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The European Refugee Controversy: Civil Solidarity, Cultural Imaginaries and Political Change

Editors

Gert Verschraegen and Robin Vandevoordt

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Gert Verschraegen (University of Antwerp, Belgium)
Robin Vandevoordt (University of Oxford, UK/University of Antwerp, Belgium)

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Editorial

The European Refugee Controversy: Civil Solidarity, Cultural Imaginaries and Political Change

Robin Vandevoordt [1,2,*] and Gert Verschraegen [2]

[1] Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, Oxford, OX1 3TB, UK; E-Mail: robin.vandevoordt@qeh.ox.ac.uk
[2] Department of Sociology, University of Antwerp, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium; E-Mail: gert.verschraegen@uantwerpen.be

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
In the summer of 2015, a wave of solidarity washed across the European continent as 1.3 million refugees arrived. While many recent studies have explored how ‘ordinary’ men and women, NGOs and governments momentarily reacted to the arrival of refugees, this issue examines whether the arrival of refugees and the subsequent rise of civil support initiatives has also resulted in more structural cultural and political changes. The contributions assembled in this issue all delve into the enduring implications of Europe’s ‘long summer of migration’. They address four sites of change: the dynamics between civil and state actors involved in refugee protection; the gradual politicisation of individual volunteers and organisations; the reproduction of pre-existing cultural imaginaries; and the potential of cities to foster new forms of solidarity.

Keywords
asylum; civil society; Europe; politicisation; refugees; refugee protection; solidarity; volunteering

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue “The European Refugee Controversy: Civil Solidarity, Cultural Imaginaries and Political Change”, edited by Gert Verschraegen (University of Antwerp, Belgium) and Robin Vandevoordt (University of Oxford, UK/University of Antwerp, Belgium).

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1. Introduction

When Europe experienced the ‘long summer of migration’ in 2015 (Hess et al., 2016), its governments seemed neither ready nor prepared. In the absence of adequate protection organised by the state, citizens and NGOs stepped in and provided stop-gap help to the newly arriving refugees. Since then, numerous studies have appeared on the rise of civil solidarity in the wake of Europe’s ‘long summer of migration’ (e.g., della Porta, 2018; Feischmidt, Pries & Cantat, 2019; Sutter & Youkhana, 2017). Yet few have detailed its enduring effects on civil solidarity, cultural imaginaries and political structures. Rephrasing Sydney Tarrow’s (2005) metaphor, this thematic issue explores whether the recent upsurge of solidarity has merely been a wave, forcefully hitting the beach before vanishing back into the sea, or if it has actually changed the structure of the shoreline.

2. Contributions

The articles assembled here address four sites of change: the dynamics between civil and state actors involved in refugee protection; the gradual politicisation of individual volunteers and organisations; the reproduction of pre-existing cultural imaginaries; and the potential of cities to foster new forms of solidarity. These contributions adopt a wide range of methodological and theoretical approaches and include case studies from across Europe. Despite their differences, most share a focus on the impact of civil initiatives and NGOs on the relations between established and outsiders.

The first six articles examine whether and how the rise of new volunteering initiatives have altered the relation between civil and state actors. Two general trends emerge, which largely corroborate earlier findings. On the one hand, some civil initiatives have been (partly)

co-opted by state actors to complement their policies. While this process of institutionalisation has led to gradual adaptations and policy changes in some cases, it also harbours the risk of making it easier for governments to neglect their responsibilities (van Dyk & Misbach, 2016; Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019). By invisibilising the harshest consequences of "organised non-responsibility" (Pries, 2018), civil initiatives may help to safeguard governments from moral criticism and indirectly weaken political support for more stringent action. On the other hand, however, offering civil support to refugees can create a powerful political momentum (Feischmidt & Zakarias, 2019; Vandevoordt, in press). Especially in contexts where governments have put in place more restrictive migration policies designed to deter immigration, civil actors have entered in conflict-ridden, highly politicised relations with the state.

In their contribution to this issue, Larruina, Boersma and Ponzoni (2019) note that the work of civil actors has brought about a reconsideration of the challenges of receiving refugees. Based on qualitative research with Dutch organizations working with refugee reception and integration, they observe a shift in the broader organizational ecology of Dutch refugee reception. While the system of refugee reception before the asylum crisis was mostly dominated by governmental organizations, the crisis enabled a broader participation of civil society organizations, as well new volunteering initiatives by citizens. It also created more space for active participation of refugees themselves. This change occurred mainly because of a focus on local rather than central government initiatives and because stakeholders sought to network, collaborate, and share best practices.

Fleischmann (2019) also highlights how the long summer of migration reordered the relationships between governmental actors and civil society active in the reception of asylum seekers. Based on ethnographic work in Germany, she shows how representatives from local to regional authorities emphasized the value and significance of citizen commitment, but also introduced numerous programmes and efforts seeking to order and influence volunteering with refugees. These manifold interventions, Fleischmann suggests, led to the institutionalization of 'civil society' vis-à-vis 'the state', making committed citizens complicit in the governance of asylum seekers. She warns however for too quick and simple evaluations: while the governmental appreciation of volunteers may have led to increased control it also opened up new avenues for forms of civic solidarity with refugees.

Haselbacher (2019) notices as well that local civic engagement can induce change and transformation but is also riddled with ambivalence. In her contribution she examines how the opening of new refugee accommodation centres in small and predominantly rural municipalities in Austria, has encouraged citizens and local policy makers to get active and establish local support initiatives. Such local civic engagements contrast the more restrictive national paradigms and can counteract hostile activism demanding the exclusion of asylum seekers and questioning the existence of the asylum centre. Yet, as most local solidarity claims are interwoven with exclusionary narratives on integration, deservingness and performance, they leave dominant subject categories unchallenged. In their analysis of a large popular education program directed to adult asylum seekers in Sweden, Mešić, Dahlstedt, Fejes and Nyström (2019) focus on organized civil society—in this case study associations and folk high schools—and how they mobilized their resources and connections to promote the social inclusion of refugees in Sweden.

Two other articles focus primarily on different factors shaping the relation between civil and state actors. Drawing on findings from qualitative research carried out with refugee-supporting organisations in three different locations in Wales, Guma, Woods, Yarker and Anderson's (2019) article analyses the intensity and variation of civil society response in each of these localities, reinforcing or altering existing place-frames and contexts. Vandevoordt (2019a) highlights the importance of local circumstances for understanding the evolution of volunteering and civil society support for refugees. By comparing two civil initiatives in different regions in Belgium, he shows how the political environment in which these initiatives emerged, and the social backgrounds of their leading members shaped their strategies for inducing cultural and political change, and their ability to institutionalise themselves. In the case of Flanders, long-term neo-liberalisation of integration and state-civil society relations both created an opportunity to mobilise and closed the possibility of cooperative inclusion. In Brussels, by contrast, the super-diverse composition of the city, its constant reemergence as a site of crisis and the availability of multilevel opportunity structures allowed its largest citizen initiative to grow into a powerful political actor.

The second set of articles explores changes on a different level: the de/politicisation of individual volunteers and organisational practices. On the one hand, several authors reaffirm what others have suggested earlier (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017): as 'ordinary' citizens become personally involved with refugees, they become more aware of the social and political causes to refugees' daily struggles and, in some cases, they take social and political action accordingly. On the other hand, these personal engagements also tend to reproduce race- and gender-infused power asymmetries between those that that help and those that are being helped (Braun, 2017).

Drawing on Austrian and German case studies respectively, Schmid (2019) and Stock (2019) show how female volunteers engage in a feministic ethics of care which opens up alternative ways of thinking about difference and the politics of integration. Drawing on case studies from 4 different municipalities in Germany, Schmid describes how her volunteers gradually adapted their views on diversity and cultural difference. Some of the volunteers consciously showed their support to

refugees in public, trying to convey to their environment that refugees should not be seen as a threat. Similarly, Stock conducted qualitative interviews with refugees and volunteers participating in a buddy-scheme in Austria. She found that these buddy-relations sometimes reinforced exclusionary perspectives on who 'deserves' to be helped and who does not. Volunteers were able to partly overcome these differences, however, through practices of 'kinning': by considering each other as kind, on familial terms, through an ethics of care. While this reproduced inequalities, it also resulted in volunteers' unconditional intention to 'stand with' migrants vis-à-vis migration policies. In addition, volunteers became more aware and often more critical towards migration policies, and for the first time joined manifestations and other collective actions.

Drawing on an ethnographic case study in the hub in the Milan-central train station, Sinatti (2019) arrives at a similar conclusion. Situating her argument within critical humanitarian studies, she acknowledges humanitarianism's tendencies to de-politicise suffering and reduce those in need to instances of bare life, robbed of social and political subjectivity. Through direct contact with refugees, however, Sinatti argues that volunteers obtain more insights into the daily lives and aspirations of migrants, which raises their awareness and leads them to identify as activists, rather than volunteers. By doing so, they engage in a 'politics of life' which aspires to an alternative, more inclusive social order.

In his analysis of the Austrian 'Godparenthood' mentoring programme for unaccompanied minors, Raithelhuber (2019) also notices a growing political awareness of participating volunteers, as well as more chances for young refugees through the support they acquire. Yet, at the same time the Austrian mentoring scheme does not turn around existing discriminatory policies, as it confirms the exclusion criteria established by the state and hence reproduces the differential inclusion of refugees. Schmid, Evers and Mildenberger (2019) point to a similar co-existence of politicizing and depoliticizing processes in their study of local support movement for refugees in Heidelberg, Germany. Whilst volunteers and activists take positions in the country-wide controversial political debates on refugees, their practical local action is often restricted to helping out refugees.

Thirdly, a couple of contributions highlight how the asylum crisis reproduces pre-existing cultural imaginaries. Vieten and Murphy (2019) analyse how Northern Ireland's legacy of conflict and sectarianism frames the imagination of newcomers and the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. Wallaschek (2019) takes on the question of how refugee solidarity is framed in two German and two Irish qualitative newspapers. Drawing on discourse network methods he concludes that pro-solidarity is a common frame, but is conceived of very differently by the different actors in both countries. Wallaschek's analysis hence demonstrates how partisan journalism—the political orientation of media outlets influencing their coverage of public debates—has persisted during Europe's asylum crisis.

A fourth set of contributions explore cities' potential to foster new forms of solidarity. These contributions build on a growing literature documenting the rise of sanctuary cities in North-America and solidarity cities in Europe (Bauder & Gonzalez, 2018) or conceptualising cities as common spaces where new political subjectivities can be formed.

Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) argue that national policies are often more exclusionary towards immigrants, whereas municipalities—especially those of super-diverse metropolises—are confronted with the human consequences of these policies and hence favour more inclusive, pragmatic strategies. Agustín and Jørgensen explore the specific case of Barcelona as an example of institutional solidarity, where citizen and municipal governments join arms in advocating for more inclusive migration policies vis-à-vis the national Spanish government. In addition, Barcelona has been at the forefront of setting up European networks of solidary cities. Drawing on expert interviews and document analysis, Heimann, Müller, Schammann and Stürner (2019) conceptualise these intercity networks as transmunicipal solidarity, which they distinguish from traditional forms of solidarity. They document how cities like Barcelona, Naples, Bonn and Cologne are connected through networks such as Eurocities, Integration cities and Solidarity Cities. Through these non-hierarchical, polycentric networks, they pressure national governments, lobby the EU and stimulate mutual capacity-building.

Yet cities can also serve as common spaces where refugees and activists build new political subjectivities outside of institutional politics. In his case study of Thessaloniki, Tsavdaroglou (2019) describes how the closing of the Greek-Macedonian border and the policy of containing refugees in isolated, poorly equipped camps attracted a large group of international activists. Together with refugees, they set up direct democracy assemblies, established infrastructures of social support, squatted buildings and organised demonstrations. Drawing on notions of the right to the city, common space and autonomy of migration, Tsavdaroglou documents how they established the right to visibility, and used the city as a common space where transnational solidarities were forged. In this sense, bordering cities in particular seem to harbor potential for mobilising and reinforcing solidarity (cf. Bontemps, Makaremi, & Mazouz, 2018; Vandevoordt, 2019a).

3. Conclusion

This thematic issue documents how the upsurge of refugee solidarity contains potential pathways to more pertinent change. First, there is the possibility of institutionalisation and changing policies from within, sometimes even changing the whole ecology of state and civil society. How this plays out ultimately depends on

favourable political opportunity structures on different governance levels, the social backgrounds of individual members and the networks between organisations. Yet, civil initiatives for refugees also harbour the risk of substituting government action and changing the nature of citizen engagement. Second, refugee solidarity has the potential of politicising individual volunteers, although it is not always capable to counteract the reproduction of race- and gender-infused power asymmetries. And third, cities harbour specific potential for fostering solidarity, both through institutional alliances and through grassroots' claims of 'the right to the city'.

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About the Authors

Robin Vandevoordt is a cultural and political sociologist whose research interests are in forced migration, humanitarianism, civil solidarity, and European migration policies. He is currently an Early Career Fellow at Oxford University's Refugee Studies Centre, where he continues his ethnographic work with civil initiatives supporting refugees.

Gert Verschraegen is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Antwerp (Belgium), where he also serves as the Head of the department of sociology. His main research interests are in social theory, cultural sociology, the sociology of science and knowledge and the sociology of human rights and humanitarianism. His work has appeared in *Poetics, Citizenship Studies*, *Journal of European Social Policy*, *Journal of Social Policy*, *Futures, Innovation*, *Journal of Law and Society*, *Time and Society*, and many other journals. A recent book is *Divercities: Dealing with Diversity in Deprived and Mixed Neighbourhoods* (2018, Policy Press, edited with Stijn Oosterlynck). His current research projects include "The European Refugee Controversy as a Cosmopolitan Crisis: The Rise, Spread and Development of New Moral Imaginaries and Movements" and "Making and Unmaking Muslim Identities. Symbolic Boundary Work and Islam in Flanders".

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Article

Responding to the Dutch Asylum Crisis: Implications for Collaborative Work between Civil Society and Governmental Organizations

Robert Larruina [1,*], Kees Boersma [1] and Elena Ponzoni [2]

[1] Department of Organization Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 1081HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands; E-Mails: r.l.larruina@vu.nl (R.L.), f.k.boersma@vu.nl (K.B.)
[2] Department of Sociology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 1081HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands; E-Mail: e.ponzoni@vu.nl

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
Between 2015 and 2016, the Netherlands experienced an asylum crisis, one that directly affected organizations working with refugee reception and integration. Besides civil society and governmental organizations (CSOs and GOs), the period also saw individuals coming together to form emergent CSOs (ECSOs). We look at these organizations to determine whether their work brought a shift in Dutch practice and policy with regarding refugee reception. We also examine literature concerning crisis governance, participatory spaces, and refugee reception governance. Finally, we investigate the views and experiences of individuals from selected organizations that played an active role during the crisis. This explorative research is based upon a qualitative and interpretative study involving panel discussions, document analysis, and interviews, conducted between 2017 and 2018 by the Refugee Academy at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. We show circumstantial and interorganizational elements that enhanced and hampered interactions between ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs. We argue that shared activities during the crisis may have created possibilities for durable forms of collaboration and for the inclusion of civil society groups in a debate mostly dominated by GOs.

Keywords
asylum crisis; civil society organizations; collaboration; crisis governance; governmental organizations; participation; refugee reception

Issue
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1. Introduction

Between 2015 and 2016, the relatively steep increase in the arrival of asylum seekers in Europe affected the ecology of organizations working with refugee reception. Organizations that, until then, were seemingly detached from each other because of their differing aims and missions came together and worked towards an efficient reception of refugees. Simultaneously, citizens objecting to EU reception policies and citizens welcoming refugees spontaneously organized themselves to assist new arrivals (Boersma, Kraiukhina, Larruina, Lehota, & Nury, 2018; Youkhana & Sutter, 2017). During this period, European authorities failed to respond to the higher number of individuals requesting asylum and the societal discontent this caused. This situation was characterized by a lack of clear legislation or coordination of efforts among EU members (Boersma et al., 2018; Braun, 2017; Feischmidt, Pries, & Cantat, 2019; Youkhana & Sutter, 2017). As Betts and Collier (2017) argue, the refugee reception system was "broken", full of weaknesses and incongruences and unable to manage increasing numbers of refugees. What was called a "refugee crisis" was in fact an asylum system crisis due to the inability to deal

with refugees' displacement and subsequent arrival in Europe. Crisis governance literature shows that once a situation is categorized as a crisis, it is treated as a situation that needs to be controlled (Van Buuren, Vink, & Warner, 2016). The Netherlands received 44,970 asylum applications in 2015 (up from 24,495 in 2014 and around 13,000 in 2012 and 2013), most of which concerned refugees from Syria, Eritrea and Iraq (Eurostat, 2019). This sudden inflow meant that emergency shelters and asylum request processing facilities were urgently required (Boersma et al., 2018). The swift establishment of temporary asylum seeker centres was soon followed by public outcry in some areas. These circumstances gave added importance to the contributions of civil society organizations (CSOs) already working in refugee reception, especially since collaboration between them and governmental organizations (GOs) was crucial for effective crisis management (Boersma et al., 2018).

Crisis and disaster studies have acknowledged that citizen volunteers play a major role during crises (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Dynes, 1994; Helsloot & Ruitenberg, 2004; Schmidt, Wolbers, Ferguson, & Boersma, 2017). The importance of citizen involvement can be seen when citizens converge to assist in damage assessment or provide general support to GOs (Kendra & Wachtendorf, 2003; Schmidt et al., 2017). The Disaster Research Center differentiates four types of organizations: established, expanding, extending, and emergent (Dynes, 1994; Schmidt et al., 2017). Established organizations are traditional response organizations carry out their regular tasks (e.g., the army). Expanding organizations have small permanent staffs who can mobilize large numbers of volunteers when needed (e.g., the Red Cross). Extending organizations are those that perform tasks outside their intended roles (e.g., church groups). Emergent organizations have an unsteady group of volunteers performing non-regular tasks or regular tasks in an improvised manner. During the asylum crisis, emergent civil society organizations (ECSOs) involved groups of individuals who came together for a specific purpose because the established CSOs were too formalized to provide support for their particular concerns. These groups often gave rise to new foundations or grass root organisations with small financial aid from funds or local governments. Note that in this article, "CSO" has two meanings: when we discuss GOs and CSOs together, it is an umbrella term with two subcategories—established CSOs and emergent ECSOs; however, when we discuss CSOs alone, it refers to established CSOs only. The interaction between CSOs (the umbrella term) and GOs is key to successful crisis management and governance (Boersma et al., 2018; COA, 2017; Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Jong & Ataç, 2017).

Across the EU, however, governmental responses to the influx of refugees led to formal, top-down "command and control" types of crisis management, with reduced understandings of how to integrate the knowledge and expertise of civil society actors into a coherent plan of action (Boersma et al., 2018). The Dutch response was no exception. In addition, the increase in refugee numbers accelerated a process that had been activated a few years earlier. Before the crisis, the adverse effects of the institutionalized reception of asylum seekers in the Netherlands were addressed in diverse academic and policy papers (ACVZ, 2013; Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016; Ten Holder, 2012; WRR, 2015). Many of these critical works were acknowledged by official authorities, and there was a consequent shift in public and policy discussions and in the actual reception and integration of refugees. The main critique was that under the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), newcomers lacked early integration opportunities, and the long waiting times and uncertainty caused further stress to their already complex situations (ACVZ, 2013). Debates began addressing the early inclusion and societal participation of asylum seekers and refugees, and brought together CSOs and GOs as active contributors (ACVZ, 2013; Ten Holder, 2012; WRR, 2015). We argue that the increased flow of refugees during 2015 and 2016 had a direct impact on this growing public discourse precisely because it increased the profile of these organizations and introduced a multitude of new actors into the field, mostly in the form of ECSOs.

Feischmidt et al. (2019, pp. 1–6) elaborate on the crisis in Europe by outlining four characteristics that encapsulate the main features of this period and delineating the current state of refugee reception. First, refugee arrivals entered the European public discourse. Refugees were in Europe, and they gave new insight into transnational problems and challenges that until then had apparently remained outside the continent. Second, civil society emerged as a central actor in practically all European countries (Pries, 2018). While it is well known that organizations were active prior to the crisis, they extended and adapted their missions during this period. At the same time, other groups appeared and organized themselves spontaneously (Youkhana & Sutter, 2017). Third, the interplay between micro- and macro-level activities increased, and it included network of organizations. These networks integrated personal involvement with new moral and political mobilizations and conducted activities that ranged from local and small-scale assistance to media appearances. Lastly, the asylum crisis was a learning opportunity for all the involved actors. Individuals who became active in assisting often entered a process of politicization after learning about the broader context of the crisis, but state authorities and organisations also learned from their mutual positioning and interactions (Pries, 2018). Civil society perceived state responses to refugee arrivals as the outcome of failing refugee reception systems, while states recognized the value of civil society's contributions (Boersma et al., 2018).

The asylum crisis caused polarized reactions in European and Dutch society alike. Some were based on public anxieties, while others stemmed from something more promising in the dynamism of these new players and initiatives. Alongside the more traditional and es-

tablished actors in the field—municipalities, governmental agencies, established CSOs—many others acted: businesses, neighbourhood residents, social entrepreneurs, and bottom-up socio-cultural initiatives (Jong & Ataç, 2017). Many of these initiatives were active in creating opportunities for refugees and Dutch people to meet. For example, there were alternative Dutch language teaching programmes, mentoring schemes, and employment projects (Rast & Ghorashi, 2018).

Roger Zetter (cited in Sigona, 2018 p. 456) argues that in this era of globalization and forced migration, two parallel processes are taking place: the proliferation of bureaucratic categories that seek to encapsulate forced displacement and the increasing precarity of the rights and entitlements of displaced people. These processes restrain refugees' movements towards the Global North, and to a certain extent, they also define and frame the assistance that newly arrived refugees receive from both civil society and governmental organizations (Sigona, 2018). As seen during the asylum crisis, the work of safeguarding refugees relies on civic involvement and organizational networks (Feischmidt et al., 2019; Pries, 2018). It is therefore particularly important to understand how the rise of ECSOs and their interplay with established CSOs altered the ecology of refugee reception during the crisis. As Pries (2018) points out, there is a need to better understand the patterns, but also the desirability, of both horizontal and vertical cooperation between different local groups, established NGOs, and state authorities (that is, between ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs).

By examining the experiences and perceptions of individuals actively involved with these three types of organizations during the crisis, this study contributes to the literature on crisis governance, collaborative governance, and CSO participation (both established and emergent). We use a crisis governance lens to call for greater attention to the emergent, bottom-up, and indeed, connective actions ECSOs have with established CSOs and GOs. A crisis governance lens enables us to give meaning to and to understand the roles of informal networks, spontaneous volunteers, and emergent organizations—in other words, the ways that people organize themselves in times of crisis when formal authorities fall short. After a theoretical discussion of crisis and collaborative governance and participatory spaces, we provide a brief outline of our methodological approach. Based on our qualitative and interpretative study conducted in 2017–2018, we address the following questions: what were the experiences of ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs during the 2015–2016 asylum crisis? Did their cooperation help bring about a more fundamental shift in Dutch refugee reception?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Crisis Governance

Crises are disruptions to peace and order in society; they manifest in diverse forms, from natural disasters and financial system failures to dramatic changes in refugee movements and numbers. According to Boin, 't Hart, Stern and Sundelius (2016, p. 5), a crisis occurs when "a social system, a community, an organization, a policy sector, a country…experiences an urgent threat to its basic structures or fundamental values, which harbours many 'unknowns' and appears to require a far-reaching response". Crisis governance, then, concerns how government works to control a perceived crisis (Boin et al., 2016). It includes governments working towards remediating a crisis but also towards enhancing community resilience for future critical situations. Crisis governance appears as a set of intertwined governance challenges in which all the relevant organizations play a role. During crises, ruling authorities often rely on instrumentation of the chaos, command, and control governance model (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Dynes, 1994; Helsloot & Ruitenberg, 2004). However, in recent years, that model has been weakened by the emergence of alternative forms of cooperation among different parties, and the emergence of advising institutions, all of which has led to the continuity, coordination, cooperation crisis management model. This model suggests that governmental organizations should aim at solving the issues that generated the crisis rather than avoiding those issues, even if that means working through an initial period of disorder or confusion (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Dynes, 1994; Helsloot & Ruitenberg, 2004). Doing so allows governments to respond with greater flexibility and inventiveness so they can adapt to the changing nature of social and organizational dynamics during different stages of a crisis. Effective responses, with synchronized forms of preparation and improvisation, can be assured by creating response structures that are ready to be triggered when needed.

2.2. Collaborative Governance

Refugee reception in the Netherlands is an established and highly institutionalized process (Geuijen, 1998; Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016; Ten Holder, 2012). To clarify whether the asylum crisis brought new opportunities to achieve durable collaboration between different stakeholders in refugee reception, it is useful to examine the concept collaborative governance. Theories of collaborative governance help to further conceptualize the relation between ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs because they provide elements for understanding the complexity of interactions between heterogeneous stakeholders. Collaborative governance allows different organizations to work together and agree on solutions while assisting policymakers and practitioners in targeting problems and delivering action more effectively. According to Thompson (as cited in Thomson & Perry, 2006, p. 23), collaboration is an informal or formal process of negotiation between independent actors. It enables the creation of structures to define and manage their relationships and how they act on the issue that brought them together. In

the specific case of collaborative governance, it is a practice that brings multiple stakeholders together in spaces where public agencies engage in a general agreement-oriented and decision-making process (Ansell & Gash, 2008, pp. 543–544). Stoker (as cited in Ansell & Gash, 2008) refers to collaborative governance as the rules around collective decision-making. Gray (1989, p. 5) argues that collaboration is a process in which actors who have different perspectives on a problem can explore their differences and seek answers that go beyond their own interests and understandings. The asylum crisis created a favourable environment for the formation of temporary, emergent collaborations between ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs. Burke and Morley (2016) note that where there is a new and complex environment, temporary collaborations connecting different organizations to a shared goal often prove to be effective (Burke & Morley, 2016). However, such collaborations usually lack planning and therefore tend to rely on spontaneous actions to coordinate activities (Beck & Plowman, 2014, p. 1235). Emergent collaboration appears in a context where organizations are under pressure to respond to conditions that require contributions from multiple stakeholders (Beck & Plowman, 2014, p. 1235). These collaborative arrangements progress rapidly during critical situations, and the interactions between actors develop organically through the immediate exchange of information and resources.

2.3. CSOs and Participatory Spaces

To understand the role of CSOs in the broader context of refugee reception and integration, it is important to note their capacity to participate and the possible obstacles to their participation in an environment mostly dominated by GOs. According to Rast and Ghorashi (2018), refugee reception through the active engagement of newcomers in CSO activities offers a more inclusive approach than that usually used by GOs. However, such initiatives face numerous internal and external challenges that limit inclusive practices. For example, despite the proliferation of new opportunities for citizen engagement in different policy processes (Gaventa, 2006; Rast & Ghorashi, 2018), participation alone does not always result in better inclusion in a specific policy sector, in this case, that of migrants and refugees. The development of CSOs' role in refugee reception appears to be in line with what is usually described as the Dutch participation society (RMO, 2013). However, community engagement is often seen as a replacement for government action and funds (RMO, 2013; Skinner & Fleuret, 2011). In continental Europe, government withdrawal has resulted in an increased emphasis on the responsibility of citizens—and voluntary organizations, as the most direct expression of citizens' commitment—without funding and/or assigning those organizations the formal task of service delivery. In other words, state reductions in welfare and social support tend to be accompanied by policy discourses centred on pluralism, citizen responsibility, and a celebration of the synergy between the state, the private sector, and voluntary resources (Skinner & Fleuret, 2011).

Neoliberal policy studies have generated much literature evaluating the risks and advantages of a more prominent role for community engagement in social support systems. The merits of community participation projects include smaller-scale operations, more pluralized forms of support, improved responsiveness to local needs, and increased capacity to build, engage, and empower local communities (Mitchell, 2001; Trudeau, 2008). However, these virtues can be compromised when community engagement becomes a tool of welfare support, leading to the risk that CSOs become an arm of the state apparatus (Hanlon, Rosenberg, & Clasby, 2007; Peeters & Drosterij, 2011; Trommel, 2009). Cooperation assets that are shared between CSOs and GOs should thus be organized to preserve CSOs' capacities to act as spaces of resistance, and to ensure "openness to alternative standpoints and active incorporation of different, marginalized voices from the periphery into a sector traditionally dominated by society mainstream groups" (Wolch, 1999, p. 29). This requires a critical reconsideration of participatory spaces and cooperative assets between CSOs, and GOs, one that attends to questions of power (Hardy & Clegg, 2006; Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998) in its analysis of the relations between these groups and stakeholders.

Gaventa (2006) elaborates on three types of participatory spaces for citizen initiatives: closed spaces, invited spaces, and created spaces. Closed spaces are where decisions are taken by policymakers without input from other stakeholders. Invited spaces constitute a shift from closed to open spaces. Here other stakeholders are invited to take part and contribute their views. Created spaces are devised by those with less power or influence over a particular issue. Cornwall (2002, p. 17) refers to created spaces as "spaces that emerge more organically out of sets of common concerns or identifications….These may be 'sites of radical possibility' where those who are excluded find a place and a voice". The interplay between closed, invited, and created spaces presents challenges to the interactions between ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs. To contest closed spaces, ECSOs and CSOs may demand greater transparency and accountability, as well as more democratic structures (Gaventa, 2006). Invited spaces might require that these organizations negotiate and collaborate while seeking a degree of independence. However, they should be able to decide when to enter and leave such spaces, which would preserve their capacity to operate in different spaces and generate change in each.

Both crisis and collaborative governance provide elements to understand the relations between ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs. Collaborative governance allows different organizations to work together on specific problems while assisting policymakers and practitioners. Similarly, the interaction between different participatory spaces puts questions of power at the heart of any engagement be-

tween CSOs and GOs (Hardy & Clegg, 2006; Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998). Thus, it is important to reflect on the experiences of ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs during the asylum crisis in order to see if those engagements brought a change in dynamics between organizations dealing with refugee reception.

Crisis governance employs a multi-actor perspective to study crisis preparation, prevention, response, recovery, and accountability. It also studies the role that citizens and new technologies can play in different crisis phases (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Dynes, 1994; Helsloot & Ruitenberg, 2004). Furthermore, participation as joint consultations or practices through which different actors can contribute to crisis remediation is an important angle for studying the dynamics between different organizational actors. Such participation opportunities give space for more pluralized forms of support and the capacity to build, engage, and empower local communities (Mitchell, 2001; Trudeau, 2008).

3. Research Approach and Methods

This article is drawn from a case study involving individuals from ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs taking part in research activities at the Refugee Academy, a part of the Institute for Societal Resilience at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The study's objectives were to identify crisis response practices that could be applied to the asylum crisis and other crisis situations and to determine if those responses would contribute to a more fundamental shift in Dutch refugee reception. As exploratory research conducted within the academy's Refugee Crisis Governance research stream, the project was based primarily on qualitative and interpretative methods (Denscombe, 2014; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2015). These included the analysis of data from two meetings with panel discussions, twelve semi-structured follow-up interviews, and document analysis (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Panel discussions allowed us to bring in different actors with extensive knowledge and expertise on the asylum crisis. Semi-structured interviews offered informants a relaxed and personalized approach, which provided flexibility in how discussion topics were introduced. Lastly, document analysis enabled the contextualization and triangulation of our research (Bowen, 2009). We corroborated findings by analysing data collected through different methods. In June 2017, during its first meeting, the Refugee Academy organized a roundtable on the governance of the 2015–2016 asylum crisis. It was moderated by one of this article's authors, an expert in crisis governance and organization sciences. Of the nine other participants, two were from different local governments, three from other universities, two from ECSOs, and two from CSOs. In November 2017, another meeting on crisis governance was organized. It had a panel with individuals from three ECSOs, two CSOs, and two GOs and was moderated by one of the authors. During February–March 2018, follow-up interviews were arranged with relevant interviewees identified through contacts from the Refugee Academy. We created a list of 45 potential respondents based on their organizations and roles during the crisis. Of these, 15 individuals did not reply, 18 did not see enough connection between their work and the potential interviews, and 12 agreed to be interviewed. However, these 12 were mainly from CSOs and, of those, mostly ECSOs. While GO respondents were open to discussing their experiences during the crisis in the first Refugee Academy meeting (in June 2017), by the second meeting four months later, they proved harder to attract. By January–March 2018, none of our GO contacts, including those who had taken part in previous activities, were willing to be interviewed. Paradoxically, many of these organizations were still eager to contribute to other activities organized by our research group, just not those activities concerned with the asylum crisis and related questions. The interviews were conducted in Dutch and followed an interview guide created to consider the operationalization of the central concepts of this study. The aim was to identify recurring topics and develop an overview of the different perceptions, views, and opinions. To systematize and analyse the data gathered, we used the grounded theory approach, which allows theory to be developed from the data, instead of the opposite. This inductive method (e.g., from the specific to the general) guided rather than determined our analysis (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). The interviews were transcribed and translated into English by native Dutch speakers. The empirical findings are based on selected quotes from the meeting reports and the interviews that show common patterns, topics, and subjects.

4. Results

4.1. Setting the Scene: Dutch Refugee Reception during the Crisis

Whether emergent or established, CSOs assist refugees through advocacy, the provision of extra services, and the help of volunteers (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017). They may include experts who can act to represent the interests of refugees without the regulatory constraints of GOs. CSOs can provide a degree of flexibility and adaptability that GOs cannot. Moreover, these organizations play a key role in refugee reception and integration because they assist refugees after their arrival (Garkisch, Heidingsfelder, & Beckmann, 2017). Not only do CSOs adapt to immediate refugee needs and possibilities, but they play a useful role in connecting refugees to other relevant individuals and organizations. CSOs aim to be a bridge, a link between their experiences and futures in the host society (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017; Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016; Rast & Ghorashi, 2018). During the crisis, ECSOs supported or interacted with CSOs such as the Dutch Council for Refugees or the Red Cross (Boersma et al., 2018). Some ECSOs collected donations and sent aid packages to Greece and other Euro-

pean countries. Other organizations focused on improving refugees' integration in local communities, greeting and assisting refugees when they arrived in town, or facilitating temporary stays for refugees with Dutch host families. Some other ECSOs provided community housing or opportunities for encounter and connection with the neighbourhood, both in physical spaces and through online communities. The key Dutch GOs involved were the COA, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND), and the local governments.

CSOs were asked to assist GOs with the reception of refugees during the crisis. Starting in September 2015, the accommodation of asylum seekers took place in new locations because the COA's centres lacked the capacity (Boersma et al., 2018). Though the law stated that applicants should receive a decision on their residency status within six months, the time to complete the process was prolonged during the crisis, and refugees had to be accommodated in temporary reception centres. In Amsterdam, the city government set up four emergency shelters and requested assistance from the Salvation Army. By April 2016, the COA had increased its capacity, and it took over management of all the Amsterdam shelters (Boersma et al., 2018). Finally, in May 2017, the COA announced that its operations would be reduced due to lower occupancy and expectations for reduced refugee inflow in the future (COA, 2017). However, while some initiatives were scaling down, other stakeholders expressed less certainty about future refugee numbers. This was clearly expressed by COA chairman Gerard Bakker, who spoke of both the experience of community groups and the need to remain ready for future developments:

> We learned a lot from each other, and therefore we became locally involved in this movement, with cities, volunteers, and locals. We will not just close the door behind us, because we will need each other again if the number of asylum seekers grows again unexpectedly. (COA, 2017; authors' translation)

Additionally, the Advisory Committee on Migration Affair's (ACVZ, 2018) work plan for 2017 focused on what the Dutch Minister of Justice called "Migration Management 2030". Indeed, authorities remained concerned about future migration and sought advice on how to develop a stable long-term migration system that would assist them in planning their work and services accordingly.

4.2. Circumstantial Elements and Crisis Governance

Our findings reveal circumstantial (specific to an organization's context) and interorganizational elements that played a crucial role in the work of ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs during the crisis. It is clear that their experiences require a shift in our attention to what we call meso- and micro-level organizational dynamics.

4.2.1. Location and Anticipation

During the Refugee Academy meetings, participants from ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs discussed their impressions and experiences of the asylum crisis. This was one of the few opportunities they had to talk about the topic with people from other organizations. Their shared impressions related to the predictability of the crisis and its perception as mostly an urban experience:

> What was striking was that there was a lot of talking about the crisis, while I was thinking by [sic] myself, if we have a crisis, it is a crisis of organizations and how we fix things and in what way we are prepared and not prepared to [sic] things that, from my view, we could have seen coming. (Respondent 6, interview)

The crisis did not come as a surprise to most respondents. In fact, they noted several conditions that were present before the increase in refugee arrivals, and they had foreseen subsequent developments and implications. This foreknowledge made respondents critical of the actual refugee crisis, but many agreed that although the handling of the crisis was clearly unfortunate, it had, nonetheless, brought positive outcomes. Some said the crisis was a "blessing in disguise" (ISR, 2017a). This was clearly realized by the coming together of independent individuals and local initiatives that otherwise would have never interacted.

4.2.2. Assessment of Needs and Definition of Roles

Respondents representing CSOs that had been present in Dutch society for a few years reflected on the impact of events portrayed in the media and the subsequent surge in calls to inquire about volunteering opportunities. This hindered the already overburdened workload of established organizations. At times, it created new obstacles or contradictory situations:

> Certain events portrayed in the media stirred public opinion and helped to increase the numbers of volunteers willing to help established local community organizations and projects, or in the launch of new initiatives. Established NGOs/charity organizations [CSOs] sometimes viewed the sudden increase in new volunteers and initiatives [ECSOs] as interfering with their work. (ISR, 2017b)

During the roundtables, participants spoke of their frustration with the lack of resources not only for receiving refugees but for integrating them into the community as soon as possible. They often elaborated on their roles during the crisis, but they also discussed how they might address this issue:

> For all organizations, it is important to know how to give help, but also to provide refugees with the re-

> sources for self-help wherever possible. To achieve the latter, it is essential to recognize what abilities people already have and build on them. This reminds workers, in turn, to listen to refugees—their views, experiences, and contributions—as a means of making refugee reception more just and sustainable. (ISR, 2017a)

All respondents noted the importance of achieving a genuine understanding of refugee needs rather than making assumptions that do not include the perspectives of refugees themselves. Many felt that the involvement of new actors—ECSOs—would facilitate better communication with refugees and, therefore, better needs assessments. This might be achieved by bringing together like-minded organizations and individuals to enhance learning and cooperation activities:

> Many participants noted that we often tend to organize initiatives *for* refugees rather than *with* them. We need a great deal more reflection on this. It is time to see part of our work as listening to and involving refugees in our discussions, decisions, and projects. All participants agreed [ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs]. (ISR, 2017b)

In the report from the second meeting (ISR, 2017b), there is a clear realization that organizational and individual learning processes should involve not only the host society but refugees themselves, and as soon as they arrive. The concept of co-ownership may prove interesting in this context, insofar as it suggests a shift from providing help by just giving to providing help by asking what is needed. In other words, there is a growing understanding that reception and integration are two-way processes.

4.3. Interorganizational Elements: Opportunities for Collaborative Governance?

4.3.1. Working Separately to Achieve Similar Aims

When asked what the organizations had experienced during the crisis in relation to other stakeholders, participants recognized that GOs interacted with and learned from the work and practices of ECSOs, CSOs, or other governmental counterparts:

> Governmental organizations learned a great deal by going into the field and working with initiatives and municipalities. This is a process that had started before the refugee crisis, but it was developed further and faster during this period. On the other hand, there was evidence that the good intentions of local governments can sometimes produce unintended (negative) results. For instance, the actions of municipalities often foment competition and/or conflict between initiatives [mostly ECSOs]. (ISR, 2017b)

Though GOs and CSOs had started coming together before the 2015–2016 period, this process accelerated during the asylum crisis. Paradoxically, this sometimes-produced unintended consequences, as the previous example indicates. By funding new projects, local governments sometimes stimulated competition between different initiatives.

The respondents emphasized not only the contact between different types of organizations (GO and CSO), but also the interactions between organizations belonging to the same sector (CSO–CSO or GO–GO). In the following example, we see evidence of strained relations between established and emergent CSOs:

> There appeared to be little recognition of the long experience and knowledge built within the NGOs themselves. For that reason, it is crucial to rethink and redesign the relations between established NGOs, like *Vluchtelingenwerk* [Dutch Council for Refugees], and more "fluid" community initiatives [ECSOs] so that the positive potential of the latter is realized and interconnected with the experience of the first. (ISR, 2017b)

Where lines of communication between CSOs and GOs were inadequate, collaborative efforts sometimes suffered or ended in conflict. One respondent described a lack of support from relevant organizations and the bureaucratic rules that obstructed clear communication:

> Sometimes there was a clear guideline communicated from the national organizations to the local ones. Then there is someone you know and that you can call. But the bureaucracy was very burdensome; there is someone behind a desk who says, "Rules are rules". (ECSO Respondent 3, interview)

Our research shows that where horizontal cooperation and collaboration occurred, experienced organizations could assist the less experienced in establishing themselves and launching their programmes.

4.4. Opportunities for Change through ECSO and CSO Participation

Although the circumstantial and interorganizational evidence show elements that limited the work of CSOs and GOs, the Refugee Academy meetings and the interviews indicate the beginning of a shift towards enabling CSOs' inclusion in an organizational ecosystem composed mostly of GOs. This change is seen mainly in the sharing of best practices and the focusing on local rather than central governments.

4.4.1. Opportunities for Change at the Meso-Level: Unexpected Partners and Local Governments

Respondents acknowledged that the asylum crisis presented an opportunity to rethink approaches to refugee

reception. They highlighted the importance of understanding the need for different organizational roles as part of a larger set of stakeholders and processes. This could be applied to the relation between homogenous or heterogeneous organizations (i.e., the interplay among organizations belonging to the same or different sectors) but also to the relationship between organizations and refugees:

> First, this opportunity [the asylum crisis] brought onto the organizational stage local and private initiatives [ECSOs] dealing with different issues regarding refugees. Second, municipalities are more involved in refugee reception than before; they are taking responsibility and initiative. These elements are generating the conditions for a larger shift in thinking about the meaning and effects of greater public participation. (ISR, 2017a)

Many of the interviews stressed the relevance of establishing and sustaining a good relationship with local governments, often noting that the relatively small size of the municipalities allowed them to interact and obtain immediate answers to their needs and requests:

> Yes, in some municipalities it is a bit easier because they are smaller. That makes it easy to get to them, to reach them. Everything I say isn't about my interaction, but what I see in the field. I have a pretty good relationship with the municipality….They are also open to processes and new things. (CSO Respondent 5, interview)

Regarding the specific actions taken during the crisis, participants mostly agreed that traditional decision channels should be modified, from being top-down to being bottom-up. Both Refugee Academy meeting reports also acknowledged the necessity of collaborative spaces and a better definition of roles, which might clarify responsibilities and help to draw an organizational map showing all the relevant stakeholders and their relation to one another. In this context, most respondents defined their roles by focusing on what could have been done better and in what manner. The interorganizational connections that emerged during the asylum crisis were central, and participants identified three conditions required to facilitate those connections: focusing on positive people, having a can-do attitude, and local governments assuming a coordinating role.

4.4.2. Opportunities for Change at the Micro-Level: Human Capital and Tailored Actions

While acknowledging the conditions required to facilitate governance and share best practices, respondents elaborated on how this could start at the micro-level. They particularly emphasized the importance of personal alliances. One respondent felt that, despite the differences between organizations, all stakeholders should focus on connections between individuals or groups that work well together and pursue the same goals:

> Regardless of the (type) of organization, there are always people you can connect with, who can make a difference. Working together towards an inclusive system boils down to finding those people and keeping in touch with the network one establishes. We should invest in creating structures in which people can find each other and build durable networks. (ISR, 2017b)

Moreover, many respondents recognized the benefit of tailoring their actions to specific situations rather than following a generic procedure. Others underlined the importance of networking to seek solutions to problems or possible points of collaboration. One respondent highlighted the importance of personal contacts not only to facilitate their work but to connect refugees with the larger host society. As another individual observed, "networks" might refer to other organizations or to individual volunteers. Some networks might even include employees from GOs. However, active collaboration with GOs proved more elusive due to their bureaucratic challenges:

> If you don't know how to find each other, a lot of time and energy will be lost….If you are all doing the same thing and you don't know it. You need some sort of coordination, and you have to find each other. (ECSO Respondent 11, interview)

Our research shows that to obtain a quick answer or solution to a problem, respondents regularly used their networks to reach the right person in the relevant organization. Despite, or perhaps because of, these informal tactics, such contact often led to greater collaboration and more positive outcomes.

While these reports and interview fragments present patterns observed in a specific setting, they have much to tell us about how ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs interacted during the asylum crisis and what their reflections and considerations reveal about the larger Dutch response. Our evidence suggests that these interactions hold the potential for future collaboration and, more specifically, for more inclusive practices regarding CSOs. The implications for refugee reception and organizational ecology are addressed in the next section.

5. Conclusion

This research examined the differing roles and experiences of ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs during the Dutch asylum crisis. Our data shows that the coming together of these organizations may mark the beginning of a shift that enables the inclusion of ECSOs and CSOs in an organizational ecosystem that before the crisis, was mostly dominated by GOs. This change occurred mainly

because of a focus on local rather than central government initiatives and because stakeholders sought to network, collaborate, and share best practices. The crisis provided an opportunity to reconsider the challenges of refugee reception, where the participation of ECSOs, CSOs, and refugees themselves could be invited and actively encouraged.

From a crisis management perspective, understanding the contributions of ECSOs and CSOs could assist GOs in moving away from the command-and-control approach to crisis and towards better planned and coordinated practices. In a crisis management model that favours coordination, new opportunities for collaboration and resource optimization between ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs would be possible (Boersma et al., 2018; Drabek & McEntire, 2003). This could enable interactions between heterogeneous stakeholders while making the most of their human, social, and logistical resources. Although incorporating new actors can sometimes hamper the work of established actors, a well-supported plan of action/interaction could help mitigate early difficulties, with much to be gained as actors learn to work together. Therefore, it is arguable that after a crisis, or indeed during any non-crisis period, there is an opportunity to put inclusive and collaborative relations (Rast & Ghorashi, 2018) into place in anticipation of future needs. What we can say with certainty is that the asylum crisis brought a new awareness of the importance of collaborative assets.

More specifically, our empirical findings suggest real possibilities for CSOs and local GOs to work together. This could be achieved in part because municipalities are smaller and less bureaucratic than the central government, often making it quicker and easier for ECSOs and CSOs to access decision makers and resources. Indeed, many respondents described micro-level interactions that focused on, and reinforced, contacts and relations in local government as well as other community agencies.

Turning to the broad issue of participation, the asylum crisis created "closed spaces" where only governmental organizations, such as the COA and the municipalities, were involved (Boersma et al., 2018). These became "invited spaces" once CSOs were asked to assist. However, while the promise to leave that "invited space" open for future interactions was clearly expressed in the 2017 COA statement and in the Refugee Academy meeting it seems that the perception of ongoing collaboration was not shared by all.

As our study indicates, there are opportunities for collaboration among ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs during both crisis and non-crisis periods. Such collaborative governance could offer the possibility of shared spaces to exchange best practices on a long-term basis, one that could foster a sustainable form of refugee reception and integration by contributing to policy changes and best practice guidelines. However, these opportunities are weakened by seemingly divergent organizational priorities. This gives added urgency to the need for civil society and governments to work together during non-crisis periods so they can be ready for any future asylum crisis.

Future research needs to determine to what extent our findings apply to other policy sectors and/or stages of a (asylum) crisis. In addition, because of the differences between ECSOs, CSOs, and GOs, research should allow for the fact that each may present differently depending upon whether it is considered separately or with the others. In other words, considering them together may mask internal or external factors that might otherwise be visible. With that caveat, we argue that by examining micro- and meso-level opportunities between ECSO, CSOs, and GOs, it is possible to identify the conditions for a change in Dutch refugee reception. This change can be contextualized in an organizational ecology that includes the effort and commitment of individuals, most of whom share a desire to assist refugees without bureaucratic constraints. Their work and indeed this research are made more important because they coincide with current and highly polarized public debates about the reception and inclusion of refugees.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Robert Larruina (MSc) is a PhD candidate and teacher in the Department of Organization Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, at VU Amsterdam. His research is affiliated with and the Department of Organization Sciences and the university's Refugee Academy (Institute for Societal Resilience). Since 2011, he is interested in refugee reception and integration in the Netherlands and the role that (emergent and established) civil society, governmental, and refugee-led organizations play in these processes. Currently, he is focusing on multi-stakeholder collaboration and co-creation processes in refugee policymaking and entrepreneurship.

