. (2005) and de Koning et al. (2015), they should be seen as discontented residents who struggle for social inclusion and equality while cooperating with and sometimes even

supplementing public authorities. This entails understanding participatory norms, and their contestations and resistances, as *contextually specific* (Desforges et al., 2005; Wood 2013, 2014a, 2014b). In other words, norms do not impact everyone the same way, and they may be experienced differently by those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Moreover, my analysis suggests that it is limiting to think about people as either fully governed by active citizenship norms or as empowered actors who are unconstrained by participatory ideals or expectations. Instead, and as I argued earlier, we must recognize that disciplining norms of active citizenship are by no means produced by the state alone and that ordinary people are involved in their (re)production and contestations. While frameworks of participation may be exclusionary in some configurations, they can also have inclusive and emancipatory potentials in other contexts. My point here is not necessarily that we must change our academic language by abandoning the term ‘active’ altogether. Rather, my point is that we need to understand the different framings at work when we speak of certain contributions and modes of participation as desirable and how these framings may alienate or exclude certain people. Acknowledging people’s capacity to resist disciplinary and exclusionary active citizenship norms, as well as their agency to ‘do things’ differently, paves the way for re-imagining the active citizen as someone who may be sick, poor, Muslim, a refugee or a ‘beer-drinker’.

Acknowledging diversity in participation

The title of this dissertation – “*Taking part in society the way I am*” – reflects a central argument in my study: namely, that it is important to recognize the plurality of ways in which people are active citizens, and that we must be careful not to use active citizenship as a measuring bar to exclude certain people and their contributions. This is

particularly important because active citizenship is, fundamentally, about being recognized as a *full member* of society. With this central argument in mind, I revisit the methodological dilemma I raised in Chapter 3: is ‘everything’ active citizenship? Some scholars warn against ‘watering down’ the concept, arguing that being a citizen is different to other kinds of identities and social relationships, such as being a parent, a friend, a partner, a co-worker, or a neighbour. My empirical findings demonstrate the opposite: namely, that it is precisely the multiplicity of people’s identities and lived experiences that constitute their understandings of their responsibility towards society – regardless of whether their practices of active citizenship are in line with dominant formulations or not. This insight offers a shift in our perspective. Instead of attempting to define what active citizenship is or should entail, we can view active citizenship as a *process* that continuously evolves as our lives unfold, rather than as just a state or an end (Wood, 2014b).

If active citizenship is meant to be a ‘positive’ concept that promotes inclusion, empowerment, and participatory democracy, then I believe it is reasonable to rethink active citizenship as a concept grounded in the recognition of difference, rather than the ideal of sameness. In other words, we need to think of and work with the concept of active citizenship in a way that fully recognizes the lived experiences and contributions of those with alternative value systems, the poor, the disabled, and other minoritized people, instead of expecting and disciplining these to fit into dominant ways of being and contributing. The examples from Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrate the importance of recognizing values and practices rooted in for instance faith and working-class culture as essential contributions to a democratic, inclusive society. More importantly, categorizing these as irrelevant for the common good may contribute to alienating people who already experience marginalization or non-belonging. Such a reconceptualization of active citizenship calls for a shift in scholarly attention from what the obligations and responsibilities of citizens ‘should’ be to the ways in which a diversity of individuals draw on *different resources and identities*

when exercising their responsibility towards others. In this vein, I return to Lister's (1998) concept of differentiated universalism, as it offers us a way to reconcile the universalist ambitions of citizenship with the particularities of our individual lives.

Lister (1998) convincingly argues that the realization of citizenship's universalist promise and emancipatory potential (which resonates among many feminist scholars), is *contingent* upon attention to difference. If the concept of citizenship is to have any theoretical or political value to those groups who are excluded from its universalism, Lister argues that it must accommodate particularity rather than transcend it. She draws on Young's (1990) distinction between two understandings of universality: universality as impartiality and universality of moral commitment. The former advocates the dominant point of view that leaves behind our "particular affiliations, feelings, commitments, and desires" (Ibid., p. 105), while the latter is an active commitment to the equal moral worth, participation and inclusion of all persons. It is with the latter understanding of universalism that I, in line with Lister (1998), believe active citizenship should be understood theoretically and politically.

An understanding of universalism based on the participation and inclusion of all, and not just those who live up to good citizenship ideals, leads us to recognize our lived experiences as intrinsic to active citizenship, and not as something separate from or outside of it. This is also in line with most feminist scholars who contend that the everyday life of people is so intertwined with politics and the market that our 'private' worlds cannot be separated from the 'public' world. In this spirit, I agree with Young (1998), who claims that rather than consensus or cohesion, the public and civic sphere should be about "recognition and appreciation of differences", which in principle "excludes no persons or aspects of person's lives" (p. 443–444). In other words, recognizing lived experiences as an integral part of active citizenship *expands* (rather than 'waters down') our understanding of the active citizen beyond the rational, self-

sufficient, able-bodied, and culturally and ethnically similar individual. If people are to participate ‘the way they are’, as the title of the thesis indicates, we need to also recognize that it is the *same* fully human self that participates in the public sphere – a self that is “gendered with all its other characteristics such as ethnic and cultural background, sexuality, age, disability” (Prokhovnik, 1998, p. 98). This way, we can recognize the positive values associated with active citizenship, while maintaining “an ethos of pluralization which makes possible plural rather than dual ways of thinking about citizenship and identity” (Isin & Wood, 1999, p. 23).

The way forward

The diversity of my empirical material and the people I spoke with illuminate the challenges of ‘pinning down’ the concept of active citizenship, as particular constructions of active citizenship are put forward, contested, and resisted through time and place (Painter & Philo, 1995; Staeheli, 2008; Staeheli et al., 2012). After all, there lies power in defining some citizens as good and active, and others as not-good-enough and passive. As my research demonstrates, the last thing people want is to be seen and treated as powerless and less-than-citizens. What implications, then, might my research insights have on policy and what would be the suggested avenues for future research?

Recommendations for future research

While my sample included a diversity of people, it was nevertheless limited. I chose to not recruit (homeless) individuals who were under the influence of drugs or alcohol, even though they were visibly present (and were a ‘subject’ of focus group discussions) in some of the areas in which I conducted fieldwork. I would argue that these individuals are some of the most socio-spatially stigmatized in society, whose

public presence is threatened by ongoing urban developments. Exploring how they experience the changes in their neighbourhoods as well as how they understand participation could provide further insights on the conditions and possibilities for participation and belonging, especially in the context of urban development. Such an exploration might contribute to the marginal research on citizenship, homelessness, and drug addiction (see for instance Chen, 2010; Fahnøe, 2017; Hall, 2017; Jauffret-Roustide, 2009).

Moreover, a social category that was largely unexplored in my research was gender. Certainly, the focus of my study was not on social categories, but on how active citizenship is gendered. Nonetheless, more attention could be paid to how gendered norms of participation affect people of various genders differently or how they affect understandings of motherhood and fatherhood. For instance, it could be interesting to investigate why an overwhelming number of the local activists I met in Tøyen were mothers. When I noted this observation to one of the (few) male activists I met, his response was: *“I think it is good that the women are out and engaging! Someone has to be home and look out for the kids”*. With these reflections in mind, some plausible questions for future research might be: How do gender equality norms impact the ways that women and men understand and practice civic engagement and responsibility? Do state agendas for participation responsabilize women or mothers in ways that contradict gender equality ideals?

Lastly, my research has shown how active citizenship norms and practices are contextual and place specific. This central insight could not have come about had I not conducted fieldwork in five differing localities. However, a systematic exploration of the differences and similarities in articulations of active citizenship between as well as *within* each locality was beyond the scope of this thesis. There is therefore potential in conducting further qualitative research on the ways that the materiality and historicity

of places, and the socio-economic divides across districts/boroughs, impact the conditions for and possibilities for participation.

Recommendations for policy development

This qualitative study has pointed out the challenges that some people face in participating in desirable spaces, such as volunteer associations, political arenas, or the public debate. Age, mental health challenges, and economic constraints are factors that limit public and associational forms of civic engagement, as has been demonstrated by earlier research (Henriksen et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2011; Wollebæk et al., 2015). Like these studies, my findings indicate a need for a broadened conversation about civic engagement and the mandate for it, by questioning assumptions about what it means to be active and what are considered as valuable societal contributions. Practices of intimate care among neighbours or friends and participating in faith-based arenas or in ‘immigrant associations’ are examples of civic engagement provided in this study that would be overlooked as they do not ‘fit’ policy definitions of active citizenship.

