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Political inclusion and exclusion in a disadvantaged neighbourhood

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Abstract

In social sciences literature, political participation of individuals is often linked to socio-economic characteristics such as a person's level of education and income. The social embeddedness of subjects in local networks that are spatially tied to neighbourhoods is less frequently taken into account. Yet social networks built around local pubs, the Muslim community, a neighbourhood association or private networks all have their own mechanisms to include or exclude their members from political activities. This paper investigates the cultural practices of different social communities within a disadvantaged neighbourhood in Berlin, Germany. Based on interviews with residents, the study develops a typology of three different community designs - each of them promoting a particular route to political participation. Access to social capital within networks, shared experiences of exclusion, person or object orientation and the particular collective identity enhance or reduce the probability of participation in elections or local politics e.g. community organizing events. The paper links insights from political sociology to findings on spatial segregation and traces three routes of political participation in the neighbourhood.

Introduction

Increasing social and economic inequalities in Germany often have the effect of concentrating social problems in certain neighbourhoods. This process is reflected in social and ethnic segregation in metropolitan areas. A disproportionate number of marginalised people such as the long-term unemployed, agency workers and migrants live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. But these segregated districts are not homogeneous areas – they are diverse. This diversity is reflected in local residents' different situations which range from dependency on welfare benefits or precarious employment to students sharing flats. Residents often have different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. But there is one common phenomenon in all of these districts: The voter turnout and political participation rates in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in German cities are low. It does not matter what type of election is being considered, the lack of political representation is obvious. Voter participation is always low in districts where levels of poverty and unemployment are high. Socio-spatial segregation in German cities is accompanied by unequal participation rates. As an illustration, the average turnout rate in Berlin for the national Bundestag election in 2009 was 70.9%. In comparison, the level of participation in the same election in *Soldiner Kiez* – a poor neighbourhood in Berlin – was 41.9%[1]. In short, more than half of the residents did not have their opinion included in the political system. But what circumstances cause the residents to abstain from elections and political events?

[1] Own calculation based on the data of Amt für Statistik Berlin- Brandenburg (2009).

Statistics from 34 German cities seem to suggest a link between neighbourhoods and levels of political participation. Schäfer (2011) researched the correlation between turnout and spatial fragmentation in Germany. He analysed socio-economic data from 1,495 districts and the level of voter participation in the 2009 Bundestag election within this areas. He found that the turnout rates correlate with social indicators such as income, unemployment rate, housing size, educational attainment and age of first child birth within the districts. Schäfer concludes that there is indeed a relationship between spatial segregation and political participation. Generally, political participation is linked to socio-economic characteristics such as education and income. The social embeddedness of individuals in local neighbourhood networks is, however, not taken into consideration. But how can the differences between the participation rates in privileged and underprivileged neighbourhoods be explained? Is there a neighbourhood effect on political participation in addition to the individual characteristics of the residents? And if so, what are the factors which create such an effect in this context – or in other words, how do the local mechanisms of political inclusion and exclusion function?

This paper focuses on the social embeddedness of people in local neighbourhood networks. A case study of a disadvantaged district of Berlin provides initial indications in order to answer these questions.[2] The paper begins by describing the findings on segregation in Germany and the missing link between political sociology and urban studies. It is demonstrated that only a few studies have been carried out into the effect of social disadvantages, social isolation and/or local tradition in neighbourhoods on political integration. Secondly, based on interviews with residents, the study explores the social networks around a local pub, the Muslim community, a neighbourhood association and private networks in Soldiner Kiez. It is a poor district in Berlin where are large number of residents are migrants and/or recipients of welfare benefits. By drawing on the theoretical framework developed by Pierre Bourdieu, Talja Blokland and Herbert Gans, it is shown that access to social capital, a particular collective identity in local communities and a culture of person or object orientation enhance or reduce the probability of participation in elections or local politics. A typology of three different community designs is subsequently developed – each of which promotes a different route to political participation.

[2] This article is a shorter, amended version of my Diploma thesis, which was submitted at the Philipps-University Marburg in August 2010.

Does neighbourhood matter?

