Introduction

It has been seven years since the so-called refugee crisis in Europe, and warfare continues to force people to leave their homelands to settle elsewhere. As I am writing this, in April of 2022, Russian troops are tearing apart Ukraine and the lives of its people, forcing many people to flee their homes. Forced migration is not temporary phenomenon, and historical, ethnographic and city museums will – one way or another – continue to address it through their work. Museums are already increasingly taking migration as a focus, and in doing so, they help contextualise the experiences and lives of migrants who have moved to countries in the Global North. The refugee protection crisis of 2015 led to a large number of participatory projects in museums in which practitioners engaged forced migrants to contribute their experiences and heritage. These projects led to a lot of research into participatory work with forced migrants (Sergi 2021; Ünsal 2019; Vlachou 2019; Vlachou 2017) and to insights into museums and migration more generally (Porsché 2019; Labadi 2018; Johansson and Bevelander 2017; Whitehead et. al. 2015; Gourievidis 2014), yet very few of these studies took the perspectives and experiences of the participants into account. This observation shaped the premise of this project: through conversations with practitioners and former participants of museum projects, I sought to learn about the outcomes for the individuals as well as for the institution. Conversations and related literature introduced me to the possibility that in some ways, these projects may have had negative consequences as well as positive outcomes for the participants. With that in mind, I started this research as an evaluation process, with a focus on the different aspects of museum work that might need to be reconsidered.

During my research project, I was based at the Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Museum of European Cultures – Berlin State Museums, referred to hereafter as the MEK), which also provided one of my case studies. I undertook work as a curator, engaged in strategy

meetings and became part of the team, whilst critically assessing the museum and its work for this project. The museum became a site for participant observation, allowing me to also see and experience some of the very practical limitations faced by practitioners on a day-to-day basis. It also meant that this museum, as a site of one of my case studies, was most closely analysed. With access to all documents and photographs from the project, I gained a much more detailed overview than was possible for the other case studies. This framed my research and its scope, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Over the past few years, my perception of the museum and what it is capable of has drastically changed; but so has the broader perception of the museum's role in society and ideas about where change is most needed. At the start of this research project, I was convinced that the work museums were doing was contributing positively to the lives of forced migrants in Europe. I still think museums can have a positive impact, but practitioners will need to reconsider some of their practices for future projects.

Contextualisation

The refugee protection crisis – often referred to merely as the 'refugee crisis' – that developed upon the arrival of over a million refugees in European countries in 2015 sparked divergent responses from politicians, the media and civil society. Along with changing political decisions and media representation, the public discourse shifted from welcoming to anxiously rejecting these new arrivals, as the debate around difference, diversity, belonging and identity intensified. Prevalent in the discourse surrounding the situation was the word 'crisis', which may have contributed to the panic, and placed a sense of urgency on the refugees as cultural 'others' (Bock and Macdonald 2019).

The media discourse particularly affected shifts in the representation of the topic, as it suggested the related problems were caused by refugees themselves, rather than the lack of infrastructure to deal with the incoming migrants and the long-standing neglect of the situation in the countries migrants were (and still are) trying to leave behind. It contributed to a process of 'othering', by seeking to transfer the 'blame' for the situation and promoting the nation-state as an exclusive entity (Gourievidis 2014, 3–4). These developments were countered by various initiatives from civil society,

businesses and cultural institutions, which aimed to help overcome existing and newly built barriers between the local population and the new arrivals. "While the 'refugee crisis' was widely publicised in the media, many European museums, particularly ethnographic ones, were encouraged to reconsider their own role, mission, and exhibition and communication strategies during these unsettled times" (Račič and Čeplak Mencin 2019, 218–219). The situation led to an increased focus on migration within existing institutions, as well as in newly established ones that take migration as their main interest (Porsché 2018; Vlachou 2019). Museums were (and still are) expected to respond to these changing dynamics, seen as agents that could speed up the process of adapting to the multicultural nature of societies. Arguably, this has been one of the most pressing challenges for museums over recent decades. "Questions and arguments about the role of museums in addressing social problems, tensions and divisions are of course not new – in particular in relation to cultural diversity – but they are burning harder than ever now, and involve unprecedented complexities" (Whitehead and Lanz 2019, 23).