Kees Boersma (PhD) is Associate Professor at the VU Amsterdam in the Department of Organization Sciences. His research interest is in crisis management, disaster studies, and safety and security. He is the coordinator of the NWO project "Enhancing Smart Disaster Governance: Assessing the Potential of the Net-Centric Approach". He is an elected board member of the ISCRAM (Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management) association, and a member of the editorial board of *Organization Studies* and the *International Journal of Emergency Services*. Homepage: www.keesboersma.com

Elena Ponzoni (PhD) is currently working as a Post-Doc researcher at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, and at the Department of Child and Family Studies, Department of Behavioral and Movement Sciences, of VU Amsterdam. Her work is situated in the fields of Diversity and Inclusion, Philosophy of Language and Sociology of Scientific Knowledge. She is coordinator of the Refugee Academy (Institute of Societal Resilience, VU), an academic platform that aims to connect societal and academic actors working on the inclusion of refugees in the Dutch society.

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Article

Making Volunteering with Refugees Governable: The Contested Role of 'Civil Society' in the German Welcome Culture

Larissa Fleischmann

Department of Human Geography, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, 06120 Halle, Germany;
E-Mail: larissa.fleischmann@geo.uni-halle.de

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Abstract
This article investigates the manifold attempts of governmental actors to make volunteering with refugees governable in light of the so-called German Welcome Culture in 2015. Driven by the notion of a need to interfere, authorities introduced numerous programmes and efforts seeking to order, coordinate, influence, and enhance volunteering with refugees in order to make it more "effective". This investigation will suggest reading these interventions as attempts to (re)gain control and power over the conduct of committed citizens, making them complicit in the governance of asylum seekers, while co-opting potentially dissenting behaviour amongst them. Yet, it will also reveal how certain volunteers proved to contest their ascribed roles and responsibilities, demanding space for disagreement. Volunteering with refugees thus also constantly exceeded and defied governmental control and interference—and thereby remained, at least to a certain extent, ungovernable.

Keywords
civil society; civic solidarity; European refugee crisis; Germany; governance; humanitarianism; refugees; volunteering; Welcome Culture

Issue
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1. Introduction: Volunteers as Protagonists in the Reception of Asylum Seekers

This article contributes to ongoing discussions in the field of the anthropology of humanitarianism, investigating how ostensibly 'apolitical' humanitarian practices have become increasingly complicit in the governance of marginalized groups of society, such as irregular migrants and asylum seekers (Agier, 2010; Barnett, 2011; Bornstein & Redfield, 2011; Fassin, 2007, 2011, 2012; Malkki, 1996, 2015; Rajaram, 2002; Ticktin, 2006, 2011, 2016). Building on 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork on volunteering with refugees in South-Western Germany between late 2014 and mid-2016, the following investigation provides insights into the ways in which governmental actors seek to gain influence and come to govern through domains commonly considered non-governmental. What is crucial here is that these insights will also illustrate how such attempts to govern only partially lead to their desired outcomes and remain continuously contested.

To elaborate these arguments in more detail, I focus on the developments that made history as an ostensible German Welcome Culture (cf. Hamann & Karakayali, 2016; Heins & Unrau, 2018; Karakayali, 2019; Sutter, 2019). The catchphrase depicts the extraordinary willingness of German residents to volunteer with refugees in the summer months of 2015, when the local reception of asylum seekers moved centre stage in public discussions across Germany. The media's accelerating attention with regards to the incidents at Europe's external borders as well as the notion of a humanitarian emergency situation mobilised many residents "to help", to become involved in volunteering activities in their neighbourhood, and

to form self-organised citizens' initiatives in support of refugees in almost every corner of the country. Their activities were extraordinarily diverse and creative, including help in bureaucratic procedures, the sorting and distribution of donations, the organisation of joint leisure time activities, such as coffee rounds, joint gardening activities, handicraft circles, youth groups, or bicycle repair cafés. Moreover, volunteering with refugees spoke to a diverse group of people from various backgrounds and age groups, including many who had previously been neither committed socially nor politically (cf. Karakayali & Kleist, 2016).

Governmental actors in the area of my field research in South-Western Germany highly appreciated this unforeseen increase in volunteering activities. As the following quote indicates, representatives from local to regional authorities regularly emphasised the value and significance of citizen commitment, acknowledging the volunteers' central role in the reception of asylum seekers:

> You can't say it often enough to people who volunteer, what an important job they do. I always say this is the *backbone of society* if I can put it like that. If there wasn't such a willingness to volunteer, you wouldn't be able to run such a refugee reception facility. (Interview with a representative from a municipality in Southern Germany, March 2016; emphasis added)

Quite connectedly, many of the volunteers I spoke with presented their actions as complementary to local governmental efforts in accommodating asylum seekers on the ground. Many also demarcated their actions from what they perceived to be forms of left-wing political activism for the sake of refugees and asylum seekers. In contrast to such political forms of acting, they depicted their volunteering activities as an 'apolitical'[1] humanitarian duty to those who are suffering, claiming that they "just wanted to help" (see Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017; Hamann & Karakayali, 2016; Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019).

These meaning-making processes point to the entangled and complicit role of volunteering and the governing of asylum seekers, which sometimes also share a co-constitutive relationship. The "proper" nature of this relationship, however, remained highly contested during the German migration summer and subject to continuous negotiations between governmental actors on the one hand and volunteers on the other. As I realized during my ethnographic fieldwork, some of the new volunteers also continuously exceeded and defied governmental objectives in the management of asylum seekers. It is thus central to stress the ambiguous meanings and effects of volunteering with refugees at the outset of this investigation, acknowledging how volunteering also came with quite political and dissenting potential despite its humanitarian motivation (cf. Fleischmann, 2017; Pries, 2019; Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019). Moreover, rather than constituting a homogenous group, volunteering activities brought together a wide range of individuals whose position could also change over time with possibilities for politicisation emerging through commitment. For instance, those who started with ostensibly 'apolitical' humanitarian motivations might have turned gradually more political when experiencing injustices and fault lines in asylum laws and policies, eventually not hesitating to counteract governmental policies.

The German summer of migration thus brought about important—but necessarily contested—(re)negotiations of the role and responsibilities of "active citizens" vis-à-vis "the state" in migration societies. Here, I am particularly interested in the question of how governmental actors sought to make volunteering with refugees governable, while attempting to regain sovereign power in the management of asylum seekers.[2] I ask for the mechanisms and patterns with which they aimed to shape the "proper" conduct of volunteering, for instance, through the introduction of numerous programmes and efforts seeking to influence, enhance, or coordinate volunteering activities on the ground. Such efforts unfolded prominently on sub-national levels of government, i.e. in municipal authorities and state governments.[3] Although similar developments might have taken shape at the federal government, I focus on the regional and local levels here, since they appeared to have a more immediate influence on the volunteers' activities in the area of my field research.

I structured this article into five sections. In Section 2, I scrutinise how "civil society" emerged as a field of governmental interference through manifold programmes introduced in the area of my field research in the course

[1] I put the term 'apolitical' in single quotation marks throughout this text in order to highlight that I distance myself from such 'apolitical' self- and other-depictions, which I encountered during field research. Analytically, I believe that apolitical claims in relation to the topic of migration and asylum are impossible to implement in practice. Nevertheless, an 'apolitical' claim can have quite ambiguous political effects (cf. Redfield, 2011). I thus suggest that it is rather much more fruitful to distinguish analytically between anti-political and political forms of action, whereby the former stands for the reinforcement of exclusions in a given order, while the latter depicts the enactment of more inclusive alternatives (cf. Rancière, 1998, 2001; Ticktin, 2011).

[2] I understand sovereign power as the ability to decide upon inclusion and exclusion—a reading that is inspired by the works of Giorgio Agamben (Agamben, 1998, 2000, 2005). In the governance of migration, sovereign power unfolds in the incentive to order migration flows into neat categories of victims and villains of migration, while drawing a neat demarcation line between those who become the 'rightful' subjects of protection and those who are excluded, marginalised, and rendered deportable.

[3] My fieldwork focussed particularly on the state of Baden-Württemberg, one of the 16 German states located in South-Western Germany. Consequently, my field research took place within a specific political climate that appeared to put citizen engagement high on the agenda. Baden-Württemberg held the only state government throughout Germany that joined a coalition of the Greens and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Right from the start of its legislative period, the ruling government declared the enhancement of citizen engagement to be one of its top priorities. The insights I provide throughout this article are therefore not only contingent on the particular political but also historical, regional, and socioeconomic context of this specific part of Germany, meaning that my findings might not, or only partly, be transferable to other regions of the country.

of 2015. In Section 3, I argue that, in this process, responsibilities became (re)ordered between "state" and "civil society", while governmental actors increasingly sought to govern the self-conduct of committed citizens—yet, not always and necessarily with their intended outcomes. Section 4 then investigates how governmental actors dealt with dissenting volunteers through acts of co-optation, attempting to make them complicit in the management of asylum seekers. In Section 5, I wrap up with a concluding discussion of the (un)governability of volunteering with refugees during the German summer of migration.

2. Making 'Civil Society' a Field of Governmental Intervention

> When this big issue of helping refugees emerged, they [the state government] obviously said we need to make sure that municipalities intervene in a coordinating capacity. Citizen engagement always needs professional coordination, professional partners. At the moment, there is nowhere near enough manpower behind it....We can help there, we thought, set up a good support programme, so we set up our support programme. (Interview with a Deputy Secretary in the state government of Baden-Württemberg, April 2016)

In light of the fast-growing numbers of volunteers, governmental actors and public authorities in the area of my field research felt a growing "need to intervene" in order to coordinate, enhance, support, or manage volunteering activities in their area of influence. For instance, the government of the South-Western German state of Baden-Württemberg introduced numerous programmes targeting volunteers across the state. The design and circulation of a free practical guidebook entitled *Welcome! A Handbook for Voluntary Help for Refugees in Baden-Württemberg* (Staatsministerium-BW, 2015) was a striking case in point. Published by the state government of Baden-Württemberg, it featured examples of good practice as well as practical information and advice for newly committed volunteers. As one of my interlocutors, a member of the Green state government told me, the booklet presented a "complete success" with more than 30,000 free copies given out within a few weeks after its publication. Alongside this booklet, the state government introduced numerous other incentives seeking to influence volunteering practices, such as special training schemes for newly committed citizens, financial support programmes, regular conferences aiming to facilitate dialogue and networking among governmental representatives and volunteers, the publication of a regular newsletter dedicated to volunteers, or a website featuring practical information and examples of good practice. It was the claim that volunteering with refugees required guidance, coordination, and support in order to work effectively that underpinned these manifold efforts.

The notion of a need to intervene also triggered changes on a more local level. For instance, municipalities and district councils across the area of my field research employed so-called "Volunteer Coordinators", stating that volunteers were in need of professionals in order to work effectively. These newly appointed representatives served as a primary contact for citizens willing to volunteer with refugees on the ground. They assigned tasks to prospective volunteers, coordinated their activities and constituted a link with public authorities. A similar development to employ Volunteer Coordinators took hold in social welfare organisations, which received increased funding from the state government in order to do so.

These manifold governmental programmes on the local and regional level led to the institutionalisation of citizen commitment as part and parcel of the management of asylum seekers. It was in this context, so to speak, that an entity imagined as "civil society" was born as a responsible actor in the reception of asylum seekers.[4] This began in late 2014 when the state cabinet of Baden-Württemberg decided to allocate substantial funding for the development of programmes targeted at volunteering with refugees. Before that point in time, the state government had not implemented any incentives to intervene in volunteering with refugees, indicating that it did not consider volunteers to play a central role in the reception and integration of asylum seekers. This came through very clearly during my interview with a Deputy Secretary responsible for citizen engagement on the level of the state government. She claimed that the design and implementation of programmes directed at volunteering with refugees resembled a "process of invention". She explained this as follows:

> Citizen commitment [with refugees] is something that didn't really exist before. So, we didn't have a support programme or such like....It's just down to what's happening in society that we are now paying so much attention to the refugee issue and that we have launched a dedicated programme. (Interview with a Deputy Secretary in the state government of Baden-Württemberg, April 2016)

My interlocutor, speaking from the perspective of the state government, thus claimed that citizen commitment with refugees "didn't really exist before". However, during my field research, I encountered groups and individuals who had actually been supporting refugees for decades, often with humanitarian or faith-based motivations. Moreover, decidedly leftist political activists had

[4] Here, I refer particularly to the segment of "civil society" that is concerned with refugees and asylum seekers and that is understood as being constituted by "ordinary" citizens who commit themselves for the public good. I claim that such a function of "civil society" only became known to governmental actors and institutionalised as an actor with certain responsibilities from late 2014 onwards. Beyond this specific contextual meaning, however, it is important to note that "civil society" holds a historically important role in Germany (cf. Keane, 2006; Nützenadel & Strupp, 2007).

fought for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers long before the reception of asylum seekers moved to the centre of public attention from late 2014 onwards (see Atac, Kron, & Stierl, 2015). And yet, as the quote above suggests, "civil society" only became visible for the state government of Baden-Württemberg when an unprecedented and extraordinary increase in people willing to commit themselves for the sake of refugees unfolded.

The newly introduced governmental programmes thus constituted a section of "civil society" concerning itself with refugees as an actor with certain responsibilities. This observation connects with academic works pointing to the entangled and co-constitutive nature of understandings of "civil society" vis-à-vis "the state" (see for instance Ferguson & Gupta, 2002). Rather than regarding "civil society" as an entity that is meaningful in itself, it is thus central to investigate the contested rationalities, mechanisms, and practices that produce a certain understanding of the role of "civil society" vis-à-vis "the state", while ordering responsibilities between the two. As Baker-Cristales (2008, p. 352) puts that aptly: "Civil society does not exist as a prior and primordial unit; rather, civil society is formed in and through the same discourses and practices that create that artificially bounded postulate, the state". Mitchell (1991), on the other hand, calls attention to the contested processes of boundary-making between what appear to be two distinct entities; processes that he understands as mechanisms through which power is generated and a given social and political order maintained (Mitchell, 1991, p. 90).

Taking my cue from such works, I would suggest that the governmental efforts to intervene on volunteering served as a means to (re)gain control and power over both the management of asylum seekers as well as the growing numbers of volunteers committed to refugees. This came through very clearly in an interview with a Green member of the state government of Baden-Württemberg in charge of the programmes targeting volunteers across the state. She told me that she and her colleagues would strive to promote "effective volunteering", i.e., volunteering that is supervised and guided by those professionally employed in the reception of asylum seekers. Volunteering without professional guidance and coordination, on the other hand, often became associated with "chaos" and "disorder" being due to the extraordinary and sudden explosion of volunteering activities in 2015. Scholars in the field of critical migration studies argue that such notions of "chaos" and "crisis" in relation to the topic of migration serve as a powerful legitimisation strategy for state actors to exert control and power (Coleman, 2007; Mountz, 2011; Mountz & Hiemstra, 2014). A similar point tendency unfolds in the incentive to "order" and "coordinate" volunteering activities around the long summer of migration: the notion of disorder legitimised governmental interventions seeking to (re)gain control and power over committed citizens.

To sum up, volunteering with refugees emerged as an important site of governmental intervention in the course of Germany's migration summer. This development also laid the ground for a (re)ordering of tasks and responsibilities between "the state" and "civil society"—a (re)ordering that nevertheless remained highly contested and subject to different negotiations. In the following section, I will sketch out some patterns of these (re)ordering processes in more detail.

3. (Re)ordering Responsibilities in the Reception of Asylum Seekers

A key objective for governmental actors to intervene in volunteering with refugees was the meaningful division of responsibilities between "state" and "civil society". Only if "the state" and "civil society" were willing to act in concert and to collaborate for a joint purpose, my interlocutors stated, they could achieve a smooth reception and integration of asylum seekers. The incentive for harmonious collaboration and synergy not only underpinned the newly introduced governmental programmes but also came with an emphasis on humanitarian benevolence for those who are suffering. This observation connects with academic works in social anthropology and beyond, outlining how, through an emphasis on care and compassion, ostensibly non-governmental humanitarian actors become complicit in the governance of migration (Fassin, 2007; Walters, 2011). For instance, Ticktin (2011) emphasises how civil society actors increasingly took up tasks and responsibilities in the governance of (irregular) migrants in France and thereby formed part of, what she calls, a "regime of care" spanning both state and civil society actors. According to Nyers (2006), such complicity might result in forms of "humanitarian violence" that occur when humanitarian and governmental actors work in perfect synergy. In line with these works, I would argue that governmental actors in the area of my field research sought to manage the rising numbers of asylum seekers in Germany's migration summer through extended state-citizens networks that placed an emphasis on humanitarian help and compassion.

The emphasis on a meaningful division of tasks that underpinned governmental interventions on volunteering thus allocated responsibilities to 'civil society' deemed beneficial to the management of migration. While governmental representatives in the area of my field research often asserted that "the state" is responsible for more "technical matters" in the reception of asylum seekers, such as the provision of accommodation, the passing of legislation, or political decision-making processes, they portrayed "civil society" as essential for the "soft factors" of integration, such as "feeling welcome" or building bridges between refugees and the host society. As a delegate of the state government of Baden-Württemberg once told me, a key task of "civil society" was to produce "acceptance" for both asylum seekers and governmental decisions relating to their reception. Such images clearly depicted "the state" as being the one who determines the key tenets of mi-

gration management "from above", while "civil society" was responsible for effectuating these decisions "on the ground". According to Ferguson and Gupta (2002, p. 982), such spatial metaphors of verticality serve as a means for "the state" to reify itself as an enclosed entity while legitimatising its power and authority over "civil society", portraying itself as being "located above". Quite connectedly, governmental incentives to ensure a "meaningful" division of tasks and responsibilities in the area of my field research simultaneously (re)produced "the state" as being the legitimate source of power and authority in the management of asylum seekers.

The tendency to (re)order certain responsibilities to the level of committed citizens also chimes in with what scholars, taking their cue from Foucault's works on governmentality (Foucault, 1982, 1988), identified as wider shifts in techniques of governing. For instance, Lessenich (2011, p. 304) argues that social responsibility for the public good is increasingly being transferred from the level of "the state" to the level of individual citizens who become "the bearers not of social rights, but of social obligations". Lemke (2002) also points at a more profound shift in recent techniques of governing, which he describes as follows:

> What we observe today is…a displacement from formal to informal techniques of government and the appearance of new actors on the scene of government (e.g. NGOs) that indicate a fundamental transformation in statehood and a new relation between state and civil society actors. (Lemke, 2002, p. 11)

Others thus propose turning attention to the practices by which our own conduct is shaped (Dean, 1996, 2010; Rose, 1996). Yet, it is important to counterbalance such arguments identifying a tectonic shift in the relationship between "state" and "civil society" through a recognition of the historically important role of active citizens in German state policies (see for instance Keane, 2006). Either way, I would suggest that the manifold governmental programmes targeting volunteering with refugees from 2015 onwards presented renewed opportunities for governmental actors to promote and actualise "responsible citizens" and, ultimately, to govern (through) their citizen-subjects.

In the area of my field research, such attempts to allocate certain responsibilities to active citizens manifested themselves in various efforts to influence the "proper" self-conduct of volunteers on the ground. The introduction of countless training schemes directed at (prospective) volunteers was a striking case in point. Such training schemes built on the notion that volunteers needed qualification and education in order to work effectively, hence putting an emphasis on self-improvement and self-conduct. The state government of Baden-Württemberg allocated millions of Euros for the implementation of a dedicated training programme for volunteers across the state, entitled "Qualified Engaged". Municipalities across the area of my field research implemented workshops and seminars seeking to educate citizens on how to volunteer "properly", i.e., in a manner that served their interests in the local administration and management of asylum seekers. A similar attempt to shape the (self-)conduct of committed citizens became manifested in the publication of a guidebook, as well as a website featuring examples of "best practices". It also unfolded in the employment of numerous Volunteer Coordinators in municipalities across the area of my field research. As I realised in the course of my field research, they were often in a quite powerful position, acting as gatekeepers to information, funding, and reception facilities. They were able to exert considerable influence on volunteers under their guidance. For instance, they determined the tasks to be assigned to newly committed volunteers, thus shaping the nature of volunteering activities on the ground, while seeking to prevent forms of volunteering that were rated as unbeneficial. These diverse efforts to intervene in volunteering on the ground, I would argue, normalised a certain way of acting and being in relation to the public good while producing volunteers as "responsible citizens" within "the state".

The governmental attempts to (re)order certain responsibilities and to influence the self-conduct of committed citizens, however, did not necessarily lead to their intended outcomes. Certain volunteers continuously contested these interferences. In the course of my field research, I came across numerous moments when they openly criticised and voiced dissent at efforts to coordinate, influence, and shape their volunteering activities on the ground. For instance, numerous volunteers told me that they felt patronised by professionals, such as Volunteer Coordinators, who sought to get hold of their activities on the ground. I also witnessed controversial discussions among them concerning the perceived mushrooming of training schemes offered by governmental actors. This clearly came across during my observations at the regular conventions of the Refugee Council. This non-governmental organisation functions as an umbrella association for local citizens' initiatives in support of refugees at the level of the state, lobbies for their concerns at the level of state politics and constitutes an independent source of information and exchange for many of the volunteers. As I realised in the course of my field research, the Refugee Council's regular conventions also served as an important platform for volunteers, where they discussed controversial matters and elaborated positions in regards to the governmental handling of asylum seekers.

During the introductory address to a convention I attended in November 2015, the present volunteers reflected critically on "attempts by local administrations to intervene in volunteering". Eventually, a heated debate evolved with the volunteers voicing substantial dissent over attempts to coordinate their voluntary work—attempts that they clearly perceived as an affront to their independence. Quite strikingly, a volunteer in the audi-

ence stepped up asserting that through governmental interventions on volunteering, “only agreeable activities are promoted while others are hindered”. These findings connect with what a study of the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research (BIM, 2018, p. 10) illustrates concerning the increased provision of funding schemes for initiatives in support of refugees. Accordingly, more than a third of those interviewed claimed to be striving to remain “independent”, meaning that they did not want to become dependent on municipal administrations through the acceptance of certain funding opportunities.

On another occasion, in March 2015, a likely heated debate evolved concerning the governments’ implementation of numerous training schemes targeting those who set out to volunteer with refugees. According to the audience members, such seminars would often focus merely on the practical aspects of helping, while local authorities would strategically hinder education on asylum politics and asylum law—a matter where volunteers truly needed training. Eventually, a leading member of the Refugee Council stepped up announcing that “the decision as to who trains whom should be made first and foremost by volunteers themselves”, a statement for which she gained a standing ovation from the audience.

These anecdotes from my field research indicate that the intensified governmental efforts to intervene on volunteering with refugees also came with quite unintended consequences: they opened up possibilities for politicisation and disagreement among those active for the sake of refugees. The scrutinized moments of dissent that I encountered during field research aptly how some of the volunteers also defied or even challenged governmental interferences on their responsibility and self-conduct, instead of merely becoming silent accomplices in the governance of migration. Clearly, thus, volunteering with refugees not only constituted a field of governmental intervention but also opened up possibilities for resistance, opposition, and politicisation. It therefore comes as no surprise that governmental interventions also came with attempts to deal with and prevent those more ‘unruly’ aspects of volunteering with refugees.

4. Dealing with Unruly Volunteers

Alongside their emphasis on smooth cooperation, governmental interventions on volunteering also came with attempts to limit the space for disagreement between what they depicted as “the state” and “civil society”. As I outlined in the previous section, governmental actors expected “civil society” to complement their efforts in the governance of asylum seekers meaningfully and to produce acceptance for their decisions. Such a reading of the role and responsibility of “civil society”, however, silenced the possibility for non-governmental actors to also intervene critically, to demand legal and political reforms, to voice dissent at governmental actors, to protest governmental decisions, or to point at deficiencies in the workings of “the state”. Yet, as noted in the introduction to this article, the manifold practices in support of refugees that emerged around the so-called European refugee crisis also encompassed such more subversive potentials. Furthermore, as the short anecdotes from my fieldwork provided in the preceding section indicate, citizens themselves (re)negotiated their ascribed role in the reception of asylum seekers, which sometimes substantially departed from what governmental actors had intended.

Nevertheless, governmental interventions on volunteering with refugees in the area of my field research often denied the volunteers’ scope for dissent. In an interview with a deputy at the state government of Baden-Württemberg, my interlocutor classified these more critical forms of civic solidarity with refugees as “uncomfortable engagement”. Our conversation also strikingly revealed how governmental representatives in the area of my field research often drew a straight boundary line between volunteering with refugees, on the one hand, and forms of political campaigning and protest on the other, attempting to keep the both of them neatly separated. Only activities subsumed in the former of these two categorisations, seen as being located at the less confrontational and more “constructive” end, were presented as worthy of governmental promotion by my interlocutor. To be clear, as indicated earlier, the diverse forms of supporting refugees that developed in Germany’s migration summer constantly exceeded such a neat distinction between ostensibly ‘apolitical’ volunteering and common understandings of political activism, coming with subversive potentials despite their claim to remain ‘apolitical’. There were countless moments when volunteers explicitly demanded the possibility to participate in political decision-making processes and, if need be, to also contest local authorities’ handling of asylum seekers. This came through, for instance, in an interview with the head of a citizens’ initiative in the area of my field research who recounted his frustration with the local authorities’ lack of consultation:

> If the council says, “we need volunteers for our work”, then, in my opinion, they also have to consult them on decisions and include them to a certain extent…they should at least say, “hey, what do you think? Are you okay with that”, and if we have objections, then we have to try and find a course that both parties can live with. (Interview with a volunteer, April 2016)

The perception of a lack of space for disagreement with governmental actors, I would argue, even presented one of the top sources resulting in frustration among the volunteers.

Governmental actors in the area of my field research also worked directly towards the prevention or *co-optation* of such potentials for disagreement and critique emanating from the volunteers. Following Coy (2013), I understand co-optation as a means of extending governmental power over potential dissenters within society:

> Those in authority who are being challenged may reach out to, and attempt to bring the challengers into the system as participants. This formalised inclusion of challengers into the authority system that they are challenging is the essence of co-optation. (Coy, 2013)

The newly established positions of Volunteer Coordinators played an important role in such attempts of co-optation. As mentioned earlier, they were often in quite a powerful position by assigning tasks and determining the nature and extent of volunteering activities on the ground. This also allowed them to cushion potentials for more "uncomfortable" forms of commitment among the volunteers under their supervision. For instance, in a conversation with a local Volunteer Coordinator, I asked her if she had come across instances when volunteers under her guidance set out to voice discontent with the local management of asylum seekers, for instance in the local press. She denied, replying that her "boss"—who happened to be the mayor of the respective town—"would not like this at all". As this example illustrates, Volunteer Coordinators across the area of my field research often appeared to serve as extended arms of local authorities, exerting influence over the 'proper' conduct of committed citizens on the ground, while preventing forms of dissent and potentials for protest. This also came through in an interview with another Volunteer Coordinator in the area of my field research who told me rather openly that it was her job to intervene directly when volunteers did not comply with the "rules". Accordingly, she felt responsible for dealing with those volunteers who would show "problematic" or "deviant" behaviour. She asserted that there were some who would not know "their limits", who would reject the tasks assigned to them, or who would get "too involved" by building overly emotional ties to certain asylum seekers. If she would notice such behaviour, indicating that volunteers suffered from a "helper syndrome", my interlocutor would then immediately schedule an appointment with the affected, asking them to reduce their commitment. This points to a certain pathologisation of the behaviour that the Volunteer Coordinator classified as detrimental. Her disciplining interventions, I would suggest, might have aimed at preventing overly close and personal relationships with asylum seekers, since they could potentially result in the rejection of deportation orders and thus dissenting actions among the volunteers. This aptly indicates how the newly appointed Volunteer Coordinators played an important role in attempts to co-opt certain forms of volunteering and to cushion potentials resulting in uncomfortable situations for governmental actors. And yet, such attempts of co-optation did not always result in their desired outcomes. While some of the volunteers might have been frustrated and dropped out in response to such disciplining interventions, others might have become politicised, joining other groups with a more explicitly political or independent self-understanding.

It was the issue of deportation that most clearly illustrated how governmental actors strived for the co-optation of dissenting potentials among the volunteers. Various scholars in the field of critical migration studies point at the political significance of struggles over deportations (see, for instance, Darling, 2014; De Genova, 2010). Peter Nyers (2010, p. 415) suggests that they might be "read in terms of contemporary disputes over who has the authority to protect, and under what terms and conditions". In this light, the enforcement of deportation orders holds an important strategic function for "the state" in that it serves as a means to reinforce sovereign power (cf. Ilcan, 2014). Tyler and Marciniak (2013, p. 145), for instance, argue that the risk of being deported functions as an important source of domination and power in the governance of migration. It is no surprise then, that governmental actors in the area of my field research expected committed citizens to accept such decisions uncritically, rather than contesting or hindering them. Despite these governmental expectations, however, volunteers regularly considered certain deportation orders as unjust, voiced dissent and engaged in acts of protest. Some did not even hesitate to challenge deportation orders legally, block them directly, hide respective asylum seekers in their houses, or apply for church asylum as a means to circumvent actual deportations.

Consequently, though, governmental representatives regularly sought to impede such possibilities for politicisation in relation to deportation orders among the volunteers. They did so by emphasising that the "proper" way for committed citizens to respond to deportation orders was to provide advice on how to return successfully to the asylum seekers' country of origin. This came through very clearly when I attended a conference for volunteers held by the state government of Baden-Württemberg in March 2015. Several speakers at the conference, mostly governmental representatives, emphasised that—along with efforts to integrate accepted refugees—"qualified returnee counselling" was an "equally important" responsibility for committed citizens. Vandevoordt (2016) identifies a quite similar tendency with reference to Belgium. He illustrates how, through the promotion of a voluntary return to the migrants' country of origin, governmental actors make civil society actors complicit in the management of asylum seekers. Connectedly, I would argue that through their emphasis on such "returnee counselling", governmental actors in the area of my field research sought to make volunteers complicit in the governance of migration, while co-opting potentially dissenting behaviour among them. By doing so, they left no space for disagreement but rather claimed that committed citizens had to uncritically accept and complement governmental decisions in the management of asylum seekers. Yet, with partial success, the question of how volunteers were to position themselves and react in relation to deportation orders deemed unjust proved to remain one of the most controversially discussed topic among the volunteers them-

selves. While some did not want to engage in any sort of such critical or "unruly" behaviour, others considered it a key responsibility of 'civil society' to speak out against witnessed injustices in the context of deportation orders.

5. Concluding Discussion: The (Un)Governability of Volunteering with Refugees

This article investigated how governmental actors intervened in order to make volunteering with refugees governable. It argued that it was in the context of an ostensible German Welcome Culture that "civil society" emerged as a responsible actor in the governance of asylum seekers. Through the introduction of numerous programmes and efforts, local to regional authorities in the area of my field research (re)ordered responsibilities with regards to the reception of asylum seekers and intervened on the (self-)conduct of committed citizens, making them complicit in the management of asylum seekers while seeking to govern through "responsible citizens".

On the one hand, these attempts to govern volunteers result in a substantially limited scope for 'civil society' to act independently from governmental objectives, to bring about political change and transformation, or to take a stand in relation to witnessed injustices in the management of asylum seekers. The findings of this article might thus support Muehlebach's argument that "the state, while withdrawing its welfarist functions, mediates its own withdrawal by mobilising thousands of volunteers into caring about, and for, the less fortunate" (2013, p. 454). This might come with problematic consequences for those who are seeking asylum: rather than the bearers of rights and legal entitlements, they become the recipients of generous help and humanitarian benevolence (cf. Fassin, 2016).

On the other hand, however, governmental efforts to intervene do not always lead to their intended outcomes. Certain volunteers challenge assumptions on their "right" conduct and (re)negotiate the role of "civil society" in relation to the reception of asylum seekers, demanding scope for dissent, disagreement and independence. By doing so, they prove to remain "unruly", defying governmental attempts to interfere on their conduct. The shifting yet contested readings of the role of "civil society" during Germany's migration summer, I would suggest, thus also opened up new avenues for forms of civic solidarity with refugees to induce change and transformation towards more egalitarian alternatives. The soaring governmental appreciation of volunteers, as well as the increased acknowledgement of their role and responsibility, temporarily shifted power and agency over to committed citizens, some of whom will always remain to a certain extent ungovernable.

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About the Author

Larissa Fleischmann is a Postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Human Geography at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in Germany. In early 2019, she completed her PhD on the contested solidarities of the German summer of welcome at the University of Konstanz, where she was a member of the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology as well as the Centre of Excellence "Cultural Foundations of Social Integration" from 2014 to 2018. Her research interests include solidarity and political mobilisations in migration societies, refugee activism, and the anthropology of humanitarianism, amongst others.

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Article

Solidarity as a Field of Political Contention: Insights from Local Reception Realities

Haselbacher Miriam

Department of Political Science, University of Vienna, 1010 Vienna, Austria; E-Mail: miriam.haselbacher@univie.ac.at

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Abstract
Reception realities are marked by contentious moves and a strong degree of politicization. Claims made for the inclusion/exclusion of asylum seekers frame the activities of local solidarity initiatives. Based on a set of data on newly opened accommodation centres since 2015 as well as comparative case studies conducted in small-scale and predominantly rural municipalities in Austria, this research explores the characteristics and manifestations of solidarity in the context of asylum. Results show how claims of solidarity are under pressure as they are deeply rooted in exclusionary frames of deservingness on the one hand and federal disputes about the adequate management of asylum systems on the other.

Keywords
accommodation; asylum; Austria; contentious politics; deservingness; local reception; solidarity

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1. Introduction

The organisation of asylum systems and the spatial distribution of refugees have been the subject of political conflicts across Europe over the past years. In the course of the events that have been discussed among researchers as the "long summer of migration", in order to oppose the dominant crisis narrative (Hess et al., 2017) actors from all political levels have struggled to determine their political agenda. On a local level, the antagonistic nature of responses towards the arrival of refugees can be best exemplified via the formation of the so-called "welcoming culture" on the one hand (Daphi, 2016; della Porta, 2018b; Karakayali & Kleist, 2016), and anti-asylum-protests and the rise of right-wing movements on the other (Haselbacher & Rosenberger, 2018; Jäckle & König, 2017; Rucht, 2018). Images of people on the move from Hungary via Austria to Germany and Sweden who were given passage by politicians and welcomed by citizens are illustrative for 2015. This short period of free movement through central Europe was followed by re-bordering activities and restrictive policy changes (Cantat & Feischmidt, 2019; de Genova, 2017). Discourses based on narratives of threat and fear (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, & Wodak, 2018) strongly challenged solidarity mobilisations and reinforced the backlash against multiculturalism (Scholten & van Nispen, 2015; Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). The electoral success of right-wing parties in many European countries and the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments, as well as illiberal policies and repressive state strategies, have been paradigmatic for the developments since.

In Austria, a country that was among those EU member states that received most asylum seekers per capita in 2015 (Eurostat), the events of 2015 have led to a further politicisation of the issue of asylum, the electoral success of right-wing populist parties, and a shift in government and policies (Gruber, 2017). Analogically to the European level, the time elapsed was marked by severe federal disputes regarding competencies, policy design, and the degree of flexibility of implementation practices (Müller & Oberprantacher, 2017). Accommodation policies are characterised by vertical and rather centralised decision and implementation practices leaving only a few competencies to the local level. In 2015,

the national level was confronted with protesting mayors and conflicting demands of citizens on the one hand, and the lack of accommodation on the other. With this momentum of "increasingly polarised public opinion, beleaguered government parties, and on-going uncertainty about the future management of refugee movements" (Gruber, 2017, p. 39), the number of municipalities accommodating asylum seekers more than doubled (Leiss, 2016, p. 7) making the topic of asylum and reception not only an urban phenomenon, but also one of rural and peripheral regions.

In most of these municipalities, the opening of an accommodation centre has encouraged citizens and local policymakers to become active and to establish local support initiatives that are often affiliated with the municipal administration. Differing regarding their nature, structures, and political intentions, these initiatives redefined the boundaries of the community. Unlike other research, this article approaches the question of local solidarity from a political science perspective with a focus on mayors on the interplay between accommodation and integration policies as well as local realities and demands (Careja, 2018). Based on a set of data about newly opened accommodation centres in small-scale municipalities and 9 case studies, this paper questions how predominantly rural municipalities have dealt with the arrival of asylum seekers in their community and analyses the characteristics of local solidarity. By investigating the ways local actors bridge the gap between solidarity claims and reception realities, different manifestations of solidarity will be discussed.

Theoretically, this research applies multi-level governance and a contentious policies perspective. It combines the literature on the so-called "local turn" with theoretical reflections on the concept of solidarity and migration as a field of contentious politics. By doing so, it is possible to explore the political implications of moves of solidarity and contextualise them in a multi-level governance structure. After theoretical reflections on local solidarity in Section two and a discussion of data and methods in Section three, the Austrian case will be introduced, and the margins of local solidarity moves will be discussed. In Section 5, the empirical findings will be presented. First, the character of local solidarity will be discussed against the backdrop of contentious politics and social movement studies (della Porta, 2018a; Diani & McAdam, 2003; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015) focusing on actors, repertoires, and claims. In a second step, different manifestations of local solidarity are presented, revealing their rather exclusionary character and showing that its contentious character is strongly tied to local civil society configurations and political conflicts.

2. Theoretical Reflections on Configurations of Local Solidarity

Much has been written about the developments in and after 2015, nevertheless, researchers are still struggling to find a way to grasp and to analyse the many facets of the events and their social and political implications (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018). In a time of "limited resources and unclear policies" (de Jong & Ataç, 2017, p. 28) asylum governance often appeared as emergency governance (Panizzon & van Riemsdijk, 2018). In 2015, volunteers and NGOs stepped in when state systems were failing to cope with the number of people arriving (Simsa, 2017). This shift of responsibilities out to the private sector and down to the local level (Caponio & Jones-Correa, 2018) confronted municipalities and volunteers with a range of new activities that can be ascribed both to the camp of accommodation and integration policies as they range from the organisation of housing, donations, and language courses to the development of local integration paradigms and the lasting inclusion of new community members. Strongly tied to national paradigms, moves of solidarity define the degree of embeddedness of the accommodation centre in municipal structures as they are negotiated along the axis of inclusion and exclusion, of humanitarianism and political agency.

Most of the research in the field of local migration studies has been done in the context of cities and urban environments (Bauder, 2017; Doomernik & Ardon, 2018; Simsek-Caglar & Glick Schiller, 2018). However, in the past years, rural regions have increasingly been the focus of research projects (Glorius, 2017; Kordel, Weidinger, & Jelen, 2018; Whyte, Larsen, & Fog Olwig, 2018). In a small-scale and rural environment, effects of proximity and direct concern are even stronger than in cities, as potentially all citizens have direct contact with the facility and its inhabitants. Inclusionary and exclusionary claims made in the context of an accommodation centre are thus negotiated in the immediate neighbourhood. This nexus of local politics embedded in a multi-level governance structure, the contentious nature of acts of solidarity as well as conceptual ambiguities when speaking of solidarity will be assessed in the following three sub-sections.

2.1. The Local Level in Accommodation and Integration

The so-called "local turn" in migration management (Ahouga, 2017) as well as in migration research (Doomernik & Glorius, 2016; Scholten, 2013; Zapata-Barrero, Caponio, & Scholten, 2017) has shifted the focus of academics away from national paradigms towards local realities. It is the local dimension of migration policy-making (Caponio & Borkert, 2010) and the recognition of local actors as central agents in organising and shaping local reception and integration processes that are systematically being explored and questioned. Whereas some focus lies on the horizontal dimension—best described as local modes of governance—the remaining focus pertains to the vertical dimension, namely the connections and interactions with higher levels of government (Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017). Recently, scholars have observed a process of decoupling and disentan-

glement that fosters the development of local integration paradigms (Geddes & Scholten, 2015; Scholten & Pennix, 2016).

According to the literature, the local level is driven strongly by a pragmatic approach to problem-solving and the interests in the well-being of the local community (Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017). Furthermore, the locals are said to be potentially more liberal in their approach when negotiating the politics of inclusion and exclusion. In this context, municipalities have developed "practices to cushion and counteract aspects of…exclusionary national asylum policies…[and] thereby question the legitimacy of national policies and their execution" (Kos, Maussen, & Doomernik, 2016, p. 354). However, this is not always the case as some studies emphasise the exclusionary character of local boundary drawing that strongly resonates with national paradigms (Holloway, 2007; Hubbard, 2005). In a culturally homogenous environment, processes of othering are used as a strategy to maintain "white privilege" and to demarcate symbolic boundaries (Hubbard, 2005). In this context, supposedly liberal practices may employ disciplining aspects, a phenomenon that has been discussed under the term "repressive liberalism" (Joppke, 2007). The character of local integration paradigms thus also reflects the aforementioned vertical and horizontal dimension, as both the degree of interconnectedness with national paradigms and local boundary-drawing are decisive for its concrete structuring.

2.2. Political Contention

What exactly are contentious politics and what makes this concept so relevant for the field of migration studies? According to Tilly and Tarrow (2015, pp. 7–8):

> Contentious politics involves interactions in which actors make claims bearing on other actors' interests, leading coordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties. Contentious politics thus brings together three familiar features of social life: contention, collective action, and politics.

Acts of solidarity have been particularly analysed with the concept of contentious politics (della Porta, 2018a; Feischmidt, Pries, & Cantat, 2019) but it has also been applied to anti-immigrant protests (Andretta & Pavan, 2018; Castelli Gattinara, 2018). The conflicting claims negotiating the "continuum between inclusion and exclusion" (Huysmans & Guillaume, 2013, p. 24) are highly present in reception and accommodation policies. Andretta and Pavan (2018) bridge this gap by looking at anti- as well as pro-immigration protest in one research design and analysing it as a field of protest. The focus on the contemporaneousness of both phenomena facilitates a discussion on the polarising effects one movement has on another and conclusions can be drawn about the degree of contention of a field. For this research, two aspects are considered as especially interesting: a) the interplay of contentious action mobilising for and against the accommodation and the support of asylum seekers, and b) the dimension of politics as claimants and recipients of claims at the same time. Whereas the first draws on the research of Andretta and Pavan (2018) and analyses the accommodation of asylum seekers as a field of contention, the second emphasises the role of mayors as they are located at the interface of politics and movements.

2.3. On Solidarity

Solidarity is here defined rather broadly as supporting asylum seekers and making claims for inclusion and belonging (Isin & Turner, 2002). In contrast to anti-immigration movements that are demanding the exclusion of asylum seekers, solidarity expresses an "enacted commitment…to assist others" (Prainsack & Buyx, 2017, p. 52) that is deeply rooted in the relations between people. Solidarity action in the context of asylum has been analysed from the perspective of social movement studies, critical citizenship studies, and on the basis of the Autonomy of Migration approach (Ataç, Rygiel, & Stierl, 2016; Isin & Nielsen, 2008; Mezzadra, 2010). This literature shares the implicit assumption that the actions under study have a "political nature" and those who enact them share "political motivations" (Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019, p. 102). Most of the research carried out focuses on the self-organised protest of refugees and migrants as well as on advocacy networks, thus making the role of the persons concerned a potentially more active one claiming a right to stay. However, the political nature of these actions is not self-evident, especially when looking at support initiatives in the surroundings of accommodation centres or along refugee routes (Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019). Here, the character of solidarity and the set of repertoires changes and can be best characterised as humanitarian action with a focus on taking care of basic needs. Spahl (2018, p. 14) summarises this dilemma stating that solidarity is a "shiny concept, but its moral promise might conceal potential dark sides".

From a critical and postcolonial perspective, it can be argued that the politics of humanitarianism form part of the migration regime itself as the supposedly apolitical form of volunteering reaffirms dominant (national) paradigms (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Ticktin, 2014). In this context, the relationship between actors is characterised by unequal power structures and a social relation "without any possible reciprocity" (Fassin, 2012, p. 3). Humanitarian action is strongly embedded in the construction of a moral duty that is first and foremost directed at "alleviating immediate needs rather than criticising government policies" (Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019, p. 103). Vandevoordt and Verschraegen open up this

field of tension between politics and morality by systematically exploring the multi-facets of humanitarian action and employ the term of subversive humanitarianism (Vandevoordt & de Praetere, cited in Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019). By doing so, it is possible to show how morally motivated action acquires its political character implicitly as it stands in opposition to government policies. Solidarity activities thus may have two readings that both need to be addressed: are unequal power relations, dominant subject categories, and state policies reproduced and strengthened or are they challenged and transformed?

Summarising all three sections, some important conclusions can be drawn that have to be considered when analysing local support initiatives. First, the character of local solidarity actions may vary and has to take into account both local configurations as well as multi-level governance structures. Second, acts of solidarity in the context of 2015 cannot be considered to be genuinely independent of anti-immigrant protests but have to take into account the polarised and politicised environment they operate in. Third, the concept of solidarity is not as clear-cut, as it might seem to underline the importance of exploring its various manifestations.

3. Data and Methods

This research builds on a set of data on all municipalities in Austria that have accommodated asylum seekers between May 2015 and March 2016. The data was provided by Jakob Weichenberger, a data journalist by the Austrian Broadcasting Company (ORF) and the Austrian Association of Municipalities (*Gemeindebund*). According to the research design, municipalities were selected by size (maximum 2500 inhabitants, which represents 72% of Austrian municipalities) and type of accommodation (municipalities that hosted less than five people). Additional information collected pertained to the political environment (e.g., the party of the mayor), the time of the opening of the accommodation centre, the size and type of the facility and information on the character of local support initiatives. Information was collected via Internet research on the webpages of the municipalities that usually list local news gazettes as well as via telephone calls to the municipal administration.

Based on this set of data, nine municipalities in three regions of Austria were selected for comparative case studies. Cases varied regarding the history of the accommodation centre (some had a history of anti-accommodation protest prior to the opening), strong and weak support ties (organised local support initiatives versus individual volunteers), and the degree of involvement of municipal actors (e.g., one person of the administration is part of the volunteer group). In each municipality, in-depth interviews with the mayors were conducted. This was supplemented by interviews with local citizens who actively engage in support measures, actors from the institutional context of the accommodation centre (e.g., operators or people working for the NGO responsible) and regional policymakers. Additional information for case reports was drawn from newspaper articles and via Internet research.

In total, 16 interviews with a total of 19 actors were conducted. The main focus of the interviews was on tracing the process of the establishment of the centre on the one hand, and the description of support measures and local strategies on the other. Furthermore, interviewees were asked to describe local tasks and their ties to other actors. Interviews were interpreted based on inductive and deductive coding. Following a social movement perspective on acts of solidarity, some categories were pre-defined, such as actors, repertoires, and claims (della Porta & Diani, 2006; Fillieule & Accornero, 2016). The sequences extracted here were then coded inductively in order to develop categories (Kuckartz, 2016) amidst the theoretical discussion on contention and solidarity. In the following section, the context of local solidarity initiatives is illustrated based on the data set before moving on to the characteristics and manifestations of solidarity.

4. Austrian Reception Realities: The Margins of Local Solidarity

The accommodation of asylum seekers has traditionally been a task of cities and urban regions with only a few centres in remote areas that had existed since the introduction of the system of basic care in 2004 (Rosenberger, 2010; Rosenberger & König, 2012). Austria had taken in large numbers of refugees before 2015 and prior to the introduction of the system of basic care. As a result, the organisation of accommodation was entirely different and marked by the relative absence of organised reception centres. In September 2015, an obligatory municipal quota was introduced at the national level, which defined a share of 1.5% of asylum seekers per municipal capita. If municipalities did not meet the quota, the federal state was able to open accommodation centres against the declared will of municipalities. Although it was only executed in ten cases within the first six months (Bundesministerin für Inneres, 2016), the introduction of this law reflected strongly on hierarchical vertical power relations and deepened federal disputes. Of the one-third of all municipalities that opened an accommodation centre within that period, roughly two-thirds were small municipalities with less than 2500 inhabitants.

