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The Emergence of Bildungsmomente Through Participation
Participation Pathways in the Interactive Exhibition *Intercultural Threads*

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General Notes

The following notes apply throughout the thesis and are intended to support readability.

- The German concepts of *Bildung*, *Bildungsprozess(e)*, and *Bildungsmoment(e)* are retained throughout the thesis. While these concepts are closely related to educational, learning, and transformative processes, they do not have direct equivalents in English and therefore remain in their original German form.
- All questionnaire responses were originally collected in Hungarian. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations are presented in English, translated by the author.
- For direct quotations from the questionnaires and the discussion on the cultural context, as well as for Hungarian terms and institution names, the original Hungarian wording is provided in parentheses in *italics* following the English translation, for example, House of Generations Cultural Centre (*Generációk Művelődési Háza*).
- Participant codes are used throughout the thesis to ensure anonymity. References combine information about the participant and the location of the respective segment within the empirical material. For example, P11_G3_L9 refers to Participant 11, who took part in Group 3, and indicates that the quotation or reference is to be found in line 9 of the digitalised version of the participant's questionnaire response.
- Figures and tables are numbered according to the chapter in which they appear (e.g., Figure 7.3.3 refers to the third figure in Chapter 7.3). Unless otherwise indicated, all figures and tables were created by the author.
- All photographs about the exhibition (presented in [Chapter 5.3](#)) were taken by István Fehér.

1 Introduction

Some experiences remain with us long after a particular situation has ended; we might even say that they change us. A conversation, an encounter, a story, or a question may continue to occupy our thoughts, acquiring new meanings over time. Sometimes such experiences lead us to reconsider assumptions we previously took for granted. Community-based cultural settings often create contexts in which such moments can emerge. Estimates suggest that “approximately 70% of human learning takes place outside formal schooling” (Schumacher & Biewers Grimm, 2025, p. 15, translated by AS). Non-formal educational contexts have become increasingly important fields of education within contemporary society. Non-formal education has developed as a flexible educational field that responds to the limitations of formal systems while orienting its educational practices towards participants’ interests, experiences, and needs (Schumacher & Biewers Grimm, 2025).

Responding to the interests and needs of our community regarding interculturality, I wondered how to explore the topic through a non-formal educational project. I developed the idea of creating an interactive exhibition on interculturality that would place our community’s experiences in a new light. The exhibition *Intercultural Threads* (*Interkulturális Szálak*) was organised between May and July 2025 at the House of Generations Cultural Centre (*Generációk Művelődési Háza*) in Győr, Hungary. It presented our photographs, personal stories, exhibition texts, and interactive installations, informed by Adrian Holliday’s concept of small-culture formation on the go (2019) and by Amadasi and Holliday’s work on block and thread narratives (2017). Through guided tours and free exploration of interactive elements, visitors were invited to engage with the topic of interculturality and connect it to their own experiences and perspectives. As a creator and facilitator of the exhibition, I was actively involved in the development and implementation of the exhibition. I formulated questions that later developed into the present research project: What kinds of educational processes unfold in such participatory settings? How do certain encounters become meaningful for participants? How can such experiences be understood? And how can they be approached through empirical research?

While the exhibition itself was organised between May and July 2025 as a community-based educational and cultural initiative, I subsequently developed the research as a separate project, starting in mid-July 2025. My attention turned towards the ways participants experienced the exhibition events. This master’s thesis is based on this interest and ap-

proaches the exhibition as a research setting through which broader questions of Bildung, participation and performativity can be examined.

The German concept of Bildung has long been understood as a process of transformation involving shifts in meaning, perspective, and self–world relations (Horlacher, 2016). Recent theories of transformative Bildung further emphasise that such transformations involve the disruption and reorientation of previously established patterns of understanding (Koller, 2023). Although closely connected to notions of transformative learning (Laros et al., 2017) and education, the concept of Bildung offers a more comprehensive lens for exploring transformative processes, as it emphasises changes in self–world relations. Following Koller, Bildung is understood as a process in which established self–world relations become transformed in response to situations that can no longer be adequately addressed through existing dispositions of perception, interpretation, and action (2023, p. 15). Such processes are embedded in social and cultural practices, including those that occur beyond formal educational institutions and in participatory settings.

The present study seeks to contribute to discussions on Bildung by exploring participatory processes in contemporary non-formal education. In such contexts, Bildungsprozesse are often embedded in collective practices rather than strictly structured instruction. From the perspective of cultural education, formal, non-formal, and informal learning represent complementary settings whose respective strengths should be meaningfully connected (Krönig, 2014). Community-based artistic and cultural settings – for instance, community theatre initiatives, artist-led workshops, collaborative art studios, neighbourhood-based cultural projects, and especially museum programmes – are frequently discussed as learning environments in which participation, aesthetic practice, and engagement are emphasised (Garoian, 2001; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007; Illeris, 2015). In artistic contexts, participation takes shape within changing spatial, material, and social configurations (Dolan, 1993). Participation can be understood as a situated process of interaction that unfolds through the actions and responses of those involved (Fischer-Lichte, 2021). A focus on non-formal educational contexts raises important questions about how transformative processes unfold within participation.

Non-formal educational contexts differ from formal institutions not only structurally, but also in how participation is enacted. They are often characterised by sociocultural relevance and practical content relating to lived experiences of participants, often co-created by participants themselves (Andersson & Andersson, 2005, pp. 432–434). Youth projects, arts centre programs, or local collaborations are examples of such contexts. Here, learning is often associated with empowerment, creativity, social inclusion, or competence development (e.g.,

Ferrer-Fons et al., 2022; Pater & Olszewska-Gniadek, 2023; Yeasmin et al., 2022). Participation in these settings is not merely an additional element of the educational environment but actively contributes to the constitution of the educational space and experience itself. Understanding how *Bildung* unfolds within such contexts is therefore relevant for developing a more differentiated understanding of educational practices in contemporary society.

Several research perspectives provide important insights into how *Bildung* unfolds in participation in non-formal educational contexts. A particularly relevant perspective is offered by performativity. Performativity, first articulated in J. L. Austin's speech act theory (1962/1975) and later expanded by Judith Butler (1988) to social practices, was further developed in cultural studies by Fischer-Lichte (2004) and explained as "the self-referential and reality-constructing power of actions" (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 35, translated by AS). In other words, performativity encompasses the idea that social realities are not simply represented but produced in and through language and practices. In recent decades, performativity has gained increasing importance across the cultural and social sciences. It has been integrated into educational philosophy (Locke, 2015) and discussed in the context of cultural education as a central dimension of aesthetic and participatory practice (Pfeiffer, 2013).

Within educational research, the performative perspective has been used to conceptualise educational situations and practices as dynamic, processual phenomena. In German educational research, Wulf and Zirfas discuss *Bildung* as a performative process and refer to it as a new focal point in the field (2006; 2007). They argue that educational situations are not only sites of knowledge transmission but are also performative spaces in which social and personal realities are constituted. The perspective of performativity directs attention from representation to enactment, from fixed meanings to their situated emergence (Wulf & Zirfas, 2006). Moving beyond asking what is being done, it asks how it is being done, how it comes into being, and how it is enacted within specific situations (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014). It can enrich qualitative educational research by analysing the micro-level of performative pedagogical practice – including language, bodily expression, rituals, material settings, and interaction – and drawing attention to habitual patterns and other aspects of action that have long remained overlooked (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, pp. 515–522). Even material arrangements and objects can be understood as performative elements shaping educational situations (Zirfas & Klepacki, 2013). The performative perspective makes it possible to approach *Bildung* as a process that unfolds through situated actions, interactions, and participatory practices. If *Bildung* is understood as an ongoing process of transformation (Koller, 2023), then moments within this process might be relevant.

Research on *Bildungsmomente* has approached the phenomenon from diverse perspectives; however, it has rarely been examined alongside participation and performativity in empirical research. *Bildungsmomente* are frequently connected to experiences of difference, irritation, and disruption that challenge established ways of understanding and acting (Hartmann et al., 2023; Lüsebrink & Wolters, 2023; Röckelein, 2025). They are often understood as moments or phases in which existing self–world relations become questioned, re-configured, or transformed (Settele, 2026; Zirfas, 2008). Further, studies emphasise the embodied, affective, and situated character of *Bildungsmomente* (Hartmann et al., 2023; Lüsebrink & Wolters, 2023; Settele, 2026; Zirfas, 2008). They describe *Bildung*-related processes as grounded in vulnerability, receptivity, bodily experience, emotional involvement, and being affected by a situation. Studies also highlight that *Bildungsmomente* emerge within specific social, material, and spatial situations and cannot be fully planned or controlled (Grünheid, 2024; Kassem, 2019; Settele, 2026).

Existing studies provide important insights into the characteristics of *Bildungsmomente*, yet the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* in participation, especially in community-based artistic and cultural contexts, remains a research gap. This gap is particularly relevant because it leaves the situated and processual character of *Bildungsmomente* out of sight, and the relationship of participation and the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* in the background, despite participation being central to many non-formal educational settings.

Theoretical perspectives on participation and *Bildung* discussed above serve as a point of departure. To analyse their relation, an analytical framework, including concepts such as pathways and emerging *Bildungsmomente*, was developed and refined through the analysis. I understand pathways as analytically reconstructed individual trajectories through which participation unfolds over time. They encompass the interplay of participation-related processes and social and material configurations, such as content, facilitation, and group dynamics. The pathway framework directs attention to participation as a process and offers a way to reconstruct how participation develops in specific situations and to study how *Bildungsmomente* emerge within them. Emerging *Bildungsmomente* in this study are understood as analytically reconstructed phenomena in which participants begin to relate differently to situations, particular topics or perspectives, others, or themselves. Their emergence is understood as a process embedded within participation. *Bildungsmomente* do not necessarily appear as discrete or clearly identifiable moments; they may unfold gradually, remain partial, become articulated only retrospectively, or remain partly non-observable within participa-

tion. With that in mind, the present study focuses on the emergence of Bildungsmomente within participation pathways in an interactive exhibition.

The aim of this research is to understand the relationship between participation and the emergence of Bildungsmomente in the specific context of an interactive exhibition. To this end, I apply the performative perspective that directs attention to how participatory and educational processes are enacted in specific situations. With that, I aim to explore participation as an unfolding process, reconstruct the emergence of Bildungsmomente within individual participation pathways, and develop an understanding of broader patterns in their emergence across pathways.

The scientific relevance of this study lies primarily in its contribution to the empirical study of Bildung, following Wulf and Zirfas' (2006) call for empirical research that generates insights into performative pedagogical practices and the temporal, spatial, material, and social scopes of action in which they unfold. The study responds to the performative turn in educational and cultural research, contributes to the empirical accessibility of Bildungsmomente, opens perspectives on educational processes beyond questions of intentionality and predefined outcomes, and supports a process-oriented understanding of Bildung.

We have seen that Bildung can be understood as a participatory and performative process and that the emergence of Bildungsmomente within participation in an interactive exhibition has not yet been approached from a performative, process-oriented perspective. To address the need to understand how this process unfolds, the following overarching research question and sub-questions have been formulated:

How do Bildungsmomente emerge in participation pathways in the interactive exhibition *Intercultural Threads* in Győr, Hungary?

1. What framework for analysing the emergence of Bildungsmomente in participation pathways can be developed from the data?
2. How do pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, and process dimensions relate to each other in analysing the emergence of Bildungsmomente in participation pathways?
3. How do Bildungsmomente emerge within individual participation pathways?
4. How do Bildungsmomente emerge across participation pathways?

The study is situated within qualitative and interpretive research and draws on constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). Consistent with this approach, the research design was emergent from the outset, allowing both the study's analytical focus to evolve through working with the empirical material. The study is further informed by the overarching theoretical

and methodological lens: the performative perspective (Fischer-Lichte, 2021), the interdisciplinary approach concerned with the performative dimensions of social practices, interactions, and actions. This combination is particularly suited to the study's interest in reconstructing how Bildungsmomente emerge within participation, as it allows attention to remain on unfolding processes and situated interactions.

The empirical investigation is based on the interactive exhibition *Intercultural Threads*, introduced above. It draws on four exhibition events involving 23 participants across four groups. Each event comprises a guided tour with opportunities for free exploration of the exhibition and its interactive elements. Data collection combines multiple sources of qualitative data, including participatory observation and post-visit open-ended questionnaires with participants. Data analysis follows key principles and elements of constructivist grounded theory, including iterative engagement with the data, constant comparison, focused coding, memo writing, and the development of analytical constructs.

The thesis is structured in four parts:

- I. After the introduction ([Chapter 1](#)), the thesis begins by establishing the theoretical foundations of the study, covering theories of Bildung, performativity, participation, and Bildungsmomente ([Chapter 2](#)). This is followed by a review of relevant literature on Bildungsmomente and interactive exhibitions, through which the research gap is identified ([Chapter 3](#)). The research questions and the relevance of the study are then presented ([Chapter 4](#)).
- II. The empirical part of the thesis introduces the interactive exhibition *Intercultural Threads* and its cultural, institutional, and community contexts ([Chapter 5](#)). The methodological framework, including the constructivist grounded theory approach, the performative perspective, and the research methods are then outlined ([Chapter 6](#)).
- III. The analytical part of the thesis begins with the development of the analytical framework and the reconstruction of relationships between its central elements. Based on this framework, participation pathways are reconstructed and analysed, and the emergence of Bildungsmomente is explored both within individual pathways and across pathways ([Chapter 7](#)).
- IV. The last part of the thesis addresses the research questions, discusses the findings in relation to existing literature and theories, outlines the central contributions, and formulates practical implications ([Chapter 8](#)). It concludes with a brief summary and concluding thoughts ([Chapter 9](#)).

2 Theoretical Part

This chapter lays the theoretical foundation of the master's thesis. It first introduces the concept of Bildung and its process-oriented understandings, before turning towards performativity and participation. Drawing these perspectives together, the chapter develops a theoretical understanding of Bildungsmomente as emerging in participation.

2.1 Bildung

The German concept of Bildung (Horlacher, 2016) has long been understood as a process of transformation involving shifts in meaning, perspective, and self–world relations.

Bildung is one of the most commonly employed concepts in debates about education, schooling, teaching, learning, and educational policy in the German-speaking world. It is used to speak about educational programs and policy reforms, yet also to express moral aspirations and social hopes. (Horlacher, 2016, p. 1)

While terms such as “education”, “culture”, or “self-cultivation” capture certain aspects, none fully encompasses the combination of ethical, aesthetic, and relational dimensions implied by Bildung. Bildung differs from education, which is more often seen as an adaptation to given conditions and “different from instruction and learning, because Bildung embodies more than mere knowledge” (Horlacher, 2016, p. 119). Although Bildung lacks a direct equivalent in English, similar ideas may be found across cultural contexts, even when expressed through different conceptual frameworks (Horlacher, 2016, p. 131). Horlacher's comparative historical analysis approaches the concept as a cultural practice and says that Bildung has endured over more than two hundred years by adapting to different historical and cultural contexts, and during that it never entirely disappeared from educational discourse (2016, pp. 118–119). According to Horlacher, one reason for this persistence is the conceptual openness; another is the inconsistency of Bildung, as different interpretations of the concept emphasise various aspects, so several perspectives coexist and often stand in tension with each other (2016, p. 118).

According to Koller (2008), the concept of Bildung is characterised by focusing on the “individual being educated” (*Zu-Erziehende*), rather than on the “educator” (*Erzieher*). The emphasis thus lies on what the individual does themselves. Specifically, it is about developing themselves through interplay with their environment, thus placing the process of self-education and self-formation at the centre (Koller, 2008, p. 71, translated by AS).

The term *Bildung* has its roots in Germany, appearing as early as the Middle Ages. The term was used to describe the process of transcending natural existence and reaching real humanity. *Bildunga*, the Old High German word, suggested spiritual transcendence in a theological context (Horlacher, 2016, p. 8). It is also etymologically connected to the word image (*Bild*), pointing to an external form or representation of the person (Koller, 2008, p. 73). Around 1800, the term gradually moved away from its theological origins and came to be associated primarily with the development of the individual as a whole (Koller, 2008, p. 73). The historical development of its current meaning is often placed within this period, as a reaction to the Enlightenment concept of education (Koller, 2008, p. 71). In its classical formulation, *Bildung* is most strongly associated with Wilhelm von Humboldt.

2.1.1 Humboldtian Idea of Bildung

The concept of *Bildung* was developed from the writings of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) and reflects his work in educational policy. Koller (2008, pp. 70–116) introduces Humboldt’s work (1792/1980; 1793/1980) in detail. *Bildung* centres on the “relation between the self and the world” (*Wechselwirkung von Ich und Welt*), with an accent on the formation of that relation. The aim of human development, in this sense, lies in the inner dimension of the individual, in its “nature” (*Natur*) and “forces” (*Kräfte*), that is, the capacities and potentials that are inherent but still need to be realised and cultivated. *Bildung* thus refers to the “highest and most proportionate” (*höchste und proportionierlichste*) unfolding of these human capacities into a coherent whole (*zu einem Ganzen*) (Koller, 2008, pp. 75–76, translated by AS).

According to Humboldt, *Bildung* does not only mean the development of the intellect but also the balanced development of a person’s various abilities. These are formed in interplay with one another. An essential element of this process is that tensions and contradictions between different forces contribute to the development of *Bildung*. Humboldt sees a difficulty: people tend to be one-sided, with some of their abilities appearing stronger than others. This one-sidedness can be counterbalanced by connecting the individual’s experiences and abilities across different situations. He stresses that intellect, imagination or fantasy, and sensory perception should therefore develop in a balanced way. The diversity of life situations plays a decisive role in this process. The more diverse situations people encounter, the more opportunities they have to develop different abilities. Humboldt emphasises that every life situation that creates new experiences, challenges, and opportunities for action can contribute to the process of *Bildung*. He refers to these situations as “world” (*Welt*) and frames *Bildung* as a relationship with the world. Thus, it is not merely an internal process of the individual

but inherently involves the role of the world as the other to which the individual relates. The world is to be understood as the world as a whole (Koller, 2008).

Humboldt describes Bildung as an interplay between the self and the world. The diversity, resistance, and autonomy of the world create situations in which individuals are confronted with the unfamiliar, thereby opening possibilities for Bildung. Here, Bildung is understood not as the result of external influence but as a process that unfolds from within through the individual's active and constructive engagement with the world (Koller, 2008, pp. 80–83). As Wulf and Zirfas emphasise in their reading of Humboldt, Bildung not only concerns the development of the individual but also entails a transformation of the world, as this development takes place through and within it (2014, p. 50). Media such as language, social interaction, and art play a vital role in this process, precisely because they initially appear as foreign and thus require engagement. In this confrontation, the unfamiliar is encountered, taken up, and transformed into an individual form (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, p. 50).

Since Humboldt, Bildung has been reformulated for countless purposes, including political, nation-building, traditional, competence development, and lifelong learning (Horlacher, 2016). With some minor fluctuations, its prevalence has survived into the 21st century. Interestingly, even within competence-oriented frameworks, reference to Bildung remains frequent when questions of values and orientation arise, so Bildung continues to fulfil a specific function that cannot be fully replaced by measurable constructs (Horlacher, 2016, pp. 125–126). The historical embeddedness of the concept is worth noting, since “*Bildung* is unquestionably a pillar of German culture and thought” (Horlacher, 2016, pp. 118–119).

2.1.2 Bildung as a Transformative Process

Building on classical understandings of Bildung, recent approaches shift the focus to its process-oriented nature. Specifically, expanding upon Humboldt's concept, Hans-Christoph Koller conceptualizes Bildung as a theory of transformative educational processes in his book *Bildung anders denken: Einführung in die Theorie transformatorischer Bildungsprozesse* (2023). While taking Humboldt's understanding of Bildung as the fundamental idea, Koller both connects to and differentiates his approach from classical theories of Bildung. Both understand Bildung as a transformation of the relationship between the self and the world. Whereas in Humboldt this transformation appears as an expansion and reconfiguration of an individual's worldview, Koller conceptualises Bildungsprozesse more explicitly as “a transformation of the fundamental structures of people's relationship to the world and to themselves” when “engaging with new problem situations, developing new dispositions of per-

ception, interpretation, and dealing with problems, which enable them to do greater justice to these problems than before” (Koller, 2023, p. 15, translated by AS). According to Koller, transformative Bildungsprozesse may occur “when people are confronted with challenges for which the established figures of their relationship to the world and themselves are no longer sufficient” (2023, p. 188, translated by AS). Thus, Bildung, in his view, is a process of experience in which the subject is transformed through engagement with such challenges, in which individuals develop new dispositions of perception, interpretation, and action that allow them to respond to these situations in new ways (Koller, 2023, pp. 9–19). In short, Koller’s interpretation of Bildung involves a transformation of one’s relation to the world, others, and oneself.

To further specify this transformation, Koller situates it within socially and discursively structured conditions. Drawing on perspectives such as those of Bourdieu, Lacan, and Butler, he conceptualises the subject as constituted in relation to social structures, language, and power. Koller relates moments of tension in this context to forms of crisis. Koller understands experiences of crisis and alienation (drawing on Waldenfels and others) as occasions for transformative educational processes that challenge established world- and self-concepts (2023, pp. 79–86). However, Koller addresses a criticism later in the book and states that the term “experience of crisis” (*Krisenerfahrung*) should be understood more as a prototype, as other occasions or triggers for transformation are quite possible (2023, p. 190). It is not a linear cause-and-effect relation but rather a complex constellation of conditions in which a triggering experience does not automatically lead to a transformation of the self–world relation. This raises the question of which additional conditions need to be present for a transformative process to emerge (Koller, 2023, p. 192). Koller then goes on to explain the conditions and forms of Bildungsprozesse and identifies the “emergence of the new” (*Entstehung des Neuen*) as a characteristic of transformative processes, while noting that it is not a constant requirement, but becomes relevant in situations where established routines are no longer sufficient (2023, p. 101, 192). Here, he again draws on Butler, revisiting the possibility of transformation arising through repeated performative actions (2023, p. 129). Koller argues that the meaning of an action can change through repetition, as the repeated act is always placed in a different context.

Koller not only builds on Humboldt’s concept of Bildung but also draws on other aspects of his work. Humboldt’s theory of Bildung is intricately connected to his work in the philosophy of language. Koller takes this up and shows that language functions as a central medium of transformational Bildungsprozesse. It is crucial that language in Humboldt’s work

is not understood as a representation of something, but as a medium of the production and constitution of objects and thoughts (Koller, 2023, p. 12). This reality-constituting power of language is taken up more than a hundred years later by J. L. Austin, who formulates it in terms of the performative character of utterances. The next section introduces performativity as a further perspective on Bildung.

2.2 Performativity

Performativity encompasses the idea that social realities are not simply represented but produced in and through practices (Fischer-Lichte, 2021). In recent decades, this perspective has gained increasing importance across the cultural and social sciences, often described as a “performative turn”, which has reached educational research (Wulf & Zirfas, 2006, p. 7). It draws on different theoretical traditions, including speech act theory (Austin, 1962/1975), cultural and theatrical theories of performance art (e.g., Fischer-Lichte, 2021), gender theory (Butler, 1988), and interdisciplinary research on performative cultures (such as the Collaborative Research Centre *Kulturen des Performativen* established in Berlin) (Zirfas, 2008, p. 113). Performativity frames social phenomena, including Bildung, as dynamic and processual, and directs attention from representation to enactment, from fixed meanings to their situated emergence (Wulf & Zirfas, 2006).

2.2.1 Performativity (Austin, Butler)

Performativity is derived from the verb “to perform” and was first formulated in 1956 by John Langshaw Austin, an English philosopher of language (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 43). The concept of performativity is often traced to his book, *How to do things with words*, first published in 1962. It challenges the then-dominant philosophy of language, which held that the primary function of language is to convey truth value. Austin contrasts this idea by arguing instead that “to say something is to do something” (Austin, 1962/1975, p. 12), and there is a lot more one can do with words than describe. To address that “more”, Austin distinguishes between different types of speech acts. A particular type is the “performative”, which does not describe an existing state of affairs as constative statements do, but brings about a reality in the moment of the utterance (1962/1975, pp. 5–6). Austin argues that this dimension of language had largely been overlooked by other philosophers of language in the 1960s. He illustrates his theory of performative speech acts through a few examples. One of the most well-known is the wedding scene: when someone says “I do” at the altar, they are not describing a situation but performing an action that changes their legal and social status. By

uttering these words, they become married. The speech act is performative, as it brings about a new reality. Austin emphasises that performative speech acts only function under specific conditions (Austin, 1962/1975, pp. 14–15). Saying “I do” alone at home does not constitute a valid marriage. For a performative act to be successful, certain contextual and institutional conditions must be met, including an appropriate setting and the speaker’s authority. The concept of performative speech acts shifts the focus from language as description to language as action. Thus, Austin’s speech act theory foregrounds what is constituted and how it is constituted by uttering certain words, and how their meaning is shaped in a given situation.

While Austin and later John R. Searle and Jürgen Habermas developed the concept of performativity only in relation to speech acts, the perspective opened many doors and later became extended to broader social and embodied practices (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 48). One of the most influential contributions in this regard is Judith Butler’s. Butler reconceptualises performativity in the context of gender (1988). She argues that gender is not something one is or possesses, but something one does. Butler understands gender as a performative practice that is enacted through repeated bodily practices, movements, and styles. It is not a fixed identity but an ongoing doing, a becoming. Butler points out that performativity happens over time through repetition, embodiment, and habit formation. Social identities are constituted through the repeated enactment of norms, which define what counts, for instance, as femininity or masculinity. Along these lines, Butler arrives at the idea that repetition always involves slight variations and deviations, and thereby enables transformation (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 60). In this way, Butler extends the performative perspective beyond individual speech acts to encompass social practices and identity formation. This connects back to Austin’s insight that actions do not merely express reality but bring it into being.

First articulated in Austin’s speech act theory and later extended by, among others, Butler to social practices, performativity is further developed in cultural studies by Fischer-Lichte as the “self-referentiality of actions and their reality-constructing power” (2021, p. 35, translated by AS).

2.2.2 Performative Studies

Performative studies, as articulated by Fischer-Lichte (2021), is an interdisciplinary approach that examines a wide range of phenomena from a performative perspective. This includes not only speech acts, but also social practices, performances, texts, images, and material objects, as all of them can be analysed in terms of how they express performative qualities (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 158). In this study, performativity is used as a perspective that formulates

social processes as actions unfolding in concrete situations, considering their self-referentiality and their capacity to construct reality.

Erika Fischer-Lichte rearticulates performativity from a cultural studies perspective in *Performativität: Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Einführung* (2021) by examining the relationship between performance (*Aufführung*) and performativity. While distinguishing between these concepts, she also shows how closely related they are and how the performative perspective can be applied productively within the arts and cultural sciences. Drawing on Austin and Butler, she explains that performative acts are embodied and bring about reality through their enactment (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 51).

Performativity has found its way not only in the arts and cultural studies but also in educational research, where it enables the analysis of pedagogical situations as performative processes (Wulf & Zirfas, 2007). Even material arrangements and objects can be understood as performative elements that bring educational situations into being (Zirfas & Klepacki, 2013). Performativity has been taken up in educational philosophy (Locke, 2015) and in cultural education as well, where it is discussed as a central dimension of aesthetic and participatory practice (Pfeiffer, 2013). The performative perspective directs attention to “the practical, social and cultural order of phenomena, their interrelationships, their development, their syntheses and differences, their active and passive moments, in short, their processes, modality, logics and functions” (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, p. 519, translated by AS). Rather than asking what something is, it asks how it comes into being and how it is enacted within specific situations (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014). This opens a way to approach educational situations as dynamic, emergent processes that constitute *Bildung* in action.

In the context of this study, the performative perspective makes it possible to formulate questions about how *Bildung* unfolds in concrete situations. This raises the next question: in what context can such processes be approached? Since performative acts are considered temporally and spatially situated events (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, p. 519), participation comes into view as the concrete setting of actions.

2.3 Participation

Performativity is an overarching concept that relates the notions of the performative and performance as well as their interrelations (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, p. 519). While Austin introduced the adjective “performative”, the term “performance” is also derived from the verb “to perform” and refers to the act of doing, acting, or carrying something out. Fischer-Lichte points out that performances are always performative, while not everything that is performa-

tive necessarily takes the form of a performance (2021, p. 63). Considering cultural practices as performance highlights “the dynamic process that brings forth the reality to which it refers” (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 39, translated by AS). This also draws attention to contexts in which Bildungsprozesse emerge in and through action. Fischer-Lichte defines performance as physically enacted actions in space that are perceived by others, and highlights the relational constellation between those who act, those who perceive, and the spatial and material conditions in which this occurs (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 64). Accordingly, participation in an interactive exhibition can be perceived as a form of cultural performance. It unfolds through situated actions, in which what takes place is not simply expressed, but comes into being during the event. Approaching participation in this way makes it possible to attend not only to what participants do, but also to how actions, interactions, spatial and material conditions come together in the situation.

2.3.1 Performance From a Cultural Studies Perspective

Fischer-Lichte develops her understanding of performance (*Aufführung*) by describing a range of interrelated characteristics, including bodily co-presence and the self-generating dynamics of interaction as well as its fleeting, spatial, and embodied nature. She further details processes of perception and meaning-making, transformative power, alongside aspects such as liminality and “eventness” (*Ereignishaftigkeit*) (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 80, translated by AS). Not all these aspects are taken up in equal detail here. I selected relevant characteristics to further specify how participation can be approached as both a performance and a performative process.

A central characteristic of performance in Fischer-Lichte’s account is “the bodily co-presence of all participants, through which the medial conditions of performance are determined” (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 64, translated by AS). In other words, a performance requires the physical presence of those involved, whose actions are perceived by others and, in turn, elicit further responses (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 64). Fischer-Lichte mentions the “autopoietic feedback loop” (*autopoietische Feedbackschleife*), a self-generating process in which the event develops through the ongoing mutual involvement of the participants. Performance unfolds through a continuous interplay of actions and responses among those present, coming into being through them and disappearing with them (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 65). As such, participation as performance can also be viewed as a situation in which participants affect others, and these reactions, in turn, influence subsequent actions. These situations are characterised by a suspension or shifting of established structures, in which familiar

orientations may no longer fully apply, because participants are placed “between different rules and norms” (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 81, translated by AS). This liminal state holds transformative potential. However, its course cannot be predetermined, as it unfolds as an open and contingent process shaped by the co-presence of those involved (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, pp. 66–67). Acting and perceiving are inherently connected in this process. While some responses may remain internal, many take the form of visible or otherwise perceptible reactions that become part of the shared situation.

Fischer-Lichte’s work concerns a specific way of perception and the generation of meaning (2021, pp. 77–80). Perception moves between phenomenality and signification, between experiencing something as it appears and interpreting it within a symbolic order; and this oscillation shapes how meaning is generated during a performance (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, pp. 79–80). It means that the process of perception is neither entirely random nor fully directed; rather, it is characterised by a continuous shifting between different modes. As Fischer-Lichte notes, “perception itself appears as a performative process” (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 80, translated by AS). In this sense, meaning emerges through the performative process of perception.

As an event, performance is singular and unrepeatable, existing only in its enactment and therefore inherently fleeting (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, pp. 68–69). Fischer-Lichte further describes performance through additional characteristics, such as its spatiality, embodied and acoustic dimensions, and rhythm (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, pp. 69–77). This understanding of participation as a performance can also be expanded through John Dewey’s concept of experience as a situated process of interaction (Dewey, 1934, p. 38), which he describes in terms of “doing and undergoing”, where “doing” refers to the participant’s active engagement, while “undergoing” indicates how this engagement is shaped by the situation in return (pp. 44–46). This idea connects to Fischer-Lichte’s concept of the autopoietic feedback loop.

Considering these thoughts, participation in an interactive exhibition is defined here as a form of performance that unfolds in the continuous interaction between participants and their environment. It is a situated and unrepeatable event, characterised by the bodily co-presence of those involved as well as by its spatial, embodied, acoustic, and temporal dimensions, and a specific mode of perception and meaning-making. It comes into being through actions that are performed, perceived and responded to. Thus, it can be understood as a process of interaction in which participants are both actively engaged and affected by the situation. These characteristics frame participation in an interactive exhibition as a process in which meaning and, potentially, transformation emerge.

2.3.2 Bildung in Participation

Building on the previously discussed aspects of performance, Fischer-Lichte also formulates a set of characteristics that describe performative acts (2021, pp. 81–85). While the former characteristics referred more narrowly to performances, aspects such as unpredictability, ambivalence, fleetingness of materiality, a specific mode of perception and meaning-making, and a transformative potential describe more generally how performativity comes across various kinds of educational practices and situations. These characteristics help to further specify Bildung and participation in an exhibition. A performative act appears as an open and contingent process in which what emerges cannot be fully anticipated. It involves different and sometimes ambivalent dynamics, particularly regarding agency, as participants both shape and are shaped by what takes place (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, pp. 81–85). As a situated event, participation is inherently fleeting, existing only in the moment of its enactment, while also giving rise to processes of perception and meaning-making. What takes place is experienced and interpreted and can take on new significance, thereby carrying transformative potential for Bildung.

2.4 Towards Understanding the Emergence of Bildungsmomente in Participation

I approach participation as a performative process that foregrounds situated actions. Therefore, I turn to Bildungsmomente within these processes as points of access. Towards an understanding of Bildungsmomente as performative, processual, and emerging in participation, I first consider Bildung from the performative perspective, then turn to questions of empirical access, before elaborating on Bildungsmomente, and finally outline my point of departure for the research.

2.4.1 Bildung From the Performative Perspective

Participation in an interactive exhibition was approached as a form of performance and as a performative practice. Against this background, it becomes possible to return to the concept of Bildung, now from the perspective of performativity. In German educational science research, Wulf and Zirfas discuss Bildung as a performative process and refer to it as an increasingly important perspective in the field (2006; 2007). They argue that modern society has undergone a performative turn, which deeply affects how individuals present themselves. Educational situations are therefore not only sites of knowledge transmission, but also performative spaces in which social and personal realities are constituted (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014,

pp. 515–516). Wulf and Zirfas focus on the performativity of pedagogical practices (2014, p. 517) and shift from asking what is being done to how it is being done on the micro-level of pedagogical practice, including language, bodily expression, rituals, material settings, interaction, and habitual patterns (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, pp. 515–522).

Wulf and Zirfas emphasise that “social and pedagogical action involves more than the mere realisation of intentions”, as differences emerge in how actions are performed (2014, p. 515, translated by AS). They understand human action as cultural performance, thereby considering the event-like and embodied character of action as well as its relevance for educational processes. Attention is therefore directed to the emergence of action, its connection to language and imagination, the ways in which its unrepeatability is enabled through social and cultural patterns, and the relation of its event-like character to its repetitive aspects (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, p. 516). As they further state, “action is understood as the imitation, participation, and shaping of cultural practices. This includes artistic and social action as performance, speaking as performative action, and performativity as a derived concept that addresses these interrelations in an overarching way” (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, p. 516, translated by AS). Approaching participation and Bildung from the performative perspective raises questions about doing, undergoing, and interacting with others. Within such performative practices, Bildung may be seen as a process that unfolds in and through participation itself. Performativity offers a perspective that draws attention to how these processes emerge and are enacted in relation to one another. As Zirfas formulates, the questions to be asked about Bildung are: “what it shows, how it is carried out, how it intervenes in reality and transforms it, and what traces and consequences it leaves behind?” (Zirfas, 2008, p. 114, translated by AS).