This research also raises the need to acknowledge through policy formulations the contributions and the situated knowledges of those who do not live up to dominant ways of living and imaginations of the ‘active citizen’. Examples are the contributions of elderly people and those with health challenges. Such an approach may help deconstruct the exclusionary distinctions between ‘active’ and ‘passive’ citizens, and ‘helper’ and ‘helped’. More importantly, I encourage policymakers to avoid equating civic engagement with associational membership and volunteering, as this not only excludes those who lack the ‘right’ kinds of resources, but also contributes to national anxieties over increased cultural and religious diversity in the Danish and Norwegian societies. Related to that is being aware of the ways that for instance policy concepts

of active citizenship privilege those who have ample social capital at their disposal, or the ways that state-led area programmes may carry a significant bias in favour of the white, middle-class, and healthy population. Indeed, my analysis has shown that although policy discourses on active citizenship aim to create inclusion and equal participation, inequalities in terms of class, race and (dis)ability remain fundamentally unchallenged. For instance, drug and alcohol addicts and the severely ill, who were not visible in the resident-meetings or neighbourhood initiatives that I attended in Sydhavn and Tøyen, often remained in the category of the ‘Other’ whom the people I interviewed (including experts) felt entitled to speak on behalf of. I propose that those seeking to encourage active participation among vulnerable populations should not merely attempt to integrate them into pre-existing participatory initiatives or raise their competencies, but also recognize other avenues for participation and being heard. This implies looking beyond organized settings such as volunteering associations or political parties to the everyday spaces and places of belonging (Wood, 2013; Staeheli et al., 2012). Moreover, it entails bolstering and drawing from already existing practices in (deprived) neighbourhoods that are undergoing development, such as informal kinds of help and knowledge, while ensuring that residents retain a sense of ownership to the development processes so they do not feel restricted in their community actions.

Closing remarks

In *Believing in Anthropology as Literature*, Ruth Behar writes that “most efforts to bring emotions and feelings, including love and gratitude, into our work are likely to be dismissed as ‘feminine sentimentality’” (Behar, 2011, p. 110). Inspired by this quote, I close this dissertation by sharing with my reader how I changed throughout the course of this research, and how my own lived experiences have impacted the directions that this research has taken.

After finalizing my fieldwork, I took a leave of absence from work due to medical reasons. This leave, which I presumed would last for a short while, surprisingly stretched over a period of two years. During this period, I had to continuously re-evaluate my physical and mental capacities to not only continue this research, but also to engage in activities that constituted an important part of my identity. Prior to the medical leave, I had been volunteering in various organizations, I was a member of several associational boards and was an active contributor to public debates. I experienced shame and embarrassment over having to ‘give up’ these activities and at having to repeatedly turn down invitations to participate in important debates. It seemed ironic that as an active citizenship researcher, I was becoming a ‘passive’ citizen who was no longer contributing to society. This was particularly distressing as I believed that conducting research comes with a responsibility to communicate knowledge to the public. Moreover, I was suddenly dependent on the financial support of the Norwegian social welfare system. As an ethnic minoritized woman, I often feared that I would be viewed by friends, colleagues, or even the larger society as ‘weak’, ‘dependent’ or a ‘free-loader’ – stereotypes that are often attributed to so-called non-Western immigrants in public debates on integration.

However, this period has also led me to open my eyes to the ways that desirable traits such as good health and emotional and financial autonomy are intertwined with expectations to be an active citizen. Those perspectives and practices in my data that I had previously dismissed as ‘irrelevant’ for my research topic, such as *overskud* and intimate forms of help and care, became important in my personal life. I have come to learn new theoretical aspects of active citizenship that I had overlooked prior to my medical leave, which have enriched my academic thinking as well as my personal life. Feminist scholarship made me aware of the powerful implications that patriarchal notions of citizenship can have on the emotional lives of human beings. Feminist geography literature in particular provided me with insight into the power of everyday

and personal contributions, helping me to acknowledge the ways that I, and others who experience health challenges, are able to contribute to society, albeit in ‘invisible’ ways.

As I am writing this final paragraph, I am feeling particularly grateful towards the interlocutors who have overcome, and continue to overcome, mental health challenges. Their resilience and self-compassion, as well as their willingness to talk openly about their struggles with me, has given me the courage to accept my own struggles and embrace them as part of this research. Through this academic journey, I have come to realize how our intimate and affective lives are not just private issues but are in fact inseparable from our public identities as active citizens and as researchers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – ACT Project description

Active citizenship in culturally and religiously diverse societies (ACT)

Application for SAMKUL, “Forskerprojekt”, 2013 Application number: ES522884.

1. Relevance relative to the call for proposals

Active citizens play a central role in influencing the direction of societal development within culturally and religiously diverse environments. Across Europe, participatory citizenship ideals are being promoted politically; as part of a set of policy ideas within a neo-liberal as well as new centre left approach. How does this participation agenda, with its political philosophical roots, relate to the lived experiences of citizens? How is increased diversity affecting the ways in which people engage in their neighborhoods? Does diversity entail less trust, greater distance between people and less participation, or do new forms of mobilization develop? While the low electoral participation of young people is often highlighted as an indication of reduced civic participation, increased use of social media among youth actually leads to mobilization for social issues. While politicians often lament the lack of civil and political engagement among immigrants, many new citizens volunteer to help those disadvantaged in society, take up political causes or set up associations in both their countries of residence and origin. In Europe’s culturally and religiously diverse societies, citizens have increasingly different understandings of the world, and different frameworks for how they act and interact with their close and distant surroundings (SAMKUL 2011: 12). If the current participation agenda is to remain relevant, implications of diversified citizen participation must be studied, in order to develop informed policies.

Active citizenship has been on the agenda in Europe since the 1980s. Participatory ideals are set within the context of policies that focus on social cohesion. This is also put forward as part of a neoliberal agenda, making use of citizen and voluntary resources in response to shrinking state resources and a welfare state under pressure. In the UK, a concern over the apparent failure of young people to engage actively in the political process has led to the development of a range of practical initiatives aimed at promoting political awareness and community involvement; including the introduction of citizenship education in the National Curriculum in 2002 (Condor and Gibson 2007). In the Scandinavian context, the civic participation rhetoric is mainly addressed at immigrant populations. In Norwegian policy, for example, recently established refugee settlement programs (*Introduksjonsprogrammet*), aim to promote active citizenship as a part of broader goals of inclusion (Brochmann & Djuve 2013). Denmark, as a frontrunner in arguing the need for participatory citizenship as an integration requirement, obliges all immigrants to sign a ‘Declaration of Integration and Active Citizenship in Danish society’ (Mouritsen 2013; Mouritsen and Olsen 2013).

ACT will study active citizenship in culturally and religiously diverse societies through an analysis of present-day civic 1) motivations; 2) locations; and 3) contestations. First, we study the virtues and values that impact how citizens understand their role in society and their

ability to make a difference. To what extent do age, gender, and cultural, religious and class backgrounds impact civic **motivations**? How does the way in which various groups and individuals think and communicate (SAMKUL 2011: 11), affect the way they participate and take responsibility in society? How do different belongings, affiliations and loyalties affect the interpretations of responsibility and perceptions of what it is important to take care of, i.e. their conception of ‘good’ citizenship? Second, we analyse how shifting understandings of ‘society’ and ‘community’ and shifting experiences of belonging impact the **locations** in which active citizenship practices take place, and vice versa. We argue that the local level is crucial also for national and transnational civic engagement, and study active citizenship in a range of neighbourhoods with varying citizen composition in Oslo and Copenhagen. Third, we examine **contestations** over the meaning of active citizenship; both through debates among citizens and by juxtaposing official citizenship-promoting policies and discourse in Norway and Denmark with the experiences of citizens themselves.

2. Aspects relating to the research project

2.1. *Background and status of knowledge*

2.1.1 *Citizenship: passive-formal or active-moral?*

The citizen’s role in European societies has occupied political philosophers and others from the origins of Greek and Roman philosophy.⁷³ Within political philosophy, citizenship has often been thought of as either a matter of rights and duties (the ‘passive’, liberal conception) or as a question of civic virtue and how to be a good citizen (the active, republican conception). We focus on the latter, and argue that citizenship should be understood as participation both in formal and informal institutions and associations in civil society. We furthermore argue that the literature on active citizenship is incorrectly confined to the boundaries of the nation-state. The literature on transnational and global citizenship provides a welcome corrective, but insufficiently acknowledges the importance of localities and incorrectly focuses predominantly on migrant citizens. We argue instead that a plurality of visions on active citizenship needs to be explored from the perspective of a diverse group of citizens; being locally grounded while simultaneously exploring national and transnational dimensions.