Research on distressed neighbourhoods and contextual effects has a long tradition in urban sociology (for an overview see Friedrichs 2001). In his well-known book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, Wilson (2006) proposes a new category within the Marxian class concept – the "new urban underclass". He describes this new underclass as being characterized by social isolation and a marginal economic position. He assumes the hierarchical order of society has developed into a society divided into those that are included and those that are excluded from the modern working society. The idea behind concepts such as the new urban underclass or, for instance, the culture of poverty concept developed by Lewis (1959) is that living together in a poor neighbourhood leads to a contextual effect in the form of local cultural practices or a specific way of life. Conservatives in the United States and Great Britain appropriated the underclass concept and used it to blame poor residents for deviant behaviour. In contrast, French and German literature employs ideas of social exclusion rather than the underclass concept to describe the phenomena of division. Social exclusion refers to "the double meaning of the *state* of being excluded as well as the *process* of exclusion" (Kronauer 2001:55). In both discussions, however, being excluded or being the new underclass has consequences for the residents' daily life strategies: "In important dimensions of everyday social life they [the residents] are - and perceive themselves as - excluded from the generally accepted and desired standards. […] The only choices left for them are to develop survival strategies with the help of the welfare state and/or inside the informal economy, or to draw public attention to their plight with occasional riots." (ibid.:54) Based on the underclass concept Cohen and Dawson (1993) examine the relation between social isolation and political isolation in an Afro-American neighbourhood in Detroit. They conclude, for example, that talking about politics in the family has an effect on donating to political parties. They go on to note that "Significantly less attention has been paid to the impact of concentrated poverty in "deadly neighborhoods" on an individual's ability to function as a participatory citizen" (ibid.:286).

The social and ethnic segregation of German cities does not exist to the extent seen, for instance, in American ghettos or the French banlieues. Nevertheless, Friedrichs and Triemer (2009) point out that socio-spatial segregation is increasing many of German cities. They analyse social and ethnic segregation in 15 German cities, measured as a proportion of welfare recipients and proportion of migrants. In 11 of the 15 cities, the extent of socio-spatial segregation was increasing while in 13 cities the level of ethnic segregation was

declining. The empirical findings on the influence of the increasing level of socio-spatial segregation in German cities on the residents are heterogeneous. Nonnenmacher (2009), for example, tries to identify a contextual effect on the willingness to work and work ethic of residents of neighbourhoods with a high unemployment rate. Nonnenmacher concludes that a high unemployment rate in a district does not lead in principle to a low level of willingness to work. In a study on neighbourhood characteristics and educational success, Helbig (2010) concludes that living in a poor neighbourhood does not have a negative effect on a student's competence development. However, living in a rich neighbourhood "does in fact have a positive effect on student's competence development—independently of composition effects" (ibid.:656). In summary, no urban studies have been undertaken in Germany similar to the Study on Detroit, which prove contextual effects on political integration.

In political sciences the spatial dimension of political representation is usually the subject of Election Studies. After elections the statistical agencies publish reports showing the various parties' "voter strongholds" and indicate the turnout rates in the districts. The statistical agency of Berlin concludes in its analysis of the 2009 national election that the voter rate is lowest in districts with a high number of socially-deprived people (Amt für Statistik Berlin- Brandenburg 2009). The first studies[3] based on quantitative data to have attempted to analyse the differences between areas were, for instance, carried out by Falter and Schuhmann (1994). They analyse the records of electoral districts in the 1990 Bundestag Election. They prove that a lack of competition between parties or a tradition of political abstinence in a district lead to lower turnouts. There is, hence, a tradition of less political participation in districts with social problems. Thus, all studies assume a correlation between place of residence and turnout, but the reasons for non-voter traditions are not explored. Political sociology focuses on the social embeddedness of actors. Kißler (2007) develops a concept of political socialisation. Socialisation is "also known as enculturalisation" and "refers to the process through which a person […] acquires both the knowledge and the personality necessary to become a full member of a society." (Bruce and Yearley 2009:285) In the context of political participation the term describes the process of political education and the political values and norms imparted by a person's family or peer group. Over time the person learns skills which are important for political participation. This political competence has a cognitive and an affective-

[3] Other German studies are: Hennig, Homburg and Lohde-Reiff (1999), Hennig, Lohde-Reif and Sack (2001), and Geiling (2006).

motivational dimension (Kißler 2007:80). A sociological explanation of a contextual effect of local communities in particular neighbourhoods on political participation has not yet been developed.