2.4.2 From Processes to Moments

Koller points to a central difficulty in empirically studying transformative Bildungsprozesse. He suggests using qualitative biographical research but acknowledges that it is difficult to empirically access Bildungsprozesse with existing methodological approaches (Koller, 2023, p. 166). While research often focuses on identifiable phenomena such as educational problems or potentials, the process of transformation itself tends to remain difficult to grasp (Koller, 2023, p. 166). As Koller suggests:

... perhaps the concept of Bildung is less about completing the process of replacing an established relationship with the world and oneself with a new one, and more about

an ongoing process of questioning and dissolving existing orders and becoming different with an open outcome. (Koller, 2023, p. 166, translated by AS)

This master's thesis studies these processes in the particular context of an interactive exhibition. If *Bildung* is conceived as an open and ongoing process, then moments within this process come into view as possible points of access. *Bildungsmomente* can then be considered as situated moments in which *Bildungsprozesse* may become perceptible.

Koller discusses different possibilities and limitations of empirically accessing transformative processes. Reconstruction on the level of documented interactions allows processes to be analysed *in actu*, albeit within very short time spans. He also notes that in biographical research, transformation may occur during narration itself, where past and present are related to one another (Koller, 2023, p. 163). While these considerations are often framed as methodological limitations, they also point to specific ways in which transformation becomes accessible: namely, in situated moments and through particular forms of articulation. Focusing on *Bildungsmomente* does not make transformation as a whole accessible. It opens a way for approaching it through the emergence of its moments. This implies a specific methodological approach. As Koller argues, *Bildungsprozesse* cannot be directly observed or measured; they need to be approached interpretively by reconstructing the interactive and discursive processes in which they take shape (Koller, 2023, p. 145). By placing *Bildungsmomente* at the centre of attention, the focus shifts to asking how such moments emerge within concrete situations.

2.4.3 *Bildungsmomente*

If *Bildung* is understood as an ongoing process of thinking differently and becoming different with an open outcome (Koller, 2023, p. 9, 166), then *Bildungsmomente* may be conceptualised as moments within this process that occur in the present. Within the tradition of *Bildung* theory, such moments are intricately connected to experiences of difference, disruption, and the unexpected (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, p. 18). As Wulf and Zirfas note, *Bildungsprozesse* are related to “questions of otherness, negativity or resistance, the new and the unexpected, the unforeseen and unheard-of, that is, to moments that imply the conditions for the transformation of fundamental dispositions and forms of *habitus*” (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, p. 18, translated by AS).

When considering *Bildungsmomente* as part of *Bildungsprozesse*, we must consider their embeddedness in the present moment. Zirfas (2014) elaborates on the significance of the present in the pedagogical context. Drawing on Schleiermacher, he emphasises that every

pedagogical moment that relates to the future must, at the same time, offer a form of fulfilment in the present for the individual as they are (Zirfas, 2014, p. 367). Following this argument, Bildungsmomente are not isolated but situated points in the present, connected to past experiences while opening towards future possibilities.

Early conceptualisations of Bildungsmomente can be found in Friedrich Copei's notion of the *fruitful moment* (*fruchtbare Moment*) (1930/2019). Copei describes a sequence leading towards such moments, moving from "taken-for-granted assumptions" (*Selbstverständlichkeiten*) through impulses, questioning, and attention, towards processes of clarification, culminating in a leap beyond irritation in the learning process, in which the fruitful moment appears as a specific form of insight (Copei, 1963, pp. 59, 68, as cited in Zirfas, 2014, p. 370). In Zirfas's reading, the "fruitful moment" is a situation characterised by a "not-anymore" (*Nicht-Mehr*) and a "not-yet" (*Noch-Nicht*), pointing to a transitional state in which established orientations no longer apply, while new ones have not yet fully formed (Zirfas, 2014, p. 370). Such moments can thus be understood as short phases of transition within ongoing Bildungsprozesse. Copei's notion and Zirfas's reflections on the present draw attention to moments when transformation becomes perceptible without being complete, to moments in which new possibilities begin to emerge on the horizon of past experiences.

As discussed above, Bildungsmomente are embedded in the present that encompasses both past experiences and future possibilities. They are viewed here as situated moments within a Bildungsprozess, referring to all moments, including those that occur before, between, or beyond more clearly identifiable *fruitful moments*. Performativity directs attention to how such moments emerge and are enacted in participation. These considerations of Bildungsmomente are embedded in a broader understanding of Bildung as a process unfolding within performative and participatory dynamics. Returning to Koller's considerations, Bildung is defined as an open, ongoing transformation of the "established figures of the relation to the world and to oneself" (Koller, 2023, p. 188, translated by AS), which may become empirically accessible in such situated moments.

Importantly, this study does not proceed by identifying predefined Bildungsmomente in the data. A definition of Bildungsmomente was developed during the analysis, in close connection with the empirical material and the reconstructed participation situations. It will be presented in the results section ([Chapter 7.2.6](#)) and will be brought in relation to the theoretical aspects again in the discussion ([Chapter 8](#)).

3 Literature Review and Research Gap

3.1 Literature Review

3.1.1 *Bildungsmomente*

Within the literature that explicitly addresses *Bildungsmomente*, the phenomenon is most approached with reference to Copei's notion of the *fruitful moment* (*fruchtbarer Moment*). According to Copei, the fruitful moment consists of "those peculiar moments in which a new insight suddenly awakens within us, a meaningful idea takes hold of us" and may bring about a "transformative effect" in one's relationship to oneself and the world (1930/2019, p. 7, translated by AS). The phenomenon is approached from multiple perspectives, without necessarily being named as *Bildungsmomente*. Related concepts include "moments of Bilden" (*Momente des Bildens*) (Settele, 2026), "the performative act as an event of enactment" (*Vollzugsgeschehen des performativen Aktes*) (Zirfas, 2008), and "aha experiences" (*Aha-Erlebnisse*) (e.g., Hartmann et al., 2023). Some of these contributions focus on identifiable moments, often conceptualised as turning points or shifts, while others emphasise the processual character of *Bildung*, yet still refer to specific characteristics and meaningful moments within these processes.

A recurring insight is the experience of difference or irritation, which appears as a starting point for *Bildungsmomente* (Hartmann et al., 2023; Röckelein, 2025; Lüsebrink & Wolters, 2023; Settele, 2026). Hartmann et al. (2023) write that experiences of difference can be enabled and facilitated. There is also consensus that experiencing difference does not necessarily lead to a *Bildungsmoment*. Moreover, Lüsebrink and Wolters (2023, p. 76) thematise that moments of disruption may fade without further engagement, without becoming a site of *Bildung*. There is broad agreement that the experience of difference is not only a starting point but also a central mechanism within *Bildungsprozesse*. In the field of sports education, some studies comment on irritation, that it marks a phase in which established patterns of interpretation and action are destabilised, while new forms of understanding are not yet available (e.g., Hartmann et al., 2023, p. 93; Lüsebrink & Wolters, 2023, p. 75). Here, the concept of *Bildungsmomente* captures phases that are intensified because of experiencing a difference.

Across the reviewed literature, studies adopting a performative perspective tend to conceptualise *Bildung*-related processes and moments as embodied, affective, and often non-verbal experiences. Settele (2026), for instance, emphasises that *Bildung* takes place through

vulnerability and receptivity that operate within the embodied self (pp. 216–224). She further names experiences of discomfort and emotional intensity, as well as openness and responsiveness (p. 180, translated by AS), as often integral to these processes. Similarly, Hartmann et al. (2023) highlight that in sport contexts, Bildungsmomente are often connected to movement sensations and occur on a non-verbal level (p. 93). This perspective is extended by Zirfas (2008) and Lüsebrink and Wolters (2023). The former describes Bildungsprozesse as cognitive and embodied (p. 121); the latter discusses Bildungsmomente in aesthetic engagement in relation to being affected (pp. 76–78). Surprisingly, Röckelein – who does not connect the performative perspective to the topic, and refers to Copei’s more cognitively oriented notion at the beginning – similarly foregrounds affective involvement and describes Bildungsmomente as experiences of being “touched, moved, and affected” by them (Röckelein, 2025, p. 82, translated by AS). There is broad agreement that Bildungsprozesse, as well as within particular moments, are embodied and grounded in affective engagement.

In the literature assessed, Bildungsmomente are described not only as embodied and affective but also as fundamentally situated. Hartmann et al. argue that the atmosphere of a situation can inspire participants (Hartmann et al., 2023, p. 93). In Settele’s (2026) analysis of Bildung in performance, Bildung emerges within what she conceptualises as a “collective aesthetic situation”. She defines this as “a concrete shared space of experience and action – a shared moment” (*“einen konkreten geteilten Erfahrungs- und Handlungsraum – einen geteilten Moment”*), in which those present become part of the artistic situation and contribute to it through their desire, being affected, and being moved (p. 12, translated by AS). Similarly, Zirfas (2008), in the context of school theatre, describes educational processes as “bodily, social, and situational processes” (p. 116, translated by AS).

3.1.2 Interactive Exhibitions

Given the situated character of Bildungsmomente, it is necessary to consider research on interactive exhibitions as a specific educational context. Although these studies do not always explicitly name, conceptualise, or reconstruct Bildungsmomente – especially in those focusing on interactive exhibitions – they nevertheless offer important insights into the processes of Bildung. In the context of interactive exhibitions, participation takes on specific forms that challenge more structured understandings of learning and Bildung. Harma (2010) addresses this and highlights that contemporary art institutions have increasingly shifted from object-centred museum models towards interactive, hands-on exhibitions, transforming the nature of museum visits and visitor engagement (p. 197).

A key contribution in this regard is Grünheid's (2024) study of an interactive exhibition, in which she identifies several characteristics of Bildungsprozesse, including contingency, inherent autonomy, limited planability, and inaccessibility (pp. 29–32). She reveals that engagement with exhibition content is a discontinuous process, showing that visitors' reception of the exhibition content is "fragmentary, spontaneous, and self-determined" (Grünheid, 2024, p. 29, translated by AS). According to her findings, visitors in exhibitions are said to actively engage in the exploration of the exhibition while at the same time undermining the curatorial script for engaging with the content (Grünheid, 2024, p. 29). Grünheid emphasises the autonomy of participation, as visitors do not necessarily follow the intended plan, but instead shape their own trajectories through the exhibition. Her findings reinforce the insight, also articulated by Settele (2026), that Bildungsmomente cannot be planned but, at most, can be made possible. Settele shares complementary insights that rather than understanding the starting points of educational processes as triggers of transformation, "attention should be paid to the logic of experience itself, which is neither final nor causal and may not lead to any major or easily describable transformation" (2026, p. 157, translated by AS). While the literature reviewed suggests that Bildung is embedded in the situation, and that the form and degree of participation are affected by the specific setting, it does not mean that participants follow the intended plan. A tension arises between the situated and non-planable character of Bildungsmomente. These findings share an understanding of Bildung – both in interactive exhibitions and in aesthetic experiences – as a situated, emergent, and unpredictable process as well.

A further relevant insight can be found in the studies that connect the performative perspective to the topic. They emphasise that meaning must be considered not as given but as emerging in and through embodied interaction (Zirfas, 2008; Grünheid, 2024; Kassem, 2019). Zirfas details that meaning is attributed through a "collective process of negotiation" (2008, p. 119, translated by AS); it goes beyond reception and is a matter of active engagement. This view is supported by Grünheid (2024), who shows that visitors do not simply interpret exhibition content, but actively construct relations of meaning through their engagement with it (p. 34). Kassem (2019) also adds that meaning emerges through lived spatial engagement. They all point to the role of the spatial and social environment, and the physical presence in the emergence of meaning.

Van de Goor et al. (2025) introduce a different view. Although they do not explicitly engage with the concept of Bildung, they share insights into meaningful moments as emerging from dynamic, iterative processes, in which discovery and creation are interrelated. Based

on their findings, meaning not only emerges in the moment of experience but may also become recognisable only retrospectively (p. 192). However, the emergence of a Bildungsmoment depends on whether it is attributed meaning at all. Röckelein adds that an attitude of awareness, presence, and openness is needed for such moments to become transformative (2025, p. 82, translated by AS). Traces of Bildung often remain unnoticed “because we do not assign meaning to them in everyday consciousness” (Röckelein, 2025, p. 82, translated by AS). With that, Grünheid and Röckelein also point to important limitations. Not all exhibition content is equally accessible to visitors, and engagement depends on the interplay between material conditions, forms of mediation, and participants’ dispositions (Grünheid, 2024). These insights are related to the non-planability of Bildungsprozesse in interactive exhibitions. They also show that meaning is not only emergent and collective but also dependent upon conditions of access and awareness.

As a last aspect, the educational and transformative potential of the exhibition is discussed along with the spatial character of Bildungsmomente. Settele (2026) shows that Bildung is not tied to specific content, as situations themselves can carry significant educational potential, independent of predefined learning materials. This understanding is further supported by Kassem (2019), who describes exhibitions as “performance-oriented architectures” (p. 5) and notes that a space can be choreographed to perform and create an immersive atmosphere (p. 4); thus, he suggests studying the space as the performer (p. 2). A complementary perspective is articulated by Zirfas (2008), who describes performative educational settings such as theatres as liminal spaces, “a manifold in-between realm, a liminal medium of meaning and art” (p. 115, translated by AS). Within such spaces, established structures are suspended, allowing for new forms of experience and meaning-making to emerge, giving rise to “educational effects” (*Bildungswirkungen*, Zirfas, 2008, p. 115, translated by AS). Extending these considerations to the context of interactive exhibitions, Grünheid (2024) shifts the analytical focus toward questions of how knowledge is acquired and how learning takes place within exhibition settings. She asks how visitors perceive exhibitions, what they take from them, and to what extent such processes can be influenced or guided. Her findings suggest that exhibitions function as educational spaces that offer specific impulses while also being constituted by tensions between openness and constraint, and between accessibility and limitation (pp. 3–34). These insights serve as a reminder that exhibitions can be considered educational spaces and that their characteristics must be taken into account when studying the emergence of Bildungsmomente.

3.2 Research Gap

The reviewed literature approaches Bildungsmomente from multiple theoretical, performative, and empirical perspectives, each offering distinct insights. These studies converge in showing that Bildungsmomente are grounded in experiences of difference, in embodied and affective engagement, and in social and situational dynamics. In the context of interactive exhibitions, participation is examined as a site of Bildung. While these studies offer valuable insights into participatory and educational processes, they raise a range of questions regarding how Bildungsmomente emerge within these contexts.

Despite the clear theoretical parallels across research on Bildungsmomente, performative perspectives on Bildung, and participation in non-formal educational contexts, an interdisciplinary research gap remains: empirical research that integrates these perspectives and specifically examines the emergence of Bildungsmomente within concrete participatory contexts in non-formal education. Across these areas, insights into the performative character of Bildungsprozesse have been articulated – with an emphasis on their processual, participatory, embodied, and unpredictable character – and there is a shared interest in processes of enactment. Nevertheless, these perspectives remain only partially connected to the emergence of Bildungsmomente.

4 Research Questions and Relevance

We have seen that research on Bildungsmomente, performative perspectives on Bildung, and participation in non-formal educational contexts share important theoretical assumptions yet remain only partially connected. The present study therefore examines how Bildungsmomente emerge within participation in the context of an interactive exhibition from a process-oriented, performative perspective. It approaches Bildungsmomente as part of ongoing processes and focuses on reconstructing how participation unfolds in specific situations. To answer these questions, the study first examines how participatory situations can be reconstructed and what kind of framework enables the study of the emergence of Bildungsmomente without detaching them from the processes and contexts in which they are embedded.

4.1 Research Questions

The following overarching research question and sub-questions have been formulated:

How do Bildungsmomente emerge in participation pathways in the interactive exhibition Intercultural Threads in Győr, Hungary?

1. What framework for analysing the emergence of Bildungsmomente in participation pathways can be developed from the data?
2. How do pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, and process dimensions relate to each other in analysing the emergence of Bildungsmomente in participation pathways?
3. How do Bildungsmomente emerge within individual participation pathways?
4. How do Bildungsmomente emerge across participation pathways?

This research interest responds to a gap in the existing literature. While Bildungsmomente have been described as phenomena, their emergence has rarely been reconstructed as a process. In particular, the “how” remains unclear: how do such moments come into being in concrete situations? This is where the performative perspective becomes relevant. By focusing on processes of enactment and situated interaction, this approach offers a complementary analytical perspective on Bildungsmomente as something that emerges in and through participation. It opens up the possibility of gaining ethnographic insights into performative pedagogical practices, particularly into “temporal, spatial, material, and interpersonal scopes of action that do not necessarily appear compatible with the intended pedagogical aims, but

nevertheless reveal possibilities for action whose potential can, in turn, be pedagogically utilized” (Wulf & Zirfas, 2006, p. 11, translated by AS).

4.2 Relevance

Building on Wulf and Zirfas’ (2006, pp. 10–12) formulation, the relevance of this study can be outlined along four aspects.

First, this study responds to the performative turn in cultural and social theory, which highlights that social and educational life increasingly takes the form of staged and enacted practices. As Wulf and Zirfas argue, “this performative tendency of culture must be taken into account if pedagogy is to remain empirically and practically connectable” (2006, p. 10, translated by AS). This study treats participation in interactive exhibitions as a performative process, within which *Bildungsmomente* may emerge, and thereby contributes to understanding interactive exhibitions as performative educational sites.

Second, it builds on empirical accessibility through performativity, encompassing phenomenological, ethnographic, interactionist, and constructivist approaches. It documents relevant participatory processes and provides methodological insights into reconstructing the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* and thus contributes to the discourse on the empirical study of *Bildung* in the specific setting of interactive exhibitions.

Third, the study supports a process-oriented understanding of *Bildungsmomente* and approaches them as part of transformations of self–world relations that unfold through practice and participation. According to Wulf and Zirfas, *Bildung* can be understood as “the linkage of culture and individuality that makes it possible for individuals to actively participate in shaping their self–world relations” (2006, p. 11, translated by AS). Approaching *Bildungsmomente* as situated moments within these ongoing processes makes it possible to recognise such transformations within participation in interactive exhibitions and thus contributes to a theoretical understanding of *Bildung* that unfolds through embodied and social practices.

Fourth, the research allows for rethinking pedagogical action beyond a focus on intentionality, rationality, and functionality. As Wulf and Zirfas emphasise, the performative perspective brings to light previously overlooked moments by focusing on the embodied, habitual, and material aspects of action (2006, p. 11). Thereby, the study offers new insights into how various aspects relate to one another in the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*. These insights can inform the design and facilitation of interactive exhibitions and other participa-

tory non-formal educational practices by showing how exhibition content, spatial arrangements, interactive elements, and facilitation can afford the emergence of Bildungsmomente.

5 Intercultural Threads Interactive Exhibition

This chapter introduces the *Intercultural Threads* exhibition, which serves as the empirical setting of the research. The first part provides a description of the cultural and institutional context in which the exhibition took place ([Chapter 5.1](#)). This is followed by an account of how the exhibition was developed ([Chapter 5.2](#)). Finally, the exhibition itself is described in detail ([Chapter 5.3](#)).

5.1 Cultural and Institutional Context

To outline the cultural context of the exhibition, an interview was conducted with the director of the House of Generations Cultural Centre (*Generációk Művelődési Háza*), who has held this position for more than 30 years. The House of Generations plays a significant role in the local cultural life. Before presenting the institution's activities and the perspectives from the interview, this section briefly introduces Győr, the city in which the exhibition took place.

Győr, with a population of approximately 130,000, is the sixth-largest city in Hungary and serves as the centre of Győr-Moson-Sopron County and the Western Transdanubian (*Nyugat-Dunántúl*) region. The city is located at the confluence of the Mosoni-Danube, Rába, and Rábca rivers, which have historically contributed to its regional importance as a transport and economic centre. Győr serves as an important economic, educational, and cultural hub and is considered one of the most industrialised cities in the country, largely due to Audi Hungaria and its extensive supplier network (City of Győr, 2018). The Széchenyi István University is an important factor in the city's higher education, particularly in the fields of engineering, economics, and law (City of Győr, 2018). In recent years, the city's development strategy has remained strongly connected to the automotive industry, while also aiming to strengthen additional sectors such as sports economy, tourism, and the creative industries (Fekete, 2014, p. 187).

In Hungary, cultural opportunities and the range of available programmes are more extensive in Budapest, while smaller cities maintain their own locally grounded cultural contexts. An example of this is Veszprém, the European Capital of Culture in 2023 (European Commission, n.d.). Győr also applied for the title and was among the final three candidate cities (Kultura.hu, 2019). Although the title was ultimately awarded to Veszprém, the application process resulted in the development of a long-term cultural strategy that defined the future directions of the city's cultural and creative development (Tóthné Kardos et al., 2019).

Győr's most prominent cultural institutions include the National Theatre of Győr (*Győri Nemzeti Színház*), the internationally recognized Ballet Company of Győr (*Győri Balett*), the Győr Philharmonic Orchestra (*Győri Filharmonikus Zenekar*), and the Vaskakas Puppet Theatre (*Vaskakas Bábszínház*) (City of Győr, n.d.). Alongside these larger institutions, libraries, museums, archives, and various cultural organizations contribute to the city's cultural infrastructure. Several of these institutions also offer non-formal educational programs, often connected to artistic and cultural activities. Based on data collected in 2014 by Gombos, cultural participation in Győr is generally characterized by a preference for accessible, experience-oriented activities, while engagement with traditional cultural institutions is more limited. Theatre attendance represents a notable exception, showing relatively high participation rates, whereas other forms, such as museums or libraries, are less frequently visited despite overall satisfaction with available services (Gombos, 2014, p. 229).

In addition to institutions, amateur artistic groups, and smaller community-based initiatives also play a key role in maintaining local cultural traditions (e.g., folk-dance groups or drama groups), and expanding the range of cultural activities (City of Győr, 2018). These groups often collaborate with larger institutions, which provide space and organisational support for their activities.

The House of Generations Cultural Centre. The House of Generations Cultural Centre is a community cultural venue, located in the city centre of Győr. It provides basic public cultural services and supports community-based cultural activities in the city and its surrounding area (House of Generations, 2025). Since 1994, the institution has been directed by Éva Kokas, who has remained in this position ever since. According to her, the institution has been active in the field of culture since the 1970s, building on earlier forms of operation. Its origins date back to 1954, when it functioned as a youth cultural centre, a Pioneer House (*Úttörőház*). After several changes in name and location, it moved to its current building in 1957 and became an independent institution in 1973. By the late 1980s, it had developed into a regional centre for children's cultural activities. Following the political transition in 1989, it continued its work under the name House of Children (*Gyermekek Háza*) (Kokas, personal communication, September 23, 2025, pp. 1–2).

According to the centre's 2025 work plan, the House of Generations provides community spaces that support both individual development and collective cultural participation. Its activities are oriented towards learning, creativity, and community engagement, addressing the needs of people seeking cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities. A central aspect of the institution's work is the support of lifelong learning and forms of education that

take place outside the formal school system. This includes workshops, extracurricular educational programs, arts-based and drama-based activities, as well as talent development initiatives. The aim is to contribute to the development of creative skills and competences that complement formal education (House of Generations, 2025).

The programme structure is organised across all generations, ranging from early childhood to older adults. Regular activities include camps, workshops, clubs, exhibitions, and theatre-in-education (*színházi-nevelési*) programmes, alongside larger community events that bring together different generations. The institution works in cooperation with other local organisations from the field of education, culture, and art as well as civil initiatives, embedding its activities within the wider network of local institutions in the city. Following the renovation of its buildings in 2023, the institution further expanded its programme offer, strengthening its role as a space for cultural activities, workshops, and learning-oriented initiatives (House of Generations, 2025).

The House of Generations provides several spaces suitable for the presentation of artworks, including paintings, photographs, and other creative outputs. These spaces host changing exhibitions by artists from different fields. The exhibitions offer opportunities for groups and communities connected to the institution, including both internally organised programmes and externally affiliated groups, to present their work. The aim of organising exhibitions is to contribute to the visibility of different communities, support exchange between groups, and encourage further participation in the institution's activities (House of Generations, 2025).

Director's Perspective. During the conversation, Éva Kokas described the House of Generations as a long-standing community space which brings together people of all ages through cultural, artistic and educational activities. She emphasized that the institution has always placed strong focus on artistic education and experiential forms of learning, as an alternative to achievement-oriented approaches typical of formal schooling (Kokas, personal communication, September 23, 2025). She emphasised that artistic and craft traditions have a strong influence on local cultural life in Győr, such as folk dance, theatre, and community-based creative programs. These are often realised in cooperation with local organisations and create opportunities for encounters between different artistic fields and age groups. According to Kokas, participation is the highest among children, young people, and older adults. Everyday pressures, particularly those related to school and family expectations, make regular engagement difficult. To respond to this, lots of programmes are deliberately scheduled for weekends and school holidays. She also referred to broader challenges affecting the in-

stitution, including pressure from the education system, limited time for cultural participation, and the need to continuously adapt programme structures (Kokas, personal communication, September 23, 2025).

When speaking about exhibitions, she pointed out that experimental or concept-based formats, such as the *Intercultural Threads* exhibition, are less common in the local context. In general, more traditional formats are dominant. Kokas also identified opportunities and limitations of the local exhibition culture. The House of Generations operates as an open exhibition space, where access is often free. She stressed the need to increase the involvement of younger audiences, particularly secondary school, and university students. At the same time, the importance of the presence of facilitators was highlighted since most visitors are frequently connected to the exhibiting artists. Exhibitions in the institution often rely on existing personal networks (Kokas, personal communication, September 23, 2025).

5.2 Making of the Exhibition

This section outlines how the exhibition was developed, from the initial idea to its closure.

Background and Initial Idea. During my studies, I attended a seminar that focused on interculturality, where I first encountered Adrian Holliday's theories on "small culture formation on the go" (2016; 2019) as well as the concept of "block and thread narratives" developed together with Simona Amadasi (2017). As a part of this seminar, I developed an initial concept for an exhibition as a semester assignment. More precisely, the idea originally took the form of a workshop concept based on one of Holliday's studies (2018).

This was the first moment when I connected my university work with the experiences I had gained during an international research programme in Thailand. In May 2024, I coordinated and participated in a research project in a Thai village with an international group, focusing on sustainable community development. During the 10-day programme, different research groups had focused on specific projects. Our group explored educational practices of the local context, which later became relevant again in my studies, when encountering the topic of interculturality. This research trip was photographed by one of the participants, resulting in a large number of documentary photographs. In addition, we created field notes and collected lots of stories about the everyday life of the local community. One of the aims of the programme was to collaborate with the local community and identify analogies and similarities with our own life experiences.

When the idea of the exhibition emerged, it became clear that these materials, the photographs, and stories, could serve as the basis for constructing the exhibition. There was

a specific moment, while engaging with the work of Amadasí and Holliday, when I realized that their theoretical concepts could be illustrated clearly through the experiences and examples gathered during the research trip in Thailand. I found that Amadasí and Holliday's approach to interculturality, which is both complex and highly relevant, could become more accessible if it was connected to concrete examples and presented not only through texts, but also through images and interactive elements. From the beginning, the concept differed from a traditional exhibition format, as its educational character played a vital role throughout the entire development process, and the theory structured the exhibition from the beginning.

Aims of the Exhibition. The idea of the exhibition thus responded to the question of how such a theoretical approach could be made understandable and accessible in an engaging way, reaching people beyond an academic audience. I aimed to develop a concept in which the exhibition itself could create an opportunity for learning through participation, and to create space for dialogue around these topics. Another important aspect in the making of the exhibition was to provide space for the participants of the research programme to present their work, reflect on their experiences through creative forms, and share their stories within the format of the exhibition. Thus, community-based, and artistic aspects also became increasingly important during the realisation process. A key aim was also to create possibilities for visitors to connect to the topic in their own ways, and to offer a perspective that differs from more conventional approaches. The primary target group consisted of university students and young adults, especially those already interested in travelling. The exhibition also addressed other groups, including secondary school students and older adults.

Project Organisation and Institutional Context. The choice of venue emerged naturally from the beginning. Alongside my studies, I work as a dance teacher at the House of Generations Cultural Centre, which means I collaborate regularly with its staff. I am also familiar with the spaces, programme structure, and institutional aims of the centre. In the context of this project, it became clear that the exhibition could align closely with these aims. These priorities of the centre are reflected in the development of the exhibition and include the provision of learning-based and arts-related programmes, the support of creative skill development, and the creation of opportunities for participants to present their own cultural productions.

As members of our community are already actively involved in the life of the institution, the exhibition also provided an opportunity to present our own cultural initiative within this context. The institution places emphasis on strengthening community engagement, sup-

porting voluntary participation, and creating new forms of collective activity through shared cultural experiences. The exhibition involved volunteers in the creation process and addressed multiple generations. In the initial phase, a community-based material collection was organised, during which people brought in unused threads. These materials were later used in the creation of the exhibition's installations. Among the more recent aims of the House of Generations is the intention to reach new audiences, including university students, and to expand participation across different age groups. One of the key connections in this project was therefore the deliberate focus on this target group.

The established collaboration with the institution played a defining role in the realisation process. The House of Generations provided the exhibition space free of charge and included the exhibition in its official programme. Through the institution's network, further collaborations also emerged during the project, including a cooperation with Széchenyi István University in relation to an accompanying lecture as well as with secondary school classes for whom guided tours were organised.

Conceptual and Curatorial Design. The main theme of the exhibition, interculturality, had been defined at the beginning. The specific stories and smaller thematic units, however, were developed together with the creating team during a collaborative and creative discussion. The exhibition was organised around key ideas such as the role of community, the search for similarities across cultures, and a focus on everyday life. Throughout the process, we worked as a team. For example, we selected the photographs together, rather than leaving it solely to the photographer. We chose the images that we found most relevant and engaging for the exhibition. The photographs followed a sociographic and documentary approach, recording situations and stories that were later introduced further through the exhibition texts and guided tours.

The theoretical framework of the exhibition was informed by Adrian Holliday's (2019) concept of "small culture formation on the go", which offers a perspective on culture that focuses on everyday interactions and lived experience (p. 3). According to this approach, culture is not to be understood primarily through fixed categories such as nationality, ethnicity, language, or religion, but through the everyday processes by which people negotiate social life (Holliday, 2019, pp. 2–5). People constantly build and take part in "small cultures" within families, work groups, classrooms, or even in spontaneous conversations; these small cultures are dynamic and contextual, emerging through relationships between people and taking on complex, transient and changing forms (Holliday, 2019, p. 3). From this perspective, understanding culture involves paying attention to how people relate to each other in

specific situations (Holliday, 2019, pp. 2–3). Holliday also argues that individuals often already possess an intuitive understanding of others, as many aspects of everyday life and human experience are shared across contexts (2019, Preface, p. ix).

The distinction between block and thread narratives, developed by Amadasi and Holliday (2017), was another key element of the exhibition’s conceptual framework. The “block narrative of cultural difference” constructs boundaries, “restricts cultural travel”, and promotes national cultures as the primary and defining units of cultural identity (Amadasi & Holliday, 2017, p. 259). In contrast, the thread narrative focuses on the multiple connections that emerge through personal experiences and shared meanings, thus “[i]t has the power to extend and carry us across the boundaries that are encouraged by cultural blocks” (Amadasi & Holliday, 2017, p. 259). Threads “allow multiple connections and constructions of cultural identity” by recognising the complexity of cultural negotiation rather than reducing identity to fixed cultural categories (Amadasi & Holliday, 2017, p. 267).

This theoretical framework of interculturality provided the structural basis for the entire conceptual and curatorial design of the exhibition. Its core ideas were embodied in a central installation, while various aspects of the theory were integrated throughout the exhibition. For example, in developing the exhibition, we focused on connecting our experiences in Thailand with our own everyday contexts, and on formulating questions that would allow visitors to relate the content to their own lives. These reflective questions were also present in the exhibition texts. As a central aspect of the theoretical approach is the connection between people’s own life situations and those of others, we aimed to support this through interactive installations. In the making of the interactive installations, we combined practices from our own community with those encountered in Thailand, creating hybrid forms that became characteristic elements of the exhibition.

The role of the visitor was not limited to that of a viewer, but was extended to becoming part of the exhibition, as participants could leave traces within certain elements. It was important to ensure that these forms of participation were not exclusive. Visitors could engage with the exhibition in diverse ways, according to their own preferences, and explore its elements freely, at their own pace and in their own order.

Realisation Process. In the realisation, we aimed at using available materials and community contributions. The realisation process involved a team of approximately twenty people. Several team members took on multiple roles during the process. Participants of the Thailand research project contributed to the selection of stories and the formation of the thematic structure. The visual appearance relied primarily on the photographs prepared by the

photographer. There were also aesthetic installations created by different contributors. Specific team members were responsible for the physical realisation, the arrangement of the exhibition space, and other organisational tasks. I took on multiple roles, including developing the initial concept, coordinating the team, and contributing to the organisational process. I was responsible for designing the overall design of the exhibition, including the interactive installations, writing the texts, and shaping the visual elements. I also participated in the physical installation of the exhibition and facilitated all guided tours.

One of the key principles of the process was the extensive use of recycled materials and objects. All necessary materials were collected through community contributions. As a result, elements such as unused bricks, old door frames, pieces of wood, and threads were brought in from garages, basements, and gardens of community members. The installation of the exhibition space took place over two full days, as several elements were assembled directly on site.

Guided Tours and Accompanying Programmes. The exhibition opened on May 20, 2025. During the opening event, we briefly introduced the inspiration journey, the topic of interculturality, the themes, and aims of the exhibition, followed by a dance performance accompanied by reinterpreted ritual elements.

Due to the interactive nature of the exhibition and the inclusion of personal stories, guided tours and six accompanying programmes were planned as integral parts of the project. Each programme began with a guided tour and was followed by activities that approached the topic of interculturality from different perspectives. Time was also intentionally allocated for free exploration, which in many cases developed into longer conversations among participants. I designed the accompanying programmes and invited guest speakers to contribute additional perspectives after the guided tours. These group-based programmes played a significant role in the exhibition, as they created space for dialogue and exchange.

The programme series included, for example, a personal experience-sharing session. The second was a discussion on values and everyday life situations. The workshop I originally developed in the seminar was also realised as part of the programme. In another session, topics such as sustainability, metaphors, and local culture were explored from a more theoretical perspective. A philosophical workshop format was also organised, and the exhibition concluded with a finissage that combined an improvisational and creative dance workshop with a performance.

Closing and Afterlife. The exhibition was open to visitors from 20 May 2025 until 28 July 2025, in the exhibition space of the House of Generations. Before dismantling the installation, a 3D scan of the entire space was created, with the intention of making the exhibition accessible in an online format in the future, allowing others to revisit and experience it (Matterport scan, 2025). The exhibition was closed with the intention that it could be recreated in collaboration with other institutions, reaching new audiences and extending its impact beyond its original context.