What is the consequence of a small-scale and often rural environment? Rurality, periphery, and size are commonly used concepts that are usually imagined in comparison to their antonym: Rural regions are contrasted with urban regions, the periphery with the centre, and small-scale environments with densely populated communities. Stereotypical attributes are the idyllic countryside on the one hand, and the modern city on the other (Holloway, 2007). Yet to theorise the relationship between these settings as a mere dichotomy would be

a simplified view (Eder, 2019, p. 19) as multiple political and economic linkages result in a complex system of connections and inter-dependencies. When it comes to accommodation realities, there are some important differences between the two settings. First, rural regions have a comparatively smaller administrative infrastructure and had to develop new structures when confronted with the topic of asylum (Kordel, 2017). Second, the access to services, information, and counselling is rather scarce, as specialised NGOs and state organisations are located in cities (Kordel, 2017). Third, the relative absence of ethnic and religious diversity results in a lack of ethnic networks and intercultural strategies and the perception of difference is strong (Glorius, 2017; Larsen, 2011). To sum it up, the environment of asylum centres in predominantly rural regions is—politically speaking—conservative, as the vast majority of mayors are part of the conservative party or allied with it and it is–socially and culturally speaking–homogenous.

Societal reactions towards the opening of an accommodation centre differed significantly, ranging from protest, to relative ignorance, to support and solidarity. Austria is characterised by a comparatively moderate protest culture (Merhaut & Stern, 2018) but has a long history of anti-immigrant mobilisation, an electorally successful right-wing populist party, and public political debates that are dominated by restrictive frames and anti-immigrant sentiments (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Gruber, 2014; Meyer & Rosenberger, 2015). Protest, as well as the establishment of support initiatives, often occurred in clusters (Haselbacher & Rosenberger, 2018). While protest activities predominantly took place before the opening of a centre and stopped as soon as the first people moved in, the organisation of support activities usually started shortly afterwards. Local solidarity initiatives transcend the domain of accommodation policies and are active in the field of integration policies. Integration is a rather young policy domain in Austria that has only recently been institutionalised (see Gruber & Rosenberger, 2018). Focusing primarily on civic integration measures, meritocratic arguments, and a performance narrative (Gruber, Mattes, & Stadlmair, 2015), the target group defined by state actors is rather narrow and does not comprise asylum seekers.

Looking at the empirical evidence, it is important to note that regional politics have a significant impact on the local level and that there is a great variety of implementation practices. This concerns the regional distribution of asylum centres, the degree of cooperation between the regional level, the local level, and NGOs, as well as the organisation of the accommodation system in terms of the type of centres and access to services. Regarding the geographical distribution, substantial regional differences can be observed as the spatial dispersal is very balanced in one province (90% of the municipalities accommodating asylum seekers) but rather uneven in other regions (less than 50% of the municipalities accommodating asylum seekers). Interestingly, there is a significant absence of individual housing in rural regions as organised reception centres run by private entrepreneurs (usually former hoteliers) or NGOs are the predominant form of living (in all of the regions, except the capital Vienna, this number is above 80%). Cooperation between involved actors was fostered only in some regions, where dense networks and sometimes even institutionalised regular meetings were established. There has been a general trend towards medium-sized centres (between 14 and 35 people) that are run by NGOs, as they have a significantly higher degree of supervision carried out by professionals. Finally, there is also a variation in terms of financial support as well as facilitation and access to services (such as the accessibility of German courses, public transportation, or childcare).

It is important to note that asylum seekers are assigned to municipalities involuntarily based on a national allocation key, making accommodation centres "spaces of forced residence" (della Porta, 2018c, p. 328) Throughout the period of accommodation, asylum seekers are governed by a set of rules that produce "stigmatised and excluded subjects" (Kreichauf, 2018, p. 10), which can be best summarised as systematic disintegration (Täubig, 2009). The daily routine in organised reception centres is shaped by inactivity and immobility, as people have no access to the labour market and live from small pocket money only (Haselbacher & Hattmannsdorfer, 2018). The region, type, and size of the centre, as well as access to services, become thus part of the asylum lottery. In the majority of cases, this converts accommodation centres in peripheral areas into places of transit instead of a final destination, as most of the people move to cities as soon as the procedure terminates.

5. Empirical Insights into Local Solidarity

> 2015, as I said, was the year of searching. We all searched a lot; for solutions that we didn't have…; for places…for personal…for structures...for cooperation….It was the support of the civil society that made many of those things possible. (Interview with the regional coordinator of an NGO; author's translation)

Summarising the theoretical arguments and the previous section, some important conclusions for the empirical analysis of the case studies can be drawn: First, solidarity activism is embedded in vertical power relations that leave little leeway to local actors, disempower people living in reception centres, and structurally inhibit integration measures during the asylum procedure. Second, solidarity activities have frequently been opposed by exclusionary and restrictive claims that together characterise the contentious field of asylum. Third, moves of solidarity in small-scale and rural environments have developed only recently and are embedded in a process of sociodemographic change and lacking experiences.

5.1. Characteristics of Solidarity: Actors, Repertoires and Claims

Actors of solidarity are citizens of the municipality who are either key actors in the community or have the time and resources to take on new tasks. The first group is closely tied to important institutions of the community such as the administration, associations, schools and kindergartens, or the church, which are decisive for the participation in social and cultural life and set the foundations for acceptance (Glorius, 2017). Mayors are usually not directly involved in the day-to-day activities of local support networks, but they play an important role as mediators in the phase of the establishment of the centre and shape the economic, institutional, and political opportunity structures of volunteerism. In all of the cases, a person of the municipal administration was directly involved in the local support group ensuring the information flow between institutional and non-institutional actors. In an interview with both the mayor and an administrative employee, this is described as follows:

> Administrative Employee: I have, so to say, agreed to get involved, also voluntarily, half-half…
>
> Mayor: During working hours and after working hours.
>
> Administrative Employee: Yes, overlapping. (Interview, author's translation)

When it comes to networks, the role of mayors is even more striking. Political ties are used to engage with other mayors and to advocate for the interests of the municipality at higher political levels. Social ties are used to encourage citizens to assume voluntary tasks and to find solutions for practical problems.

Interviewees refer to moral obligations and to pragmatic considerations when they frame their motivation to get active. Moral arguments are based on observations on the centre and its structures as they are perceived as insufficient and inhumane. The latter derives from practical considerations. Since asylum seekers are now part of the daily routine in community life, they simply cannot be ignored. Furthermore, fear of xenophobic and anti-immigrant activities is expressed. Often, pragmatic and moral frames interconnect as it is supposedly common sense that one has to help people in need and that this action can only be in favour of the whole community. Anti-migration activities have often triggered the establishment of a local support group. A mayor describes this momentum: "the [previously experienced] shock led to the establishment of a solidarity platform that said, stop, we are the other side of the coin, we are also there, and we are many even though you might not have heard or seen us until now, but we do exist" (interviews, author's translation). This closely reflects on the interplay of contentious moves for and against the inclusion of asylum seekers and their mutually polarising effects (Andretta & Pavan, 2018).

Repertoires are strongly tied to the accommodation centre as most of the activities are directed at supporting asylum seekers in their daily routine in organised reception. This includes the organisation of German courses, driving services, joint activities, as well as the collection of donations. As this set of activities is directed at providing practical support in everyday life, it can clearly be ascribed to the field of humanitarianism. Its aim is to alleviate suffering in the sense that it makes life in organised disintegration more acceptable. Consequently, the set of repertoires applied remains within the legal limits and does not transgress the line to explicit political activism. The only frequent exception is the organisation of (irregular) labour and the remuneration of auxiliary tasks above the legal limit and, although to a lesser extent, anti-deportation protest. Interestingly, both are based on emotional and social ties to particular individuals (see also Rosenberger & Winkler, 2014) as not everyone gets the possibility to work and there are no general manifestations against deportations or the asylum system as such.

Claims made in the context of solidarity can be clustered as follows: claims of deservingness (e.g., people who make an effort shall have a right to stay), claims on local autonomy (e.g., more flexibility for implementation practices and decision-making power), claims on citizenship (e.g., the expressed wish to grant people a right to stay) and permissive claims (e.g., as opposed to restrictive policies such as labour market access). The first and most dominant one revolves around frames of deservingness and, therefore, depicts a picture of "exclusive solidarity" (Lefkofridi & Michel, 2014). Solidarity is thus not meant to be addressed at everyone but is reserved for some people who publicly show their efforts. It is striking how dominant narratives and subject categories are reproduced throughout all of the interviews. The degree of "integration" of a person serves as the main indicator, without questioning the term or its political implications. Integration is constructed as a moral obligation of asylum seekers who, by showing their effort and performance, prove their gratitude.

The other three major claims identified express discontent with national regulations, as well as the wish for more leeway in developing local implementation strategies. While the autonomy claim is made predominantly by politicians, the permissive claim can be best understood as a critique of some elements of the asylum system that is based on practical observations. The citizenship claim reflects the wish of small-scale municipalities to be able to include newly arrived people as community members with a long-time perspective to stay. Often affected by emigration to urban regions, an expressed wish of municipal actors is the long-time settlement of people who usually come to stay only temporarily. The fact that "well integrated" people might be deported or voluntarily move to cities is incomprehensible and narrated as

discouraging voluntary action. Summarising the results of the interviews, it can be shown that solidarity has two dimensions: a political one among local actors that is constructed in opposition to the national level and an interpersonal one that is deeply rooted in frames of deservingness. Solidarity claims are, thus, to be located within conflicts regarding decision-making power on the one hand, and emotional ties to people receiving care on the other.

5.2. Manifestations of Solidarity: Local Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion

> A certain number can be tolerated in every municipality....But it shall not be in an excessive dimension, because it requires a lot of commitment and time to tell them how things are done here.
>
> Once again, I think it is necessary, when such situations happen, for municipalities to show their solidarity, to a reasonable extent.
>
> I always tell them, people, you are here with us in Austria, you can have everything from us, but you have to comply with the rules. And they do. (Interviews, author's translation)

These three quotes from different interviews with mayors are illustrative for local manifestations of solidarity that are based on multiple forms of boundary drawing reproducing narrow concepts of integration. Deeply embedded in the structure of the camp as a site of exception (Agamben, 2000), they serve "as a power to 'ban' from belonging" (della Porta, 2018c, p. 328). Solidarity claims do not express the general demand for people to stay, as claims of citizenship are rather scarce and reserved for individuals. Belonging is constructed to be temporary and transitional, as it is closely connected to the duration of stay and a limited set of repertoires. Some parts of community life thus remain inaccessible and restrictive national policies, as well as markers of difference, are reproduced. The aforementioned claims of deservingness, autonomy, citizenship, and permission depict a picture of exclusionary exceptionalism that resonates on the effort of singular recipients of care and follows an assimilationist approach (Joppke & Morawska, 2003). This conceptualisation of solidarity is based on hierarchical power relations that structurally impede reciprocity and agency and is deeply embedded in a multi-level structure that leaves little leeway to the local level and is based on restrictive state policies.

However, solidarity activism does reduce the constraints of life in organised reception realities and thus blurs the boundaries between the centre and its neighbourhood. Focusing on the shortcomings of the system of basic care, solidarity activism points out core deficiencies and develops its implicit political character through the construction of alternative reception realities. For those people who have successfully developed strong emotional and social ties, activism transcends the boundary to a more inclusionary notion of belonging. In those cases, manifestations of solidarity go beyond humanitarian action and intensely advocate for the lasting settlement of people. This is the momentum when socio-economic arguments come into play as the accessibility of employment and housing are narrated to be decisive in the making of citizens.

Even though most of the solidarity repertoires may have a depoliticising character, at first sight, voluntary work can lead to the politicisation of individuals and implicitly challenge the political order. Integration is a parameter in asylum procedures and may enact a right to stay. Initiatives focusing on "the construction of a positive community life" (interview with a support initiative, author's translation); or those who advocate for the possibility to "integrate into community life as well as the peaceful coexistence of neighbours" (interview with a local support group, author's translation), do not publically criticise policymakers, but they do affect the outcomes of asylum procedures and facilitate a transition from recipient of care to community member. By doing so, voluntary action transcends the boundaries from the apolitical to the political, from conformism to the confrontational (Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019).

Manifestations of solidarity are embedded in the field of tension between restrictive national policies on the one hand, and local requirements and needs on the other. Interviews depict a high level of dissatisfaction with national actors as well as the wish for more local autonomy. While actors hardly break with the socio-political order, they express harsh critique on national politics. Since 2015, restrictive policy changes have been objected to and perceived to be hindering local integration processes. In this context, institutional actors are both recipients and makers of claims who are caught in the middle of vertical and horizontal contention. Solidarity is thus expressed not only towards asylum seekers but with other community members (e.g., between the mayor and citizens) as well as other municipalities and local actors in general. It is enacted via joint activities and collective actions alongside the shared expression of discontent.

6. Conclusions: Contentious Solidarity

The process of the opening of an accommodation centre suddenly converts municipalities into sites where contentious claims are negotiated. Empirical insights into this field of tension show a clear prevalence of solidarity claims that overrule exclusionary claims. Nevertheless, manifestations of solidarity in small-scale communities follow a humanitarian approach that is exclusionary in its character and only implicitly political. This conceptualisation of solidarity can be best described as exclusionary solidarity that is based on the construction of in- and out-groups and exclusive rules of membership (Fassin, 2012). Civic engagement frequently counteracts restrictive and hostile activism demanding the exclusion of asylum seek-

ers and questioning the existence of the asylum centre (Glorius, 2017). In the interplay of inclusionary and exclusionary demands, solidarity activism has mediating effects on xenophobic attitudes and is often enacted in opposition to these modes of hostility.

Based on the reproduction of narratives on integration, deservingness, and performance, dominant subject categories remain unchallenged. Claims of solidarity—based on reflections and insights into the functioning of the asylum system—lead to the establishment of a local agenda that differs significantly from national paradigms and is primarily based on pragmatic considerations. The motivation to become active arises due to observations on the asylum system and the needs of people living in accommodation centres. In small scale and rural areas, claims based on deservingness are prevalent and reflect the wish to select new community members based on their integration efforts while human rights discourses and a discussion of the causes of flight are relatively absent. One of the main factors that impede local integration measures is the factor of time and the unpredictability of the outcome of procedures or the continued existence of the centre. Asylum seekers, mayors, and volunteers do not know how long the accommodation within the given municipality will last. The temporal and structural framework for support activities is thus very tight. Most of solidarity activism started in the context of narratives of emergency and due to the strong salience of the issue. Structures were developed rather incidentally following a learning-by-doing approach.

In small municipalities, the spatial proximity of citizens and asylum seekers results in the solidary engagement of people who have no history of political or voluntary activism but who observe grievances triggering their involvement. Nevertheless, policy changes on the national level have reduced local autonomy and (re)strengthened state control. Today, the trend of spatial distribution and decentralisation is reversed, as the number of asylum applications is declining, and centres are in the process of closing. The time of irregularity and emergency is thus over and four years after the summer of 2015, one of the core challenges for actors of solidarity is their continued existence despite restrictive policies and closed borders. As a consequence, solidarity activism is under severe pressure. This is mainly due to three factors: a) declining numbers of asylum applications and the closure of accommodation centres, b) the political-juridical framework that structurally impedes horizontally organised solidarity activism, and c) the character of solidarity in small-scale communities being rooted in exclusionary frames of deservingness and humanitarianism that only partially break with the socio-political order.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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About the Author

Miriam Haselbacher is currently working as a University Assistant at the Department of Political Science, University of Vienna, and is a member of the research group INEX—Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion. Her research interests comprise asylum and integration policy, protests, and social movements as well as Austrian politics and multi-level governance.

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Article

Use-Values for Inclusion: Mobilizing Resources in Popular Education for Newly Arrived Refugees in Sweden

Nedžad Mešić [1,*], Magnus Dahlstedt [1], Andreas Fejes [2] and Sofia Nyström [2]

[1] Department of Social and Welfare Studies, Linköping University, 601 74 Norrköping, Sweden;
E-Mails: nedzad.mesic@liu.se (N.M.), magnus.dahlstedt@liu.se (M.D.)
[2] Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Linköping University, 581 83 Linköping, Sweden;
E-Mails: andreas.fejes@liu.se (A.F.), sofia.nystrom@liu.se (S.N.)

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
In times of market reforms and international migration, the Swedish welfare model has been seriously challenged. In the context of the arrival of refugees in 2015–2017, the state turned to civil society in facing up to the challenges. In this article, we direct our attention to the Workers' Educational Association's (ABF) state-funded work with refugees, with a specific focus on the activities conducted, the resources making them possible and the use-value of the resources mobilised. The article is based on observations and interviews with study circle leaders, managers and asylum seekers. The analysis illustrates that ABF, in line with its historical legacy, the broader workers' movement, the strong notion of popular education as 'free and voluntary', has, with its well-established connections throughout the country, not solely taken on the task defined by the state. In solidarity, ABF has also responded to the needs of the refugees. As highlighted in the analysis, ABF has mobilized a wide range of resources, not least providing refugees with social networks and help in contacting the authorities. With such mobilization, opportunities were provided for the inclusion of refugees in Sweden.

Keywords
asylum seeker; civil society; inclusion; migrants; popular education; refugee; Sweden model

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1. Introduction

Current migration patterns in Europe, and particularly the historically high number of refugees arriving in Sweden and other member states of the EU, are challenging in terms of inclusion. How can refugees and migrants be supported in order for them to gain access to the labour market and Swedish society more widely? This question comprises a number of policy challenges and institutional innovations not only for the government, regional organizations and municipalities, but also for social partners and in a broader sense civil society. Asylum seekers are facing several problems and shifting conditions with regard to formal assessment of identity and citizenship, living conditions, local community relations, social networks, labour market, welfare and caring and curing institutions. Thus, the asylum process is a complex process of life transition and everyday learning, adapting to new conditions. Educational and occupational background, recognition of prior learning as well as language training are crucial components for the adaptation to the Swedish society and labour market (see e.g., Delmi, 2015).

In order to face these challenges, a wide range of institutions and actors have been mobilised, not least within civil society. Over the last century, there has been

a close relationship between the state and civil society organisations in Sweden, as part of corporatist arrangements of the Swedish welfare model—a model that, however, is changing. More and more tasks, previously ministered by the state, are now conducted by organisations in civil society. In this article, we focus on one such activity emerging in response to the refugee challenges of 2015—*Swedish from day 1*. Here, the state invited civil society organisations, among them study associations, to apply for funding in order to provide adult asylum seekers with introduction to Swedish language and society. The invitation was taken up by all ten study associations in Sweden. In this article, we investigate the resources mobilized in such activities, and the ways in which inclusion is facilitated through such mobilizations. By focusing on the use-value of resources mobilised by civil society, the aim of the article is to analyse how public funding in the wake of the recent refugee situation in Sweden becomes transferred into public benefit in the form of inclusion of newly arrived migrants. The article thus examines the implications of collaboration between the state and civil society, and how added value of publicly funded civil society engagements becomes generated vis-à-vis resource conversion in the free and voluntary form of popular education.

2. Background

2.1. A Changing Swedish Welfare Model

The Swedish welfare model has been described as characterized by its 'de-commodifying' provision of welfare services, based on the pillars of industrial development, full employment, economic growth and income redistribution (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Weiss, 1998). One of the model's main characteristics was symbolised by the institutionalised collaboration between employer and trade union organisations (Edling, 2019). In this model, relations between the state and civil society organisations, referred to as 'people's movements' (*folkrörelser*), were seen as important for developing a more equal and democratic society. Accordingly, a wide range of interest groups was involved in the decision-making process, thus becoming part of the social democratic welfare project (Rothstein & Bergström, 1999). The idea with such arrangement was to embed decisions in broad layers of the population, at the same time as high levels of participation in the activities of such organisations would contribute to a democratic fostering of the population (Dahlstedt, 2009a; Edquist, 2009).

The state has for the last century, to varying degrees, funded popular education as a part of the corporatist Swedish model—at the same time as popular education has been 'free and voluntary' (Micheletti, 1995; Premfors, 2000). However, in the 1980s and 1990s, these corporatist arrangements changed, with a wider transformation gradually influenced by neoliberal rationalities (Larsson, Letell, & Thörn, 2012). Starting in the late 1980s, several of the pillars of the Swedish model were challenged. In all, the centralized welfare state was now seen as an obstacle to the individual's freedom and active responsibility (Boréus, 1994). Eventually, following the early 1990s economic recession and the election of a centre-right government, by the mid-1990s, the Social democrats had undertaken the development of a 'new Swedish model'. It entailed a radical shift, from equality to freedom of choice, redistribution to activation, collective rights to individual responsibilities as the main ideas guiding the development of welfare policy in Sweden (Dahlstedt, 2015; Edling, 2019).

The established corporatist arrangements gradually became disintegrated, as they were criticized for being too centralized, state-directed and, thus, paternalistic, co-opting the civil society organisations (cf. Rothstein & Bergström, 1999). However, in the 1990s the idea of collaboration between state and civil society reappeared, in the form of the increasingly widespread notion of partnership. According to this notion, collaborations between state, civil society and private organisations were seen as being necessary in order to deal with societal challenges. To be successful, such partnership arrangements were seen as in need of being decentralized, short-term and based on the transgression of boundaries between public and non-public sectors (cf. Dahlstedt, 2009b).

2.2. Integration Policy in Change

In a contemporary academic debate concerning integration policies among EU member states, the state of national integration models has been a contested issue. Here, Joppke (2007) has argued that multicultural integration models have generally converged, in line with an assimilationist development, to such an extent that making distinctions between national model in terms of integration becomes superfluous. Although adhering to the prevalence of such conversion, Jacobs and Rea (2007) contend that dominant integration policy discourses in different member states, by and large, are still rather intact. They argue that it is, nevertheless, both possible and relevant to distinguish path dependencies in terms of national models and policy choices concerning integration.

However, in the wake of the refugee situation in Europe since 2015, major policy changes have recently been made, not least in the case of Sweden. From an international perspective, Swedish integration policy was for a long time widely recognized, not least in research (cf. Borevi, 2014; Schierup, Hansen, & Castles, 2006), for being an inclusion pioneer and a symbol of the citizenship model described by Castles (1995) as multicultural—a model based on the principles of inclusion (making it relatively easy to obtain citizenship) and recognition (guaranteeing minorities certain group rights). However, with contemporary developments, such notions of 'Swedish exceptionalism' (Schierup & Ålund, 2011) have

been seriously challenged due to major policy changes, towards a more repressive approach. In political discourse, it has become more or less widely accepted that migration creates societal problems and tensions, that 'integration has failed' and that 'parallel societies' are emerging, not least in the suburbs where most of the migrants live (Sernhede, Thörn, & Thörn, 2016). Based on such discourse, there has been an increasingly sharp focus on repressive measures with an emphasis on citizens' duties rather than on their rights—primarily aimed at migrants (cf. Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2016; Gardell, 2016).

Such discourse has induced suggestions that the borders surrounding the national community should be closed and that specific community 'values' need to be protected from threats located both beyond and within the national community. Such development has not least taken place during and in the aftermath of the 2018 Swedish general election, which became a strong electoral success for the right-wing populist party the Sweden Democrats. It was followed by a right-left political interlacement and government proposals on restricted migration policies, combined with integration measures extending workfare and sanctions specifically targeting newly-arrived refugees (Social Democrats, 2019). Altogether, these policy changes are similar to those seen during the last decade in, not least, other EU member states (cf. Duyvendak, 2011; Houdt, Suvarierol, & Schinkel, 2011).

Yet, what has been referred to as the long summer of migration in 2015 (cf. Hess et al., 2017) has induced the need for critical analyses of integration policies executed in different EU states, the role of civil society and migrants' mobilisation, and the emergent social relations and cultural encounters (Youkhana & Sutter, 2017). In one study, Karakayali (2017) examines emotions in German social movements in relation to newly arrived refugees, illustrating how volunteers' emotional management in the form of refraining from emotional involvement induce a narrow, rather than transnational form of solidarity—thus maintaining established boundaries of belonging, furthering the volunteers' local belonging vis-à-vis an emotional regime of charity. In another study of the mobilisation of middle-class volunteers in Germany, Fleischmann and Steinhilper (2017) describe the complexities of such mobilisation: on the one hand, there is a constant risk that such mobilisation will reproduce already existing hierarchies and inequalities. On the other hand, there is a potential in this engagement, for the development of new political subjectivities—facilitating contesting public discourse interventions. In the Austrian context, De Jong and Ataç (2017) have drawn attention to the engagement of social movement-oriented NGOs, identifying the creation of spaces where encounters between refugees and engaged activists take place, offering possibilities for the development of new forms of solidarity and belonging. These spaces, in turn, make it possible to break refugees' isolation and provide volunteers with both a sense of responsibility and opportunities for participation in political struggles for extended citizenship rights of refugees.

2.3. Study Associations, Swedish from Day 1 and Material

Turning to Sweden post-2015, and specifically to the mobilisation of popular education, an extensive engagement for the inclusion of newly arrived refugees has been identified, conducted largely outside the formal task set by the government. Such engagement has been aimed at providing refugees with a home in Sweden, and for the refugees to become part of Swedish society (cf. Fejes, 2019; Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2017; Håkansson & Nilsson Mohammadi, 2018; Nordvall, Pastuhov, & Osman, 2018). In this article, focus is specifically directed towards the mobilisation of popular education and particularly study associations, in relation to the inclusion of newly arrived refugees.

There is still a strong notion of popular education as 'free and voluntary', and in this sense, there is a continuity with the long corporatist tradition in the Swedish welfare model. In terms of popular education, the state provides basic funding to folk high schools and study associations, in order for these institutions to provide courses and study circles of their own design, in terms of content as well as pedagogical forms. Furthermore, participation in these activities is voluntary. Thus, popular education is 'free and voluntary', in terms of organisation as well as participation. However, study associations and folk high schools need, at least in relation to the activities conducted based on state funding, to follow the state aims for popular education. These aims are broadly defined in terms of giving 'everyone the possibility, together with others, to increase their knowledge and 'bildung' for personal development and participation in the society' (Swedish Code of Statutes, 2015). Popular education should also, according to the aims of the state, support activities that contribute to the strengthening and development of democracy, increase people's influence on their life situation, create engagement to participate in societal development, and close the educational gaps between individuals and groups in society.

Over time, other means of income for popular education institutions than state funding have become important, not least due to drastic decrease in funding for popular education on the local level (i.e., by county and municipal councils). Such other means of income could be commissioned tasks by the state, municipalities or state agencies. One such commissioned task is the focus of this article, namely *Swedish from day 1*. In the autumn 2015, the Swedish government, facing the largest migration flows since the Second World War, made funding available for study associations (and to some extent folk high schools) in order to set up study circles for asylum seekers providing an introduction to the Swedish language and society. Between the autumn of 2015 and the end of 2017, more than 120,000 unique

participants (asylum seekers) had taken part in these activities, which makes up more than half of all asylum seekers arriving in Sweden during this period (Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2017; Fejes, Dahlstedt, Olson, & Sandberg, 2018; Swedish Government, 2017).

3. Empirical Material and Methodological Considerations

Empirically, the largest study association, the Workers' Educational Association (ABF), was selected for further study. ABF was the study association with the most participants registered in *Swedish from day 1*, and there was already well-developed collaboration between the study association and the researchers, i.e., access was easy. Three different ABF locations in Sweden where *Swedish from day 1* was carried out were chosen for further study: one large city, one medium-sized city and one small town.

In order to gain insight into and background information on what took place in these study circles, before conducting interviews we participated as observers in each location, taking field notes and conducting informal conversations. We also collected documentation concerning the activities (course plans, teaching material, etc.). The observations also made it possible for the participants to get acquainted with us and what we were doing, which thus made the planning and conduct of the interviews easier. At each site, a sample of participants, study circle leaders (SCLs), and managers were chosen for semi-structured interviews. All managers and SCLs working with the activities were interviewed. Among the managers, 3 were female and 6 male. Manager 2 and 3 were employed by ABF regional headquarters in Large City, while managers 5 and 6 were employed by ABF in Mid-City as well as Small Town (they were co-responsible for both locations). Managers 1, 4, and 7–9 were employed by three migrant organizations with whom ABF cooperated in Large City, which below will be denominated as ABF Large City local offices. Among the SCLs, 4 were female and 4 male. SCL 2–4 and 6-8 worked in Large City, while SCL 1 and 5 worked in the other two locations.

Among the participants, we wanted to select an equal number of persons at each site, as well as securing representation in terms of age, gender, country of origin and educational and occupational background. 21 of the 46 interview persons were female and 25 male. There was an age span between 20 and 60 years, and the interviewees mainly originated from Afghanistan, Syria and Iran. ABF was for all the participants their first encounter with education in Sweden. Some of them had only been in Sweden for as little as three weeks, while others had been in Sweden waiting for a decision on their asylum application for up to three years.

Each interview lasted between 20 and 75 minutes. Interviews with participants were generally shorter as compared to those with managers and SCLs. The project has undergone ethical vetting and been approved by the regional ethical committee in Linköping (Dnr 2017/280-31). Each interviewee was informed about the research, the possibility of their withdrawing at any time, and the fact that the information would be securely stored as well as the identifying markers being deleted/changed in coming publications in order to safeguard their anonymity.

Manager interviews focused on the organisation of *Swedish from day 1* and rationales for engagement. Questions asked concerned engagement motives in these activities, their educational and occupational background, activity organisation, their thoughts about their participants and involvement in other tasks than managing the activities. The circle leader interviews centred on motives for engagement, educational and occupational background, their teaching and participants, as well their involvement in tasks other than teaching. As will be illustrated, most of the SCLs themselves had experiences of migration. In participant interviews, we focused their ideas about their current studies and how these related to their past experiences of work and education, as well as to their dreams of the future. Surprisingly, we did not need interpreters. Most interviews were conducted in Swedish, some in English, and one in Bosnian. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and edited for readability.

4. Analytical Perspective and Analysis

This article departs from an approach to social movements focusing specifically on resource mobilization as a means of collective action (cf. McCarthy & Zald, 1973). In line with the broader tradition of popular movements in Sweden, ABF mobilizes a wide range of resources in order to provide popular education to all adults, as a social right. With the aim of combating social inequalities, not least in terms of social class, ABF promotes adult learning based on equal encounters among people with specific experiences, interests and living conditions. In order to further analyse the mobilization of resources in the case of ABFs activities targeting newly arrived refugees, we employ a typology of resources developed by Edwards and McCarthy (2007). According to Edwards and McCarthy (2007, p. 142), 'the availability of diverse kinds of resources to social actors and privileged access to them…enhances the likelihood of effective collective action'.

In the five-fold typology proposed, they distinguish between material, human, social-organizational, cultural and moral resources. Material resources include financial and physical resources such as money, property, equipment, supplies and office space. Human resources consist of access to skills, experience and labour, within or outside the organization. These are commonly embodied in the individuals involved in the organization, in the form of leaders, staff and volunteers. Social-organizational resources may be divided into three different forms: infrastructures (such as postal services, trans-

portation, the internet), social networks and organizations, and more specifically access to the resources embedded in these, in terms of contacts, potential coalitions as well as recruiting volunteers. Cultural resources include widely known and accessible ideas, traditions, conceptual tools, and tactical know-how, for instance concerning how to conduct collective action, run a meeting or make decisions. Such resources also include the use and production of cultural artefacts such as literature, music, magazines or websites. Moral resources include legitimacy, solidarity and sympathetic support, most often located outside of the organization, and granted by external sources. As these external sources may also choose to retract such resources, moral resources may be less accessible than, for instance, cultural resources.

Resources may have different attributes. One such attribute is that of 'use-value', i.e., how easily resources are transferred between persons or organisations and thus converted into resources of other kinds—for instance, as in converting money by the purchase of equipment, the hiring of staff or the production of cultural products. Money is generally quite easy to convert into other kinds of resources. This means that organizations with access to large amounts of monetary resources enjoy greater flexibility in terms of the strategies available to them. Other kinds of resources, not least social-organizational and human, are comparably more context-dependent and, thus, difficult to convert into other resources.

Furthermore, there are various mechanisms of access and resource sources, such as self-production and patronage. Resources are not always easily accessible, and so to speak 'ready' to be mobilized, but resources may also be produced within the organisation itself, for instance by the creation of cultural frames and the training of activists. Patronage refers to the existence of a substantial amount of financial support provided by 'patrons' external to the organisation, seeking to influence the way in which money is actually used. Kaldor (2003) problematizes such influences on the part of the state in terms of 'domestication' by which the civil society would substitute state services in exchange for becoming institutionalized, and hence drift away from its activist-oriented agenda.

Drawing on the typology of resource mobilization, the analysis is focused on the ways in which resources are mobilized in the activity *Swedish from day 1*, and how inclusion of newly arrived refugees might be made possible through such mobilizations. Specific attention is drawn to the ways in which the organisation and set-up of the activity is described in interviews with people involved in the activity, i.e., managers, SCLs and participants. All interviews conducted were thematically analysed, guided by the analytical approach outlined. Here, the focus was on identifying commonalities and differences across interviews, as well as geographical settings, in terms of how resources are mobilized, and converted and by which means resources are accessed.

5. Result

In this section, we introduce our results. These are divided into two parts. In the first part, we discuss the mobilization of resources in the activities arranged by ABF and in the second we discuss the use-value of such mobilizations.

5.1. Mobilizing Resources

In our interviews, ABF has, by persons in all interviewee categories, been portrayed as a hub where study circle participants become acquainted with state bodies and their services and other civil society organisations. The head of one local Large City office expounds on the matter:

> We have had 25 years of experience with education and we have vast contacts with the Migration Board, Public Employment Service, the National Society for Road Safety…and we have many presentations for our participants regarding road safety, employment and social security services. There are, besides [the circle], many matters regarding society…and they come and explain to our participants. (Manager 4)

Apart from the actors mentioned here, prominent societal actors that the participants, circle leaders and managers refer to include a dental office offering free care, the Swedish Church and local social services informing them about child services and related laws. As we can further see in a participant's excerpt below, the list of organisations involved in the activities of the study circles is quite long:

> Last week somebody came from the Swedish Public Employment Service. A couple of months ago a police officer came who spoke about laws and regulations…and recently…information about health care in Sweden. Somebody came and spoke about nature conservation. Folkuniversitetet [an adult educational association] also came and talked about their free of charge courses that one can attend, [and how to] validate earlier education. (Participant 46)

Apart from the study circle, ABF also arranged for and created conditions for other activities that took place in relation to the study circles, such as language cafés, learning how to ride a bike and swim, cook, apply for job and make study visits. The language café is an activity that is highlighted in all contexts. The café was located at ABF's premises, where the participants have the opportunity to drink coffee, meet other participants as well as Swedes and thus practice speaking Swedish. One participant said:

> There was a language café here. It helped us a lot. Swedes came here. We drank coffee and tried to talk

> to everyone. We talked like this: 'What's your name? Where are you from?' Everything, you dared to talk. (Participant 4)

In interviews with participants, SCLs, and managers, such an introduction to and interaction with influential societal organisations is described as one of the cornerstones of the programme. In parallel to the extensive mobilisation of socio-organisational resources, our empirical data has also revealed organisational strains in securing material resources such as supplies, staff wages and adequate premises.

Counteracting strategies to such strains include both self-production and resource mobilisation arrangements such as the establishment of affordable course literature lease programmes; and patronage-based arrangements in the form of the use of municipal registers for volunteers; the use of state wage-subsidised employments for circle leaders; and, in the case of one Large City local office, a successful application for a supplemental project grant. Despite such examples of successful forms of external mobilisation of material resources in terms of project grants, this local office has also been cornered in finding makeshift solutions such as alleviating a lack of classroom space by disposing of office-space for the course work. One of the managers at Large City ABF regional headquarters expounds further on the matter of accumulating material resources:

> For most of the them [SCLs], it is some type of labour market subsidy programme…but it is still a cost to the association, even if a subsidy is received…and we come in and cover up…with at least one part of the cost of the difference. So, we finance the teachers…and, these associations [Large City local offices] have actually in principle no other assets whatsoever. They have no association subsidy from the municipality as athletic clubs and the like have. (Manager 2)

Another counteractive measure to redeem the ever-present burdens related to material resources that we encounter links in with the ideological and historical foundations of the ABF, i.e., its cultural resources. Activities that were directed to asylum seekers were stated to be highly prioritised due to their clear accordance with the ABF's founding mission and educational ambitions for workers' educative development. According to the managers of ABF, this has contributed to a further strengthening of the *Swedish from day 1* programme through local re-orientation of other available material resources. Two managers at the Large City headquarters expound on this type of self-production of material resources vis-à-vis the internal redistribution of capital:

> Our mission is the same today, but it's a different target group than 100 years ago. Therefore, it felt the whole time as a calling to be in on this. It is of huge importance for ABF to take part and do what we can to support these people. It costs a lot of money because it is free of charge to the participants. We are pretty much in accord, all of us working at ABF in Large City, that this is a highly prioritized activity…we also use money for this which we take from our regular state grants [for ordinary circles and cultural arrangements]. (Manager 2)

> We must sponsor the weakest in the society. That is our ideology, because we are a people's movement organisation, or workers' organisation…We think that these groups (refugees) are important now…maybe 30–40 years ago, it was the workers at Volvo and others. Now, it is these groups who need our education. And, that means that we take a little from privileged groups who have money…and give to these groups that require it. (Manager 3)

It has accordingly, in the case of the Large City regional headquarters, been possible to re-dispose resources from the regular and larger state grants so as to further extend the financing of the Large City local offices' Swedish from day 1 groundwork. The headquarters' confidence in the local offices derives from a decades long joint delivery of educational and cultural services to inhabitants with a migrant background, and not least, the local offices' successes in mobilising circles with newly arrived migrants as participants. This socio-organisational resource in the form of access to social networks of potential participants has been accredited central use-value by the headquarter managers. One of them comments on the local offices' capacity to attract asylum seekers to the numerous circle-courses offered:

> There has always been a waiting list…to take courses in Swedish and societal orientation. And, that is not something we advertise in some newspapers or on placards; rather, it spreads between friends and acquaintances, relatives and so. So, we have had a waiting list for the courses even before the arrival of this boom in 2015. (Manager 2)

Both the managers and SCLs attest to the use-value of the long-standing relations both with and between local offices, as a means of facilitating the general groundwork. Specific attention is paid to the local offices' extensive human resources embodied in the individuals involved in the organization, in terms of their ability to communicate with participants in their mother tongue, which in turn makes it possible for the local offices to reach the participants. However, these conditionalities are rather disparate in the different contexts we have studied. In contrast to Large City, we have not found similar mobilisation on the basis of ethnic background in Mid-City and Small Town. Contemplating the potential for mobilisation of not least moral resources vis-à-vis migrant organisations, which may aid in attracting newly arrived participants by generating legitimation, signals the im-

portance of establishing and nurturing of such organisational collaborations.

5.2. The Use-Value of Resources Mobilized

In this section, we will scrutinize the use-value of a variety of resources in the realm of study circles as a social support system for asylum seekers. One central aspect is how ABF vis-à-vis its socio-organizational, material and human resources manifested through the study circle itself generates moral resource use-value in the form of participants' attendance, simply by being a place for encounters. Yet, it is not solely referred to as a place where participants simply hang out. Rather, it is described as a safe place, a place where the participants may escape the uncertainties of their everyday lives and thereby 'break' some of the isolation that they express. This also connects up with use-value related to the way in which the studies are organized and how they are regarded by the participants. The circle-form of education has throughout our observations and interviews distinguished itself from its convention where the classroom is isolated by walls and the learning closely follows the curriculum. Instead, the idea of the classroom has assumed an extended form, where activities, previously expounded on vis-à-vis socio-organisational resources, such as visits by external guests and city tours have been regarded by the participants as widely appreciated educational components. On the basis of such arrangements, along with the possibilities of encountering many new people and finding friends, the circles have been framed by the participants in a rather soft-centred respect. One of the participants expounds:

> I can only recommend it to those that sit at home; they do not have to. They can come to ABF. Here you will find friends; you can learn Swedish and you can make more connections. ABF is not a school for me, ABF is a home. I feel at home when I'm here. (Participant 1)

Many of the participants in the study express similar opinions about ABF and the study circle *Swedish from day 1* as those in the quote above. The use of the metaphor 'home' indicates that there is more going on in the study circle apart from language learning, which indicates that several other forms of resource have been successfully converted into moral resources in the form of participants' articulated satisfaction.

The findings have also provided evidence that show how attending the ABF study circles denotes a feeling of belonging and inclusion, since the participants are not only learning about the Swedish language and about Sweden, but also about the society and how to get around. One participant emphasises the value of and strong will to be included into the Swedish society:

> It is by learning the language that I can get into the society. Here, I get to learn the language, the Swedish language, and by using the language, I can get to understand the Swedes better and then learn more Swedish. (Participant 46)

Another participant further reflects on learning vis-à-vis the circle:

> Much of the talk is about Sweden as a place, a country. We learn how to orient ourselves, north, south, how many citizens…and last time we had someone here that talked about how to understand traffic and the rules. (Participant 37)

One manager argues that the circle has four functions:

> The first function is that you give them a tool, the language, so you can communicate. This is very important. Then you create a meeting place, since these individuals are alone, with different backgrounds, traumatized by their experiences…they have left a country at war and all of that…the circle becomes a meeting point which has a social and psychological meaning for them, a support. The third is that you gain a network which is important in order to find different ways (ahead). To find an apartment, to find work and maybe find each other, a friend, and you can help each other in the tough situation…the fourth is the knowledge they acquire about the society. When they learn Swedish, they can…integrate into the society and get a job. They then know what ways there are. Where is the public employment office, the social service and where to get help? (Manager 3)

The findings also show that the ABF vis-à-vis the various resources mobilised within the circles themselves jointly offers a social form of support through the relationships that are formed between the SCLs and the participants. The use-value of the material resources provided vis-à-vis state patronage through *Swedish from day 1* in this way extends beyond the formal programme funding goals. Thus, rather than drifting away from its activist-oriented agenda (cf. Kaldor, 2003), our study illustrates that state patronage, on the contrary, has provided fuel for the activist orientation of ABF. Both the managers and SCLs describe in detail numerous ways how they conduct voluntary and funding programme-supplementary social work in relation to the participants. These activities constitute the study circle context as a kind of liaison centre where both the managers and the SCLs assist the participants with social support in a broad sense—one that is akin to 'bureaucratic support' and described as indispensable in encounters with public and business services such as banks, doctors and migration officials. One manager, for example, states that her door is always open to those in need of help, whatever it might be:

> I always have my door open, so everyone can come in if they want help in calling the authorities or interpret-

ing different papers. There is so much to do. Sometimes I stay until ten in the evening, trying to read their letters and maybe writing a 'close relative application' to the Migration Board. (Manager 1)

The relationship that is formed between the participants and the SCL thus expands way beyond the professional responsibilities as SCLs at ABF. One reason for this is the precarious situation the asylum seekers are in, and this kind of support is described in terms of an obligation to fellow human beings in despair.

All the SCLs that were interviewed showed a large social commitment, which also extends out into the local community, where they, for example, may run a local sports team or work extra hours at the library. Through these engagements, the SCLs often establish bonds with the participants outside their professional work at ABF, i.e., the SCLs also encounter participants in contexts outside of the circle. One SCL states: 'Well, the majority of the participants are my friends as well. I play football with them; I visit them and they come to me' (SCL 5).

However, the close relationships and the social commitments that the SCLs offer the participants in the form of human resources, also come with certain trials. The findings indicate that the SCLs also take considerable responsibility for the welfare of the participants. Many say that they have been or are struggling with how to handle the situation of always being 'on call'. While underlining the importance of the relational aspects of their work, they also emphasize the costs that come with the forming of relationships with individuals that may be transferred to another location or removed from the country at very short notice. One manager states that: 'How they should handle this is very challenging for the participants and our leaders. For many of them, they are not psychologists or social workers; they cannot take care of these individuals' (Manager 3).

Another manager reasons on the investment made when forming a relationship:

There is a risk; you form a close relationship with individuals whose application [to stay in Sweden] are rejected. Yes, it is tough. People that have been here every day and the next day you ask where they are and they have been deported. Then it is very tough for us. (Manager 6)

Despite such hardships, the accounts by SCLs are indicative of a considerable use-value of human resources vis-à-vis the SCLs principal pursuit for social engagements that are anchored in their interest in benefitting the asylum seekers' welfare. It is apparent that this commitment derives from a will to work with people, but also a will to give something back. A small group of SCLs were born and raised in Sweden, and have a great interest in working relationally with people. Another group, almost all of the SCLs interviewed, have themselves migrated to Sweden, and have corresponding experiences of undergoing the asylum process, learning Swedish and building a future for themselves in Sweden. One SCL states:

I think they saw me as a role model and a leader. I could also see myself in them based on my own experience of being a migrant. I worked; I applied for asylum and I got the chance to stay and this makes it easier to work with the participants. (SCL 5)

Another SCL describes his role: 'You explain and give them some of your own experience about society. It is not only about learning Swedish, an introduction to this language; it is more about the society' (SCL 6).

As the quotes illustrate, the SCLs' lived experiences of migration can be emphasised as human resources whose use-value translates into moral resources as the experiences may allow SCLs to act as guiding role models, i.e., be perceived as persons with whom the participants can identify. Thus, SCLs gain credibility and the opportunity to share their experiences while having an understanding of the participants' situation. However, it is not solely the lived experiences of migration among the SCLs that can be used as a resource, but also their mother tongue, which in some study circles is used as a 'springboard' for learning (in those cases where the SCLs share their mother tongue with the participants). As one of the participants describes it: 'Those SCLs that speak Persian…they can explain it better for me and I understand' (Participant 10).

6. Discussion

This article has directed attention to one specific case of civil society mobilisation carried out across Europe in the wake of the long summer of 2015 (cf. Hess et al., 2017), taking place in Sweden and specifically within the realm of popular education. In the wake of the 2015 refugee situation, the Swedish state occasioned mobilisation of the civil society in the cause of language studies and introduction into the Swedish society, incorporating ten major study associations in Sweden (cf. Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2017; Håkansson & Nilsson Mohammadi, 2018). Among these, ABF was awarded the largest share of the targeted state funding programme for integration—*Swedish from day 1*. It is this specific activity that has been the focus of this article. On the receiving end, such popular education directed to adult asylum seekers has been seen by the ABF leadership as directly contingent on the resources allocated by the government. However, apart from underlining the centrality of such patronage-based material resources for the operations of ABF, we have in this article identified the mobilisation of a wide range of resources as being crucial for the activities carried out within the organisation—material, human, socio-organisational, cultural as well as moral. In the article, we have analysed how different kinds of resources are mobilized within the *Swedish from day 1* activities, as

well as how various resources are converted from one form into another (cf. Edwards & McCarthy, 2007).

Our data illustrates how state funding of the 'free and voluntary' format of the study circle, by extension, has contributed to the attainment of use-value in the form of socio-organisational resources within ABF. These resources have included the mobilization of an established broad social network of collaboration partners as well as the establishment of new alliances with an extended set of municipal, state and civil society actors throughout society. The material resources mobilised through the state-funded programme have, furthermore, vis-à-vis the accompanying moral resource in the form of a widely established legitimacy of the work carried out by popular education organisations more broadly, aided ABF in mobilising yet additional sets of patronage providing material resources such as labour.

In addition to the patronage-based resource mobilisation, ABF has also engaged in extensive self-production of resources, by relocating some of the general state funding provided for the *Swedish from day 1* operations. This manoeuvre entails the ways in which cultural resources, in the form of ABF's historical and ideological legacy of striving for workers' rights in the society by means of providing adult education as a social right to the broad sections of the population, in turn may generate additional material use-value. In the operations carried out by ABF, newly arrived refugees thus become perceived as the 'new' working class, or rather *the* working class of today (cf. Dahlstedt, 2009a; De Jong & Ataç, 2017; Osman, 2007).

One of the central resources for the ground operations found in our study is the one related to the general and extensive engagements on the part of the participants to attend the courses offered, by which the study circles commonly are denominated as a 'home' (as, for instance, illustrated by Participant 1), a place where the participants are seen as belonging and treated as equal fellow beings, even though they are newly arrived. The use-value of the moral resource that the participants' attendance attests to has in turn been coupled with human resources embodied by the SCLs, their own experiences of migration, language skills and familiarity with Swedish society (cf. Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017; Karakayali, 2017). Additionally, both SCLs and participants refer to the study circles and the activities arranged by ABF as a safe place with the potential of breaking the social isolation related to living in refugee camps across the country, by offering the means to get acquainted with the new society and to learn the Swedish language in the 'free and voluntary' format provided by ABF (cf. De Jong & Ataç, 2017). Not least, the empirical material underscores the participants' appreciation for the social and bureaucratic support provided in the activities conducted, for instance in terms of SCLs helping out with contacts with banks, doctors and migration officers.