Citizenship is often understood in the passive or formal sense as 1) a legal status; 2) entitlement to certain political, social and cultural rights; and in the active or moral sense as 3) participation in the public sphere and active engagement in civil society; and 4) identifying or feeling solidarity ‘with others in the wider world’ (Bosniak 2006; van Bochove et al 2010; Schinkel and van Houdt 2010; Mouritsen forthcoming 2014). Kymlicka and Norman (1994: 353) refer to ‘citizenship-as-legal-status, that is, as full membership in a particular political

⁷³ For an overview of the ancient thinking around ‘Politeia’, or the conditions of citizens and of civic forms of living (and of life in a city), see Harte and Lane (2013).

community; and citizenship-as-desirable-activity, where the extent and quality of one's citizenship is a function of one's participation in that community'.

The notion of citizenship, in its passive or formal sense, assumes a full and equitable membership to all those who have been recognized as citizens in a self-governing polity. In his seminal work, T.H. Marshall (1950), who belongs to the social liberal tradition, has developed a model of citizenship based on a catalogue of civil, political, and social rights for all members; developed from the cumulative logic of struggle for the expansion of democracy in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This model, presented in the post-War context of expanding welfare states, has been widely adopted in the literature on citizenship. It assumes that citizenship exists and its accompanying rights can be claimed by all citizens regardless of their social status.

This model of citizenship has been questioned both from the political right and political left, because it emphasizes rights more than political and social participation and moral responsibilities (Kymlicka and Nordman 1994: 354). While conservatives during the Thatcher/Reagan period argued that the welfare state had promoted passivity and dependence among the poor; the political left has been more concerned about the loss of political participation in modern welfare states (Kymlicka and Nordman 1994; Mouritsen 2008). The model is also criticized from feminists perspectives (Orloff 1993; Walby 1994; Lister 2006), as well as from the perspective of multiculturalism and immigrant and diasporic communities (Soysal 1994; Ong 1996; Bauböck et al. 2006; Modood et al. 2006). The main critique here has been that this analysis of modern democratic citizenship fails to take into account the differentiation of lived experiences of citizenship - in terms of access to rights and claims to membership - along the axes of, *inter alia*, ethnicity, gender, race, class and religion. However, the multicultural and feminist critique of citizenship often remains at a very abstract and theoretical level. Our contribution therefore is to take a more grounded approach, and explore citizenship in the active and in the moral sense.

2.1.2 Active Citizenship

An understanding of active citizenship, or citizenship-as-desirable activity, most closely matches what Mouritsen (2008) defines as the 'republicanism and civic patriotism' vocabulary. Within this tradition, liberty is perceived as a common good that is jointly searched for and secured by civic participation. Social and political participation is the foundation of recognition and integration of common values. However, a number of criticisms have been pointed to. Firstly, this model leads to various practical problems that make it difficult to sustain, such as participation overload, conflicting actions, coordination challenges and a bias towards the well-educated and resourceful.

Secondly, civic virtue and public-spiritedness are not natural givens. Galston (1991) identifies four groups of virtues required for responsible citizenship: general virtues; social virtues; economic virtues; and political virtues. Others have particularly focused on the

importance of religious virtues for civic engagements (Hirschkind 2001). Immigration, and consequent cultural and religious pluralism, are challenging the traditional link between civic virtue and patriotism. Simon Keller (2013) argues that good citizenship is possible without presupposing patriotism. Keller introduces the concept of the ‘worldly citizen’, who, modelled on migrants, expresses an appreciation for the local, for particular places and communities; has an understanding of and commitment to general principles of justice and compassion; and has a sense of how the country fits into the wider world. These kinds of citizens can hold civic virtues that are informed by international or global values and loyalties, and that understand the country of residence as one among many (Keller 2013: 243).

We build on these observations by using the following definitions of active civic participation and active citizenship. Vogel and Triandafyllidou (2005:11) conceptualize active civic participation as people giving

a voice to societal concerns, e.g. by engaging in political parties, local committees, parent associations or migrant lobby organizations; and/or organizing solidarity and self-help, e.g. by taking leadership functions in religious associations, ethnic associations or informal self-help networks.

Similarly, Chanan (1997:1) defines active citizenship as

the people’s capacity to take an active role in public affairs, whether through formal democratic structures, through the press, through public debate, through associations, political parties, trade unions, local clubs and societies or simply through informal networks and mutual aid among neighbours, friends and family.

Both definitions of active citizenship allow for an understanding of the location of citizenship beyond traditional understandings of citizenship as a legal status defined by basic rights and obligations and as self-evidently connected to the nation-state (Bosniak 2006). ‘Societal concerns’ and ‘public affairs’ demand more active forms of civic engagement and are not necessarily bounded by nation-states. Furthermore, the nature of the societal concerns that people wish to give voice to, or the nature of the public affairs they wish to take an active role in, remains open in these definitions. This approach allows us to explore the potential of pluralism through practices, against the common demand for consensus (Rescher 1993). This will require us to move beyond participation in common affairs that are pre-defined to a wider range of ‘unpaid, legal, and nonviolent ways of addressing social problems and issues’ (Levine 2008: 102) as identified by citizens themselves. It will also require us to move beyond the local and national to the global and transnational.

2.1.3 Citizenship across geographical scales

The literature on transnational citizenship (Balibar 2004, Bauböck et al. 2006, Smith 2007), which is firmly situated within migration studies, challenges traditional understandings of citizenship located in the nation-state by exploring emerging forms of cross-border citizenship. Overwhelmingly, this literature focuses on the ‘rights’ and ‘membership’ of migrant citizens. Fox (2005: 172) tests the concept of transnational citizenship in a range of disciplines to conclude that transnational ‘citizenship’ is often used inappropriately, and the issue would be better framed as “transnational extension of the national construction of rights and political inclusion”. We argue that this may be the case for citizenship as understood in the passive or formal sense, but that understandings of *active* citizenship remain incomplete when being confined to the level of nation-state.

The broader literature on transnationalism, and in particular the original work by Basch et al. (1992; 1994), does however focus on transnational civil and political engagement. Here, the role of migrants in the social and political life of more than one nation-state is explored (Basch et al. 1994: 5); and this literature has made an important contribution in arguing that there is a single field of social relations and interconnected social experiences. Yet the transnationalism literature mainly looks at migrant engagement in the public sphere of the country of origin, through political mobilisation, philanthropy and such (Horst 2008; Lyons and Mandavill 2012). Somalis across Europe, for example, are heavily engaged with the conflict in and rebuilding of Somalia through sending remittances as well as through political engagement; after all ‘Mogadishu is only an SMS away’ (Horst 2013a: 6).

While it has been a crucial corrective to explore transnational engagements, we argue this literature poses a number of challenges. First, migrant practices are more than ‘long-distance nationalism’ and require a holistic understanding of civic engagement that incorporates the local, national and transnational levels simultaneously. Drawing on work on participation, representation, and democracy at the local level (see e.g. Kearns 1995), we situate our research in local neighbourhoods. We aim to unpack the active citizenship practices which take place locally, but may also be linked to national and transnational levels. Research on active citizenship at the local level is multi-disciplinary and fragmented, and there are significant advances to be made by putting different literatures into dialogue with one another. Much of the literature focuses on issues physically located within a local community (e.g. planning issues, the closure of a hospital) and is linked with an explicit focus on formal political institutions and decision making processes (Jun and Musso 2013). Bang and Sørensen (1999) do explore new forms of urban political engagement through a study of democratic governance and civic engagement in Denmark. The ACT project seeks to advance such studies of active citizenship at the local level, through integrating this focus on localized participation with participation on national and transnational levels. Furthermore, the project follows Staeheli et al (2012) in studying citizenship practices as ordinary practices that are part of everyday life.

A second challenge to existing literature is that it tends to compartmentalize citizens in migrants and non-migrants, thus essentializing 'culture' in ways that have been criticized for decades (e.g. Gupta and Ferguson 1992). This approach leads to the assumption that migrants' ethnic and national ties to their country of origin explain civic participation in either country of origin or residence. As critics of 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2003) have argued, this leaves the impact of factors like class, gender, generation and religion unexplored. While studies on 'cosmopolitan citizenship' (Isin and Wood 1999) do focus more on the effects of globalization for non-migrants, these studies largely present elite perspectives and often do not reflect ordinary practices well. The ACT project will therefore use local neighbourhoods as the starting point for empirical data collection that acknowledges and explores national and transnational levels, and looks beyond the local place. Furthermore, the project will not compartmentalize the civic engagements of migrants and non-migrants but rather start with the mixed citizenry of particular neighbourhoods, and work toward a better informed understanding of their active citizenship practice.

2.2. Approaches, research questions and choice of method

2.2.1 Approach and research questions

ACT aims to study active civic participation from the starting point of how people identify and act 'civically', rather than 'nationally' or 'ethnically'. 'Civic' engagement entails an emphasis on activity, contestation and dialogue (Mouritsen 2008: 19). Cultural and religious backgrounds impact motivations and understandings of individual responsibilities in relation to such civic engagement (Jensen 2008; Stepick et al. 2008); but so do class, religion, gender, and age. Multiple social structures and divisions intertwine to produce specific social relations thus affecting people's lives; as proponents of intersectional approaches argue (Anthias 2013). The focus in much of the existing literature is on the one hand on how the national and ethnic determine people's engagements, and on the other hand how local issues unite inhabitants. We instead ask how multiple identity markers are at play and interact when people engage as active citizens. Arguably, there are underlying differences relating to individual and group values and ethics, with implications for how the place of the citizen in society is understood (Arendt 1958; Hulme 2013).