After the exhibition, members of the creating team came together for a group reflection, where we discussed our experiences and evaluated the process. Several key aspects emerged from this discussion (Reflection meeting with the exhibition team, author's field notes, September 19, 2025). The team highlighted the importance of shared goals, including educational intentions, the creation of institutional connections, and the realisation of creative ideas. Positive experiences were strongly connected to the collaborative process, such as the construction of the exhibition, the unexpected support, and the overall positive feedback received from visitors. The experience of “flow” during the creation process and the quality of conversations within the exhibition space were also emphasized. Challenges were also identified, particularly related to time management, organisation, and adapting the concept to the given spatial conditions. These difficulties were addressed throughout the realisation process through collaborative problem-solving, experimentation with new techniques, and the use of recycled materials, which proved to be both a constraint and a creative resource.

In the discussion, we also identified several valuable lessons for future projects, including the value of early team building, and the importance of communication and audience outreach. The role of the host institution as a supportive environment, as well as the strength of the community involved, were also recognized as key factors in the making of the exhibition.

5.3 Exhibition Setting

The following section presents the exhibition in detail, focusing on its spatial, visual, material, textual, conceptual, and thematic elements. The interactive installations are introduced, with a special attention given to the *Threads and Blocks* installation. Finally, the guided tours, the free exploration phase and the visitors are discussed. To complement the following description, the exhibition can also be explored through a 3D Matterport scan (see Figure 5.3.1), which provides an impression of the spatial organisation and interactive elements of the exhibition.

Figure 5.3.1

QR Code for the Virtual Exhibition Intercultural Threads



Note. The QR code provides access to the virtual exhibition *Intercultural Threads* (Matterport scan, 2025)

Space and Atmosphere. The exhibition was in two medium-sized rooms in the House of Generations. The first, larger space functioned as the main “exhibition room”, from which the second room, referred to as the “art room” opened. Upon entering the exhibition, the most immediately noticeable element was the network of threads stretching across the walls, visually connecting different elements of the space. Photographs of varying sizes were displayed on the walls, while a larger, wooden installation, resembling a railing-like structure, occupied a central position in the room. The space was further shaped by a ceiling installation composed of white threads, which created a less immediately visible but more layered spatial composition. The door between the two rooms was always kept open and functioned as an interactive installation itself.

The atmosphere in the second room differed a little. While the first room was more dynamic due to its central position in the building and its connection to the theatre room, the second room felt lighter and calmer, partly due to the presence of a wall of windows. Here, the emphasis shifted away from large photographic displays toward smaller images and installations made from various materials. More of these elements were suspended from the ceiling, hanging on threads.

In both rooms, the arrangement was primarily organised along the walls, with only a few central installations, allowing the space to remain freely accessible. No fixed route was defined to enable visitors to navigate the exhibition according to their own preferences.

Figure 5.3.2*Selected Exhibition Spaces*

Note. Left: *Bound by Movement* installation. Right: Guided tour during the exhibition.

Visual and Material Elements. Photography was the most prominent medium of the exhibition. All exhibited photographs were taken during the research trip to Thailand by photographer Mátyás Czika and were printed on laminated PVC panels. The images were thematically grouped across the walls. The accompanying text sheets were attached to threads and clipped next to the corresponding themes. These could be detached, held, read, and then clipped back, allowing for a more tactile interaction with the content. All thread-based elements were created from unused yarn that people had brought to designated collection points before the exhibition. In some cases, they later recognized their own yarns when visiting the exhibition. A visitor explicitly reflected on this and shared personal stories connected to the threads of the ceiling installation. The installation was inspired by *sai sin*, a decorative and symbolic element observed in Thai temples. The *Sai Sin* installation's threads extended across the ceiling, with the white threads symbolizing protection, purity, and the strength of belonging, spiritually connecting members of a community. Thus, in the exhibition, the threads also represented invisible connections between people, such as shared stories, everyday practices, and encounters.

Figure 5.3.3*Examples of Spatial and Visual Exhibition Elements*

Note. Left: *Sai Sin* installation. Right: Detail of *Light Theatre* installation.

In the art room, digital content was also included, accessible via QR codes and presented through suspended elements. Another installation, *Light Theatre*, consisted of hanging mirror fragments that reflected light and their surroundings. Their movement created a constantly shifting visual composition, with the aim of symbolizing how perception and perspective can change depending on how we look at something. Additionally, a table displayed a previously published study (Makkos et al., 2025) related to the research trip, as well as an illustrated children's book – with a story of a stray dog who ends up in the village – created by one of the research groups of the Thai study trip. Other outputs from participating groups were presented in the form of posters and personal accounts.

Textual Elements. Several types of textual elements were present in the exhibition. The main thematic areas were indicated by titles placed above the corresponding sections. Each theme was accompanied by a text sheet that included short stories related to the topic or thoughts on approaching the themes from the perspective of interculturality. At the bottom of the sheets, a few reflective questions invited visitors to connect the themes to their own experiences and everyday situations. Overall, the texts on these sheets were relatively short,

but there were lots of them. Other, longer formats of text-based elements included posters, personal accounts from participants of the research trip, and selected stories written for specific themes. All of these were presented in visually designed formats.

Instruction cards were attached to the interactive installations, providing guidance on how to explore and use them. These functioned more as invitations, encouraging some kind of action or conversation. Each text sheet and instruction card was bilingual, with one side in Hungarian and the other in English.

Conceptual Framework. The exhibition was conceptually informed by Adrian Holliday's perspective on "small culture formation on the go" (2016; 2019) and the distinction between thread and block narratives developed by Amadasi and Holliday (2017), introduced in the previous section. The exhibition translated these theoretical concepts into an interactive form through its installations, incorporating spatial and textual elements. The exhibition's conceptual framework was also presented as a central textual element. It was placed near the middle of the exhibition room, where visitors could stop and read it, and it often functioned as a starting point for engaging with the exhibition and an invitation for discussion.

Thematic Structure. Connecting this conceptual framework with the stories and photos, the following thematic areas were selected for the exhibition to be organised around: the market as a community space, reusing and everyday objects, storytelling practices, food and daily life, spirituality and wishes, life by the water, the power of community, connected by movement, research projects, and the shared journey of the group. These themes were spatially arranged across the walls, combining photographs, texts, and other materials. They were designed to address the everyday experiences and situations which allow visitors to relate the content to their own lives. Through this approach, the aim was to explore interculturality through shared human experiences and common points of connection, instead of large-scale cultural differences.

Interactive Installations. Interactive elements formed some of the most distinctive parts of the exhibition. In the art room, a table and chairs were placed so that visitors could sit down and read a study related to the research trip, as well as the illustrated children's book. Digital content also functioned as an interactive element. Visitors could use their own devices to scan QR codes and access additional materials, such as videos, and engage with them by watching, sharing, or commenting.

Several installations invited direct physical interaction. One of them was the *Dancing Shadows* installation, inspired by Thai shadow theatre. It featured dancer silhouettes based on one of the photographs, placed behind a curtain. Visitors could move a light source to

project shadows from different directions, which continuously altered the shapes and compositions of the projected images. This installation highlighted how perspective influences perception, and how different viewpoints can lead to different interpretations.

Figure 5.3.4

Selected Interactive Exhibition Installations



Note. Left: *Wishes Fulfilled* installation. Right: *Thread by Thread* installation.

Another installation, *Thread by Thread* (*Szálról Szálra*) named after a wordplay on the Hungarian expression for oral storytelling “mouth by mouth” (*szájról szájra*), was placed between the two rooms. Visitors were invited to share stories or thoughts inspired by the exhibition while physically connecting threads. By tying knots, they symbolically linked their stories to one another. Over time, each visitor left a visible trace, and the installation continuously changed throughout the duration of the exhibition. The installation *Wishes Fulfilled* also referred to as the “Grateful Rooster”, became one of the most memorable elements of the exhibition. It was inspired by a tradition encountered in Bangkok, where rooster figures placed in temples symbolize gratitude for fulfilled wishes. This idea was combined with a familiar practice of collecting small objects from nature. Visitors were invited to reflect on a fulfilled wish or formulate a new one, and to express their gratitude by attaching a small

object, such as leaves, flowers, or other natural elements, to the rooster. Visitors added elements to this installation, so it also gradually changed its appearance over time.

Figure 5.3.5

Threads and Blocks Interactive Installation



Note. Left: Blocks of the installation. Right: Thread detail from the installation.

The *Threads and Blocks* Installation. The *Threads and Blocks* installation was positioned at the centre of the exhibition space, emphasizing the importance of conversation and encounters within the exhibition. The initial inspiration was like a bar counter, a place where people naturally stop, talk, and share stories with one another. The structure of the installation was made of wood and resembled a railing, but followed a curved, winding form, like a thread. From this structure, coloured threads were suspended, each grouped according to thematic categories, such as everyday situations, connections and encounters, emotions, identity layers, and places and were extended with additional themes connected to the exhibition. Each thematic group included approximately 8–10 threads, and each thread contained a short sentence starter or a prompt designed to evoke personal memories or reflections. The themes and prompts were developed based on the concept of thread narratives (Amadasí & Holliday, 2017). On the other side of the installation, a pile of blocks (made from leftover

ytong construction material from a kitchen renovation) formed the second part of the structure. These blocks had titles with thematic categories, also based on the study, including nationality, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, and social class. Next to the installation, a text panel was placed, which introduced Amadasi and Holliday's concept of block and thread narratives in relation to interculturality, as well as an instruction sheet offering suggestions for how to engage with the installation:

Instructions for the interactive task

In this interactive installation, we can tell our stories in different ways:

- with blocks: categories, large narratives,
- with threads: everyday stories, personal narratives,
- with a mix of blocks and threads.

Step One: Choose a block or a thread.

Step Two: Tell your story. You can ask yourself questions like: Who am I? What story comes to my mind? What do I always tell about myself? What do I sometimes leave out?

Step Three: Listen to other people's stories and notice how the image of you and of them changes.

Guided Tours. The researcher facilitated all guided tours. During the guided tours, participants were first introduced to the topic of interculturality. This was followed by an introduction to the thematic areas, illustrated through stories from the research trip, occasionally complemented by questions or short conversations. Moving through the space, the group progressed from one theme to another, first in the main exhibition room and then in the art room. At certain points, specific details of photos were highlighted, while in other moments the focus shifted to textual elements or brief references to the theoretical concept. In the sections dedicated to the exhibited research projects and the group's shared journey, more detailed accounts were given about the trip that inspired the exhibition, including personal observations. Sustainability was also a recurring topic throughout the tours. The process of creating the exhibition and constructing the installations was frequently brought up in conversation as well, with particular emphasis on the use of recycled and upcycled materials.

Free Exploration. Each guided tour was followed by a period of free exploration, during which participants could move freely within the exhibition space at their own pace, engage with the interactive installations, revisit the photographs, read the texts, and return to the elements that had captured their interest. Participants often began interacting with the

Threads and Blocks installation, usually starting with the threads. After some time, they moved through the space again, looking more closely at the photographs, reading the texts in detail, and trying out other interactive installations. This process varied across participants and groups who attended guided tours or accompanying programmes. Smaller groups often remained together throughout the exploration and engaged in longer conversations. Larger groups often split into pairs, small groups of three, or individual participants, who continued exploring the exhibition on their own. Participants frequently returned to the *Threads and Blocks* installation later, often as a closing moment, to continue or conclude their conversations.

Visitors. The visitors of the exhibition included both organised groups, such as secondary school classes and university students as well as individual attendees. Groups most often gathered during guided tours and accompanying programmes, typically comprising 5–20 participants. Across these occasions, multiple generations were present. Visitors often arrived in existing social constellations, such as friends, classmates, or family members, and engaged with each other in conversations during their visit. The exhibition was free and accessible outside of organised programmes, during the opening hours of the House of Generations. Some visitors reported that they explored the exhibition individually, moving through the space on their own, reading all the texts, and answering the questions for themselves.

6 Methodology and Methodical Approach

6.1 Methodology

This study is situated within qualitative social research. Qualitative social research aims to understand social worlds and phenomena from within by working through the complexity of individual cases and reconstructing subjective perspectives and realities (Flick, 2021, pp. 95–96). This includes attention to “the meanings and perspectives of the people”, “how these perspectives are shaped by, and shape, their physical, social, and cultural contexts”, as well as to the “processes that are involved in maintaining and altering these phenomena and relationships” (Maxwell, 2013, p. viii).

6.1.1 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory, developed by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 1960s, is a way of developing theory from data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 5). Grounded theory has developed into one of the most widely used approaches in qualitative-interpretative social research – while also becoming a frequently used and sometimes loosely applied term within the field (Strübing, 2021, pp. 1–2) – and refers to both a methodological approach and a theory that is grounded in the empirical world. This idea was first articulated in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2008) and offered systematic strategies for qualitative research practice (Charmaz, 2014, p. 5). The new concept here was the claim itself that theory can be developed from research grounded in qualitative data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 6). This was not self-evident at the time. In the USA, quantitative approaches were still dominant in the social sciences, and qualitative research often had to justify itself beyond descriptive work (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 6–7). Grounded theory played a key role in shifting how qualitative research was understood. According to Charmaz, the central components of Glaser and Strauss’ Grounded theory included:

- simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis,
- constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived, logically deduced hypotheses,
- using the constant comparison method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis,
- advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis,
- memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps,

- sampling aimed toward theory construction (theoretical sampling), not for population representativeness,
- conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 7–8).

The aim here was to create explanatory theoretical frameworks that can provide an abstract, conceptual understanding of the phenomena studied (Charmaz, 2014, p. 8). Grounded theory was later developed into several strands with different methodological and epistemological positions (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 11–12). Still, across these variations, the core idea remained unchanged in that the theoretical understanding is developed from empirical data.

6.1.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory

This research project relies on constructivist grounded theory, based on Charmaz (2014), which adopts an inductive, comparative, iterative, and open-ended approach (2014, p. 1). Grounded theory here distances itself from mechanical applications and a step-by-step method; instead, as described by Charmaz, it offers “systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves” (2014, p. 1), which involve:

- conducting data collection and analysis simultaneously in an iterative process,
- analyzing actions and processes rather than themes and structure,
- using comparative methods,
- drawing on data (e.g., narratives and descriptions) in the service of developing new conceptual categories,
- developing inductive abstract analytic categories through systematic data analysis,
- emphasizing theory construction rather than description or application of current theories,
- engaging in theoretical sampling,
- searching for variation in the studied categories or processes,
- pursuing the development of a category rather than covering a specific empirical topic (Charmaz, 2014, p. 15).

Constructivist grounded theory is a widely used approach within education science as well. In this study, grounded theory methods are understood as “tools to use rather than recipes to follow” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 18). Due to the scope of the research project, certain elements, such as theoretical sampling, were not implemented. Although grounded theory evolved as a method of theory construction, working with its strategies does not necessarily mean aiming

to develop a complete theory; it can be used to formulate and answer questions that emerge from empirical data.

Both data collection and analysis are not understood as independent or objective, but as emerging within the research process itself through interaction with the field and its participants (Charmaz, 2014, p. 17). Charmaz emphasises that “[w]e construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices” (2014, p. 17). According to her, grounded theory begins with inductive logic, invokes iterative strategies of going back and forth between data and analysis, takes on a comparative approach and aims to develop theoretical analyses (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 14–15). The data collection as well as the analysis follows this understanding and develops as an interpretative process in close relation to the material. Greater immediacy with participants’ social world contributes to a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon under study (Charmaz, 2014, p. 35). Knowing the exhibition from the inside out provided this immediacy and enabled a more direct approach to underlying processes.

Grounded theory methods can work as “tools for generating, mining, and making sense of data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 26). Coding enables a close engagement with the material and helps to articulate what is happening in the data. Memo writing accompanies this process and serves as a place to develop ideas, follow emerging connections, and document analytical decisions. Constant comparison enables tracing similarities and differences across codes and cases, while interpretive strategies aim to develop a more abstract understanding rather than to explain causalities (Charmaz, 2014, p. 132). How I used these tools in this study is documented in the data collection and data analysis chapters ([Chapter 6.3](#) and [Chapter 6.5](#)). Charmaz acknowledges that tools are helpful, but constructing theory is not mechanical; it is rather playful:

Whimsy and wonder can lead you to see the novel in the mundane. Openness to the unexpected expands your view of studied life and subsequently of theoretical possibilities. Your hard work reins in those ideas that best fit the data and brings them to fruition. (Charmaz, 2014, p. 245)

6.1.3 Performative Perspective

In addition to the constructivist grounded theory approach, this study is informed by performative studies. Performativity refers to the “self-referentiality of actions and their reality-constructing power” (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, p. 35). This shifts the focus from what is being done to how it is being done, drawing attention to interaction, embodiment, and material

settings. This perspective resonates with the constructivist grounded theory, as both emphasise processes and the emergence of meaning in interaction. In this study, a methodological approach informed by performativity functions as a lens for understanding how participation unfolds. A more detailed discussion on performativity is provided in the theoretical part ([Chapter 2.2](#)).

6.2 Chronology of the Master's Research Project

6.2.1 Starting Point

The research design was emergent from the start. As mentioned earlier, the research project was preceded by the creation of the exhibition. During this process, I began to formulate the idea of using the exhibition as the research setting for my master's research project. The exhibition itself was a practical, community-based project that we organised as a collective, in which the creative process, pedagogical aspects, and the community context played a central role (as described in [Chapter 5.2](#)). The research, however, developed subsequently and separately from the exhibition. While it relied on it closely, it was not part of the exhibition or its program series. My initial research interest was formulated in an early exposé, where the focus was primarily on Bildungsmomente and the concept of performing narrative (Langellier & Peterson, 2004).

The qualitative, emergent approach allowed the research question and analytical focus to evolve. As the research progressed, it became clear that the study's focus would shift away from performing narrative as the central research phenomenon, as initially anticipated. In parallel, it became evident that constructivist grounded theory would provide the most suitable methodological approach, because it enables the reconstruction of emergent participation processes without imposing predefined analytical categories. Therefore, I was able to focus on emerging patterns and refine the research questions during the analysis.

6.2.2 The Research Process

After the initial formulation of the exposé, the actual research process began with planning the data collection. The data collection events, which combined guided tours with free exploration, were organised within the exhibition setting and involved participatory observation and post-visit open-ended questionnaires. In addition, data were collected to document the contextual embedding of the research project. Following data collection, I began working on data processing, including the writing of observation protocols and the digitalisation and organisation of the material. I then familiarised myself with the use of MAXQDA and the pro-

cedures of grounded theory coding within this software (Rädiiker & Kuckartz, 2020) and imported the data into the program. The analysis began with an open engagement with the material, starting from observations and initial notes. From there, I moved into the coding process, accompanied by memo writing and keeping a research diary. During focused coding, as the analysis progressed, recurring patterns became visible. Throughout the process of axial coding, the study's focus gradually took shape. Writing memos on the analytical process led to the creation of the first visualisations and marked the beginning of developing an analytical framework. Through discussions with my supervisors, the idea of reconstructing pathways emerged. This perspective opened new analytical directions and led to a reinterpretation of some parts of the material. I selected cases for more detailed analysis and developed individual pathway memos followed by comparative memos. This process remained non-linear. In later stages, I worked with integrative steps on these pathway-based analyses and their relations. In line with the refined research questions, the focus was placed on participation processes and Bildungsmomente.

6.2.3 Supervisory Feedback

Regular discussions with my supervisors played a key role throughout the whole research process. These meetings created a space for dialogical reflection, in which open questions could be discussed and clarified. The feedback received after each phase was highly valuable and contributed to shaping analytical decisions and refining the direction and the precise details of the study.

6.3 Data Collection

Data collection was organised into four sessions with four groups, each consisting of a guided tour event involving a total of 23 participants (detailed in [Appendix A](#)). Participants had neither visited the exhibition nor previously taken part in one of its guided tour events. Each session included the following phases:

1. arrival and signing the informed consent,
2. a guided tour of the exhibition,
3. a phase of free exploration in the exhibition,
4. and the completion of a post-visit questionnaire.

Data collection followed an open logic in line with constructivist grounded theory. As Charmaz notes, “an inquiring mind, persistence, and innovative data-gathering approaches can bring a researcher into new worlds and in touch with rich data” (2014, p. 22). In this sense,

the aim was not to follow a fixed procedure, but to create a setting in which rich data could be constructed. The data collected in this study consisted of observation notes, audio and video recordings, post-visit open-ended questionnaire responses, and additional contextual materials (the interview with the director of the cultural centre, the team discussion, field notes and my reflections), which provided further insight into the context in which the data were collected. The observations document what happens during the sessions at a group level, while the questionnaires capture individual perspectives and reflections after the event. It is important to note that no one-to-one relations between individual observations and questionnaire responses were established. These two data sources were intended to provide different ways of approaching the same participatory situation (more on this in [Chapter 6.5.1](#)).

6.3.1 Preparation

In practice, data collection planning began with the decision to work with guided group tours. This decision did not come from a purely methodological consideration but from prior experience during the exhibition, where guided tours often sparked spontaneous conversations among participants, especially during the free exploration phase. The data collection was organised in four sessions with four different groups. The aim was to include a sufficient number of participants while allowing for variation in group constellations in terms of size, age, and prior relationships. These differences were not controlled but rather intentionally left open as part of the setting.

Participants were recruited through multiple channels. I shared open messages on social media, inviting people – who had not visited the exhibition before – to attend the exhibition and take part in a guided tour as part of the research. In addition, I asked acquaintances to share this opportunity within their own networks, which allowed me to reach beyond my immediate circle. Furthermore, during a public outdoor event one week before the data collection, I approached small groups in conversation, introduced the research topic, and invited them personally to participate. The aim was to form heterogeneous groups based on interest and voluntary participation, similar to those who would typically attend a guided exhibition tour. Interested participants contacted me directly, after which I collected their email addresses to provide more formal information. Communication then continued via email, including coordinating appointments and distributing an information sheet and an informed consent form. These documents included all relevant information on participation and data management as well as a brief introduction to the exhibition and the research process. Partic-

icipation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before the sessions.

After the exhibition officially closed, the four sessions were scheduled over two consecutive days at the end of July 2025, with two groups participating each day. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot session was conducted with a smaller group. This allowed me to evaluate both the observation process and the questionnaire, and to make minor adjustments. It was also an important moment to reflect on my dual role as a facilitator and researcher before beginning the actual data collection. In addition to these steps, practical arrangements were made, including the finalisation of the questionnaire and the preparation of audio and video recording equipment. The content of the exhibition itself was not changed for the data collection.

6.3.2 Research Setting

Two interconnected spaces were used as the research setting: a theatre room next to the exhibition space, and the exhibition area itself. The latter was relatively open and designed as an artistic and informative environment (described in [Chapter 5.3](#)). The theatre room was intentionally chosen as a separate space for the research-related parts of the session, such as arrival, informal conversations, the informed consent process, and questionnaire completion. In this way, the exhibition space itself remained free from the more formal aspects of research participation. Before each event, I arranged the spatial setup, prepared the necessary materials, and installed the recording equipment in both rooms. Two cameras were used, one in each room, and an additional audio recording device was placed in the exhibition area, specifically near the *Threads and Blocks* installation, where longer conversations were expected.

Each session followed a similar sequence. Participants arrived and engaged in brief informal conversations, followed by reading and signing the informed consent, during which the study and the conditions of participation were explained, and questions could be addressed. This was followed by a guided tour through the exhibition, lasting approximately 30–40 minutes. After that, participants were invited to explore the space freely, interact with the installations, and engage with one another. At the end of the session, participants completed a post-visit questionnaire.

6.3.3 Researcher and Facilitator Roles

In the data collection process, I occupied several interconnected roles: a personal role, a researcher, a facilitator, and an observer. Beyond all that, as the creator of the exhibition, I had

an insider perspective on the setting. My role throughout the sessions thus shifted depending on the phase of the event:

- At the beginning of each data collection session, during arrival and informal interaction, I was present in a more personal role, especially in relation to participants I already knew.
- This was followed by a more formal researcher role, during which I introduced the study and clarified the conditions of participation.
- After that, during the guided tour, I took on the role of a facilitator, guiding participants through the exhibition, introducing the themes, and sharing narratives related to the content.
- In contrast, during the free exploration phase, I consciously stepped back and moved into the role of the observer. Participants were explicitly informed about this. While remaining available for questions, I avoided actively participating in conversations.
- I returned to my role as a researcher at the end of the session to coordinate the completion of the questionnaires and close the event.

As Charmaz notes, “no researcher is neutral ... we attribute meanings to specific terms and hold perspectives” (2014, p. 114). This shifting positioning is therefore acknowledged as an integral part of the research setting. It shaped the situation in different ways, for example, by framing the experience during the guided tour and by allowing more independent interactions during the free exploration phase. As the free exploration phase constituted the primary source of data for this study, I aimed to remain in an observing role as much as the situation allowed. I continuously reflected on my roles during the sessions and through the research diary and accompanying memos, for example, by considering how facilitation related to participants’ engagement. Through this approach, I sought to minimise my influence on participants’ interactions while remaining aware that my presence and multiple roles may nevertheless have influenced the research situation.

6.3.4 Participatory Observation

The study draws on an ethnographic perspective in its approach to observation. As Charmaz notes, “ethnography requires involvement even if it consists of sustained hanging around a setting rather than shared action with it” (2014, p. 35). In this sense, the approach taken here involved sustained presence in the setting, as well as familiarity with the context through the overall process of creating the exhibition and through earlier guided tours.

The observations were conducted in the form of participatory observation (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2021, pp. 57–68). In line with a grounded theory perspective, attention was directed not only to what was said, but also to what participants were doing in the situation. As Charmaz emphasises, this involves “attending to actions and processes as well as to words” (2014, p. 35). Thus, the aim was to observe visible and perceptible dynamics within the group, including spatial orientation and movement, participants’ positioning relative to one another, and their interactions. During the free exploration phase, participants could move around the exhibition and engage with the installations in various ways. At times, conversations unfolded collectively, while in other moments participants moved in pairs or small groups, engaging in parallel discussions. The duration of the sessions was not strictly fixed and often extended beyond the initially planned time frame, as several groups remained in the exhibition space longer, continuing conversations and using the installations.

While the primary focus of the observation was the free exploration phase, I also remained attentive during the guided tour, observing interactions alongside my role as a facilitator. After the guided tour, I informed participants that I would shift into an observing role, allowing them to explore the exhibition and interact more independently. As the entire session was recorded using video and audio, I did not take notes during the observation itself. Immediately after each session, I wrote down initial observations and impressions.

6.3.5 Observation Protocols

The observations were documented using structured observation protocols. Their design aligns with grounded theory approaches to ethnographic fieldnotes (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 34–35). This includes documenting interactions in detail and situating them within specific contexts and scenes. Particular attention was paid to processes that appeared significant within the setting, and to how actions unfolded over time (Charmaz, 2014, p. 34). The explicit design of the protocols was informed by observation documentation (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2021, pp. 69–75).

The protocols were written after each session, based on the recordings and on the initial notes and impressions taken directly after the session. They include sections for basic information about the session as well as a chronological description of the observed situation. In writing the observations, I maintained a descriptive style, following the sequence of events and using active formulations to capture what participants were doing and how the situation developed (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2021, pp. 70–73). In addition, the protocols included space for reflections on the researcher’s role and first notes.

6.3.6 Post-Visit Open-Ended Questionnaire

The post-visit open-ended questionnaire was used to capture participants' individual perspectives on the experience, including aspects that were not directly observable during the sessions. This format was chosen to gain both an overview of participant perspectives and richer insights into their experiences. A post-visit questionnaire was particularly suitable in the exhibition setting, as participants could complete it together during a dedicated period at the end of the session. This enabled participants to articulate their experiences and thoughts immediately after the experience anonymously and in their own words. Although Charmaz mentions "open-ended yet directed" questioning (2014, p. 85) in relation to intensive interviewing, this logic also informed the design of the questionnaire in this study.

The questionnaire contained open-ended questions, beginning with 'how' or 'what' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 97) to allow participants to articulate their experiences in their own terms, while still providing a loose structure. The questionnaire consisted of five open-ended questions (see [Appendix B](#)). Participants were first asked to 1) reflect on their overall experience of the exhibition, followed by questions focusing on their engagement with the *Threads and Blocks* installation, including 2) what they did there and 3) how they experienced the situation. In addition, participants were invited to 4) reflect on whether they experienced moments they associated with learning or personal insight, and 5) to share any further thoughts they wished to add. With the questionnaire, the aim was to approach participants' perspectives as closely as possible, while acknowledging that "we cannot fully reproduce their experience" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 24).

The questionnaire was completed in writing on paper during a dedicated time immediately after the session. The length and level of detail of the responses varied, as did the time participants spent on completing them. The written format allowed participants to take time to formulate their responses and to articulate their thoughts at their own pace. Anonymity was a decisive factor in choosing this method, and an important aspect of the questionnaire design. At the end of the questionnaire, participants had the option to provide basic demographic information, such as age, name, and level of education, but this was not mandatory. The voluntary and anonymous nature of responses was explicitly emphasised, and particular care was taken to avoid suggestive phrasing. At the same time, the structure of the questionnaire inevitably shaped how experiences were articulated, since "[h]ow you collect data affects *which* phenomena you will see, *how*, *where*, and *when* you will view them, and *what* sense you will make of them" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 26).

6.3.7 Additional Contextual Material

In addition to the main data sources, I collected further material to gain a more detailed understanding of the context in which the data were generated. First, the director of the House of Generations provided insights into the cultural context and the institution, including its role in Győr, its program structure, and its values. This helped to situate the exhibition within its broader institutional and local context (see [Chapter 5.1](#)). Second, reflections from the exhibition team were collected through a post-event group discussion combined with a collaborative poster-making activity. This provided a retrospective view of the creation process and made it possible to reflect on experiences beyond my own, particularly on working together as a team (see [Chapter 5.2](#)). Third, my own reflections were also an important part of the material. As I was present in multiple roles throughout the process (see [Chapter 6.3.3](#)), I documented my experiences, challenges, and perspectives in writing regarding both the exhibition and the research process.

6.4 Data Processing and Data Protection

Following the data collection, the material was prepared for analysis through several steps of organisation and processing. This included the development and digitalisation of observation protocols, the digitalisation of handwritten questionnaire responses, and the organisation of video and audio materials. Initial notes and impressions were further elaborated with the support of the recordings. Then I organised all data sources by data type and session and brought them into a consistent format. Audio and video recordings, original questionnaires, and observation protocols were accessible only to the researcher and the supervisors and were stored in password-protected files.

The original data were handled in anonymised form in accordance with the informed consent and data protection guidelines (Helfferich, 2011, pp. 190–192). During documentation and data processing identifying information, such as names or specific references to persons or places, was removed or replaced. In cases where statements contained highly personal or potentially identifiable information, these parts were not included in the processed data. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the sessions. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the data collection procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without negative consequences. They were also informed of their right to request deletion of their data at any point during the research process. The collected data are used exclusively for

research purposes and are presented in anonymised form, with references to participant and group numbers assigned after data collection. Audio and video recordings are stored only for the duration of the research project and will be deleted after its completion. The processed data were imported into the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA, which was used to manage, structure, and support the analysis of the material.

6.5 Analysis

Similarly to the data collection, the analysis was guided by the logic of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) and followed an open, data-driven approach. Rather than applying a predefined framework, analytical constructs and directions gradually emerged through coding, memo writing, and constant comparison. The analysis was developed in several interconnected steps, beginning with an initial engagement with the data, followed by an extensive phase of initial (open) coding. Based on recurring patterns, the analysis moved towards focused coding, where codes were grouped and refined. In the next stages, the analysis was further developed through axial coding, in which an analytical framework began to take shape. This process was part of the development of more abstract analytical constructs. In later stages, these were further refined and brought together in a process of theoretical integration.

6.5.1 *First Engagement With the Data*

The first steps of the analysis were closely connected to the empirical material. I began by working with the observation protocols, writing initial memos for each group in order to capture first impressions and emerging questions. This was followed by document memos based on the questionnaire responses, which documented the first descriptions and interpretations of the material. During the analytical process, I used the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA (Rädiker & Kuckartz, 2020). As a preparatory step, the questionnaire responses were organised with codes according to the structure of the questions. For example, responses to the first question were marked with a Q1 code, and the second with a Q2 code. This supported later comparisons across participants by the structuring of the material throughout the coding process. In addition, sets were created from frequently used words (e.g., “interesting”, “story”, “connect”) to gain an initial overview of recurring elements in the data.

While working with the data, instead of explaining individual cases by linking their observable actions to subsequent written reflections, I decided to let the meanings that par-

ticipants themselves assigned guide the coding and, later, the reconstruction of participation pathways. In this way, the observed participation situations remained the context in which later participation pathways – only partially observable – could be reconstructed by interpreting participants’ anonymous questionnaire responses. With this analytical strategy, the observations were not treated as direct representations of participants’ meanings but were interpreted alongside participants’ own reflections.

6.5.2 Initial Coding

The coding process began with initial coding, conducted line by line across the full set of questionnaire responses. As Charmaz defines it, “[c]oding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data” (2014, p. 111). Initial coding was used to articulate what is happening in the material and to begin engaging with its possible meanings (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 111–122). Following its logic, this phase aimed to remain as close as possible to the data and to open up the material analytically. In this process, I generated a large number of codes. After coding all 23 questionnaires, a total of 312 initial codes were created, including numerous in vivo codes that directly captured participants’ own expressions. As Charmaz explains, “in vivo codes serve as symbolic markers of participants’ speech and meanings” (2014, p. 134). In several cases, I used Hungarian in vivo codes to preserve participants’ original wording. For example, expressions such as “to be seen while seeing” (*látva lássanak*, P7_G2_L21) were directly translated into codes.

During initial coding, I wrote short code memos to document emerging meanings of individual codes. It became apparent that many codes were highly specific and rarely identical across participants, reflecting the diversity of responses. At the same time, recurring elements and connections between codes began to show themselves, which were continuously documented in memos.

6.5.3 Focused Coding

This process led to the phase of focused coding, a “selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organise large amounts of data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). In this phase, similar or overlapping codes were grouped, refined, or removed. The process was guided by continuous comparison of codes and code memos (Charmaz, 2014, p. 142), and by questions such as: “In which ways might your initial codes reveal patterns? Which of these codes best account for the data? What do your com-

parisons between codes indicate?” (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 140–141). In focused coding, I repeatedly returned to the original data and re-coded where necessary. Several initial codes, such as talking together, sharing ideas, and reacting to others, were grouped under more abstract, focused codes, such as shared storytelling and social interaction. I developed a set of focused codes, including emotional and memory-based reactions, immersion, engagement, facilitation through spatial structures, encounters with other cultures, social interaction, shared storytelling, reflection processes, perspective shifts, and taking something forward. The development of these codes involved a series of analytical decisions. For example, codes related to participants’ longer engagement with the installation were initially grouped under immersion, but I later differentiated them when it became visible that the material setting played a distinct role in shaping these interactions. Another example was identifying reflection as a central process which I further differentiated into multiple levels, including individual (self-reflection), social (reflection on others), content-related, and societal.