However, on the part of the SCLs, such engagements also come at the cost of persistently being emotionally engaged and on the call, which in turn raises questions concerning the ways in which boundaries between the professional and the private sphere are and should be drawn. Even though there is certainly great potential in the efforts and engagement of the SCLs, in terms of social inclusion of newly arrived refugees, there are obvious risks in such a mobilisation of human resources within the organisation, not least considering the risk of SCLs hitting a wall, as there is not really a limit to the amount of work that would need to be carried out in order to meet the needs of newly arrived refugees (cf. Karakayali, 2017).

Conclusively, in line with its historical legacy, and with its well-established connections throughout society, ABF not solely took on the task defined vis-à-vis state patronage. On the contrary, in converting the material resources provided by the state into other resources, and by mobilizing its traditional activist orientation (cf. Kaldor, 2003), ABF succeeded in both responding to the urgent needs of the newly arrived refugees and gaining legitimacy for such a response—from participants as well as from the state. So then, what is the point of focusing on popular education in terms of resource mobilisation in relation to newly arrived refugees? Despite the rather major shifts in terms of welfare and integration policy taking place in Sweden recently, with a greater focus on obligations, adaptability and individual responsibility (cf. Gardell, 2016; Schierup & Ålund, 2011), this kind of analysis has made it possible to illustrate the complexities of such developments and is not as clear cut as first might seem to be the case. Popular education offers one example of the existing opportunities to work towards social inclusion in Sweden, in a range of different ways, not the least by mobilising state resources in combination with other available resources. In order for such an endeavour to be successful, moral resources such as legitimacy and trust are needed, and these need to be carefully managed. Concerning popular education in Sweden, such moral resources in terms of legitimacy and trust seem to be rather intact, despite the changes that have taken place. Thus, a focus on popular education might provide space for further debates on how to promote social inclusion in times of migration.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Nedžad Mešić holds a PhD in Ethnicity and Migration and works as a Lecturer in education. His research interest concern migration and inclusion, with particular focus on the engagements of social movements for precarious migrants, newly arrived migrants and young people. (see e.g., *Negotiating Solidarity: Collective Actions for Precarious Migrant Workers' Rights in Sweden*, Linköping University, 2017).

Magnus Dahlstedt is a Professor in Social Work at Linköping University. His primary research interests concern welfare changes, inclusion and exclusion in times of market-orientation and migration. Currently, he is conducting research on civil society organizations and the social inclusion of migrants in Sweden.

Andeas Fejes is Professor and Chair of Adult Education research at Linköping University, Sweden. His research interests concern adult and popular education with a specific focus on issues pertaining to citizenship and migration. He is currently, together with M. Dahlstedt, directing a research programme on migration, learning and social inclusion, of which this article forms part. Fejes is one of the founding editors of the *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*.

Sofia Nyström is an Associate Professor in Education at the Department of Behavior Sciences and Learning at Linköping University, Sweden. Her research interest focuses on the relation between education and work concerning arrangements for professional and vocational learning as well as identity formation using different theoretical perspectives. She is currently working on a research programme on migration, learning and social inclusion.

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Article

"It's That Kind of Place Here": Solidarity, Place-Making and Civil Society Response to the 2015 Refugee Crisis in Wales, UK

Taulant Guma [1,*], Michael Woods [2], Sophie Yarker [3] and Jon Anderson [4]

[1] School of Applied Sciences, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, EH11 4BN, UK; E-Mail: taulant.guma@gmail.com
[2] Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, Aberystwyth University, Ceredigion, SY23 3DB, UK; E-Mail: m.woods@aber.ac.uk
[3] School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PL, UK; E-Mail: sophie.yarker@manchester.ac.uk
[4] School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University, Cardiff, CF10 3WA, UK; E-Mail: andersonj@cardiff.ac.uk

* Corresponding author

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Abstract

This article examines the different ways in which local civil society has responded to refugees and asylum seekers in different parts of Wales in the wake of the recent "refugee crisis". While the events of summer 2015 have generated a considerable amount of scholarly attention, including empirical accounts that look into local community responses to refugees and asylum seekers, the current research has tended to overlook the significance of place and the varied impact of "refugee crisis" across localities; this article aims to fill this gap in the existing research. It draws on findings from qualitative research carried out between 2017 and 2018 with refugee-supporting organisations based in three different locations in Wales. Taking a comparative look at these organisations, the article sheds light on the intensity and variation of civil society response in each of these localities, showing how this is informed by and closely interweaved with processes of place-making and place-framing, contributing to the reshaping of civil society networks and population profiles in these local areas. In conclusion, the article argues that humanitarian responses to "refugee crisis" can be understood not only as instances of hospitality and solidarity but also as practices of locality production.

Keywords

asylum seekers; local civil society; place-making; refugees; solidarity; Wales

Issue

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1. Introduction

The dramatic increase in the numbers of displaced people arriving in Europe from 2015 onwards has reignited debates around migration and the appropriate response of European states to the "refugee crisis", including the problematic representation of refugees and migrants in political, media and academic discourses that followed this so-called crisis (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Holmes & Castañeda, 2016). This has been most prominently articulated at national scales, with discussions in politics and the media over immigration policies (Barlai, Fähnrich, Griessler, & Rhomberg, 2017) but is also manifested in the practical actions of civil society groups in localities where refugees and asylum seekers are settled, and where they come into contact in everyday life with established local residents. Whilst national debates around refugees have frequently been co-opted by xenophobic, anti-immigration sentiments (e.g., Krzyżanowski, 2018; Narkowitcz, 2018), at a local scale occasional expressions of defensive localism have been balanced by more humanitarian responses, including proactive initia-

tives by civil society groups to reach out to and welcome refugees to their communities—especially following dissemination of the emotive image of toddler Alan Kurdi on Turkish beach in late 2015 (Sohlberg, Esaiasson, & Martinsson, 2018).

Local responses to the "refugee crisis" have emerged not only in localities close to major refugee transit routes or critical borders, such as towns in southern Germany that have accommodated thousands of new refugee arrivals since 2015, but also in places further removed from the main gateways, where refugees and asylum seekers have been settled. Indeed, one of the features of the so-called refugee crisis in Europe is that refugees and asylum seekers have been more widely dispersed geographically, including into localities with limited previous experience of hosting refugees, or indeed of any substantial immigration (Challinor, 2018). In Britain, for instance, the government announced new measures in 2014 and 2016 that allowed the spatial dispersal of mainly Syrian refugees to any localities in the UK , thus marking a shift from previous asylum policy that saw asylum seekers only dispersed to major cities/urban areas of the country (Piacentini, 2012). Under the UNHCR Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme, which was launched in 2014, the UK government invited "any local authority" in the UK to participate in the Programme by bringing in those deemed "in the greatest need" of protection and helping them settle in these localities (Home Office, 2017). In addition, through the launch of Community Sponsorship Scheme in 2016, the government extended the list of actors who could take on the role of bringing in and supporting refugees from local authorities to "community groups including charities, faith groups, churches and businesses" (UK Government, 2016). As a result, the geography of refugee settlement in the UK expanded from urban areas to include rural districts in the Scottish islands and west Wales.

The dispersal of Syrian refugees in part followed from grassroots pressure in the localities concerned, reacting to transnational news reportage and seeking to be part of a collective humanitarian effort. Through such initiatives, the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers has become part of the articulation and negotiation of place identity. The arrival and integration of refugees in a locality contributes to the sense of place, as with any migrant group, as new arrivals introduce new cultural practices, languages, religions and traditions, foods and clothes and other artefacts, and forge new connections with different parts of the world. At the same time, sense of place is also evoked and reproduced through the actions of established local residents as they engage with refugees and asylum seekers, reflecting the ethos and outlook of the community and drawing on local cultural and institutional resources. As such, understanding the relationships between place and civil society responses to the "refugee crisis" is important to explaining the variegated geography of refugee integration; as well as the geography of anti-refugee opinion. Furthermore, recognizing the attributes of place that foster and support attitudes of hospitality towards refugees could help to produce strategies for effective social inclusion and integration.

This article examines the significance of place in civil society responses to refugees, and the contribution of these responses to place-making, in three localities in Wales: the small university town of Aberystwyth in mid Wales, the suburban community of Mumbles on the fringe of Swansea, and the inner city neighbourhood of Splott in Cardiff. The study draws on interviews conducted with civil society activists and local councillors in the three localities, participant observation and analysis of press reports, social media and other documents, informed by theories of relational place-making in human geography. The next section introduces the relational place-making literature and reviews previous writing on refugees and place, before the methods are described in more detail and the case studies presented and discussed.

2. Relational Place-Making and Local Responses to Refugees

Following the seminal work of Massey (1991, 2005), a relational perspective understands places as constellations of "social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus", or "articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings" (Massey, 1991, p. 28) that transcend the specific space and scale that the "place" is perceived to occupy. Accordingly, places are made and remade; made materially by the bringing together of variously physical components, but also made discursively through the framing and description of particular spatially-located bundles of entities and relations as having a coherence and a collective identity that is distinct from other adjacent bundles (Martin, 2003; Massey, 1991; Pierce, Martin, & Murphy, 2011). Through these processes, places acquire material and imagined coherence that allows them to focus as the locus for collective action (Jones & Woods, 2013).

A critical contribution to place-making is made by civil society as it structures collective action and social mobilization around notions of place. These notions are articulated through "place-frames" that "describe common experiences among people in a place, as well as imagining an ideal of how the neighborhood *ought* to be" (Martin, 2003, p. 733, emphasis in original). Place-frames can therefore be normative or aspirational, such that place-framing is inherently political (Zhang, 2018). They "define the scope and scale of the shared neighborhood of collective concern" (Martin, 2003, p. 733), and may be mobilized proactively to promote forms of progressive social action, or reactively against perceived threats.

The mobilization of various place-frames in civil society responses to migration has been especially notable in questions of the reception and integration of refugees and asylum seekers, as recorded in a number of recent

studies. Some of this emerging research has focused on issues around hospitality and social encounters between refugees and local population (Challinor, 2018; Wilkinson, 2018), but here the localities and neighbourhoods in which refugees have come to live have been often taken for granted or treated as mere contextual (back)ground. Other studies, on the other hand, have highlighted the significance of place in shaping refugees and migrants integration and experiences in "host" society (McDaniel, 2018; Radford, 2017; Schmidtke, 2018; Vallaster, von Wallpach, & Zenker, 2018; Woodrow, 2017; Woods, 2018). These cases are varied, but examination of reported cases reveals three broad underpinning factors.

First, the mobilized place-frames incorporate elements of "ethical place-making" (Eckenwiler, 2018), in which places are understood not as autonomous, but as enmeshed in wider networks of affective relations and thus as subject to geographies of responsibilities (Massey, 2004). Framing places in this way thus resonates with Massey's (1991) "global sense of place", and Amin's (2004) "politics of connectivity", promoting "a politics that looks beyond the gate to strangers without" (Massey, 2004, p. 17). Part of this approach is recognizing that whilst individuals identify with a place as part of their collective identity, they are also part of wider shared humanity that transcends place (McDaniel, 2018). The enactment of responsibilities towards refugees and asylum seekers hence commonly starts with a response to global events, transmitted through transnational media, and a compulsion to humanitarian action that is not necessarily place-bound. Such individual humanitarian impulses convert to grounded actions within specific places in which people meet, interact and organize, and particularly in which they may encounter refugees and asylum seekers at the personal level (Hebbani, Colic-Peisker, & Mackinnon, 2017; Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018; Schmidtke, 2018).

Secondly, collective action is mobilized within places because they offer an appropriate scale at which regular direct participation by volunteers can be organized, and shared interests and identities defined. Whilst new civil society groups may be formed, localities also commonly have an established cohort of civil society groups with dispositions towards humanitarian action, such as churches and trades unions, whose resources and networks may be enrolled. These connections may also be made with local government institutions, with civil society groups lobbying authorities to act practically or symbolically (McDaniel, 2018). At the same time, civil society groups may be mobilized to fill gaps in local government provision or response, for instance by directly sponsoring refugees (Schmidtke, 2018).

Third, place-based responses to the global issue of refugees necessarily involves a negotiation of scale. Notably, the assertion of progressive, humanitarian values in the framing of places may conflict with the immigration policies of the nation state. As such, the articulation of place identity in designations such as "welcoming cities" and "cities of sanctuary" may be statements intended to differentiate cities and towns from the discursive position of the nation (McDaniel, 2018). In the United States, "cities of sanctuary" are primarily places supporting undocumented immigrants against the enforcement regimes of the nation state; whereas in Europe "cities of sanctuary" tend to be framed as offering safety to refugees. Similarly, the mobilization of civil society groups working in place to support refugees and asylum seekers may be framed as resistance to state border regimes, though as Obradovic-Wochnik (2018, p. 65) remarks, their work "sometimes unwittingly supports the rationalities of government through the focus on counting refugees or working with state [agencies]".

The studies engaged in the above discussion provide insights into local civil society responses to refugees and asylum seekers, but it is unclear how representative they are of broader experiences. Most of the studies are single case studies and whilst common threads can be identified, they are mostly places characterized by prominent and visible community action to support refugees. This article hence aims to develop the strand of research through comparative analysis of three localities, which exhibit different forms and degrees of civil society mobilization in response to refugees and asylum seekers. The analysis is informed by the three themes identified in the discussion above; they provide a guiding framework for understanding the role of place and the relationship to place and scale for these local civil society organisations. By focusing on how organisations frame their work, how they draw on certain understandings, experiences and perceptions of place, be this their locality or more global imaginaries, we are able to tease out the role of place in shaping local civil society whilst also exploring the changing nature of locally based action in response to global issues.

3. Methods and Case Studies

The research for this article was conducted as part of a wider study of the changing nature of local civil society in Wales, UK and how the imaginaries and practices of local civil society have been stretched and reconfigured by global interconnectivity. The comparative case study analysis presented in this article specifically responds to the research question asking to what extent do patterns of participation in local civil society, and the engagement of local civil society with global issues, vary between localities, and how is this influenced by geography, class and ethnic composition? The three case study locations—Aberystwyth, Mumbles, and Splott—were selected as indicative of different geographical contexts, socio-economic profiles and histories of civic and civil society activity, but not initially with specific regard for questions of refugees and asylum seekers.

Aberystwyth is a university town of around 19,000 people in mid Wales that functions as a service centre

for the surrounding rural region. It has a long civic history and a well-defined local civil society with a diverse range of organizations. The presence of the university contributes to attracting international visitors and migrants to the town, and in the 2011 Census 13% of the population were born outside the UK. Just under a third of residents can speak Welsh. Politically, Aberystwyth leans to the centre-left, with elections dominated by the Liberal Democrats and the Welsh nationalist party Plaid Cymru, and the town has a history of radical political activity in struggles around Welsh national identity (Jones & Fowler, 2008).

Mumbles is an affluent suburban and seaside village with a population of around 14,000 people, situated on the western side of Swansea Bay. It forms part of the Swansea conurbation and the Swansea city local authority area, with most employed residents commuting to work in the city but has a strong sense of independent identity and an active distinct local civil society. It was described as the "best place to live in Wales" by the *Sunday Times* newspaper in 2018. The population is predominantly white British, with little ethnic diversity, and primarily votes Conservative—the party holding three of the four city council wards, and half of the seats on the community council.

Splott is an inner-urban neighbourhood, located to the east of Cardiff city centre, with a population of around 13,000 residents. A traditional working class district, it has relatively high levels of deprivation and is one of the most ethnically diverse parts of Cardiff, with 17.4% of residents recorded as non-white in the 2011 Census, and 13.6% born outside the UK. The neighbourhood has a strong sense of identity, reinforced by hyper-local media, but civil society activity is largely organized at the city scale or across the adjacent neighbourhoods of Adamsdown, Roath and Tremorfa. Splott ward of Cardiff City Council persistently elects Labour councillors.

In order to address the broader research interest of how local civil society organisations respond to global concerns, the research conducted a survey of civil society organisations and groups based in the three localities whose work focused on responding to the refugee and migration crisis. Interestingly, the study found refugee-supporting organizations and groups existing in all these three relatively small locations: these were Aberaid in Aberystwyth, Bloom in Mumbles, and Oasis and Space4U in Splott. These active organisations were identified through local print and social media as important actors in the civil society landscape of each place. This was further supported through local knowledge and interviews with local councillors and other key stakeholders in the three areas. These organizations were positioned as the focal points of the research, with additional data collection radiating out from these.

Interviews with 41 individuals were conducted between December 2016 and November 2018 with representatives and members of these and other civil society organizations, along with councillors and other key local stakeholders in the three areas. The demographic features of the interviewees varied in relation to age and gender; the sample included 23 women and 18 men, ranging from 26 to 73 years of age. Some of the interviewees were employed by the organizations in which they were involved in, many others were just volunteers. The interviews were semi-structured and sought to gain an understanding of the organizations in which these individuals were involved in as well as of their own motivations and experiences of volunteering/working for these civil society groups. Interviews included questions, inter alia, about the goals of the organization, how it originated, its relationship to the place in which it was based, who was involved and in what capacity, and specific questions around how it used social media to engage with different audiences. The interviews also included questions about the perceived levels of awareness of global issues, such as the "refugee crisis", in the area, how local people had responded to the issue and finally a broader discussion of the nature of local civil society in the locality and how it may have changed over time. They were recorded, transcribed and coded using NVivo software; and were supplemented by the collection and analysis of data from press reports, websites, social media (including Facebook and Twitter), and other documents, as well as by ethnographic observation at meetings and events.

4. Refugee Support Action in Three Welsh Places

4.1. Local Responses and National Narratives

Between September 2015 and November 2017, at least 725 refugees from Syria were resettled in Wales under the UK Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme (SVPRP), joining nearly 3,000 asylum seekers of a range of nationalities resident in Wales whilst awaiting the outcome of asylum applications, and an estimated 6,000 to 10,000 earlier refugees from various countries (including previous asylum seekers with approved applications) that had settled in Wales (Houghton, 2017; National Assembly for Wales, 2017). Whilst the distribution of asylum seekers followed established UK government policy in being concentrated in the urban areas of Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham (National Assembly for Wales, 2017), Syrian refugees brought to Wales from camps in the Middle East under the SVPRP were, as in England and Scotland, dispersed more widely to volunteering local authorities. By November 2017, all but two of the 22 local authorities in Wales had accepted refugees under the programme (Houghton, 2017).

Ceredigion was one of the first local authorities in Wales to apply to take Syrian refugees under the expanded SVPRP scheme in 2015, following pressure from within the local community that reflected a wider local civil society mobilization in response to the "refugee crisis", including the formation of Aberaid in 2015 as an informal fundraising network. Aberaid has subsequently

worked with Ceredigion Council and other groups and agencies in providing support for the refugee families settled in Aberystwyth, whose numbers increased from an initial 11 refugees in December 2015 to a total of 33 refugees living in the town in May 2018. Additionally, Aberaid has raised £20,000 to directly sponsor a refugee family under the UK Government's Community Sponsorship Scheme, which seeks to extend responsibility for hosting refugees from the state to civil society. Although not the first community sponsorship project in Wales—Narbeth, in Pembrokeshire, had welcomed a Syrian family under the scheme in July 2017—Aberaid's activity is perceived as "pioneering", and Aberystwyth hosted a one-day conference on the Community Sponsorship programme in July 2017, including speakers with experience of Canada's private sponsorship scheme (cf. Schmidtke, 2018).

In contrast, the settlement of Syrian refugees in Cardiff has continued an established process of housing asylum seekers and refugees in the city. Although refugees and asylum seekers may be dispersed across the city, relatively low property and rental prices in Splott have led to a clustering of refugees and asylum seekers in the neighbourhood, which also hosts two civil society run support centres. Oasis and Space4U were both established by volunteers in 2008 and operate as day centres and community spaces for refugees and asylum seekers, providing services and facilities including English lessons, advocacy and employment advice, free lunches and leisure spaces. They are used by individuals from a range of national backgrounds, notably Eritrea, Sudan, Iran and Iraq. In comparison with Aberaid, the emphasis is less on direct participation in refugee resettlement, and more on promoting integration and social inclusion and creating "third places" in which refugees and asylum seekers can meet in accessible, neutral, comfortable and welcoming settings (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018). As such, whilst located in Splott, both centres serve the wider city and engage volunteers from across the city, and although the 2015 "refugee crisis" brought them more attention it did not substantially change their work.

Mumbles, meanwhile, is distinct from the other two case studies in not directly hosting refugees or asylum seekers, however local residents formed a refugee support group, Bloom, in response to the 2015 "refugee crisis", which is active in befriending refugees and asylum seekers living elsewhere in Swansea, and in awareness raising activities including school visits, food nights and multicultural events. Similarly, activists resident in Mumbles played a key role in establishing the Swansea City of Sanctuary initiative:

> Swansea was the second City of Sanctuary in the UK, recognised in 2010, first in Wales and it's been a really strong group ever since. There's about 100 pledged organisations in Swansea who are active to more or less degree depending....We have a management committee made up of both sanctuary seekers, asylum seekers and refugees and people from the local community. And I guess relevant to your research is that in Swansea the co-founders of Swansea City of Sanctuary were and are still living in Mumbles. It's an idea that actually came from them. (Swansea City of Sanctuary representative, Swansea, interview)

Both existing initiatives such as Swansea City of Sanctuary, Oasis, etc., and the new local groups such as Bloom and Aberaid that have emerged in response to the 2015 "refugee crisis" play an important role not only in offering support to refugees and asylum seekers living in Wales but also aiming to put into practice the idea of Wales as a "welcoming place". Following the "crisis" Wales has sought to reposition and promote itself as a welcoming place for refugees and asylum seekers; most notably, this culminated in the recent introduction of the "Nation of Sanctuary—Refugee and Asylum Seekers Plan" by the Welsh Government, setting out its ambition to make the country the first "nation of sanctuary" in the world for refugees and asylum seekers (Welsh Government, 2019). The Plan can also be seen as an example of how positive narratives about refugees can be mobilised at the national level and be employed as nation-building processes (cf. Giudici, 2014). The positive and inclusive language promoted by the Welsh Government is often contrasted with the rather hostile approach adopted by the UK government with regard to immigration. While immigration and nationality are matters reserved to the UK government and parliament, Wales as a devolved nation has competence in a range of fields affecting refugees and asylum seekers' everyday lives such as education, healthcare, and housing. Yet these positive narratives and ideas remain largely on the discursive level as they do not seem to have impacted significantly on people's attitudes on the ground; in terms of anti-immigration sentiments, there is relatively little difference between Wales and England as the result of the recent EU referendum has shown.

4.2. Motivations and Framing

The "European refugee crisis" in 2015 marked a pivotal moment for civil society mobilization towards refugees in the case studies. Aberaid and Bloom both originated in emotive responses to media portrayals of Syrian refugees, and especially the photograph of drowned toddler Alan Kurdi:

> I started...it was about two and a half years ago now. I saw a picture of Alan Kurdi who was the little boy who got washed up on a beach in Turkey, and that deeply affected me, seeing that picture. I've got two little boys. One of them was around the same age and I couldn't imagine how scared I'd have to be to risk that happening to my son....I was just working in a pub down the road as a barmaid. So it was completely

out of the blue…it changed my life. (Bloom founder, Mumbles, interview)

The emotive connection as a "mother" made with events in the Mediterranean or continental Europe fed into motivations to help in those places, a reaction which had the transformation effect of turning the above interviewee from an ordinary working individual into a civil society activist. Aberaid was set up by six "young mothers" connecting through Facebook and initially operating as an informal group fundraising for refugees in camps in Greece and Calais. The founder of Bloom similarly first travelled to Calais to volunteer in the "Jungle" refugee camp before starting to organize activities in Swansea after meeting a Syrian refugee through working at a food bank.

In Aberystwyth the catalyst for refocusing civil society engagement with refugees within the locality was provided by the UK Government's expansion of the SVPRP in 2015 and its call for local authorities to host refugees, as noted earlier. A grassroots movement developed to lobby the local Ceredigion Council to agree to take refugees, gaining traction with the local community and with council members because the idea resonated with a shared place-frame of Aberystwyth as a progressive, outward-looking, international town. As one councillor put it, "it's that kind of place here" (Fieldnotes, July 2017). The framing of Aberystwyth in this way drew on the presence of the university and the international networks of staff and students, as well as perceived high levels of political interest and awareness of international events, and a history of outward-looking environmental, peace and trade justice activism (with the small size of the town further meaning that key individuals were active across multiple civil society groups). The inclusive culture articulated in the place-frame was mobilized not only through direct participation in Aberaid's work with refugees and contributions to fundraising, but also through rallies and marches demonstrating solidarity with refugees and with civilians in Syria. The settlement of 33 refugees in the town and public support for the community sponsorship proposal, as well as positive coverage in national press and broadcast media, further reproduced and perpetuated the dominant place-frame, with interviewees citing accolades of Ceredigion Council as a "trailblazer" and pride in Aberystwyth as "one of the first towns" to welcome Syrian refugees as proof of its liberal, progressive identity.

Although Bloom in Mumbles started from a similar response to the "refugee crisis" as Aberaid, the development of its local activities followed a very different trajectory. In part this reflected the existing presence of refugees and asylum seekers in Swansea, with whom connections could be built and for whom activities could be organized. There was therefore less incentive to mobilise to bring refugees to Mumbles. Indeed, as noted earlier, although individuals from Mumbles are active in Swansea-wide organizations including Bloom and City of Sanctuary, that this activism has not translated into moves to host refugees in Mumbles is indicative of a shared place-frame of Mumbles as a conservative place, constrained by limited exposure to other cultures:

There's a lot of goodwill in Mumbles [but] it doesn't always translate to being actively welcoming. It's quite difficult to put some of these things into words, but for example a good number of our volunteers come from Mumbles, they live there. And they're talking to their neighbours and their friends about what they're doing. That is a level of awareness. But you know if an asylum seeker were to get on the bus and get off in Mumbles would they be welcomed? I don't know. (Civil society activist (1), Mumbles, interview)

I just think they haven't been exposed to refugees. So they are friendly but they need a bit of education and to meet people. I think that's why the pop-up nights are hugely successful here. I think people would be good but they just don't get much opportunity, because there's no asylum seeker housing down this side of Swansea. (Civil society activist (2), Mumbles, interview)

In Cardiff, Oasis and Space4U were formed long before the 2015 "refugee crisis" and responded primary to local issues, such as lack of support, poor accommodation, rise in destitution among asylum seekers—issues which were a product of an increasingly restrictive and hostile UK asylum policy (Parker, 2018)—rather than global concerns. As such, they arguably were motivated by normative place-frames of how social relations in Cardiff ought to be and mobilized to fill gaps in provision that militated against this vision. The most significant place-frames for Oasis and Space4U were hence those articulated for Cardiff as a city, e.g., as being welcoming, multicultural and, as one interviewee put it, "less racist", rather than more immediately for the neighbourhood of Splott. They saw their location in Splott mainly as a matter of convenience, rather than an expression of neighbourhood identity, and efforts to attract local residents into the centres as visitors or volunteers were described as difficult. At the same time, the presence of these two organisations was valued by other local groups in Splott which saw them as adding to the local dynamism and diversity. Although dynamics of engagement with local residents were altered by the public's shifting interpretative frames of refugees with the Syria crisis, the latter did not substantially change the work of Oasis or Space4U; while it made them more visible to city residents and brought offers of help and donations, such rise in interest was short-lived and focused mainly on Syrian refugees, even though, as noted earlier, the latter were not necessarily a major client groups for these organisations:

One of the things I'd say about the refugee crisis is that we were getting lots of offers of support, more at that time. Mostly positive, but sometimes it was quite

> strange that people would only be willing to give to help Syrian refugees. We kindly had to say quite often that we support asylum seekers and refugees from all over the world. Is it okay if your donation goes to them, not just the Syrian refugees? Most people said yes, but a couple of people said no, they only wanted it to go to Syrian refugees, which was a bit strange. (Space4U volunteer, Splott, interview)

4.3. Civil Society Infrastructure and Negotiating Scale

All four of the core organizations that we studied work closely with other civil society groups and public agencies, including local government. Although studies elsewhere have sometimes identified tensions between the objectives of civil society groups working with refugees and local government (McDaniel, 2018), in Wales the roles have tended to be complementary. In Aberystwyth, in particular, civil society mobilization to support refugees needed to enrol the local Ceredigion County Council as it was the council that was required to apply to take refugees; in turn, once the council had agreed this, it formed a partnership with Aberaid and other civil society groups in order to have the capacity to house and support refugees. Only with the advent of the Community Sponsorship scheme has Aberaid been able to apply to sponsor refugees directly:

> Lots of churches have been very helpful and also the flat we now have, sort of, reserved for this [Syrian] family, it actually belongs to a local church. So several churches have been helpful. Other organisations, Amnesty International, Freedom from Torture—they're also local organisations—they've been quite helpful. But then also things that I'd say not quite so closely connected, like walking groups or something. They've done walks and then fundraised money. So that's all been quite positive. I have to say, generally the local politicians as well. So the Town Council, Aberystwyth Town Council has been supportive, although they don't have much budget or anything like that. Ceredigion they had to prove with Ceredigion County Council. So we actually went to their scrutiny committee meeting. Well it was approved with, like, sort of four abstentions or something. So most people are clearly quite…they're very, very supportive. (Aberaid representative, Aberystwyth, interview)

As the quote above indicates, Aberaid engaged with and received support from a wide range of local organizations, groups and actors. The geographies of these groups and organizations have shaped the spatialities of civil society mobilization in support of refugees in the case studies. In Aberystwyth, the groups engaged have tended to be concentrated in the town, reflecting its status of the main town in the county, and reinforcing the identification of the mobilization with the town. Bloom in Swansea, and Oasis and Space4U in Cardiff, however, work with civil society groups operating across the city, not just in the specific neighbourhoods of Mumbles and Splott. At the same time, the organizations are grounded in place by the use of buildings and facilities, often volunteered by civil society groups. The location of Oasis in Splott, for example, largely stems from being approached by a Methodist congregation looking to rent out a surplus chapel; whilst Bloom's ties to Mumbles are reinforced by the use of facilities at an evangelical church.

This movement between neighbourhood and city, or town and county, is one of the ways in which the refugee support groups negotiate scale. In Cardiff, Oasis and Space4U are primarily framed as city-wide, or even as Welsh, organizations that happen to be based in Splott. In Swansea, individuals living in Mumbles have set up groups such as Bloom and City of Sanctuary working across the city, but also feel obliged to be active in Mumbles through fundraising and raising awareness. In Aberystwyth, meanwhile, support for refugees is strongly framed as an expression of the town community, though involving volunteers from the rural hinterland, but has by necessity had to enrol the wider county council—a step that involved persuading rural councillors with more conservative inclinations to support the initiative.

Beyond the locality, working with refugees necessarily involves encountering the apparatuses of the nation state. In contrast again to some cases recorded elsewhere in the literature, none of the organizations studied positioned themselves as resisting the UK immigration regime, although individuals were critical of policies, but the work of each was informed by immigration legislation and involved contact with various agencies. Aberaid's application to the Community Sponsorship scheme required negotiation of UK Home Office bureaucracy and civil servants at different levels, with volunteers contrasting positive support from the Home Office team in Wales with "unhelpful" officials in London. Local civil society mobilizations for refugees developed networks of support and mutual exchange of advice informally and through organizations such as CitizensWales and Cities of Sanctuary Wales, as well as by working with national civil society groups such as the British Red Cross; whilst translocal support was also engaged through social media, with Bloom for instance reporting receiving donations from fund-raising by churches in London.

Finally, the transnational mobility of refugees and asylum seekers gives any local action an international dimension. The place-based actions of volunteers were accompanied by awareness and concern in interview discussions about details of the war in Syria; in Aberystwyth, both refugees and supporters have periodically joined local peace activists in demonstrations against the Syrian war. There is awareness too of local issues of refugee reception and integration as part of an international crisis. Individuals from Aberaid have continued to visit refugee camps in Calais after the organization's main focus has oriented to the town, whilst Oasis and Space4U

are involved with activities such as publishing refugee stories and running exhibitions that articulate global connections. Transnational connections have also sought to learn from experiences elsewhere, for example through the involvement of Canadian participants in a conference on Community Sponsorship of refugees in Aberystwyth, and contacts between Swansea City of Sanctuary and the North American sanctuary movement.

5. Conclusion

Civil society groups in Wales, as across Europe, mobilized in response to the 2015 "refugee crisis". Initial motivations to help with an apparently distant problem—in the eastern Mediterranean or the "Jungle" camp in Calais—were converted into more local, place-based action, involving receiving refugees from Syria into local communities and/or supporting refugees and asylum seekers from Syria and elsewhere already living in the locality. As has been documented in other recent studies in Europe, North America and Australia (McDaniel, 2018; Radford, 2017; Schech, 2014; Schmidtke, 2018; Vallaster et al., 2018; Woodrow, 2017; Woods, 2018), local civil society actions to support refugees and asylum seekers in Wales have drawn on place-frames to mobilize volunteers and structure initiatives, enrolled local government and other civil society groups to build capacity, and negotiated across scales to engage state immigration regimes and to share support and experiences. However, as a comparative study of three communities—Aberystwyth, Mumbles and Splott—this article has been able to move beyond other literature that has focused on a single case study by exploring the differential mobilizations of civil society towards refugees and asylum seekers in these localities, and how they produced and reproduced these places and neighbourhoods.

In Aberystwyth, a dominant framing of the town as a liberal, open and internationalist place was effectively employed to mobilize civil society actors that enjoyed relative autonomy and coherence in a free-standing small town to become an early recipient of Syrian refugees and a "pioneer" in the Community Sponsorship scheme, despite not having hosted refugees or asylum seekers for forty years. These mobilizations thus reaffirmed the neighbourhoods' self-image as a progressive place, while at the same time generating new narratives and images, e.g., as a "first town in Wales" to welcome Syrian refugees, a "pioneer" in the field, etc. This reminds of Appadurai's (1996) insight that place-making/locality production is simultaneously context driven and context generating. By comparison, responses to the "refugee crisis" in Mumbles were not as intensive as in Aberystwyth but still significant; while in the case of the latter such responses became part of local community-building, in Mumbles they were channelled towards helping refugees and asylum seekers already living in neighbouring Swansea, with activities in Mumbles itself tempered by its framing as a more conservative community and culturally backward where attitudes towards refugees seemed ambivalent. These mobilisations thus enabled the opening up of new connections between this area and the neighbouring city of Swansea. In addition, they also provided an opportunity for civil society activists to challenge the existing place-frames and contexts in Mumbles, creating new possibilities for the neighborhood to reflect on its image as a "closed village" towards a more open and inclusive neighborhood, e.g., through meetings and encounters between the local population and refugees and asylum seekers which were described as "educating" practices. This was reflected in narratives among the interviewees such as "Mumbles is slowly changing" or "It is getting there". Both these situations contrasted with Splott, where the major impact of the 2015 crisis was short-lived rather than lasting in terms of the increase in public support for the existing work of organizations such as Oasis and Space4U with asylum seekers and refugees in the area.

Accordingly, civil society responses in each of these localities has contributed to ongoing place-making. These include, inter alia, the formation of new local groups and reshaping of civil society networks, the emergence of new activities, connections and narratives, the rise in awareness among the local community, the changing of local population profiles, the transformation of local subjects into activists, etc. Through the discussion of these changes, the analysis has shed light on the intensity and variation of these mobilisations in each of these localities, demonstrating how humanitarian responses to "refugee crisis" are not only about practices of hospitality and solidarity but also about the production of localities in which these activities take place.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Taulant Guma is Lecturer in Human Geography at Edinburgh Napier University. His research explores a wide range of topics pertaining to migration, including social security and risks, "race" and ethnicity, civil society and participation, globalisation and place, transnationalism and healthcare, online networks and digital communities. Approaching these issues from a multidisciplinary and ethnographic perspective, he has published his work in various peer-reviewed and leading journals such as *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, *Population, Space and Place*.

Michael Woods is Professor of Human Geography at Aberystwyth University, UK, and Co-Director of the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD) and the ESRC WISERD/Civil Society research centre, of which this work formed part. His research interests range across issues of globalization, rural geography, political geography and spatial justice, including projects funded by the European Research Council, UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and EU Horizon 2020 programme.

Sophie Yarker has a background in human geography and sociology with research interests in community, belonging and civil society. She currently holds the position of Research Fellow at the University of Manchester researching neighbourhood-based approaches to age-friendly cities and communities. Prior to this she has worked as a research associate at Aberystwyth University and as a Teaching Fellow at Newcastle University where she gained her PhD in Human Geography.

Jon Anderson is a Professor of Human Geography at the School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University, UK. His research interests focus on the relations between culture, place and identity, particularly the geographies, politics, and practices that emerge from these. His key publications include: *Understanding Cultural Geography: Places and Traces* (2015, 2nd ed.), *Water Worlds: Human Geographies of the Ocean* (2014, edited with K. Peters), and *Page and Place: Ongoing Compositions of Plot* (2014).

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Article

Eroding Rights, Crafting Solidarity? Shifting Dynamics in the State–Civil Society Nexus in Flanders and Brussels

Robin Vandevoordt [1,2,*]

[1] Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, Oxford, OX1 3TB, UK; E-Mail: robin.vandevoordt@qeh.ox.ac.uk
[2] Department of Sociology, University of Antwerp, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium

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Abstract
In 2015, hundreds of new civil initiatives emerged to provide stopgap help to refugees arriving in Belgium. This article zooms out from this moment of solidarity and explores the broader socio-political conditions that allowed these initiatives to emerge and, in some cases, solidify into professional service-providers or powerful political actors. The article focuses on two case studies, one in Flanders and one in Brussels. In Flanders, the Hospitable Network brings together local civil initiatives which have drawn upon the networks and skills of senior citizens with considerable experience in civic associations, NGOs and social movements. While these initiatives have partly filled the gaps that were created by a series of neoliberal reforms in Flanders' citizenship regime, the same neoliberal outlook has prevented these initiatives from being institutionalised. In Brussels, the Citizen Platform for the Support of Refugees has mobilised largely among the city's super-diverse population. The Platform's development has been shaped by Brussels' continuing attractiveness to immigrants, as well as by the city's complex governance structure, which has provided it with both material support and increasing opposition. As a result, the Platform has become a highly visible political actor offering partly professionalised support to refugees.

Keywords
asylum policies; citizenship regime; mobilization; refugees; social movements; solidarity

Issue
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1. Introduction

Since the summer of 2015, citizens have established various initiatives to provide stopgap help to refugees arriving in Europe. While most research has focused on citizens' actions and discourses (Ataç, Rygiel, & Stierl, 2016; della Porta, 2018; Feischmidt & Zakaria, 2019; Youkhana & Sutter, 2017), this article zooms out from these moments of solidarity, and explores the broader socio-political conditions that allowed these initiatives to emerge and, in some cases, solidify into professional service-providers or powerful political actors. I focus on two civil initiatives in particular: the Hospitable Network in Flanders and the Citizen Platform for the Support of Refugees in Brussels. In both cases I describe how the social backgrounds of its leading volunteers and the political environment in which they emerged, have impacted the way in which these initiatives have organised themselves, which strategies they use, and to what extent they have become institutionalised. More concretely, I argue that the Hospitable Network emerged in the context of neoliberal policy reforms, which provided an incentive for citizens to mobilise and oppose its institutionalisation. The Citizen Platform, however, exemplifies how super-diverse metropolises such as Brussels can be a place where new (fleeting) forms of solidarity can be crafted.

I substantiate these arguments by drawing on two types of data. First, I draw on desk-based research that includes an analysis of the secondary literature on Belgian citizenship regimes prior to 2015, and a supplementary, primary analysis of recent policy documents and press statements by the actors involved. In these analy-

ses, I focus on the relations between state and civil actors. Second, I analytically describe two case studies for which I draw on on-going ethnographic work, comprising both in-depth interviews and participant observation. In Flanders, I have worked with the Hospitable Network ("Gastvrij Netwerk"), a platform of 38 civil initiatives operating in local municipalities. The Hospitable Network organises board meetings, workshops and newsletters in which member initiatives exchange experiences and develop common strategies to support refugees. The support they provide responds to refugees' changing needs: finding housing, practising Dutch, children's homework, everyday administration, leisure and developing social contacts with established locals. In Brussels, I worked with the Citizen Platform for the Support of Refugees, which emerged in 2015 from the tens of thousands of citizens who offered stopgap help to refugees stranded in the capital. Over time, the Platform has developed into a volunteer-driven NGO that offers an array of services to forced migrants, irrespective of their legal status. These include both general social services (e.g., language classes, socio-administrative advice) and humanitarian assistance (e.g., shelter, food, clothing).

My on-going ethnographic work with both initiatives has taken a variety of forms. In the Hospitable Network I have participated in general assemblies, national workshops and the activities of some of its local member groups. I have also conducted seven in-depth interviews with the Network's leading volunteers, focussing on its rise, organisational development and its relations with state actors. In the following months I will conduct interviews with individual volunteers from the Network's member organisations. In the Citizen Platform, I have participated as a volunteer in its various social and humanitarian services, and in a wider range of actions such as demonstrations, workshops and social events. While I am still conducting interviews at the time of writing, I have to date conducted 14 interviews with its coordinators (5) and individual volunteers (nine).

In the next section, I first develop a conceptual framework, to explore the conditions that allowed these initiatives to emerge and have shaped their development over time.

2. Social Networks, Political Opportunities

Both the Hospitable Network and the Citizen Platform strive towards a dual goal: to provide basic humanitarian and social services to a diverse group of forced migrants; and to induce broader cultural and political changes to improve forced migrants' living conditions. Only the latter makes them a social movement in the strict sense (cf. Jasper, 2014). Although I therefore think we should explore, rather than assume that these civil initiatives represent a nascent social movement (Vandevoordt, in press-b; cf. Melucci, 1989), this article makes use of key concepts in social movement studies. I do so for two reasons. First, a large part of the recent scholarly work on civil initiatives supporting refugees has been firmly situated within this literature (e.g., Ataç et al., 2016; della Porta, 2018; Pries, 2018). To link this article to these debates, it makes sense to use a similar conceptual framework. Second and more importantly, social movement studies provide us with concepts that are useful to analyse how these initiatives develop over time. I draw on two concepts in particular: the social networks and skills of the movements' (leading) participants, and the political opportunity structures (POS) in which they emerge. Focusing on these two notions will help us understand how these civil initiatives have organised themselves, which strategies they use to achieve their goals, and the extent to which they are able to become institutionalised as social and/or political actors.

First, from earlier studies we know that newly emerging movements mobilise participants through existing social networks (Diani & McAdam, 2003; Snow, Zurcher, & Ekland-Olson, 1980). This was the case for many European civil initiatives supporting refugees in 2015. In Germany, for instance, scholars have documented that 34% of the volunteers providing stopgap help to refugees in 2015 had been involved in volunteering work with refugees prior to 2015 (Karakayali & Kleist, 2016). Similarly, Pries (2018) has argued with respect to Germany and Spain that the civil initiatives supporting refugees during and after 2015 have built strongly upon an existing body of NGOs and civic associations.

What interests me in this article, however, is how individuals' embeddedness in social networks shapes the way in which these civil initiatives work. To refine this question I draw on Jasper's (1997, 2014) biographical approach, which focuses on the skills participants have acquired in previous social contexts.[1] According to Jasper (2014), for instance, the rise of the women's movement in the US was partly driven by women who had participated in the student and peace movements a few years before. There they had learned how to embed their local organisations into national networks, how to organise symbolic protests and how to translate everyday experiences into policy demands. In a similar vein, drawing attention to individuals' previous social networks can help us understand three things about recently emerging civil initiatives supporting refugees: how do they organise themselves? Which strategies do they deploy? And which approach do they develop in supporting refugees?

Second, scholars have increasingly focused on movements' POS: the external political environment in which they arise, develop and have institutionalised themselves (e.g., Tarrow, 2011). Two factors are of particular

[1] Within the sub-strand of "resource mobilization theory", individual skills have also been understood in terms of "human and cultural resources" (Edwards, McCarthy, & Mataic, 2018). In this article, however, I draw upon Jasper's (1997, 2014) conceptualisation, largely because his meaning-centred cultural-sociological approach fits better with the overall scope of my ethnographic work than the rationalist assumptions underlying the "resource mobilisation" paradigm. Admittedly, for this article both approaches would have been suitable.

importance to our purpose: the relation between state and civil actors, and the needs that are created by specific policies. To begin with the former, it is crucial to note that Belgium has a long tradition of corporatist-democratic decision-making, in which civic associations are closely involved in the organisation of the welfare state, both as service-providers and as partners in political decision-making. In this sense, municipal, regional and federal governments may offer resources for civil initiatives to professionalise their services and institutionalise their position as a formal organisation. However, various Belgian state actors have recently moved away from this corporatist model towards a model of neoliberal governance, thereby limiting civil actors' role in decision-making (Van Puymbroeck & Saeys, 2014). How has this context, then, influenced the development and institutionalisation of these civil initiatives?

A second factor of POS concerns the needs that have been (in)directly created by specific policies. One of the more pertinent critiques that has emerged with respect to civil initiatives supporting refugees, is that they fill the gaps that were created by their national governments (Van dyk & Misbach, 2016). This brings us to the following question: in which ways were the needs citizens sought to address a consequence of broader developments in Belgium's asylum and integration policies?

3. A Brief History of Belgian Integration Policies

In this section I sketch some of the broader developments in recent Belgian integration policies. I concentrate on the POS these policies created, in the twofold sense of the relation between state and civic actors, and in creating immigrants' needs that were later addressed by civil actors. First, however, it is useful to note that Belgium has an exceptionally complex constellation of migration and integration policies (Martiniello, 2013). While the Federal government is responsible for most matters relating to migration, such as nationality procedures, deportation and asylum, the Regional governments of Flanders and Wallonia are responsible for the integration of immigrants, which includes organising civic integration and language courses, and ensuring access to education, work, housing and health care. To make the situation even more complex, Belgian municipalities have a relatively high degree of autonomy vis-à-vis their Regional and Federal counterparts in deciding whether and how they take initiatives in ensuring migrants' access to housing, work and education.

Like many Western European countries, Belgium's recent immigration history began with the arrival of Mediterranean "guest workers", which reached its zenith in the 1950s and 1960s. As consecutive governments expected these "guest workers" to return to their countries of origin, most of the social support came from citizens. The latter organised language classes, helped to find accommodation, set up leisure associations, and helped to establish the first mosques (Goeman & Van Puymbroeck, 2011; Groffy & Debruyne, 2014). For a long time, the reception of migrants in Belgium was thus characterised by a lack of coherent political vision on integration, asylum and migration. This created opportunities for citizens to take action and organise things themselves.

In the 1980s several Belgian governments began to develop integration policies. In this period the Belgian state underwent a process of devolution, in which policy domains that were previously a competence of the Federal state, such as integration, were transferred to the Regional governments of Flanders and Wallonia (Adam, 2013). In Flanders, these developments began after the electoral breakthrough of the extreme-right Vlaams Blok in 1988. In response to this perceived integration crisis, the Flemish government created long-term project funds for civil initiatives and municipal governments develop local integration policies. In line with Belgium's general political tradition of corporatist-democratic cooperation, civil and state actors collaborated closely with one another as more or less equal partners. Civil actors were granted considerable autonomy in setting priorities, building a vision and establishing an organisational structure. Throughout the 1990s, their services gradually became more professional and specialised. In Flanders, for instance, 43 local and eight regional integration centres were established, as well as four Dutch language houses and four Social translation centres (Groffy & Debruyne, 2014). The dominant vision that emerged in Flanders[2] somewhat resembled the multicultural policies that had long been central to integration policies in the Netherlands, in which social support was organised along the lines of different migrant groups, depending on their nationality, religion and gender.