Furthermore, our approach analyses how the global and transnational is given a place in the national and local experiences of active citizenship, mutually transforming these spheres. How does involvement in global social movements such as the environmentalist movement interact with local civic engagement for some citizens? How does participation in neighbourhood committees and parent associations transform transnational engagements with the country of origin for others? One area where societal development is likely to take place, is in the increasing relevance of the global and transnational for how citizens understand and practice their civic responsibilities nationally and locally. We know little about how individuals relate to these different levels of scale in their initiatives to participate in society;

nor about how the civic engagements on these different levels compare between citizens with different class, gender, age, cultural and religious backgrounds.

RQ1 What are the implications of diverse virtues and values on the *motivations* of citizens to give voice to societal concerns and take an active role in public affairs?

With active citizenship practices increasingly advocated across Europe, one common concern is how increasingly culturally and religiously diverse societies can maintain a high level of participation in society. How do citizens understand their right and responsibility to engage in the neighbourhood where they live; the country they reside in; and the wider international context? How do they understand their own agency in relation to larger societal processes; what determines their view on individual and group power to contribute to societal transformation? Which virtues and values impact how they understand the place of the citizen in society? To what extent do cultural, religious, class backgrounds, age and gender impact such views on active agency? ACT will explore the interrelations between the virtues and values of citizens; and the ways in which they participate, take responsibility and engage actively in society.

RQ 2 How do shifting understandings of ‘society’ and ‘community’ and shifting experiences of belonging impact the *locations* in which active citizenship practices take place?

Increasing numbers of citizens in contemporary Europe have a sense of multiple belongings as they have ties that connect them beyond the nation-state in which they live. Simultaneously, increasing numbers of citizens – inspired and enabled by social media and other globalizing forces - engage with global causes or hold transnational commitments. How do shifting understandings of belonging, and relatedly of ‘society’ and ‘community’, impact both the substance and the location of active citizenship practices? How do differently located citizens participate on different geographical levels simultaneously in ways that may be contradicting, contesting but also supporting and mutually strengthening? By exploring these questions, ACT aims to revisit the groundbreaking original work on transnationalism to expand both its understanding of location and of subject.

RQ 3 Which tensions and *contestations* arise in debates on what it means to participate as an active citizen in society?

Experiences of active citizenship will then be compared and contrasted, in order to understand where tensions arise in debates on what it means to participate as an active citizen in society. Not only will the experiences of differently positioned citizens be contrasted, but ACT will also juxtapose official citizenship-promoting policies and discourse across various arenas with the experiences of citizens themselves; testing the reception of such policies and discourses among various citizen-groups. The research will draw on philosophical work on pluralism as

well as on theories of deliberative and radical democracy to explore these tensions in a wider political and historical context: How do lived experiences of citizens challenge different models of deliberative and radical democracy? ACT will explore the conditions of political equality and contribute to rethinking conceptions of public deliberation in culturally and religiously diverse societies.

2.2.2 Methods of data collection

The motivations, locations and contestations of active citizenship will be studied through empirical data collection among citizens in Oslo and Copenhagen, in order to explore everyday practices of citizenship (Staeheli et al. 2012). This requires an indepth qualitative approach that allows us to explore practices and perspectives, through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation. Wimmer (2007) argues that research designs can be de-ethnicized by choosing territorial units or taking social class as unit of analysis. We focus on a number of purposely selected neighbourhoods within the two cities in order to work with manageable territorial units that are diverse in the socio-economic composition and national backgrounds of their residents.

Oslo has been a class-divided city for many hundreds of years, with poorer living conditions in the east and better conditions in the west, which now increasingly coincides with the percentage of residents with immigrant background. The centre of town displays a similar east-west division; combined with specific inner-city challenges. For our empirical research, we will focus on neighbourhoods in each of these areas: Smestad (city district Vestre Aker, in west-Oslo), Tøyen (city district Gamle Byen, in central Oslo), Holmlia (city district Søndre Nordstrand, in east-Oslo). These neighbourhoods score very differently in terms of levels of education, income, employment rates, voting patterns and other relevant indicators.

In Copenhagen, on the basis of the same selection criteria, we will focus on Sydhavnen and Inner Østerbro. Sydhavnen (city district Vestre Bro/Kongens Enghave) is among the poorest areas in Copenhagen with high level of unemployment; while Inner Østerbro (city district Østerbro), also known as the Embassy Quarter, is among the most wealthy areas in Copenhagen. The two districts' composition of people with immigrant background, as well as the class background of the migrant residents of these neighbourhoods, also differ significantly.

	Interviews	Focus groups	Social media	Participant observation	Roundtable
RQ 1: Motivations	X	X	X		
RQ 2: Locations	X		X	X	
RQ 3: Contestations	X	X			X
Number/Location	60 (Oslo) 40 (CPH)	9 (Oslo) 6 (CPH)	N.A.	N.A.	1 (Oslo) 1 (CPH)

Table 1: Methodological overview

Our approach draws on a combination of methods (see table 1), and data will be analysed through collective coding (Saldana 2009) in NVivo. We will start by mapping each neighbourhood through statistics, secondary sources and key-informant interviews; in order to obtain an overview of the basic characteristics of the neighbourhood, formal political structures, media, and spaces of active engagement – for example related to education, the voluntary sector, housing associations etc.

This first phase will be followed by semi-structured interviews exploring motivations, locations and contestations; *inter alia* asking individuals about (recent) events that have triggered their concern and potentially trigger engagement, as well as asking them about arenas that enable or constrain such engagement. We will recruit participants with the aim of maximizing diversity within our sample; in particular in relation to cultural, religious and class backgrounds as well as age and gender. Furthermore, research participants will include three types of citizens: (1) those that are obviously engaged, in identified spaces of formal political engagement and informal voluntary engagement: (2), those that are potentially engaged, such as parents in education and sports arenas, or students at university from these selected neighborhoods; (3) those of whom we do not know their level of engagement, whom we will randomly approach in the neighbourhood in private and public spaces. Focus groups will then follow with each of these categories of citizens; to explore the diversity of motivations as well as contestations.

Those interviewees and focus group participants whose social media use encourages and enables active civic engagement will be followed up, with permission from the interviewee. Data collection will include following their social media use for a limited period, conducting ‘virtual ethnography’ on information sharing, debate and mobilization on public issues (Shah et al. 2005). Besides virtual ethnography, actual participant observation will be carried out in Oslo in local arenas that are identified during the mapping phase and through interviews as central for active citizenship. This is an important addition to speaking to informants, as citizenship practices and contestations thereof can best be observed rather than just discussed. Participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups complement each other and will be conducted in parallel. A final methodological tool will be

the use of a roundtable to juxtapose official citizenship-promoting policies and discourse across various arenas with the experiences of citizens themselves. This approach has been adopted earlier successfully in a research on inclusion practices in Oslo (Horst 2013b).

2.3. The project plan, project management, organisation and cooperation

2.3.1 Coordination and management structure

ACT is based on collaboration between the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tromsø (UiT) and the Department of Political Science and Government at Aarhus University (AU). The project is organized in four Work Packages (WPs), with several team members collaborating on each WP (see table 2).

	WP focus area	Objective	Researchers
WP1	Theorizing active citizenship	Review different conceptions of (active) citizenship and how citizenship is conceptualized in plural societies in philosophy, political science, anthropology, geography and feminist studies	Mouritsen , Doctoral researcher, Erdal, Fjærtøft Horst, Jakobsen, Olsen
WP2	Experiences of active citizenship	Explore experiences of active citizenship of residents of Oslo and Copenhagen on neighbourhood, national and international level	Horst , Doctoral researcher, Erdal, Mouritsen, Olsen
WP3	Theoretical – empirical links	Assess the value of theoretical models of citizenship for the analysis of the empirical material and use this material to challenge and refine traditional normative models of citizenship	Erdal , Doctoral researcher, Fjærtøft, Horst, Mouritsen, Olsen
WP4	Project management & communication	Coordinate the research in all its phases to guarantee its quality and the production of agreed-upon deliverables	Horst , Erdal, Mouritsen

Table 2: Work package organisation

During the first project year, the main focus will be on WP1 as well as on preparations for WP2. Fieldwork in Oslo will start in year one, whereas in the second project year, the Oslo fieldwork will be completed and fieldwork in Copenhagen will take place – involving a six months' visiting scholarship at AU for the doctoral researcher on the project. The third and final year will concentrate on using the theoretical models of citizenship to analyze the empirical material while the empirical findings will be used to challenge traditional normative models of citizenship. WP 4 will run throughout the duration of the project. This WP will guarantee overall coordination and implementation, supporting partners and promoting synergy.