6.5.4 Axial Coding

As relationships among focused codes became more visible, the analysis moved towards a phase of axial coding, in which categories were related to one another and further specified. In this phase, the focus shifted from grouping codes to examining how they are connected and how they form more coherent analytical structures. Following Charmaz, “axial coding helps to clarify and to extend the analytic power of your emerging ideas” (2014, p. 150). This might involve relating categories to subcategories, specifying the properties and dimensions of categories, or creating theoretical codes to reassemble data fractured during initial coding into an analytic story or frame (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 138–161). I moved beyond working with isolated codes and focused on how different aspects of participation are connected and how they come together. This involved repeated returns to the original data and codes to trace how codes co-occur, how they are linked within specific situations, and how they contribute to broader processes. Within this phase, I further specified the emerging analytical constructs in terms of their properties and dimensions, which provided a way of making the analysis more systematic (Charmaz, 2014, p. 147). Certain aspects, such as temporality or observability, appeared in varying configurations and were therefore further explored.

6.5.5 Memo Writing and Research Diary

Memo writing and keeping a research diary accompanied the entire analysis. As Charmaz states, memo-writing creates a space to actively engage with the materials to take codes apart,

compare them, and to develop ideas (2014, pp. 162–164). Memos did not function only as documentation but also as a space for thinking, reflection, and the development of a concept through writing. I wrote memos throughout all phases of the analysis, where I captured emerging ideas, formulated questions, and documented analytical decisions. During coding, memos were used to explore code meanings, note emerging patterns, and reflect on uncertainties. As the analysis progressed, memos increasingly supported the development and refinement of more abstract concepts. Different types of memos were used throughout the process, including document, code, theoretical, methodological, and reflective memos, as well as later pathway-specific and comparative memos. I adapted their structure to the needs of the analysis at different stages. The research diary – in which I documented the overall development of the study, including reflections, emerging questions, and methodological considerations – remained in continuous dialogue with the memo-writing process. Both formats contributed to making the analytical process traceable.

6.5.6 Theoretical Integration and Development of the Analytical Perspective

In line with Charmaz, theoretical integration was not treated as a separate final step but as an ongoing process that began with focused coding. This phase is integrative and helps develop an analytic story with coherence (Charmaz, 2014, p. 150). This involved revisiting earlier coding decisions and memos and re-examining them in light of developments in the analysis. I wrote a memo on the analytical and interpretive process (Charmaz, 2014, p. 150) that led to the creation of the first visualisations (Charmaz, 2014, p. 216) and marked the beginning of the development of an analytical framework. Then, the idea of a pathway emerged during the analysis. In one of my discussions with my supervisors, it became clear that this perspective could help structure emerging insights. From this point on, it became an organising principle for further analysis (see [Chapter 7.1](#)).

After that, I began working with additional analytical constructs related to the pathways that gradually emerged from the data. The writing process, particularly in pathway memos and comparative memos, was structured around these emerging relations. Interestingly, initial memos had already pointed to certain processual dynamics or moments that were not fully recognised at the time. Returning to these memos in light of the developing analysis provided new insights. In parallel with writing memos, I developed the analytical constructs by sorting and systematising them into an analytic framework (Charmaz, 2014, p. 216) and refining their definitions (see [Chapter 7.1](#)).

Going back to the original data with this analytical perspective, I created a table of pathways that could be considered analytically relevant. The selection was guided by whether cases made specific configurations of participation processes reconstructable. Particular attention was given to the level of detail and depth in participants' responses, distinguishing between more descriptive or evaluative answers from those that provided richer insight into processes and experiences. I also considered aspects such as the quality of observable interaction in the group setting, the presence of key focused codes, and the presence of developments or shifts. From this overview, I selected four pathways as core cases because they provided particularly clear examples of participation processes, while additional and contrasting cases were chosen to add variation to the subsequent comparative analysis. In constructing the pathways, I brought together insights from both questionnaire data and observations. This allowed me to relate participants' individual perspectives to observed group-level interactions.

6.5.7 Refining the Research Questions

Like other analytical constructs in this study, the concept of *Bildungsmomente* was not defined in advance. It functioned as a point of departure, a sensitizing concept (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 30–31), guiding the analytical process without determining it. A data-driven understanding of this concept developed in the course of the analysis, and as a result, the research questions were continuously refined before reaching their final form (see [Chapter 4](#)). In responding to these questions, the aim is not to provide causal explanations, but to develop an interpretive understanding of what happens in the data and how the studied processes take shape (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 239–241).

7 Results

This chapter presents the study's findings. It first introduces the analytical framework for reconstructing the emergence of Bildungsmomente in participation ([Chapter 7.1](#)) and examines how pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, and process dimensions relate to one another ([Chapter 7.2](#)). The chapter then continues by reconstructing the emergence of Bildungsmomente within individual participation pathways ([Chapter 7.3](#)), and finally, it develops a synthesis of the emergence of Bildungsmomente across pathways ([Chapter 7.4](#)).

7.1 Analytical Framework for Reconstructing Pathways of Participation

This chapter introduces the framework developed to analyse the emergence of Bildungsmomente in participation. The framework was developed iteratively through coding, memo writing, constant comparison, and conceptual refinement (described in detail in [Chapter 6.5](#)). The analytical constructs of the framework gradually emerged from the data, were revised and refined through memos and comparative memos (see [Chapter 7.3.2](#) and Appendices), and related to one another and to the data until a coherent analytical framework was established. Once the framework was developed, it was applied to reconstruct the individual participation pathways (as presented in [Chapter 7.3](#)). The framework can therefore be understood as a systematisation and sorting of the analytical constructs and their relations (Charmaz, 2014, p. 216). The pathway framework's function is to provide an analytical perspective and a strategy for reconstructing pathways of participation and the emergence of Bildungsmomente within them. The underlying analytical constructs – namely pathways, pathway processes, pathway-affording elements, and process dimensions – serve as a vocabulary for describing how participation unfolds in specific situations. In the following, these constructs are defined and elaborated.

Pathways. A pathway is an analytically reconstructed trajectory that captures how pathway processes unfold within a specific configuration of pathway-affording elements in a given participatory setting. It brings together how participation is enacted through situated actions and interactions, emerging processes, how they overlap, and develop in relation to each other. Pathways are situational, non-linear, and non-recurrent. They are analytical constructs that are developed retrospectively through interpretation.

Pathway-Affording elements. Pathway-affording elements refer to analytically distinguishable aspects of a participatory setting that may facilitate specific pathways. Together they constitute the context in which pathway processes unfold. They enable, constrain, and

invite particular forms of participation by configuring the situation in which processes emerge. They do not constitute pathway processes themselves, nor do they determine participation. Pathway-affording elements are relational and dynamic, and they are part of the unfolding pathways. Their role and meaning within a specific pathway are continuously shaped and reconfigured and can only be identified in relation to other elements within a given configuration.

In this study, pathway-affording elements include the material and spatial setting, content of the exhibition, facilitation, group dynamics, and participant orientation. These elements are different in nature but are understood here in terms of how they contribute to the configuration within which participation unfolds.

- The material and spatial setting refers to the physical arrangement of objects and installations, as well as the atmosphere of the space and the setting, which can invite, guide, or frame forms of interaction and engagement.
- Content refers to the thematic, narrative, or conceptual material of the exhibition, including themes, photos, texts, installations, prompts, stories, and perspectives that participants engage with.
- Facilitation refers to how participation is guided, framed, mediated, or structured, in the form of verbal guidance, instructions, the presence and actions of facilitators, and material facilitation, such as instruction sheets as well.
- Group dynamics refers to the composition of the group, including the group size, the presence, orientation, and responsiveness of participants, the familiarity among them, and the relationships within the group. These are not treated as individual traits, but as relational constellations embedded in the situation.
- Participant orientation refers to the internal orientation that participants bring into the situation (e.g., openness, uncertainty, affective orientation), as well as their expectations and how they position themselves in participation.

Although facilitation, group dynamics, and participant orientation operate in dynamic and interactional ways, they are conceptualised here as pathway-affording elements rather than pathway processes, because they may facilitate specific pathways and together constitute the context in which pathway processes unfold. Concrete examples are displayed in a later section, in [Table 7.2.3](#).

Actions and Interactions within Participation. Actions and interactions are not analytical constructs as such; they refer to specific, situated doings within the setting. They include observable or empirically documentable and accessible actions and interactions, such

as moving, selecting, reading, listening, sharing, responding to others, or remaining silent. They provide empirical entry points for reconstructing pathway processes. The term interaction is used in a broad sense and extends beyond social interaction between participants. It includes interactions with the material and spatial setting, exhibited content, facilitators, and other participants. Actions and interactions may appear across multiple pathway processes. This is because the same observable activity can be taken up in different ways within participation and thus become part of different processes.

Pathway Processes. Pathway processes refer to analytically reconstructed participation-related processes that unfold within a pathway. They describe processes that emerge within participation, such as conversation, immersion, reflection, engagement, meaning-making, learning, perspective shift, or taking something forward. Within a pathway, different processes may come to the foreground or remain less dominant or appear in fragmented ways. They are not linear or clearly sequential; multiple pathway processes may be present at the same time within a single situation and may overlap with each other. Not all pathway processes are present in every pathway, and those identified in this study are processes that emerged as recurrent and analytically relevant across the analysed material. Pathway processes are situated in that they are embedded within specific participation situations and are continuously shaped by, and contribute to shaping, their context and conditions. They are relational in that they take shape in relation to each other and are continuously reconfigured through their interplay. Pathway processes are not directly observable. They are reconstructed analytically from actions and interactions accessible in empirical data. Some examples are included in [Table 7.2.2](#).

Process Dimensions. Process dimensions are analytical lenses that show how pathway processes vary in terms of temporality, observability, dominance, and qualities. Dimensional variations become apparent when comparing pathways, as processes manifest differently across configurations. Taking these variations into account clarifies the relational and dynamic character of pathway processes. Examples are detailed in [Table 7.2.4](#).

Temporality. Temporality refers to when and how pathway processes unfold over time within a pathway. It draws attention to aspects such as pacing, sequencing, duration, continuity, interruption, and whether processes emerge gradually, immediately, or retrospectively.

Observability. Observability is a complex dimension of pathway processes, as these processes are not directly observable themselves but are analytically reconstructed. To address their observability, pathway processes need to be connected to their empirically accessible forms in actions and interactions. Accordingly, some processes, such as storytelling,

include observable forms of interaction, for example, the verbal sharing of stories or non-verbal responses such as nodding to others' contributions. Other aspects of these processes, such as recalling memories or reflecting on others' stories, are not observable within the situation. The term "observable" does not only refer to what is directly seen by the researcher. It also includes what is, in principle, observable within the situation and becomes accessible through different forms of data. This includes both what is directly observable in the situation (e.g., through observation or recordings) and what participants articulate about their observable actions and interactions (e.g., in questionnaires). Processes that are not observable in the situation are often internal processes, which become empirically accessible only through participants' articulation.

Dominance. Dominance refers to how pathway processes come to the foreground or remain in the background within a pathway. It captures when, how, and in what relation to which other processes certain pathway processes become more prominent. As it is a dynamic dimension, the dominance of a process can change within a pathway. It can be identified in the interplay of multiple processes. Specific interplay of processes or configurations can also be considered dominant.

Qualities. Qualities of pathway processes describe how participation is enacted within a pathway. Multiple qualities may characterise a single pathway process, and they may also be identified in relation to dominant processes. In some cases, the interplay of processes gives rise to a specific quality that accompanies or modifies another dominant process. For example, a predominantly conversational process may take on a reflective or critical quality through the way it unfolds. Identifying such variations in quality captures configurations in which less dominant processes become visible through the qualities they lend to more dominant ones. These qualities are typically articulated as adjectives, such as silent, immersive, reflective, or interpretive.

7.2 Mapping the Relations in the Analytical Framework

This chapter presents a series of tables and a visualisation that illustrate the relations between the analytical constructs (introduced in [Chapter 7.1](#)). The tables focus on how elements of the pathways relate to one another and provide concrete examples. The purpose of presenting the tables here is not to compare pathways or present the results of such comparisons, but to make the development of the framework transparent. For this reason, the tables show how the framework was constructed through different analytical steps, each focusing on a particular aspect of the pathway reconstruction process. The sequence of the tables follows a pro-

gression from empirical data to increasingly abstract analytical constructs, reflecting the logic of constructivist grounded theory. [Table 7.2.1](#) gives an overview of the analytical constructs and their analytical functions. [Table 7.2.2](#) traces the steps of analytical reconstruction of pathway processes from empirically grounded actions and interactions. [Table 7.2.3](#) clarifies how specific pathway-affording elements relate to these pathway processes by constituting their immediate context. [Table 7.2.4](#) introduces variation by describing process dimensions and their relations to pathway processes. Finally, these relations are presented in a visual format ([Chapter 7.2.5](#)).

7.2.1 Overview of Analytical Constructs and Their Analytical Functions

As explained in [Table 7.2.1](#), pathway-affording elements, pathway processes and process dimensions come together in pathways, more specifically, in different configurations within each pathway. Their meaning and function can only be identified in how they are brought into relation within particular situations. Pathway-affording elements form the context within which pathway processes may emerge and take form, but they gain analytical meaning only in relation to how participants engage with them. Through these engagements, pathway processes unfold and develop in different ways. Process dimensions draw attention to these variations in how the pathway processes unfold.

Table 7.2.1*Overview of Analytical Constructs and Their Analytical Functions*

Analytical construct	Analytical functions	Analytical questions
Pathway	Captures participation as an analytically reconstructed, non-linear trajectory in which pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, and process dimensions are brought into relation	How does participation unfold as a pathway?
Pathway processes	Capture which participation-related processes are present within a pathway (e.g., reflection, immersion, interpretation); are reconstructed based on empirically accessible actions and interactions of participants	What is happening in participation?
Pathway-affording elements	May facilitate specific pathways; together they constitute the immediate context in which pathway processes unfold	What constitutes the context of participation? How do these function? What enables or constrains participation?
Process dimensions	Differentiate how pathway processes unfold by capturing variations (e.g. in temporality, observability, dominance, and qualities)	When and in what sequence do processes unfold? What is observable and what is only accessible through retrospective articulation? Which processes and interplays become more or less dominant? How does participation take shape?

7.2.2 Pathway Processes and Their Empirical Grounding

[Table 7.2.2](#) lists selected examples of pathway processes and their empirical grounding. Thereby, it shows the distinction between the analytically reconstructed and empirically accessible forms of participation. The actions and interactions are derived from the empirical data of observations and questionnaire responses, and they are understood here as entry points for the analytical reconstruction of participation-related processes. The reconstruction is conducted through coding and comparison, which makes recurring patterns visible as pathway processes, for instance, as immersion, reflection, interpretation, or conversation. Several processes were identified during the pathway analyses; this table provides only a partial over-

view. Those included here were identified as frequently recurring across the pathway analyses.

Table 7.2.2

Selected Examples of Pathway Processes and Their Empirical Grounding

Pathway processes	Empirical examples (actions and interactions)
Interpreting content	Reading prompts, selecting and focusing on content, making sense of what is presented, relating content to personal experience
Storytelling	Recalling experiences, remembering and associating, sharing personal stories, narrating memories, sharing experiences in response to others
Being receptive	Listening to others, attending to others' stories, observing interactions, reading and attending to exhibition content, listening without responding
Participating in conversation	Expressing opinions or personal views, responding to others, engaging in dialogue and exchange, sharing personal experiences
Opening up (e.g., to others, to new perspectives)	Showing interest in others, responding more openly, engaging with unfamiliar perspectives, approaching new content, beginning to share one's own views
Making contributions	Contributing to installations by placing, modifying, or creating elements, expressing opinions or personal views, adding to discussions
Immersion	Staying focused on the activity, continuous interaction with the installation or situation, sustained involvement
Reflection (e.g., internal, collective)	Relating content to personal experience, pausing, thinking quietly, articulating reflection on the experience, reconsidering earlier contributions
Taking something forward	Articulating what is taken forward, expressing feelings, learnings or questions carried forward, identifying what remains from the experience

7.2.3 Pathway-Affording Elements and Their Relations to Pathway Processes

[Table 7.2.3](#) specifies different pathway-affording elements, provides empirical examples, and outlines how these elements relate to pathway processes. The actions and interactions discussed in [Table 7.2.2](#) are directly related to the empirical examples listed in [Table 7.2.3](#), which are also observable or empirically accessible.

Table 7.2.3*Pathway-Affording Elements, Examples and Their Relations to Pathway Processes*

Pathway-affording elements	Empirical examples	Relation to pathway processes (examples)
Material and spatial setting	Installations, spatial layout, placement of prompts, material objects	Structures interaction, orients attention and movement within the space, enables immersion, affords engagement (e.g., in the form of making contributions, interpretation) with installations, content, and other participants
Content	Images, texts, stories, themes, narratives, perspectives, guiding questions	Invites engagement with themes when interpreting content, provides connections to personal experiences when taking part in storytelling, relates to a perspective shift by introducing unfamiliar perspectives and raising questions
Facilitation	Facilitative guidance, guided tour, instructions for interactive installations	Relates to opening up by inviting and guiding participation, relates to being receptive by directing attention to specific aspects, relates to making contributions by encouraging and framing interaction
Group dynamics	Group size, composition of the group, relationships within the group, familiarity among participants	Affords or constrains social interactions (e.g., participating in conversation, storytelling, and making contributions), makes being receptive and opening up possible through the participation of others, relates to how pathway interactions are taken up within the group
Participant orientation	Initial openness or uncertainty, interest, enthusiasm, feeling comfortable or uncomfortable, curiosity, expectations	Initial uncertainty relates to being observing and receptive before engaging, feeling comfortable relates to engaging in storytelling or opening up, curiosity relates to interpreting content or exploring unfamiliar perspectives

7.2.4 Process Dimensions and Their Analytical Functions

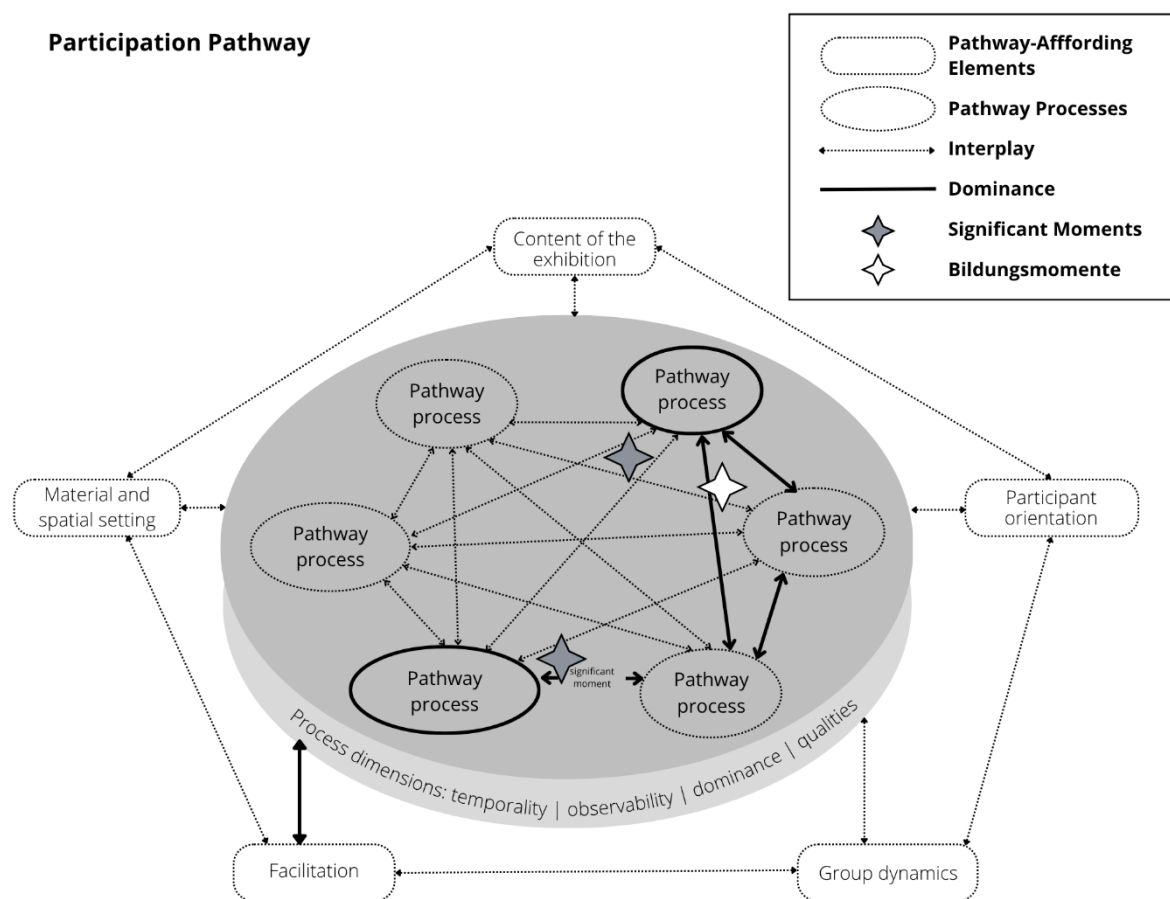
[Table 7.2.4](#) complements the analytical framework through an explicit focus on the variations across pathways. It specifies the analytical dimensions that address the “when”, “where”, “how dominant”, and “how” of unfolding pathway processes, thereby linking the “what”, the reconstructed processes of [Table 7.2.2](#), and the “within what context” and “under which conditions”, the pathway-affording elements outlined in [Table 7.2.3](#).

Table 7.2.4*Process Dimensions, Examples, and Their Analytical Functions*

Process dimensions	Empirical examples	Analytical functions in relation to pathway processes
Temporality	Gradual unfolding, immediacy, sustained engagement, retrospectivity, anticipation	Relates to when and how pathway processes unfold over time, for example, opening up gradually, continuing something beyond the exhibition, taking part in sustained conversation, interpreting before contributing to an installation, continuously unfolding reflection
Observability	Observable in the situation, partly observable, accessible through articulation in the questionnaire but not observable in the situation	Distinguishes pathway processes that are externally observable (e.g., contributing in conversation or interacting with installations), processes that are only partly observable (e.g., attentive listening or silent participation), and processes that are not observable in the situation but become accessible through articulation (such as reflection or learning)
Dominance	Foregrounding, backgrounding, marginality, shifting prominence	Examines which pathway processes become foregrounded or backgrounded within a pathway, for example, conversation as a dominant process of the pathway, interpretive engagement in the foreground, while contribution remains limited
Qualities	Dialogical, silent, reflective, immersive, performative, analytical, critical, affectively engaged	Describes how pathway processes take shape through their interplay, including how dominant processes are modified by others, for example, conversational participation becoming reflective or critical, or contribution taking on an immersive quality

7.2.5 Analytical Map of Participation Pathways

The analytical constructs and their relations are suited to form a map of the analytical framework, a pathway map ([Figure 7.2.1](#)). The visual format of the framework provides a new perspective on how pathway processes occur simultaneously within a pathway, how pathway-affording elements frame participation, and how they all interplay within a pathway.

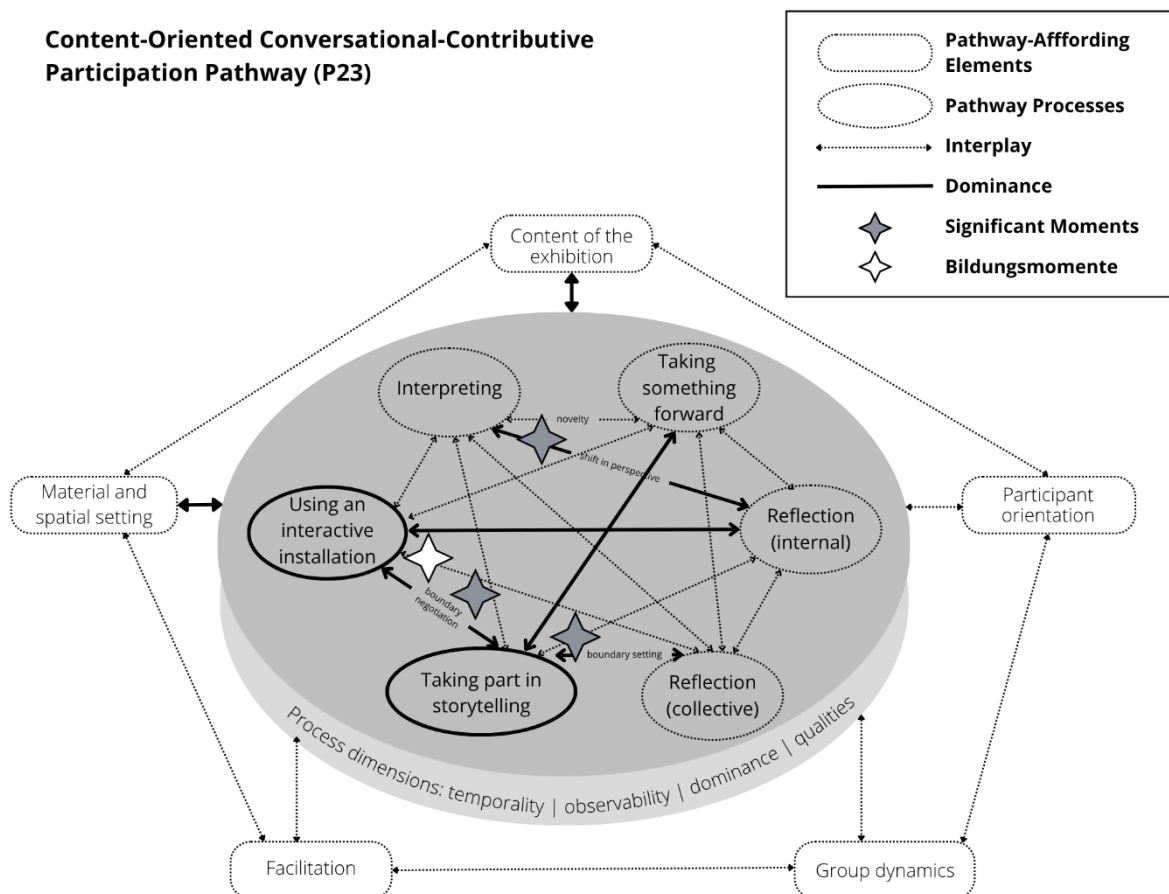
Figure 7.2.1*Analytical Map of Participation Pathways*

To illustrate how the pathway map format can be used, I draw on one concrete example, the content-oriented conversational-contributive participation pathway (P23). [Figure 7.2.2](#) visualises selected processes, relations, and insights that emerged as particularly salient in the analysis of the exemplary pathway and does not aim to represent participation in its full complexity. The map stands for the pathway as a whole, encompassing all elements, processes, and relations, while the inner circle illustrates the participation field. As a specific pathway is visualised here, the participation field includes the pathway processes (ovals) that are most dominant in this case: interpreting, using an interactive installation, taking part in storytelling, reflection (internal and collective), and taking something forward. Surrounding this field are the pathway-affording elements (rectangles) – material and spatial setting, facilitation, group dynamics, participant orientation, and content – which constitute the immediate context of participation. The dotted lines between these elements and the participation field indicate how they relate to each other and to the situation. Within the participation field, the pathway

processes are also connected by dotted relational lines that depict their interplay. Dominance is indicated with a solid line. Along the connecting lines, significant moments are indicated on the arrows (e.g., novelty, shift in perspective, boundary setting, boundary negotiation). Small dark stars mark significant moments, and white stars signify the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* within this network of interplaying processes. As this pathway shows, these moments are often located along the most dominant interplays. When using the pathway map, further explanation is required regarding the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*, the reconstructed moments, and the dimensions to complete it.

Figure 7.2.2

Analytical Pathway Map of the Content-Oriented Conversational-Contributive Participation Pathway (P23)



7.2.6 Reconstructing the Emergence of *Bildungsmomente*

In developing the pathway map, the research questions played a central role, particularly the intention to identify the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* within participation. Overall, the

analytical framework relates to the research questions by providing a conceptual and abstract vocabulary through which participation can be addressed in relation to the possible emergence of *Bildungsmomente*.

Emerging *Bildungsmomente*. In this study, *Bildungsmomente* are understood as analytically reconstructed phenomena within participation pathways in which participants begin to relate differently to the situation, to certain topics or perspectives, to others, or to themselves. Their emergence is understood as a process embedded within participation and linked to specific configurations of pathway processes. *Bildungsmomente* do not necessarily appear as discrete or clearly identifiable moments, but may unfold gradually or partially, become articulated only retrospectively, or remain partly non-observable within participation. *Bildungsmomente* emerge differently within unique, relational and situated configurations of participation.

Empirical Entry Points for Reconstructing the Emergence of *Bildungsmomente*. What becomes interpretable and reconstructable from the empirical material, specifically as a *Bildungsmoment*, is the articulated meaning construction of a shift. Meaning-making is approached here in two related ways. On the one hand, it can be considered part of pathway processes, capturing how participants perceive, interpret, and assign meaning to participation throughout the unfolding situation. On the other hand, meaning-making is also relevant in participants' retrospective articulations in the questionnaire, as they assign particular meanings to the participatory experience, for example, through reflecting on significant moments.

In this study, meanings articulated in the questionnaire are important empirical access points, through which the emergence of a *Bildungsmoment* may become traceable and reconstructable. Participants may articulate their experience in terms of a shift in perspective or a change in how they relate to the situation. For example, one participant described how “a completely new and unfamiliar topic opened up” (*egy addig számomra teljesen új és idegen téma nyílt meg*, P13_G3_L25–26), “it taught me many new things. The whole experience was very new.” (*sok új dolgot tanított nekem. Igazából az egész élmény nagyon új volt.*, P05_G2_L26–27), “Every moment was about learning something.” (*Minden pillanat arról szólt, hogy tanulok valamit.*, P07_G2_L25), or “I feel I’m leaving being a little bit more than when I arrived.” (*Úgy érzem, egy kicsit többként távozok, mint ahogy érkeztem.*, P13_G3_L31). Such articulations can be interpreted as the articulations of emerging *Bildungsmomente*. They refer to the process in which participants interpret an experience as involving change and assign meaning to it in these terms. Thus, meaning-making is not understood to be identical to the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*. Through the articulation in the

questionnaire, the emergence of a Bildungsmoment becomes accessible in the empirical material. These meanings later assigned to particular moments remain connected to the unfolding process of participation, even if the shift itself is not articulated in the situation.

7.3 Reconstructing Participation Pathways

After introducing the analytical framework in the previous sections, this chapter applies it to address the research question of how Bildungsmomente emerge within individual participation pathways. The pathway reconstructions are organised according to the analytical framework developed in the previous sections. While the framework introduced the analytical constructs on an abstract level, the following examples illustrate how these constructs are applied when reconstructing individual participation pathways. Each pathway reconstruction follows the same structure:

- Pathway map: Each reconstruction begins with an analytical pathway map that provides a visual overview of the pathway. It highlights the dominant pathway processes, pathway-affording elements, their interplay, significant moments, and the emerging Bildungsmomente.
- Overview: The pathway map is followed by an overview detailing the reconstructed significant moments, novelty, the process dimensions that characterise the pathway, Bildungsmomente and the emergence of Bildungsmomente.
- Pathway description: The description details the pathway configuration and the emergence of Bildungsmomente. It is complemented by analytical tables that further illustrate the application of the analytical framework.
- Summary: Each pathway concludes with a brief summary of the central insights.

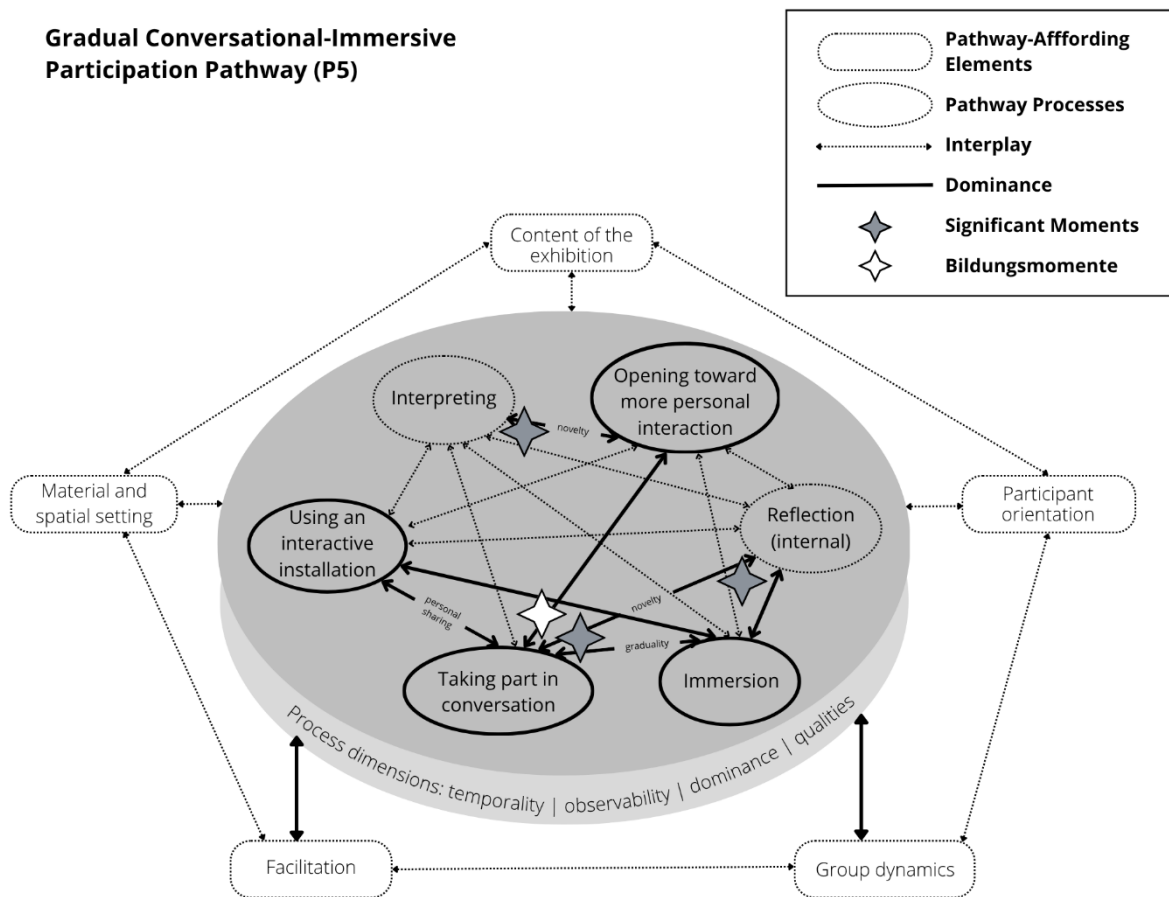
Within each pathway description, two sections reflect the analytical logic of the comparative memos: *Configuration of Pathway-Affording elements, Pathway Processes, and Process Dimensions* and *Emergence of Bildungsmomente*. While the former focuses on the interplay of pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, and process dimensions, the latter reconstructs how Bildungsmomente emerge within this interplay. The analytical tables embedded within the pathway descriptions illustrate the application of these components of the framework. Because different pathways foreground different analytical aspects, different tables are

presented across the reconstructions. The P5 pathway illustrates how the analytical reconstruction of dominant pathway processes ([Table 7.2.2](#)) is grounded in actions and interactions. The P23 pathway demonstrates the application of [Table 7.2.3](#) by showing how pathway-affording elements relate to pathway processes within a concrete participation pathway. The P11 pathway illustrates the use of [Table 7.2.4](#), demonstrating how the process dimensions of temporality, observability, dominance, and qualities further specify the relations between pathway processes. In contrast, the P13 pathway does not include any analytical tables, as it instead illustrates how the pathway reconstruction connects directly to the participant's articulations.