The research: Political participation in a disadvantaged neighbourhood

Soldiner Kiez – the researched area in Berlin – is characterised by old buildings and a large number of social housing projects. It is part of the western city centre and belongs the district Berlin-Mitte (Wedding). The neighbourhood has approximately 15,700 residents. Media and public opinion regard it a disadvantaged and dangerous part of Berlin. Table 1 presents the data related to social structure in comparison to the average dates for Berlin. These statistics indicate that the neighbourhood is a highly socially-segregated area. All indicators are above the average for Berlin.

	Soldiner Kiez	Berlin Ø
Unemployment (15-65 years)	18.1%	10.2%
Youth unemployment	13.0%	6.1%
Long-term unemployment	7.1%	4.0%
Recipients of welfare benefits	30.6%	13.9%
Children under 15, Dependent on welfare benefits	70.4%	38.6%

Tabel 1: Socio-economic data (based on Niggemeier et al. 2009)

The socio-spatial segregation in the area is accompanied by ethnic segregation. 40.31% of the residents of Soldiner Kiez do not have German citizenship. 44.3% of these migrants are from Turkey and 13.5% from former Yugoslavia. Lots of social projects are based in the neighbourhood such as a social kitchen and various youth initiatives. The neighbourhood is part of Berlin's "socially integrative city programme"[4] which has a local office and employs two so-called neighbourhood managers.

The analysis is based on six interviews undertaken from February to April 2010. The sampling and interpretation was based on the grounded theory methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1980). The objective of the interviews was to gain initial insight into how mechanisms of political inclusion and exclusion may function in a local urban setting. The technique of "episodic interviews" developed by Flick (1996) was used to understand

[4]In German: Stadtteile mit besonderem Entwicklungsbedarf – Soziale Stadt.

the daily experiences within the communities. Episodic interviews make a distinction between episodic and semantic knowledge. Episodic knowledge is linked to concrete circumstances such as time and space and is generated in narratives about concrete events and situations in daily life. Semantic knowledge is more generally related to an issue and includes, for example, political opinions. To gain both types of knowledge the interview focused, on the one hand, on the biography of the interviewees in relation to local engagement and social contacts. On the other hand questions were also asked about politics and personal opinions (ibid.:3ff.). Table 2 lists the interviewees and some of their characteristics. Each of the interviewees functions as representative of his or her community.

Name	**Age**	**Gender**	**Characteristics**
Simone	48	female	University graduate, worked as a secretary, recently unemployed
Claudia	49	female	Worked in a factory and as a nurse, long-term unemployed
Hakan	38	male	Works in a mosque, financed by the job centre (employment agency)
Bärbel	45	female	University graduate, local school assistant and single parent
Gudrun	47	female	Long-term unemployed, doing a so-called "1-€ Job" (working program for long-time unemployed, financed by the employment agency)
Eugen	58	male	Worked as truck driver, long-time unemployed

Tabel 2: Interviewees[5]

All six of the residents interviewed have lived in the neighbourhood for more than 5 years and are between 45 and 58 years old. Apart from Bärbel they are all unemployed or doing a job financed by the employment agency. Hakan was born in Berlin and has a German citizenship, his parents are migrants from Turkey. Gudrun grew up in the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

Social integration in local communities

The participants' different backgrounds are reflected in the way they are integrated into local social networks. Gudrun and Eugen frequently visit local pubs in *Soldinerstrasse*, where German long-term unemployed frequently come together. Hakan works in the local Muslim community, where he also spends his free time and organises the local Qur'an

[5]All interviewee names are pseudonyms.

school. Bärbel, Simone and Claudia are primarily integrated in their private network of family and friends and also participate in local neighbourhood association events. None of the interviewees is part of only one community.[6] The membership varies with time and often overlaps. In general, Soldiner Kiez is an anonymous space with no common interaction throughout the community. Simone answers the question whether she has lots of contact with her neighbours as follows:

> When you are talking about the neighbours in the same apartment building, I would say no. When you are talking about the neighbours in the wider meaning, not in the same building, but for example two streets away, I would say yes.