In Brussels, a different, more complex situation has emerged. This has partly been the result of a policy gap, as the Brussels Region does not have jurisdiction over integration. Instead, migrants in Brussels can choose to comply either with Flemish or Walloon integration policies, both of which are ill-adapted to the super-diverse context of Brussels, which is similar to other metropolitan capitals such as Paris and London (Bousetta, Favell, & Martiniello, 2018). As a result, the pressure to deal with the capital's super-diversity has been largely left to Brussels' 19 municipalities and its large battery of civic associations. Some of these municipalities have furthermore seen a rapid diversification since the 1980s, creating minority-majorities (i.e., where the majority of inhabitants have a migration background). Especially in poorer and super-diverse municipalities such as Sint-Jans-Molenbeek and Anderlecht, this has contributed to

[2] The main difference between Flemish and Dutch multiculturalism was that in Flanders these policies emerged from bottom-up civil initiatives, which were subsequently incorporated into government policies, whereas those in the Netherlands were largely installed top-down by the central, national government (Adam, 2013). In Wallonia, a non-interventionist policy developed which rather resembled the French, Republican model: the integration of newly arriving migrants was not seen as requiring a separate competence, but as an aspect of mainstream institutions and policies such as education, work, and welfare.

a relative dominance of left-leaning, inclusive social policies that have been more favourable to a "soft" stance on integration (Bousetta et al., 2018). In these municipalities, the persistence of strong connections between socialist civic associations and the still-dominant Parti Socialiste have fed into an exceptionally high concentration of professional and non-professional civic associations, even by Belgian standards (Swerts & Oosterlynck, 2018). In addition, despite its lack of formal powers to deal with integration, the Brussels Region has supported civil actors such as Samu Social, Vluchtelingenwerk and Ciré, which are either directly or indirectly active in the field of integration. In sum, Brussels has been characterised by a complex multilevel governance structure, that both created a gap in coherent integration policies and a range of opportunities for civil initiatives to secure funding and operational autonomy.

In Flanders, however, the continuing growth of the extreme right fed into criticism of Flanders' fragmented multiculturalist policies. According to critics, the field of integration was characterised by an unmanageable proliferation of civil and state actors offering overlapping services and embodying contradictory visions on integration (Groffy & Debruyne, 2014). Fuelled by European critiques on the failure of multicultural policies, the Flemish government adopted a series of measures that gradually replaced its 'cooperative multiculturalism' with a neo-liberal, neo-communitarian citizenship regime that shifted power from civil actors to the state (Van Puymbroeck & Saeys, 2014). This development culminated in a controversial reform of the integration sector in 2014, which centralised a wide range of social services into a single agency that would develop a more coherent vision. The local and provincial centres for integration, social translation and legal advice that had emerged from civil initiatives, were thus merged into a single government-controlled Agency of Integration and Citizenship ('Agentschap Inburgering en Integratie'; Groffy & Debruyne, 2014; Van Puymbroeck & Saeys, 2014).

On a national level, the establishment of the Flemish Agency of Integration and Citizenship was the result of a dual process of Flemish state-building (Adam, 2013) and nation-building (Martiniello, 2013). As the Belgian state increasingly shifted competences towards the Flemish region, the Agency of Integration and Citizenship took on a task that seemed particularly crucial to nurturing Flanders' supposedly homogenous culture. The major developments in Flemish integration should therefore be seen against the backdrop of a programme of regional state and nation-building.

From a broader perspective, these reforms were driven by the rising popularity of neoliberal discourses across the European continent. These elements are of crucial importance here. On the one hand, neoliberal state actors both withdraw from, and expand their grip on society: state actors reduce support to civil actors and demand more control over the work of those actors it continues to support. As a result, civil actors are seen as contracted service providers, rather than political partners with considerable autonomy. Moreover, these neoliberal discourses have tried to make migrants responsible by rendering their social rights conditional upon their achievements (Joppke, 2007; Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010). Until 2013, the Flemish state mostly conceived of integration as a two-way process requiring both migrants and the established communities to shoulder their responsibilities. From 2014 onwards, the emphasis shifted towards "civic integration" or "citizenisation" (Inburgering), in which it was primarily migrants' responsibility to prove their cultural assimilation and economic self-reliance (Groffy & Debruyne, 2014). In order to retain certain social (e.g., social housing, social benefits) and civic rights (e.g., family reunification, naturalisation), immigrants were now obliged to prove their proficiency in Dutch and their prior independence from benefits. Despite the specifically national context of Flemish state and nation-building, these developments can thus be situated in a broader converging trend in European integration policies (cf. Joppke, 2007; Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010).

Summing up, Belgium has long been characterised by a lack of coherent integration policies. Since the 1980s, different integration policies have developed in Flanders and Wallonia, which created a policy gap in the Region of Brussels. In Flanders, the initial model of 'cooperative multiculturalism' was gradually replaced by neoliberal policies that reduced the social and political role of civil actors, and gradually eroded migrants' social rights. In Brussels, the pertinent policy-gap and the growing super-diversity of its population have fed into strong collaborations between state and civil actors, with the latter playing a crucial role in the support of newly arriving migrants. In the following sections I describe how these broader contexts have shaped the responses of civil actors to the 2015 "asylum crisis" and its aftermath.

4. The 2015 Reception Crisis and Its Aftermath

In Belgium, the increased arrival of refugees in 2015 manifested itself most clearly in the emergence of a spontaneous camp in the Maximilian Park, where citizens provided all kinds of humanitarian, social and political support (Depraetere & Oosterlynck, 2017; Lafaut & Coene, 2018; Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019). In this article, however, I will not focus on this initial moment of mobilisation, but on the long-term mobilisation of the Hospitable Network and the Citizen Platform. The acute crisis of 2015 developed into two distinct crises in Flanders and Brussels, both of which have shaped how these initiatives have organised themselves. In Flanders, a slower integration crisis emerged, which centred around affordable housing. In Brussels, the Citizen Platform was confronted with a more volatile situation, as migrants of different legal statuses continued to arrive in and around the Maximilian Park.

4.1. A Slow Burn: Flanders' Integration Crisis

In this section I describe three factors that have shaped the rise and development of the Hospitable Network: the immediate needs created by the 2015 asylum crisis and its aftermath; the social backgrounds of its leading volunteers; and the long-term POS in which it operates. Together, these factors reveal a complex image of the Network, caught by two paradoxes. While the Network was able to emerge due to neoliberal policies that created the need to take action, the same neoliberal policies have made it difficult to institutionalise their efforts. Similarly, while the Network's leading volunteers were equipped with the skills to address the structural causes of refugees' problems and engage in political dialogue, the rather hostile political environment of the Flemish government put them in a position where they were inadvertently filling the gaps created by Flanders' neoliberal integration policies.

To understand how and why civil initiatives in Flanders emerged, it is crucial to take into account how asylum seekers are accommodated in Belgium. Since the early 1990s, the Federal government has gradually developed a twofold accommodation system coordinated by Fedasil, a government agency established for this very purpose. First, Fedasil coordinates a network of collective reception centres, some of which are managed by Fedasil, and some of which are managed by the Red Cross. Second, Fedasil coordinates a network of Local Accommodation Initiatives (LAIs), which are usually managed by municipalities' social services. When the number of asylum seekers rapidly rose in the summer of 2015, the Federal government established emergency reception centres in places such as abandoned military barracks, bungalow parks and pontoons, thereby creating an additional 15,000 places (Fedasil, 2016). As early as 1 September 2015, the Federal government urged municipalities to create more LAIs: an additional 1,010 LAIs therefore became operational by the end of 2015, and 2,151 more by the end of 2016 (Fedasil, 2015, 2016, 2017).

These LAIs, and, to some extent, the emergency reception centres, proved of crucial importance to the mobilisation of citizens across Flanders. These additional places for accommodation brought asylum seekers into smaller municipalities, which provided citizens with an opportunity to mobilise themselves locally. This policy measure also had a decisive impact upon the type of support these initiatives provided. Their work concentrated largely on the local integration of refugees as they passed through the asylum system: first as asylum seekers residing in LAIs, and second as either refugees who had receiving protected status, or as undocumented migrants whose asylum applications had been rejected. Hence, they helped refugees to find housing, practice their Dutch, support school-going children, organise women's groups, introduced them to leisure associations and organised socio-cultural events to strengthen their networks. In other words, these emergency reception measures created a favourable political opportunity structure for citizens to become involved, because it provided them with both a point of contact with local state actors (the municipal social centres organising the LAIs) and with a situation in which their help was needed (i.e., everyday social support for asylum seekers).

Second, the Hospitality Network has been strongly shaped by the networks and skills of its leading protagonists. Most of its leading figures are senior men and women who had recently retired, and who had spent a large part of their lives in a variety of civil organisations and networks. A small but significant number had been active in NGOs supporting migrants since the 1980s, either professionally or voluntarily. Others had been members of local branches of the North-South movement, a so-called "new social movement" which arose in the late 1960s and was institutionalised in the 1980s and 1990s (Walgrave, 1994). Yet others had been active in one of the many associations related to the "pillars" of Belgian civil society, including socialist and Catholic labour unions, and socio-cultural, women's and youth associations.

Citizens' firm roots in organised civil society had a decisive impact on their approach. Most importantly, they tried to avoid merely offering ad hoc assistance to refugees, preferring to work structurally instead. This had been a defining feature of the three types of civil organisations they had previously participated in. Since its radicalisation in the late 1960s, the North-South movement had strongly set itself apart from charitable forms of development aid. Instead, their fundraising actions, awareness-raising campaigns and political interventions were rooted in a critical political economic perspective on Northern countries' responsibilities in producing Southern poverty (Walgrave, 1994). Similarly, the civil initiatives that emerged to support the "guest workers" in the 1960 and 1970s and the first groups of refugees in the 1980s, had developed an increasingly structural approach due to their professionalisation in the 1990s. In this period, they moved away from a perspective centred on individual well-being, towards one focused on broader issues such as access to work, housing and education (Groffy & Debruyne, 2014). And lastly, the civic associations in which many of the Network's leaders had participated, were also characterised by a long-term embeddedness within the broader environment of Flanders' socialist and Catholic pillars (cf. Walgrave, 1994).

The Hospitable Network operated in much the same way. Most of its member initiatives did not emerge from the spatial setting of a pending humanitarian crisis, but from a call among active locals to attend a board meeting, to explore what they could do for refugees, how they could best achieve this, and with which other actors they could cooperate. In line with Belgium's tradition of corporatist-democratic cooperation, most initiatives thus immediately tried to establish contact with local municipalities and their social services, as well as with local

NGOs focusing on poverty and other forms of exclusion. In many instances, this resulted in the launch of (new) working groups on refugee support, in which both the emerging civil initiative, the municipality's social workers and other NGOs participated. In addition, most of these initiatives not only provided support to refugees, but also tried to influence local policy-makers by writing memoranda and organising meetings to address barriers to refugee inclusion. Most initiatives also tried to reach out to local citizens by raising awareness of refugees' stories, and by organising socio-cultural events to establish personal encounters. In this sense, the social networks of its leading volunteers and the skills and visions they had developed there have had a crucial impact on how they mobilised, how they engaged with state actors, and on their structural approach to addressing refugees' problems.

So what were the more structural problems these civil initiatives encountered? First and foremost, in Flanders, the 2015 reception crisis slowly fed into a more long-term housing crisis. In contrast to countries such as the Netherlands and Germany, asylum seekers in Belgium are only offered accommodation during their asylum procedure. There are no state agencies responsible for coordinating refugees' transition into the regular housing market. As soon as they have received a positive decision on their application, refugees need to find accommodation by themselves within two, or a maximum of four months. Most struggle to do so, for several reasons: they have limited social networks, do not know the language or the local housing market and its administrative procedures, they have no steady income and are often faced with racial and religious discrimination. In addition, the Belgian housing market is characterised by a high degree of property ownership and a shortage of cheap rental accommodation (Saeys, Vandevoordt, & Verschraegen, 2018).

From the moment refugees receive protected status, they are entitled to municipal social services, which includes a living allowance. In principle, however, they need to be residents of a specific municipality before they can apply for the material or social support it provides. This means that it is up to the municipality's social services to decide whether or not they will assist newly arriving refugees. And as some municipalities have attempted to discourage migrants from settling on their territories, most refugees became dependent upon their own social networks, civil initiatives and NGOs to find housing (Saeys et al., 2018).

While the root causes of Belgium's housing crisis are endemic to both its housing market and the organisation of refugees' accommodation, they can also be seen in relation to the neoliberal reforms in recent years. Before the 2014 reform, for instance, around 50 centres for integration were embedded in Flanders' municipalities and provinces, from where they addressed immigrants' structural barriers to inclusion. The reform, however, had shifted its attention away from these structural barriers, had dismantled the local connections of these integration centres and concentrated more on migrants' own responsibilities. When these civil initiatives set out to focus on refugees' structural exclusion on a local level, it looked very much as if they were filling a gap that had been created by the 2014 reform. In this sense, the reform created POS that were favourable to civil mobilisation, as it indirectly created a gap in social support which seemed necessary for refugees' inclusion in central social institutions.

Apart from ensuring refugees' access to the housing market, these initiatives tried to connect refugees to Belgian society in the broader sense. They concentrated on the everyday needs of refugees, for which professional social workers lacked time to provide support: they accompanied them on trips to lawyers to translate between legal jargon and refugees' complex stories; helped them find their way in Belgian bureaucracy; offered homework support to children; organised events where women, men and young people could diversify and strengthen their social networks; used their own networks to find opportunities for work and helped them to apply for jobs; personally introduced refugees into civic associations to develop their interests (e.g., music school, sports club, etc.); and organised socio-cultural activities to help them meet up with locals. All of these activities had been the core business of the civil initiatives that arose prior to the 1990s and then were institutionalised into a wide range of local integration centres.

The same neoliberal discourse that produced the need (or opportunity) for these initiatives to arise, however, also prevented their institutionalisation. Between 2016 and 2018, Flemish Minister of Home Affairs Liesbeth Homans created a fund of 20 million euros for the local integration of refugees (Deprez, Platteau, & Hondeghem, 2018). By allocating these funds to municipalities instead of to the civil initiatives—which had, in many instances, not only taken the lead in refugee support, but also had better connections and expertise to do so, given that most rural municipalities had little if any experience in working with immigrants—Homans continued the long-term trend of shifting power from civil actors to the state. In contrast to the civil initiatives that arose in the 1970s and 1980s, this generation of initiatives had fewer opportunities to professionalise their work. To put it differently, the neo-liberal outlook of the Flemish government—which saw civil actors as potential service-providers that could be contracted by state actors, rather than equal social partners—thus produced a political opportunity structure that encouraged the emergence of civil initiatives but was hostile towards their institutionalisation.

In addition, the Federal government's restrictive stance towards immigration also had a negative impact on citizens' opportunities to mobilise. In the summer of 2018, State Secretary of Asylum and Migration Theo Francken announced a substantial reduction of the reception capacity for asylum seekers, which tilted the balance of the reception network back to collective recep-

tion centres, instead of LAIs. Nine temporary reception centres were closed down (i.e., 2,854 places), while the number of places in LAIs were reduced by 3,600 (Fedasil, 2018). This decision was informed by Francken's earlier attempt to establish a two-tiered asylum system: a fast-track to local integration for refugees who were either vulnerable or were very likely to be granted asylum, and who would be accommodated in LAIs (e.g., Syrians), and a slow-track for others, who would be accommodated in collective reception centres. Several of the Hospitable Network initiatives protested against these decisions. According to them, the expertise and networks they had established in close collaboration with municipal social services and local schools, hospitals and leisure clubs would be lost if these LAIs were closed. Put differently, this shift from individual to collective accommodation is likely to have a negative impact on citizens' mobilisation for refugees, as the LAIs, specifically, had provided them with an opportunity to set up local initiatives to become involved in the first place.

To sum up, the neoliberal policy shift of the Flemish government created opportunities for civil initiatives to mobilise but made it difficult for them to institutionalise their work. And while the Hospitable Network's leading volunteers tried to take structural action and engage in political dialogue, they did so in a political climate that seemed rather hostile towards cooperation.

4.2. A Blazing Fire: Brussels' Recurring Humanitarian Crisis

The Citizen Platform was one of the first initiatives to arise from the spontaneous refugee camp in the Maximilian Park, in an attempt to coordinate citizens' actions. Initially, citizens provided mainly humanitarian support (shelter, food, clothes, washing facilities), yet as Brussels continued to attract refugees before, during and after their asylum procedure, the Platform gradually expanded its range of services. In this section I describe three factors that have shaped the development of the Platform: Brussels' continuing importance to immigrants; the city's super-diverse pool of volunteers; and its complex multilevel governance structure. Together, these factors have turned the Platform into a highly visible political actor, offering partly professionalised support to forced migrants.

First, Brussels has repeatedly been the primary site in which Belgium's reception crises have manifested themselves. As I noted in Section 4, in 2015 the Federal government's failure to organise accommodation for asylum seekers created an opportunity for citizens to mobilise in and around Brussels. In the summer of 2017, a new development led the Citizen Platform to expand its range of activities, enlarge its pool of volunteers, and develop a more radical political voice. An increasing number of migrants arrived in Brussels, most of whom could not or preferred not to apply for asylum in Belgium. Some had had their fingerprints taken in other European countries such as Italy, Greece or Hungary, where they either did not want to apply for asylum, or where they had applied for asylum and were appalled by refugees' living conditions in those countries (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2019; Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, 2019). Others were determined to reach the U.K. and had been forced to flee the dismantled camps of Calais, Dunkirk and Paris. In Belgium, as in France, these migrants were increasingly targeted by police actions to arrest and deport them (Médecins du Monde, 2018). And because they preferred not to apply for asylum, they were excluded from most institutional support provided by municipal services and established NGOs.

As the Platform's volunteers saw that there were many minors, women and persons with urgent medical needs among them, they responded by setting up two lines of action, both of which drew heavily upon their earlier experiences in 2015. First, the Platform reinforced its partnerships with Médecins du Monde, Médecins Sans Frontières, the Red Cross and Oxfam International. In close collaboration, they established a humanitarian hub in the vicinity of the Maximilian Park, where they offered phone services, food, clothes and medical and mental health care (Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, 2019). Second, the Citizen Platform developed a twofold system of shelter, offering migrants a bed for the night. In response to an emergency call by the Platform's coordinators in August 2017, individual volunteers took the most vulnerable migrants into their homes. While this was intended as a one-time emergency measure, a series of controversies emerging around State Secretary Francken continued to "shock" new citizens into joining the Platform's group of volunteering hosts (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995). The Platform's coordinators estimate that around 8,000 volunteers hosted migrants in their homes at least once between August 2017 and March 2019. As a result, between 20 and 600 migrants have been hosted in volunteers' homes for nearly every single night (Vandevoordt, in press-a). In this sense, the Citizen Platform emerged in response to urgent needs for shelter and humanitarian support that were created partly by Federal policy developments: the failure of this policy to provide adequate accommodation for asylum seekers in 2015, and the decision to persecute and exclude a group of migrants who could not or preferred not to apply for asylum in Belgium.

A second factor shaping the Citizen Platform is the pool of potential volunteers it draws upon. In contrast to the 'Hospitable Network', the Platform is driven by an ethnically and demographically diverse group of members, including migrants of different generations and backgrounds, (international) students, as well as professional expats and their children. This diversity has helped to create a cosmopolitan vibe that attracts a variety of people with a shared interest in this type of environment. At the same time, the Platform has faced a high turnover of volunteers and coordinators. This is partly because much of the work they do is emotionally taxing, and because of a widespread sense that they are continuously

operating in a crisis mode of urgent humanitarian support, since otherwise migrants sleep out on the street without any adequate legal information, medical care, food or clean clothes. Continued absence of government action and difficulty for professional NGOs to take action creates a large burden on the Platform's volunteers, especially its more committed, driven volunteers. In addition, many of its volunteers are young people, students and expats who do not have a long-term connection to Brussels. As a result, many volunteers engage in a form of volunteering that is associated with liquid modernity: it is flexible and tailored to their schedule and renewed (social) experiences take priority over long-term engagement focussing on structural solutions—as is the case in the Hospitable Network. After a brief but intense period of volunteering at the Platform, students and expats, for instance, frequently return to their home countries, move elsewhere, or find a job. Every time I visited one of the Platform's social services to help as a volunteer, I encountered "newer" rather than "established" volunteers.

This fluid, continuously renewed pool of volunteers has contributed to the Platform's fluid organisational structure. Two aspects are particularly important here. On the one hand, practical organisation of the Platform takes place via Facebook, rather than through more formalised meetings, as was the case in the Hospitable Network (Vandevoordt, in press-a). Available volunteers are matched to specific services through polls on closed Facebook groups. This allows the Platform to attract volunteers who are currently available, and it allows volunteers to take up shifts that fit their agenda, regardless of their plans in the longer term. On the other hand, this Facebook-based set-up means that the Platform can call on its members to take immediate action. When new crisis situations emerge, the Platform is often able to act more quickly than government agencies, professional NGOs and other civil initiatives. When the Platform's core volunteers saw an increasing number of youths and women roaming around the Maximilian Park, for instance, they immediately and successfully appealed to their broader pool of volunteers to provide shelter. In this sense, Brussels' super-diverse demographic situation and the generally cosmopolitan outlook many of its inhabitants share, seem to provide the Platform with a large, continuously self-refreshing pool of available volunteers. As a result, the Platform's modus operandi is to take action first, and reflect on structural solutions second. This contrasts with the Hospitable Network, which emerged from established social networks and which centred its approach around identifying structural needs before taking concrete action.

So far, we have seen how the Citizen Platform has been shaped by its specific setting in Brussels, which provided it with both a site of repeated crises and with a constantly refreshed pool of volunteers. A third factor shaping the Platform is the POS produced by Brussels' complex multilevel governance structure. As the Platform's coordinators did not think their dual shelter system was sustainable in the long run, they lobbied the Municipal, Regional and Federal governments to establish an emergency shelter where migrants could receive basic medical care and legal-administrative information. While the Platform did not manage to convince these governments to establish such a centre, they did secure enough support to open such a centre themselves. The so-called Porte d'Ulysse opened in December 2017 and gradually expanded its capacity from 80 to 350 beds. Some of Brussels' 19 municipalities provided cleaning and washing services, while the Brussels Regional government covered the costs of renting an empty wing of an office building in Haren, in the outskirts of the city. In May 2018, the Regional government increased its support, enabling the Citizen Platform to temporarily employ around 20 full-time staff members, most of whom had been longstanding volunteers (Vandevoordt, in press-a). This allowed the Platform to gradually make its services more professional and become less dependent upon individual volunteers. Summing up, it was the Brussels multilevel governance structures, and its longer tradition of close collaboration between state and civil actors, which provided the Citizen Platform with the political support they needed to professionalise their services. In this sense, they found themselves in a local political opportunity structure that was favourable to their institutionalisation.

In spite of the local support, the Platform also faced increasing opposition from the Federal government, which intensified its attempts to detain and deport precisely those undocumented migrants the Platform seeks to support. This has led the Platform to engage in more assertive political action, mainly in the form of demonstrations, press statements and symbolic actions. Two measures in particular have encouraged this polarisation. First, on 30 June 2017, Federal Minister of Home Affairs Jan Jambon submitted a draft law that would make it possible for police forces to enter private properties if there are suspicions that undocumented migrants are residing there. In January 2018, however, this draft law became the subject of an intense public debate. Judges and legal scholars expressed their concerns that the law did not provide enough checks and balances to guarantee migrants' rights. Among both the government's liberal parties, resistance arose to the fact that properties belonging to third parties—i.e., persons with whom undocumented migrants were staying, including Platform volunteers—would also be subject to such house search warrants. In response, the Citizen Platform aligned with allied NGOs to organise demonstrations, press statements and a nation-wide campaign writing letters to local mayors, asking them to declare that they would not implement this law if it were to be adopted at Federal level. Ultimately, the law was abandoned due to both internal divisions in the Federal government's liberal and conservative coalition partners, and to broader public criticism.

Second, in January 2018, the Federal government stepped up its actions to arrest both undocumented mi-

grants and human traffickers. In June 2018, the Federal public ministry charged eleven persons with human trafficking, including four who had hosted undocumented migrants. This lawsuit attracted considerable media attention and was interpreted as an attempt to undermine the image of the Citizen Platform as moral heroes (cf. Jasper, 2014). Through the lawsuit and the continuous discourse of leading political figures such as Theo Francken, Jan Jambon and Bart De Wever, the Citizen Platform was portrayed as an "extreme-left" movement flirting with the boundaries of the law—even though its hosting volunteers in particular tend to refer to care, humanitarianism and solidarity to distance themselves from politics as a whole (Alcalde & Portos, 2018). While the four hosts were ultimately cleared of all charges, the lawsuit did seem an attempt to undermine the Platform's ability to host undocumented migrants, and to equate it with a radical, extremist movement. As a result, the Platform increasingly adopted a more assertive political voice, both in public and among its members. In this sense, it is uncertain to what degree the Federal government will be able to create a hostile environment for the Citizen Platform, and to what extent the Platform will further radicalise its actions to defend its work.

To sum up, the Citizen Platform has been strongly shaped by the specific context in Brussels. It has responded to a series of crises affecting the capital, which were partly produced by the policy gap in organising the arrival of new immigrants to Brussels. The city's super-diverse, sometimes temporary population has provided the Platform with a constant source of new volunteers. Both these developments have fed into a fluid, Facebook-based organisational structure, which has had a crucial impact on how the Platform has been organised (Vandevoordt, in press-a). And lastly, Brussels' complex governance structure has provided the Platform with both material support and increasing opposition. As a result, the Platform has become a highly visible political actor offering partly professionalised support to refugees.

5. Conclusions

This article has argued that the civil initiatives that arose in response to Europe's 2015 asylum crisis need to be understood in the context of broader political developments. In Belgium, two different crises arose in Flanders and in Brussels, which have been met with different forms of civil solidarity. In Flanders, a slow crisis unfolded, regarding local integration and housing. Crucial local opportunities to mobilise were created by the establishment of LAIs and emergency reception shelters across the region of Flanders. In response, civil initiatives arose to provide support to refugees throughout their asylum procedure. Internally, the Hospitable Network has built on the remnants of older civic organisations in Flanders' North-South movement, its faith-based and political pillars, and the NGOs supporting migrants in the 1990s and early 2000s. In line with this civic heritage, the Hospitable Network's member initiatives have tried to work structurally, rather than focusing on ad hoc assistance to individual refugees. While some of the challenges refugees faced were created by structural problems in the Belgian housing market and the system of accommodation for asylum seekers, these challenges were also generated—or exacerbated at the very least—by a series of neoliberal reforms in preceding years. As a result, local support services to immigrants had been both centralised and reformed, with a greater emphasis on immigrants' responsibilities. In that sense, the emergence of local civil initiatives attempting to include refugees more structurally seemed to fill a gap created by these neoliberal reforms. At the same time, however, this neoliberal outlook prevented them to institutionalise their services, as it meant that neither the Flemish nor the Federal government provided long-term support to the Hospitable Network and its member initiatives. As a result, the Flemish civil initiatives supporting refugees have remained a set of loosely connected fragments, each operating as a voluntary association in a distinct local environment.

The Citizen Platform, by contrast, found several opportunities to mobilise and partly professionalise their work in the specific urban context of Brussels. The presence, persecution and institutional exclusion of undocumented migrants created a recurring humanitarian crisis to which the Platform responded. To do so, they acquired structural support from several Brussels Municipalities and its Regional government. Lastly, the super-diverse, metropolitan nature of Brussels provided them with a continuously renewed pool of volunteers and coordinators coming from a variety of backgrounds. On the other hand, however, the Platform has faced increasing opposition from the Federal government, which not only stepped up its efforts to detain and deport undocumented migrants, but also tried to undermine citizens' attempts to support them, both legally and symbolically, by portraying the Platform as a radical movement balancing on the borders of legality.

So what do these two case studies tell us about the broader developments of civil initiatives for supporting refugees? On the one hand, these cases show us the significant impact of local circumstances. For both the Hospitable Network and the Citizen Platform, the POS provided by their respective municipal, regional and national governments have played a crucial role in their rise, their development, and the degree to which they institutionalise themselves. Furthermore, the social backgrounds of their leading volunteers have had a crucial impact on the strategies they use to work with state actors, the approach they develop in helping refugees, and how they organise themselves internally.

On the other hand, these case studies also point to two broader developments in refugee support in Europe. First, despite the persistence of national differences, in recent decades European integration policies have tended to converge to a neoliberal model. Migrants are being made responsible by rendering their so-

cial rights conditional upon their achievements (Joppke, 2007; Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010; Van Puymbroeck, Blondeel, & Vandevoordt, 2014), while state actors leave less room for (corporatist) cooperation with their civil counterparts. In regions such as Flanders, this has created a political environment that stimulates civil actors to take action in support of refugees, but which makes it harder for their work to become institutionalised. In this sense, eroding migrants' rights and fostering civil solidarity appear as two sides of the same coin. Second, in the last few years a burgeoning literature has emerged on "sanctuary cities" (Bauder, 2017) and "villes d'accueil" (Bontemps et al., 2018). Since urban governments are often confronted with the consequences of exclusionary national policies, they may tend to adopt more inclusive policies vis-à-vis migrants. From that perspective, the Citizen Platform can perhaps be understood as a rather unique illustration of this argument. Due to the high profile of the migrants' situation, the presence of a larger pool of potential volunteers, and a local government willing to support them, the Citizen Platform found itself in a climate that was favourable to the professionalisation of their services. In that sense a metropolis such as Brussels seems to act as a fruitful space for crafting solidarity.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Robin Vandevoordt is a cultural and political sociologist whose research interests are in forced migration, humanitarianism, civil solidarity, and European migration policies. He is currently an Early Career Fellow at Oxford University's Refugee Studies Centre, where he continues his ethnographic work with civil initiatives supporting refugees. He obtained his PhD in Sociology from the University of Antwerp (Belgium) and an MA in Modern Literature from the University of East Anglia (UK).

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Article

Taking Care of the Other: Visions of a Caring Integration in Female Refugee Support Work

Sophia Schmid

Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research, Humboldt University of Berlin, 10099 Berlin, Germany;
E-Mail: schmidso@hu-berlin.de

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Abstract
European societies have been significantly challenged recently by intensifying debates around migration and integration. In Germany, the controversy around refugees has put the question of how to negotiate cultural differences back on the agenda. This article argues that female refugee support work volunteers in Germany have developed a compelling approach to handling cultural diversity in emotional, social and cultural practices. Building on interviews with female volunteers, this article demonstrates that research subjects' interaction with refugees is guided by an 'ethics of care'. Care ethics is characterised by the recognition of interdependence and relationships, attention to the context and to the particular, blurring of the public and the private and orientation towards the needs of others. The research subjects show that care values, such as responsibility and attentiveness, can serve as an alternative framework to integration and to the negotiation of diversity in everyday encounters. Data from quantitative studies on refugee support work in Germany then reveals that female volunteers politicise their care work to respond to racism and right-wing xenophobia. Ultimately, a political ethics of care has the potential to structurally, politically and emotionally change established understandings of integration and the relations between host societies and immigrants.

Keywords
cultural difference; ethics of care; Germany; integration; refugees

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1. Introduction

In 2018 Germany's Minister of the Interior Horst Seehofer boldly declared "migration is the mother of all problems", causing an enormous stir among the German public. While right-wing and conservative opponents of immigration rejoiced, a union of the creative and cultural industries, migrant organisations and prominent politicians, even from Seehofer's own party, forcefully condemned the statement. This incident illustrated that in Germany, as in many other countries, heated debates on immigration and integration dominate the public discourse. The question of how to handle cultural differences remains a hotly debated issue that is still unresolved. This article enters the debate with a new perspective on the possibility of emotional acceptance of diversity. It argues that the feminist ethics of care provides a unique opportunity to render integration practices more compassionate, just and inclusive.

Developed in the 1980s, the ethics of care describes an alternative moral approach to traditional ethics that centres on relationships, responsibility and interdependence (Robinson, 2010). Scholars such as Joan Tronto (1993) and Selma Sevenhuijsen (1998) expanded its scope by outlining the implications of care for political and societal transformation. Others also demonstrated how care ethics can facilitate the relationship to other cultural groups, both at home and abroad (Held, 2005; Robinson, 1997; Scuzzarello, 2015; Sevenhuijsen, 1998). This article builds on these insights to demonstrate how

care ethics could structurally change political propositions on integration and the societal negotiation of cultural difference.

For this purpose, I define integration as a process of social, cultural, structural and emotional/identificational inclusion and recognition, which involves both immigrants and the host society (Foroutan & Canan, 2016; Heckmann, 2015). While acknowledging structural and systemic barriers to integration, this article mainly focuses on emotional conflicts resulting from cultural difference. Cultural difference here stands for the diversity of social groups' norms, values, worldviews, beliefs and the resulting behaviours and practices which form a shared and historical system of meaning (Parekh, 2000). Following Stuart Hall (1996), I understand culture as a complex, ambiguous and constantly shifting social construct intersected by various other social dimensions such as gender or class.

Care-oriented integration is based on context-dependent and respectful dialogue that truly includes all voices, especially those that have so far been excluded in public discourse. Care values such as attentiveness, responsibility and responsiveness help recognise each individual's specific needs and design sensitive and flexible integration policies. Social relations characterised by these values could evoke empathy, trust and solidarity between immigrants and the host society and thus contribute to social cohesion and harmonious intercultural relations. This article provides a practical and empirical example of what a care-oriented approach to integration might look like in practice through interviews with female volunteers in refugee support work.

After briefly outlining the current resentment of immigrants and cultural difference and why established concepts like multiculturalism fall short of providing a resolution, this article describes the central characteristics of the ethics of care. It then outlines a caring approach towards integration and cultural difference based on care-ethical principles in the political field. An empirical component, mainly analysing 22 qualitative interviews, follows which demonstrates how German female volunteers in refugee support work draw on the ethics of care to provide attentive and respectful care for refugees and interpret their voluntary care work as a political tool to achieve social change for more tolerance and openness towards refugees. Concluding this article is a discussion that consolidates the idea of 'caring integration' and considers various suggestions for policy change in current integration politics.

2. The Debate on Cultural Difference and Refugees

All over the world, immigration seems to be the issue of the hour. Many major political decisions in the last years, such as the election of Donald Trump for US president or the decision of the UK to leave the European Union, were substantially driven by concerns and fears about immigration. Right-wing populists in particular tried to exploit the so-called 'refugee crisis' to gain electoral success.

However, in Germany, by contrast, the general public and the media seemed at first to be exceptionally open-minded towards refugees. This 'welcome culture' was particularly visible through the creation of new organisations and spontaneous initiatives supporting asylum seekers (for a comprehensive overview see Hamann & Karakayali, 2016). As Karakayali (2018) maintained, the 'crisis' presented an opportunity for a large number of Germans to engage with migration first-hand. Indeed, Karakayali and Kleist (2016) revealed that the refugee support movement encompasses a broad cross-section of German society, including a large number of women and migrants. It also includes volunteers of all ages in urban and rural locations. Refugee support work not only represented a humanitarian care effort, it also provided a platform for often implicit political engagement (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017), as this article demonstrates. In contrast to the widespread celebration of this unprecedented effort to help refugees, some critical voices pointed to unequal power imbalances upholding gendered and racialised colonial stereotypes, discourses of 'deservingness' and the paternalism often implicated in refugee support work (Braun, 2017; Holmes & Castañeda, 2016). Thus, refugee support work in Germany remains a complex and contradictory phenomenon, themes to which this article will add another perspective.

After an initial welcoming attitude to refugees in Germany, the discourse soon shifted to increasingly depict refugees as problems, threats and criminals (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). Consequently, the prevailing feeling about immigration currently seems to be one of crisis (Dines, Montagna, & Vacchelli, 2018). Building on longstanding resentment of cultural and racial differences, migrants and refugees are constructed as generalised threats to national security and culture. In this process, they become the principal targets for the myriad anxieties and rising discontent with politics in general (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016). In Germany, this discourse has a particular appeal, as up until 2001, the country refused to accept realities of immigration. Germans have long constructed their national identity as ethnically and racially exclusive and thereby set apart migrant and particularly Muslim communities as 'other' (Foroutan & Canan, 2016). In 2015, the influx of refugees led to a re-emphasis of this homogenous character of national belonging.

Moreover, as anti-immigration campaigns often include considerable backlash against multiculturalism and its proponents, the long-time dominant political frame for cultural diversity can be understood to be coming under fire too. Under the catchword of multiculturalism, rejection of difference as 'culture' has found its place where outward references to 'race' have become socially unacceptable (Lentin & Titley, 2012). Originally, the concept of multiculturalism emerged as a re-

action to minority groups' increasing demands for public recognition in Western societies—seeking to politically, socially and legally accommodate national and ethnic identities within liberal democracies (Kymlicka, 1995; Modood, 2007). Resting on the basis of universal equality, this 'politics of difference' still respects the plurality of unique identities and cultural diversity (Modood, 2007; Parekh, 2000; Taylor, 1994).

Leaving aside the populist criticism of multiculturalism, the academic critique above all questions multiculturalism's rigid, homogeneous and bounded identity categories (Lyshaug, 2004). A variety of scholars have argued that multiculturalism risks neglecting internal variations in continually contested, fluid ethnic identities, and the complex power relations between and within groups (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992; Hall, 1996; Scuzzarello, 2015). Consequently, a number of alternatives and further developments of multiculturalism have been proposed. This article aims to add the additional perspective of caring integration to academic discourses on multiculturalism. Some scholars of multiculturalism advanced 'interculturalism', which centres on intercultural dialogue and interaction to resolve multicultural conflicts (Meer & Modood, 2012). As I will demonstrate, interculturalism echoes many central ideas of the ethics of care.

Particularly pertinent for care-ethical approaches to culture is feminist literature on multiculturalism. While many feminists do support multiculturalism's demand for the recognition of social groups to address structural inequalities (Young, 1990), they point towards multiculturalism's tendency to leave women vulnerable and unprotected when uncritically defending controversial practices of minority cultures (Okin, 1999). Some even claim that the multiculturalist celebration of diversity is a fantasy that obscures the real and systemic experience of racism (Ahmed, 2008). On a theoretical level, some feminists argue that more flexible, shifting and intersecting conceptualisations of identities illuminate the complex power dynamics between different categories of oppression such as race, class and gender (Anthias, 2002; Lyshaug, 2004). Interestingly, several care theorists draw on these scholars, particularly Iris Marion Young's work, to argue for the recognition of plurality inherent in care ethics and for a more complex model of responsibility (Conradi & Heier, 2014; Sevenhuijsen, 1998; Tronto, 2013).

As will be demonstrated, the ethics of care also seeks to empower those currently excluded by uncovering the power relations that construct them as subordinate. Based on sensitive dialogue, the ethics of care calls for the genuine consideration of each individual's specific needs and contexts, thus concurring with the demand advanced by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) and others to move beyond rigid and homogeneous assumptions of group needs. To conclude, this article suggests that the ethics of care offers a persuasive, yet relatively unexplored further perspective on new strategies facilitating the integration of immigrants.

3. The Ethics of Care as a Key to Integration

3.1. The Care-Ethical Perspective

Care as a disposition or ethical value is intimately linked to the understanding of care as a practice. While there is no general agreement on the definition of care, Fisher and Tronto's (1990) broad conceptualisation constitutes a popular foundation. They define care as:

> A species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web. (Fisher & Tronto, 1990, p. 40)

Accordingly, care is a deeply human process based on interdependence and relationality that takes place in public and private. Tronto (1993) further divided the process of care into four phases: caring about (recognising the existence of a need), taking care of (assuming responsibility for this need), care-giving (meeting the need) and care-receiving (the response of the object of care).

The ethics of care, then, concentrates on the moral dimension emerging from caring relationships among individuals (Robinson, 1997). In the wake of second-wave feminism, Carol Gilligan (1982) first popularised care ethics when researching the ethical contemplations of children. Whereas boys drew on an 'ethics of justice' based on fairness, autonomy and rationality, for girls, relationships, empathy, concrete context and responsibility played a crucial role in their moral judgement—what Gilligan termed an 'ethics of care'. While Gilligan's experiments could not always be replicated (Engster, 2007; Skoe, Cumberland, Eisenberg, Hansen, & Perry, 2002), this 'first generation' of care ethicists was most profoundly criticised for reifying sexist gender stereotypes that confine women to the private sphere and the household (Hankivsky, 2014; Tronto, 1993). Gilligan (2011, p. 22) later addressed this criticism, however, when pointing out that "within a *patriarchal* framework, care is a feminine ethic. Within a *democratic* framework, care is a human ethic".

Consequently, the ethics of care developed into a multidisciplinary strand of feminist research expanding into a broad range of disciplines (Klaver, van Elst, & Baart, 2014). Most conceptions of care ethics today have the following characteristics in common: the central importance of relationships, recognising the context and particularism, transcending the private sphere into the political, appreciating emotions as moral tools, and grounding ethics in the empirical practice of care (Engster & Hamington, 2015; Klaver et al., 2014). Following the latter principle, Tronto (1993) deduced four fundamental ethical elements corresponding to the above-mentioned phases of care: attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness. Other care ethicists have also

emphasized the values of trust (Held, 2015), recognizing different points of view, empathy and compassion (Sevenhuijsen, 1998), and respect (Engster, 2007).

3.2. Envisioning Care-Oriented Integration

To utilise care-ethical insights for integration, this article mainly draws on the political re-orientation of feminist care ethicists of the second generation (Hankivsky, 2014), who aim at "developing a new political theory that can usefully guide analysis and action under contemporary conditions…[in an] increasingly interrelated and networked society" (Engster & Hamington, 2015, p. 7).

The political ethics of care was pioneered by Joan Tronto (1993), who argued that care has the potential to transform society and public life and represents a crucial element of democracy (Conradi & Heier, 2014). She added a fifth phase of care called 'caring with' that perceives citizens as interdependent and in need of care. Thus, 'caring with' shifts the main goal of politics "to ensure that all of the members of the society can live as well as possible by making the society as democratic as possible" (Tronto, 2013, p. 30). Democratic caring is based on the values plurality, communication, trust and respect, and solidarity. Responsibility for democratic care expands and includes collective action as well (Conradi & Heier, 2014).

Following Tronto, I maintain that care as a political theory needs to additionally inform ideas and practices of integration. Political care ethics is pivotal in today's superdiverse democracies faced with the challenge of cultural difference. Indeed, Engster (2007, p. 4) observed:

> Care theorists have also thus far failed to address adequately the challenge of multiculturalism. Since most societies today are populated by individuals with diverse cultural and religious views, it is important to situate care ethics in relation to these diverse worldviews.

The following pages aim to contribute to closing this literature gap.

To begin, care values are particularly well equipped in dealing with diversity and difference. In Sevenhuijsen's (1998) model of care-oriented citizenship, processes of public deliberation respect each person's individual view and take into account specific contexts. She argued that care ethics avoids the problem of citizens having to conform to an unrealistic 'sameness', or a shared identity. Instead, it positively values difference and relations to others, in ways similar to multicultural discourse. This is particularly important for those most obviously different to mainstream society: immigrants and refugees. Sensitivity to both culturally specific caretaking practices and needs, and non-intervention if a basic standard of caring is met, characterise care in a complex, multicultural social context (Clark Miller, 2010; Engster, 2007). Attentive dialogue and recognition of interdependence would allow for more inclusive, flexible, decentralised and responsive policies that meet the needs and perspectives of different individuals, supporting each citizen to live in society as well as possible (Engster, 2007; Sevenhuijsen, 2000).

By recognising today's complex global relationality, the ethics of care sheds light on and aims to reduce power imbalances. This is mainly done by empowering those without a voice and constructed as dependent on the global North (Robinson, 2010). By ideally listening to and taking seriously all voices, caring integration could potentially circumvent the ethnocentrism and paternalism that historically characterised Western attitudes towards other cultures (Held, 2005; Narayan, 1995). A caring integration that acknowledges racial and gendered inequalities hence involves formerly excluded actors in the public discourse and the shaping of public institutions (Conradi & Heier, 2014). To avoid unequal power relations, Clark Miller (2010) further contended that feminist care ethics does not solely prioritise meeting needs, but more importantly seeks to restore agency so that individuals can care for themselves. As opposed to multiculturalism, "care theory privileges not only the generic features of caring over cultural values, but also the care of individuals over group values and goals" (Engster, 2007, p. 99). By undermining binary constructions and being sensitive to intersecting positionalities, caring integration advances multiculturalism's exclusive focus on ethnicity to a more particularised perspective including categories such as age, gender or class (Hankivsky, 2014; Sevenhuijsen, 1998).

According to Sevenhuijsen (1998, p. 15), a caring society is "capable of dealing with the radical alterity of human subjects, through recognizing their individuality and diversity while at the same time conceiving of them as equals". The latter becomes particularly important when confronting defenders of a 'shared identity', supposedly reducing antagonism by the dominant group. In contrast, care-ethical integration builds on civic caring virtues as a basis of societal interaction and cultivates emotional connection through empathy and trust towards those perceived as culturally different (Held, 2005). Care ethics transcends the personal or national frame, as the shared experience of being cared for has the potential to motivate even distant people to trust and respect each other. More explicitly, Clark Miller (2010) asserted that as fundamentally interdependent beings, we have a moral duty to care for each other individually, but also globally. This duty leads to caring relations within and between societies that encourage the solidarity underpinning welfare states and democratic institutions (Held, 2005). A caring global civil society rests on relationships between concrete individuals and attentiveness towards their real needs and replaces an abstract, impersonal and often unattractive cosmopolitanism (Robinson, 1997).

Engster (2007) further demonstrated how mutual dependency and the common experience of care provide a basis for intercultural dialogue and mutual obligation. As care ethics judges all cultural practices against the universal standard of good care, caring integration is partic-

ularly well suited to discuss anti-democratic practices or controversial issues, such as the right to circumcision or wearing a headscarf. As long as they do not impede the provision of minimally adequate care, individuals should be free to keep their cultural practices.

The ethics of care has a number of merits compared to multiculturalism and interculturalism. Notably, Scuzzarello (2015, p. 73) outlined a 'caring multiculturalism' that "sees individual and collective identities as relational, processual, negotiated and political, and…analyses and attempts to change the gendered power asymmetries embedded in intra- and intergroup relations". Thus, caring multiculturalism replaces traditional multiculturalism's rigid, unidimensional understanding of group characteristics and neglect of power relations. As this article also argues, Scuzzarello (2015) advocated for context-sensitive, fully inclusive multicultural policies, informed by care values and based on the real needs of those affected. Moreover, Zembylas and Bozalek (2011) indicated that care ethics has much in common with interculturalism as both emphasise dialogue and relationships, but care ethics goes even further by taking into account power relations, mutual dependence, vulnerability and larger-scale structural inequalities. Furthermore, interculturalism still relies on culture as its main variable of analysis, as the name already suggests. An intersectional care focus brings to the forefront interacting social positionalities as well (Hankivsky, 2014).

While Scuzzarello, Zembylas and Bozalek have proposed ways to improve multiculturalism from a caring perspective, they remained on a fairly abstract level and thus failed to anchor theory in caring practices, a crucial element of the ethics of care. This article thus advances the theory of caring multiculturalism and integration by demonstrating what they could look like in practice. The following section traces how the ethics of care informs and influences relationships between the majority group and minority cultures in refugee support work.

4. Methodology

The following insights draw on 22 semi-structured face-to-face interviews with female refugee support work volunteers in four different locations in Germany—two bigger cities (Berlin, Hamburg) and two smaller towns. As attitudes towards refugees often seem more hostile in East Germany (Karakayali & Kleist, 2016), one of these towns is located in West Germany and one in East Germany. The fieldwork took place between May and July 2018. The volunteers, aged between 20 and 70, came from various occupational positions (e.g., students, working professionals, pensioners). The research subjects were part of a variety of refugee support organisations, ranging from self-organised initiatives set up spontaneously in-or-after the summer of 2015, to already established church- or school-based organisations that strengthened their existing efforts on refugee support work. Access to these research subjects was often gained through these organisations, with a coordinator or spokesperson forwarding my request and organising interviews, or through personally organised contacts. In a detailed initial letter, I highlighted my background and institutional connection, the aims of the research, the content of the interviews and ethical assurances, such as anonymity and data protection. Together with informed consent given prior to the interviews, this instruction contributed to the ethical soundness of the research. I was also open to answering any additional questions the participants might have, which a number of women made use of.