7.3.1 Pathway Examples of the Emergence of Bildungsmomente

Gradual Conversational-Immersive Participation Pathway (P5)

Pathway Map of P5. [Figure 7.3.1](#) illustrates the analytical map of the P5 pathway with the dominant pathway-affording elements and pathway processes and locates significant moments and the emerging Bildungsmoment in their interplay.

Figure 7.3.1*Analytical Map of the Gradual Conversational-Immersive Participation Pathway (P5)*

Overview of P5. The following overview complements the figure by detailing the significant moments, novelty in the pathway, process dimensions, the Bildungsmoment and its emergence.

Significant moments:

getting to know unfamiliar content and perspectives, perceiving novelty in relation to the whole experience, the exhibition, the participants and their stories, the social interactions

Novelty:

the experience as a whole is perceived as unfamiliar, rare, and several content elements are listed as new

Temporality:

gradual emergence of Bildungsmoment, beginning with anticipatory uncertainty and opening up gradually

Observability:	extended conversation forms an observable part of the emergence process
Dominance:	conversation, immersion, opening toward more personal interaction, using the interactive installation
Qualities:	conversational, immersive, interactional
Bildungsmoment:	sharing more openly than usual through storytelling and conversation
Emergence of Bildungsmomente:	gradual shift in participation through conversation and immersion, unfolding as increasing openness toward more personal interaction and retrospectively articulated as a changing way of interacting with others

Pathway Description of P5. The following pathway description narrates how the pathway processes unfold throughout participation, and describes their relations to pathway-affording elements and process dimensions.

Configuration of Pathway-Affording Elements, Pathway Processes, and Process Dimensions. The participant orientation in the P5 pathway initially starts with uncertainty toward the unfamiliar situation:

At the beginning, a person always has many thoughts circulating in their head about what the experience will be like.

(Az elején az embernek mindig nagyon sok gondolat kering a fejében, hogy most az milyen is lesz.) P5_G2_L17–18

This anticipatory uncertainty dissolves gradually through immersion. The participant describes how the peaceful group atmosphere and the facilitation contribute to a sense of comfort, enabling more open engagement and the sharing of personal stories in conversation that would not normally be expressed in such situations.

I shared many things about myself that I normally would not when getting to know new people. This was probably thanks to the peaceful environment and the good people.

(Sok dolgot megosztottam magamról, amit alapvetően új emberek megismerésekor nem szoktam csinálni. Ez valószínűleg a békés környezet és a jó embereknek volt köszönhető.) P5_G2_L11–12

Here, reflection becomes oriented toward the participant's own openness within the supportive social atmosphere. The reconstruction of the dominant pathway processes is displayed in [Table 7.3.1](#).

Table 7.3.1

Selected Pathway Processes of the Gradual Conversational-Immersive Participation Pathway (P5) and Empirical Actions and Interactions

Selected pathway processes (P5)	Empirical actions and interactions
Taking part in conversations	Engaging in dialogue, exchanging perspectives, listening and responding to others, sustaining ongoing group discussion
Opening toward more personal interaction	Sharing more openly than usual, engaging in more personal conversation, responding openly to others' stories
Social immersion	Extended conversation, continuous interaction without interruption, being present in the group
Using the interactive installation	Using prompts, sharing personal experiences, responding to others' stories, articulating personal perspectives, storytelling
Reflection (integrative)	Thinking about one's own openness ("because of the peaceful environment and the people"), interpreting participation retrospectively
Interpreting	Attending to the content of the exhibition, interpreting the instructions
Content-related learning	Identifying new cultural elements, referring to unfamiliar practices or symbols, articulating learning of "new insights"

Material and spatial settings of the installations provide prompts for storytelling and guide interaction over time and across space. The participant engages with these prompts by sharing personal experiences, responding to others, and taking part in conversation. Thus, social interaction appears as a continuous exchange in storytelling and dialogue, without noted interruption. Encounters with others' perspectives and the exhibition's content are experienced as

novel and meaningful. The participant refers to multiple moments of gaining new insights about unfamiliar cultural topics, stories, and practices.

Actually, the whole experience was very new for me. I had never encountered an exhibition like this before, and for me it was both a positive experience and a lesson. (*Igazából az egész élmény nagyon új volt. Ilyen kiállítással még nem találkoztam, és nekem ez egy jó élmény és tanulság is egyben.*) P5_G2_L26–28

In this configuration, conversation, storytelling at the installation, and immersion mutually reinforce one another and contribute to a gradual opening toward more personal sharing. Reflection integrates these experiences retrospectively, connecting unfamiliar content, interactional openness, and the participant's changing relation to others within the situation.

Emergence of Bildungsmomente. The emergence of a Bildungsmoment follows the processes of gradual opening toward more personal interaction through conversational immersion. A shift stands out when the participant moves beyond their usual patterns. The immersive quality of participation makes it difficult to clearly identify emerging Bildungsmomente. The participant retrospectively integrates the experience and articulates it as a gradual change in interaction and openness toward others. The participant reflects on their own openness and relates it to the social circumstances of the situation. While these reconstructed processes are not identifiable as Bildungsmomente themselves, they can be considered as emergence traces, including the encounter with new elements, the developing openness towards others and the situation, and the articulation of a shift. Here, the experience begins to take shape retrospectively as a gradual change in interaction. Bildungsmomente are not identifiable as distinct points in the situation. Still, it is possible to approach certain interplays of the pathway as the emergence of the Bildungsmoment, which then unfolds through an accumulative process, bringing together multiple moments of noticing something. The shift in this pathway is the participant's changing way of relating to others within the interaction itself, in the conversational immersion, from initial uncertainty toward more open and personal participation. This Bildungsmoment becomes retrospectively articulated as a gradual opening toward more personal interaction.

Summary of P5. P5 pathway unfolds through the interplay of conversation, immersion, and opening toward more personal interaction, while using the installation. The pathway is characterised by the sense of novelty regarding the whole experience, including encountering unfamiliar content, perspectives, stories, and forms of interaction. The gradual opening of participation is enabled through the supportive group atmosphere and facilitation, which together afford more personal connection. Several reconstructable moments appear through-

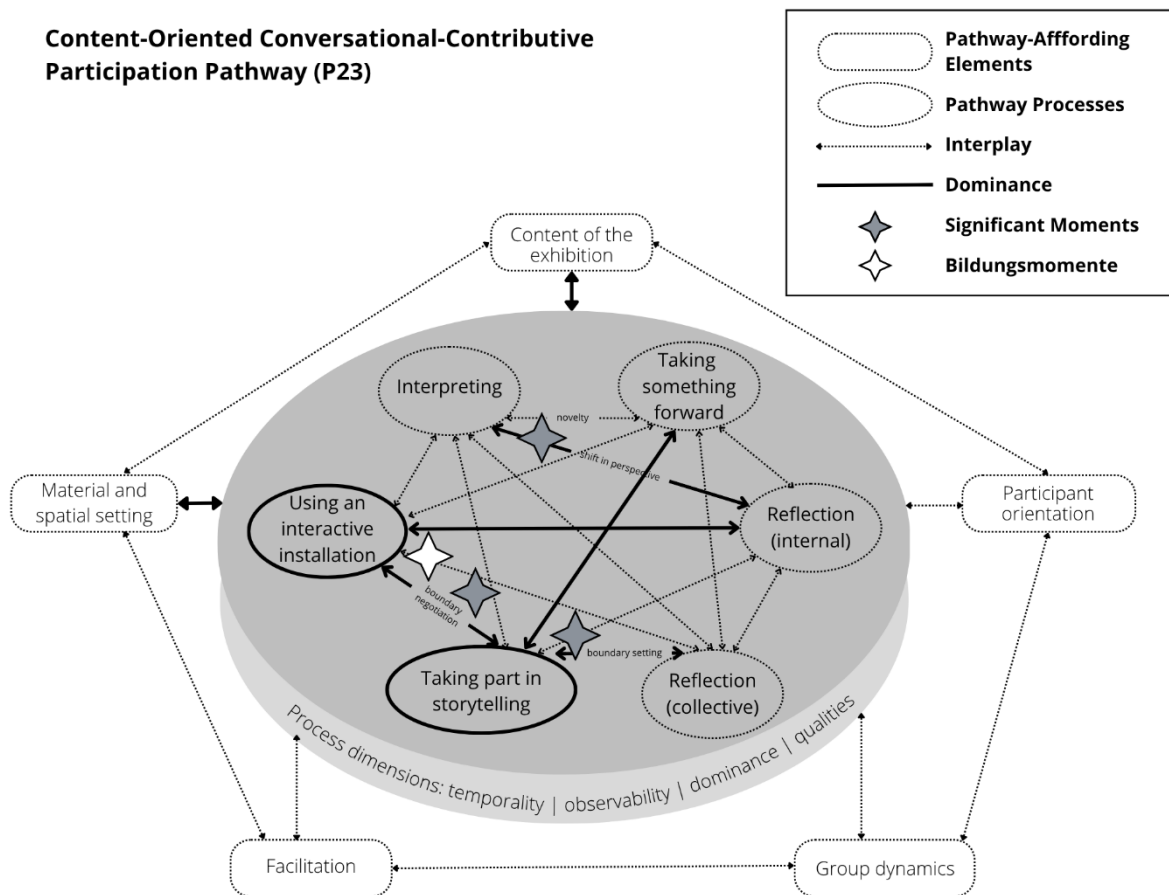
out participation, such as encountering unfamiliar cultural content and engaging with others' stories, which become meaningful in the pathway. These moments do not appear as clearly articulated shifts themselves; rather, they can be identified as emergence traces. A Bildungsmoment is articulated retrospectively in the questionnaire as a shift in how one interacts with others, sharing more openly than usual through conversation and storytelling.

Content-Oriented Conversational-Contributive Participation Pathway (P23)

Pathway Map of P23. [Figure 7.3.2](#) illustrates how pathway processes unfold in relation to the pathway-affording elements and how significant moments and a Bildungsmoment develop within this interplay.

Figure 7.3.2

Analytical Map of the Content-Oriented Conversational-Contributive Participation Pathway (P23)



Overview of P23. The figure can be complemented by an overview of the significant moments, novelty, what is taken forward, the process dimensions, as well as the Bildungsmoment and its emergence.

Significant moments:	collective processing and interpretation of content through discussion and contribution; collective boundary-setting regarding personal sharing
Novelty:	the stories and perspectives presented in the exhibition are perceived as new and thought-provoking
Taking something forward:	carrying forward a feeling from the experience during participation: discussing and interpreting content through contribution and interaction with the installations; retrospectively: articulating the encountered perspective and stories as new
Temporality:	
Observability:	interactions with others, taking part in conversation, contribution, and using the interactive installations are observable parts of the emergence
Dominance:	contribution by using the installations, discussion of content, taking part in storytelling and conversation, interpretation, reflection, taking something forward
Qualities:	contributive, content-oriented, conversational
Bildungsmoment:	a shift in perspective regarding the exhibition topic
Emergence of Bildungsmomente:	discussing and processing content collectively in conversation and contribution, partly guided by the interactive installations, written facilitation, and small-group dynamics, articulated retrospectively as a shift in perspective regarding the topic

In contrast to the P5 pathway, where the emergence of the Bildungsmoment was primarily connected to changing forms of interaction and gradually opening toward more personal sharing, in P23, a boundary-setting moment structures the extent of personal sharing, and the emerging Bildungsmoment remains rather content-related.

Pathway Description of P23

Configuration of Pathway-Affording Elements, Pathway Processes, and Process Dimensions. The P23 pathway highlights the relation between material facilitation and social interaction (Table 7.3.2). The structured prompts and thematic entry points of the installation afford participation and organise it as well. The participant's reinterprets the meaning of these prompts in contribution.

Table 7.3.2

Selected Pathway-Affording Elements of the Content-Oriented Conversational-Contributive Participation Pathway (P23), Empirical Examples and Relation to Pathway Processes

Pathway-affording element	Empirical examples	Relation to pathway processes of P23
Material and spatial setting	Interactive installations (<i>Threads and Blocks</i>), prompts structuring interaction, threads inviting action and decision-making	Actively organises participation, creates visible decision points, enables material interaction and contribution, invites social interaction and performative action
Content	Questions, themes of community, cultural narratives	Inviting comparison and analogy making, guides conversation and storytelling, enables content-related learning and perspective shift
Facilitation	Guided introduction, structured prompts, "small themes" on the installation	Supports approachability of objects, structures interaction, small themes guide entry into conversation and invite for storytelling and personal sharing
Group dynamics	Small-group interaction (2–3 people), familiarity among participants	Enable shared storytelling and interaction, afford collective boundary-setting and decision-making, sustain dialogical engagement
Participant orientation	Openness to participation, positive affect, curiosity, readiness to engage	Supports active participation and contribution, enables engagement in storytelling and interaction, reinforces immersion

The interactive design also frames the experience as engaging, enabling the participant to connect easily and to enter conversations. When looking at pathway processes, we can see that contributions through interactive installations, storytelling, participation in conversation, and leaving material traces are dominant in this pathway and are closely interconnected. Reflection appears in the middle of participation:

It also said a lot when we ‘threw back’ a thread because it brought up an experience that felt too uncomfortable or a negative experience came to mind.

(Az is sokat elmondott amikor egy adott szálát ‘visszadobtunk’ mert túl kellemetlen élmény, vagy negatív tapasztalat ugrott be.) P23_G2_L14–15

This interruption reconfigures the interplay of pathway processes, making the limits of sharing explicit. This moment also marks an important aspect in the temporal structure of participation and leads to reorientation. Interestingly, because of using the installation, these processes are partly observable during the interaction. Contribution also plays a central role in the pathway. These contributions are not limited to verbal forms; they include material participation. The possibility of leaving a material trace within the exhibition creates a sense of involvement and a positive affective orientation that continuously reinforces openness to further contribution.

Emergence of Bildungsmomente. This pathway illustrates how a Bildungsmoment emerges from the configuration of primarily contributive and conversational pathway processes in relation to pathway-affording elements (here, material setting and content are particularly dominant). In the act of ‘throwing back a thread’, participants together decide not to pursue a topic further. Here, collective reflection is linked to materially mediated decision-making on the limits of sharing. Observable contribution makes individual actions immediately available within the group. These actions are taken up, responded to, and continued within the group interaction. Meaning is produced not only through what is said, but also through what is avoided. This boundary-setting moment in storytelling at the interactive installation appears as a separate moment from the emergence of a Bildungsmoment. Still, as a moment of emerging awareness of the limits of sharing, it is analytically significant because it reveals how intensified moments may take shape through collective contribution and performative interaction.

A Bildungsmoment emerges in the same process of collaborative engagement. Conversations about the content and reflection, affective engagement, and material contribution to the exhibition create multiple moments through which shifts in meaning may occur. Par-

ticipants process unfamiliar perspectives together while using the installations. Exhibited narratives become connected to personal experience. A shift in perspective emerges, as perceived differences are reinterpreted as similarities, opening new perspectives on the topic of communities. This is later articulated in the questionnaire as a realisation. The participant describes the experience as novel and positive and carries the shift in perspective forward as an affective and reflective orientation that remains open.

Summary of P23. In the P23 pathway, Bildungsmoment emerges along collective engagement with the exhibition's content, primarily through conversation, contributions, and interactions with the interactive installations. Participation is characterised by a content-oriented engagement, in which participants collaboratively interpret and discuss the topics presented in the exhibition. The participant describes that:

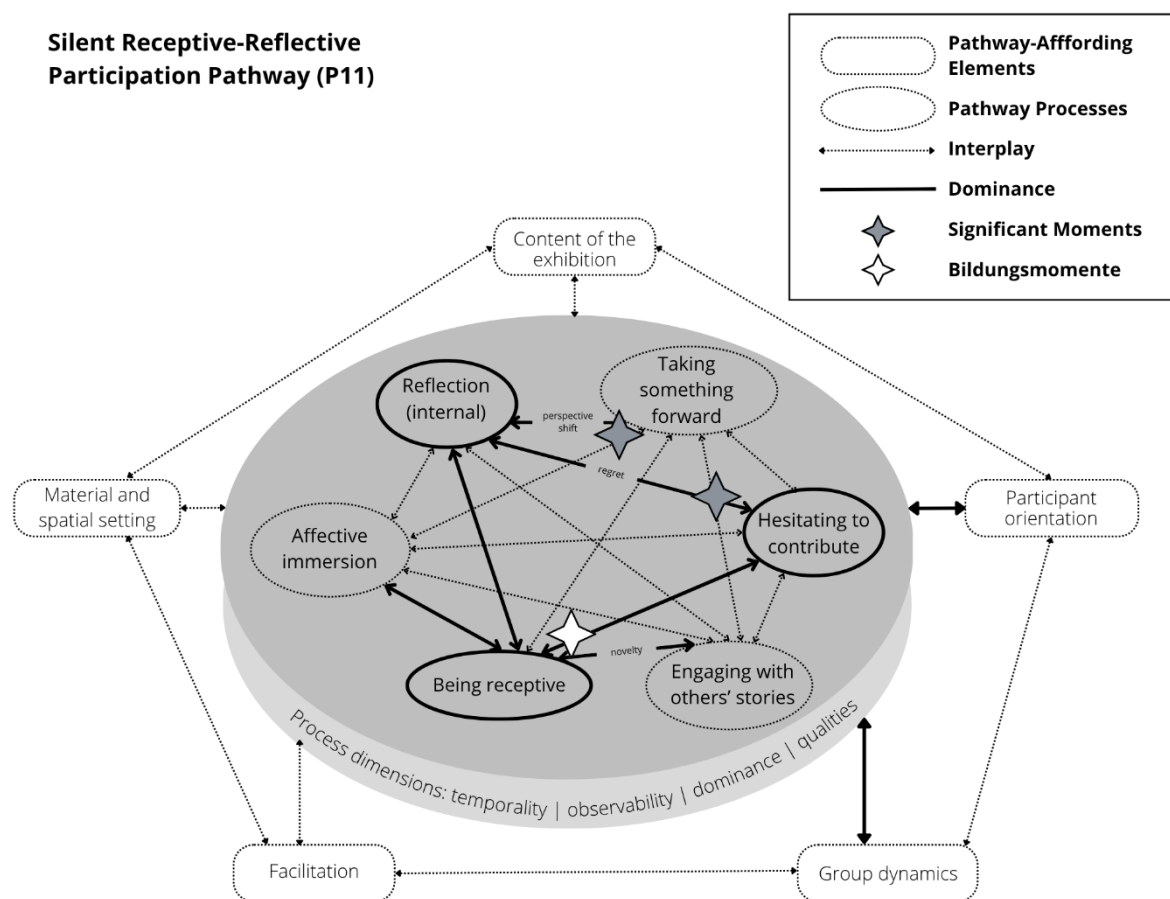
It was easy to connect with others, share personal memories, and engage in deeper conversations.

(*Könnyű volt másokhoz kapcsolódni és személyes emlékeket megosztani, mélyebb beszélgetésekbe bonyolódni.*) P23_G2_L6–7

Several pathway processes become observable through their interplay with performative and material pathway processes (e.g., storytelling, the use of interactive installations). The pathway can also be described as performative because participation is enacted through contributions that become immediately available within the interaction and actively reconfigure the process of participation itself. The P23 pathway includes encounters with unfamiliar perspectives that are perceived as thought-provoking and insightful, opening up new ways of looking at the exhibited stories.

Silent Receptive-Reflective Participation Pathway (P11)

Pathway Map of P11. The pathway's analytical map – illustrating the dominant pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, their interplay, the significant moments, and the emerging Bildungsmomente – is shown in [Figure 7.3.3.](#)

Figure 7.3.3*Analytical Map of the Silent Receptive-Reflective Participation Pathway (P11)***Overview of P11.**

Significant moments:

hesitating to join the conversation; listening to others' stories and perspectives; regretting not joining the conversation; recognising the importance of considering multiple perspectives the unfamiliar social situation and the unfamiliar perspectives encountered

Novelty:

Taking something forward:

intending to consider multiple perspectives more consciously in future interactions

Temporality:

during participation: listening, hesitation, receptivity, and affective immersion; retrospectively: reflection, articulating regret, and a shift in thinking about future interactions

Observability:	presence, hesitation to contribute are partly observable; the dominant processes such as being receptive and reflection, including the emerging shift in perspective, remain non-observable and become accessible through retrospective articulation
Dominance:	listening, being receptive, hesitation to contribute, internal reflection, affective immersion, engaging with others' stories, taking something forward
Qualities:	silent, receptive, reflective, affective
Bildungsmoment:	a shift in thinking about future interactions, particularly regarding the importance of considering multiple perspectives in order to understand others
Emergence of Bildungsmomente:	through receptive listening to others' stories and perspectives, in interplay with hesitation to contribute, affective immersion and internal reflection, retrospectively articulated as a shift in thinking about understanding others and considering multiple perspectives

Pathway Description of P11. The following reconstruction shows how the pathway unfolds and how Bildungsmomente may emerge within this configuration.

Configuration of Pathway-Affording Elements, Pathway Processes, and Process Dimensions. The configuration of pathway-affording elements is not determinative but plays a central role in organising how participation unfolds. Facilitation in the guided tour is perceived primarily as an affective catalyst, inviting engagement through immediacy and personal storytelling, while content provides informational depth. Despite emotional challenges, anxiety and hesitation do not completely interrupt participation but reconfigure it.

Personally, I only listened to the people around me because anxiety took over me.

(Személy szerint én csak hallgattam a körülöttem lévőket, mert úrrá lett rajtam a szorongás.) P11_G3_L9

The participant remains emotionally immersed in the interaction, and writes about facilitation that:

The vibe and the openness completely drew me in.

(Ez a vibe, tényleg a közvetlenség... teljesen magával ragadott.) P11_G3_L19–20

The social environment serves as a source of input, as being receptive towards other participants' contributions is the primary way participation takes place. Thus, participation is not absent in this pathway. Instead, it unfolds as receptive participation in the interplay of engaging with others' stories through listening and reflecting, hesitation to contribute, inward reflection, and an ambivalent affective orientation toward the interaction. This receptive quality is made possible by the contributions of others who actively engage in storytelling and conversation. While the participant does not explicitly describe the experience as novel, novelty can be reconstructed indirectly. The participant's reactions to the situation and the unfamiliar perspectives encountered can be interpreted as indications that the participation situation was experienced as unfamiliar. This pathway configuration shows how receptive participation itself may become a basis for reflection, meaning-making, and the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*. The process dimensions are presented in detail in [Table 7.3.3](#).

Table 7.3.3

Selected Process Dimensions of Silent Receptive-Reflective Participation Pathway (P11), Empirical Examples, and Relation to Pathway Processes

Process dimension	Empirical examples in P11	Relation to pathway processes
Temporality	Retrospective, delayed, regret after the situation	Reflection emerges mainly after the situation, when the participant reconsiders their own receptive position in relation to the group interaction; a shift in thinking about others does not occur during interaction but emerges through retrospective articulation
Observability	Partly observable (listening, presence, not taking part in conversation), largely non-observable (reflection, hesitation, realisations)	Receptive participation is only partially observable; reflection and meaning-making processes remain internally processed and become accessible primarily through retrospective articulation
Dominance	Listening without contributing, remaining mostly silent in conversation, retrospective reflection in the questionnaire	Hesitation to contribute shapes participation into receptive listening; reflection becomes dominant retrospectively through the reconsideration of one's own participation
Qualities	Silent, receptive, inward, affective, reflective	Participation unfolds as inwardly oriented and receptive engagement; immersion is maintained without observable interaction, experiences and affective impulses are internally processed

The dimensions of temporality and observability reveal that, for example, reflection is not observable within the situation itself but appears retrospectively in answering the questionnaire. It is directed toward the self, thereby turning participation into a process of self-examination.

The Emergence of Bildungsmomente. This pathway shows that Bildungsmomente are not tied to observable or performative pathway processes but may also emerge within receptive participation. A central moment of this pathway can be identified in the reflection on one's own participation.

Afterwards, however, I somewhat regretted by the end that I did not join the conversation.

(Utólag viszont már kissé bánom a végére, hogy nem kapcsolódtam hozzá a beszélgetéshez.) P11_G3_L11–12)

Regret functions here as a key dynamic that reorients the participant's understanding of their engagement in the social situation. Together with the hesitation to contribute, it reconfigures the meaning of the participant's own receptive position within the interaction. The receptive quality of participation carries over into the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*, because others' interactions also provide the basis for further engagement and reflection.

The emerging *Bildungsmoment* can be identified in the articulated perspective shift, where the participant realises that understanding others requires engaging with multiple viewpoints.

It really conveyed to me that it is not right to see everything from only one perspective, because everyone sees things differently.

(Nagyon sokat átadott, hogy nem az a megfelelő, ha egy nézőpontból látok mindent, mert mindenki máshogy látja a dolgokat.) P11_G3_L10–12

These significant moments remain internally processed. What is observable is primarily listening and presence; further insights become accessible only through the questionnaire. While the articulation of the *Bildungsmoment* is temporally delayed, its emergence remains embedded in the affective and embodied experience of participation itself.

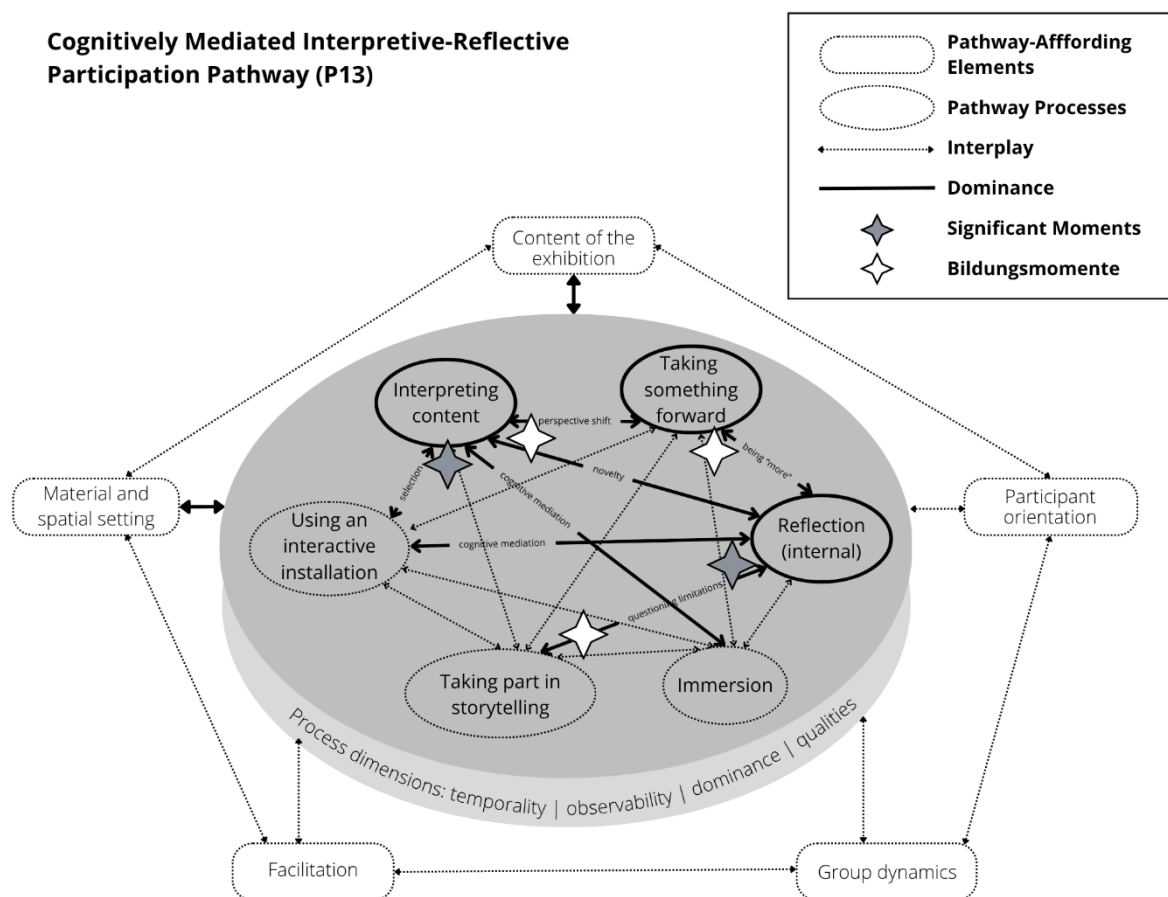
Summary of P11. Unlike pathways characterised by observable contribution and extended conversation, the P11 pathway unfolds mainly through receptive participation, where listening, hesitation, and reflection become central to participation and to the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*. The slightly ambivalent, hesitant yet positive affective orientation shapes participation into attentive presence and reflective engagement with others' stories and perspectives. The participation situation and the perspectives encountered can be reconstructed as unfamiliar. Some moments stand out on the P11 pathway. These include the regret for not joining the conversation, the formulation that "everyone sees things differently" (*mindenki máshogy látja a dolgokat*, P11_G3_L16), and a wish to understand others more deeply. These moments appear as traces within the broader emergence process. The *Bildungsmoment* is retrospectively articulated in the questionnaire as a shift in thinking about future interactions, particularly regarding the importance of considering multiple perspectives in order to understand others.

Cognitively Mediated Interpretive-Reflective Participation Pathway (P13)

Pathway Map of P13. The dominant processes, their interplay, the reconstructed moments, and the emergence traces of the P13 pathway are displayed in [Figure 7.3.4](#).

Figure 7.3.4

Analytical Map of the Cognitively Mediated Interpretive-Reflective Participation Pathway (P13)



Overview of P13. The following overview extends the figure by tracing the significant moments, novelty, what is taken forward, process dimensions, Bildungsmomente and emergence of Bildungsmomente.

Significant moments:

feeling validated in conversation; reflecting on the group dynamics; interpreting and reflecting on the exhibition participation

Novelty:

the participant encounters unfamiliar topics, perspectives, the conversation with others

Taking something forward:	new perspectives, future-oriented reflection, continued interpretation, implicit transformation
Temporality:	surprise and interpretation emerge within participation; reflection continues beyond the situation
Observability:	use of the installations and participation in conversations are observable; interpretation, reflection, and perspective shifts remain largely internal
Dominance:	interpretation, reflection, content-orientation, interaction with the installations
Qualities:	interpretive, cognitive-immersive, content-oriented, reflective
Bildungsmomente:	questioning not getting to know the perspectives of others; encountering a new topic that the participant intends to return to in the future; leaving the exhibition as “being more”
Emergence of Bildungsmomente:	Bildungsmomente emerge in cognitively mediated immersion, through interpreting and reflecting on the exhibition’s content, complemented by conversation, storytelling, and interaction with the installations; afforded through participant orientation and group dynamics, while remaining strongly oriented toward understanding unfamiliar perspectives and topics, leading to shifts in thinking about the world, others, and oneself

Pathway Description of P13

Configuration of Pathway-Affording Elements, Pathway Processes, and Process Dimensions. This pathway is characterised by cognitively mediated engagement, in which thinking often precedes action. The exhibition is described both as creative and as a thought-provoking “information avalanche” (*információlavina*, P13_G3_L7), creating the sense of

an intense informational and experiential space. This pathway highlights the relationship between pathway-affording elements and pathway processes, especially in relation to the spatial and material environment, and the content. Immersion is mainly cognitive, arising from the processing of the space's informational and visual density. The material environment and the content frame and organise participation by initiating interpretive processes and structuring engagement with interactive tasks.

Dominant processes on this pathway are using the interactive installation, cognitive immersion, selecting and interpreting content, individual reflection and taking something forward. Participation unfolds through cycles of interpretation and engagement: the participant first seeks to understand the installation's structure, including its rules and content, and only then engages in interaction. A central quality of the selection process is reflexive. Faced with "overcoming the difficulty of too many possibilities" (*leküzdvé a bőségzavar akadályát*, P13_G3_L12), the participant responds by narrowing down the available options and selecting a topic. The participant individually reflects on which topic feels personally engaging and chooses accordingly.

Social interaction in this pathway remains structured along the instructions of the interactive installation. The group atmosphere does not become fully open, and fewer perspectives are encountered than expected:

It was very good to talk with strangers about a topic outside my comfort zone and to get to know them. At the same time, I somewhat regret that the group did not fully open up, so I encountered fewer perspectives.

(Nagyon jó volt egy komfortzónán kívül eső témakörben idegenekkel beszélni, megismerni őket. Talán kicsit sajnálom, hogy az összejött csapatnak nem sikerült feloldódnia teljesen, így kevesebb véleménnyel találkoztam.) P13_G3_L12–14

Group dynamics in this pathway, therefore, constrain the range of perspectives available within the situation. This limitation itself becomes an object of reflection as one listens to others' stories. When others speak, the participant continues to engage by interpreting and reflecting on their stories and relating them to their own perspectives.

... when they were sharing their stories, I was reflecting on what they said, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that someone else held the same view as I did.

(... amikor ők meséltek, az ő történeteiken gondolkoztam, és kimondottan kellemes meglepetésként ért, amikor más is ugyanazon az állásponton volt, mint én.)

P13_G3_L14–16

Here, the storytelling interaction reinforces the participant's own views, and the recognition of the shared perspective is perceived as a surprise.

Process dimensions reveal a shifting dominance of pathway processes. The dominant processes show how the participant engages with both the content and the situation. The exhibition opens up new thematic fields for the participant. Looking at the dimension of temporality also uncovers new insights, for example, that these new themes become objects of further interpretation beyond the situation. The interplay of pathway processes creates qualities that lay the foundation for the emergence of Bildungsmomente.

Emergence of Bildungsmomente. Multiple interconnected Bildungsmomente emerge through continuing interpretive engagement, as moments of reflection, questioning, and engagement with unfamiliar perspectives build on one another throughout the pathway. A Bildungsmoment emerges in the reflection on the storytelling activity, as the participant begins to relate to the social situation differently. The participant formulates a question about the many perspectives in one's own social environment that will remain unknown.

Anyway, the installation made me reflect on the fact that I will probably never get to know the worldview of many people around me, and whether that is actually okay.

(Mindenestre az installáció elgondolkodtatott, hogy a környezetemben előforduló emberek nagy részének soha nem fogom megismerni az álláspontját a világról, és ez jó-e így.) P13_G3_L21–22

Here, the emergence of the Bildungsmoment is embedded in the interplay of engaging with others' stories, comparing perspectives in interaction, and reflecting on the limited range of viewpoints encountered. The reflective quality of participation also carries over into the quality of the emerging Bildungsmoment itself.

Another Bildungsmoment emerges when the participant encounters an unexpected connection within the content:

When the topic of wishes and their role in culture came up, a completely new and unfamiliar topic opened up for me. I will probably return to this topic many times in the future because I have never even considered that this connection could exist.