All interviewees have contacts in the neighbourhood and meet them in different spaces. The contacts are distributed throughout the district and do not result from living together in a building or a street but from activities such as practising religion, organising local politics or drinking beer in a pub. Blokland and Savage (2008) stress "the need to understand contemporary 'sociation' not in terms of bounded, small-scale, communities with an intense public realm, but in terms of their decentralized, diffuse, and sprawling character which depend on multiple and myriad technological, informational, personal and organizational networks that link locations in complex ways" (ibid.:4f.). That does not mean that neighbourhoods have no relevance for their residents but that their social networks are constructed not according to spatial proximity but as a result of common activities and local practice. Gudrun, for example, meets her peer group in the pub every day. The other pub regulars live in different parts of Soldiner Kiez or in the surrounding area. Belonging to the group enhances Gudrun's self-confidence and she describes her community as her family:

> I would like to move out of my apartment but stay here in the neighbourhood. […] Not far away, because of the people I know here. Here you have the feeling you have a family. […] Shit, I really want to move out but since I am part of … I would miss that somehow.

The communities are direct reference groups and constitutive for a person's social identity and their moral principles and values. The residents experience contemporary communities through bonds existing in the private space (Blokland 2003:153). Social integration and the accompanying feeling of togetherness are relevant for political participation. Talking about politics, receiving invitations to political events or identifying as a poor resident can be linked to different routes of political participation. The interview analysis highlights three patterns in the local communities which influence the political inclusion or exclusion of their members: social capital, a collective identity and a person- or object-orientation.

[6] In the research design only communities are considered which are tied in some manner to the neighbourhood.

Patterns of political integration

1. Social capital

The first pattern concerns the resources provided by the residents' social relations. Putnam (1994; 2000) has published studies on the relationship between social capital and political participation which show that membership of local associations such as sports clubs have an effect on individuals participation in politics. Institutionally organized communities such as neighbourhood associations or mosques use their social ties for political mobilisation. The group offers an interpretation of the political system and knowledge about events and political questions. Hakan, for instance, describes how the mosque encourages visitors or members to vote in elections:

> We arrange for everyone to vote. We explicitly don't advise people on how they should vote. The main thing is that they vote. [...] They think, “I have to vote for someone” and then they ask, “Hakan, What should I do?” And than I tell them position A, position B, “Now I'm going to leave you alone with your conscience. But go and vote, that main thing is that you vote”. […] I call them on Sunday and ask, “Erkan, have you already voted?”, “No”. “Do it, you can vote until 6 pm”.

Hakan is not alone in trying to motivate the mosque's members to vote; the Imam also supplicates visitors to vote. The mobilisation in the neighbourhood association is different but has similar effects. The association has relationships with local politicians. Simone noted:

> That is amusing because Mr. Hanke, our district mayor, comes [to our association's events] now and then for all sorts of reasons. For example, he was at the Festival of German Diversity which Theresa had organised in the Koloniestrasse. Then when he came to our association's summer festival he had a colleague with him who called attention to an election. That was before the Bundestag elections.

Both organisations are representative of civil organisations inspired by Saul Alinsky's (1989) concept of community organising. The local platform of citizen organises events that address issues such as conditions in the job centre, the situation faced by young migrants at the local school or the cleanliness of public spaces, and thereby connects institutional organised communities. Hakan and Simone are both highly motivated and describe the mobilisation through the club structure as successful. The scientific discussion about social capital and political participation focuses on the institutional dimension on social capital. Aspects of social networks in daily life are not taken into account. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition.” (ibid.:248). These relationships cannot only be acquired in institutionalized clubs but also in private networks of family or friends. However, social capital in private networks is usually not used to

mobilise a community. Claudia sees a clear distinction between the topics of conversation in her private networks and in the neighbourhood association. When asked whether she talks to a particular friend about politics she replied:

> No, only regarding the employment agency. Apart from that... She is a single parent, pregnant with her second child. She definitely has other things to worry about. Unless it is related to her daily life, ... like child benefit. Sure, than we talk about it. But about politics in general, no.