On average, the interviews lasted for roughly one hour, were conducted in German and concentrated on motivations to volunteer and prior expectations, descriptions of the voluntary work (including challenges or rewards), and the impact of the voluntary work on the women. Finally, topics such as integration, the current right-wing discourse or gender issues allowed for a more abstract, moral reflection. To avoid the reification of gender stereotypes, however, the latter were kept to a minimum and often emerged out of the participants' own accounts. Nevertheless, I followed Lofland's (1971) relatively open and flexible method of 'guided conversations' to more specifically focus on certain aspects when relevant or skip or change the order of the questions depending on the situation. While the research subjects were aware of the general objective of the study, researching volunteers' relations with refugees and their individual approach to refugee support work, I did not specify my theoretical approach of the ethics of care, as I both aimed to elicit unbiased, general and genuine responses and only developed the theoretical framework successively in a mix of inductive and deductive analysis. With consent, all interviews except one were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were analysed successively with a detailed code frame based on the theoretical review that encompassed care values, care-ethical principles and Tronto's five phases of caring. To ensure the privacy and safety of the participants, this article omits names and other identifying information. All quotations have been translated from German into English by the author.

Before demonstrating how care-ethical values guide the relationship between female volunteers and refugees, it is crucial to point out that the following section only highlights instances where the volunteers succeeded in adopting a caring approach. While I use those as best practice examples for a model of caring integration, in my fieldwork I observed several behaviours and statements that directly contradicted the ethics of care that I analysed separately. Moreover, I cannot be certain whether the volunteers truly acted according to their beliefs and declarations in the interviews.

5. Traces of the Ethics of Care in Refugee Support Work

First and foremost, the interviews revealed that female volunteers centrally build on relationships, the funda-

mental basis of the ethics of care. Many activities involved spending considerable time with refugees in sometimes relatively intimate settings. This includes, for example, accompanying refugees to doctor's appointments or court hearings, or tutoring children after school. As a result, the volunteers invariably developed close relationships and friendships with particular refugees, often highlighting the refugees' supposed emphasis on personal relationship as a cultural difference they admire most. They occasionally evoked family metaphors, for example in the sense of adopting refugees into the family and being seen as a part of the refugees' families:

> You belong to the family, they don't do things halfway. They don't have this American mentality, come visit us some time. Rather, they either immediately reject you.…Or they accept the help but then you're a family member, forever and ever.

Or as another volunteer remarked:

> They are very happy that I visit them at home. That is a kind of friendship, I would say. Then you talk, the kids, we tell each other our worries…I get along very well especially with the mothers, because I am also a mother myself.

This close relationality had a number of effects, such as developing trust, recognising similar worries and caring needs, and giving rise to a vigorous solidarity that led some volunteers to passionately fight to defend refugees in court or to public authorities. Consequently, when the conversation turned to values they follow in their voluntary work, the volunteers experienced fundamental empathy and obligation towards others. The friendships the volunteers developed increased this empathy-informed obligation and often further strengthened their motivation. When asked whether she ever considered quitting, one volunteer responded:

> Somehow that wasn't an option. I have the feeling, once you got to know these people and when you understood the kind of situation they are in.…I was so much in this situation and somehow my whole life revolved around it.

The following selection of Tronto's, Sevenhuijsen's and Engster's care values played the most significant role in female refugee support work: attentiveness, responsibility, empathy, respecting different perspectives and respect. Attentiveness to the context and situation of each person in their particularity represents a central characteristic of caring integration. Similarly, instead of assuming a one-size-fits-all approach, the volunteers strived to understand the refugees' specific needs and to provide them with a sensitive and genuine solution. One participant, for example, recounted an instance where female volunteers collected cosmetics and similar feminine items overlooked by other volunteers as "you actually don't need them". They then brought this "women's box" of luxury items to the refugee shelter for female refugees. Another volunteer created a student research project with the aim of identifying the refugees' real needs, which resulted in the idea of an app that brought people together based on shared interests. Sometimes, when the women felt that services were not attentive enough towards the refugees' actual needs, they even stood up against the authorities or shelter operators.

Another value that played a central role in the women's voluntary work is responsibility. The importance of responsibility stood out most when the research subjects tried to explain their motivation to become involved in refugee support work. Repeatedly, they struggled to provide concrete answers and claimed that they just had to, that they saw an appeal for help or that the sheer presence of the refugees was enough for them to assume responsibility without many other considerations. One volunteer summed this up as follows:

> Whenever people and their social circumstances are involved, regardless of their background, I feel addressed. It was a very intense situation, an unexpected situation. You could almost say, actually, it was a crisis situation. And the first thing I thought of was, you have to do something. Many people just talked about it. But I had the feeling that you also really have to practically do something.

More specifically, some volunteers felt that their comparative wealth and privilege created a moral obligation to help those that are less well-off. This responsibility often sprung from the perception of shared humanity or humanitarian values connected to Sevenhuijsen's (1998) values of empathy and compassion. Some volunteers, for instance, pointed out that they did not specifically choose to help refugees, but saw them as people that needed support in general and would have been equally willing to volunteer for other groups in need. Consequently, volunteers highlighted the importance of providing universal care while respecting different perspectives (Sevenhuijsen, 1998; Tronto, 2013):

> Because I consider life very valuable, I find that everyone should have the right to lead a happy life. And what that looks like for one or another, everyone has to define that for themselves. But I think we have, life is a gift we have to be thankful for.…That's something that I want to achieve in my life, this right to freedom, to peace, to be accepted, to a home. Maybe also a new home. And protection.

Turning to the power relations inherent in any caring situation, a remarkable number of volunteers attached vital importance to treating the refugees respectfully—a value highlighted by Engster (2007) and Tronto (2013)—as adults and 'on an equal footing'. This crucially in-

volved attentive listening, perceiving them not primarily as refugees but as human beings, and appreciating different cultures and values. Many considered experiencing diverse perspectives a valuable reward of their voluntary work and subsequently started to question their own world-view and habits as well (see Sevenhuijsen, 1998).

This facet of caring refugee support work presents a suitable opportunity to further delve into the effectiveness of the care-ethical approach in conflictual intercultural situations, an aspect this article so far left aside. A very common aspect arising in almost all interviews was the experience of disappointment, anger or bewilderment when refugees did not show gratitude, did not conform to expected behaviours in their 'best interest' or even rejected the help of volunteers. Although these incidents often deeply affected the volunteers, many managed to overcome their hurt feelings and continue to help effectively by reminding themselves of their commitment to respect the refugees' individual standpoints and culture, and to be attentive to their complex and specific needs that are often obscured for those not similarly affected. Moreover, a care-ethical emphasis of relationships helped volunteers negotiate these situations when they sought talks with the other party or other volunteers. One volunteer recounted a fairly typical experience of helping to set up a flat for a refugee family. After she organised a number of essentials, such as mattresses for free, the family showed her a large flatscreen TV that they had just bought. Although the woman was deeply baffled and had to leave immediately, she later reflected the situation as follows:

> My priorities don't always have to be the priorities of other people, you shouldn't mix that up. I don't have to make others happy the way I am happy. There are so many differences between people....And why should I interfere? I would perceive this as too arrogant myself....But I was surprised, if I'm being honest, because I didn't consider myself so intolerant. These are moments when you question yourself.

To mitigate these power hierarchies and misunderstandings, many volunteers tried to involve the refugees as much as possible. Some saw their primary goal in capacity building and giving refugees agency, so that ultimately, they could take matters into their own hands and were not dependant on help any more. This constitutes a crucial requirement of both integration theory and care ethics.

Still, it is important to note that the immense power differentials in refugee support work continue to have an effect due to the volunteers' positionality as white majority group members. They possess structural advantages despite any potential efforts to counteract these or feeling threatened themselves. Here, Hankivsky's (2014) intersectional ethics of care might shed a light on the complex interactions between different oppressive power structures, in this case, particularly the influence of race on gender relations that the ethics of care has often disregarded. For example, this intersection manifested in some volunteers' often unfounded fear of sexual assault by male refugees or their intentions to 'emancipate' female refugees they constructed as oppressed, which both point to ethnosexual and orientalist power mechanisms of race and gender (Dietze, 2017).

6. Potential for Structural and Political Change

The political strand of the ethics of care radically challenges the boundary between the public and private to achieve more fundamental structural and political transformation. This article argues that refugee support care work has political potential as well. Apart from providing efficient, sensitive care for those culturally different, volunteers also use their care work as an alternative means of political participation and a tool for expressing their political beliefs. One young volunteer was of the opinion:

> I don't think there's anyone who volunteers that doesn't also fundamentally have a political opinion on this....I do believe that it is a kind of statement to say, I play my part in helping here.

Ultimately, to a certain degree, the volunteers provide hints of how the idea of caring integration in their concrete work could also advance political approaches to refugees and immigrants in general. Interestingly, this political orientation has a strong gender component. This becomes apparent in the analysis of two quantitative surveys with German refugee support work volunteers from 2015 and 2016 with a total of 3,577 respondents that were contacted through German umbrella organisations in the field, thus ensuring limited sample selection bias. The results show that female volunteers are statistically significantly more likely to agree that through their voluntary work, they want to "take a stand against racism" (85% of female volunteers fully agree versus 76% of males) and "show that, besides right-wing populism and violence, a welcome culture also exists/acting against right-wing mobilisation in my city/neighbourhood" (77% of female volunteers fully agree versus 68% of males).

The qualitative interviews illuminate the concrete steps the volunteers took when aiming to establish caring integration approaches in their social environment more broadly. Being frustrated with how the refugee issue is currently handled politically, both on a local and national level, research subjects interpreted refugee support work as a particularly practice- and context-driven alternative to current policies and societal attitudes. As an illustration of alternative politics, some volunteers expressed consternation at the authorities' decisions on deportation. Instead of taking a refugees' whole situation into account, as the ethics of care would demand, research subjects perceived authorities as basing decisions on insensitive and highly generalised assumptions. Fear-

ing the deportation of her Gambian charges, one volunteer proposed:

> I understand that long-term, Gambians actually don't have a right to asylum. The dictatorship is officially abolished. Purely based on the law, I understand that they don't have a right to stay. But we need craftsmen, Germany too….They would only need to ask different independent people. I don't know how to organise this, but there should be a system. They should ask three people of AK Asyl [the refugee support initiative], they should ask three people from the town administration, they should ask the lady from the administrative district office, they should ask the lady from the AWO [another welfare institution]. And obtain the information: who is at school, who works, who makes an effort, who integrates themselves.

Another strategy directed at changing social attitudes toward more tolerance consisted of activities in public or hostile environments where volunteers consciously presented themselves openly with refugees. These activities ranged from taking refugees to public recreation spaces, such as to a lake or to a Christmas market, to organising festivals or private parties where refugees were invited in particular. The volunteers hoped that thereby, they could show others who are not already open to other cultures that refugees pose no threat and in fact feel and act similarly, as well as providing an example themselves on how to deal with refugees. Especially in the small towns, the volunteers occasionally risked antagonism and personal animosity when directly confronting friends and family, but they felt they had an obligation to strengthen welcoming attitudes on a larger scale. Many women interviewed considered this direct contact and concrete relationships as the best measure to truly understand other cultures. In their opinion, this could then lead to a more peaceful and respectful social environment and reduce the current culture of hostility. Similarly to the quantitative findings, for some women, refugee support work also functioned as a communal symbol expressing that refugees are welcome, and that Germany has a friendly, open and compassionate side as well.

Thus, in line with Tronto's case for democratic caring, the volunteers interpreted their care work as an opportunity for deeper cultural and political change in Germany towards a more respectful and profound recognition of other cultural groups. While some volunteers interviewed had the feeling that they could, from the ground up, influence how some people in their environment thought about other cultures, others were rather pessimistic when faced with Germany's growing xenophobia. It remains to be seen whether caring refugee support work can lead to a long-term structural transformation of Germany's approach towards refugees, immigrants, and those perceived as 'other' in general. These topics, and others, are considered in the following section which analyses the consequences of a care-ethical approach to integration policies on a macro-level.

7. Discussion

On the basis of a political and multicultural ethics of care, and of the practice of care in German refugee support work, this article demonstrates how care ethics can enhance approaches to integration and cultural difference. The female volunteers interviewed showed how qualities such as respectful listening, taking into account the context and particular case, and assuming responsibility in concrete personal relationships, contribute to productive and amicable intercultural relations within a diverse society. Some of the volunteers related their care work to the public arena, hoping to achieve political and societal change as well. Hence, Tronto's (2013) conviction that care needs to become the centre of democratic politics also extends to contested social issues, such as integration. Basing social relations, citizenship practices and policies on care-ethical values has the potential to make political structures and the public sphere more inclusive both for immigrants and for other disenfranchised groups. Accordingly, Virginia Held (2015, p. 29) maintained that a global ethics of care "can contribute greatly to social change, to sensitivity toward and understanding of and willingness to take account of unfamiliar others and distant persons". In the long run, the ethics of care may provide a more effective framework for negotiating difference, cultural or otherwise, on a national and global level than current multicultural policies.

To conclude, I want to outline some potential implications for future research and political practice. This article substantiates care ethics' conflictive tension between demanding that all voices be heard but then only investigating and highlighting certain actors, mostly care givers, with a focus on Western practices (Lloyd, 2000; Narayan, 1995). Together with care's inherent danger of unequal power relations and paternalism (Williams, 2001), particularly in refugee support work, additional work on the perspective of refugees is urgently needed to do justice to the promise of a truly caring integration. This is critical towards illuminating the ambiguities, interrelations and conflicts that always accompany social negotiations from a feminist perspective. Additionally, this study purposely focused only on female volunteers and their specific approach to refugee support work. Thus, it inevitably relies on certain gender constructions that the ethics of care is based on. Studies on non-binary caring practices and ethics are sparse (Hines, 2007) and future research should challenge the gender stereotypes inherent in this approach.

As Scuzzarello (2015) and Zembylas and Bozalek (2011) suggested, multiculturalism and interculturalism could be re-examined to include more sensitivity to intergroup difference and power relations, as well as grounding theoretical considerations in the real-life practice of those affected. Turning to political and structural conse-

quences of a caring integration, first and foremost, all voices need to become part of the political and public discourse. Apart from relying on experts and leaders of migrant community organisations, policymakers should make more of an effort to seek out the opinion of those not organised in any official institution or potentially silenced in the existing structures. This includes getting input from migrant women, queer people and children. Summits like the regularly occurring Islam conference in Germany can not only invite leading Islamic unions and prominent individuals, as it has often done in the past, but also a more diverse array of Muslims. Structurally, more low-threshold meeting spaces for policymakers, but more importantly ordinary citizens, should be created to develop personal relationships with immigrants and refugees.

To a certain degree, in the last years a number of civil-society initiatives aiming to connect mainstream society with newcomers have already emerged, particularly in refugee support work. As the participants of this study reported, however, these initiatives usually only reach those already interested in and open to different cultures and do not extend into the social spheres where they are needed most. In personal interactions, those not yet open to other cultures could learn to respect different customs, as long as they do not impede on the provision of adequate care, through cultivating empathic connections. Regional governments in particular are thus called upon to create new local gathering structures and to ensure sufficient funding for broader outreach campaigns.

Focusing on the group that receives most public attention, Foroutan and Canan (2016) showed that the German public consistently questions Muslim religious rights and thus denies Muslim citizens their due recognition. As demonstrated in this article, caring integration could shift the discourse to an appreciation of culturally and religiously different caretaking practices, while at the same time safeguarding good care for vulnerable individuals within ethnic groups. Moreover, similarly to the way right-wing politicians and media induced a fundamentally anti-immigration and nationalist dominant stance since 2015, the German discourse could be shifted back to a more humane, caring and respectful mindset. Politicians, educational establishments and media outlets could introduce more solidarity and empathy based on care practices into public discourse by setting an example in formal and informal communications.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Sophia Schmid is a PhD candidate in Political Science at the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research (BIM) at Humboldt University of Berlin in Germany. She completed a Master of Science in Culture and Society at the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2014. Using an interdisciplinary approach, she combines sociology, postcolonial, feminist and cultural studies and social psychology. Her research interests include negotiations of diversity and difference, the construction of shared and exclusive identities and the nexus between gender, migration and refugees.

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Article

Buddy Schemes between Refugees and Volunteers in Germany: Transformative Potential in an Unequal Relationship?

Inka Stock

Department of Sociology, Bielefeld University, 33615 Bielefeld, Germany; E-Mail: inka.stock@uni-bielefeld.de

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Abstract
Since 2016, many German citizens have participated in so-called 'buddy schemes' in which volunteers provide personalised support to refugees to help them build their new lives in Germany. These relationships are characterised by ethnic, gender, and age differences between the two parties. This article looks at buddy schemes from the perspective of both volunteers and refugees and investigates whether their relationships open up spaces for transformative citizenship practices, or rather reinforce exclusionary discourses. Drawing on feminist theories of care, the article describes how volunteers and refugees attach meaning to their activities and roles in the relationship. On the one hand, values attached to caring relationships, such as emotional closeness, trust, and respect, contribute to migrants' heightened sense of self-esteem and autonomy and foster volunteers' sense of responsibility for fighting against inequality. On the other hand, both parties enter into particular logics of care that potentially reinforce power hierarchies between them. These ambiguous dynamics influence the possibility of transformative citizenship practices on both sides. While some volunteers and refugees develop and take a critical stance on restrictive migration policies in their relationships with others, others reinforce their exclusionist viewpoints on who deserves to be helped and by whom.

Keywords
buddy schemes; citizenship; gender; migration; refugees; volunteering

Issue
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1. Introduction

Since the increased refugee influx in Germany in 2015, many volunteers all over the country have actively sought to facilitate refugees' starting a new life in Germany, marking what has been subsequently termed a veritable 'dispositif of helping' (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017). Others went so far as to talk about a new movement of volunteering for refugees (Karakayali & Kleist, 2016). In the beginning, most volunteers were supporting state-run temporary shelters by providing short-term relief assistance in a situation that was depicted as an emergency situation by both governmental institutions and the media alike (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017; Karakayali & Kleist, 2016). From 2016 onwards, administrative settlement processes became swifter and more institutionalised. While many asylum seekers were still waiting for decisions on their right to stay in the country, they slowly began to move from communal shelters into independent accommodations. Around this time, volunteer buddy schemes started to gain popularity among volunteers, city councils, and civil society organisations who argued that they were a useful tool to move towards longer-term support for migrants' successful social and economic integration into German society (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend [BMFSJ], 2019). In the buddy schemes, German volunteers provide personalised support to one or several newly arrived refugees. The buddy schemes build on the assumption that because of their formalised citizenship, resident volunteers have privileged access to the relevant cultural, economic, or social capital needed

to facilitate migrants' integration into society (Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband e.V. [AWO], 2016). The activities volunteers engage in within the buddy-schemes are varied and involve administrative, social, and emotional support. They are not focused only on one project, institution, or activity. Some volunteers engage in formalised partnerships with refugees, which are officialised by written agreements with non-governmental organisations. The great majority, however, maintains relationships that are more informal in nature. Thus, what distinguishes buddy schemes from other voluntary activities in refugee aid are the particularly intimate and long-term relationships between volunteers and refugees on which they are often based and the very informal, non-institutionalised context in which they evolve (Cantat & Feischmidt, 2019). In this sense, the buddy schemes represent a move away from a humanitarian imperative of helping in times of conceived crisis towards a more personalised form of long-term informal social support between individuals who choose to care for each other's needs outside of organised public structures within the private realm. In this sense, voluntary buddy schemes are similar to informal caring relationships which are often found among family members or friends.

The intimate caring relationships that characterise buddy schemes may well be interpreted as a rebellious practice of non-reciprocal and disinterested service to the 'Other' (Van Dyk, Dowling, & Haubner, 2016). They are noteworthy practices of a certain kind of civil disobedience in the cases in which volunteers support refugees who are threatened with deportation or who are discriminated against. At this point, it is important to recognise that since 2016, the buddy schemes have been operating in times in which migration policies in Germany have seen wide-reaching changes, with the overall aim of reducing refugee arrivals (Hess et al., 2016). As a result of these legislative changes, many of the volunteers active in buddy schemes are now accompanying refugees who are threatened with deportation or face severe restrictions through their settlement conditions. At the same time, however, volunteers may reinforce highly gendered and hierarchic relationships of dependence between Germans and foreigners instead of contributing to refugees' increased autonomy and participation in society. This is because buddy schemes are built on unequal power relations between 'helpers' and those individuals who are to be 'helped' which is -not least from a postcolonial perspective- paradigmatic of a wide range of humanitarian and aid relationships in development, migrant and social work contexts all over the globe, which have been criticised for their victimising effects (Cantat & Feischmidt, 2019; Cook, 2007; Schott-Leser, 2018).

The above-mentioned political significance of these emotionally and morally charged relationships is easily overlooked in a liberal world in which societal and even social relations are often understood as regulated and negotiated through contractual principles which are adhered to by rational and autonomous individuals (O'Connell Davidson, 2005). Furthermore, buddy schemes appear to continue to promote a 'myth of apolitical volunteering' (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017) because, through some of their practices, they seem to locate social welfare provision for asylum seekers permanently outside the state's responsibility.

In light of these contradictory perspectives on volunteering and its effects on migration politics, this article focuses on the relationship between volunteers and refugees in buddy schemes. In particular, the article asks: Have buddy schemes in Germany turned volunteers into civil society activists in the fight for migrants' rights? Do buddy schemes help increase migrants' and asylum seekers' possibilities of making autonomous decisions and becoming their own rights advocates? Drawing on feminist theories of care and Isin's and Nielsen's (2008) theory on 'acts of citizenship', I argue that volunteers and refugees develop specific logics of care which are grounded in their different gender, age, and class positions. By relating their personal experiences of mutual care with gender, class, and age positions, volunteers and migrants link individual action to structural constraints for the political transformation of prevalent migration regimes. The first section of the article conceptualises buddy schemes through theories of care as both representative of particular sets of practices and moral values. In the following section, I describe the nature of the unequal relationships between buddies and how they experience these. I continue by analysing the consequences of gendered, classed, and ethnicised differences for their caring practices and their understanding of justice and migration policy. I conclude that buddy schemes have the potential to both reinforce and break down differences between volunteers and refugees which arise out of the care logics that guide their relationships in different contexts.

2. Methods

The article is based on interview material collected in the context of a small research project on civil society activism for refugees in the city of Bielefeld, employing a focused ethnographic research methodology (Knoblauch, 2005). I started in 2016 by mapping different institutions and organisations active in civil society support for migrants in Bielefeld through documentary analysis and observation. In addition, eight managers (project coordinators in organisations, the city council, and the church), as well as 12 volunteers active in humanitarian shelters, were interviewed in order to investigate the structures of volunteer support in the city (Stock, 2017). Based on the findings, the subsequent data collection focused more prominently on the nature of buddy schemes. I was interested in the subjective views on volunteer support of both implicated parties- refugees and volunteers, in order to investigate the effect of caring practices for acts of citizenship on both sides of the relationship. Thus, in 2017, I participated in several training events organised for and by volunteers involved in buddy schemes in the city.

Through contacts with both volunteers and associations, a female research assistant and I were able to select and interview a total of six buddy pairs. This resulted in a total of 12 interviews: six volunteers and six asylum seekers. The interviews were semi-structured, between one and two hours long, and involved questions about the nature of activities undertaken together, interviewee's perspectives on the meaning and significance of buddy schemes, as well as the perceived connection between buddy schemes and migration policy on local and national levels.

Our interviewees mirrored the socio-economic characteristics of other volunteers and asylum seekers we talked to and met in training events. The volunteers were middle-class, female, and roughly between 50–65 years of age. Only one interviewee was in her early twenties. Five of the volunteers had been working in social professions and included social workers, psychologists, teachers, and nurses. Some were already retired.[1] The asylum seekers were around 20–30 years old and male, originating from Mali, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, the Balkans, Syria and Ghana. All of them had an insecure or temporary residency status at the time of the interview.

The majority of the interviewed volunteers were not aware of the refugees' legal difficulties to settle in Germany when they got to know them. The interviews were all conducted in German, in which all refugees were conversant. Both parties in the relationship were interviewed independently at a time and place of their choosing. By interviewing both asylum seekers and their buddies of the same buddy pair, I was able to compare the similarities and differences to the care dynamics of their particular relationship. This strategy also enabled me to take into account how different interpretations of the meaning of the same events and practices by both parties shaped the relationship. The fact that both my research assistant and I were German citizens and female has surely impacted on the type of rapport we were able to establish with both asylum seekers and volunteers. While it allowed the volunteers to talk more freely about their gendered roles as women and mothers, it may have increased asylum seekers' distrust in our capacity to understand their position as male refugees- not least because of the fact that the interviews were usually arranged through our contact with the volunteers and not through our contact with the asylum seekers.

The fact that German was not the asylum seekers' native language may further have impacted negatively on the interview situation. However, we sought to particularly increase the asylum seekers' trust in our intentions through the mediation of their participation by their German buddy partner and also by the guarantee of treating the information they provided about their buddy partner confidentially.

An extensive analysis of the impact of researcher-interviewee rapport is beyond the scope of this article. However, it might be worth mentioning that my knowledge of some of the asylum seekers' countries of origin has certainly helped both in the interview process and the analysis, as well as the fact that both my research assistant and I had been introduced as trustworthy individuals to the volunteers beforehand (either by civil society organisations or other friends of theirs).

3. Buddy Schemes as Caring Relationships

In general, buddy schemes in migration involve pairing up a German citizen with a refugee[2]. Simply speaking, for the volunteer, this means taking on responsibilities of care for one or a group of refugees. Here, 'care' refers to a range of practices because activities that buddies undertake with each other are rarely clearly defined from the start and instead develop throughout the relationship. In the excerpt below, a volunteer explains how her relationship to the refugee slowly developed through initial contacts in the temporary shelter where she had helped him with the translation of an official letter:

> Well, and from then on, he contacted me with every paper, every letter. I signed a paper when he moved into his new apartment, kind of saying that….I am making sure that -in the words of the landlady- that not a whole African family moves into his one-room apartment. Well, and in-between we invited each other to our birthdays and what have you. He has laid the floor in my apartment, according to the principle 'I have helped you, now you help me'. Ah, well and in the meantime, we have organised his passport -that was also a hell of running around and applications and back again.

In all of the cases we encountered during participant observation in training events and during the interviews, volunteers had met their buddies in 2013–2015 while they were active in humanitarian support in shelters for newly arrived refugees.[3] Similar to Scheibelhofer's (2019) analysis, the volunteers mentioned that they felt particular sympathy for the refugees they agreed

[1] I actively intended to include male buddies and those with migration background in the research, in order to count on valuable contrasting perspectives. While I was able to establish contact with three of them, I have not been able to agree on an interview date with them and/or their buddies. In line with the information we gathered from social organisations in the city involved in buddy scheme programs, the buddy pairs we interviewed represent 'typical' characteristics in terms of participants' gender, age, and class composition in the context of the city of Bielefeld. Nevertheless, the findings of this very small sample are not generalisable to buddy schemes in general and can only identify noteworthy aspects which require further investigation in order to enable theory building.

[2] There are, of course, also buddies who do not hold German citizenship. We have been in contact with one male buddy from an African country, for example, who came to Germany twenty years ago as an asylum seeker himself. However, the majority of buddies in Bielefeld are still people who were born in Germany and have spent most of their life there.

[3] Conversations with social workers confirmed that this was a frequent pattern observed in buddy schemes and has also been documented by Scheibelhofer (2019) in the case of Austria.

to accompany later on. Thus, even though their first encounter was shaped by humanitarian and depersonalised care logics in the context of acute crisis, both parties described their evolving relationship like friendship, like an intimate and emotional connection with someone they actively choose.

The activities which the volunteers and the refugees mentioned most frequently included accompanying asylum seekers to interviews at the job centre, doctors' appointments, or to the office for asylum claims (*Ausländeramt*), translating and explaining official letters to them, mobilising personal networks to help during their job search, and teaching German. Refugees, by contrast, helped their buddies to move house, did handy work for them, or accompanied them to social gatherings with their own family and friends. Some helped their volunteer buddies to improve their English or French language skills. A lot of time was also spent on simply spending free time together and getting to know the city. Both parties met to take part in cultural activities such as concerts and visiting museums or markets. Several volunteers went on holiday with the refugees or on day trips to visit different German cities and sights. The volunteers had been in regular contact with their refugee buddies for eight months to over two years when the interviews were conducted.

These activities and the personal commitment that buddies feel towards each other can be meaningfully conceptualised as caring practices. In this sense, Thomas (1993, p. 665) has suggested that care is both the 'paid and the unpaid provision of support involving work activities and feeling states' and can be provided in public or domestic spheres, and in a variety of institutional settings. Care is approached here as an empirical concept based on *practice and values*, which can take many different forms (Alber & Drotbohm, 2015; Held, 2006). Philosopher Virginia Held (2006, p. 14) argues, for example, that care concerns not only practices and specific values but also specific ethical thinking. Crucial in her understanding of care is that specific ethical values develop on the basis of experience, reflection, and discourse concerning care practices. This also means that ethical thinking and values connected to care can only develop through practical engagement in caring relationships. Similar ideas have been put forward by political philosopher Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2012), who proposes that 'thinking' with care is particularly fruitful to develop inclusionary political consciousness and awareness for difference.

An ethics of care values interdependence and dependence on others—a fact which is often not sufficiently acknowledged by moral theories that depart from the assumption of autonomous and rational individuals (Held, 2006; Tronto, 2000). It also values emotions such as sympathy, empathy, sensitivity, and responsiveness (Sevenhuijsen, 1998). In a similar vein, Mol (2008) argues that care relationships between patients and volunteers in hospitals are grounded in a 'logic of care', which is based on a set of shared moral understandings that give rise to a collaborative approach to social support in which both caregivers and care receivers are implicated in taking decisions on the best strategy of action. Mol opposes this approach with logic of choice, in which patients' autonomy and individual decision-making are central.

In line with the principles of ethics of care outlined above, it may be possible that the caring experiences of buddies in migration contexts activate moral values in both parties which give new meaning to both partners' understanding of their social position in relation to each other, their relation to the state, and their differential degree of inclusion into society. In this context, the literature on buddy schemes in other realms of social work provides evidence that relationships between buddies generally involve a mutual added value such as friendship, trust, and gratitude, which goes far beyond the functional value of social support (Hopitzan, 2012; Zwania, 2008). This is also visible in the interviews, in which both the volunteers and the refugees often define the relationship not through the activities they are doing together but through the emotional support they are giving and receiving, as well as the moral values attached:

> I *feel* I am responsible and *I think*, someone has to be there to translate all of these (official letters regarding his residency status). Someone has to be at his side, without interfering with his private life….I am there when he has questions and needs help. This is how I see this buddy scheme.

4. Linking Care and Acts of Citizenship

Tronto (2000) argues that moral values of responsibility, empathy, or responsiveness that are developed through caring relationships also influence people's understanding of justice and democracy. Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2012) goes even further to argue that caring relationships represent an essential feature of transformative politics and represent a basis for alternative forms of organising. In this sense, buddy relations may also influence both volunteers' and refugees' conceptualisations of justice and citizenship in relation to migration policy. In other words, it is possible that the practices of confronting together the many difficult moments in which asylum seekers require support in order to successfully claim basic rights and services may effectively challenge and transform both asylum seekers' and volunteers' ideas about who deserves to be included into society and on which moral and political basis this has to occur. Hence, caring practices may not only influence how people think and feel, but also alter ways of engaging with the state, public institutions, or friends and family. In this sense, buddy schemes may actually alter people's political agency in both public and private realms of life.

In this sense, Isin and Nielsen (2008, p. 2) argue that citizenship is not produced only through legal status or the individual rights-claiming activities of individual citizens,

but rather through political, ethical, and aesthetic deeds which he calls 'acts of citizenship'. He describes these as constituted through collective or individual deeds that rupture social-historical patterns, because they are not necessarily related to formalised and ritualised expressions of formal citizenship such as voting or protesting. For Isin and Nielsen (2008), theorising acts means:

> Investigating everyday deeds that are ordinarily called politics. But acts of citizenship are also ethical (as in courageous), cultural (as in religious), sexual (as in pleasurable) and social (as in affiliative), in that they instantiate ways of being that are political. These ways of being constitute the existential conditions of possibility of acts. (Isin & Nielsen, 2008, p. 2)

White (2008, p. 4) defines acts of citizenship as inherently those activities which break with the 'habitus' of a persons' social position in the Bourdieuan sense[4]. In other words, she suggests that an act of citizenship must arise from a breakdown of our capacity to recognise how we should act from our social position in society, while simultaneously responding to this crisis with an invention, a new way of reacting to difference and injustice, for example.

In the case of the refugees and the volunteers, this could mean that the caring practices they engage in through the buddy schemes give them the opportunity to re-evaluate their respective social positions in terms of gender, class, and citizenship rights in a different light, and adapt their views and practices in such a way as to find creative ways to deal with differences and rights hierarchies between their own and their buddies' positions. Recognising the potential for transformation of concepts of citizenship in care work thus means valuing and acknowledging how citizenship is enacted, reproduced, and contested through the material, emotional, and moral dimensions of care. Because of care's primary association with women and family-related tasks in the private sphere, care activities and the values attached to them have often been neglected or overlooked in assessments of their political significance regarding citizenship practices (Erel, 2011). The theoretical significance of care thinking then lies in reinterpreting volunteer action in the informal and often private realms of social life as a particular form of knowing and thinking about migration, citizenship, and the state.

5. Unequal Relationships and their Effects on Care Logics and Citizenship Practices

The significance of caring relationships for enactments of citizenship can only be unearthed if their interdependence with other realms of functioning society is duly acknowledged, particularly in relation to unequal power relationships between states, markets, and citizens. In this context, Ticktin (2011) and Fassin (2012) have shown, for example, how states use a caring discourse to justify very inhumane migration politics by converting 'rightful' migrant receivers of care into passive victims, rather than into actors who are able to transform their own fate and claim their own rights.

On a related note, many writers on care have shown how gender, class, and citizenship structure the ways in which people are enmeshed in particular caring relationships which reinforce inequality, rather than mitigate it (Anderson, 2000; Sevenhuijsen, 1998). Simply put: power may be manifested over others by helping them, as well as by hurting them (Anderson, 2000, p. 144). This is also why Isin and Nielsen (2008) warn us that acts of citizenship do not always only encompass claims of justice and democracy, but may well also include forms of domination. This is particularly the case when caregivers consciously or unconsciously act with the aim of consolidating their superior position of power or social status over other groups of people in society they are caring for—but not about.

In this sense, Cook (2007) and De Jong (2017) use a postcolonial perspective on women in development to show how some women from the Global North enact exclusionary and degrading practices when engaging in helping women from the Global South. Wang (2013) uses a care perspective to demonstrate how particular logics of care help white, western, female volunteers in a Chinese orphanage to perform their status privileges through the emotional labour they engage in while delegating reproductive care tasks to Chinese personnel. Here, 'help' and 'solidarity' may be a dominating rather than a liberating form of support.

Braun (2017) is applying these insights from decolonial studies in her ethnographic study on female volunteers in migrants shelters in Germany. She argues (2017, p. 45) that the roles that female volunteers act out in their encounters with refugee women often build on historical and colonial notions of feminine charity which legitimise and define not only who is to be helped and the scope of such help, but which also influence who is to be included into German society and who is not.

The danger that buddy schemes actually lead to further exclusion of migrants rather than to their heightened autonomy and inclusion into society is therefore real, particularly if one considers that buddy schemes are developing within a context of a migration regime which is dominated by humanitarian logics, security concerns, and crisis management rather than characterised by a preoccupation with migrants' rights (Hess & Kasparek, 2017).

[4] According to Bourdieu (1990), habitus refers to ones' habits and dispositions. A critical feature of habitus is that it is embodied, and not only composed of mental attitudes and perceptions (Reay, 2004, p. 433). It is expressed through ways of 'standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 70). Habitus is acquired through the reality that individuals are socialised in. Thus, habitus represents how society's structures, culture, and personal history shape the body and the mind, and as a result, shape a person's social actions. Habitus is not a deterministic concept. Bourdieu was quite explicit about the fact that habitus can lead us to draw on transformative, as well as constraining, courses of action- but always in the context of the demands that impose themselves on individuals in the form of predispositions towards certain ways of behaving (Reay, 2004, p. 433).

Existing social work literature on buddy schemes in child and family-related social work (Dietsche, Guidon, & Ochsner, 2009; Kautza, 2013; Perzlmaier & Sonnenberg, 2013) further demonstrates that buddy schemes inherently hinge on the idea that one member in the relationship is 'more knowledgeable' or 'more experienced' than the other and can, therefore, provide support in times of need. This concept implies an intrinsic power imbalance and inequality in buddy relationships. In our case, these power imbalances are further compounded by gender, class, and age differences between the volunteers and the refugees. In one of the buddy relationships, volunteers are represented by relatively privileged, middle-aged women with high social status, economic security and German citizenship. On the other side, the refugees are frequently young, single men with precarious legal status, insecure future prospects, little economic means and a very low social status. In the interviews, both parties were generally very aware of the differences in their position. One of the volunteers described it as follows:

> This is not the same level. He is half my age, thus: a child. You know? In my mind, he is a young man. That means, we do not have the same interests, not the same taste, not the same taste in music, you see?

Citizenship status constitutes a very specific aspect in which both parties were made aware of how legalised differences between both parties translated into acute power differences in their relationship. In the interviews with the refugees, for example, some of the young men expressed that they often felt the need to justify the legitimacy of their claims to stay in Germany to their buddies. In the same vein, the volunteers frequently mentioned that they were aware of their privilege in having access to political, social, and economic rights and services while asylum seekers were excluded from them. Both parties often referred to the fear they had of making the refugees dependent on their help and talked about the difficulties in helping them become autonomous in Germany. Refugees often voiced awareness for having to be grateful for the services and help they received from volunteers and stressed their continuing need for outside support.

In what follows, I will show that the awareness for these differences in social status, inclusion into society, and power not only shape the practices and activities both parties engage in but also structure the relations of trust and mutual support on an emotional level in particular ways. They thus form the basis for the justification of specific 'logics of care' (Mol, 2008; Wang, 2013) which guide the practices and values that both refugees and volunteers' adhere to. In this way, they also influence the ways in which both volunteers and refugees think about citizenship, migration policy, and the state. It will become clear that, rather than being an 'either-or' choice between the reinforcement of existing inequalities or rebellious practices of transforming injustice, the buddy relationships display a rather complicated terrain in which different care practices and values of both refugees and volunteers intersect and mix (Braun, 2017; Scheibelhofer, 2019). In this way, they also impact on how both parties perform citizenship practices or 'acts of citizenship' which have the capacity to both reinforce existing relations and subvert them.

6. Caring Practices in Buddy Relationships: Reinforcing Inequality?

Mirroring the studies by Scheibelhofer (2019) and Braun (2017) referred to above, our interview material shows that status inequalities and gendered roles between refugees and volunteers are continuously reproduced in buddy relationships rather than effectively transformed. One example of this is the 'division of labour' between volunteers and refugees within the buddy scheme. Many of the female volunteers saw it as their role to teach refugees cultural values, such as ways of behaving and ways of being in Germany. This was mostly achieved by spending time with the refugees doing all kinds of daily activities. These activities could be meaningfully described as 'emotional labour' or nurturing care (Wang, 2013) because they are grounded in the mobilisation of volunteers' emotional capital (Reay, 2004) to the benefit of their buddies in order to bestow them with certain cultural capital useful for acquiring social standing in Germany.

Among the important values which volunteers were keen to promote through their involvement in the buddy scheme were punctuality, the willingness to educate oneself, and to work hard. As Braun (2017) shows, these values are closely connected to a German protestant and bourgeois conceptualisation of charity and female notions of social status. Acting out and passing on these values served to reinforce women volunteers' own social status. In some cases, it meant that women refused to offer their support to refugees who did not commit to these values in the desired manner and thus became the basis for excluding certain types of refugees as 'legitimate' buddies. One volunteer thus explained why she would prefer not to accompany any African refugees, based on her experience with one African refugee she knew through a friend:

> I told him, you have to be on time at your work, otherwise, you will lose the job and he is never on time or rarely on time and things like that. That is no good for me. This is an issue I have drummed into my lads early on. First be on time, second reliability….If someone does not arrive unexcused one or two times, I tell them that I am not continuing like that.

Similar ideas are echoed by the refugees we interviewed, who acknowledge the volunteers' role as 'mediators for German culture', as one volunteer described herself. The refugees often stressed that they feel obligated to fulfil

a range of expectations regarding their behaviour in order to be a 'good' buddy partner, showing gratefulness and thus being worthy of the volunteers' support and time. In the refugees' eyes, it is vital to show respect towards elderly people, be punctual, and be reliable in order to have a working buddy relationship. In their experience, their German counterparts particularly value these issues.

In the interviews, while the volunteers frequently stressed that their relationship with the refugees was based on mutual support, the refugees often did not feel that they were able to support the volunteers in a meaningful way. When the refugees engage in care for their volunteers, the nature of the activities they undertake is generally rather different from those which the volunteers provide for them. Generally, they consciously decide not to share too many details about their cultural values and traditions, their political views or the situation in their home country in order to not challenge the volunteers' views or moral values, or simply to avoid upsetting them with painful details of war and political upheaval.

However, the refugees often take on domestic tasks and activities for the volunteers. These tasks are often related to traditionally 'male' domestic tasks which imply the use of physical labour, such as help moving house and carrying furniture, accompanying the volunteers to places where they will transport heavy things, and doing DIY in their home. There are only a few instances where the refugees are able to exchange knowledge and care with the volunteers that are based on their cultural capital, for instance, when refugees cook traditional dishes from their home country for their buddies or when they teach them foreign languages.

The division of tasks between volunteers and refugees exemplifies two different aspects of care, which could be described as nurturing and emotional tasks on the one hand, and commodifiable reproductive tasks on the other. These divisions are based on the gendered roles of both carers, in that nurturing and emotional work are often delegated to women while certain domestic tasks such as carrying furniture or repairing things are often traditionally associated with male household members.

However, the socially constructed difference between these aspects of care is not only based on gender, but also on class and 'race', as Anderson (2000) shows in her analysis of the relationship between female domestic carers and their female employers. Wang (2013) draws on Cronquist, Theorell, Burns and Lützen (2004) to conceptualise this as a dichotomy of work responsibilities versus moral obligations, which are both two fundamental aspects of care that may or may not overlap. In Cronquist's et al. (2004) conceptual distinction, nurturing care focuses on relations and interdependence, while the reproductive labour approach towards care is more focused on practical tasks. This suggests that gender, ethnic, and class differences between volunteers and refugees are continuously reproduced through different logics of caring practices that both parties perform within their buddy relationship.

In the care relationships observed here, particular 'German values' are constructed as cultural capital, which is deemed more valuable than the cultural capital offered by the refugees. Only the volunteers possess this more highly valued capital, which they are able to transfer by engaging in nurturing work, thereby using their emotional capital which furthermore reproduces their social identity as members of a particular gender, class, and 'race' (Reay, 2004). In return, the refugees provide care in the form of commodifiable domestic labour, rendering the need to hire external help obsolete and thus informally replacing economic capital.

For both the volunteers and the refugees, commodifiable forms of care are less valuable than nurturing labour because the former does not depend on the provider's personality and could easily be provided by someone else. In this way, the division of labour in the buddy schemes reproduces power differentials and social inequality between the refugees and the volunteers through care, rather than contributing to more egalitarian and therefore inclusionary relationships between both parties. This also affects the ways in which both volunteers and refugees construct differences on the basis of their own class and gender roles between who is worthy of care, what care actually means, and who is able to provide care in society.

7. Overcoming Difference through Symbolic Kinship

Both the volunteers and the refugees found it difficult to define their relationship as a formal 'buddy scheme', based on contractual relations and support by two equal parties. Instead, they considered the other as part of their family. 'For me, Ms Heidi is like my mama', is the way one of the refugees describes the relationship. This was common in the interviews. Another refugee, whose buddy was around the same age as he said: 'For me, Maria is like my sister. I have told her that. She is family. That is more than friendship. Friends go, family stays.' The volunteers often referred to their role as being like grandmothers or mothers. In accordance with the literature on the relationship between paid carers and the families they work in (see for example Baldassar, Ferrero, & Portis, 2017), the volunteers and refugees were able to deal with their status inequalities by conceptualising their buddy relationship as kinship. Treating the relationship as akin to family relations helped both parties to accept the care of the other despite, and maybe even because of, their unequal social positions and power differentials.

Howell (2003, p. 465) has defined 'kinning' practice as a process whereby 'a previously unconnected person is brought into a significant and permanent relationship with a group of people that is expressed in a kin idiom.' In this definition, kinship is understood as something fundamentally relational rather than being biologically de-

termined. Kinship is negotiated on a daily basis through diverse activities, with caregiving being the most significant one (Baldassar et al., 2017).

The very act of caring, which is the reason why the relationships were formed in the first place, provided both parties with the necessary emotional and affectionate basis to 'convert' buddies into kin in the absence of biological ties. In this sense, care serves here as a particular type of social action performed among people who conceive themselves as belonging to each other through kinship (Alber & Drotbohm, 2015; Baldassar et al., 2017; Howell, 2003). The kinning process helped both parties to reproduce their social roles and positions, but also enabled them to maintain affectionate and caring relations despite social differences. This is evident in the various ways in which both refugees and volunteers refer to their activities in the context of the family. On the side of the volunteers, treating the refugees as their children or grandchildren allowed them to extend their gender roles as 'mothers' and 'family carers' to the buddy relationship. In this way, they were able to reproduce the basis upon which important aspects of their social status in Germany is based.

Simultaneously, through kinning, refugees' social status is, at least symbolically, augmented in the eyes of volunteers and refugees alike because it has allowed refugees to become at least symbolically included into 'German' society as part of a family. Because of the strong link between kinning and care, some of the volunteers also implied that these kinning relationships were grounded in moral responsibility and non-negotiable willingness to support the other in every possible way despite their different social and legal positions. This played an important moral role in volunteers' decisions to support the refugees even when these had problems with the law or were threatened with deportation. In these cases, it initiated them to take a critical and radical stance against government logics in order to stand by their 'kin'. Kinning also implied including the refugees into very intimate family activities—which had to take place sometimes against the will of other family members, such as adult children or husbands (see also Scheibelhofer, 2019). Here, the women volunteers were particularly forceful in making decisions about refugees' access to their homes by inviting them to family gatherings, birthday parties and other celebrations, which ritualised their 'membership' in their family and symbolised—by extension- their inclusion into German society.

For the refugees, the linking of buddies to kinship was a way of conceiving of the relationship as durable over time. Refugees often expressed the conviction that contact with their buddy would not cease, regardless of whether circumstances would change in the future.

> And I want….If I have money someday, or what have you, I want to look after Ms Ingrid, the same way she has looked after me….This will not change. Until I die.

In this sense, the relationship morally extended any contractual relationship of support, which could be ended by the other side at any time. It signified a moral commitment to mutual lifelong support and help. This also meant that for the refugees, there would come the time when they could 'repay' their favours, and break even.

> When I have a residency and when I am working, when I have money, I could ask her if she wanted to come to Africa with me. Visit my family. My mother is there.

The fact that both parties agree to view their relationship as being formed of family or kinship ties demonstrates that moral values associated with an ethics of care, such as caring for each other's 'family', bind them together in relations of mutual support, despite their different social positions.

8. 'Rebellious' Transformations in the Lives of Both Volunteers and Refugees?

The previous sections have shown that buddy schemes bind people of different social status together in caring relationships, which both involve practices which reproduce unequal power positions as well as promote transformative and inclusionary positions for both parties. The question remains whether these caring relationships also impact the citizenship practices of both parties in significant ways.

In the interviews, there is evidence to show that buddy schemes have actually contributed to the constitution of 'acts of citizenship' for both the refugees and the volunteers and therefore represent both interesting examples of transformative spaces for migrants' rights as well as exclusionary practices. On the side of the volunteers, this was particularly evident when they talked about the consequences of their increasing knowledge about migration policy and the resulting moral and political responsibility they felt towards acting in accordance with their new knowledge.

> Well, for example, I have looked closely—already at the past election—, how do the different political parties position themselves regarding political changes in Africa, or not only in Africa but generally, well for me a more just world order I would find meaningful….Well it is a big topic which I do not necessarily understand fully, but I am interested now in knowing which party is working for political transformations and which are not, and then I am voting accordingly.

Some volunteers also pointed out that their relationships with the refugees have introduced activism for migrants' rights into their everyday relationships, so as to voice their concern with friends and acquaintances, even risking conflict and problems over political opinions on migration.

> Before I would never have talked about this issue with friends, but now, it is a piece of my life now…and this generates unpleasant discussions…where I have to take my stance and have to explain again and again…and to some, I simply say: you? No. Or I have eliminated people from my Facebook friends list, for example.