(Amikor a kívánságokról és azok szerepéről a kultúrában volt szó, egy addig számomra teljesen új és idegen téma nyílt meg. Valószínűleg ezt a témát még sokszor elő fogom venni, tekintve, hogy erre a kapcsolatra soha nem is számoltam, hogy létezik.) P13_G3_L25–28

The participant's understanding becomes reconfigured through a previously unconsidered thematic connection. The participant explicitly states that the encountered topic will be re-

visited and taken forward in the future. The interplay of pathway-affording elements and pathway processes becomes relevant here again. The encounter with the exhibition content opens new opportunities for interpretation and reflection, which are carried forward as an open-ended transformation, articulated finally as leaving the experience “being more” than before:

Overall, I feel that I leave the exhibition being a little more than I was when I arrived.
(*Összességében úgy érzem egy kicsit többként távozok, mint ahogy érkeztem.*)
P13_G3_L30–31

The Bildungsmoment does not culminate in closure but remains open and may continue as an extended process beyond participation.

Summary of P13. The P13 pathway is characterised by the multiplicity of Bildungsmomente that emerge primarily through engagement with unfamiliar perspectives and topics, interpretation, and individual reflection. Participation is oriented toward understanding and processing the exhibition’s content, while conversations and interactions with the installations complement the pathway. The participant encounters perspectives and themes that are experienced as novel, while the exhibition is perceived as creative, spectacular, and thought-provoking. Multiple Bildungsmomente emerge through questioning unfamiliar perspectives, reflecting on them, and carrying thoughts forward. Additional reconstructable moments also emerge, such as feeling validated in conversation and regretting not having encountered more perspectives from other participants. These moments remain interconnected within an ongoing interpretive process that continues beyond the situation itself.

7.3.2 Insights Into the Framework Development Through Comparison

Although the analytical framework was presented earlier, it emerged through an iterative process of constant comparison between participation pathways. Having reconstructed the individual pathways, it is now possible to provide an insight into this comparative process. As an excursus, this section presents the final comparative memo, which illustrates how the comparison of participation pathways contributed to the refinement of the analytical framework. Several earlier comparative memos preceded this final version (see [Appendix C](#) and [Appendix D](#)). The comparative approach was central throughout the analysis, and the final comparative memo was particularly important in refining the analytical constructs ([Chapter 7.1](#)) and developing an understanding of their relations ([Chapter 7.2](#)).

Final Comparative Memo

Introduction. This final comparative memo brings together the previously reconstructed main pathways (P11, P23, P5, P13) and includes considerations and analytical insights from all reconstructed pathways (such as P7, P12, P16, P17, P21), as it aims to move to a slightly more abstract level than the other comparative memos. In the following, I will refer to the pathways by their numbers for readability.

- P5 gradual conversational-immersive participation pathway,
- P7 conversational-reflective participation pathway,
- P11 silent receptive-reflective participation pathway,
- P12 gradual comparative-contributive participation pathway,
- P13 cognitively mediated interpretive-reflective participation pathway,
- P16 socially inhibited receptive-reflective participation pathway,
- P17 internal reflective-continuing participation pathway,
- P21 critical comparative-interpretive participation pathway,
- and P23 content-oriented conversational-contributive participation pathway.

The purpose of this final comparative step is to trace how different configurations give rise to different pathways of participation and to explore variations across pathways. Participation is understood here as a process that unfolds through actions and interactions. This includes a range of forms, such as material contributions, attentive listening, participation or non-participation in conversations, and other forms of engagement. These are not understood as more or less valid forms of participation, but as different ways in which participation unfolds within the interactive exhibition context. This perspective offers a way to understand how Bildungsmomente may emerge in an interactive exhibition space. The comparison does not aim to assign pathways to fixed categories. Instead, it helps to study how different aspects of participation become more or less dominant within each pathway, often in overlapping and shifting ways.

All pathways stem from the same interactive exhibition setting, with the same material arrangements, facilitation, content, and instructions. Starting from the shared pathway-affording elements, this memo examines how they are taken up differently across pathways. By focusing on participation as a relational and situated practice, I am not asking whether participants engage, reflect, or learn, but how, and through which relational configurations, these processes unfold. The comparison is structured along the analytical constructs of pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, their interplays, process dimensions, and significant moments that further characterise the emergence of Bildungsmomente.

Pathway-Affording Elements. Entry is not considered a starting point, a single moment, or a distinct phase of participation. By “entry”, I mean the initial part of the reconstructed participation pathway, in which I analyse how participants relate to the situation. Entry shows how participants relate and initially interact with the available pathway-affording elements, in particular the content, facilitation, material setting, group dynamics, and their own orientation. These elements invite engagement through reading, listening, and interaction, often structured around storytelling. Regarding the entry, what varies across pathways is how these pathway-affording elements are taken up, and how this might give a direction to the unfolding participation pathway. What the comparison shows, however, is that these shared elements do not lead to uniform forms of participation.

In pathways such as P5 and P23, the interaction with others is central in the entry. In P5, through a gradual deepening of trust that enables participants to move beyond their usual boundaries, and in P23, in a collectively negotiated process in which these boundaries are articulated. In P5, entry unfolds within a supportive group atmosphere, where shared storytelling develops gradually into extended conversation. The participant describes how the facilitation, others' openness, and the perceived quality of the environment made it possible to engage and share personal experiences. This conversational quality of participation develops here through the specific group dynamic, as the gradual development of trust allows the conversation to move toward more personal topics, going beyond what the participant would normally share in such situations. In P23, the installation's structure and prompts organise participation more directly. The participant responds to these invitations through immediate contribution, speaking, and interacting with others and the material setting. The interaction is organised around moments that build collective awareness of personal boundaries. These boundaries become visible during the conversation, for example, when participants decide not to discuss certain topics. In both pathways, participation unfolds within the dominant interplay between group dynamics and the material setting as participants follow the installation's instructions and prompts.

Other pathways show a different entry to participation. In P11, the participant takes up a more receptive than contributive position from the beginning. While remaining silent during group discussions, they closely follow others' stories and remain engaged throughout. This indicates not an absence of participation, but a different way of relating to the situation. A similar entry appears in P16, where the participant initially remains outside the conversation, observing others and engaging only occasionally. In these cases, group interaction is present in the pathway but is not taken up as an immediate space for contributive interaction.

Instead, participation unfolds through attentive listening and the interaction with the group is characterised by a receptive quality.

P13 illustrates another variation, in which entry into participation occurs primarily through individual engagement with the material and content. The participant describes the exhibition as information-rich and approaches it by first reading, selecting, and interpreting prompts. Participation begins here with understanding the structure and content of the installation before interaction with others becomes dominant. A comparable entry can be reconstructed in P21, where the participant first engages individually with the material and only later turns to interacting with others. In these pathways, the focus on the exhibition's material and conceptual structure introduces an interpretive quality to participation processes.

More pathways (P5, P7, P12, P17) further show that entry does not necessarily determine the direction of the whole pathway. Participants may initially observe or listen, and only gradually begin to engage with others. The processes and their interplays may unfold amid constantly shifting dominance as participants become more familiar with the situation and the group.

The comparison highlights that entry and initial interactions with pathway-affording elements differ across pathways, even within the same group. This becomes visible, for example, in G4, where pathways such as P16 and P21 unfold differently in many aspects. While one participant remains restrained in their entry into the participation, the other immediately immerses themselves, engaging with the material and adopting a more individual, interpretive approach. These differences suggest that pathway-affording elements, including group dynamics, do not determine participation but are taken up differently depending on how participants orient themselves toward them. An illustrative example is facilitation. It frames how participants are invited to engage with the material, with one another, and with the exhibition's prompts. The comparison clearly shows that facilitation is, in some pathways, perceived as an invitation to interact, while in others it is less dominant, remaining in the background of the pathway or being taken up in a more individual or unique way.

Pathway Processes and Dimensions. Pathway processes are approached here as analytically reconstructed forms of participation, interpretations of actions and interactions. The comparison, therefore, focuses on how the pathway processes and their interplays are configured across pathways. Moreover, through the lens of process dimensions, it can be analysed how the pathway processes and meaning-making vary.

Across the pathways, different configurations of processes and interplays become more dominant. The names of the pathways (detailed at the beginning of [Chapter 7.3.2](#)) de-

note the dominant processes and their qualities, and some include additional dimensions and relations to clarify relevant details. It is important to note that these labels do not describe exclusive types of participation. They point to the most dominant pathway characteristics, even as other features and variations are still present. The naming of pathways, therefore, serves as an analytical orientation, not as a typology or categorisation.

Some pathways (such as P5, P7, P12 and P23) are characterised by dominant social-interactive engagement. In these pathways, processes such as interpretation, reflection, and meaning-making are closely connected to interaction with others. In P5, the gradual development of trust within the group allows reflection to emerge in the conversation as a shared, collective process. At the same time, engagement with the material setting remains dominant, as the installation's prompts and structure continue to guide the interaction. Here, social and material dimensions do not operate separately, but jointly support a gradually evolving immersion and openness towards others. The P12 pathway also illustrates this gradually changing configuration, in which participation develops over time from initial hesitation to later contribution. P5 and P12 pathways make visible how processes such as participation in storytelling, conversations and reflection may unfold progressively.

Other pathways show configurations in which interactional participation unfolds in less observable pathway processes. In P11, being receptive through attentive listening is dominant, whereas reflection becomes more dominant later. The retrospective meaning-making of the experience suggests a key temporal aspect between participation and reflection. P16 and P17 similarly indicate forms of participation that remain less observable.

A different interplay can be observed in pathways such as P13 and P21, where participation is characterised by focused individual engagement with the exhibition's material setting and content. Actions and interactions such as looking at pictures, reading, selecting topics, and reflecting are closely tied to understanding, interpreting and working through the content. In P13, this includes moments of cognitive tension as part of the selection process, during which the participant actively engages with the material. P21 shows how this type of engagement can take on a more distanced position, in which the participant formulates a critique of the content while still articulating certain learnings. Here, the processes of reflection and interpretation interplay with evaluation and critical positioning, in contrast to the more frequent interplay with affective immersion.

Pathways are far too complex to be explained solely as a simplified set of configurations. Dominant interplay among all pathway processes makes a difference. For example, P5, while primarily socially oriented, also involves engagement with the material setting, which

guides the conversational process. Another interesting example is the pathway of P7, which foregrounds reflection processes, as taking part in conversation, being receptive, self-reflection, and positioning within the group are closely intertwined, including a tension between seeing and being seen. This pathway illustrates a performative dimension of participation, in which reflection is not only internal but also enacted in the positioning in relation to other participants. These insights underscore that pathways can be understood as overlapping interplays of processes rather than as distinct categorisation or a set of configurations.

An illustrative example of pathway comparison is analysing a selected pathway process across pathways. Comparing how reflection relates to other pathway processes across pathways highlights differences in the configuration and interplay of participation processes. In some pathways, such as P5, reflection is closely embedded in participation, unfolding within the ongoing interaction as participants respond to each other's stories. In others, such as P11, reflection becomes dominant later, suggesting a temporal shift in which participation and reflection are less tightly coupled. In pathways like P13, reflection can also take on a structuring role, preceding or guiding participation through processes of reading, selecting, and interpreting content. These variations illustrate how the same process may serve distinct functions within participation pathways, depending on which interplays dominate and how it relates to other processes within that interplay.

Meaning-Making and the Articulation of Significant Moments. Meaning-making refers here to how participants perceive, interpret, and assign meaning to their participation experiences. Meaning-making can be understood as part of pathway processes, as participants continuously interpret interactions and experiences throughout participation. On the other hand, participants also articulate particular meanings afterwards, while answering the questionnaire, when describing what the experience meant to them. These articulations may take the form of recognising something as new, learning something, gaining a new perspective, or seeing a situation differently. Meaning-making is not treated as a separate analytical category but as part of how participants interpret participation. It is also not equated with the emergence of a *Bildungsmoment*. However, meaning-making often provides an important point of access for reconstructing the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*. *Bildungsmomente* may emerge within ongoing meaning-making processes as participants begin to relate differently to the situation, to others, or to themselves. Thus, the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* is reconstructed through participants' articulations of meaning, while remaining embedded in the participation processes from which it emerges. It is also important to note that not all processes experienced by participants are fully reconstructable from the available data. As-

pects, moments, and processes may remain implicit or unreported in the empirical material. The analysis, therefore, does not claim to capture the entirety of participants' meaning-making processes, but focuses on the meanings articulated in the questionnaires.

In the comparison of pathways regarding meaning-making, the process dimensions become relevant again, particularly temporality and observability. Meaning-making can also be compared in relation to how participants make sense of the experience through interaction with others and through engagement with the exhibition content, namely, its relation to the pathway processes' dominance and qualities.

The first dimension, temporality, concerns whether meaning-making unfolds within the interaction or extends beyond it. In pathways such as P23, meaning-making emerges directly within the ongoing dialogue, as the participant listens, responds, and positions themselves in relation to others and the situation. In contrast, in pathways such as P11 and P17, meaning-making can be reconstructed as primarily occurring after the interaction, through retrospective or ongoing reflection, in which participants reinterpret the experience. P13 similarly points to a continuation of interpreting the experience and to meaning-making beyond the immediate situation, even beyond the whole event, as reflection remains open and extends into thinking that is carried forward.

Second, meaning-making also differs in its observability. While some pathways include observable articulations of meaning within interaction, others involve forms of meaning-making that remain largely internal. In P7, for example, meaning-making unfolds in parallel as a shared, dialogically constructed process within interaction and as an individual, more internal process. Observable and less observable variations of reflection coexist, and meaning-making extends beyond the immediate interaction. Also, there are pathways in which meaning-making occurs during interaction but remains largely internal and is thus less observable. In P6 and P8, for instance, participants engage in ongoing interpretation while present in the interaction, yet how they make sense of it is only articulated retrospectively.

Further, I would like to compare how meaning is created regarding the interplay of dominant pathway processes by examining how it unfolds in relation to other participants or in relation to the exhibition content. Regarding social interaction, meaning-making may take the form of a more collective pathway process (for example, as in P5 or P7), where shared storytelling, listening, and responding create a conversational process in which meaning is co-constructed. This collective meaning-making may also involve boundary setting, as in P23, where participants negotiate what can and cannot be shared. Meaning-making can also take more individual forms. In pathways such as P11, P16, or P17, participants engage with

the exhibition through internal reflection and interpretation. For example, in P16, the participant explicitly states that they did nothing because of the presence of strangers, while still describing continuous learning and reflection throughout the experience. In these cases, social interaction functions less as a space of co-construction and more as input for individual meaning-making, as the participant perceives the situation and makes sense of it for themselves.

Meaning-making can also be compared in relation to the exhibition content and how participants interpret it, evaluate it, and engage with it. The content and format of the exhibition are often perceived as unfamiliar or new. This is explicitly articulated in the P13 pathway, where the participant describes encountering perspectives, they had never considered before. The participant formulates the meaning of the experience as getting to know new perspectives after engaging with this unfamiliarity. The meaning of experiencing something new can also be observed in more pathways, where participants report that the exhibition opens up previously unknown perspectives, topics, and experiences (e.g., P12 or P7). A further variation of content-related meaning-making of the experience can be observed in pathways such as P21 and P6, where participants adopt a more distanced or evaluative stance. In these, meaning-making involves critique, comparison, and a distancing position toward the content, especially with respect to topics experienced as less personally relevant.

The comparison reveals that meaning-making accompanies participation throughout, as part of perception. What meanings participants create from the experience can be reconstructed from their articulation. Meanings may be articulated within interaction, or only later. This also shows that meaning-making may also remain partial, open, or unresolved.

Emergence of Bildungsmomente. Participation pathways may include shifts in how participants relate to the situation, to others, or to their own perspectives. These shifts do not appear uniformly, nor do they always take the form of clearly reconstructable Bildungsmomente. The comparison suggests that different pathways may or may not give rise to distinct forms of shift (reorientation, continuation, or change), which may vary in quality, temporality, observability, and dominance.

Not all pathways include reconstructable emergence of Bildungsmomente. In some cases, participants describe the experience in more general or affective terms, referring to it as “interesting”, “enjoyable”, or simply as a positive experience, without formulating specific emerging insights or something they take forward. This is, for example, a characteristic of pathways (such as P2, P18, P19 and P22), where participants emphasise the quality of the experience and the atmosphere, while shifts in thinking or interaction remain absent or are

less explicitly articulated. In these pathways, affective engagement is a dominant process, and the formulated meaning of the experience is primarily framed in terms of how it felt rather than how one relates to others, oneself, or the topic. This does not necessarily indicate the absence of an emerging *Bildungsmoment*, but suggests that it may have remained implicit, has not been verbalised within the empirical material, the experience has not been assigned a meaning of a shift, or has not been perceived as significant enough to be reported. These pathways, however, show that participation may be experienced as meaningful without involving something that can be reconstructed as a *Bildungsmoment*.

Across pathways, there are significant moments when participants describe realising, noticing, or becoming aware of something, referring to thoughts that stay with them, or new perspectives that emerge through the experience. In the P16 pathway, the participant describes that although they did not take part in conversation, they nonetheless recognise “how important the power of community would be in everyday life”. Here, a *Bildungsmoment* emerges from reflecting on what is observed and heard at the exhibition, appearing as a recognition that connects the experience to the participant’s own experiences. Similarly, in P19, an emerging *Bildungsmoment* is expressed through a redefinition of everyday values, in which the participant notes that they “learned that one should be grateful not only for big achievements but for small things as well”. In both cases, the emerging *Bildungsmoment* seems to function as a reminder, which makes a perspective more explicitly seen as important. These moments might involve shifts, relate to the emergence of a shift, or sometimes only contextualise the participation from which a *Bildungsmoment* is emerging.

The emergence of *Bildungsmomente* also appears in relation to unfamiliar perspectives. In several pathways, recognitions are connected to interaction, where listening to others or engaging with their stories and experiences brings certain aspects into focus. In the P12 pathway, a *Bildungsmoment* emerges through exposure to others’ perspectives and through comparing these perspectives with one’s own experiences. In the P7 pathway, the emerging *Bildungsmoment* appears as an interpersonal reflexive process embedded in conversation and individual reflection. In this pathway, hearing others’ reactions to one’s own thoughts and stories is perceived as a moment of shift in how one thinks about those thoughts and stories. The participant describes it as an ongoing process that unfolds through the exchange of perspectives and personal stories: “every moment was about me learning something”.

New perspectives are also often mentioned in relation to the content itself, where participants refer to themes or viewpoints they had not considered before. In P5, for instance, the participant describes the exhibition as both enjoyable and meaningful and summarises

the newly encountered cultural practices and stories as valuable insights gained during the event. In some pathways, the new insights become part of a coherent and positively evaluated experience that reaches a sense of closure by the end.

In contrast, several pathways point toward an emerging Bildungsmoment that is taken forward beyond the situation. In P17, the participant describes taking “the questions and [their] own answers” with them. This sense of continuation is also visible in P13, where encountering something “completely new” is described as something that invites further thinking. In P22 or P1, Bildungsmomente appear as intentions, wishes, or orientations toward future action, such as being more open or communicating more. In these cases, the articulated meaning of a shift addresses the future and extends beyond the exhibition context.

Significant moments do not always involve a shift; they can, for example, take the form of becoming more aware of others’ perspectives, of recognising differences in how people respond, or of understanding one’s own position in relation to the group or the content. In some cases, realisations are formulated toward the self, as in P17, where the participant writes that “I should spend more time reflecting on myself”.

Some pathways involve a more explicitly articulated moment of shift in perspective, and in some, it is between the lines. Bildungsmomente are reconstructed from participants’ references to situations in which they begin to see something differently, or in which their way of relating to a topic, to others, or to their own position slightly changes. This becomes particularly interesting when comparing the P23 and P11 pathways. In P11, the perspective shift appears in internal and retrospective forms. The participant reflects on the importance of not seeing things from a single point of view. A shift in thinking about interacting with others is grounded in the pathway processes of being receptive and hesitant to participate in conversation, which are less observable forms of participation. In the P23 pathway, a perspective shift emerges from more observable pathway processes, as the participant relates the exhibited stories to their own contexts and to one another in conversation, through analogy-making across different cultural practices. These are not the only ways in which perspective shifts appear across pathways. There are pathways that include more self-reflective, gradual, or critical reorientations. The comparison highlights that these shifts are not tied to a specific quality of participation. Different Bildungsmomente may emerge in diverse ways, depending on how pathway processes come together within the pathway.

Returning to the dimensions discussed in the sections on pathway processes and on meaning-making, the emergence of Bildungsmomente can also be approached and analysed through these dimensions. In some pathways, the emergence of Bildungsmomente is closely

connected to social interaction, conversation, and exchange, while in others it unfolds with less observable participation. Across the different pathways, specific processes and interactions are dominant in shaping the emergence of significant moments. Not all of them are Bildungsmomente. As seen in P16, a participant may describe themselves as not actively taking part yet still reflecting on what they encounter and articulating a Bildungsmoment afterwards. There are also pathways characterised by more distant and evaluative forms of engagement. In P21, meaning-making unfolds through critique, comparison, and analytical interpretation of the exhibition content. The participant reflects on alternative approaches to community organisation and urban governance, comparing them with familiar models from their own context. The emergence of a Bildungsmoment is connected to this interpretive quality of engagement with content.

The comparison of pathways regarding the emergence of Bildungsmomente highlights its complexity in interactive exhibitions, as it may appear in multiple parallel ways. The examples illustrate that significant moments may be articulated as recognition, carried forward as ongoing reflection, expressed as a new orientation, or remain implicit and only partially observable, and some also involve shifts. These variations point to differences in how Bildungsmomente may emerge along pathways, and in how they occur as participants begin to relate differently to the situation, to others, or to their own perspectives.

Analytical Relevance of the Comparative Analysis. The comparison of pathways also shows that participation unfolds through different configurations of pathway-affording elements and pathway processes as they come together in different interplays and dimensions. Across the pathways, participants engage, interact, and make meaning of their experience, yet how these processes appear, relate to one another, and are articulated varies considerably. This analytical step revealed a field of variation in which pathway processes unfold in the setting, in relation to different group dynamics and participant orientations. These variations highlight the importance of considering not only which processes are present but also how they are configured within each pathway, and how participants find their ways of relating to the situation, to others, or to their own perspectives.

The comparative memo has also provided findings on a more abstract level. Insights into pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, dimensions, and their interplay were refined from the memos and structured into an analytical framework for analysing pathways and the emergence of Bildungsmomente within them. The analytical framework is presented in [Chapter 7.1](#), the relations among its constructs are presented in [Chapter 7.2](#), and the syn-

thesis about the emergence of Bildungsmomente is presented in the following section ([Chapter 7.4](#)).

7.4 Emergence of Bildungsmomente in Participation Pathways

The following section draws on the constructs of the analytical framework to address the research question of how Bildungsmomente emerge across participation pathways in the interactive exhibition. It builds on the comparison of participation pathways (see [Chapter 7.3.2](#) and the [Appendices](#)), which was central not only to the development of the analytical framework but also to the formulation of insights across pathways, and synthesises broader patterns, differences, and relations across the reconstructed pathways. The synthesis is organised according to the analytical framework. It first examines the emergence of Bildungsmomente in participation, then discusses the role of pathway-affording elements and pathway processes, and finally considers how the process dimensions further differentiate their emergence across pathways.

It is important to note that not all participation pathways include the reconstructable emergence of Bildungsmomente; therefore, the following synthesis primarily builds on the four main pathways in which such emergence can be reconstructed. Across these main pathways, Bildungsmomente appear as shifts in how participants relate to others, themselves, or the world. In some pathways, this shift becomes articulated as a change in interaction, for example, through opening up differently than usual toward others during participation or leaving the exhibition with a sense of being more. In others, it is more about thinking, as participants encounter previously unknown perspectives, formulate new questions, or describe a shift in how they think about others or the presented topic.

7.4.1 Emergence in Participation

The emergence of Bildungsmomente is embedded within participation itself. It is a situated, relational, and embodied process that unfolds through interactions among participants, the exhibition setting (including all pathway-affording elements), and the individual pathway processes. Participation events can be understood as temporary participatory spaces with their own interactional and relational dynamics, which vary with each group. Bildungsmomente emerge in unrepeatable configurations and remain connected to the participation pathway through which they arise. Participation forms the relational context, the place and time in which Bildungsmomente may emerge.

Bildungsmomente do not develop in a linear sequence. Their emergence is better described as arising from the interplay of multiple pathway processes. The emergence of Bildungsmomente can involve multiple interconnected moments throughout participation, for example, realisations, reflections, questioning, experiences of something new, or perspective shifts. These moments are not necessarily Bildungsmomente themselves, yet they are essential parts of the process of emergence. Thus, moments that are not clearly identifiable as shifts may still become significant within the emergence of a Bildungsmoment.

The emergence of a Bildungsmoment can be considered affective and embodied, as it remains embedded in the affective and embodied experience of participation itself. This includes the participant's relations with the group, their physical presence within the situation, and their bodily interactions with the exhibition setting, such as looking at exhibition materials, moving through space, talking and listening, together with affective orientations such as curiosity, joy, anxiety, hesitation, and sensitivity to the atmosphere. In several pathways, participants describe carrying forward an affective imprint from the exhibition.

7.4.2 Pathway-Affording Elements and Emergence

The emergence of Bildungsmomente is framed by the spatial and material setting, the exhibition content, and facilitation, while participant orientation and group dynamics form the social affordances along the pathway. Pathway-affording elements configure different possibilities for participation and therefore for the emergence of Bildungsmomente; they are not determinative. The same exhibition setting may be experienced as novel, overwhelming, immersive, emotionally engaging, or hardly noticeable at all, depending on how participants engage with the pathway-affording elements within participation. Participants repeatedly describe a sense of novelty when interacting with pathway-affording elements. Novelty appears across pathways in multiple forms, including unfamiliar perspectives or topics, new forms of social interaction, spaces, and the exhibition experience as a whole, and these forms of novelty are associated with distinct forms of emergence.

While the spatial setting, the exhibition content, and facilitation remain relatively constant across pathways, participant orientation and group dynamics continuously reconfigure how these pathway-affording elements are taken up within participation. Group dynamics afford which perspectives become available, how interaction develops, whether participants engage through contribution, receptivity, reflection, hesitation, or conversational immersion; in short, which pathway processes and interplays become dominant throughout participation.

How Bildungsmomente emerge in a pathway is therefore closely interrelated with the configurations of group dynamics and participant orientation.

Pathway Processes and Interplays. Bildungsmomente emerge through the interplay of pathway processes. No specific process can be identified as necessary for the emergence of Bildungsmomente. Similar pathway processes may appear across pathways, yet they do not lead to the same forms of emergence. Even within the same group setting, pathways unfold differently as participants enact pathway processes and interact with pathway-affording elements differently. Although taking something forward is not a necessary pathway process in the emergence of Bildungsmomente, it is connected to it in various pathways and may point to their open-ended, future-oriented character. Pathway processes, such as interpretation, immersion, reflection, contribution, taking part in conversation, or being receptive, may also become connected to the emergence of Bildungsmomente in diverse ways. Therefore, what matters is not which processes are present, but how they are related, connected, interrupted, reconfigured, or intensified within a pathway.

Process Dimensions and Emergence. The emergence of Bildungsmomente varies across the dimensions of temporality, observability, dominance, and qualities. Comparisons along dimensions reveal additional insights into how Bildungsmomente emerge, how they become articulated, and how they are embedded in participation pathways in different ways.

Temporality. The temporal dimension points toward the processual character of emergence. Temporality raises the question of when and how long a Bildungsmoment emerges. They do not necessarily emerge as clearly identifiable moments within participation, but retrospectively, or through both. Thus, the temporality of the emergence addresses both the participation experience and the articulation in the retrospective questionnaire. The emergence may unfold gradually, may include significant moments or reconfiguration points with certain intensifications throughout participation, or continue beyond the situation. In the more gradual pathways, the emergence of a Bildungsmoment becomes identifiable only after the event, as the shift occurs in interaction and meaning is assigned afterwards. In P5, the shift involves interacting with others differently than usual. This gradually emerging different way of acting and different way of being appears to be linked to a sense of novelty about the experience, as the participant experienced the whole situation as new and unfamiliar. There are also pathways in which something reconfigures or redirects participation in a different direction. This can be seen, for example, in P23 through boundary-setting, or in P11 through anxiety. If temporality is interpreted as spatiality, then the process of emergence is embedded in the exhibition space. Participants experience impulses during participation, within the par-

ticipatory space itself, that may be connected to the emergence of Bildungsmomente in situ or afterwards. When participants share and retrospectively interpret their thoughts and experiences in the questionnaire, the articulation of the Bildungsmoment is sometimes integrative and closing, formulated through a concrete lesson learned. In other cases, it remains open, formulated as questions, a feeling, a thought, or a new perspective that is carried forward, and therefore extends beyond participation. In this way, temporality as spatiality also extends beyond the participation situation itself through the embodied and affective embeddedness of the experience.

Observability. The dimension of observability distinguishes among observable, partly observable, and non-observable pathway parts of the emergence process. Observable aspects of the emergence of the Bildungsmoment primarily appear through the interplay with pathway processes that include interactions with the spatial and material setting or other participants. As participation in the interactive exhibition involves physical aspects, at least the bodily presence of participants remains partly observable through movement in space, positioning relative to others, or body language. However, the central insight from the reconstruction of pathways shows that more observable processes do not necessarily facilitate Bildungsmomente more than other pathways. Many pathway processes are themselves not observable, yet Bildungsmomente emerge through their interplay. This includes, for example, being receptive, listening to others' stories, reflecting on them, or taking something forward. In P5, reading the threads aloud and discussing the topic with other participants are observable aspects of the emergence process. In P13, participating in storytelling is observable, whereas reflecting on others' stories and feeling good when hearing similar views are not. In the P17 pathway, an illustrative example, the participant reads the threads, which is observable, but takes the answers with them without telling them to anyone. Finally, the P11 pathway shows that receptivity and reflection in silent participation are connected to the emergence of Bildungsmomente, even if these processes are not directly observable during participation. The emergence of Bildungsmomente is not always externally observable within participation and thus cannot necessarily be identified through visible interaction alone. Certain shifts remain implicit, or only indirectly reconstructable through pathways.

Dominance and Qualities. The dimensions of dominance and qualities become particularly important in relation to the emergence of Bildungsmomente, as different dominant interplays are associated with different forms of emergence across pathways. In each pathway, certain pathway processes and interplays become dominant. Group dynamics and participant orientation relate closely to which pathway processes and interplays become domi-

nant throughout participation. The dominant interplays do not determine the emergence of Bildungsmomente, yet they guide it in particular directions and become significant in how participants relate to the situation, to others, and to the exhibition content. Bildungsmomente emerge through participation qualities. Through the interplay of dominant and other pathway processes, particular qualities become prominent, and Bildungsmomente tend to emerge within these qualities. For instance, conversational, interpretive, receptive, affective, and immersive qualities of participation may also become qualities of the emergence process. In both P13 and P23, for example, a similar dominant interplay can be reconstructed in which interaction with the installation, and more specifically with the content, becomes central in both pathways. In this interplay, Bildungsmomente emerge in relation to the content. However, even similar dominant interplays do not necessarily lead to the same forms of emergence, because the qualities through which participation unfolds differ. In P13, cognitively mediated participation and individual interpretation are dominant throughout the pathway, and the emergence of Bildungsmomente is also characterised by these qualities. In contrast, in the P23 pathway, collective contribution and topic discussion become dominant, so the interplay creates the possibility for the emergence of Bildungsmomente within a contributive-conversational quality of participation. Bildungsmomente, therefore, tend to emerge in ways that follow the qualities through which participation is enacted within a given pathway. In this regard, it can be stated that Bildungsmomente emerge not only through specific pathways but also through the ways how pathway processes are experienced and enacted throughout the pathway. The emergence of Bildungsmomente does not introduce a separate layer of participation but unfolds through the same qualities that characterise the dominant interplay of pathway processes.

8 Discussion and Implications

The discussion of the findings begins by revisiting the research questions and summarising the central findings as answers to them ([Chapter 8.1](#)). This chapter continues with exploring how these findings contribute to existing understandings ([Chapter 8.2](#)) and relates them to the literature and theoretical perspectives on participation, Bildung, Bildungsmomente, and performativity introduced earlier in the thesis ([Chapter 2](#)), building primarily on Fischer-Lichte's (2021), Koller's (2023), and Wulf and Zirfas' (2014) perspectives. Finally, the chapter outlines the contributions ([Chapter 8.3](#)), names practical implications ([Chapter 8.4](#)), reflects on limitations, and identifies directions for future research ([Chapter 8.5](#)).

8.1 Answers to the Research Questions

8.1.1 Pathway Framework for Analysing the Emergence of Bildungsmomente

The first research question asked what kind of framework could be developed from the data that enables the reconstruction and analysis of the emergence of Bildungsmomente. A central insight of the coding process was that participation unfolded as a complex, non-linear, and situational process that could not be adequately captured through isolated events or participant characteristics. This led to the development of a pathway framework, which provides a way to reconstruct participation trajectories by making participation-related processes traceable as they unfold, overlap, and develop in relation to one another within specific participation situations. It takes the complexity of participation as its starting point and makes the relations and processes through which Bildungsmomente emerge analytically accessible.

The pathway serves as the central analytical construct of the framework. Building on it, the framework includes further analytical constructs: pathway-affording elements, pathway processes and process dimensions. Pathway-affording elements are aspects of participatory situations that frame participation and contribute to the configuration of pathways, while pathway processes encompass actions and interactions that unfold within the participation pathway. Process dimensions capture variations of these processes across pathways. These constructs provide a vocabulary for describing and analysing participation, while also remaining closely connected to the data. The resulting framework, therefore, provides a process-oriented way to study and reconstruct how Bildungsmomente emerge within participation, without separating them from the pathways in which they are embedded and through which they become accessible.

8.1.2 Relations in the Pathway Framework

The second research question focused on the relations between pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, and process dimensions. The findings show that these constructs gain their meaning through the ways they are brought into relation within specific pathways. Pathway-affording elements (material setting, facilitation, content, group dynamics, and participant orientation) together constitute the context within which participation unfolds. Their analytical significance can only be understood in relation to how participants engage with them through pathway processes. Process dimensions provide analytical lenses for examining variations. They draw attention to temporality, observability, dominance, and qualities of pathway processes. In this way, they address when and how processes unfold over time, whether they are observable within the situation, only partly observable, or become accessible through retrospective articulation, how processes become more or less dominant within a pathway, and how participation is enacted through different qualities. Considering how these constructs relate to one another within specific pathways was essential for allowing the complexity of participation to remain part of the analysis. Analytical tables and pathway maps (presented in [Chapter 7.2](#)) proved particularly useful for reconstructing and mapping these relations.

The analysis further showed that retrospective questionnaire responses provided an important empirical access point for reconstructions, as they were articulated meanings of experiences assigned by the participants. While meaning-making also formed part of pathway processes, participants' retrospective articulations made emerging shifts accessible and interpretable. They constituted an important empirical access point for reconstructing both participation pathways and the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*.