2.3.2. *Description of partners*

The project will be led by **Cindy Horst**, Research Professor in Migration and Refugee Studies at PRIO. She is an anthropologist whose main recent research interests focus on transnationalism, social transformation and active citizenship. Horst has extensive experience leading large research teams, including for the EU-funded *Diasporas for peace: case studies from the Horn of Africa (DIASPEACE)* and *Theorizing the Evolution of European Migration Systems (THEMIS)*. Senior Researcher **Marta Bivand Erdal** (PRIO) has a doctoral degree in Human Geography. Her main research interests are migrant transnationalism, integration and citizenship. She is currently involved in the RCN funded *Possibilities and Realities of Return Migration (PREMIG)* and leads the RCN funded *Negotiating the nation: Implications of ethnic and religious diversity for national identity (NATION)*. The **Doctoral Researcher** to be appointed to the project will be based at PRIO. The Doctoral Researcher will be supervised by Horst and will her/himself identify a further supervisor at a PhD-granting institution. The Doctoral Researcher will be integrated into PRIO's international and interdisciplinary environment, and selects Research Group affiliation him/herself.

Associate Professor **Kjersti Fjørtoft**, is head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tromsø (UiT). Fjørtoft chairs the *Project Justice in Conflict* (funded by RCN) and is a member of the research group *Pluralism, Democracy and Justice* at UiT. She has experience with interdisciplinary research through a research project on female immigration (RCN-funded) and through the research school CEPIN at UiT. She has published extensively on citizenship, pluralism and justice. Research Fellow **Jonas Jakobsen**, Department of Philosophy (UiT), works on a range of issues, including deliberative democracy, multiculturalism, theories of justice, religion in the public sphere, Islamic political thinking, education and democracy and contemporary Critical Theory. Jakobsen is also a member of the research group *Pluralism, Democracy and Justice*. He will begin his position as Associate Professor at the department of philosophy, UiT, on Mai 1, 2014.

Professor **Per Mouritsen**, Department of Political Science and Government, Aarhus University (AU) has headed or participated in a range of Danish, European and International research projects on citizenship, pluralism and multiculturalism. Associate Professor **Tore Vincents Olsen**, Department of Political Science and Government, AU has participated in Danish and European research regarding citizenship, pluralism and multiculturalism and works with theories of political culture, transnational democracy and European integration.

The project will furthermore operate with a Scientific Advisory Board, which will meet twice during the project period: once at its early stages and once in conjunction with the international conference hosted at UiT in 2016. We aim to include the following members to this Board: Professor **Michele Micheletti** (Department of Political Science, Stockholm University), **Linda Bosniak** (School of Law, Rutgers University) and **Simon Keller** (School of History, Philosophy, Political Science & International Relations, University of Wellington - confirmed).

2.4. Budget

See electronic application form.

3. Key perspectives and compliance with strategic documents

3.1. Compliance with strategic documents

The project is firmly situated in ongoing research at the three institutes, allowing for interesting synergies. At PRIO, relevant research competence exists within the Migration, Media and Religion Research Groups. In particular, the project can speak to past and ongoing research projects on transnationalism (DIASPEACE), national identity (NATION) and societal resilience (NECORE). At UiT, the research group Pluralism, Democracy and Justice works on issues that are highly relevant for the project, including deliberative and radical democracy, pluralism and citizenship. The Department of Political Science and Government at Aarhus University is involved in ground-breaking work on citizenship, pluralism and multiculturalism.

3.2. Relevance and benefit to society

In political and academic debates on citizenship in Europe, the need for active participation among all citizens is increasingly stressed. But how do normative ideas of what active citizenship is, relate to people's lived experiences in present-day Europe? While policy initiatives focus on a more responsive and locally empowered democracy, active citizenship is also demanded out of concerns for decreasing levels of social cohesion while active citizens are furthermore a means to deal with the challenges of the increasingly challenged welfare state. ACT allows us to explore the participation agenda in greater detail, not only from its political philosophical roots but also in light of the lived experiences of citizens. Culturally and religiously diverse environments produce a diverse set of challenges, as well as corresponding possibilities for social change (SAMKUL 2011: 13), which citizens with multiple civic engagements can enact.

3.3. Environmental impact

The project is not expected to have any negative environmental impact.

3.4. Ethical perspectives

Our common procedures around informed consent, anonymity and ability to withdraw from the project apply to this project. The research team is well-prepared to deal with these and other ethical challenges. PRIO's Fieldwork Network, which meets monthly to discuss the ethical and methodological challenges of fieldwork, is coordinated by Dr. Erdal, who took

over from Dr. Horst. FIWON-related expertise and debate complements the NESH guidelines and NSD approval process in managing ethical dilemmas.

3.5. Gender issues (Recruitment of women, gender balance and gender perspectives)

This project has strong gender dimensions both in terms of substance and organization. We explore the implications of gender on civic participation, as it intersects with other aspects of people's identity. In terms of organization, the project leader is a female researcher and the main researcher team, including the project leader, consists of three women and three men (plus the doctoral researcher).

4. Dissemination and communication of results

4.1 Dissemination plan

The project will produce three conceptual **working papers**, a **monograph**, ten **peer-reviewed articles** and three **policy briefs**. Targeted international peer-reviewed journals include: Citizenship Studies, Current Anthropology, Ethics, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Ethnicities, Global Networks, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Journal of Global Ethics, Political Geography, Social Identities, Society and Space, Translocations. For further details, see online dissemination plan.

4.2 Communication with users

The project will host a **website with blog** and create bi-annual **newsletters** for a non-academic audience. The three institutes host a range of **seminars and workshops**, such as the Migration Breakfast Seminars at PRIO, where project results will be presented. A **user advisory board**, which will meet four times over the project period, will be established with representatives from local and national government, services and civil society organizations. This board will be actively involved in providing advice for the roundtable organization as well. **Roundtable** discussions will also be part of communicating findings. For further details, see online project dissemination plan.

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Appendix 2 – Norwegian policy quotes

QUOTE 1:

Original Norwegian:

Definisjon 'deltakelse'

«Deltakelse handler om hvordan innbyggerne i samfunnet bruker sine formelle rettigheter i praksis og hvordan de bidrar til demokratibyggning. Deltakelse i nabolag/lokalmiljø, fritids- og kulturaktiviteter, frivillige organisasjoner og media kan defineres som «det lille demokratiet». «Det store demokratiet» omhandler politisk liv – deltakelse i politiske organisasjoner og valg [...] [Følgende] samfunnsarenaer er sentrale for makt og innflytelse:*

- 1) *Bruk av stemmeretten til å velge folkets representanter til Stortinget eller*
- 2) *Deltakelse i politiske partier*
- 3) *Påvirkning gjennom interesseorganisasjoner*
- 4) *Påvirkning gjennom media».*

My translation:

Definition of 'participation'

“Participation concerns how residents in society use their formal rights in practice and how they contribute to building democracy. Participation in the neighbourhood/local community, in leisure- and cultural activities, in voluntary organizations and in the media can be defined as ‘the small democracy’. ‘Democracy at large’ concerns political life – participation in political organizations and elections. [...] [The following]* societal arenas are central for power and influence:

1. Use of the right to vote to elect the people’s representative in parliament or
2. Participation in political parties
3. Influencing through interest organizations
4. Influencing through public media”.

(Barne- likestillings-og inkluderingsdepartementet, 2011, p. 269)⁷⁴

*My insertion

QUOTE 2:

Original Norwegian:

Muligheter og innflytelse

«Alle innbyggere i Norge skal ha like muligheter til å engasjere seg i nærmiljø og det sivile samfunn. Frivillige organisasjoner er viktige aktører i et demokratisk og inkluderende samfunn. For å hindre at det utvikler seg et klassesdelt samfunn der [noen grupper] har*

⁷⁴ Royal Ministry of Children and Family Affairs.

dårligere levekår enn andre, vil regjeringen kjempe mot forskjellsbehandling og bygge ned barrierer mot deltagelse. Politikken skal bidra til tillitt til institusjoner og innbyggere seg imellom. Slik tillitt er viktig for å støtte opp under ordninger i velferdssamfunnet og styrke fellesskap og samhold».

My translation:

Opportunities and influence

“All inhabitants of Norway should have equal opportunities to engage in local and civil society. Voluntary organizations are important players in a democratic and inclusive society. To prevent the development of a class-based society where [some groups]* have poorer living conditions than others, the government will fight against discrimination and reduce barriers to participation. The policy should contribute to trust in institutions and citizens among themselves. Such trust is important for supporting social welfare schemes and strengthening community and unity”.