Before museums found themselves confronted with this urgency to represent those moving to European states, they were already seeking new approaches to engaging differently and more inclusively, through methods of 'community engagement' (Golding and Modest 2013; Meijer-van Mensch 2012). Following a shift from "new museology" (Vergo 1989) to the museum as a "contact zone" (Clifford 1997, following Pratt 1992) and then to the "participatory museum" (Simon 2010), the museum's focus has been moving from the objects in the collection to the people it represents. Museums too have to move away from the "myth of neutrality" to become active contributors to sociopolitical debates (Gesser et al. 2020; Janes and Sandell 2019; Vlachou 2019). However, the colonial history of the institution continues to construct power relations that define the relationship between Europe and the 'other' (Kockel 2015; Said 2007; Clifford 1997). These power structures also inform the ways in which museums have represented forced migrants in recent projects, which is especially evident in the approach towards forced migrants as a singular 'community'. Recently, museums have reserved this term largely for referring to Black people and other people of colour (BPoC) (Efe 2021; Jones 2021), but it indicates a group of people based on a set of limited characteristics (Waterton and Smith 2010). Museums impose a 'shared identity' on a group of people (Waterton and Smith 2010, 10) and, in doing so, they differentiate between the 'own' and 'other' culture (Van Zeijden and Elpers 2018). This process is key to the participatory, or community engagement

work of museums; a practice that has more recently been discussed as a way to make the museum more relevant to different audiences and participants (Morse 2021; Nielsen 2015; Simon 2013; Kreps 2008).

In their reconfigured role, museums might be able to challenge political shifts that threaten democracy and social cohesion (De Cesari and Kaya 2020; De Cesari 2017; Gourievidis 2014). In response to the refugee protection crisis, many museums across Europe worked with migrant groups to develop temporary exhibitions, events or talks, or to contribute to museum collections. Aware of the challenges that come with the representation of the 'other', museums have been exploring various approaches to participatory curatorial practice. Whilst these practices have been long evolving, the more recent projects with forced migrants grew out of an intention to include their personal and collective memories within the context of national or European culture (Porsché 2018). The participatory projects taking place within memory institutions today – such as those investigated in this study – aim to overcome the inherent biases that are so deeply rooted in colonial modes of thought in Europe. These practices, however, may alter the prominent perception and role of the museum as an institution, which cannot maintain a neutral position when addressing such politically urgent issues (Vlachou 2019). The presumed neutrality of the museum – despite its governmental ties, its dependence on funding and the inevitably subjective internal voices (of its employees) – has been questioned before, but these particular circumstances demand a clearer communication of the museum's stance. With this in mind, projects that are developed with the intention of benefitting forced migrants are challenging, as they confirm the pervasive inequality between the local population and forced migrants (Mörsch 2016, 69).

Participatory practices with migrants may confirm media discourses rather than transcend them if an understanding of participation and its necessity does not directly inform the approach taken by museums. At the same time, this approach "too often results in further undermining the self-esteem of migrant communities because it regards them *only* as passive, suffering victims and objects of pity, eroding their dignity, self-determination, and active agency" (Lynch 2017a, 233, emphasis in original). Through adopting participatory rather than authoritative practices, museums aim to incorporate multiple cultural memories into the ethnographic representations that constitute the museum discourse. As a result, the focus on migration and its intricacies has expanded the museum's tendency to employ participatory approaches, as well as the need to question such

practices and assess their true potential. The museum as a "contact zone" as proposed by James Clifford (1997) – based on the concept proposed by Mary Louise Pratt (1992) and further explored by Robin Boast (2011) within a more contemporary context – employs collaborative practices, yet these are not necessarily beneficial to the participants. Boast addresses this issue when he points towards "the contact zone [as] an asymmetric space where the periphery comes to win some small, momentary, and strategic advantage, but where the center ultimately gains" (2011, 66). Placing the museum at the centre and the 'communities' it engages with on the periphery (Morse 2021, 41), it is the museum that most evidently gains from these practices, whilst participants gain little, if anything, at all, both during and after the process.