Once a week Claudia attends the neighbourhood association's writing circle where she talks about the daily news and/or local political decisions. She also receives information about which benefits or jobs have been cut off and what the district mayor plans to do. The quality and quantity of this social capital is, according to Bourdieu, the result of the social position in social space. Depending on the social position and the attendant capital, a person has access to different social fields, for example, the political field. In an empirical study Bennett (2009) emphasizes that apart from a person's class, characteristics such as gender, ethnicity and age also have a relevant effect on the number of relationships which offer resources in form of social capital. The social capital associated with specific neighbourhoods also differs along these lines (Blasius, Friedrichs and Klöckner 2008). Hakan receives important resources from his activities in the mosque and through his contacts to a Muslim political organisation. In comparison, Eugen lives relatively socially isolated. His infrequent social contacts consist of visitors of the local pub. In the past he was interested in politics but nowadays he has nobody to talk to. The lack of political interest within the community and the consumption of alcohol have lead to Eugen's general apathy.

> No, they [visitors of the local pub] are not interested in that. They're more like your average BZ [tabloid newspaper] reader. And also in terms of IQ they're nothing special. And when you've had a few, then nothing's so important anyway. Nothing matters. That's a drug, an expensive one. Away from everyday life and so on.

Bourdieu mentions the role of local social networks for residents in poor neighbourhoods. The low level of access to different types of capital compounds spatial mobility and social capital is acquired in the daily context of the neighbourhood (Bourdieu 2010:117ff.). In addition to Bourdieu's concept of social capital, it should be noted that the role of neighbourhoods for social networks has generally changed in the last decades. Blokland and Rae (2008) call this transformation of urban bonds “networked urbanism”. Individualisation, suburbanisation and increasing socio-spatial segregation have led to changes in the organisation of social ties and urban communities. This does not mean that social capital has no spatial dimension. Social capital is related to where the agents are engaged in social relations. Modern neighbourhoods are not made up of one common community, but certain divergent forms of social ties in the form of different types of

communities (Blokland and Savage 2008:7ff.). In practice, the pub is a special form of community with a special kind of social capital. In her interview Gudrun stressed the importance of the community and mentioned that she has lost all her contacts outside the district. Her most important relationships are now with people in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, she thinks the regulars at the pub are not interested in politics and that they do not participate in elections or other political processes. The correlation between institutionalized social capital and political participation has been empirically proven (see for example Gabriel 2002). The amount of social capital in private networks that is spatially tied to neighbourhoods is not explored. However, it seems obvious that even in times of "networked urbanism" local networks and communities have an effect on the daily lives of many residents and through different access to social capital on their willingness to participate in political processes.

2. Collective Identity

Shared experiences of exclusion are a topic often mentioned in the interviews and frame the second pattern of political inclusion: a collective identity within the community. Shared experiences of exclusion are related to the neighbourhood and concurrently to factors such as a person's ethnicity or class. The argument that experiences of exclusion have consequences for political inclusion is not mentioned in literature. In his description of forms of exclusion, Kronauer (2002) distinguishes between material, cultural and political-institutional participation. This political-institution dimension has three aspects: the hindrance of citizenship, the reduction of social rights and exclusion within the educational system. The role played by exclusion from the political system is not considered. However, empirical data shows that a group's shared experiences of exclusion have an effect on political integration. The interviews point to two categories of exclusion: individual and collective experiences of exclusion. These categories are expressed through the usage of words like "I" or "We". Gudrun has lost hope that she will be able to change her social position and shares this feeling with her group. She speaks of how she tried to escape from unemployment and how repeated experiences of exclusion lead to feelings of powerlessness:

> You have already seen what is going on with me. I've been in this situation for so long. I won't get out of it. You can forget it. I am going to be 47 years old this month. I am an unskilled worker. That makes it even harder. I did my vocational training as a baker "over there" [in the GDR]. But that doesn't count for anything here. [...] Try to find something. You can't even get a job as a cleaner. Yes, I tried back then, when things weren't so bad. [...] Back then I said I would happily work as a cleaner. They said they had no work; there were no jobs. What do I know. They prefer to take foreigners rather than us. Because they are cheaper. Yes, I have given up.