The same woman also commented that her involvement in the fight for legal status for the refugee from Mali whom she is accompanying had actually compelled her to go to demonstrations and public events around migration policy again, which she had last done in the 1970s when she was active in the feminist movement. The refugees also showed signs of having developed new ways of relating to the power differences between themselves and the German population in general. Here, transformations in their awareness of moral values, of autonomy, and a different view on life and German society are mentioned.

> I am the same person I was before, but now, I know that I am responsible. I am taking care how to treat others, what I should be doing. I have started to learn a lot because I know that I can adapt and become like the others if I learn, if I learn to speak German, for example. And I look after myself. That I stay healthy. That I try not to make mistakes. Going on the wrong track. This is what has changed.

Another refugee told me about the renewed feeling of self-esteem and self-worth which the buddy scheme allowed him to gain, mostly due to the emotional support he received in difficult situations, such as job interviews and before test situations more generally:

> (She teaches me) how to believe in yourself. There is someone who says: I am here if you need me. She gives me security.

However, some volunteers' acts of citizenship have also involved exclusionary practices. For some female volunteers, for example, their newly gained knowledge about refugees' multiple motivations to come to Germany made them more critical concerning refugees' claims for permanent settlement options in Germany. Some, for example, mentioned that since they understood migration law in more detail, they had developed a more informed opinion about who deserved a right to stay and who did not. For some volunteers, this meant that they were refusing to accompany refugees threatened with deportation or who refused to obtain educational qualifications or learn the German language.

Exclusionary practices were also evident on the side of the refugees, albeit only in one case. A practising Muslim among the refugees argued that he no longer wanted to have any dealings with highly religious, Christian volunteers, or Germans in general, because he felt that the differences in values were too strong and any close relationship would be counterproductive. This opinion was the result of his experiences in a buddy scheme in which he felt constantly proselytised by his German buddy. These findings also indicate that the ways in which logics of care actually promote acts of citizenship which are conducive to transformative views on migration policies in civil society are strongly related to the political and economic contexts and the social fields that both parties in the relationship are enmeshed in. These contexts shape how both parties in the relationship are able to transform their social roles and their habitus of action in light of the needs within the buddy relationship.

9. Conclusion

In the context of increasingly restrictive migration and asylum policies taking hold in Germany and Europe, it is important to ask to what extent volunteer action in favour of refugee and asylum seeker support is contributing to more inclusive migration politics 'from below'. The present article has contributed to this discussion by examining the ways in which buddy schemes, which developed out of institution-driven opportunities for volunteering in a humanitarian sense, contribute to transforming migration policies and experiences of citizenship.

Buddy schemes in the realm of refugee support in Germany are an example of spaces of social action by two groups of people who are ordinarily not recognised as important 'political actors' in public life. Both volunteers, in this case the middle-aged women, and their buddies with insecure residency status, traditionally do not occupy powerful social positions from which to claim transformations in unjust migration regimes in the public realm. Furthermore, the unequal relationships between volunteers and refugees, as well as the political, social, and economic context in which they are enacted, influence the care logic that both parties engage in and impact on the ways in which they can think about migrants' citizenship, rights, and political participation. The examples have shown how the resulting unequal power relationship between both parties is constantly negotiated. In many instances, it is not subverted and may even be reinforced through the buddy scheme.

Despite (or maybe even because of) these differences between both parties, buddy schemes can enable both actors to engage in acts of citizenship through care practices that are conducive to more inclusive migration politics. This is because mutual practices of informal social support are able to activate a set of moral values that are conducive to transformative politics. The volunteers and refugees we interviewed all indicated a heightened sense of awareness for migrants' rights claims, the role of the state, and the responsibility of civil society to transform migration policies. In all interviews, both volunteers and refugees mentioned that the buddy relationship has made them learn about the importance of their own voice in affecting the course of events in the life

of the other. It is in this sense that buddy schemes may be looked at as an important element for more egalitarian refugee politics, which include both the host society and refugees in their realisation. Hence, buddy schemes are an interesting example of how political consciousness develops through seemingly 'apolitical acts' in the private sphere which may harbour far-reaching transformative potential.

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Conflict of Interests

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About the Author

Inka Stock is a researcher in the working group on transnationalism, migration, and development at the Department of Sociology, Bielefeld University, Germany. She has a particular interest in south-south migration, gender and migration, and the nexus between migration, human rights, and inequality.

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Article

Humanitarianism as Politics: Civil Support Initiatives for Migrants in Milan's Hub

Giulia Sinatti

Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands; E-Mail: g.sinatti@vu.nl

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Abstract

Humanitarianism is increasingly used to address migration in Europe, from search and rescue operations at sea to reception on land. Scholars often interpret humanitarianism as a means for states to depoliticize migration and prioritize securitization. In this article, I analyze perspectives on humanitarianism among civil society volunteers and workers who, alongside institutions, deliver humanitarian support to migrants. Civil initiatives in this field by independent volunteers, non-governmental organizations and charities have surged, thus shifting tasks traditionally under the responsibility of the state to non-state actors. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in and around the premises of the Hub (a center providing humanitarian assistance to migrants transiting in the Italian city of Milan), I show that engaging in such civil support initiatives raises the levels of political awareness and activism among ordinary citizens. Through insight into the daily actions, motivations and aims of the men and women operating at the Hub, I show that their involvement in humanitarian assistance marks the beginning of a personal journey in which they gradually conceive what they do as far from being in support of depoliticizing state securitization policies and rather as politically loaded.

Keywords

civil society; depoliticization; humanitarianism; migration; repoliticization

Issue

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1. Introduction

In 2015, almost 1,015,000 people entered Europe via the Mediterranean (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], n.d.). In the same year, over 1,220,000 asylum applications were filed in the continent, followed by almost 1,195,000 in 2016 (Eurostat, n.d.). At this time, humanitarian initiatives multiplied supporting migrants along the external borders of Europe and at key transit or arrival nodes within the continent.

Scholars propose a critical reading of humanitarian assistance to migrants, indicating that states use it to downplay a political problem to a sheer humanitarian issue. I recognize the value of this interpretation, while pointing at two limitations. First, the literature emphasizes institutional recourse to humanitarianism. Second, it adopts a reductive definition of humanitarianism as life-saving relief, which downplays ethical and political dimensions inherent in humanitarian work on the ground. I further illustrate both points next.

Discussions about the links between humanitarianism and politics are situated in scholarly work about governance, which interprets humanitarian assistance as complicit with state-driven aims to securitize Fortress Europe (Pécoud, 2015). Watson (2011) suggests that humanitarianism is a sector of securitization: both justify the adoption of emergency measures by defining issues as threats. According to Italian philosopher Agamben (1998), the separation between politics and humanitarianism is paradigmatic in the case of the refugee. In refugee camps, a state of exception prevails in which

bare life—the mere biological aspect of life addressed by humanitarian assistance—is prioritized over other aspects of life—life as it is lived. This dehumanizing strategy strips migration and refuge of their political dimension. By emphasizing the urge for life-saving measures that protect bare life and downplaying the role of nation-states, the refugee camp moves out of the political field and epitomizes the raise of what Foucault (2008) calls biopolitics.

Several scholars have drawn on the arguments above to highlight the a-political or depoliticizing effects of humanitarianism when used in the migration field. Malkki (1996) proposes that a focus on suffering abstracts people from historical and structural contexts, thus depoliticizing their condition. Ticktin's (2006, 2011) analysis of humanitarianism and immigration law in France shows that care and compassion offer protection to people suffering from bodily vulnerability, so that "once one is…protected by humanitarian clauses, one loses one's political and social rights" (Ticktin, 2006, p. 44). Fassin (2005) talks of "compassionate repression" to illustrate how transforming asylum into an issue of moral sympathy diverts attention from the political aspect of asylum claims.

In the interpretations just outlined, humanitarianism is conceived as a state-driven affair. Agamben understands political agency at the level of sovereign states. Similarly, Malkki (1996), Ticktin (2006, 2011) and Fassin (2005) foreground institutional recourse to humanitarianism. This overlooks the involvement of non-state actors, despite civil society occupying a significant role in the migration field, including in humanitarian assistance (Cuttitta, 2018; Garkisch, Heidingsfelder, & Beckmann, 2017). Throughout Europe, civil support initiatives by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), charities, human rights organizations, grassroots associations and independent volunteers offer first help (e.g., distributing food and clothing, offering shelter and medical aid) to newcomers in ports of disembarkation, temporary camps and transit nodes. I argue that including attention to these initiatives adds complexity to how the relationship between humanitarianism and politics is interpreted.

The emphasis on institutional recourse to humanitarianism leads to a second limitation of the above-mentioned literature, which reduces humanitarianism to life-saving relief. Yet this overlooks essential scholarship about the practices of humanitarian organizations on the ground. The latter indicates that humanitarianism involves more than its basic definition, i.e., "the provision of relief to victims of human-made and natural disasters" guided by principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence (Barnett & Weiss, 2008, p. 3). In the field, through reflection on its core values, humanitarianism may also extend to broader objectives such as human rights, democracy promotion, development, and peacebuilding (Barnett & Weiss, 2008). In this sense, it is constantly enmeshed with moral dilemmas (Finnemore, 2008) and far from depoliticizing. Rather, it engages in what Fassin (2007) calls "politics of life": it evaluates human beings and the meaning of their existence. In his words: "a common interpretation…tends to distinguish and to contrast politics and humanitarianism, declaring that the latter is gradually replacing the former or even announcing the advent of humanitarianism and the end of politics" whereas "everything suggests that rather than become separate, humanitarianism and politics are tending to merge" (Fassin, 2007, pp. 508–509).

Emerging empirical literature about civil society involvement in humanitarian responses to migration convenes that humanitarianism and politics may indeed be entangled. This is documented, for instance, in Cuttitta's (2018) analysis of NGOs undertaking search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. They conceive their activities not merely as saving migrant lives, but as a commitment to turn the sea "into a political stage from which they can make their voice heard" (Cuttitta, 2018, p. 641) and challenge institutional policies and practices through lobbying and advocacy. In a similar vein, Youkhana and Sutter (2017) point at political contestation by pro-migration activist movements. With evidence from the spontaneous camp of Calais in France, Sandri (2018) qualifies informal "volunteer humanitarianism" as an open form of protest against institutional border securitization practices that establishes a connection between humanitarianism and activism. These authors convene that civil society humanitarianism in the migration field goes hand in hand with politics. Politics is understood, here, along the lines of French philosopher Jacques Rancière (1999), who considers political action as expressing disagreement and aspiring to change an existing social order. Rancière introduces a distinction between 'politics'—which challenges the order of things through disagreement—and 'policing'—which refers to the rules that govern the disciplining of bodies (Rancière, 1999, p. 29). Institutional recourse to humanitarianism to manage migration is a form of policing: a means to securitize, exercise control over and depoliticize migration. Political, instead, are attempts to challenge the underlying rules. Accordingly, the respondents of Cuttitta (2018), Youkhana and Sutter (2017) and Sandri (2018) engage in politics by expressing dissent through forms of anti-institutional protest such as lobbying, advocacy or public demonstration. These forms of protest are traditionally associated with social movements and other organizations pursuing an openly political agenda. Yet literature on humanitarian practice suggests that the latter can be political also in more subtle ways. In Fassin's (2007) politics of life, for instance, attributing value to human lives is sufficient to qualify humanitarianism as political.

In this article I further investigate the links between humanitarianism and politics beyond the explicitly political actions of NGOs and activist movements. Recognizing the variety of civil support initiatives in this field, I focus on how the everyday activities of the many private, self-governed, non-profit organizations and infor-

mal activities that see many ordinary citizens engage for the benefit of migrants may also be political. My respondents consist of the men and women providing humanitarian support and engaging as professionals, casual laborers or volunteers connected to established NGOs and charities, associated with informal grassroots initiatives, or operating independently. The questions I raise are whether and how humanitarian support offered through these civil initiatives is instrumental to policing or, instead, political. Do civil volunteers and workers reinforce and support depoliticization by filling an institutional gap? Or do they repoliticize migration by disagreeing with state perspectives?

I answer these questions with evidence from civil initiatives delivering humanitarian support to migrants in the city of Milan. In the next section, I describe these initiatives and review my research methods. Two analytical sections follow, in which I illustrate ways in which civil humanitarian support may be interpreted as political. First, I examine the actions of volunteers and workers, arguing that they do more than care for migrants' life-saving needs. In an attempt to address migrants as dignified subjects, they are political in largely involuntary ways as they strive to pursue humanitarianism in the sense of Fassin's (2007) politics of life. Second, I illustrate how initial involvement leads many volunteers and workers to become further committed to making a difference and how they use humanitarianism to express disagreement with institutional perspectives (Rancière, 1999). I also highlight that these expressions of disagreement stem from deliberate political awareness yet may be expressed in silent ways and do not necessarily lead to explicit public protest. Lastly, I offer some conclusions in a closing section.

2. The Hub at the Core of Migrant Routes

Italy is a country of first entry for migrants into Europe. After peak arrivals in 2015, a report by the UNHCR showed that, at the end of June 2017, more than 200,000 migrants and refugees were in reception centers in Italy, despite two thirds of new arrivals continuing their journeys to further European destinations (UNHCR, 2017).

These figures imply that humanitarian aid for migrants is highly relevant in Italy. This is evident not only in ports of disembarkation in the south, but also in other localities along migrants' routes to northern Europe, such as Milan. Official data from the Municipality indicates that 125,500 migrants were assisted between 2013 and 2017 in the city's official reception centers, alongside an inestimable number of migrants cared for unofficially.

At a national level, Italian policy and practice address migrant arrivals as an emergency issue (Campomori & Caponio, 2014; Marchetti, 2014). In border locations like the island of Lampedusa and other ports of first disembarkation, humanitarian responses are institutionally-driven and highly securitized (Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018). In Milan, civil initiatives providing humanitarian support to migrants surged in 2013. The news of two consecutive migrant shipwrecks in Lampedusa dominated the Italian media and hundreds of survived migrants camped at the city's main rail station, the Stazione Centrale. Migrants carried visible signs of having endured the sea crossing. Despite autumn weather, they bore no or few belongings, wore plastic thong sandals or were barefooted. Their clothes were stained with brine and some carried the shiny thermal blanket received during the sea rescue. Some suffered from hypothermia, were physically injured or in distress. Witnessing this scene on their doorstep, people spontaneously mobilized to distribute food, blankets and clothing.

Building on these spontaneous responses, Milan's municipal authorities established the Hub in purposely refurbished premises under the elevated rails of the Stazione Centrale. The Hub dealt with up to 1,200 migrant arrivals daily, addressing basic needs such as food, shelter and healthcare. It became a well-known reference within informal migrant networks, and many reached Italian soil with its street name scribbled on their arms, or a photo of volunteers or workers in their mobile phones.

The Hub offered a unique setting to gain insight into civil involvement in migrant humanitarianism. In other notable situations in Europe—the spontaneously formed camp in Calais (Sandri, 2018), a public park in Brussels (Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019) or a squatted hotel in Athens (Rozakou, 2012)—volunteers or activists operated independently and in informal spaces. At the Hub, volunteers and workers from different committees, associations, charities and NGOs worked side by side and under the aegis of institutions: a situation that soon revealed that actions were coordinated, whilst also presenting tensions and overlaps. As a physical site of refugee management, the Hub also became an important space of contestation (della Porta, 2018). For instance, smaller initiatives refrained from involvement at the Hub, in opposition with the philosophy of larger organizations or with the official approach of municipal authorities.

These tensions called for an investigation of the logics underlying humanitarian support and of the motivations urging volunteers and workers to act. I achieved this through ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation, online research and interviews with respondents (whose names I have anonymized). During multiple field visits between 2013 and 2017, I spent the equivalent of sixty full-time days observing respondents as they dispensed humanitarian support to migrants and the daily interactions between volunteers and workers. In this time, I also attended meetings, public events and protests in and around the Hub. In between field visits, I followed respondents' social media activity: I noted how they chose to represent what they did and recorded posts that triggered animated streams of comments. When conducting supplementary interviews with twenty respondents, I used these social media posts as elicitations, inviting them to reflect about underlying meanings and values. Taken as a whole, this ethno-

graphic data provides insight into what prompted volunteers and workers to engage in humanitarian support to migrants, how they conceived what they did and what they (hoped to) contribute to.

3. From Minimalist to Enabling Humanitarianism: Involuntary Politics of Life

The Hub was operational for over three years, yet activities always remained characterized as temporary measures, adapting to seasonal fluctuations in the numbers and composition of incoming migrants. This approach follows a logic that is in line with Italian national institutional framings of migrant arrivals as an emergency issue (Campomori & Caponio, 2014; Marchetti, 2014) and temporarily addresses only the superficial consequences—the threats to bare life—of a deeper structural problem. Civil support initiatives at the Hub were funded through short-term tendered contracts with municipal authorities, in which the mandate was to cater for migrants' basic needs.

This form of humanitarianism is easily associated with the official approach of institutions, to which larger civil society organizations may adhere (or instrumentally adapt). The slogan of one charity operating at the Hub recited: "First Help, Always". This message indicates that the organization is faithful to the core ethic of humanitarian intervention: saving lives. Actions are presented as "based on the satisfaction of offering unconditionally, to a person in danger of dying, the aid which enables him to survive" (Fassin, 2007, p. 510). Civil society organizations use this biopolitical bureaucratic logic strategically in their official discourse, drawing "on a global assemblage of categories, legal definitions, norms and standards, and procedures and technologies associated with humanitarian aid" (Robins, 2009, p. 638). They adopt what Redfield (2005) defines "minimalist biopolitics", focusing on basic needs such as medical aid, shelter and food relief. The everyday motivations and actions of the volunteers and workers ensuring that those humanitarian goals were met, however, reflected alternative preoccupations.

Some respondents indeed conceived humanitarian assistance as a means to protect bare life. When I shadowed them, some referred to migrants as "gli ultimi" (the last). From their words, the image emerged of a mass of helpless, de-humanized people who have nothing and are in desperate need to receive. A volunteer doctor insisted that she was moved to act by humanitarian motives and reinforced her argument claiming that her best gratifications came not from the Hub, but from the times she spent on board Italian Naval ships rescuing migrants at sea:

> The most beautiful work for a doctor is on board ships. There the line between life and death is a question of seconds. Either you save them, or they die. It is a very powerful challenge. If you are born to heal, it doesn't get more extreme than this. (Cosima)

Some acknowledged that their role as humanitarians included also a controlling dimension, one that—following Rancière—is associated with policing. A charity worker commented about the registration procedure for migrants at the Hub: "At the registration desk, my role is first of all to understand whether the person sitting in front of me is a real refugee or not" (Amun). Amun recalled the episode of a Somali who stood in the queue for the stamps giving access to food, a set of new clothing and a bed for the night. When his turn arrived:

> He didn't look like someone who's just arrived. His clothing didn't give that away. Even the smell of a refugee, when someone hasn't washed for a few days…various signs tell you whether someone is a refugee. So I said to him: "You're not a refugee. Empty your pockets and show me something, anything that proves that you're a refugee". A train ticket from Taranto saying he'd just disembarked and come to Milan, whatever….And as he emptied his rucksack, he dropped an Italian passport. That Somali was an Italian citizen. So I said to him: "Sorry, we can't welcome you".

Amun explained that he used the term 'refugee' to refer broadly to migrants in distress, having just arrived illegally in Italy and regardless of whether they had applied for asylum in Italy or intended to do so. A perceived need for immediate and temporary basic support, in Amun's eyes, was the main precondition qualifying migrants for humanitarian support. Like Cosima and Amun other respondents expressed their role as one in which they, as humanitarians, protected bare life whilst also occupying a position of power and control over migrants. At a first reading, this appears to reinforce the dehumanizing and depoliticizing side of humanitarianism.

A closer look, however, uncovers that many workers were ill at ease with 'policing' tasks attached to their roles. When talking about what they did, they challenged the idea of humanitarianism as ending with the protection of bare life. When justifying their actions, many chose words like 'solidarity', 'philanthropy', 'justice', 'humanity', 'empathy', and 'equality'.

More than words, however, it was the actions of volunteers and workers that questioned the minimalist biopolitics (Redfield, 2005) of "holding people in a position of continuous need for assistance" (Michele). Despite being aware of power imbalances between themselves as humanitarian givers and migrants as aid recipients, many maneuvered within the system to do more than dispense basic aid. They aspired to be facilitators, enabling migrants to find their own way. Patrizia explained how workers or volunteers circumvented minimalist humanitarian logics:

> [At the Hub, migrants] are subject to our rules, to the food we give them. Their autonomy is equal to zero. They even need to knock on the door and ask me for toilet paper: we don't have enough for everyone, so

> I have to ration it. We use the word 'guests' to indicate migrants and here this word is a good fit. To call someone a guest is depriving him of responsibility. Here people are deprived of responsibility and they are treated accordingly....You are a guest and you follow my rules. Now, though, we have started imagining paths for these people, but this comes out of the initiative of those working here. For instance, I may know some migrant youths who like playing football and I may know of a football initiative in the neighborhood, so I go and tell them. This is not in the workers' vademecum, though. If anything, the vademecum says "manage fights, deal with registration, give them a bed and that's it". (Patrizia)

Volunteers and workers instigated a range of socio-cultural activities: language classes, recreational activities for children, sport events, city tours, or pairing migrants with sponsor families. These initiatives had a central concern not for basic needs, but for social fulfilment. They showed that humanitarian action can move "from bare life to qualified life, from physical survival to social existence" (Fassin, 2007, p. 518).

Respondents addressed migrants beyond bare life through socio-cultural activities as well as in more subtle ways. They encouraged migrants to take direct responsibility in the everyday delivery of humanitarian aid: serving food at the canteen or unfolding and storing the camp-beds that were set up every night in the communal dormitory. Respondents conceived involvement in these moments as a chance for migrants to step out of the category of guest or victim attributed to them through depoliticizing minimalist humanitarian logics. Some volunteers and workers went to great lengths to address migrants by their name, to give an otherwise ephemeral interaction a deeper significance. Against the reading of humanitarianism as de-historicizing (Malkki, 1996), I interpret these efforts as striving to inject personal biographies back into the generalized figure of a migrant victim. Informal support to migrants extended to advice about administrative and legal dealings with asylum procedures or border-crossings, with the intention of supporting migrants to make independent, informed choices about their future.

I do not evaluate whether the actions just illustrated had an empowering effect on migrants, nor how migrants themselves received them. What is noteworthy is that the intention behind these actions contrasted sharply with the depoliticizing logics of minimalist humanitarianism. In their daily actions, volunteers and workers put forward a politics of life (Fassin, 2007) that attempted to value victims beyond basic needs. My findings resonate with Rozakou's (2012) analysis of humanitarian initiatives assisting migrants in Athens. She concludes that, through the practices of volunteers operating outside formal reception camps, refugees may also be "reconstituted as political subjects" (Rozakou, 2012, p. 573).

So far, I have uncovered tensions between the logics of respondents delivering humanitarian support in civil initiatives on the one hand and the official logics of institutions on the other hand: while the latter emphasize saving lives, the former stress the importance of every life and move beyond basic needs. These divergent views led volunteers to speak with nostalgia about the times before the Hub was established, cherishing the freedom with which they had been able to approach and assist migrants. The same sentiment induced some initiatives to remain independent from the Hub, operating informally on the streets and in disagreement with minimalist biopolitics (Redfield, 2005). As one respondent put it: "volunteering is a positive action that should enable a refugee or asylum seeker to engage independently on a journey of inclusion" (Antonio).

In this section, I have shown that the men and women delivering support in a system conceived as responding to basic migrant needs may be inspired by alternative humanitarian logics. Respondents spoke of migrants and refugees as the ultimate vulnerable others whose bare life should be protected: these arguments indeed resonate with the depoliticizing or a-political traits denounced by scholarship on migrant humanitarianism. Respondents however also strived to treat migrants as dignified people in need to make their way, autonomously. In this sense, they pursued another humanitarianism: one that promotes a politics of life (Fassin, 2007) by moving beyond mere survival and committing to concerns for human dignity. My data identify tensions inherent in humanitarianism. One logic focuses on protecting migrants' bare life: I call this minimalist humanitarianism. An alternative logic hopes to empower migrants and facilitate their autonomous agency: I call this enabling humanitarianism.

People delivering support to migrants at the Hub experienced tensions between minimalist and enabling humanitarianism, as each is "defined by different configurations of practices, principles, and understandings of the proper relationship between politics and humanitarianism" (Barnett & Weiss, 2008, p. 5). Many volunteers and workers were inspired by enabling humanitarianism and attempted to inject human value into the migrants they assisted. They often did so, however, inadvertently and without being aware of the political value of their thoughts and actions: they engaged in politics of life, yet involuntarily. Vandevoordt and Verschraegen (2019, p. 102) found the same among civil humanitarians in Brussels whose "political intentions were far from self-evident" and who, for instance when establishing horizontal relations with refugees, were unknowingly political. My data show the value of integrating a focus on the exclusionary logics of states' humanitarian responses with a focus on volunteers and workers in civil support initiatives who may counteract them (Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016). In the next section, I discuss how this counteraction may become loaded with greater political awareness.

4. Humanitarianism as Politics: Engaging in Silent Disagreement

Many respondents became involved in humanitarian support through volunteering, dedicating a few hours to assisting (often in the minimalist humanitarian sense) migrants and refugees. This exposed them to emotionally intense experiences, followed by personal involvement in the stories of individual migrants.

On social media, respondents maintained contact for years with migrants and refugees met at the Hub. Lorenza, one of the first volunteers assisting Syrians since before the Hub was established, recalled:

> We used to go every morning and offer bread and Nutella to Syrian refugees.…From there we took a further step and started talking to them.…Clearly their stories affected us. Speaking with them was the most beautiful thing that this initial group did. It created a bridge, a human bond that went beyond the fact of offering bread with chocolate spread and a warm cup of tea. (Lorenza)

The fleeting moment of humanitarian giving led to deeper contact. Shifting from minimalist to empowering humanitarianism, some felt invested with an overwhelming sense of personal responsibility:

> Some ask you "Where do you think I should go? Where should I migrate to?" This is a huge responsibility.…When people ask you where they should spend the rest of their lives, this is not a question you can answer lightly. (Sarah)

Conversation after conversation, interview after interview, I became aware of how respondents were affected by migrant stories. As a researcher, I was interested in the experiences of volunteers and workers—not of migrants. Yet whenever I gave interlocutors leeway, they would steer the discussion towards excruciating details of painful migrant stories. Anna, a volunteer who housed migrants in her home when the Hub reached full capacity, recalled the time she was sitting on the couch of her Milanese apartment when a migrant recognized himself in the images of a report about a sea rescue aired on the evening news. While she watched history unfold on the television screen, she felt she could reach out and touch it in the person sitting next to her in the private space of her home.

Exposed to the suffering of otherwise distant others, Anna and other respondents reinjected personal histories into migrant subjects. Many looked at their own lives in a new light and reported personal growth. Against a perceived wave of raising European populism and individualism, they read the human and social situations of migrants within an international geo-political vision, became skeptical about institutional responses, and nurtured the ambition to do more than help people in distress.

I observed a correlation between growing personal involvement in enabling humanitarianism and a conscious politicized commitment. As with Ayana, a second-generation Eritrean supporting co-nationals escaping the current regime in the streets of her neighbourhood, which hosts a historically established Habesha community:

> I'd never been an activist before, I never supported any cause. I'd also always been distant from lay or religious associations. But engaging in migrant assistance took me on a long, introspective journey that could only lead me to engage further and learn to relate with and challenge institutions. (Ayana)

For many, political engagement began with critique of the Hub itself, where I observed tensions between minimalist and empowering humanitarianism. Some openly criticized the conditions under which help was delivered, denouncing that the Hub allowed only fleeting encounters. As Lorenza underlined: "You cannot talk to all of them.…The Hub doesn't give you time.…In transit, you don't have time to relate to one another". Respondents would mock the slogan "First Help, Always": "First help and no more", they would add, voicing disapproval of a rationality that reduces victims to basic needs, to bare life. Whether the charity in question is indeed associated with depoliticization is a judgement beyond the scope of this article. I did however record that, by supplementing institutional funding with private donations, the organization enjoyed flexibility on the ground allowing workers to go beyond what was requested in binding contracts with local authorities. For example, if the mandate limited provision of shelter to migrants of certain nationalities, respondents could open the doors to other migrants. In this sense, the charity prudently avoided explicit political confrontation with its institutional donors. It also closed a blind eye to what respondents did on the ground, leaving it to their discretion to solve tensions and ambiguities that are typical of humanitarian organizations: instrumentally complying with a depoliticizing concern for human survival, whilst ethically striving for a concern for human dignity (Redfield, 2005). This way, bending the rules became a silent but deliberate expression of political dissent by workers or volunteers.

For those who understood the expression of dissent as requiring more open forms of political protest, the Hub hindered the pursuit of their aims. They chose to operate independently in the informal spaces of streets, squares and public parks surrounding the Stazione Centrale. Besides delivering support to migrants, they also engaged in outspoken forms of dissent. They raised public awareness, for instance holding talks in schools. They initiated public protests and denounced institutions for reducing migrants to mere, dehumanized numbers. The reasons leading some to shift to such overtly politicized engagement were usually tied to personal background and lived experience. For instance, an activist operating

outside the Hub compared his own choice as a second-generation migrant with that of first-generation migrants for whom social work for a large charity had become a regular job:

> I believe in people's autonomy and this is tied to a personal baggage of claims I make to the society I live in. Others [who have recently immigrated] have a more subaltern relationship with Italian authorities. We have strong disagreements on this point. This is why many second-generation migrants experienced working at the Hub as a learning opportunity, but then decided to leave. Whereas [recent immigrants] decided to stay on in a role that can contribute little to changing the status quo. (Awet)

Political action, however, was not restricted to independent initiatives such as those just described. Also within the Hub, workers disagreeing with the official Hub logic of saving lives carried out political actions from within. They were not so much critical of the approach of the charities and NGOs operating at the Hub. Rather, they held institutions responsible for a situation that, as Amun suggested, "aims at quantity, not quality". They critiqued the Italian state for preferring solutions that address an out-of-the-ordinary situation to structural solutions (Campomori & Caponio, 2014; Marchetti, 2014). According to Patrizia, "the Hub treats migrant flows as an emergency issue, whereas it is a structural phenomenon. To put a plaster on a war wound doesn't make sense". Insight into the failings and contradictions of how migration is governed led some respondents to deliver humanitarian support while simultaneously questioning it and critiquing institutional mechanisms through moral and political pressure:

> If one is just a volunteer it means that in a totally spontaneous way he or she is engaging in activities. These may follow ethical and moral motivations, but once the activity is done it ends there. Activism, instead, is engaging in an activity but also pushing your idea further and instigating it. One thing is to say "I help migrants to write their CV": this is volunteering. Another thing is to say "I open a desk to support migrants in looking for work and I talk with institutions, express people's discontent, propose alternatives": this is activism. They are two very distinct things. (Patrizia)

When I asked Patrizia for an example of how she exercised activism as charity worker, she replied that the data about migrants sheltered at the Hub that she transmitted weekly to the Municipality were her main channel for protest. She collected and organized the information to highlight the growing number of migrants being returned to Italy from other European countries on the grounds of the Dublin Regulation. This way, she deliberately made authorities aware of new migrant vulnerabilities emerging out of European regulations, putting pressure on them to deal with this reality. She also gathered figures highlighting the presence, at the Hub, of migrants officially considered highly vulnerable (e.g., pregnant women) and eligible for support in dedicated centers, thus exposing institutional failure in meeting the requirements of international protection standards. Chiara, another charity worker, daily escorted to the offices of the Municipality a group of unaccompanied minor migrants who hung around the Hub during daytime but were not officially admitted to sleep there at night because entitled to supplementary protection. Due to infrastructural lack of capacity in centers assisting minors travelling alone, these children joined the ranks of those sleeping rough around the Stazione Centrale.

When humanitarianism takes on a political connotation—not just a depoliticizing one—questioning the accepted ways in which assistance is delivered becomes an integral part of practicing humanitarianism. Outside the Hub, independent activists challenged the dehumanizing logics of humanitarianism by engaging in open protest or promoting public advocacy. Even inside the Hub, Patrizia and Chiara engaged in deliberate, yet silent expressions of dissent. Their strategies recall the "imperceptible politics" used by illegalized migrants to struggle for work and unionization described by Wilcke (2018). They show that being political does not necessarily require engaging in visible public protest. By reminding local authorities that it should be their responsibility to provide appropriate shelter for unaccompanied migrant minors, Chiara took on a role of watchdog; by making institutions aware of the shifting composition of migrants in need, Patrizia tried to exercise on them political pressure.

At the Hub and independently, the actions of volunteers and workers suggest that involvement in assistance to newcomer migrants was, for some, a means to restore a conscious political role for humanitarianism by "*revealing* and *reviving* the political (that is the plural and conflictual) character of politics" (Cuttitta, 2018, p. 635, emphasis in original) and repoliticize the migration field. Without necessarily engaging in overt forms of public protest, in the examples presented here, civil society actors nonetheless still engaged in actions that meet Rancière's (1999) definition of political: they silently challenged the minimalist humanitarian logics of institutional approaches.

5. Conclusion

The European migration 'crisis' brought to the fore emerging subjects from civil society in the field of humanitarianism (Sezgin & Dijkzeul, 2016). As I have shown in this article, it also led to contesting some of humanitarianism's basic principles. Civil initiatives of humanitarian support reveal tensions between depoliticization and repoliticization.

I acknowledge the worth of critical approaches to humanitarianism that emphasize its depoliticizing value. However, I also show that an exclusive focus on hu-

manitarianism as an institutional logic conceals the profoundly political nature embedded in humanitarian work on the ground. As broader literature on humanitarianism has indicated, humanitarian actions constantly grapple with moral and ethical dilemmas that make them deeply political. I thus highlight the limitations of the biopolitical paradigm that "can obscure the complexity of actual practices and the diversity of aid" (Rozakou, 2012, p. 565). I do so by integrating an analysis of institutional uses of humanitarianism in migration management with an analysis of the practices and underlying motivations of civil initiatives of humanitarian support. This allows revealing particular styles and strategies that civil initiatives of migrant support bring to responses to migration, reflecting a diversity of ways in which humanitarianism is conceived, practiced, and linked to politics.

Actions of people on the ground indeed contribute to depoliticization when they uncritically support the official system of migrant reception. Their actions, however, also prove political in at least two ways.

First, in the relationship between civil society volunteers or workers and their migrant beneficiaries, I have distinguished between a minimalist humanitarianism that is exclusionary and depoliticizing and an enabling humanitarianism that questions an exclusive emphasis on bare life. While the former indeed contributes to depoliticizing migration, the latter is repoliticizing. Volunteers and workers put into practice an understanding of humanitarian aid that evaluates the human dignity of beneficiaries. Instead of drawing on minimalist humanitarian principles to prioritize security and sovereignty, they prioritized migrants' rights and well-being. In this sense, civil society initiatives of humanitarian support engaged in a politics of life (Fassin, 2007) that aspired to enact an alternative social order. While not necessarily voicing disagreement with established ways of doing humanitarianism, the experiences and practices of volunteers and workers did nonetheless constitute involuntary politics, offering fertile ground for more overt and conscious forms of political engagement to develop.

Second, when the initiatives of volunteers and workers take on a denouncing role—by calling attention to a gap, rather than just filling it—humanitarianism becomes consciously political. Following Rancière's (1999) definition, humanitarianism is a means to express disagreement and antagonize the configurations of institutional approaches to migration. Humanitarianism, in this sense, is "deployed among the weak as it denounces the powerful" (Fassin, 2007, p. 511). Most interestingly, this form of political action need not rely on open public protest through demonstrations or public advocacy. Many expressed it silently, through everyday practices that challenged institutional categorizations of migrant needs (e.g., when extending humanitarian assistance to those considered ineligible by institutions or denouncing to authorities the neglect of their own responsibilities).

The examples presented in this article show that civil society actors involved in humanitarian support to migrants are far from passively filling an institutional gap and acting in support of state securitization strategies. Rather, through direct involvement in humanitarianism, ordinary citizens become conscious of its inherent tensions, which leads their political awareness and engagement to grow. As they struggle to come to terms with the ethics of life-saving only approaches, some reinject value in migrant lives and, by doing so, engage in involuntary politics. For others, progressive involvement comes with increasing awareness of the political value of their thoughts and actions, leading to open or silent expressions of political dissent.

At a time when humanitarianism has been indicated as being void of political value, volunteers and workers in civil support initiatives question the minimalist logics of humanitarianism as bare life. By re-humanizing the ways in which aid is delivered on the ground, giving voice to global inequalities and injustice, acting as watchdogs and questioning institutions they repoliticize the migration field. Ultimately, by contrasting an institutional and a civil perspective on humanitarian support to migrants, I show that a plurality of humanitarian traditions coexists in this field, with different political voices.

My findings also testify the increasing entanglement, in current responses to migration, between institutional actors, development and relief organizations, charities, volunteers, activists and social movements. The fact that all of these have become essential actors in this field has important implications for migration policy and politics in general. The interactions and frictions between these actors, in fact, become the cogwheels through which underlying ethics and responsibilities are interrogated. This interrogation, I argue, may be not only a source of contestation, but could also constitute a motor through which change to current migration systems may emerge democratically.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Giulia Sinatti is an ethnographer with a longstanding interest for migration. Her work deals with issues such as migration governance, migration policy, asylum-migration nexus, migration-development nexus, human security, return migration, diaspora and transnationalism, migration between (West) Africa and Europe. On these topics, she has published in recognized journals, including *Population Space & Place*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Ethnicities* and *African Studies*. An engaged scholar, she also advises intergovernmental and United Nations agencies, civil society and grassroots organizations active in the migration field.

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Article

Rearranging Differential Inclusion through Civic Solidarity: Loose Coupling in Mentorship for "Unaccompanied Minors"

Eberhard Raithelhuber

Department of Educational Science, University of Salzburg, 5020 Salzburg, Austria; E-Mail: eberhard.raithelhuber@gmx.at

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Abstract
This article looks into a community-based mentoring programme for unaccompanied refugee minors (URMs), launched in 2015 at the peak of refugee movement in Austria. Leaning on a long-term ethnographic study, it sheds light on dynamic developments in refugee support through civic solidarity. The article proposes that examining the programme from the point of view of dialectic processes of organizing provides a better standpoint for asking what was produced on the programme and what influences those outcomes have had on more contentious political dimensions. Following this, the focus is concentrated on "loose coupling" within a pilot youth mentoring scheme. This reveals how inbuilt ambiguities were given structure, how rationality and indetermination were interdependently organized and how the uncertain was ascertained through mentor training and matching. Thus, unequal but personal relationships were brought about and stabilized. The particular institutionalization of "godparenthoods for URMs" offered possible ways of integrating various elements of a support system in a way which could provide better support than other relationships amongst strangers. I argue that these specific forms of loose coupling opened up a corridor in which aspects relating to the differential inclusion of young refugees were (re-)arranged through adults volunteering, but with mixed results.

Keywords
child and youth welfare; civic solidarity; loose coupling; organizational ethnography; refugee support; unaccompanied refugee minors; volunteering; youth mentoring

Issue
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1. Introduction

Some years after the arrival of up to ten thousand refugees a day in the "long summer of migration" in Europe in 2015, academia is asking what traces of this remain. As proven by this thematic issue of *Social Inclusion*, more and more scientists are inquiring into the extent to which civil initiatives have translated into institutional developments and change in the social sector (e.g., Feischmidt, Pries, & Cantat, 2019; Lace, 2018). Some are taking stock of the potential impact of these developments by considering if, and how, civic solidarity has altered or extended forms of social support and care within the welfare state. The present article follows this trend but pursues two aims. Firstly, it provides empirical findings on a community-based pilot mentoring programme for unaccompanied refugee minors (URMs). Secondly, and inseparably from this, I offer an example of how a perspective on "loose coupling" can be fruitfully applied in research on civic support initiatives.

To pursue the double objective, on one hand I look into substantial results from a case study on the above-mentioned youth mentoring scheme, which launched in 2015 in an Austrian region. Drawing on the results of this overall investigation, I make the case that this form of civic solidarity and volunteering has indeed added to established, professional and institutionalized welfarist social support and care. All of this has to some extent rearranged the differential inclusion of these young people, though with mixed results. For example, the godpar-

enthood programme did not change fundamentally how political representatives and agencies that are funded or run by the state handle the situation of these young people institutionally. However, as I will show, this model of organizing civic solidarity has continuously supported the young participants in navigating their life courses. It has extended and intensified the various support measures that the ombuds-organization piloting the mentoring scheme provides for young refugees.

This article's other objective is to move beyond established ways of mapping and assessing the results of research on civic solidarity. Our ethnographic approach allowed a number of questions to arise and then crystallize over time as the complex research project unfolded: how could the dispersed social realities and activities of organizing we came across be so crudely represented and even rebranded as "godparenthood for URMs"? How could this programme, launched at the peak of refugee movement and acts of solidarity, still be "successful" despite the radical right-wing policies developing in Austria? Within our study, such contemplative, but fundamental questions called for a middle-range theory or concept to shape and make sense of the research we conducted: loose coupling (Orton & Weick, 1990; Wolff, 2010). Applying that concept to data from a long-term qualitative case study, I show how we can assess in a sophisticated way what has been produced and has become organizable and producible within refugee support initiatives with regard to more contentious, political dimensions. Therefore, I provide an example of applying a heuristic that may also be helpful to address related issues in future research.

Taking the twofold objectives together, the overall intention of this article is to discuss findings from an in-depth case study under the conceptual perspective of loose coupling to advance academic discussion in the field. Thus, based on the relational understanding of the author, the article does not want to get rid of complexity, but to unfold it by connecting dynamic and dialectic aspects within the overall study. This will allow for demonstrating how ambiguities and uncertainties in systems which are typical for momentums with a change potential were both brought about and dealt with. In the given case, this allows for understanding how all of this led to a particular outcome: the "success" and even sustainability of the programme "godparenthoods for URMs", bearing on civic support for refugees.

In the following, I start by describing the local context and theoretical background for the latter empirical focus. This involves outlining the development of the mentoring programme and connecting it to the social positioning of URMs in public care in Austria. Leaning on political theory, I regard the situation of URMs as one that is characterized by "differential inclusion" (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2012). Then I introduce the key principles of a loose coupling perspective in organizational research. As this approach is not widely used in scientific reasoning on the rise and development of civic support initiatives for refugees, I elaborate on the fundaments of "loose coupling theory" (Orton & Weick, 1990). Together with a brief look at methods and data, this serves as a prelude to the core of this article: the conceptually inspired integration and discussion of findings from the overall in-depth case study from the perspective of loose coupling. To this end, in the main section I will show how the mentoring scheme under observation made it possible to rearrange various aspects of this differential inclusion of URMs. Towards the end, I determine six core aspects which can be uncovered through this organizational perspective on a local refugee support initiative, before adding a political assessment and outlook on future research and practice.

2. The Mentoring Programme and the Differential Inclusion of Minor Refugees

In the summer of 2015, an acknowledged, semi-independent regional ombuds-organization for children and youth announced the implementation of a new mentoring scheme for URMs, calling for volunteers. This mirrored developments in other parts of Austria (see Scheibelhofer, 2019). Shortly thereafter, around a hundred local people took part in the first information evening. Dozens declared their interest in becoming a "godparent" ("Pate" in German). The plan was to turn some "godparenthoods" ("Patenschaften") into "host families" ("Gastfamilien", not to be confused with foster families). According to this plan, a handful of URM mentees would move into the mentors' households, having already established firm mentoring relationships. Shortly after the kick-off evening, ombuds-agency staff started the first compulsory training cycle with local adult volunteers, consisting of around 20 hours of preparation, accompanied by personal assessments and consultations.

Meanwhile, trains packed with refugees crossed into Austria on their way to Germany and beyond. As a result, the ombuds-organization launched the programme ahead of time, due to the pressure felt and the enthusiastic response from civil society. When the first mentors were trained and ready, staff went to the special accommodation units housing most URMs between 14 and 18 years of age, explaining how mentoring works and what it achieves. Many declared their willingness to "get" a mentor. The new mentors then got to know "their" young refugees at an assisted face-to-face meeting, known as "matching". After this, they met regularly on their own with no set end date. In the background, the agency continued its activities. At the end of 2018, nearly 200 mentors had been trained and more than one hundred "godparenthoods" were still active, far beyond what the agency had defined as a minimum target.

2.1. Contextualizing "Unaccompanied Minor Aliens" in Austria

This picture-book story calls for context. From 2014 to 2018, more than 16,000 young refugees claimed asy-

lum as minors in Austria (population: approx. 9 million), with a peak of around 8,000 applications in 2015. Over 90% were male and an equal number gave their age as between 14 and 18. The vast majority of these URMs were considered to have Afghan citizenship, while a sizeable group also described Syria and Somalia as their native countries, followed by other countries of the Maghreb, Central and West Africa and the Middle East. Beyond this basic statistical information, there is almost no research-based scientific knowledge on the lived experience and institutional handling of URMs in Austria. In addition, there is still no full official portrayal of the different systems and services around the legal representation of URMs and their accommodation in public care (Heilemann, 2017). The Austrian office of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) and UNHCR Austria have now issued detailed publications which fill some of these gaps (see Bassermann & Spiegelfeld, 2018; UNHCR, 2018). This deplorable situation is one reason behind the disparate ways in which institutions deal practically with URMs across the country. For example, there is no particular agreement on the minimum standards for the legal representation of URMs during their asylum procedure. Detailed rules for this are generally lacking, including on the level of the federal provinces (the nine Länder), which play a key role in the federal Republic of Austria. Moreover, the recent turn towards extreme right-wing policies in Austria has caused a constant shift in conditions and infrastructures in the refugee management and asylum systems (for more details see Merhaut & Stern, 2018).

However, some basic structures for URMs can be mapped. As a rule of thumb, if a person claims asylum in Austria, he or she falls into the basic welfare support scheme for refugees ("Grundversorgung"), grounded in the Federal Basic Welfare Support Act. Basic welfare support is generally applied to all asylum claimants and to refugees without a "first-class" asylum status. URMs are dealt with under this scheme until they get a positive asylum decision or leave the country. Generally, as soon as refugees enter the national asylum procedure, they fall under the responsibility of one of the Länder (Ganner, Jicha, & Weber, 2016, pp. 23–24.). Most unaccompanied minor "aliens" ("Fremde", a legal term) aged between 14 and 18 who are sent to the Länder are not housed in regular out-of-home child and youth care. Instead, they are accommodated in special residential facilities for youth under the basic welfare support scheme. These mass accommodation units, as I call them here, are part of the refugee management system and administration, and are very dissimilar in nature across the country. The public child and youth welfare authorities take on legal guardianship for URMs residing in the country without a "natural" guardian, e.g., parent or adult kin. However, these legal guardians, often state-employed social workers, generally do not, and cannot, operate as independent, powerful and resourceful representatives of these children. In practice, their duties, e.g., care, education and counselling, are largely delegated to providers contracted to run mass accommodation units for URMs, working under inadequate conditions.

In contrast to adults, minors in basic welfare support at least can and should receive additional support according to the law, e.g., regarding schooling or child and youth services. However, various legal opinion-makers deplore the fact that the state authorities and contractors providing basic welfare support for URMs have a broad discretionary power regarding the provision of these additional support measures (e.g., Ganner et al., 2016). Generally, URMs can only transfer to regular out-of-home youth care institutions after they are granted full asylum and before reaching the age of majority. Only a minority have qualified. However, if URMs can enter regular out-of-home child and youth care, they have much better de facto access to social services and support and possibly even receive that support for a longer time, before they definitely have to leave care when turning 21. Simply put, Austria has already had a two-class system in public care for a long time: on the one hand "regular" out-of-home care in child and youth welfare (group homes, semi-independent housing or foster families) and on the other hand "irregular" care for URMs without full asylum status housed in special accommodation units. Most URMs are in the latter group. In terms of volume, in the state where the mentoring project operated, the number of URMs (age 14 to 17) receiving basic welfare support in mass accommodation in 2015 surpassed the number of children, youth and young adults in "regular" out-of-home care (age 0 to under 21).