Participatory practices become relevant, and potentially more sustainable, if they provide positive outcomes for participants and museums alike (Weil 2007), following a "logic of care" (Morse 2021). Sustainability in practice refers to social impact and continuous social learning (Naguib 2013; Colvin 2018), creating a network (Graham 2017) and anchoring an event or debate in the museum through collections and exhibitions (Macdonald 2013). Relevant and sustainable participatory work should be ethical and consider the needs and interests of the participants (Morse 2021; Marstine 2011). These aspects are especially important, because sustainability might entail both positive outcomes and negative consequences (Koch and Lutz 2017). This study seeks to assess the sustainability of these projects by considering their expected and eventual outcomes. I apply the concept of sustainability as proposed by Gertraud Koch and Samantha Lutz, who return to the ecological meaning of the term, describing it as a "condition or state" in which elements are maintained at a constant level (2017, 71). Translating this understanding to museum work, my research seeks to define how participatory projects can have a lasting impact on the forced migrants involved, and on the museum and its practices.

Key concepts

As referred to in the title of this book and discussed in the previous section, this research focuses on projects with forced migrants. I refer to forced migrants rather than refugees for two main reasons: because the term 'forced migrant' is able to act as an all-encompassing term to describe all people who have been forced to flee their homelands, and also in response

to the negative connotations attached to the word 'refugee' since 2015. According to the Geneva Convention, the term 'refugee' applies to anyone with a "well-grounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (UN General Assembly 1951). The term is often used to refer to people who have been granted 'refugee status', and does not include asylum seekers (whose applications are still pending), undocumented migrants or internally displaced migrants (Engler and Schneider 2015). Additionally, in Germany, the concept has come to be connected to the notion of a 'crisis', which was worsened by the discursive shift from 'victim' to 'villain' in response to the attacks in Cologne on New Year's Eve 2015–16.[1] These shifts reflect a repeating pattern of "hostility and suspicion towards refugees" (Vollmer and Karakayali 2017). In this study, I do not wish to repeat such patterns, nor do I want to suggest museums should not limit their work exclusively to people who have been granted refugee status by the state. This research project, as part of the EU's Horizon 2020 project POEM, was entitled 'Collaboration and incorporation of vulnerable groups in professional PMW [participatory memory work]'. However, this study does not reflect on forced migrants as vulnerable groups, as it challenges this particular perspective on forced migrants and scrutinises the museum's participatory practices that figure migrants as 'vulnerable' (see Lynch 2017a).

Derived from the original thesis title, this book focuses on participatory memory work, which can be defined as participatory work carried out within or by memory institutions, such as archives, libraries and museums. This excludes 'galleries' from the original combined acronym of 'GLAM', which in this case is less relevant for its role in memory work due to the absence of a collection or archive. This study focuses in particular on the participatory work in and by museums, yet it draws on several theories that apply to the wider field of memory institutions. This work can be participatory in many different ways, from contributions within the exhibition spaces to the co-creation of an exhibition or collaborative collecting practices (Piontek 2017;

1 On New Year's Eve of 2015–16, several women were victims of sexual assault and theft in and near the central train station in Cologne, Germany. Though the actual events "remain contentious" (Wigger et al. 2022), several young men were involved, a number of whom were of North African origin. Accounts and reports on the events quickly took on a life of their own, as negativity towards (forced) migrants spread in Germany and neighbouring countries (Wigger et al. 2022; Tolsma et al. 2021).

Simon 2010). In this study, however, I focus on participatory work that engaged with participants to contribute to, or create (parts of), an exhibition. Rather than focusing on the institutions themselves, I will outline the context of the institutions before addressing the work of museum practitioners directly. Museum practitioners are any staff members of the museum, such as collection managers, community engagement officers, conservators, curators, educators, marketers, museum directors and workshop facilitators. Museum practitioners shape the work of the institution; the way that projects are approached, carried out and evaluated is very much up to them.