In this case “us” shows that a collective identity exists in the pub community of discriminated poor Germans with no way of improving their situation. They retreat into their own space and develop their own mechanism of excluding others from public realms. The first time the interviewer visited the pub she was viewed with distrust. As Schroer (2009:104) highlights, not only privileged groups exclude others from public spaces. The pub regulars use the common space in the pub to create their own world, distinct from the outside world and the majority of society. In the narratives about their communities the interviewees refer to Soldiner Kiez in different ways, such as by referring to the pub. The participants' social identity is not the same as their spatial identity. None of the residents referred to themselves as a “Soldiner” (A “Soldinian” - or someone from Soldiner Kiez - something that would be possible in German). Their identities are related to their membership of groups and differ between situations. Blokland (2003) distinguishes between four patterns of using location: “people who associated no particular significance with location; people who used the neighbourhood for practical purposes; people who focused on symbolic neighbourhood use; and people who associated living in the neighbourhood with specific lifestyle” (idib.:157). The practical and the symbolic use can be seen in the interviews. In private networks of friends and family the neighbourhood has a practical function. The good infrastructure and cheap rent enhance the quality of life. However, members of the group meet in each other's private apartments and not in public spaces in the neighbourhood. The urban setting has no symbolic dimension for the particular groups' collective identities. Simone describes the meetings with her friends:

> I spend a lot of time with Markus. We live pretty near to each other. He often comes round to mine for something to eat and I go round to his pretty often for something to eat. [...] The artist is a bit unsociable, so I don't meet up with her as often. But if we do meet we generally meet at hers or mine, to drink wine or whatever. Sometimes we take the dog for a walk.

The spatial proximity of friends' apartments and the parks is put to practical use. Simone could not imagine living in another district. She likes life in Soldiner Kiez. However, the location is not relevant for her self-image or the collective identity of her personal network.

Collective identity is - according to Polletta and Jasper (2001) - defined “as an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may from part of a personal identity.” (ibid.:285) It is important to consider the group's self-image as an excluded group of residents in a disadvantaged neighbourhood when trying to understand the group members' political decisions. In the pub, mosque and neighbourhood association the neighbourhood has a symbolic dimension. Gudrun, for

example, talks with the other regulars in the pub about life as an unemployed German in the district and describes how she feels unprivileged in comparison to other local groups such as migrants:

> You can do what you want. They [the migrants] get more rights than we do. And that's the injustice I experience regarding the state. They get everything on a plate. We have to go begging for every cent. As Germans we are worthless … that's the reason why I am angry.

The collective identity in the pub is considered distinct from other groups such as "foreigners" or the "local politically-involved people like the district manger". Soldiner Kiez is a symbol for exclusion from society, and "the Politics" is seen as responsible for the socio-spatial segregation in Berlin. That politics, in general, is responsible for local problems is an opinion shared by the neighbourhood association. Claudia is angry about the social situation of lots of residents:

> High unemployment. It's plain to see that every third person here lives on state benefits. But as I said, it's not those people's fault. It the fault of politics. This is practically a ghetto. They have practically sent the people here.

Bärbel reflects on the political under-representation of the neighbourhood and the political disinterest:

> […] those are the political problems, […] which don't get solved because there is no interest. In principle, our neighbourhood has no voice.

There is a clear difference between the contacts that exist in the private sphere and the bonds in communities which meet in public locations. Private networks do not identify according to their place of residence. The members of the pub, mosque and neighbourhood association, however, have developed a collective identity that includes their social position in Soldiner Kiez. This symbolic identification with the neighbourhood leads to different consequences for political participation. The members of the pub feel distressed in comparison to others in the district and are of the opinion that they cannot change anything by participating in politics. The members of the neighbourhood association and mosque see the entire neighbourhood as excluded and want to engage in local political processes to change the social situation of all residents.