8.1.3 Emergence of Bildungsmomente in Individual Participation Pathways

The third research question examined how *Bildungsmomente* emerge within individual participation pathways. The interactive exhibition provided a participatory environment in which multiple forms of participation processes could emerge alongside one another, ranging from conversational and contributive engagement to interpretive, receptive, and immersive qualities. Reconstructing participation pathways made it possible not only to identify articulated *Bildungsmomente* but also to trace their emergence processes and the relations through which they developed. In some pathways, emergence unfolded gradually through multiple interconnected moments. For example, a gradual opening towards more personal interaction emerged through conversational immersion, encounters with unfamiliar stories and perspec-

tives, and increasing openness in interaction. In other pathways, Bildungsmomente emerged through collective engagement with unfamiliar perspectives, contributions, and interpretations, resulting in shifts in perspective on the exhibition topic. Other pathways revealed multiple interconnected Bildungsmomente emerging through ongoing interpretation, questioning, reflection, and engagement with new topics and views, remaining open beyond the exhibition experience itself.

The pathway reconstructions also highlighted aspects of participation and Bildungsmomente that might otherwise remain unnoticed. Bildungsmomente were not only connected to observable processes such as storytelling, conversation, interaction with others and the installations or contributions. Further pathways demonstrated that the processes of listening, hesitating, receptiveness, and reflection can also contribute to the emergence of Bildungsmomente. Here, pathways unfolded primarily through engagement with others' stories or with the exhibition's content. Reflection and meaning-making remained largely internal and became accessible mainly through retrospective articulation. The reconstructions, therefore, showed that Bildungsmomente may emerge not only through active contribution but also through receptive and less immediately observable forms of participation.

8.1.4 A Pathway-Based Understanding of the Emergence of Bildungsmomente

The fourth research question addressed how Bildungsmomente emerge across participation pathways.

Firstly, as discussed above about individual pathways, the findings underscore that Bildungsmomente emerge through relational, situated and pathway-specific configurations of participation, although not all participation pathways included reconstructable Bildungsmomente. Where their emergence can be reconstructed, it is embedded in participation itself and unfolds through the interplay of pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, and process dimensions. In this regard, participation forms the relational context, place, time and process in which Bildungsmomente emerge.

Secondly, Bildungsmomente emerge as processes rather than isolated events. The emergence may involve multiple interconnected moments, including experiences such as questioning, recognising, interpreting, realising, or shifts in perspective. It may appear surprisingly, unfold gradually, be articulated retrospectively, or remain open beyond participation itself.

Third, pathway-affording elements configured possibilities for participation pathways without determining them. Novelty appeared in multiple forms across pathway-afford-

ing elements, for example, as unfamiliar perspectives, topics encountered in the exhibition, interactions, atmosphere and space, and was repeatedly connected to the emergence of Bildungsmomente.

Fourth, no specific pathway process could be identified as necessary for the emergence of Bildungsmomente. Similar processes appear across pathways, but do not lead to the same forms of emergence. What matters is how the pathway processes within a pathway are related, intensified, interrupted, or reconfigured. Dominant interplays can be associated with the emergence, and Bildungsmomente tend to emerge through the qualities that characterise the dominant interplays of participation itself. This became particularly visible when comparing pathways. In pathways where conversational immersion and personal sharing are dominant, we have seen Bildungsmomente emerge through gradual opening, increasing engagement, and encounters with unfamiliar stories and perspectives. In pathways characterised by receptive and reflective qualities, emergence often remains closely connected to listening, hesitation, and reflection. Similarly, pathways dominated by engagement with unfamiliar perspectives through interpretation reveal interpretive and reflective qualities of the emergence of Bildungsmomente. These examples suggest that the dominant interplays and qualities characterising participation also characterised the emergence of Bildungsmomente.

8.2 Discussion

In the following, the answers to the research questions are discussed in relation to the literature reviewed and theoretical framework. The section begins by discussing participation as the broader process through which Bildungsmomente emerge. It then turns to novelty and unfamiliarity as central aspects of participation and examines how they relate to the emergence of Bildungsmomente. The discussion then considers what the findings imply for understanding Bildungsmomente themselves as emergent processes. Finally, these aspects are brought together through the performative perspective. This progression moves from the broader participatory context towards the phenomenon of Bildungsmomente itself and to its performative characteristics, thereby reflecting the logic behind the master's thesis.

8.2.1 Participation and the Emergence of Bildungsmomente

Participation emerged not merely as the context in which Bildungsmomente occur, but as the broader process through which their emergence unfolds.

The first point of discussion concerns the idea that participants create their own participation pathways through which Bildungsmomente may emerge. Related aspects are dis-

cussed by Grünheid (2024), Kassem (2019), Zirfas (2008), Settele (2026), and Hartmann et al. (2023). Grünheid (2024) describes visitors as actively shaping their own trajectories through exhibitions. This insight is reflected inherently in the pathway framework itself and in the pathway reconstructions. Although Grünheid highlights visitors' autonomy in exploring exhibitions, some complementary aspects can be discussed. As participants created different individual pathways through the same exhibition, variations appeared not only in how they navigated the exhibition, but also in how they interpreted, reflected on, and engaged with it, as well as in how the emergence of Bildungsmomente unfolded in their pathways. This means that participants create not only their own trajectories through exhibitions but also their own pathways through which Bildungsmomente may emerge. Kassem's (2019) understanding of exhibition spaces as active participants in educational processes – stating that spatial arrangements can initiate interactions, invite engagement, and trigger transformation – can also be discussed in this regard. While the pathway framework builds on Kassem's understanding of space, it also complements it by emphasising that the pathway-affording elements, including the spatial arrangements, do not determine participation; they are taken up differently within individual pathways. This interpretation also connects to Zirfas' (2008) understanding of Bildungsprozesse as embodied, social, and situational, as well as to the arguments of Settele (2026) and Hartmann et al. (2023) that Bildungsmomente cannot be planned but can be made possible, as the conditions can be created and made available. However, how participants engage with them, and whether and how a Bildungsmoment emerges, unfold along their individual pathways. The pathway reconstructions also show that the emergence of Bildungsmomente is not determined, nor does the situated, embodied, social, and non-planable character imply complete randomness. Whether a Bildungsmoment emerges cannot be guaranteed, but when it does, it is situated in the concrete participation setting framed by material and spatial setting, exhibition content, facilitation, group dynamics and the participant's own orientations.

A closely related aspect is that Bildungsmomente remain embedded in participation. Settele addresses this by stating that “collective aesthetic situations” (*kollektive ästhetische Situationen*) can be seen as starting points for transformative Bildungsprozesse (2026, p. 168). The pathway reconstructions reveal additional relations between the situation and the Bildungsmomente and make it possible to see more concretely how this situatedness operates in practice. The emergence of Bildungsmomente did not appear as an extra layer in participation, but remained embedded within ongoing processes such as conversation, reflection, interpretation, receptivity, contribution, and immersion. Going beyond treating participation

as the starting point or the context in which Bildungsmomente occur, and considering that the emergence of Bildungsmomente unfolds through the same qualities that characterise the dominant interplay of pathway processes, we can interpret participation as the medium through which their emergence unfolds.

A further aspect deals with the social, embodied, and situated character of the emergence of Bildungsmomente in participation, which extends beyond observable contribution. This can be discussed in relation to Fischer-Lichte (2021), Dewey (1934), and Settele (2026). Fischer-Lichte (2021) describes participation as an unfolding process that emerges from the bodily co-presence of participants and their continuous interactions. Her concept of the autopoietic feedback loop is particularly useful for understanding the role of participant orientation and group dynamics in the pathway reconstructions. We have seen that participation was continuously shaped by the presence and responses of others, whether through social immersion, collective interpretation, experiences of being seen, hesitation to join a conversation, or the negotiation of boundaries. While many of these dynamics are social in character, the process dimensions showed that not all pathway processes are equally observable. Among the pathways containing emerging Bildungsmomente, some of the most dominant processes remained only partly observable.

The silent receptive-reflective participation pathway (P11) is particularly interesting in this regard. Although participation was characterised primarily by listening, hesitation, receptivity, and reflection, these processes cannot be separated from their social situatedness. This is where Fischer-Lichte's notion of the autopoietic feedback loop must be recalled, to remember us that participation is continuously co-shaped through the co-presence of others. Moreover, Dewey's concept of "doing and undergoing" (1934, p. 38–46), where participation involves not only acting within a situation but also being affected by it, is also relevant for the following argument. The emergence of the Bildungsmoment in the silent receptive-reflective participation pathway was embedded in an interplay of processes that were not entirely observable, yet remained inherently social, involving doing and undergoing the situation in the co-presence of others. The reconstructed emergence would not have been possible without the contribution and the stories, perspectives shared by others, about which the participant articulated realisations, new perspectives, future-oriented insights, and wishes.

This interpretation is also in accordance with Settele's (2026) emphasis on receptivity and vulnerability. The pathway reconstructions draw attention to participation not only as a contribution, but also as openness towards what emerges through others. Being receptive appears here as a particular process of participation within a social situation, one that inher-

ently involves vulnerability from all participants. Within the pathway framework, these dynamics become particularly visible through the interplay among group dynamics, participant orientation (pathway-affording elements), and listening, being receptive, and hesitation to contribute (pathway processes).

Beyond co-presence and social interaction, other constructs of the pathway framework also relate to additional aspects discussed by Fischer-Lichte regarding participation as performance. Spatiality appears in the pathway-affording element of the material and spatial setting, while bodily and acoustic dimensions become visible and audible through the observable qualities of participation and through participants' orientation within the situation. The immersion process further connected participants to the exhibition's atmosphere, spatial environment, and installations, and often included affective and embodied forms of engagement. Rhythm can similarly be connected to participant orientation, group dynamics and the dimension of temporality, as pathways differed not only in what participants did, but also in the pace, intensity, and manner in which participation unfolded. Perception itself emerged as a recurring pathway process through which participants interpreted and assigned meaning to their experiences. The reconstructed pathways, therefore, not only support Fischer-Lichte's understanding of participation as performance but also illustrate the not necessarily observable, social, embodied, and situated character of the emergence to *Bildungsmomente* in participation, and how performative characteristics become empirically traceable in relation to one another and the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*.

8.2.2 Novelty, Unfamiliarity, and Experiences of Difference

Novelty became a central aspect in the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*, as participants encountered, interpreted, and worked through experiences of unfamiliarity in different ways. A first observation concerns the recurring emergence of novelty across participation pathways. It was reconstructed directly from participants' own articulations and not applied from theoretical assumptions brought into the analysis, as participants frequently referred to encounters, perspectives, topics, stories, situations, or other exhibition experiences as "new", "unfamiliar", or as something they "had not thought about before". This observation aligns with previous discourse on *Bildungsmomente* and *Bildungsprozesse*. *Bildungsmomente* are often discussed alongside concepts such as difference, irritation, estrangement, and otherness (Hartmann et al., 2023; Lüsebrink & Wolters, 2023; Röckelein, 2025; Settele, 2026). While the findings do not challenge these perspectives, different wording is used to stay close to the empirical data during the reconstruction of pathways. Participants rarely described their ex-

periences in terms of disruption, irritation, or otherness; instead, they spoke about encountering something new or previously unconsidered. Thus, novelty may be understood here as an equivalent of what Bildung theory often conceptualises as “experience of crisis” or “experience of unfamiliarity” (*Krisenerfahrung* or *Fremdheitserfahrung*, Koller, 2023).

Closely related to the previous point is the question where, in which form novelty is encountered in participation. Settele (2026) and Kassem (2019) agree that educational potential does not reside only in content but also in participation situations themselves. Settele (2026) argues that Bildung is not tied to specific content, as situations themselves can carry educational potential. The pathway reconstructions support and extend this insight. When relevant to the emergence of Bildungsmomente, novelty can take multiple forms, appearing as something that participants encountered, how they participated, and the situations in which participation unfolded. Kassem’s (2019) argument that meaning emerges through lived spatial engagement can also be brought back into this discussion, as the findings underscore that novelty may also arise through spatial experiences that participants perceive and interpret as new.

A further insight concerns how novelty relates to the emergence of Bildungsmomente. Hartmann et al. (2023), Lüsebrink and Wolters (2023), and Röckelein (2025) all emphasise that experiences of difference may fade without becoming educationally meaningful. Similar observations can be made in the reconstructed pathways. Novelty appeared frequently across participation pathways, yet not every encounter that was perceived as new can be associated with an emerging Bildungsmoment.

At the same time, the pathway analysis revealed more than this distinction. The primary question was not whether something was interpreted as novel, nor whether it could ultimately be connected to the emergence of a Bildungsmoment, but rather how participants encountered novelty and how they worked through it in participation. The argument in the literature that experiences of difference may function as starting points for Bildungsprozesse is therefore supported, but the pathway reconstructions allow this process to be described more precisely. Since emergence remains embedded in participation, novelty does not necessarily appear as an entry of a pathway. It may become relevant at multiple points throughout participation, in relation to content, interactions, situations, or experiences. These encounter processes may overlap, interplay, and develop in parallel. The emergence of a Bildungsmoment as working-through novelty, therefore, does not appear as a linear sequence but as an unfolding pathway of participation in which novelty may be continuously encountered.

What does it mean if the significance of novelty depends not on what it is, but on how participants engage with it throughout participation? A related implication is that meaning is not inherent in moments themselves but develops through participation. At this point, it is useful to return to van de Goor et al.'s (2025) perspective on the emergence of meaningful moments. In their understanding, meaningful moments emerge through iterative processes in which meaning is constructed and retrospectively discovered. Stating that novelty was not simply encountered but rather worked through in participation also implies that participants' relationships to it shifted and that new, multiple, or changing meanings were assigned to it throughout the participation pathway. Consequently, a moment does not become meaningful as a *Bildungsmoment* immediately upon encountering novelty itself. Its significance develops through the pathway as participants engage with it.

What appeared new did not remain a fixed trigger but instead became part of an ongoing process of emergence of a *Bildungsmoment*, embedded in participation and beyond. In this regard, the pathway framework contributes to Koller's understanding of *Bildungsprozesse* by reconstructing how unfamiliarity is encountered and worked through within participation. According to Koller (2023), experiences of unfamiliarity confront participants with situations in which existing orientations prove insufficient, and possibilities for their transformation may open up. After reconstructing the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* in participation pathways, this process can be examined more closely by tracing how unfamiliarity is encountered, engaged with, and worked through within participation. Inserting Koller's terms, unfamiliarity appears within a pathway when participants encounter something new among the pathway-affording elements or experience pathway processes that exceed their existing orientations or habitual ways of understanding. As pathway processes unfold, participants interpret, negotiate, reflect upon, and relate unfamiliar experiences to prior orientations. If possibilities for transformation open up in this process, then the process of working through the unfamiliarity in the participation pathway can be interpreted as the emergence of a *Bildungsmoment*.

This leads back to the contribution of the pathway framework itself. Beyond identifying experiences of unfamiliarity or moments of transformation, the framework locates emergence within participation. It thereby maps the participation processes and their interrelations through which unfamiliarity is encountered and worked through. Following this argument, pathways can trace what lies between encounters with unfamiliarity and possible transformations of orientations.

8.2.3 Understanding *Bildungsmomente*

The preceding discussion provides the basis for several discussion points about *Bildungsmomente*. It has arrived at the argument that unfamiliarity can become educationally meaningful through participation. What does this tell us about *Bildungsmomente*? One of the challenges in the early pathway reconstructions was that *Bildungsmomente* were often difficult or not possible to reconstruct as single, identifiable moments. This is also reflected in the definition that emerged through the analysis, according to which emerging *Bildungsmomente* refer to phenomena in which participants begin to relate differently to the situation, particular topics or perspectives, others, or themselves. Accordingly, *Bildungsmomente* do not necessarily appear as discrete or clearly identifiable moments, but may unfold gradually, remain partial, become articulated only retrospectively, or remain partly non-observable within participation. What could more clearly be reconstructed as a *Bildungsmoment* was often the articulation of the shift itself. This insight that will be discussed later (in [Chapter 8.2.4](#)). Participation pathways nevertheless contained a range of reconstructable significant moments. In the gradual conversational-immersive participation pathway (P5), opening towards others unfolded through conversation and immersion. Along this pathway, the exhibition situation itself, initially experienced as unfamiliar, acquired new meanings and functions for the participant in several moments. Similarly, in the silent receptive-reflective participation pathway (P11), where the *Bildungsmoment* emerged primarily through reflection, significant moments could be reconstructed in which the unfamiliar social situation was reinterpreted as a resource for encountering stories and perspectives. The cognitively mediated interpretive-reflective participation pathway (P13) and the content-oriented conversational-contributive participation pathway (P23) likewise contained multiple significant moments that appeared interconnected within participation and therefore could not be understood as isolated events detached from the pathway through which they emerged.

This idea leads to the point that *Bildungsmomente* are better understood in relation to their emergent processes than as discrete moments. This aspect can be discussed further in relation to Röckelein's (2025), Copei's (1930/2019), Koller's (2023) and Zirfas' (2014) arguments. Röckelein (2025) introduces the term *Bildungsimpuls* that can be translated into English as an educational or formative impulse. Given its conceptual specificity, I will continue to use the German term in the following. Röckelein argues that not every meaningful experience, irritation, or *Bildungsimpuls* develops into a *Bildungsmoment*. When examining whether the significant moments identified within the pathways can be interpreted as *Bild-*

ungsimpulse in Röckelein's sense, an important distinction becomes visible. While Röckelein defines the Bildungsmoment as something we experience that has a transformative effect, and the Bildungsimpuls as something we receive – “a kind of information that we did not have before in this form, that motivates us to act” (Röckelein, 2025, p. 63, translated by AS) – which could be partly supported by the findings; he also emphasizes that a Bildungsimpuls is closely “connected to conscious stimulation or intention” (Röckelein, 2025, p. 78, translated by AS). However, the difference between the significant moments reconstructed in the pathways and the Bildungsmoment is not related to intentionality in this regard. The reconstructed significant moments are better understood as parts of a pathway, that is, as points within an emergence process.

On the other hand, Röckelein also introduces the concept of “traces of Bildung” (*Bildungsspuren*), referring to the lasting, often implicit effects that formative experiences leave behind, even if we are not consciously aware of them. These function as experiences of difference that can transform us, particularly when we attend to them (Röckelein, 2025, p. 83). This concept comes closer to the significant moments identified in the pathways, which appeared important in participation without necessarily constituting Bildungsmomente themselves. Moments of encountering new topics, engaging in conversation with unfamiliar people, recognising something, sharing more personal experiences than usual, or becoming immersed in the exhibition atmosphere when looking at pictures often served as important parts of a pathway. They become analytically accessible because they were meaningful enough for participants to recount and thus could be reconstructed as part of the pathway and the broader emergence process. Unlike by Röckelein, these significant moments are not approached as effects of processes, but rather as traces within the pathway, and their relevance does not lie solely in the degree of attention they receive. When such moments function as traces in the emergence process, they constitute dominant interplays along the pathway, and they reveal the processes that carry their qualities into the emergence of a Bildungsmoment.

This discussion also invites a return to Copei's notion of the *fruitful moment* (*fruchtbarer Moment*), which retains the image of a moment in which “a new insight suddenly awakens within us ... and a light suddenly dawns on us” (*blitzartig eine neue Erkenntnis in uns erwacht ... uns plötzlich ein Licht aufgeht*; Copei 1966, p. 17, as cited in Röckelein, 2025, p. 67, translated by AS). The pathway reconstructions do not contradict this understanding. Copei himself describes the fruitful moment as connected to a longer process of questioning, engagement, and interpretation. What participants later articulated as meaningful and could be interpreted as a Bildungsmoment emerged from the process of participation. By providing

a non-linear view, reconstructing this in the form of pathways brings out further details about the relations between the elements and processes of participation, and thereby offers a more complex understanding of the emergence of Bildungsmomente. Copei describes the process as moving from the experience of difference towards insight in a distinguishable sequence. In the reconstructed pathways, however, novelty reappeared in different forms, relations, and interplays throughout participation. The emergence of a Bildungsmoment was therefore approached as an overlapping interplay of participation processes rather than as a progression through separable stages.

If Bildungsmomente cannot easily be reduced to identifiable moments within participation, their temporal situatedness has to be clarified in more detail. The pathways also show that Bildungsmomente were not necessarily restricted to the immediate situation of participation, but their emergence was always embedded in it. Koller's understanding of transformative Bildungsprozesse (2023) and Zirfas' emphasis on temporality (2014) are both helpful in understanding this relation. To recount Koller's (2023) perspective, experiences of unfamiliarity become educationally relevant when the existing way of thinking or being is no longer sufficient and possibilities for transformation emerge. The reconstructed pathways highlight that shifts in thinking and being are connected to encountering something new along a pathway. However, these shifts can extend beyond the immediate participation setting and can be carried forward, for example, as open questions, wishes regarding future behaviour, or changes in perspective. In these pathways, participants relate unfamiliar experiences to previous orientations, and, while encountering some unfamiliarity, new possibilities become imaginable within and beyond participation.

Zirfas writes that Bildungsmomente are situated in the present while remaining connected to both past experiences and future possibilities (2014, p. 371). Keeping the pathway framework in mind, this can also be read as meaning that past experiences (included within participant orientation as a pathway-affording element) and future possibilities for shifts or transformation (appearing in form of possible encounters with unfamiliarity) interplay with present participation processes in the emergence of Bildungsmomente.

This is related to the question of empirical accessibility. Koller repeatedly emphasises the difficulty of empirically approaching transformative Bildungsprozesse and suggests that Bildung may be understood less as a completed transformation than as an ongoing and open-ended process of thinking differently and becoming different (Koller, 2023, p. 166). In line with this understanding, the pathways did not seek to reconstruct large-scale or completed transformations. We did not see participants leaving the exhibition with fundamentally trans-

formed self–world relations that changed their lives. Instead, they described smaller shifts. They formulated new questions, reconsidered assumptions, expressed intentions for future action, reflected on their own behaviour, or described changes in perspective. These shifts were often modest in scale when compared to transformative Bildungsprozesse in biographies, yet as moments within the context of participation in an interactive exhibition, these Bildungsmomente were meaningful for the participants. Viewed through Koller’s understanding of Bildungsprozesse, these shifts do not need be interpreted as incomplete transformations. If Bildung is approached as an ongoing process of thinking differently and becoming different, these shifts can be interpreted as moments within this open-ended process itself, pointing to movements in participants’ relations to the world, to others, and to themselves, without implying that a transformation must already be completed. So, the emergence of Bildungsmomente draws attention to the present situation in which Bildung becomes perceptible, while remaining connected to past experiences and future possibilities.

Bringing together the previous discussions about participation, novelty and Bildungsmomente suggests moving beyond a strict distinction between moment and process. The insights indicate that Bildungsmomente can be interpreted in relation to the configurations and processes through which they emerge within participation pathways.

8.2.4 Performativity and the Emergence of Bildungsmomente

The previous discussions have addressed what happens in participation, how novelty is encountered, and the emergence of Bildungsmomente. Taking a step back, these findings can now be discussed through a performative perspective, which brings together the preceding aspects by considering how these processes come into being. The following discussion draws on Fischer-Lichte (2021), Wulf and Zirfas (2007), Butler (1988), Austin (1962/1975), Copei (1930/2019), Koller (2023), and Zirfas (2014).

First, the event character of participation pathways can be discussed in relation to Fischer-Lichte’s (2021) understanding of performative events. Fischer-Lichte (2021) conceptualises performative processes as temporally and spatially situated events that emerge in the course of action. When approached as performative events, pathways can be understood as more than temporal or spatial routes through an exhibition; as emerging through the actions and interactions. This was also reflected in the development and application of the pathway framework, whereby pathway processes are reconstructed from participants’ actions and interactions. So, to say that pathways emerge through participation means that the actions and interactions enacted within the participatory space and duration are constitutive of the path-

way itself. Fischer-Lichte's understanding of performative events, therefore, helps to understand the pathways as emergent occurrences whose course is open and cannot be fully determined in advance.

On the other hand, participation pathways can further be understood as relational performative configurations. This aspect can be discussed in relation to Wulf and Zirfas (2014) and Fischer-Lichte (2021). While participation and the interplay between participants, exhibition elements, and situations have already been discussed ([Chapter 8.2.1](#)), a focus on the performative perspective adds further insight by showing what these relations brought into being through participation, and how they constituted emergent events of participation and *Bildungsmomente*. Wulf and Zirfas (2014) propose that the performative perspective directs attention to the practical, social, and cultural order of phenomena, including their interrelations, development, syntheses, differences, and active and passive moments (see [Chapter 2.2.2](#)). Similarly to Wulf and Zirfas, Fischer-Lichte include interrelations as focal points of performative analysis. The pathway reconstructions contribute to this discussion by specifying the interrelations between the performative participation event and the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*. The central idea of the framework is to reconstruct how actions, interactions (as pathway processes) become interconnected within participation pathways and how they together form relational configurations. From a performative perspective, relations do not simply connect already existing elements, but they emerge through interactions in the first place and simultaneously contribute to the constitution of pathway configurations. Certain participation processes become observable, intensified, shifted, or receded into the background, as different configurations emerge, characterised by particular constellations of dominant processes, their relations and shifting dynamics. Fischer-Lichte's (2021) concepts of bodily co-presence and the autopoietic feedback loop can be brought back again in this regard, since the pathway reconstructions further highlight how the group dynamics and the participant's orientation were performative through relations within a pathway. Relations among participants, as well as participants' relations with exhibition elements, stories, objects, and situations, formed part of the configurations. These elements and situations acquired significance and meaning through their relations to one another. An example of this is the gradual conversational-immersive participation pathway (P5), where the group first functioned as an unfamiliar social environment introducing novelty, then eventually as a supportive and open atmosphere for personal sharing. Through the performative relational configurations in the participants' pathways, this reality was brought into being and formed a shift in relating to others, as the participant opened up more than usual. The pathways extend theo-

retical insights by showing how relations accumulated, shifted, and interconnected within the open and emergent performative events of participation.

Beyond the event character and the relational configurations of pathways, performative processes of perception, meaning-making, and articulation also play a constitutive role in the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*. This aspect can be discussed in relation to Fischer-Lichte (2021), Wulf and Zirfas (2014), Butler (1988), Austin (1962/1975), Copei (1930/2019), Zirfas (2014), and Koller (2023). Returning to the theoretical point of departure that *Bildung* is performative, and to the discussion of the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* as a relational, open, and emergent performative event, leads back to the argument that perception is a performative moment in the generation of meaning (Fischer-Lichte, 2021, pp. 78). Throughout the participation pathways, perception and meaning-making repeatedly appeared as central processes, constantly interplaying with other processes. Fischer-Lichte argues that perception is neither entirely directed nor entirely random, but continuously shifts between these modes (2021, p. 79). Participants enter the exhibition with particular intentions, interests, and orientations, which also means that the setting of an educative-interactive exhibition might direct perception and the generation of meaning towards recognising opportunities for *Bildungsmomente*. While shifting between experiencing situations as they appear, participants also interpret these experiences. This also corresponds with Wulf and Zirfas' performative understanding of perception, in which "the rhythms of the interplay between order and movement, memory and expectation, participation and distance" become central to *Bildungsprozesse* (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014, pp. 518–519, translated by AS). While perceiving them, participants continuously attribute meanings to situations, interactions, installations, and conversations during participation. These moments later become reconstructable as significant moments and dominant processes within the pathways. As participants retrospectively reorganise their meanings, shifts in relating to understandings, to others, to themselves, and to the world became traceable. Perception and meaning-making, therefore, create important points for reconstructing the emergence of *Bildungsmomente*, both within participation and retrospectively, while the pathways enable these processes to be reconstructed in relation to one another.

This insight can also be related to Butler's understanding of transformation through repetition (1988), as discussed by Wulf and Zirfas (2014, p. 521), Koller (2023, p. 162), and Fischer-Lichte (2021, pp. 48–49). The performative interplay of perception and meaning-making recurred throughout the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* and connected the transformative potential of different significant moments within a pathway. As Wulf and Zirfas

formulate it, performative inquiry is interested in “how action emerges ... and how its event character relates to its repetitive aspects” (2014, p. 516, translated by AS). Repetition continuously reworked the meaning of experiences. This also explains why examining performative practices on the micro-level, as recommended by Wulf and Zirfas, proved particularly fruitful. It became possible to follow the emergence of Bildungsmomente to the level of meaning-making itself, where shifts emerged through these repeated attributions and reinterpretations of meanings across participation. Here, Zirfas’ argument that meaning is attributed through collective negotiation is equally relevant, as it was clearly observable within the reconstructed pathways. It also connects with the finding that collective negotiation during participation did not produce one shared meaning but multiple meanings. The pathway examples illustrate this in detail. The interrelations between significant moments and the processes of the open, relational participation event, including meaning-making, extend our understanding of the performativity of Bildungsmomente and of how they emerge. Beyond locating transformation in clearly identifiable experiences of crisis or problem situations (Koller, 2023, p. 15), the reconstructed pathways suggest that participants gradually developed new ways of perceiving, interpreting, and relating to unfamiliar situations through these repeated processes of meaning-making. Experiences of difference are, in this case, not clearly interpretable as starting points of shifts. They appear as moments with complex temporality and relationality that are repeatedly perceived, interpreted, and reinterpreted throughout the pathway, thereby becoming interconnected within the emergence of Bildungsmomente. This also nuances Koller’s discussion of transformative Bildungsprozesse.

The retrospective articulation of Bildungsmomente also invites a return to Zirfas’ (2014) discussion of temporality. While the previous paragraph addressed perception and meaning-making as processes embedded within participation itself, *in actu*, another finding was that the articulation of a Bildungsmoment often appeared later as a separate performative act. Copei’s fruitful Bildungsmoment, understood as “a genuine act of insight” (Copei, 1930/2019, p. 73, translated by AS), is likewise described as emerging through a process. Although this research conceptualises this developmental process as ongoing rather than culminating in a completed result, the retrospective articulation nevertheless constitutes a distinguishable performative moment within it, similar to Copei’s notion. It is in this moment that participants, for example, realise they now view a topic addressed by the exhibition from a new perspective. This leads back to Austin’s understanding of speech acts (1962/1975). In that regard, it means that questionnaire responses as speech acts function as more than reports of what happened. In articulating shifts, participants do not merely describe a Bild-

ungsmoment but actively constitute it as educationally meaningful. Being performative, the articulation is self-referential and reality-constructing, and by referring to the emergence process, it thereby provides an empirical access point for reconstructing the emergence of Bildungsmomente. Through the act of articulating, the participant performatively brings the Bildungsmoment into being. Thus, existing interpretations of participation, perception, meaning-making, and Bildungsmomente can be complemented by these insights into their emergence, the performativity of articulating them, and their relation to their embeddedness within participation pathways.

Participation brings Bildung into being through its performative and liminal character. This aspect can be discussed in relation to Fischer-Lichte's (2021) understanding of liminality. Fischer-Lichte mentions that participants in performative events are placed "in a situation between different rules and norms – a liminal situation. It is this experience of liminality that, under certain conditions, can unfold a transformative force within the subject" (2021, p. 81, translated by AS). Participation in the interactive exhibition can be understood as a liminal situation. As a situated performative event, including encountering and working through novelty, the relational configurations emerging within it, the recurring processes of perception and meaning-making with their transformative potential, and the retrospective articulation of educational significance, it constitutes the emergence of Bildungsmomente. Participation is therefore not merely the context in which Bildungsmomente occur; since their emergence unfolds performatively through participation itself, participation brings Bildung into being.

At a more abstract level, this research itself can be understood as a performative process that brought into being an approach – the pathway framework – for studying the emergence of Bildungsmomente in an interactive exhibition, through which Bildung theory, the performative perspective, and constructivist methodology could meet. This final point of discussion is connected to Schoonenboom's (2023) considerations about the performative approach to research. Although Schoonenboom develops this idea in relation to mixed methods research, it also offers a useful perspective for reflecting on this master's thesis, which likewise brings together different methods, methodologies, and theoretical concepts. Schoonenboom argues that:

... the aim of mixed methods research is to bring multiple research worlds into being through different methods, ... exploring these worlds, and coordinating the products of these worlds to obtain a deeper and more inclusive understanding of a phenomenon than would be possible using one method alone. (2023, p. 136)

Following this line of thought, in this thesis I brought multiple research worlds into being through different methods, concepts and theories, namely through the use of constructivist grounded theory, data collected through questionnaires and observations, performativity, concepts of *Bildung* and *Bildungsmomente*. I explored these worlds and coordinated their products in developing the pathway framework, thereby arriving at a deeper and more inclusive understanding of the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* in participation in interactive exhibitions than would have been possible through any single perspective alone. *Bildung* theory makes it possible to conceptualise *Bildungsmomente*, novelty, and shifting relations between self and world. The performative perspective offers a way of understanding participation and *Bildung* as emergent, embodied, relational, and situated processes. Constructivist grounded theory provides a methodology for reconstructing these processes and relations and remaining grounded in the empirical material. The meeting of these different research worlds created the analytical space in which the idea of pathways could be formulated in the first place. Approaching the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* through the pathway framework then coordinates these different research worlds and thus makes it possible to reconstruct participation and the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* as interconnected aspects of the same unfolding phenomenon.

8.3 Contributions

Earlier in the thesis (in [Chapter 4](#)), four potential areas of contribution were outlined based on Wulf and Zirfas' discussion of performative educational research (2006, pp. 10–12). At that stage, the anticipated areas of relevance were derived from the theoretical framework and research design. After elaborating the findings and discussion, they can now be revisited.

The first field of contribution addresses the relation between *Bildung* and participation. The concept of pathways offers a way to approach participation without reducing it to predefined categories or forms of engagement. By reconstructing participation as unfolding pathways, it is possible to analyse how processes such as conversation, receptivity, interpretation, reflection, contribution, and immersion relate to one another in specific situations, and how their performative characteristics show themselves. This contributes to educational research by taking the performative tendency of culture into account and providing a process-sensitive perspective for empirical and practical relevance.

The second area of contribution concerns empirical research on *Bildung*. Questions of how transformation can be approached empirically have long been discussed within *Bildung* theory. The research encompasses phenomenological, ethnographic, interactionist, and

constructivist approaches and brings them into dialogue through a performative perspective. Building on this, the study contributes insights from reconstructing the emergence of Bildungsmomente in a concrete empirical setting. In particular, participants' articulations of meaning, reflections, and descriptions of experiences proved to be important points of empirical access for reconstructing the emergence of Bildungsmomente. The study thereby contributes to ongoing discussions on the empirical accessibility of Bildung and offers methodological insights into how the emergence of Bildungsmomente can be approached and interpreted.

The third area of contribution highlights the process-oriented understanding of Bildung. Bildungsmomente can be understood as part of broader transformations of self–world relations that unfold through participation. The pathway brings participation and the emergence of Bildungsmomente into relation by understanding participation as the process through which Bildungsmomente emerge. In this way, shifts can be traced not only in articulated reflections or cognitive reorientations but also in embodied, social, and situational forms of participation. The study thereby contributes to understanding Bildung as an ongoing process and offers a way of relating moments of emergence to the broader processes of thinking differently and becoming different in which they are embedded.

Finally, the master's thesis contributes to rethinking pedagogical action beyond a primary focus on intentionality, rationality, and predefined outcomes. The performative perspective turns attention toward embodied, habitual, material, and relational dimensions. The pathway reconstructions also include how interactions with other participants, facilitation, exhibition content, and the material setting become part of the emergence of Bildungsmomente. This offers insights into how embodiment and material aspects of participation relate to the emergence of Bildungsmomente and supports an understanding of educational processes as situated, thereby contributing to the formulation of implications for educational practice.