This project studies these approaches and considers how they may have led to several of the project's sustainable outcomes. Sustainability has become a major focus for museums: first and foremost, in the sense that museums are expected to work in a more sustainable way (greener, less waste, more recycled materials), but secondly, in a way that it has become increasingly relevant to consider the long-term impact of museum work. The latter understanding of sustainability often implies that projects should produce tangible outputs, whether these are exhibits, objects/works for the museum's collection, or other products of collaborative practice. However, museum practices often produce intangible outcomes, both for the museum (learning processes about new practices and in-depth knowledge of specific topics, a shift in the museum's surroundings or how this is perceived), and for the participants (feeling empowered or gaining a sense of belonging, having learned a new skill, or making friendships or expanding professional networks). Though these intangible outcomes are most relevant to the impact of museum work more generally, they are rarely the focus of research or practice – especially due to the expectations of funding bodies –, and this is something I seek to redress by making them a central part of this study.

Aims, methods and scope

This research project evaluates recent participatory projects with forced migrants. The investigation considers projects that have taken place since 2015 and have already come to an end, so as to allow for a reflection on their outcomes and potential impact together with their participants. This approach therefore addresses the full process of these projects as outlined in social innovation theory, which points towards the stages of projects as: inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. It focuses on museum

projects in Western Europe, with case studies in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The parameters are defined by a clearly marked point in time – the start of the refugee protection crisis in 2015 – and this geographical area within the European Union that, at the time, were similarly affected by and had comparable responses to the so-called 'crisis'. Beyond the borders of these European countries, many museums in the EU and worldwide have engaged with forced migrants in recent years; these projects would likewise make interesting case studies, yet insufficient knowledge of their political contexts and insurmountable language barriers have excluded these from my qualitative study. The proliferation of the discussed projects, whether temporary or longer term, is relevant for the museum's practices going forward.

Beginning my research by looking at some of the goals that are often mentioned by museum practitioners or described in recent studies, I seek to evaluate how these particular goals translate to museum practices and impact on the museum and the participants. Despite visitors being a relevant stakeholder group to the museum, perspectives and reflections from visitors are left out in order to allow for a clear focus on the people that actively contributed to the projects prior to the realisation of their outputs. Through reflections from different (active) stakeholders in each of the studied projects, this investigation reflects on participatory processes and their respective outcomes to outline the potential for a more sustainable museum praxis. The studied participatory approaches, along with the relationships that are formed, the role of the museums, the discourses that are generated and the museum collections all contribute to what participants take with them and what remains in the museum. Throughout this study, I will ask what – but more importantly who – is prioritised through the different approaches. This book discusses the distinctive experiences of particular practices as well as their aftermaths, as these continue to affect the former participants long after a project has ended. Aiming to consider the consequences and outcomes of participatory museum work, I look beyond the projects' timelines and outside of the museums' physical spaces. As such, I address what happened in relation to what remains of the project today. Starting from a "logic of care" (Morse 2021), I propose a more *care-full* and social approach to participation, which puts the needs and objectives of the participants first, positioning the museum not at the centre but on the periphery of these practices. In doing so, I explore the extent to which museums should take on social responsibilities,

and consider the boundaries between participatory practices with forced migrants and social work.

Through an analysis of selected case studies, I set out to evaluate the museums' practices with forced migrants and their outcomes. Based at the MEK in Berlin, I gathered information for one of my case studies and the general workings of this institution on a daily basis. The materials and knowledge that inform this case study are much more comprehensive than the information that shaped the other case studies. This study is based on qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews and discourse analysis framed by central aspects of impact assessment (following Tanner 2012). The semi-structured interviews with practitioners and research participants provide the key materials for this study, with the interviews being made up of personal reflections that cannot be generalised but are paramount for the study of the processes and outcomes relevant to different stakeholders.