3. Person- and Object-Orientation

The third pattern of political inclusion is based on the idea of a specific culture within a community and draws on the theoretical framework of a working class culture developed by Herbert Gans (1982). Gans explores the personal networks of Italian Americans in West End, an inner-city neighbourhood in Boston. To analyse the local culture Gans distinguishes between two kinds of individualistic modes of behaviour: Person- and object-orientation. Object-orientated individualism involves striving toward the achievement of

moral, ideological, material, cultural or social objects. Person-oriented individualism is characterised by the desire to be a person within a group (ibid.:89ff.). West Enders are highly person-oriented and this orientation prevents the group from acting in concert or to fight for their rights. Some forms of person-orientation can be observed in the community around the pub. Belonging to the group is very important for the self-image of the members of the pub community. However when they talk about politics, they consider an individual politician's actions more important than the general ideological concept of a party. In Gudrun's opinion politicians are self-interested and do not want to solve the social problems in the area:

> None of them [the politicians] come here. Only when the television is here or something like that. When they are filming, then they are here. Then they show themselves. When they were here and were walking along. Big stories that they want to help. And then they don't help.

This stereotype of selfish politician is also observed in Boston's West End (ibid.:171). The outside world of "the Politics" or "the government" is a general unit. Contact to that unit in form of visits to the job centre, problems with policy, social workers or local representatives influences the disposition to the unit like "the state" in general. For Gudrun the local politicians are not ambassadors to the outside world:

> These people were always like that. When there were elections coming up, they drew us here and made us promises and what not [...] They give us ballpoint pens and what not. So that you vote for them or thereabouts. They organise parties round the back here, the SPD [a party] or whatever. They organise such a party back there. You can eat a hot dog and whatever. And they have games for the kids so that you see they are socially engaged. Yes, but in reality they think we are nothing. That's the truth!

The representatives of the outside world of politics are characterized as immoral. Participation in politics, such as voting in an election, could be interpreted as an act of legitimisation of politicians' bad behaviour. The personalisation of governmental operations is an expression of person-orientation. "The idea that individual officials follow rules and regulations based not on personal morality but on concepts of efficiency, order, administrative hierarchy, and the like, is difficult to accept" (ibid.:165). In contrast to the pub goers, the members of the mosque and the neighbourhood association are not only person- or object-oriented. This can be seen firstly in the discussion of political ideas. Hakan always discusses political issues with the mosque's chairman and thinks about his political home as a German Muslim:

> I have problems with politics in Germany. In my opinion democracy does not function as it should. And than I sometimes share the ideas of the far left about this democracy just not being right. [...] But on the other hand I don't want to be too far to the left - be a socialist - because of the danger that can result from this socialism in the world. […] And then I say okay, half democracy at least. But... that is not enough for me, because as a Muslim who was born here I haven't yet found a place in this society.

Because of his perceived lack of political representation in the German political system he

joined Milli Görüs (IMGM), a Muslim political organisation. Discussions about capitalism and different forms of political participation such as direct democracy also occur in the neighbourhood association. This contrast is also demonstrated by the relevance of the social dimension of political engagement in both organisations. Gans describes the social function of political engagement: “West Enders usually will belong only to those organizations which offer opportunities for peer group activity that are not available elsewhere” (ibid.:106). Likewise, Simone does not only want to be politically active within the group but also develop personal bonds. This missing personal dimension was Simone's reason to leave the group “More Democracy” and join the neighbourhood association.

> I have to say something else about my political socialising. In the past we often... we would meet in pubs after the group meetings... and, naturally, we would discuss politics further. But there came a point when I realised … that was true “More Democracy”. Among the politically active there are huge numbers of people who you can only talk to about politics. And then at some point you miss the personal intimacy.

An object-orientation is only observed in private communities such as friendship circles and seems to enhance the willingness to participate in politics. A person-orientation reduces the probability of a person participating in politics. This finding complies with Bourdieu's observation that some groups' answers to political questions have an ethical and moral dimension. This dimension is not accepted in the political field and leads to political apathy (Bourdieu 1986: 632).