8.4 Practical Implications

As the emergence of Bildungsmomente is situated and relational, a first implication is to think less in terms of directing participation and more in terms of opening a world of possibilities for diverse forms of engagement through which participants can explore their own pathways. This may help a wider range of participants find personally meaningful ways of engaging with the content. The diversity of participation pathways and the complexity of individual pathways identified in this study highlight the value of educational settings that offer multiple opportunities for engagement and allow different participation pathways to

unfold. The pathway reconstructions further show that participation should not be equated with observable contribution alone. This implies recognising both active and more receptive processes of participation and creating educational settings in which participants can choose to engage in ways that feel meaningful and appropriate to them.

Secondly, Bildungsmomente cannot be planned or produced directly. Still, the pathway reconstructions highlight the role of opportunities for meaning-making, reflection, interaction, and engagement with unfamiliar perspectives and experiences in the emergence of Bildungsmomente. Reflection questions, invitations for individual and collective interpretation, opportunities for dialogue, and interactive forms of engagement (not necessarily observable and immediate) may help participants connect new topics and experiences to their own lives and perspectives. Practical implications can involve creating open-ended questions to engage with unfamiliar perspectives, including free exploration of materials and content, and providing room for interpretation and discussion, while recognising that whether, how, and when Bildungsmomente emerge ultimately remain contingent and participant-dependent.

The findings also point to the educational potential of interactive exhibitions beyond museum settings. The exhibition examined in this study was situated in a community-based, non-formal educational context. A third implication suggests that interactive exhibitions may offer meaningful opportunities to engage with educational themes in cultural centres, community spaces, and other non-formal educational environments. Diverse groups of participants may encounter new perspectives and gain access to innovative educational experiences.

A fourth practical implication can be formulated about the pathway as a perspective itself. While developed as an analytical framework, it may also offer a way of thinking about the emergence of Bildungsmomente and participation in educational practice. Considering participation pathways directs attention to unfolding processes. It also provides a strategy to think about relations, how people, content, and settings (or more precisely, pathway-affording elements, pathway processes and process dimensions) become connected within educational situations. It may support educators, facilitators, and participants in attending to the complexity and processual character of participation, and to the different ways in which meaningful experiences, or even Bildungsmomente, may emerge within it.

8.5 Limitations and Future Research

Some limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this master's thesis. The research was conducted within a single interactive exhibition focusing on interculturality. The idea of the emergence of Bildungsmomente in participation pathways was developed

through a detailed analysis of this context and captured broader dynamics of participatory educational situations. Its transferability to other educational settings remains an open question, an assumption that requires further study. Future research could help refine the pathway framework by examining how it translates across contexts and initiatives, such as exhibitions, community theatre initiatives, artist-led workshops, participatory museum programs, collaborative art studio programs, community-based cultural projects, and courses or programs within cultural institutions.

The analysis focused on the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* within participation pathways and on the articulation of these moments within the empirical material. The theory and the findings imply that *Bildungsmomente* are embedded within broader *Bildungsprozesse* and may form part of ongoing transformations of self–world relations. However, this research did not aim to examine these processes beyond the immediate participatory situation. The process-oriented research logic addressed reconstructable emergence processes, but the relationship between *Bildungsmomente* and long-term *Bildungsprozesse* remains open to future research, raising questions such as whether and how *Bildungsmomente* redirect it, become integrated, or develop in significance over time.

Lastly, this master’s thesis was grounded in the theory of *Bildung*. This focus made it possible to examine the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* and address questions of transformation, but it also meant that related fields of research, such as museum learning, visitor studies, and learning in interactive exhibitions, were not explored in depth, and learning and *Bildung* were not differentiated within the analysis. Given the overlap between learning and *Bildung*, future research could pay greater attention to exploring how they relate within participation pathways.

9 Conclusion

My journey through this thesis began with the interactive exhibition *Intercultural Threads*, which also served as the point of departure for the theoretical and methodological questions pursued throughout the study. As the creator of the exhibition, I approached the research from an insider perspective, already familiar with the exhibition and the participants' interactions with it. The thesis is therefore written from an engaged position that does not claim neutrality or distance from the field. It represents an exploration that seeks to bring lived experiences, observations, and empirical material into dialogue with theoretical perspectives on Bildung, participation, and performativity – perspectives that are often considered distinct, but in lived experience, they appear inseparable from one another. Following this interest required developing a way of reconstructing participation as it unfolded. The pathway framework emerged from this effort. By coordinating the conceptual contribution of Bildung theory, the interpretive lens of the performative perspective, and the methodology of constructivist grounded theory through the reconstruction of participation pathways, the pathway framework provided an analytical space in which these research worlds could meet. This enabled an empirically grounded understanding of how Bildungsmomente emerge through participation in interactive exhibitions.

Looking across the reconstructed pathways, what becomes salient is not a single way in which Bildungsmomente emerge. The pathway framework developed in this study approaches participation through the relations among pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, and process dimensions, thereby making its complexity integrated into the analysis. Encounters with perspectives, stories, situations, and experiences became meaningful through different processes and in different ways. Some emerged through conversation, others through reflection, contribution, receptivity, interpretation, or immersion. Reconstructing participation pathways opens a view on participation as an unfolding process, making it possible to trace how interactions, meanings, elements and processes of a pathway relate to one another. Novelty recurred across pathways and derived its meaning from how participants engaged with it. In these pathways, the emergence of Bildungsmomente is connected to the relations and interplays of pathway processes through which participants engage with situations, make sense of experiences, and begin to relate differently to themselves, others, or the world around them. The pathway reconstructions show that understanding participation is central to understanding the emergence of Bildungsmomente. They direct attention to the situated, relational, and processual dynamics through which participation, novelty, meaning-

making, and the emergence of Bildungsmomente become connected. Bildungsmomente appear not as separate from participation but as embedded in, and emerging through participation pathways themselves. They indicate that Bildung may be less about encounters with novelty itself and more about how novelty is worked through in participation.

If participation is where Bildungsmomente emerge, then understanding participation becomes essential to understanding Bildung. The pathway framework formulated in this master's thesis, therefore, directs attention not only to meaningful moments that appear as shifts of self–world relations in retrospect, but, most importantly, to the present interplays and qualities of unfolding processes through which such meanings come into being. Approaching these sites of Bildung from a performative perspective, participation is not merely the context of Bildung. It is the process of Bildung coming into being.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participants and Groups

Group number	Participant code number
G1	P1
G1	P2
G1	P3
G1	P4
G2	P5
G2	P6
G2	P7
G2	P8
G3	P9
G3	P10
G3	P11
G3	P12
G3	P13
G3	P14
G4	P15
G4	P16
G4	P17
G4	P18
G4	P19
G4	P20
G4	P21
G4	P22
G4	P23

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

About the exhibition

- (1) How would you describe your overall experience of the exhibition?

About the *Threads and Blocks* installation

- (2) What did you do at the *Threads and Blocks* installation, and how did you engage with it?
- (3) How did you experience this activity?
- (4) Was there a moment when you felt that you learned something? If so, please tell us about it.
- (5) Is there anything else you would like to share?

Background information

This section is optional and does not need to be completed.

Gender:

Age:

Highest level of education:

Kérdőív

A kiállításról

- (1) Milyen élmény volt számodra a kiállítás összességében?

A *Szálak és Blokkok* installációról

- (2) Mit csináltál a *Szálak és Blokkok* installációnál, és hogyan?
- (3) Hogyan élted meg ezt az élményt?
- (4) Volt olyan pillanat, amikor úgy érezted, hogy tanultál valamit? Ha volt ilyen, kérlek, mesélj róla!
- (5) Van még valami, amit szeretnél megosztani?

Háttérinformációk

Ez a rész szabadon kitölthető, nem kötelező.

Nem:

Életkor:

Legmagasabb iskolai végzettség:

Appendix C: Comparative Memo P11 and P23

The comparative memos were written during the analytical process to compare pathways and to further develop the analytical framework. Their purpose was not only to identify similarities and differences across pathways but also to refine the analytical constructs and explore their relations in greater detail. Through the writing of comparative memos, pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, process dimensions, and emerging Bildungsmomente were continuously compared, differentiated, and further developed. Memo writing was a central phase in identifying the analytical focus and refining the details of the framework presented in the results chapter.

P11 and P23

P11 silent receptive-reflective participation pathway and P23 content-oriented conversational-contributive participation pathway represent two markedly different participation pathways from different groups within the same interactive exhibition setting. At first glance, they appear to stand in contrast: one is quiet, inwardly oriented, while the other is socially expressive, engaged with the material and other participants, characterised by observable contribution. The analytical value of comparing these two cases lies not in treating them as opposites, but in examining how different configurations of participation give rise to different pathway processes and forms of emergence. Therefore, their comparison reveals unexpected similarities in the interplay of pathway-affording elements and pathway processes. Both participants articulate a shift in perspective. In this comparative memo, I would like to analyse how Bildungsmomente emerge with particular attention to pathway-specific configurations of facilitation, engagement with the content, social dynamics and participant orientation. For that, I chose to work with the pathways of P11 and P23.

Pathway-Affording Elements

Both participants enter the exhibition with positive affective openness; still, their orientations diverge early. P11 is oriented towards an attentive listener position within a socially challenging atmosphere, whereas P23 positions themselves as an active participant, responding to material-based and content-based invitations to contribute. In the P11 pathway, the entry is connected to social aspects and highlights the facilitator's positive attitude during the guided tour. The participant emphasises the facilitator's energy and personal storytelling as the primary sources of enjoyment and engagement. This socially oriented affective openness introduces a receptive quality to participation. In contrast, P23's entry is space- and content-oriented from the outset. The participant highlights the exhibition's structure, interactive de-

sign, and thematic framing as elements that invited engagement. Openness here is directed toward the exhibition's content, which then interplays with pathway processes of contribution at the interactive installations and through participation in conversations about the content.

The response to facilitation differs between the two pathways, but it is central in both. In P23's pathway, facilitation is thematised mainly through the exhibition's interactive design, prompts, and small thematic topics that actively organise participation. Facilitation in this pathway supports engagement and also provides a structure for social interaction, making it easier to connect, share personal stories, and contribute materially. Content is not only received but also worked through dialogically, as participants follow instructions, discuss, and relate the exhibited narratives to their own experiences. P11's response to facilitation is mainly affective and focused on the person of the facilitator, their stories and instructions. Content is valued as significant information, but it remains a rather marginal pathway-affording element, in contrast to P23's pathway. In the P11 pathway, content supports engagement and frames the experience as meaningful, while the facilitator's and other participants' contributions sustain immersion. P11 finds emotional resonance towards facilitation, whereas in P23, it organises participatory interactions.

Pathway Processes and Dimensions

Both pathways illustrate how group dynamics and participant orientation afford pathway processes in relation to the material setting, content and facilitation. However, the pathways differ considerably in how these affordances are taken up within participation. This becomes apparent in the dominance and qualities of pathway processes. P11's participation is characterised by a silent, receptive quality, whereas in the P23 pathway, content-oriented, conversational, and contributive qualities are prominent. In P11's pathway, anxiety redirects participation into hesitating to participate in verbal contribution, but participation is maintained through attentive listening, affective immersion and reflection. In P23, engagement unfolds through observable actions, such as handling materials, sharing stories, making collective decisions, and leaving traces in the exhibition. Participation involves engaging with the material, content, and other participants; conversation and storytelling are dominant in the pathway. For P11, the group serves as a social environment, approached not through exchange but by listening to their stories. Immersion is maintained individually in P11 and collectively in P23. The silent receptive participation in P11 is not a sign of disengagement but a meaningful way of participating, afforded by the participant's orientation and the group dynamics. Interestingly, the comparison highlights the different qualities of participation in interplay

with similar dominant processes (e.g., immersion, reflection, engagement with the group in some form).

Significant Moments

When selecting pathways for analysis, I decided to start with these two, as they both include moments in which the participation pathway, more specifically, the dominant pathway processes are reconfigured. These moments take very different forms and emerge also at different times in the process. What makes them analytically comparable is their function. While they differ in form, in both cases, a moment of tension opens up reflection and reorients the emergence of Bildungsmomente.

In the content-oriented conversational-contributive pathway of P23, this moment of reorientation occurs in the context of storytelling. At the *Threads and Blocks* installation, the small group's collective decision to throw back a thread introduces a significant moment in the pathway. A potentially uncomfortable topic is not pursued further, thereby temporarily interrupting immersion. Rather than breaking engagement, this interruption becomes meaningful in itself. The decision not to unfold a topic is later explicitly reflected upon as "telling", indicating that meaning is produced not only through what is said, but also through what is collectively avoided or withheld. In the P23 pathway, this significant moment is partly observable, socially negotiated, and materially enacted, as it is directly embedded in the ongoing social and material interaction of storytelling at the interactive installation.

P11's silent receptive-reflective participation pathway has no such observable significant moment during the interaction itself. The significant moments here are internal, temporally delayed, and only accessible through the questionnaire responses. Anxiety shapes participation at the *Threads and Blocks* installation, giving the pathway a silent, receptive quality. The meaning of the experience is articulated after the situation, in retrospective reflection, as the participant reports feeling regret. Regret for not having participated more actively becomes a point of self-examination. This marks a reflective moment, turning towards thoughts on the social situation itself.

Placing these moments side by side highlights that significant moments in pathways do not follow a single logic of emergence. Moments of recognition, reflection, questioning may emerge immediately or later, collectively or internally, and in an observable, non-observable or partly observable way. What they share is their role in characterising a pathway and providing points of access into the process of the emergence of a Bildungsmoment.

Emergence of Bildungsmomente

In both the P11 and P23 pathways, a Bildungsmoment emerges, though not through the same participatory logic. The comparison makes it clear that Bildungsmomente can emerge along unique pathways in an interactive exhibition.

In P23's pathway, content interpretation and reflection are closely tied to performative action through shared storytelling, collective decision-making, and material contributions. Content-related insights are processed dialogically. A Bildungsmoment emerges as a shift in perspective through the experience of making analogies between exhibited narratives and familiar contexts. The emergence process is embedded in social interaction, highlighting its embodied and situational character. The participant lists content-oriented learnings that emerged as insights from participation and formulates a shift in perspective on the topic. P11's pathway reveals a different temporal structure. The emergence of a Bildungsmoment remains largely non-observable during participation and is articulated retrospectively. A shift in thinking is emerging from reflecting on one's own participation, regarding relating to and interacting with others. Rather than emerging through collective discussion of content, as in P23, the emergence process is embedded in individual receptive engagement and reflective reinterpretation of the experience.

The emergence of Bildungsmomente is non-linear across both pathways; while temporality is important, it does not follow a clear sequence. In the P11 pathway, similar processes, as in the P23 pathway, appear in different dominance, dynamics and intensities. The comparison suggests that in an interactive exhibition, Bildungsmomente emerge through pathway-specific configurations of participation. Bildungsmomente in P11 and P23 are articulated in relation to processes of meaning-making that reorient understanding. Getting to know the content is an essential part of the process, especially in P23, but the pathways enable diverse ways for Bildungsmomente to emerge. Silent, receptive participation and content-related conversations may all build pathways that lead to shifts in perspective, thinking, or interactions with others.

Conclusion From the Comparison

The comparison between the silent receptive-reflective participation and the content-oriented conversational-contributive participation pathways demonstrates that the emergence of Bildungsmomente in the context of an interactive exhibition cannot be adequately understood through isolated moments or idealised forms of participation. Bildungsmomente emerge through participation pathways configured by the interplay among pathway-affording ele-

ments (such as facilitation, material setting, content, group dynamics and participant orientation) and pathway processes. Approaching participation from a the perspective of pathways makes it possible to trace how different processes unfold over time and how moments and processes gain meaning within a specific configuration. By highlighting pathways rather than participant types or learning outcomes, this analytic lens offers a way to understand Bildung in interactive exhibitions as situational and contextual, and emphasises its relational and processual character. Within the same space, the same content can be encountered and interpreted in different ways along individual pathways, because, as situations with their group dynamics and participatory orientations vary, the configuration of pathway-building elements and the pathway processes that interplay with them make every pathway of participation and the emergence of a Bildungsmoment unique and unrepeatable.

Appendix D: Comparative Memo P5 and P13

The pathways of P5 (gradual conversational-immersive participation pathway) and P13 (cognitively mediated interpretive-reflective participation pathway) are from different groups, which partly contextualises their differences. At the same time, several similarities between pathway-affording elements and processes are shared across the two cases. In both pathways, participants actively engage with the installations (the material setting), the exhibition's thematic content, and other participants. They read instructions, select themes, actively participate in storytelling at the *Threads and Blocks* installation, articulate significant moments of this experience, and both involve shifts that can be interpreted as emerging Bildungsmomente. In both, the experience is described as positive, and participants report a sense of novelty regarding the perspectives encountered in the exhibition or those shared by other participants. In both cases, the *Threads and Blocks* installation functions as an invitation to interaction and a structure for storytelling. Both participants describe moments of learning connected to the exhibition content and both reflect on others' perspectives. The comparison, therefore, does not begin from opposing forms of participation, but takes similarities as its starting point. These similarities are analytically important because they show that both pathways include the emergence of Bildungsmomente from a positive affective orientation and a sense of novelty, from similar interplays of process dimensions with pathway-affording elements are dominant, specifically material design, group dynamics, and content; yet process dimensions vary. In the P5 pathway, conversational interaction with the group is dominant. While the pathway of P13 also includes conversation, it has a different quality that comes to the fore with the dominance of content interpretation and individual reflection. The comparison brings these varying dimensions, especially in temporality, dominance and qualities, into focus.

Pathway-Affording Elements

Openness and curiosity characterise initial participant orientation in both pathways, as they describe the encounter with the exhibition environment as new and interesting. In both pathways, the exhibition space invites attention to unfamiliar cultural content. However, the character of this novelty and the way participants encounter it differ between the two pathways. Not only the participant's initial orientation but also the emerging group dynamics play a role in how participation unfolds. In the case of P5, initial orientation is characterised by a positive affective orientation combined with anticipatory uncertainty. The participant describes having many thoughts about what the experience might be like, but this uncer-

tainty later dissolves through the interactive character of the guided tour and the calm atmosphere created by the facilitator and the group. Here, facilitation, the aesthetic and conceptual quality of the installations, and the open social atmosphere afford a socially oriented participation. Reassurance and social engagement gradually transform initial uncertainty into a more comfortable form of participation. Within this configuration, the novelty of the exhibition here frames the entire experience as a rare opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations with others and to encounter the topic of culture.

P13 describes the exhibition space as an information-rich, visually dense environment that invites interpretation and processing, likening it to an “information avalanche”. The material setting and the facilitation frame the experience as a cognitive task. The participant first seeks to understand the installation’s structure, details, and rules of participation before engaging in interaction. Participation, therefore, begins with the understanding, interpreting and reflexive processing of the exhibition environment.

While both pathways begin with novelty and strong interest in the content, the comparison reveals how these shared elements are embedded into different initial configurations of pathway-affording elements and pathway processes. In P5, immersion to participation stabilises through the supportive group atmosphere and the sense of emotional safety that develops during the interaction. In P13, immersion develops through cognitive engagement. The comparison reveals how the installations, spatial arrangement, and instructions provide a framework for participants to move through the exhibition and interact with it. In both cases, the material setting does not simply provide background context but actively mediates participation by offering entry points for engagement with the content and with other participants.

Pathway Processes and Dimensions

An interesting aspect of the comparison between the two pathways lies in the specific ways participation unfolds during the interaction around the installation. In both pathways, taking part in conversation is central. In the P5 pathway, participation develops through conversation and discussion of topics that gradually synchronise the group. An increasingly immersive and more personal conversational dynamic develops. The installation’s prompts initiate storytelling, and in Group 2, these exchanges evolve into flowing conversations in which participants respond to each other’s experiences. Observation notes indicate that the group gradually becomes more relaxed and engaged in the discussion, spending considerable time at the installation and engaging in extended conversations. Within this dynamic, P5 becomes more open towards personal sharing. The participant notes that they shared aspects of their own

life that they would not normally share when meeting new people. This individual experience in the collective process is a specific characteristic of this pathway.

Participation in the P13 pathway follows a more individually structured pattern. The participant reads numerous prompts and reflects on them before selecting a topic that feels personally relevant. In contrast to the extended discussion in Group 2, conversational interaction in Group 3 takes place through sequential storytelling. The participant shares a thought or story on a topic, and the storytelling does not evolve into a discussion; instead, the next person in the group continues with their story. P13 describes thinking about others' stories while listening, indicating that engagement continues internally even when verbal participation is limited. Observation notes also suggest that the group interaction remains reserved and that after an initial round of sharing, participants split into smaller groups of two to three, and continue to explore other parts of the exhibition.

Comparing the pathway process of conversational interaction highlights how group dynamics shape individual experiences. The P5 pathway emphasises the collective dynamics in which participants gradually open up and build on each other's contributions. The group constellation in the P13 pathway affords a more individual, interpretive participation.

Significant Moments

The P5 and P13 pathways reveal pathway configurations that highlight the varying process dimensions. The dimensions show how pathway processes unfold on the pathway. In P5, processes unfold in a gradually intensifying way. A significant aspect of this pathway is the shift from initial uncertainty toward increasingly open interaction within the group. As mentioned earlier, P5 shares aspects of their own life that they would not normally share when meeting new people. This indicates that the social interaction moves beyond usual patterns of conversation. In this pathway, the characteristic temporal dynamic is the progressive, gradual development of conversational engagement and mutual responsiveness within the group.

A characteristic process dimension in both pathways is the dominance of reflection. In P5, it is primarily related to the conversations that develop around the installation. Reflection is thus embedded in the interaction itself, as participant together interpret the exhibition's themes in relation to their own experiences and those shared by others. In the cognitively mediated interpretive participation pathway of P13, topic selection is a significant moment, as it allows the participant to position themselves in relation to the themes presented by the exhibition and those chosen by other participants. Reflection in the pathway of P13 appears in an individual form, as an interpretive process, in which these perspectives encountered through the exhibition and the other participants' stories are processed individually. Later in

the interaction, reflection reappears with a content-oriented focus when the participant encounters an unexpected connection in the cultural content. This moment of surprise opens the possibility for further reflection beyond the immediate situation.

Looking at the two pathways, we can see that the same processes can appear with varying temporalities, degrees of dominance, and different qualities in their interplay. Temporal variations can be, for example, a gradual opening towards more personal sharing in the conversation, or a cognitively mediated quality with first interpreting and then interacting. Reflection can unfold collectively through shared conversation and interpersonal exchange, or internally through interpretation as one engages with the content. These variations indicate differences in the quality dimensions of pathway processes.

Emergence of Bildungsmomente

What these pathways share is that both involve a sense of novelty and opportunities where unfamiliar perspectives become available, inviting interaction. Both participants emphasise that encountering unfamiliar cultural practices and perspectives facilitated reflection and provided new realisations. The exhibition environment brings together several elements that offer a new way to interact with others and with the topic of culture and interculturality. Participants reflect on the cultural practices and on the viewpoints of other participants.

In both pathways, the emergence of a Bildungsmoment begins with this encounter with unfamiliar perspectives. The exhibition invites participants to read and reflect on diverse cultural themes, while the *Threads and Blocks* installation prompts them to share stories and introduce additional viewpoints. In this situation, both participants compared their own experiences and assumptions with those presented in the exhibition and by others, each in their own way, along different pathways.

In the gradual conversational-immersive participation pathway of P5, the participant articulates the accumulation of new cultural knowledge and perspectives as learning. The participant refers to several specific topics encountered during the exhibition, such as cultural symbols and practices, as well as stories shared by other participants, which were previously unfamiliar. Significance appears in a series of recognitions connected to the content and to the experiences shared within the group. This cumulative process is embedded in the participation and integrates the perspectives encountered into the experience as a whole. The participant describes the exhibition as enjoyable and meaningful, and summarises the newly encountered cultural practices and stories as valuable insights gained during the event. In this pathway, a shift occurs in how one interacts with others, and this, along with other significant

moments, becomes part of a coherent, positively evaluated experience that reaches closure by the end.

In the cognitively mediated participation pathway of P13, moments of surprise can be reconstructed. While engaging with the installation's themes, the participant encounters a connection they had not previously considered and describes it as something they "never would have expected". This moment prompts a reconsideration of earlier assumptions and initiates a reflective process. The participant notes that they will likely return to the topic in the future. Thus the participant takes something forward, beyond the exhibition context. This suggests that the emergence of a Bildungsmoment is less about the acquisition of knowledge and more about opening of an ongoing interpretive process.

Comparing P5 and P13 pathways further underscores the insight (that became central from the comparison of P23 and P11 as well) that the emergence of Bildungsmomente in interactive exhibitions does not follow a single trajectory. Although both pathways involve encounters with unfamiliar perspectives, similar interplays among pathway processes and with the material setting, thematic content, and others' perspectives, the way Bildungsmomente emerge differs in many aspects. This comparison shows that Bildungsmomente might emerge from a gradual shift in interaction or from moments of surprise that question earlier assumptions and open an ongoing process of reflection. The dimensions also explained important variations. When considering temporality, the emergence of a Bildungsmoment might be integrated into the experience and concluded within participation, or it may extend beyond participation. What these processes share is their potential to reorient participants' views of themselves and others, and to connect the exhibition experience with broader reflections on cultural perspectives and social life.

Conclusion From the Comparison

The comparison of the gradual conversational-immersive and cognitively mediated interpretive-reflective participation pathways confirms the insights from the comparison of P11 and P23, as it shows that participation and the emergence of Bildungsmomente in interactive exhibitions unfold through multiple possible relational configurations of pathway-affording elements and pathway processes, like the interplay of participation with facilitation, material setting, content, group dynamics, or the participant's own orientation. Rather than being determined by these pathway-affording elements, participation is afforded through specific configurations of these elements in very different pathways. Even within the same exhibition setting, participation pathways remain open, as varying group and interaction dynamics, as well as individual orientations, give rise to distinct trajectories in which Bildungsmomente

might emerge. With that, meaning-making of participation also unfolds differently. The comparison further highlights the situational (pathway-specific) and relational (same space and installation, but different spaces for interactions due to group dynamics, for example) characteristics of the emergence of Bildungsmomente in interactive exhibitions. This comparative memo contributes particularly to the development of the process dimensions and to understanding how similar pathway-affording elements and pathway processes may nevertheless enable different forms of emergence.

Abstract

Non-formal education has developed into a flexible educational field that responds to the limitations of formal systems while orienting its practices towards participants' interests, experiences, and needs. Community-based artistic and cultural settings, such as community theatre initiatives or interactive exhibitions, are frequently discussed as educational environments that emphasise participation, aesthetic practice, and engagement. Approaching non-formal educational contexts through the German concept of *Bildung* raises important questions about how educational processes unfold through participation. *Bildungsmomente* are understood as situated moments within these ongoing processes, embedded in the present while remaining connected to past experiences and future possibilities. To study *Bildungsmomente*, this thesis adopts a performative perspective, approaching participation as a performative process through which meanings, interactions, and educational experiences are continuously brought into being. Performativity draws attention to how these processes are enacted in relation to one another, allowing *Bildung* to be understood as unfolding in and through participation itself.

Although research on *Bildung* from a performative perspective and on participation in non-formal educational contexts share important theoretical insights into *Bildungsmomente*, these perspectives have remained only partially connected. In particular, the emergence of *Bildungsmomente* has rarely been reconstructed empirically as an unfolding process within concrete participatory situations. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to examine how *Bildungsmomente* emerge through participation pathways in an interactive exhibition. Participation pathways are understood as analytically reconstructed trajectories that make participation-related processes traceable as they unfold over time and provide a process-oriented way to analyse how *Bildungsmomente* emerge within and across these pathways.

The empirical investigation was set in the interactive exhibition *Intercultural Threads* (*Interkulturális Szálak*) in Győr, Hungary, which invited visitors to explore the theme of interculturality through guided tours, interactive installations, and free exploration. The exhibition offered participants various opportunities to engage with stories, exhibition elements, and one another. The study follows a constructivist grounded theory methodology. Accordingly, the research design was emergent, allowing the analytical focus to develop through engagement with the empirical material. Data collection was conducted during four guided exhibition events using participatory observation and post-visit open-ended questionnaires.

Data analysis followed the iterative principles of constructivist grounded theory through coding, constant comparison, continuous memo writing, and the conceptual development of analytical constructs and the pathway framework.

The findings show that Bildungsmomente emerge through relational, situated, and pathway-specific configurations of participation. Their emergence can be reconstructed through the interplay of pathway-affording elements, pathway processes, and process dimensions, and remains embedded in participation itself. Across participation pathways, Bildungsmomente appear as shifts in how participants relate to others, themselves, or the world. They may involve multiple interconnected significant moments, unfold gradually, become articulated retrospectively, or remain open beyond participation itself. Novelty appeared in multiple forms across pathway-affording elements, deriving its meaning from how participants engaged with it, and was repeatedly connected to the emergence of Bildungsmomente. No specific pathway process could be identified as necessary for the emergence of Bildungsmomente; rather, Bildungsmomente tend to emerge through the qualities that characterise the dominant interplays of the particular participation pathway.

By coordinating the conceptual contribution of Bildung theory, the interpretive lens of the performative perspective, and the methodology of constructivist grounded theory, this thesis provides an empirically grounded understanding of how Bildungsmomente emerge through participation in an interactive exhibition. In doing so, it shifts attention from viewing participation merely as the context of Bildung towards understanding it as the process through which Bildung comes into being.

Abstract

Die non-formale Bildung hat sich zu einem flexiblen Bildungsbereich entwickelt, der auf die Grenzen formaler Bildungssysteme reagiert und seine Bildungspraktiken an den Interessen, Erfahrungen und Bedürfnissen der Teilnehmenden ausrichtet. Gemeinschaftsbasierte künstlerische und kulturelle Kontexte, wie Community-Theater-Initiativen oder interaktive Ausstellungen, werden zunehmend als Bildungsräume verstanden, in denen Partizipation, ästhetische Praxis und Auseinandersetzung im Mittelpunkt stehen. Die Betrachtung non-formaler Bildungskontexte aus der Perspektive des Bildungsbegriffs wirft grundlegende Fragen danach auf, wie Bildungsprozesse durch Partizipation entstehen und sich entfalten. Bildungsmomente werden dabei als situierte Momente innerhalb dieser fortlaufenden Bildungsprozesse verstanden, die im gegenwärtigen Erleben verankert sind und zugleich mit vergangenen Erfahrungen sowie zukünftigen Möglichkeiten verbunden bleiben. Um Bildungsmomente zu untersuchen, nimmt diese Arbeit eine performative Perspektive ein und versteht Partizipation als einen performativen Prozess, in dem Bedeutungen, Interaktionen und Bildungserfahrungen fortlaufend hervorgebracht werden. Die performative Perspektive richtet den Blick darauf, wie diese Prozesse in ihrem wechselseitigen Zusammenspiel hervorgebracht und vollzogen werden, wodurch Bildung als ein Prozess verstanden werden kann, der sich in und durch Partizipation entfaltet.

Obwohl die Forschung zu Bildung aus performativer Perspektive sowie zu Partizipation in non-formalen Bildungskontexten wichtige theoretische Erkenntnisse über Bildungsmomente liefert, sind diese Perspektiven bislang nur teilweise miteinander verbunden worden. Insbesondere wurde die Entstehung von Bildungsmomenten bislang kaum empirisch als sich entfaltender Prozess in konkreten Partizipationssituationen rekonstruiert. Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es daher, zu untersuchen, wie Bildungsmomente entlang von Partizipationspfaden (participation pathways) in einer interaktiven Ausstellung entstehen. Partizipationspfade werden dabei als analytisch rekonstruierte Verläufe von Partizipation verstanden, die partizipationsbezogene Prozesse in ihrem Verlauf nachvollziehbar machen und eine prozessorientierte Analyse der Entstehung von Bildungsmomenten innerhalb und über verschiedene Partizipationspfade hinweg ermöglichen.

Die empirische Untersuchung wurde in der interaktiven Ausstellung *Interkulturelle Fäden* (ungarisch: *Interkulturális Szálak*) in Győr, Ungarn, durchgeführt, die Besucher*innen dazu einlud, sich im Rahmen von Führungen, interaktiven Installationen und freier

Exploration mit dem Thema Interkulturalität auseinanderzusetzen. Die Ausstellung eröffnete den Teilnehmenden vielfältige Möglichkeiten, mit Geschichten, Ausstellungselementen und miteinander in Interaktion zu treten. Die Studie folgt der Methodologie der konstruktivistischen Grounded Theory. Entsprechend war das Forschungsdesign emergent angelegt, sodass sich der analytische Fokus im fortlaufenden Arbeiten mit dem empirischen Material entwickeln konnte. Die Datenerhebung erfolgte im Rahmen von vier geführten Ausstellungsbesuchen mittels partizipativer Beobachtung und retrospektiver Fragebögen mit offenen Fragen. Die Datenanalyse orientierte sich an den iterativen Prinzipien der konstruktivistischen Grounded Theory und umfasste Kodieren, den kontinuierlichen Vergleich und Memo-Schreiben sowie die konzeptionelle Entwicklung analytischer Konstrukte und des Pathway-Frameworks.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Bildungsmomente durch relationale, situierte und pfadspezifische Konfigurationen von Partizipation entstehen. Ihre Entstehung lässt sich durch das Zusammenspiel von pfadermöglichenden Elementen (pathway-affording elements), Partizipationsprozessen (pathway processes) und Prozessdimensionen (process dimensions) rekonstruieren und bleibt dabei in der Partizipation selbst eingebettet. Über verschiedene Partizipationspfade hinweg erscheinen Bildungsmomente als Veränderungen darin, wie sich Teilnehmende zu anderen, zu sich selbst oder zur Welt in Beziehung setzen. Sie können mehrere miteinander verbundene bedeutsame Momente umfassen, sich schrittweise entfalten, retrospektiv artikuliert werden oder über die Partizipation selbst hinaus offen bleiben. Neuartigkeit trat in unterschiedlichen Formen innerhalb der pfadermöglichenden Elemente auf, erhielt ihre Bedeutung durch die Art und Weise, wie Teilnehmende sich mit ihr auseinandersetzten, und stand wiederholt im Zusammenhang mit der Entstehung von Bildungsmomenten. Kein einzelner Partizipationsprozess konnte als notwendige Voraussetzung für die Entstehung von Bildungsmomenten identifiziert werden. Vielmehr entstehen Bildungsmomente tendenziell durch jene Qualitäten, die die dominanten Wechselwirkungen des jeweiligen Partizipationspfades charakterisieren.

Durch die Zusammenführung des konzeptionellen Beitrags der Bildungstheorie, der interpretativen Perspektive des performativen Ansatzes und der Methodologie der konstruktivistischen Grounded Theory liefert diese Arbeit ein empirisch fundiertes Verständnis davon, wie Bildungsmomente durch Partizipation in einer interaktiven Ausstellung entstehen. Damit verschiebt sie den Blick von einem Verständnis von Partizipation als bloßem Kontext von Bildung hin zu einem Verständnis von Partizipation als jenem Prozess, durch den Bildung überhaupt erst entsteht.