The research focuses on the projects in hindsight, looking back at museum projects that took place several years ago. This meant that in all cases, it was difficult to reach the former participants, who have moved on with their lives and may not wish to or have time to reflect on a project that they took part in several years ago. Similar to participatory practices in museums, this research may not provide outcomes that are particularly relevant to the former participants today. Most interviews with the participants lasted one or two hours, providing in-depth material and deeply personal perspectives on the different case studies. Yet, of course, these can only serve as excerpts and should not be misunderstood as representing every participant's experiences of the respective project. The same goes for the reflections of the museum practitioners, who – as much as they work(ed) for the museum – embarked on these projects from their personal positionality as museum practitioners and as people. I analyse the interviews starting from commonly addressed themes or challenges, but have shaped the main body of this study according to the goals outlined for the project at the MEK. Research participants remain anonymous and upon request some contributions and the analysis thereof have been discussed in order to avoid misinterpretations or false contextualisation of the materials. In addition to these ethnographic methods, I apply discourse analysis (Whitehead 2016; Rose 2012; Hall 2018) to address the written and visual materials related to the participatory project outputs, including the exhibitions and, in some cases, additions to the museum collection. Through a study of the discourses developed as part of these projects, I identify the different ways in which the

museums attempted to challenge the dominant discourse on forced migration (as described above), as well as how this perpetuated unequal power relations. All methods combined allowed for a thorough study of the processes and outcomes of the selected projects.

Even though this study is predominantly shaped by the reflections of my research participants, the analysis and conclusions are a product of my own positionality and thinking as a researcher and museum practitioner. I include many citations to refrain from changing the intended meaning of certain reflections, yet these materials are framed by a structure that I felt was most relevant. Starting from a focus that mainly considered the museum and the relevance of participatory work for museums, I shifted my position as I learned about the experiences of the participants and found that these were commonly lacking in studies about participatory work. This shift meant that, as a White researcher, I asked BPoC participants about their experiences, and I tried to make them feel comfortable and heard. Despite my position of privilege, I hope I have presented their views in this book in an ethical and respectful way, and that the debates brought together in this book show how urgent it is for us to take these considerations seriously. Additionally, I would like to mention my position as a researcher based at the MEK. Whilst based at the museum, an ongoing conflict between a former participant, the project facilitator and the museum continued to unfold, providing me with otherwise private information; it would not surprise me if such discussions took place in other institutions as well, but this would generally be kept behind closed doors. As such, my position at the MEK shaped the study to the effect that contains in-depth examples from this particular museum, which could not always be balanced with examples from, or insights about, other projects.

The scope of this study, however, was significantly redrawn by the Black Lives Matter movement, which resulted in a shift in perspective and wider understanding of the continuous presence of racialisation and discrimination in modern-day Western European societies. This movement began in 2013 in response to excessive police violence towards Black people, particularly in the United States. On 25 May 2020, a police officer murdered George Floyd, which sparked a number of protests in countries around the world (McGonigle Leyh 2020). These protests did not limit themselves to addressing police brutality towards Black people but also took aim at much wider issues of discrimination against Black people locally and globally. These protests and the conversations I had as a result have also changed my perspective on, and heightened my awareness of, everyday racism, structural inequalities and

my own privileges as a White woman. The protests also sparked responses from museums, many of which drafted a statement to express solidarity with the movement, which were consequently critiqued for their hollow promises (Greenberger and Solomon 2020). Museums were, and still are, expected to re-evaluate their collections, staff and approaches as a means of decolonising the institution (Wajid and Minott 2019; Kassim 2017). The political and societal impact of the Black Lives Matter movement inevitably changed our expectations of museums; the societal role of museums and the ethics of their practices are central to this study.