Routes to political participation

The interviewees often did not give rational reasons as to why they participate in political events or ignore elections. The personal route to participation depends on various circumstances, in this case belonging to a group which offers information, interpretations of political issues and a specific lifestyle. Becker (1994) argues that “Everyone knows that most of the things that happen to them happen “by accident”, and this is particularly true of the things that are most important to us, such as our choice of career or partner”. He goes on, “Yet social science theory looks for determinate causal relationships, which do not give an adequate account of this thing that “everyone knows”. If we take the idea of “it happened by chance” seriously, we need a quite different kind of research and theory than we are accustomed to” (ibid.:183). Taking this idea into account, it seems useful to describe the different ways to political participation within the communities without claiming a mono-causal relationship between individual characteristics or characteristics of an area and a person's mode of participation. Claudia, for example, always votes in elections or

referenda. The contacts in her networks, her self-image and a strong object-orientation lead to her feeling that getting involved in political processes is important. This is not the case for Gudrun who has only voted once and has no plans to do so in the future. The other members of her community do not participate either and the collective identity and strong person-orientation lead to political apathy.

In conclusion, this paper has proposed three idealised categories of community which reflect the different ways residents participate in politics. The first category contains *institutionalized communities* such as the mosque or the neighbourhood association. The second type of community is private networks which this paper has referred to as *privatised communities*. The third category is made up of *third-place communities*[7] such as the pub or, for example, amusement arcades with gaming machines. Each of the empirically-constructed idealised category of community reflects a different way in which residents participate in politics:

a. Members of privatised communities have no specific social capital which enhances an affinity to politics. They usually do not talk about political events or decisions. The collective identity is weak and not related to the neighbourhood. Members of this group use Soldiner Kiez in a practical way and interpret social exclusion as an individual's fate. In private networks, peers stress their independence from other group members and are more object-oriented. This type of community appears to enhance an individual's willingness to vote although members do not take part in other forms of political participation such as community organising events.
b. Members of institutionalized communities are often asked to participate in political events and are mobilised to vote. Social capital in the networks is used to enable participation while some community members have direct contact to political capital and/or politicians. The common identity in this type of community is more generally related to common activities. The neighbourhood has a symbolic value and members of institutionalized communities consider themselves as residents of a disadvantaged district. The experiences of exclusion are collective experiences and related to membership of the community. The political discussions are more object-oriented although the political activities have a person-oriented dimension. All in all, membership of an institutionalized community leads to an interest in politics while social pressure in the group enhances the probability of an individual voting. In

[7] Oldenburg and Brissett (1982) describe third-place communities as meeting points outside the workplace or home which have a specific social function for the users.

general, members' political interests have a local orientation and are related to aspects of daily life.

c. Members of third-place communities are not interested in politics and do note vote in elections. The communities are not related to the political field and the local social capital is useful for finding a job or other daily problems but not for political mobilization. If members of this community do talk about politics, such discussions have a strong person-orientation, reflected in personalisation of government operations or a moral perspective on politicians. The collective group identity is tied to the space and constructed distinction of other groups of residents in the neighbourhood. The community feels excluded from society and discriminated against. Participation in the political process would only go to legitimise the discrimination by the outside world.[8]

Conclusion

The results of this empirical study suggest that the mechanisms of political integration and exclusion function according to the three patterns discussed. An additional effect caused by a common culture in the neighbourhood or of the urban underclass in general could not be identified; however an effect was found resulting from cultural practices in the diverse communities located in the neighbourhood. The paper's findings reinforce concerns regarding a process-orientation of individual decisions to participate. The study develops a typology of three different community designs - each of them promoting a particular route to political participation. The findings can only provide initial pointers towards the connection between socio-spatial segregation and political participation. The political underrepresentation of disadvantaged neighborhoods could be explained by a high rate of third place communities in Soldiner Kiez. Further research should focus on whether this model is transferable to privileged neighbourhoods. Furthermore, it appears to be problematic to talk about politics without addressing individuals' political orientations and different forms of participation. Nevertheless, understanding the mechanisms of political exclusion and integration could help develop strategies to empower disadvantaged groups. One such a strategy is the creation of citizen platforms for community organizing. They operate outside of partisan politics and religious denominations and foster engagement from the ground up. The idea behind this is to extend political involvement from institutions into other areas in the public realm to include third-place and privatised communities.

[8] This type of community is most similar to the urban villagers in the West End (Gans 1982).

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