(Barne, likestillings-og Barne- likestillings-og inkluderingsdepartementet, 2011, p. 270)

*My insertion. The original quote contained the word ‘innvandrere’ (immigrants).

QUOTE 3:

Original Norwegian:

Tillit og deltagelse

«Deltakelse på felles arenaer i nærmiljøet bidrar til å forebygge og redusere mistillit mellom majoritets- og minoritetsbefolkningen. For å bygge tillitt er det viktig å legge til rette for møteplasser og aktiviteter lokalt, der minoritets- og majoritetsbefolkningen kan samhandle. Dette kan gi utslag på deltakelsen på andre samfunnsarenaer som valgdeltakelse og deltagelse i utdanning og arbeid».

My translation:

Trust and participation

“Participation in common arenas in the local community helps prevent and reduce mistrust between the majority and minority population. In order to build trust, it is important to facilitate meeting places and activities locally, where the minority and majority population can interact. This can affect participation in other social arenas such as voting and participation in education and work”.

(Barne, likestillings-og Barne- likestillings-og inkluderingsdepartementet, 2011, p. 19).

Appendix 3 – Danish policy quotes

QUOTE 1:

Original Danish:

Definition ‘aktiv medborgerskab’

«En andet vigtigt aspekt af medborgerskabet er den sociale og politiske deltagelse og muligheden for indflydelse. Deltagelse handler ikke kun om formel politisk deltagelse, men også om uformel deltagelse i samfundslivet og dialog i civilsamfundet [...]. Deltagelse kan være valgdeltagelse, men også fx deltagelse i politiske partier, interesseorganisationer og andre foreninger, arbejdspladsdemokratiet, forældre- og andre brugerbestyrelser samt den offentlige debat. Deltagelsesaspektet handler endvidere om følelsen af, at man har mulighed for at deltage, for at øve indflytelse og for at påvirke beslutninger af betydning for fællesskabet».

My translation:

Definition of ‘active citizenship’

“Another important aspect of active citizenship is the social and political participation and the possibility to influence [society]. Participation is not just about formal political participation, but also informal participation in societal life and dialogue in civil society [...]. Participation can be voting in elections, participation in elections, as well as participation in political parties, advocacy groups and leisure associations, workplace democracy, parent school boards and other user boards, as well as the public debate. The participatory aspect is moreover about the feeling of having the possibility to participate, to exert influence and to affect decisions that are of importance to the collective”.

(Ministeriet for Flygtninge Indvandrere og Integration, 2011, p. 29)⁷⁵

QUOTE 2:

Original Danish:

Muligheder og indflydelse

«Medborgerskab handler grundlæggende om, at alle borgere er fuldgældige og ligeværdige medlemmer af samfundsfællesskabet. Medborgerskab sætter fokus på, at borgerne har pligter og rettigheder og gør brug af dem for at udvikle og styrke fællesskabet. Desuden indebærer medborgerskab, at borgerne deltager aktivt i samfundslivet og har lige muligheder for at få indflytelse på samfundet. Medborgerskab vedrører endvidere borgernes identitet, tillid til hinanden, gensidige anerkendelse og følelsen af at høre til og at være en del af fællesskabet».

⁷⁵ The Danish Ministry for Refugees, Immigrants and Integration.

My translation:

Opportunities to influence

“Active citizenship is fundamentally about ensuring that all citizens are full and equal members of the community. Active citizenship emphasizes that citizens have duties and rights and that they use them to develop and strengthen the community. In addition, active citizenship means that citizens participate actively in community life and have equal opportunities to influence society. Active citizenship also relates to citizens' identity, trust in each other, mutual recognition and the sense of belonging and being part of the community”.

(Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Ministeriet for Flygtninge Indvandrere og Integration, 2011, p. 26).

QUOTE 3:

Original Danish:

Definition ‘passiv medborger’

«De passive medborgerne [er dem] der stiller sig uden for samfundet i den forstand, at de hverken er politisk interesserende, følger med i politik i medierne, deltager i politik i bredeste forstand eller deltager i fritids- og foreningsliv».

My translation:

Definition of ‘passive citizen’

“The passive co-citizens [*medborgere*] are those who position themselves outside of the society in the sense that they are neither politically interested, follow politics in the media, participate in politics in the wider sense or participate in leisure-time associations and associational life”.

(Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Ministeriet for Flygtninge Indvandrere og Integration, 2011, p. 18).

Appendix 4 – Overview of data

Total number of interlocutors: 123

Number of localities: 5

Table 1: Numbers of interviews and focus groups according to country

	Norway	Denmark	Total
Interviews (including walking and expert interviews)	42	32	74 (74 interlocutors)
Focus groups	5	6	12 (53 interlocutors)*

*Four of the 53 interlocutors were interviewed prior to the focus group discussion. Hence, the numbers added in the table exceed the total number of interlocutors recruited for this study.

Table 2: Number of interlocutors for each method and from each locality

	Tøyen (Oslo)	Holmlia (Oslo)	Røa (Oslo)	Sydhavn (Copenhagen)	Østerbro (Copenhagen)	Other areas	Total
Interviews	12	10	9	13	11	-	55
Walking interviews	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
Expert interviews	3	2	-	5	4	-	14
Focus groups	2	2	1	2	2	2	11
Participant observations	X	X	X	X	X	-	
Pilot interviews	-	-	-	-	-	2 (Oslo)**	

**The pilot interviews are included as part of my data.

Appendix 5 – Information sheet (Norwegian)



Jeg vil lære av deg!

Mitt navn er Noor Jdid. Jeg er stipendiat ved Institutt for Fredsforskning (PRIO). Jeg samler inn intervjuer som skal inngå i min doktorgradsavhandling i kjønnsstudier ved Universitetet i Bergen.

Jeg er interessert i problemstillinger knyttet til samfunnsengasjement i Norge og Danmark. Jeg ønsker å forstå hva det betyr å være samfunnsengasjert og hvorfor individer velger å engasjere seg. Jeg er også interessert i at man velger å ikke være engasjert, samt ulike måter å være engasjert på. Jeg ønsker å ta utgangspunkt i dine livserfaringer for å lære mer om hva engasjement betyr for deg, hva som motiverer deg til å være engasjert i noe, eller hvorfor du velger å ikke være engasjert.

Prosjektet samler inn individuelle og gruppeintervjuer i tre områder i Oslo og to områder i København i perioden 2015-2016.

Hvem er ansvarlig for prosjektet?

Prosjektet er finansiert av Norges Forskningsråd, og er en vitenskapelig studie som utføres av uavhengige forskere, ikke av myndighetene. Prosjektet er et samarbeid mellom PRIO, Universitetet i Tromsø, og Universitetet i Aarhus, Danmark. Prosjektleder er Cindy Horst ved PRIO. Du finner mer informasjon om prosjektet her: www.prio.org/act.

Hva vil det bety å delta i studien?

Jeg ønsker deg velkommen til å snakke med meg i et individuelt eller gruppeintervju. Dine tanker og erfaringer vil være veldig verdifulle for meg. Intervjuet blir relativt åpent hvor jeg har noen forberedte spørsmål, men hvor du også vil få anledning til å snakke om temaet ut ifra din erfaringsbakgrunn. I gruppeintervjuer vil jeg presentere noen utsagn som deltagere kan reflektere over.

Individuelle intervjuer utføres på et tidspunkt og sted som passer deg og vil vare rundt 1-2 timer. Jeg kan intervjuer deg på norsk, engelsk, fransk eller arabisk. Gruppeintervjuer vil gjennomføres på norsk med 4-6 deltagere og vil vare rundt 2 timer. Det vil bli lett servering.

Med din tillatelse, vil jeg ta lydopptak av intervjuet for å sikre så nøyaktig gjengivelse av dine utsagn som mulig i min analyse og fremstilling.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle opplysninger om deg vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og datamaterialet om deg vil anonymiseres. Intervjuene vil bli transkribert av en forskningsassistent og vil deretter slettes.

Ingen andre enn meg og forskningsassistenten vil ha tilgang til lydopptaket. Andre forskere i prosjektteamet vil få tilgang til den skriftlige, anonymiserte transkripsjonen av intervjuet. Vi vil lagre disse tekstene for prosjektteamets videre bruk i ubestemt tid. De lagres på passord-beskyttede datamaskiner.

Vi vil skrive vitenskapelige artikler og formidle forskningen vår til et allment publikum. Vi oppfordrer ikke til noen bestemt politikk, men håper at vår forskning kan bidra til at myndighetene kan fatte velinformerte beslutninger. Andre personer vil ikke kunne kjenne deg igjen i våre publikasjoner.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil all intervjudata som du har bidratt til bli slettet.