Contributions to museum research and practice

In this introduction so far, I identified the role of museums within the context of the EU, and related this to the representation of the 'other'. The museum's 'new role' (as formally identified by ICOM in 2022) highlights the relevance of participatory practices, identifying their potential in struggles to break down persistent hierarchies. Providing further insight into common practices and the idea of 'empowering' 'migrant communities', I introduced certain difficulties with participatory memory work within culturally and politically embedded structures. Pointing to the short-lived nature of participatory projects (or museum projects in general), I outline their potential for sustainable outcomes. After identifying the gaps in existing research, I outlined my aims, methods and scope for this study. As such, I have identified my theoretical, practical and personal approach to the study of participatory work with forced migrants in museums and its relevance for the future of museum practice. This study sits between the well-established fields of museum studies, heritage studies, post-colonial studies, cultural anthropology, design anthropology, ethnology, participatory research and migration studies. In this book, I build on literature from these fields and my empirical materials to propose additional ways of extending projects' lives within the museological realm.

In response to the museum's shift towards exhibiting migration and working with migrants, many researchers have considered the work done by museums and the problems implicit in such work. Researchers have reflected on the ways in which museums represent migration (Porsché 2019; Ulz 2019; Gourievidis 2014; Meza Torres 2013; Baur 2009), on the museum as a political (non-neutral) institution (Gesser et al. 2020; Vlachou 2019; Whitehead et

al. 2015), on its transformation into an activist institution in the fight for social justice (Janes and Sandell 2020; Labadi 2018) or into a space of social care (Morse 2021), and on the power relations that defined the participatory processes in museums (Sergi 2021; Lynch 2017a; Lynch 2014). As Sergi points out, most of the publications in this field address "migration as an all-encompassing analytical category" (2021, 2), neglecting some of the more specific complexities surrounding the political and social circumstances of many forced migrants. This study proposes a different approach to reflecting on these practices and their potential role in the lives of the participants. It does not foreground the institutions nor does it generalise input from individuals to draw broad conclusions; instead, the interviews bring in personal perspectives that highlight the differences between participants in terms of their needs, experiences and takeaways from the projects, and between practitioners in their approaches, professional identities and roles, as well as their personal ideas and expectations. Drawing on the individual reflections on the different processes of the participatory projects several years later, this investigation underscores the notion that wisdom is hindsight. As such, it does not merely foreground the necessity of project evaluation, it also emphasises the quickly changing debates and sensitivities that need to be taken into account before engaging in participatory work as a museum.

In the aforementioned studies, notable researchers and practitioners bring up questions about the sustainability of participatory work, the need for organisational change, and about ethical practices. These have been critically considered but not yet answered in the work of my colleagues. A focus on the goals and outcomes of participatory memory work in the particular context of the refugee protection crisis is necessary in order to rethink such questions. Especially when reconsidering the museum's social or societal role (as per Janes and Sandell 2019; Golding and Walklate 2019; Morse 2021), it is important to assess the ethics of its institutional practices. Despite its relevance for recent publications (such as Morse 2021; Sergi 2021), the very practice of ethical museum work remains insufficiently dissected. With a focus on the potential longer-term outcomes of museum work, the ethical considerations need to be tailored to the sociopolitical framework of the future. This research studies the museum's position within current and future cultural, social and political contexts, and looks at the prospective development of participatory work as a more sustainable praxis.

On the structure of the book

In this introduction, I have presented the relevant literature and outlined the methodology applied for this research project. In the following two chapters, I build on this by positioning participatory memory work with forced migrants in its broader contexts and outlining the selected case studies. The first chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the research by contextualising participatory museum practices with forced migrants. It defines the relevance of the museum's infrastructure for how it is used by stakeholders inside and outside of the museum. Through studies on the continuing colonial legacy of the institution, this chapter also outlines the colonial frameworks and ethical complexities of museums today. Building on the outlined frameworks, the second chapter offers a detailed description of the four case studies. Each of the case studies is described by way of a project description, the projects' (pre-)defined goals and evaluation processes, a description of the hosting museums and potential partner organisations, and a review of the political context of these cases. The cases and their goals form the basis for the outline of the following section of this book, in which I analyse the experienced processes and their outcomes.