Hvordan kan jeg kontaktes?

Ta gjerne kontakt dersom du skulle ha noen spørsmål eller ønsker å delta i prosjektet. Jeg ser frem til å høre fra deg!

Noor Jdid

Tlf. 480 61 099

njdid@prio.org



Ved andre spørsmål, ta kontakt med prosjektleder Cindy Horst, cindy@prio.org

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS.

Appendix 6 – Information sheet (Danish)



Jeg vil lære af dig!

Jeg arbejder på Institutt for Fredsforskning i Oslo (PRIO) og er i gang med en undersøgelse af danskernes forståelser af aktiv medborgerskab. Derfor har jeg brug for at interviewe en række mennesker i København, som vil fortælle mig jeres livserfaringer.

Jeg er interesseret i spørgsmål relateret til aktiv medborgerskab i Norge og Danmark. Jeg vil forstå, hvad det betyder at være en aktiv medborger. Jeg er også interesseret i at man vælger at *ikke* være en aktiv medborger såvel som forskellige måder at være aktiv på. Jeg vil starte med dine *livserfaringer* for at lære, hvad aktiv medborgerskab betyder for dig, hvad der motiverer dig til at være aktiv i noget, eller hvorfor du vælger ikke at være aktiv.

Projektet samler individuelle og gruppeinterviews i tre områder i Oslo og to områder i København i perioden 2015-2016.

Hvem er ansvarlig for projektet?

Projektet er finansieret af Norges Forskningsråd og er en videnskabelig undersøgelse udført af uafhængige forskere og ikke af myndighederne. Projektet er et samarbejde mellem PRIO, Universitetet i Tromsø og Aarhus Universitet. Projektleder er Cindy Horst hos PRIO. Du kan finde mere information om projektet her: www.prio.org/act.

Hvad vil det betyde at deltage i undersøgelsen?

Jeg vil invitere dig til et personligt eller gruppeinterview, hvor jeg håber, du vil dele dine tanker med mig. Dine erfaringer vil være meget værdifulde for mig. Interviewet vil være relativt åbent, hvor jeg har nogle forberedte spørgsmål, men hvor du også har mulighed for at tale om emnet ud fra din oplevelsesbaggrund. I gruppeinterviews vil jeg præsentere nogle udsagn, som deltagerne kan reflektere over.

Individuelle interviews gennemføres på et tidspunkt og sted, der passer dig og vil vare omkring 1-2 timer. Jeg kan interviewe dig på norsk/dansk, engelsk eller arabisk. Gruppeinterviews gennemføres på norsk/dansk med 4-6 deltagere og varer ca. 2 timer. Det vil være let servering.

Med din tilladelse vil jeg optage interviewet på bånd, for at sikre den mest præcise gengivelse af hvad du siger i min videre analyse og forberedelse.

Hvad sker der med dine oplysninger?

Alle oplysninger om dig vil blive behandlet fortroligt og data om dig vil blive anonymiseret. Interviewene vil blive transskriberet af en forskningsassistent baseret på optagelsen og derefter slettet. Andre forskere på projektet vil få adgang til det skrevne, anonym transskription af samtalen. Vi ønsker at gemme disse tekster til projektgruppen yderligere bruge på ubestemt tid. De er gemt på kodeordsbeskyttede computere.

Vi vil skrive videnskabelige artikler og formidle vores forskning til en generel publikum. Vi har ikke opfordre nogen bestemt politik, men håber, at vores forskning kan hjælpe myndighederne træffe kvalificerede beslutninger. Andre vil ikke være i stand til at genkende dig i vores publikationer.

Frivillig deltagelse

Det er frivilligt at deltage i samtalen, og du kan til enhver tid tilbagekalde dit samtykke uden at give en grund. Hvis du trækker, at alle data, der har bidraget blive slettet.

Hvordan kan jeg kontaktes?

Du er meget velkommen til at kontakte mig og høre nærmere.

Noor Jdid:

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Epost: njdid@prio.org



For andre spørgsmål, kontakt projektleder Cindy Horst, cindy@prio.org

Undersøgelsen rapporteres til fortrolighedsombudsmanden for forskning, Norwegian Social Science Data Services AS.

Appendix 7 – Interview guide (original language)

1. Personlig bakgrunn:

- Kan du fortelle meg din livshistorie? (eller kan du fortelle litt om deg selv/din bakgrunn/din oppvekst?)
- Er du opprinnelig fra Oslo/København? Hvor lenge har du bodd i byen?
- Hvor lenge har du bodd i dette området?

2. Engasjement:

- Er du engasjert i noe? (hvis ja: hva og hvorfor, hvis nei: hvorfor ikke?)
- Hva betyr det samfunnsengasjementet for deg?
- Hva tenker du når jeg sier ordet 'samfunnsengasjement'?

3. Verdier og handlingsrom:

- Er det noen verdier eller holdninger som påvirker deg til å engasjere deg?
- Hvis du tenker litt tilbake, var det noe spesifikt som skjedde i livet ditt som 'trigget' ditt engasjement?
- (Hvis personen har internasjonal migrasjonsbakgrunn): Hvis du ser tilbake på din og familiens migrasjonshistorie, og når dere kom til Norge, tror du det har formet ditt syn på engasjement?
- Hvorfor er det viktig for deg å engasjere deg i disse stedene/tingene?
- Hva føler du at du får ut fra engasjementet ditt?
- Føler du at du har mulighet til å påvirke eller gjøre en forskjell? Hvis ja: på hvilke måter? Hvis nei: hvorfor ikke? Er det lett/vanskelig?
- (dersom personen oppgir ansvar: spør hvor den kommer fra, og hva er man ansvarlig for?)
- (dersom personen nevner «å bidra til noe/fellesskap» – spør hva dette betyr konkret. Hva er et fellesskap for han/henne?)

4. Avslutningsspørsmål:

- Er det noe du ønsker å legge til som du føler du ikke har fått sagt i dag?

5. Fylle ut skjema om personlig info

Appendix 8 – Interview guide (English translation)

1. Personal background:

- Could you tell me your life story? (or could you tell me about yourself/your background/your upbringing?)
- Are you originally from Oslo/Copenhagen? How long have you lived in the city?
- How long have you lived in this area?

2. Civic engagement:

- Are you engaged in anything? (if yes: what and why? If no: why not?)
- What does civic engagement mean to you?
- What do you think of when I say the word ‘civic engagement’?

3. Values and capacity to engage:

- Are there any values or attitudes that motivate you to engage?
- If you think back, was there anything particular that happened in your life that ‘triggered’ your engagement?
- (If the person has an international migration history): If you look back on your own/your family’s migration history, and when you came to Norway, do you think this has shaped your view on civic engagement?
- Why is it important for you to engage in these places/things?
- What do you feel that you get out of your engagement?
- Do you feel that you have the opportunity to influence or make a change? If yes: in what ways? If no: why not? Is it easy/difficult?
- (If the person talks about responsibility: ask where this responsibility comes from, and what one is responsible for?)
- (If the person mentions «contribute to something/to community» - ask what this means specifically. What is a community for him/her?)

4. Closing questions:

- Is there something you would like to add that you’ve felt you haven’t already said today?

5. Fill out attribute form and personal information

Appendix 9 – Focus group discussion guide (original language)

Forberedelse:

- Sjekk opptaksbånd
- Informasjonsark, skjema, sitater
- Tegn sirkler på flip-charts: «privat», «lokalt/nabolag», «byen», «nasjonalt», «globalt/internasjonalt».

Del 1: Introduksjon: 15 min

- Velkommen og navnerunde
- Kort introduksjon om prosjektet
 - Vi vil finne ut hvordan forskningen og politikken om aktiv medborgerskap relaterer til hverdagslivet til mennesker i Danmark og Norge. Hvordan forstår folk aktiv medborgerskap ut ifra personlige erfaringer i Oslo og København? Og så er det viktig å spørre hva aktiv medborgerskap egentlig betyr? Hvem defineres som aktiv og passiv? Vi fokuserer på to byer, og snakker med folk i ulike nabolag. Så ønsker jeg å finne ut hva dere legger i begrepet «aktiv medborgerskap» – gjennom deres personlige erfaringer og tanker rundt noen politiske sitater som jeg skal presentere til dere.
- Målet med gruppeintervjuet:
 - Alles meninger er viktige, ingen konsensus!
 - Fortrolighet
 - Forklar bruken av båndopptaker, flip charts og post-it notes.
- Spørsmål?
- Alle presenterer seg selv (alder, boddid i området, hva de laver, om de engasjerer seg noe sted eller ikke).

Del 2: Diskusjon – 1 time

A. Post-it øvelse – Måter å delta på – 15 min

MÅL: finne mest mulig ut om lokalområdet og arenaer for ‘aktiv medborgerskap’

- På hvilke måter tenker du at du er en aktiv medborger? Hvorfor?
- Hvis du mener at du ikke er en aktiv medborger, skriv hvorfor.
- La alle sammen forklare hva de har skrevet på lappen, og plassere lappen i en av sirklene. Hvis samme lappen kan inngå i mer enn én sirkel, så kan de skrive samme ord i ny lapp og legge i andre sirkler.
- Oppsummer kort.

B. Diskusjon om sitat 1: aktiv deltagelse – 15 min

MÅL: nyansere aktiv/passiv begrepene

- Les opp sitat 1.
- Be gruppen reflektere: Hva tenker dere om dette? Er dere enige med det som står der?

- Sitat 1 forteller om måter og arenaer man kan delta i – og hva det vil si å ikke være aktiv (dvs passiv). Og vi har snakket om dette. Når dere tenker om måter dere deltar på og de stedene dere deltar i, som dere har notert i post-its, tenker dere at dere har mulighet til å øve innflytelse i samfunnet og påvirke samfunnet rundt dere? Hvorfor? Hvorfor ikke?

C. Diskusjon om sitat 2: 15 min

MÅL: finne ut hvordan deltagere knytter muligheter til innflytelse til deres opplevelser av aktiv medborgerskap

- Les opp sitat 2
- Be gruppen reflektere: tenker dere om dette? Er dere enige med det som står der?
- Dette sitatet forteller om innflytelse. Når dere tenker på måten dere deltar på og stedene dere deltar i, som dere har skrevet på post-its, tenker dere at dere har like muligheter til å ha innflytelse? Hvorfor, hvorfor ikke?

D. (Hvis tid – presenter ett sitat til)

Del 3: Avslutning – 5 min

- Oppsummer diskusjonen
- Takke for deltagelsen
- Skjema.

Appendix 10 – Focus group discussion guide (English translation)

Preparation:

- Check dictaphone is working
- Information sheets, attribute forms, policy quotes
- Draw circles on flip-charts: «private», «local/neighbourhood», «city», «national», «global/international»

Part 1: Introduction – 15 minutes

- Welcome and round of names
- Short introduction about the project
 - We want to find out how the research and politics on active citizenship relates to the everyday lives of people in Denmark and Norway. How do people understand active citizenship from their personal experiences in Oslo and Copenhagen? It's also important to ask what active citizenship actually means? Who is defined as active and passive? We focus on two cities, and talk to people in different neighbourhoods. I wish to learn how you define the term 'active citizenship' – through your personal experiences and thoughts on some policy quotes that I will present to you.
- Aim with the group interview:
 - Everyone's opinions are important – no need for consensus!
 - Confidentiality
 - Explain use of dictaphone, flip charts and post-it notes.
- Questions?
- Everyone presents themselves (age, how long they've lived in the area, if they engage in anything or not).

Part 2: Discussion – 1 hour

E. Post-it task – Ways of participation – 15 minutes

AIM: Finding out as much as possible about the neighbourhood and arenas for 'active citizenship'

- In what ways do you consider yourself to be an active citizen? Why?
- If you think that you're not an active citizen, write down why.
- Let everyone explain what they have written on the post-it, and encourage them to place it in one of the circles. If the same post-it can be placed in more than one circle, they can write the same word on a new post-it and place it in the other circles.
- Summarize briefly.

F. Discussion on policy quote 1: active participation – 15 minutes

AIM: to nuance the terms 'active'/'passive'

- Read policy quote 1.

- Ask the group to reflect on it: What do you think of this quote? Do you agree with what is said?
- Quote 1 talks about ways and arenas to be active in, and what it means to *not* be active (in other words, passive). We have talked about this. When you think of ways you participate, and the places you participate in that you've noted on the post-its, do you think you have the possibility to influence society? Why? Why not?

G. Discussion on policy quote 2 – 15 minutes

AIM: Find out how participants understand the possibility to influence in the context of their own experience of being active citizens

- Read policy quote 2
- Ask the group to reflect: what do you think about this quote? Do you agree with what's written there?
- This quote is about influence. When you think of the ways that you participate, and the places that you participate in, which you have written on the post-it notes, do you think that you have the possibility to influence society? Why? Why not?

H. (If time allows – present one more policy quote)

Part 3: Closing – 5 minutes

- Summarize discussion
- Thank the participants for their participation
- Attribute form

Appendix 11 – Attribute form interviews

Dato:	
Informant ID (fylles ut av forsker)	
Bakgrunnsinformasjon	
Bosted:	
Fødselsår:	
Kjønn:	
Sivilstatus:	
Antall barn:	
Barnas fødselsår:	
Fødselsland:	
Fødselsby:	
Botid i Norge:	
Statsborgerskap:	
Nåværende status for oppholdstillatelse i Norge (sett kryss:)	Statsborgerskap: Permanent oppholdstillatelse: Avventer saksbehandling: Udokumentert:
Flyttehistorie (sett kryss):	Intern: Internasjonal:
Flytteårsak (sett kryss):	Jobb: Studier: Asyl/humanitær: Kvoteflyktning: Familieformasjon: Familiegienforening: Annet:
Primær aktivitet (sett kryss):	Jobb (betalt arbeid): Studier: Pensjonist:

	Mottar sosial støtte: Ingen av delene:
Beskrivelse av aktivitet (f.eks type jobb eller studier):	
Høyeste fullførte utdanningsnivå:	
Type kurs/vitnemål:	
Religion:	
Hvilken religion/livssyn har du:	
Medlemskap i tros- eller livssynssamfunn (f.eks kirke/moské):	
Hypighet for deltakelse (sett kryss):	Daglig: Ukentlig: Månedlig: Sjeldnere enn én gang i måneden: Kun i forbindelse med ritualer/høytider: Aldri:
Politikk	
Politisk ståsted (sett kryss):	Høyre: Venstre: Sentrum: Annet:
Medlemskap i politisk parti (sett kryss):	Ja: Nei: Hvis ja, hvilket parti:
Hvilket politisk parti stemte du på ved forrige valg?	
Deltagelse i aktivitet	
Er du aktiv i noen organisasjoner/klubber/foreninger?:	Ja: Nei: Hvis ja, hvor?

Mediebruk	
Medievaner (sett kryss):	TV: Avis: Nettavis: Facebook: Twitter: Andre:
Språk som du behersker:	
Kommentarer:	

Appendix 12 – Attribute form focus group discussions

Norwegian

Gruppe & informant ID (fylles ut av forsker):	
Navn	
Epost	
Fødselsår	
Kjøn	
Antall barn	
Barns fødselsår	
Nabolag/bydel:	
Botid i nabolag/bydel (antall år):	
Fødested (sted og land):	
Antall år med opphold i Norge:	
Statsborgerskap:	
Utdannelse:	Høyeste avsluttede utdannelsesnivå: Type utdanning (fag):
Primære aktivitet i dag (kryss):	Jobn Student Aktivering Pensjonist Jobbsøkende Frivillighet
Type jobb:	
Medlemskap i religiøst/spirituelt samfunn (kryss):	Ja Nei Hva:
Hypigheten av deltakelse i religiøse samfunn (kryss):	Daglig Ukentlig Månedlig Mindre enn 1 gang om måneden Kun ritualer/helligdager Aldri
Medlemskap i politisk parti (kryss):	Ja Nei Hva:
Hvilket parti stemte du på ved siste valg:	
Frivillig aktivitet/engasjement (kryss):	Ja Nei Hva:
Hypigheten av frivillig aktivitet/engasjement (kryss):	Daglig Ukentlig Månedlig Mindre enn 1 gang om måneden Aldri

Danish

Gruppe & informant ID (fyldes ud af forsker):	
Navn	
Epost	
Fødselsår	
Køn	
Antal børn	
Børns fødselsår	
Kvarter:	
Botid i kvarter (antal år):	
Fødested (sted og land):	
Antal år med ophold i Danmark:	
Statsborgerskab:	
Uddannelse:	Højeste afsluttede uddannelsesniveau: Type uddannelse (fag):
Primære aktivitet i dag (kryss):	Job Studerende Aktivering Pensionist Jobsøgend Frivillighed
Type arbejde:	
Medlemskab i religiøse/spiritualitet samfund (kryss):	Ja Nei Hvad:
Hypigheden af deltagelse i religiøse samfund (kryss):	Daglig Ugentlig Månedlige Mindre end 1 gang om måned Kun ritualer/helligdage Aldri
Medlemskab i politisk parti (kryss):	Ja Nei Hvad:
Hvilket parti stemte du på ved sidste valg:	
Frivillig aktivitet/engagement (kryss):	Ja Nei Hvad:
Hypigheden af frivillig aktivitet/engagement (kryss):	Daglig Ugentlig Månedlige Mindre end 1 gang om måned Aldri



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