Guiding the reader through the different aspects of participatory work with forced migrants in museums, the evaluative chapters of this book each depart from a well-known or frequently proposed goal of these practices. These address established and criticised processes and outcomes through a selection of five goals: networking communities, empowering participants, creating or becoming a 'safe space', changing the discourse, and material and digital outputs. As participatory projects start with an invitation process, Chapter 3 addresses the development of a network of participants as an initial potential output of participatory museum work. The development of relationships with the participants starts with the invitation of so-called communities. This chapter highlights the ways in which these practices contribute to processes of 'othering', and looks at how assumptions about groups may spark conflict amongst the participants. Through an assessment of the related processes of building trust and forming friendships, I outline the museum's potential and limitations for creating a network with the group of participants. Following this, Chapter 4 addresses the frequently mentioned goal of 'empowering' marginalised communities. In this chapter, I describe the asymmetrical power relations at play in the participatory processes in museums, especially with regards to forced migrants. At the same time

though, I also point out that these power relations do not necessarily have to obstruct processes of empowerment. The chapter identifies the different roles people played during the projects, and how these informed the process, in particular underlining the well-preserved authority of the curator. With a discussion of the transparency and adaptability in decision-making and the potential for remuneration for participatory work as a form of recognition, I present a number of mechanisms for (dis-)empowerment. This aspect ties in with the focus of the next chapter on the potential of the museum coming to function as a 'safe space', for the duration of the participatory project and thereafter. As such, Chapter 5 addresses the breadth of museum thresholds and the role of the museum in society, in order to identify which aspects are getting in the way of museums becoming 'safe spaces'. It points to the roles of practitioners as paramount in developing and maintaining such welcoming, inclusive and safe spaces (Morse 2021). However, it also acknowledges the public role of the museum, and the ways in which this may compromise a 'safe space' during or after a participatory project. Through encounters with press and visitors, as well as encounters in digital spaces, the participant's perception of the space might change. The maintenance of these spaces as 'safe spaces' throughout, I argue, relies on the work of the museum staff.

This brings us to Chapters 6 and 7, which focus on the museum's discourse through its exhibitions and other materials, as well as the material and digital remnants of the project (the latter being an 'expected' outcome for the museum). In Chapter 6, I highlight the museum's role in the "authorised heritage discourse" (Smith 2006) and how participatory practices might feed into this. The chapter demonstrates how museums attempted to positively contribute to the political debate, and how in the process they unintentionally fed into stereotypes of migrants as cultural 'others'. It discusses different aspects that contributed to the discourse presented in the museum. Carrying on from this, Chapter 7 looks at what was physically and digitally left of the projects afterwards, and what was kept and preserved by the museums. It highlights how decisions were made for collecting the outputs as objects, and how this adds to the discourse presented by the museum. Similarly, I look at the online presence of the projects today – through online collections and dormant websites – and question how these continue to represent the projects and their outputs. I focus primarily on a goal that is set by the museum following a contributory logic, based on what participants might be able to add to the museum. However, in this final analytical chapter, I also look at

the ways in which the collection and an enduring online presence may be relevant for the participants or forced migrants arriving in Germany today.

In a discussion chapter (Chapter 8), I reflect on these findings by bringing them together in a further examination of their broader conclusions. After a short summary of the analytical chapters, I combine my findings into thematic sub-chapters on ethical practices within neo-colonial institutions, the museum's organisational infrastructures and role(s), and the incorporation of sustainable outcomes in practice. Finally, in Chapter 9, I return to the initial aims of this research and evaluate the main findings. I highlight the need to reflect on outcomes as part of museum practice, and propose that, especially in participatory work with people who are being marginalised, practitioners should take a more careful approach. This evaluation of the processes and the outputs for museums and participants serves as a starting point for shaping future approaches to collaborations with forced migrants. As such, this final chapter suggests potential first steps toward applying these findings in museum work, as well as providing a reflection on the limitations of this study and the need for further research. As a whole, the book brings together ideas about sustainable practice, ethics and processes of decolonisation, in order to propose the shifts required to develop a more socially responsive museum practice.