In brief, mass accommodation units for URMs have much less favourable conditions for what is commonly referred to as "integration" into the receiving nation/state/society. The above-mentioned recent IOM report on URMs in Austria concludes:

> On the whole, the transition to adulthood is seen as a challenge....Austria has no specific nationwide measures in the areas of care and integration that are designed to prepare unaccompanied minors for the transition to adulthood…. (Bassermann & Spiegelfeld, 2018, pp. 33–34)

Many newcomers only have access to public schools or other welfare services under precarious conditions. This is despite the fact that Austria ratified the universalistic UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). However, the unjust legal and social treatment of URMs in Austria is "legitimated" and practised by the official administrative bodies, first and foremost by youth welfare authorities which do not actually take in URMs. In contrast to this, legal opinions and reports by ombudsman boards have stated repeatedly that child and youth welfare has to guarantee the provision of adequate services to all young people in need (Die Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaften, 2015). To sum up, this situation can be understood as the differential inclusion of URMs into var-

ious institutions and organizational systems of the Austrian nation state and society, most notably in care, education and health.

2.2. The Concept of Differential Inclusion

By characterizing the inclusion of URMs as differential, I adopt a concept which has become popular in critical migration and border studies, but is equally rooted in anti-racist, cultural and feminist studies (De Genova, Mezzadra, & Pickles, 2014, p. 25). Up to now, it has rarely been applied in studies on social policy and social services. "Differential inclusion" reflects insights from a political theory of immigration and citizenship (see Anderson, 2013). It starts from the assumption that society is pervaded by and made up of multiple bordering processes. They shape all kinds of positions of membership, subjectivities and belonging, going deeply into the political space (Balibar, 2003). In the context of this article, the concept serves to grasp the complex and confusing ways in which young people who are categorized as URMs are unequally woven into the social fabric in concrete terms, in the context of the refugee management system and youth welfare.

Describing migrants as undergoing differential inclusion highlights the fact that borders are permeable and that different political figures (see Nail, 2015) are subject to and created through different regimes of mobility (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013). Hence, the ways such othered subjects are categorized, valued, selected and, finally, excluded and included are dynamic, and undergo occasional processes of (re)negotiation:

> The nub of the matter, however, is how these differential processes of bordering affect the threshold that lies between governmental processes of delivering justice and the politics of claims that exceed them.…There is a need to further investigate the processes and discontinuities that characterize the relation between the variations of this threshold and the contemporary transformations of borders. (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2012, p. 197)

In my work, I endorse these thoughts expressed by core proponents of the perspective in multiple ways. First, in the context of my broader aims I take their lead in formulating a research framework that allows me to examine the intersection of social (de)protection and (im)mobilities (Raithelhuber, Sharma, & Schröer, 2018). Second, in the case study on the programme behind this article, "godparenthoods for URMs", I consider the establishment and lived realities of youth mentorship as this type of threshold of negotiation and, possibly, site of contest. The present article narrows down the focus by adopting a theoretically informed position that understands youth mentoring for URMs by adult volunteers from civil society as *one* potential site for negotiating and, possibly, for reshaping aspects of differential inclusion. Up to now, no study has looked into such processes from the organizational perspective of loose coupling.

2.3. Research Gaps and Lacking Focuses

In my understanding, examining differential inclusion requires sensitivity to discontinuity and processes, rather than making continuity and structure (in the sense of stability) the starting point for empirical analysis. This makes a pilot youth mentoring scheme based on civic solidarity for refugees an interesting starting point for observations, as it allows a number of questions to be asked. What actually comes true when an ombuds-organization founded on the universalistic principles of the UN CRC engages in a new social support scheme for URMs outside official youth welfare, but built on civic engagement? What kind of institutional and biographical work is done? How does a pilot programme deal with upcoming uncertainties and insecurities?

Such questions call for a perspective that is yet to be established in research on (youth) mentoring. Mainstream mentoring research, which mainly uses quantitative methods, adopts an operational and factorial perspective, e.g., looking at mentors' attributes, contextual factors, (self-)assessments, and "add-ins" (i.e., mentor training, matching, screening, etc.). Many studies seem aimed at developing knowledge on success in programmes, including programmes for "immigrants and refugee youth" (Birman & Morland, 2014) or young people in public care (e.g., Sulimani-Aidan, Melkman, & Hellman, 2019). Put simply, most studies in the field follow an individualistic, positivistic and evidence-based logic (for an exception see Schott-Leser, 2018). Qualitative research on youth mentoring through stand-alone programmes (in which a mentor-mentee dyad is intentionally created) is still scant (but see Colley, 2003). That applies all the more to research on community-based mentoring schemes for youth. What is more, there is still little critical discussion of methods and methodology in qualitative research on mentoring, including discussion on organizational aspects.

In brief, in contrast to mainstream research which focusses on youth mentoring (e.g., Behnia, 2007; Lakind, Atkins, & Eddy, 2015; Larsson, Pettersson, Eriksson, & Skoog, 2016), I conducted research *within* or *in the midst of* mentoring. In other words, youth mentoring was not the primary object of desire. Fairly more, for me it was a provisional empirical anchor to engage with the highly stratified, complex and dynamic orderliness of social life, and with perceived changes to that orderliness. Here, this is achieved by applying an organizational perspective of loose coupling to "godparenthoods for URMs", anchored in a civic solidarity initiative.

3. Context of the Study, Methods and Data Analysis

The study was part of an explorative and qualitative investigation that started in the summer of 2015 (Raithel-

huber, 2018). It began in haste at a time when events were coming thick and fast. The team was led by a principal investigator, the author of this article, and four young female voluntary researchers, some of them university students. Initially, the agency which started the new scheme called upon the author to do an evaluation. However, I decided to take a much more fundamental research stance, enabling the team to draft an internal research report (given to the agency) and at the same time offering an academic outcome. Given the unsatisfactory scientific knowledge on mentorship programmes for URMs, and on URMs in Austria in particular (see above), we asked a simple but fundamental question: What "on earth" is happening here?

Building on my experience as an ethnographer, the overall research project that I employ as an example embraced alienation and an initial lack of "cultural" understanding as core approaches for data collection and analysis. The case study mainly looked into three different aspects of the mentoring project: first, the public events to attract future mentors and the subsequent compulsory training of adult volunteers (participant observation, e.g., on a full training cycle); second, sense-making by these mentors (initial and several follow-up narrative interviews, N1 = 18; N2 = 13); and third, the perspective of the young mentees (two multi-lingual one-time group interviews, embedded in socio-cultural events, N1 = 10, N2 = 8, all male; languages used: Somali, Arab, Dari/Farsi and German). Besides this, photos were taken of events or places connected to the pilot scheme, artefacts were collected (e.g., forms used by the ombuds-agency, reports, handouts), and representations were examined on social media and in the press. The particular research settings, methods and methodology of the substudies have been presented elsewhere (Raithelhuber, 2018, 2019a). Here, it shall suffice to say that ethnographic and narrative data was produced over more than three years, without noteworthy funding from third parties. The analysis of field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) was inspired by membership categorization analysis (Fitzgerald & Housley, 2015). We mainly used content analysis for the initial interviews with prospective mentors, as well as for the one-time group interviews with youth, enhanced by aspects of in-depth sequential text analysis. The documentary method (Nohl, 2010) has been employed to analyse follow-up interviews with experienced "godparents". This part of the long-term qualitative substudy is still continuing.

Participation in the interviews was voluntary. Data collection, including during the training cycle, was based upon informed consent. In the group interviews with the young refugees we deliberately did not ask them about their experiences during or before their flight. In contrast, we concentrated on their experiences with their match and with the ombuds-organization. The quotes in the following section are all translations from German and Austrian German. All names of persons, places and organizations were anonymized in this article.

The particular perspective of loose coupling that I bring to the fore in this article emerged at an early stage of the analysis. The concept helped us to understand the ethnographic material on the mentor training, which initially seemed to be divergent and confusing. In the context of this article, loose coupling is employed as a heuristic to integrate and discuss particular findings from the overall study from the perspective of loose coupling.

4. "Loose Coupling Theory" and Human Service Organizations

In an overview of developments, Meyer (2017, p. 430) stated that since the 1990s "organizational theory has focused not on entities as unitary structures, but on complexity and differentiation in organizations and in their environments". The perspective of loose coupling I invoke here deals with related issues. It concentrates on processes within systems and on interactions between elements, rather than on properties of particular elements per se (Czarniawska, 2006, p. 1661). In the present article, I follow Orton and Weick's (1990, p. 218) proposition of seeing "the concept of loose coupling...as a useful tool in identifying, measuring, and understanding interpretative systems". I consider the pilot youth mentoring project under scrutiny to be such a system.

4.1. Keystones of a Loose Coupling Perspective

Loose coupling pioneers assume that systems can evolve which are both loose and coupled at the same time (Orton & Weick, 1990; Weick, 1976). Their relational, dynamic and dialectical perspective, in particular, opens up a unique way of understanding how organizing (i.e., processes of structuring) and the constructions making up a system are possible in the light of ambiguity and uncertainty (for an overview, see Wolff, 2010, pp. 286–295). In organizational parlance, this approach is able to grasp the fact that particular elements or parts of (some) systems can maintain a degree of independence and indeterminacy, thus conducing to heterogeneity within a system. At the same time, some elements and their relationship are determined. Taken together, different elements respond to other elements within the systems (and, thus, do not act fully independently). As a result of this particular interdependency, rationality and indeterminacy combine in ways that enable systems to achieve distinctive capacities and performances (Orton & Weick, 1990, pp. 205–208). This aspect is important for the way in which I will present and discuss findings. One reason for choosing the perspective of loose coupling is that the regional ombuds-organization for children and youth which developed and implements the mentoring scheme shares features of a human service organization (HSOs). HSOs display strong characteristics of loose coupling, for which internal fragmentation is one cause.

4.2. *The Advantage of a Loose Coupling Perspective on "Civic Solidarity for Refugees"*

Research on situations with the potential for change—e.g., those discursively defined as "crisis", "emergency" and "exceptional"—requires an approach that is sensitive to uncertainty and ambiguity. This supports the choice of a "loose coupling" perspective in order to analyse emerging civic solidarity for refugees. A recent study looked into experiences in mentorships or "sponsorships" for URMs in the Austrian context as a form of "intimate solidarity" (Scheibelhofer, 2019). It highlighted important topics in mentors' experiences of relationships in "godparenthoods", e.g., the intersection of emotions, gender, and care in civic engagement. Though the research results reveal ambivalences, they do not feature a thoroughly organizational perspective. Organizational perspectives have been employed to look into how HSOs deal with URMs, though on a small scale. For example, a micro-analytic study in this field that focuses on cultural images of URMs uses sociological neo-institutionalism as a prism (von Oppen, 2018). However, von Oppen solely investigated "professional" social work with URMs, thus not examining civic solidarity.

It is notable that the loose coupling perspective does not start out from a reified picture in which "organization" is considered to be an ordered and rational entity—or even a single entity at all. In contrast, it focuses on the structuring and processing of events and relationships. Below, I use this approach heuristically to map substantial findings on a particular case of civic solidarity initiative for refugees under the conceptual perspective of loose coupling.

5. Findings

I start by thrusting you into the raw data, a field note from the public event launching the youth mentoring programme for URMs. The head of the ombuds-organization, overwhelmed by the high number of interested adults from civil society, explained this new scheme as follows:

> [Head] says that the [ombuds-organization for children] put their "heart and soul into children's rights" and that in these circumstances, the children's rights of refugee minors are being violated, by the standards of care....Word for word: "No child may be discriminated against; all children are equal". The children need special protection and support, precisely because they are vulnerable, says [head]. "Specially adapted to URMs because of the difference in the task, expectations and background conditions". He/she also refers to the UN CRC in that context. In 2015 the focus is supposed to be on structural improvements to the background situation for URMs. The aim is to achieve equality between URMs and Austrian children and adolescents. The former, [head] continues [stretching out and emphasising "former"] has a long way to go....The latter [again, he/she stresses the word] is, however, something very concrete; direct help. (Field notes from information event)

How can we read this? On the surface, the agency's actions in dealing with discrimination against URMs as publicly stated here by the agency could be described as diverging and even inconsistent (see Wolff, 2010, p. 307). However, the chosen perspective of loose coupling does not regard the development of community-based mentoring for discriminated URMs as a poor solution to a supposedly given social problem. Instead, it suggests that such a "decision" is part of an (active) search for a problem in the light of already ongoing actions and changes. In developing mentoring, organizations actively both deal with and produce uncertainty and ambiguity. In the following paragraphs, I will unfold six key examples of how ambiguities and uncertainties were both dealt with and brought about in related processes of organizing youth mentoring for URMs.

5.1. *Proclaiming that Diverging Decisions Are Natural to Various Audiences*

In 2015, the ombuds-agency had been running a general mentoring programme for children and youth for several years, characterized by the individualized training and matching of volunteers. Besides up to 200 "local" children and youth, it had also integrated a handful of teenagers who originally came to town as URMs. Connected to this and according to the founding myth of "godparenthoods for URMs" within the agency, it all started out with a growing awareness that voluntary mentors needed different knowledge to deal with the challenges they face when engaging into a personal relationship with an URM. A staff member remembers how he/she felt when these adult volunteers from the established general youth mentoring programme addressed them:

> Yes, they really sat there, and I thought, they're all asking the same questions. Makes sense. They all have the same issues. What's the [asylum] interview? What does he [the mentee] talk about, then? Yes, or, is there anything I can do wrong? And so we said, of course, it would really be good if we can give them [the mentors] something in advance, you know, tell them what it actually means to undergo an asylum procedure. That's generally something we don't have a clue about, right? And so that's how it came about. (Interview with ombuds-agency worker A)

A hypothetical option to react to such perceived needs would have been to add to the general programme, which the organization itself presented as well developed. However, the agency "opted" to develop a particular new programme aimed at attracting, screening, training, matching and—later on—supervising "godpar-

ents for URMs". Hence, in my view, this move from "mentoring" to "godparenting" was conditional on a different type of sense-making: a handful of cases were explored by applying particular knowledge, leading to a (re)framing of these mentees as URMs. At the same time, the agency put the ill-treatment of URMs (see Section 2) on its nationally coordinated agenda—a fact that resounds in our note on the information evening above. Hence, a number of activities were already going on, actually since the Millennium. Both things together—i.e., first the reassessment of existing mentoring relationships as requiring different knowledge on the part of adult volunteers (and, incidentally, the agency itself) and, second, ongoing activities related to URMs—later allowed the new scheme to be depicted as a self-evident necessity and decision, fully coherent with the agency's universalistic mission. This switch to a new, now partly pedagogically framed social problem agenda by the ombuds-organization was achieved by connecting it to both publically and professionally widely shared socio-cultural representations of the "unaccompanied refugee minor" (Raithelhuber, 2018, 2019a). Hence, "URMs" could be charted as a particular social problem, as well as a "solution" to them being proposed: community-based mentoring for URMs.

To sum up, in organizational language, a "discovery" of this kind enabled the organization to rationalize particular actions, some of which had already been realized and are continuing. The proclamation of the new scheme can be seen as part of a constitutive process to account for a variety of actions towards internal audiences (e.g., colleagues) and external audiences (e.g., civil society, NGOs in the refugee management system). This explanation enabled the (re-)allocation of particular resources within the ombuds-agency, e.g., the deployment of more than two full-time staff members. It facilitated the integration of a new, exceptional space—a lab—into existing activities in a cautious way: one that did not put the overall operability of the agency at risk. By searching (for) their new problem, parts of the ombudsman organization switched from a routine mode into a developmental mode. This allowed enhanced institutional work on uncertainty to be carried out. One aspect of this was that the agency proclaimed diverging decisions as something natural and rational to various audiences. This sense-making of the situation as a sort of incubator was *not* linked in any particular way to migration or refuge, however. Templates were found in the organizational (self-)narrative. That narrative takes material form at the agency in a huge silver timeline made of cardboard boxes. This symbolic agency lifeline, as I would call it, marks previous catalytic periods, including their completion (e.g., their transformation to youth welfare legislation). At the same time, a new term was invented for the voluntary mentors for URMs: "godparents". What is more, the name given to the programme conveys the idea of an intimate, warm-hearted and caring personal engagement, letting or taking someone in.

5.2. Ascertaining the Uncertain and Determining the Indeterminable through Training Prospective Mentors

Dependency on external resources, e.g., public funding, is typical for HSOs (Hasenfeld, 2009). What is more, any community-based mentoring programme depends on the integration of resources from civil society. From this perspective, the public communication of a decision to start mentoring for this particular group also provided the legitimation to connect external resources to mentoring activities, i.e., local adult volunteers. This, however, needed to be done in a way that both preserved and altered volunteers' borders and identities. One core means of bringing about this as well as the (re-)alignment of various actors was the establishment of a training curriculum. The complexity of an uncharted mentoring relationship with a social neophyte who—according to the ombuds-agency—was subject to severe discrimination and, in addition, a "minor", was reduced to topics which were held to be essential for dealing with young people as URMs (e.g., intercultural communication, asylum law, housing situation and everyday life, dealing with trauma). Staff literally referred to these aspects as a sort of "basic vocabulary".

For example, during training, URMs were characterized as generally traumatized, and this trauma was presented as something that could break out at any given time. Mentors were informed that this normally calls for psychotherapy, but that there was no such professional treatment available for URMs. In this context, the role of mentors was pictured as one of simply "being there"—something I reconstructed elsewhere as an element of one of three godparent figures: the "professional godparent", tending towards a "joker professional" or "surrogate professional" (Raithelhuber, 2018). In our interviews with prospective mentors (i.e., before they actually met their future match), volunteers described this "being there" for the young refugees as their self-understanding. Far from defining a simple and clear task, this construct of "simply being there" is reflected in the following quotes from initial interviews, giving examples of how some mentors imagined their future role and relationship:

> Kind of having a supportive role a bit, uh, like being there even when there are uh, if there are sometimes difficult phases, and, let's say, being a bit of a launch pad. (Jovanovic, lines 80–82)

> Something like uh, a fixed point. Something that's simply there. (Steiner, line 123)

This fact, i.e., the depiction and understanding of this core task of being a mentor for an URM, surprised us initially, at least against the overall image, which portrayed these young people as a highly discriminated social group with potentially enhanced professional needs. However, from a loose coupling perspective, making out

something this unclear to be a clear idea shows that the training provided future mentors with a particular certainty of what mentoring was about—including themselves and the other(ed). This "certain uncertainty" and "determined indetermination", as I would like to call it, was strongly connected to the enhancement of volunteers' biographical reflexivity. It offered them the freedom to later adapt their own behaviour to suit perceived necessities and needs in their personal mentoring relationship. Perhaps strict indications of "what to do" would have impacted negatively on volunteers' functionality regarding their "inner life", e.g., their personal life. It would probably have diminished volunteers' capacity to react to indeterminable tasks. In a worst-case scenario, volunteers would have simply fled the battleground, as adults also used mentoring to work on their "personal life", thus also engaging in youth mentoring for their own sake (Raithelhuber, 2019b).

All things considered, the training—amongst other elements—countered the pervasive threat of the different elements drifting apart. Particularly regarding the fact that people who are "unknown" to each other at the start and who share average "cultural(ized)" images of URMs can have feelings of alienation and disconcertment, the programme disseminated particular ways of understanding mentoring (including one's own role and the identity of the other), of orienting oneself and acting as a mentor or mentee. At the heart of this was the establishment of "membership categorizations" (Fitzgerald & Housley, 2015). These were varied and adaptable, sometimes intrinsically ambivalent, and allowed everyone involved to develop a personal relationship in a confusing situation. This was important, as none of the matched couples could fully know how they would learn to understand each other and what modus vivendi they would find in the long run. In other words, at least at the outset of turning local adults into "godparents for URMs" (Raithelhuber, 2018), the loose coupling of mentors (and mentees) was achieved by reducing mentoring complexity to particular topics during training and in the public representation of the programme. As I will show, this was compounded by a structuring and ritualization of mentoring steps, as well as other elements which helped to create the concrete illusion of "godparenthoods for URMs".

5.3. Producing Shared Values as a Sticky Glue

In the mentoring programme and in the training of volunteers, in particular, shared values were strongly established to bring about systemic integration. Hence, besides legitimizing mentoring, the programme also "produced" mentors through the establishment of a particular morality and expected forms of (inter-)action. This aspect is well known from research on human services as moral work (e.g., Hasenfeld, 2009; White, 2003), and also discussed critically in contributions on human(itarian) relief (Ticktin, 2014). In the given case, these legitimate and coercive ways of understanding the mentoring relationship and related obligation crystallize in the very naming of the overall mentoring programme as a sort of "godparenthood", as argued above. Adding to this, the ombuds-organization hosted a red carpet event in which the principal investigator and one voluntary researcher also participated as guests without a particular function. During a ceremony, mentors and mentees were awarded roses on stage for their engagement in the programme. There, again, a caring, intimate and warm-hearted picture was painted publicly and symbolically. Mentors' and mentees' names had been written on coloured, cut-out hearts and pegged to a long line, each tiny heart inscribed with the word "thanks". Mentor-mentee pairs were invited to a photo shoot, posing with their heads together in a golden, empty picture frame. Top political representatives acknowledged the programme in their welcoming address. Moreover, the competitive regional, national and European awards that the project had already won were exhibited in a shrine-like installation, while the event was enhanced by solemn live music.

In short, all of this supported the production and distribution of shared values amongst various stakeholders and actors in the mentoring programme. Most likely, this allowed much more durable links to be created between unequal elements than any other efforts to shape, influence and facilitate mentorship activities through leadership or control could have brought about (for a critique of this in the mentoring literature see Colley, 2003). It helped stabilize the understanding of mentors and mentees as a part of a larger project. Hence, it can be said that these values served as a glue to attach civic solidarity to the mentoring scheme.

5.4. Creating, Selecting, Disconnecting and Distributing Knowledge

As mentioned, the training for prospective "godparents" singled out trauma and health, dealing with cultural differences, legal procedures and the everyday life and needs of URMs, i.e., housing and social issues. A group learning environment allowed them to share their ideas, questions and biographical experiences. Forming a particular set of knowledge about "godparenthoods for URMs" was also supported by the production and administration of data. Volunteers also engaged actively in creating, disconnecting and distributing knowledge, not least by volunteering for narrative interviews with us. Notably, the ways volunteers managed the flow of knowledge displays characteristics of loose coupling. Adults selected information on themselves and their mentee, sometimes differentiating between knowledge from their "inside" experience (e.g., what they went through with their young match) and that on the "outside" (e.g., the public, the media, their kinship and neighbours). On some occasions, mentors let us researchers in on a secret, e.g., on the "real-life" story of their protégé or on other aspects which would socially and politi-

cally create a problematic, awkward image of the young people in general or of the mentoring programme. This aspect can be termed "semiotic loose coupling" (Orton & Weick, 1990, p. 209). In such a process, information from one system (in our case the real-life experience with the young refugee) is decoded, classified and re-coded or encoded in a particular manner that allows the other constitutive element of mentoring (in our case public communication) to maintain the system's integrity and consistency.

5.5. Creating "Godparenthood for URMs" as an Entity and Boundary Object

Staff and mentors together also showcased examples of "successful" mentoring on other occasions. Mentors were literally put on stage. Now in the role of "experts", they publicly bore witness to the enriching experience (for the mentor) and the positive transformation process (on the part of the refugee). They testified to the deep family-like relationship established with a young protégé, thus also suggesting there was a particular means-end relationship in mentoring. These somewhat ambivalent aspects are noticeable in the following two sequences from our field notes on the course for prospective mentors (participant observation). In the first, a person, presented to the group as a role model, answers the question of what kind of tips he/she has for future "godparents":

> It's important to offer them a relationship; to show interest in the other person and "take them in", explains [experienced mentor] word for word. "An interest in other cultures, not holding back, taking the leap". As they need a long-term relationship. "Wanting to help isn't the main priority". Altogether, it is a great enrichment: "Love develops", explains [experienced mentor] word for word. (Field note from mentor training, mentor A)

> Yes, I can really recommend it to anyone who has time. If you have two hours' time for the refugees, you can do a lot for the refugees. It's nice to see when they start integrating. (Field note from mentor training, mentor B)

Bringing together the various elements and representing "godparenthood for URMs" in a manner that was both durable and topical called for more than a one-off event, such as the kick-off evening or the red carpet event described above. In this sense, the release of group photos on social media and in the press, demonstrating unity among the various stakeholders, can be seen as efforts to build an entity or image.

Summarising the above, by this means, "godparenthood for URMs" was made objectifiable and personalized through representations and "representatives" of mentors, young refugees in mentorship, government ministers, decision-makers in public administration, ombuds-staff, speakers from both national and international NGOs, not to forget researchers (i.e., the author of this article). Producing communicable data and consumable images of mentoring for young refugees helped create a particular entity and particular heterogeneity across the system. Different actors could refer to this without losing their own systemic autonomy. Developing this "boundary object" (Star, 2010) required symbolical work and involved giving the various elements material form in a physical and virtual space.

Up to this point, I have presented five out of the six previously announced key examples of how ambiguities and uncertainties were both dealt with and brought about processes of organizing "godparenthoods for URMs". They mark challenges within this mentoring system. These challenges had to be worked on to create an interdependency enabling rationality and indeterminacy to co-exist and, consequently, enabling the system to achieve distinctive capacities and performances. At heart, this was connected to a central task: bringing about particular relationships between a local adult volunteer (a mentor) and a young person (a mentee). Following up on this, the final key example reveals how the project stabilized unequal relationships amongst people who were previously unknown to each other, by creating a hybrid space. It is perhaps the clearest example of how rationality and indetermination were concomitantly taken into account when processing and structuring the civic solidarity initiative.

5.6. Stabilizing Unequal Relationships amongst Strangers in a Hybrid Space

As a way to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity in the initial phase of a mentoring relationship, a ritualizing framework was applied. It was organized concentrically around the first date at the agency, following the mentor training, which was simply called "the matching". Agency staff metaphorically referred to it as the "marrying" of the "godparent" and the "youngster". In the following quote, two agency workers share their experiences on these matching events:

> Worker B: And what usually happens is that we simply say, OK, good, that before we fill out the agreement together, the two of them, first the godparents present themselves again to the young people....Then the young people also present something about themselves, introduce themselves....Though, if necessary, of course, we help. If we notice that, OK, good, one of them's got a bit stuck. Because sometimes the godparents get stuck, too. It's not only....I'll never forget how one [mentor] suddenly couldn't remember what she liked doing [worker A and interviewer laught].

> Worker A: That's what some of the godparents said: now I'm like really nervous…

Worker B: As if they were getting married or they really had a new job and were now getting to know their new employer, like, like you'd really notice it straight away. So, then we did help, with the documents too, a bit....And then both, then we ask both of them, OK, now you've got to know one another again. Introduced yourselves again, too....Can you imagine it? We ask the young people first and they say yes. We also ask the godparent, of course. If they both say yes, the two of them have the chance to talk to one another again a bit, while we simply fill in this note.

It comes clear how the agency workers themselves arranged the "matching" as a sort of wedding, assuming the role of a personal dating assistant and marriage registrar. In the youth mentoring literature, Pryce, Kelly and Guidone (2014, p. 427) hint that though matching seems to be a routine and highly valued activity of programmes, it is still poorly conceptualized and empirically investigated. Mainstream views on matching build on individualistic psychological theories (attractiveness, choice, etc.) and focus on individual people's characteristics. In contrast, an organizational perspective foregrounds enactment: what is performed, rather than the actors per se. As the quote indicates, in the case under investigation, "matching" activities prepared, induced, shaped, and stabilized insecure situations in which people who were unknown to each other could act as if they knew one another and understood what mentoring was, thus getting a chance to engage personally on unfamiliar terrain. Early information events for URMs already connected them to legitimate causes and needs. In turn, the young refugees were enabled to communicate this and elicit a reaction from the mentoring scheme. In turn, staff decoded and codified what they heard in individual counselling sessions from the adults and from the young refugees.

These different aspects make it clear how rationality was produced on all sides (what a mentoring match achieves, in general and in particular), in artful combination with indeterminacy (as no one really could know what it would be like). On the one hand, the training reassured participants that the agency would find the "right match", e.g., through personal assessment and data acquisition. Staff stated that people only failed to accept or immediately undid the proposed relationship in rare cases. On the other hand, mentors (and mentees) were symbolically equipped with what I call a "natural" decision-making power. For example, they were assured that the pairing depended on their approval (during or after the first meeting) and that they themselves would "feel" right away whether they matched or not, always having the right to say "no" without being dropped from the scheme. In addition, the ritualization of the first meeting and the role of the agency as a sort of warrantor, intermediary and (potential) arbiter was also underlined by introducing an artefact: a "contract" outlining the agreement for the mentoring relationship, as illustrated in the quote on the matching event. All parties signed it, each person was given a copy. This process provided not only basic data for communicating with each other, but often determined the availability, frequency and content of later non-assisted meetings.

In summary, the contract focused on controllable, imaginable and realizable activities in the midst of an as yet uncharted relationship. All of this this provides rich examples of how aspects of rhythmizing, temporalizing, determining and contouring were artfully developed to make mentorship and matching controllable and determinable at an early phase. In particular, this insight into procedure and timing also highlights the assistive role of both material and virtual artefacts in bringing about this kind of hybrid space (printed forms, data bases, contracts, certificates, profile images, and other items). Yet, what started out with a meeting to learn German once a week or leisure activities, connected to the image of "simply being there" described above, would later turn into more serious, delicate issues, as we know from our follow-up interviews with mentors and agency staff. Mentors ended up helping to prepare "their" young refugee for decisive interviews in asylum procedures. In some cases, mentors even invited their protégé to move into their household upon coming of age, thus avoiding their relocation to a remote refugee camp, i.e., mass accommodation for adults run under the basic welfare support scheme. One mentor even bought a flat so the young man could find affordable housing. In another case, volunteers scraped together several thousand euros to enable family reunification, providing "their" minor with funds to pre-finance DNA kinship tests in their country of origin.

6. Summary and Discussion of Findings

This article looked into a community-based youth mentoring programme for URMs grounded in a civic solidarity initiative in an Austrian region. Applying a loose coupling perspective to findings from a long-term case study highlighted dynamic and dialectic aspects.

6.1. Findings on the Six Key Examples of Organizing in the Mentoring System for URMs

The accelerated implementation of the programme took place in a historical situation: the "long summer of migration" in 2015. Based on the concept of loose coupling with its focus on organizations as "interpretative systems" (Orton & Weick, 1990, p. 218), I showed how a regional ombuds-agency achieved a different form of sense-making. According to my analysis, ambiguity and insecurity called for a new interpretation of the problem at hand: the enormous increase in URM arrivals. Hence, a mere aggregation of information within the beaten tracks did not enable the situation to be dealt with viably. Thus, activities finally flowed into a new mentoring scheme with a target group characterized by the agency as "URMs". By doing all of this, the agency was able to proclaim to different audiences that different ways

of helping to improve the situation of young people in public care was something "natural" and fully coherent with the agency's universalistic mission. As the first step towards future implementation, the agency developed a new training course for adult volunteers, as well as many other vehicles for structuring, processing and ordering (e.g., membership categorizations, matching rituals). These were used as add-ins which guided participants (mentors and the young people) and stakeholders towards the assumption that there was a logic to the programme. Thus, rationality was produced (e.g., the image of a clear means-end relation within mentoring) which was intrinsically tied to aspects of indetermination (e.g., an uncharted relationship and uncontrollable future activities between mentors and mentees). This enabled everyone—including the young people—to enact the mentoring programme in a specific way: a way that not only conduced to the distributed, but interdependent system of mentoring but also allowed volunteers and young mentees to act at their own behavioural and cognitive discretion (thus see Orton & Weick, 1990, pp. 210–211).

The training was only one core means of organizing and structuring elements within a dynamic system with frayed, permeable boundaries. Building on the organizational perspective of loose coupling, the undeterminability of means-end relations in mentoring (understood as a human service) was also dealt with by installing the matching process at the very core of the programme. Here, again, insecurity on all sides, as well as unknowability about how a personal relationship could actually be brought about, were tackled in various ways. From such a viewpoint, I reconstructed matching as an extended interconnection of various elements, both spatially and temporally. They intersect in a ritually staged event (the first, assisted "dating"), but stretch well before and after this particular activity, potentially becoming de-institutionalized and transforming into something else in the long run. Hence, paralleling results on HSOs, this article revealed how this mentoring system was capable of bringing about a particular networked capacity by combining two supposedly opposing aspects: rationality and indetermination (see Wolff, 2010, p. 24). An organization of this kind does not simply lack the capacity to fully "rationalize" all relevant aspects, and thus leave aside anything that exceeds its capacity for control. Quite the contrary, as the case demonstrated: both aspects—rationality and indetermination—were artfully taken into consideration in the context of organizational processing and structuring. This opened up a practical corridor in which issues around young people differentially included *as* URMs could be dealt with by engaging adult volunteers from local civil society.

6.2. The Organizational Perspective of "Loose Coupling" as a Heuristic to Address Complexity

Following my analysis, mentoring in the form of "godparenthood for URMs" most likely became "successful" and even sustainable in the example because it offered an institutional model for both dealing with and producing uncertainty and ambiguity in an artful way. This allowed core actors in the programme (mentors, youth) to make sense of the confusing situation—including by structuring uncertainty and ambiguity all the way down to a personal, physical, emotional level (on these aspects in "sponsorships" or "godparenthoods for URMs" in Austria, see Scheibelhofer, 2019). On an abstract and general level, it stands to reason that civic support became mainstreamed as mentoring precisely because relationships amongst various distributed elements could be built up in a flexible yet determined manner. At the peak of multiplied acts of solidarity with refugees in 2015, various means were invented of allowing people to take up such relationships (see Feischmidt et al., 2019). However, there is reason to assume that the institutionalization of "godparenthoods for URMs" offered options for integrating various elements in a way that was potentially more "effective" than other relationships between strangers. It did so partly in a pedagogical manner by using socio-cultural(ized) images of "godparents" and "URMs" (Raithelhuber, 2018), which were taken up by mentors and mentees alike (Raithelhuber, 2019a, 2019b). This model emerged and has subsisted until now because it was financially viable, projectable, advertizable, administrable and manageable for a variety of actors under the given circumstances, including the youth welfare authorities (see subsection 7.1 below).

Using Weick's "loose coupling" perspective allowed me to register the complexity, dynamics and dialectics involved in organizing "godparenthoods for URMs" in a way that goes beyond a widespread neo-institutionalist understanding of the "coupling" of (organizational) structure and environment (for a critique see Wolff, 2010, p. 308). For example, the study by von Oppen (2018), mentioned earlier, observed ambivalences within a particular HSO; a group home for URMs in child and youth care in Germany. Drawing on a neo-institutionalist approach, von Oppen (2018, pp. 185–187) merely mapped perceived ambivalences in the use of cultural(ized) images of URMs in a dichotomous manner, i.e., as contradictions. Therefore, he interpreted them as a sort of "decoupling" of the formal structure from everyday institutional practice and routine. This approach implies that, for strategic reasons, the cultural representations which are used for justification towards the outside world need to be strictly separated from the interpretations made by professionals in day-to-day care work with URMs. In my view, what is problematic about this approach is that it turns coupling issues into an either-or question (either *closely* or *loosely* coupled). However, in this kind of attempt to get rid of the ambiguity found in our material, we as researchers might end up with a weak understanding of events. In contrast to this, my case study provides a more fine-grained picture of how organizing was pursued mindfully "in the face of ambiguity" (Weick, 2015, p. 122). To give some insight into this, the present

article started out from the various ways that sense-making was achieved by the ombuds-agency in the light of particular incidents. In the given case, these were the increased arrival of URMs in 2015, the mentors of the established mentoring programme seeking advice at the ombuds-agency and so forth. Hence, the ambiguity present was turned into both a universalistic understanding of the issues at hand (i.e., URMs' neglected rights as children) and a particularistic approach (i.e., focusing on how URMs were different in terms of their legal status, social needs and culture). Later on, when something this unclear was made out to be a clear idea (i.e., the task of a mentor as "simply being there"), one could say that the ambiguity was increased. However, while it was heightened, at the same time ambiguity was grasped at a workable level and in a transient manner, i.e., in a way that allowed a next provisional step to be taken (see Weick, 2015, p. 117) and upcoming experiences to be integrated—including by the mentors and the young people themselves.

"Godparenthood for URMs" can be seen as a negotiated arena in which a number of different actors jointly ascertained that mentoring should be established to treat URMs as a "social problem". These interconnections evolved precisely because they offered everyone (or at least many people) advantages if they did (not) take particular decisions, (not) engage in something, and so forth. This evolution, however, required some element within the overall mentoring system to take on the role of a controller (signalling the transgression of boundaries), of surety (e.g., by symbolically guaranteeing the cohesion of independent actors), of immediate responsiveness (e.g., by intervening as a rescue unit in an emergency), etc. Therefore, on a surface level, the role of the ombuds-agency seems to stand out. However, to counter the threat of reification it needs to be acknowledged that no organization has a (fixed and enduring) capacity to bring about something that "works" and is "effective" and "prize-winning". Quite the contrary to this kind of essentialist agentic idea, various elements became loosely coupled into what we perceived as "godparenthoods for URMs". Seen this way, each of the elements within the system had partial knowledge of and interconnection with the overall, complex aspects involved, e.g., the everyday life of the young refugees or the bureaucratic procedures within the matching agency. Yet all of them jointly constructed a representation of "godparenthood for URMs" as a "boundary object" (Star, 2010). They produced an image that fed back into these elements, outstripping the capacities of each individual element to reflect, determine and represent the multitude of events involved in mentoring (see Weick, 2005, p. 54). This might be the pivot which has prevented the mentoring project under observation from drifting apart until now, as has happened to many initiatives for refugees arising in 2015.

Regarding the contribution of this example for future research, within a broader picture, I would venture to say that this organizational perspective has added complexity in understanding the emergence and working of refugee support initiatives, in particular as it did not start out by sharply contrasting state actors with non-state actors, as is often the case in this field (for Austria see De Jong & Ataç, 2017). My proposal is that the present example suggests that this specific organizational approach of loose coupling within systems could be used in future studies to deal with questions which are currently driving academic debate on refugee support initiatives, in order to better understand and assess related institutional and structural developments.

7. Conclusion and Outlook: A "Political" Assessment

If the intention of this article were only to fulfil the two objectives indicated, it would have to stop right here. I have already come to a conclusion on empirical findings, by looking at a particular initiative for young refugees through the lens of the concept of "loose coupling". However, at the beginning, I also argued that this organizational perspective on civic solidarity in refugee protection would provide a *better* viewpoint for assessing what has been produced and has become organizable and producible within these initiatives with regard to more contentious political dimensions. To be able to do so, I introduced the concept of "differential inclusion" from critical migration and border studies. Now, finally, I return to this view and try to give an answer to these "political" questions. Has this civic support initiative resulted in more structural cultural and political changes? Have the mentoring programme and all the effort that citizens put into it enabled public administrators and politicians to uphold the differential inclusion of "unaccompanied minor aliens"? Or have "godparenthoods for URMs" brought about a progressive shift? As I stated at the outset, I would certainly venture to say that this form of civic solidarity and volunteering has extended established, professional and institutionalized welfarist social support and care, rearranging the differential inclusion of these young people—with mixed results.

7.1. "Godparenthoods for URMs" as a Modernization of Differential Inclusion

My assessment is that on a political level, the "godparenthood" programme based on orchestrated civic solidarity did *not* turn around the general institutional attitude towards these young people. This, however, is hardly surprising given the overall political climate. Shortly before the programme started, a new piece of legislation was drafted in the province in question, codifying the exclusion of minor asylum claimants from child and youth welfare. While this formulation was eventually cancelled (as it was obviously anti-constitutional and violated the UN CRC), it mirrors exactly how welfare institutions have acted to date. Public authorities, even those with a self-proclaimed humanitarian stance towards refugees, have

used the initiative from the very beginning to support discriminatory policies. To give but one example, when the first "godparenthood" became a "host family" (remember that this was intended for a few cases as a sort of "top-up" to existing mentorships), the minister for social affairs and integration posted on Facebook:

> Possible at last—Minister Wagner [responsible for youth welfare; the author] has got it through: unaccompanied refugee minors in #Karlstadt can now be cared for in host families (similar to foster families). Thanks to [ombuds-organization].

A person obviously protesting against this development of a special scheme of "host families" instead of using "foster families" under the appropriate legislation for out-of-home care, i.e., the Child and Youth Welfare Act, commented:

> Why not in foster families??? They're also children and adolescents under the JWG [Youth Welfare Act], aren't they?!

The minister for social affairs and integration responded:

> Because asylum-seeking children/young people have a different status and the host parents also need special training (intercultural competence, knowledge about their cultures of origin).

This is just one example showing that concepts which the mentoring programme made relevant (e.g., specialist knowledge on cultural issues) enabled public authorities and administration to rationalize their differential inclusion of URMs, leaving these young people with severely reduced life chances. I indicated at the outset that manifold actors, including the ombuds-agency under observation, condemned the institutionalized ways of dealing with these young people as "URMs" as a form of (il)legal discrimination. Given that this applies almost exclusively to non-European, non-Western youth from former colonies, now ridden with conflict and (proxy) wars, discrimination is ultimately racist, in my opinion. Seen this way, the mentoring programme "helped" public authorities to treat a political issue of (il)legal inequality predominantly as a pedagogical issue of differentiated public care and youth services and *simultaneously* as an issue of civic solidarity. This is what I coin the "modernization of differential inclusion". It falls in line with other efforts proliferating "techniques and technologies of control within broader logics of governmentality and management" (De Genova et al., 2014, p. 3).

7.2. "Godparenthoods" as a Road to "Subversive Humanitarianism"?

If we look at the current status of the programme, it is still a pilot scheme. The original intention was to convince politicians and authorities in child and youth welfare to transform the programme into a tax-financed, regular social service delivered by a private welfare organization. However, many factors have changed since its launch in 2015. Arrivals of URMs have almost abated and many of the remaining young refugees have "aged out". There has been a turn towards right-wing extremist governments with barely hidden fascist traits. The institutional discrimination of (young) refugees has been hardening. Their asylum claims are more often treated arbitrarily, and even "safe" statuses are revoked. Hence, in the eyes of agency staff, the possibility to institutionalize mentoring beyond its provisional status is fading away. The number of recruits has dropped.

The number of godparents, however, was still stable at the end of 2018. Some of them are already engaging in a "second round" with a new youngster. They see themselves as core stabilizing factors in the life of the young people, and so do their mentees. In several follow-up interviews, mentors explained that these young people would not have had any chance or at least would have been unable to aspire to and achieve what they wanted (an average life in the receiving country), if they had not been able to rely on their mentors' support. This view was supported by young refugees in our multilingual group interviews (Raithelhuber, 2019a). Mentors motivate the young people to keep going when facing an asylum interview or receiving a negative decision. Mentors drive them to invest even more, to be able to get some "proof" of their integration efforts which can be presented to the asylum agency, in the hope that this will avoid deportation. What is more, in follow-up interviews, adult volunteers related that they experienced their "own" society side by side with their young match in an unprecedented manner, raising their political awareness. Such experiences can reach beyond current, established forms of subjection and subjectivity. Potentially, they imply forms of "subversive humanitarianism" (Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019) and of a "politicization of charity" (Feischmidt & Zakariás, 2019) which may crystallize into more contentious political figurations one day (thus see Scheibelhofer, 2019). Those who have recently shown interest explain that by volunteering they want to set a counterpoint to the current national government, as they consider this target group of (young) refugees as one that has come under fire, in particular.

Moreover, the ombuds-organization believes itself to be an anchor point for young refugees in the region. Due to the sustained shortage of mentors, hundreds on the list might never be assigned to a "godparent". However, some of these long-term candidates utilize agency staff to get advice, to deal with legal issues or to search for housing. Hence, the programme itself has turned into a reliable companion in the midst of the biographical, social and spatial movements in refugees' life courses. And, last but not least, in the view of the agency, the relations to both volunteers and young refugees have brought these young people's lived realities very close to them,

putting their unbearable intricacies right on their desks. The agency takes up many of these young refugees in and around the mentoring programme as particular "cases". They provide extended support, e.g. by facilitating family reunification, intervening in forced returns, or organizing free legal defence. I venture to say that if these local adults were not there and if staff members did not work with them and their mentees, there would often simply be nobody there to protect these young people against infringements, including by state authorities.

7.3. The Need for Further Research at the Intersection of (Im)Mobilities and (De)Protection

Considering these findings in a broader context, the mentoring scheme can be seen as one that works at the intersection of (im)mobilities and (de)protection (see Raithelhuber et al., 2018) in a productive, but also ambivalent way. The study has unveiled structures which need to be explored not only in research, but also in practice; in social work and (refugee) activism. Concerning a political assessment, we should investigate even more how access to protection and even the notions of membership, rights and entitlements are changing practically, and how research can foster this in a practical-utopian way. This includes looking at ideas of sociality or commonality that are connected with practices—however ambivalent and problematic we consider such ideas at first sight with regard to issues of equality, universalism and political contention. It is evident that a more nuanced discussion and sustained engagement are needed. Clearly, a sophisticated assessment of a civic initiative cannot simply build on a binary scheme of (conservative and problematic) humanitarian activity on the one hand and (progressive) political activity on the other hand. We should not easily fall into the trap of a dualistic "either-or" assessment of these matters: either reproduction and reaffirmation of power structures and refugeeism through (humanitarian) protection initiatives or subversion and the transformation of exclusionary logics, subjectivities and practices (e.g., with regard to sanctuary practices, see Lippert & Rehaag, 2013). The final quote below makes this clear. In a recent interview, looking back on more than three years of work, a staff member assessed the current role of mentoring for URMs as follows. He/she refers particularly to young people threatened with the withdrawal of their refugee status:

> OK, on the other hand, there are also cases where the young people...are just so firmly embedded, where I think the BfA [Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum] won't dare pull them out....But actually, they do pluck up the nerve occasionally. There are just some cases when I think, good for them, this development is simply spot on. The thing is, I think for some we've simply also become friends. (Interview with ombuds-staff B)

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Eberhard Raithelhuber (PhD) is a Social Scientist with a special focus on social work and social pedagogy, currently based at the Department of Educational Science, University of Salzburg, Austria. His research projects are located at the intersection of child and youth services, migration and mobilities, and social policy and welfare. He has published on transitions in the life course, agency, social support and intervention, youth and young adults, regional development and networks, citizenship and democracy, and transnationalism.

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Article

More or Less Political: Findings on a Central Feature of Local Engagement for Refugees in Germany

Verena Schmid *, Adalbert Evers and Georg Mildenberger

Centre for social Innovation and Investment, Max-Weber Institute, Heidelberg University, 69115 Heidelberg, Germany; E-Mails: verena.schmid@csi.uni-heidelberg.de (V.S.), adalbert.evers@csi.uni-heidelberg.de (A.E.), georg.mildenberger@csi.uni-heidelberg.de (G.M.)

* Corresponding author

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Abstract

The article is based on research in the region of Heidelberg—the city itself and two small municipalities nearby. It addresses three dimensions of local support movements for refugees: (1) the varying bundles of motives among those engaged, (2) the diversity of organizations concerned and (3) their interaction with the local political administration. A focal point of the study concerns features and processes that give actions and organizations a more or less political character. Our results reveal that, especially among newly engaged helpers and activists, political and apolitical motives coexist. Many people and their local organizations take positions in the country-wide controversial political debates on refugees, but for their practical action on location, moral concerns clearly prevail. Processes of politicization and depoliticization of refugee support largely depend on the ways and degrees to which nationwide political controversies and local developments intermesh. Politicization may take place due to controversies that call for more than a moral attitude, have an impact and build up at the local level. However, resistance to supportive action, be it by changing discourses or the persistence of traditional administrative routines, may also cause depoliticization, where volunteers and initiatives restrict themselves to acting as mere helpers that bring some human touch into an environment that longs to return to normality.

Keywords

civil society; governance; local policy; migration; political engagement; refugee aid; volunteering

Issue

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1. Introduction

In Germany, there was no other development in recent decades in which the engagement of the civil society became more important than in the handling of the refugee question. In September 2015, 15% of the German population aged 16 and above were somehow engaged on behalf of refugees (Birkenfeld et al., 2017, p. 201); every second genuine refugee relief organization was founded in 2015 (Priemer, Krimmer, & Labigne, 2017, p. 39). The media and public debates acknowledged the enormous size of this support movement and its impact as a sign for an open minded "welcome culture". Yet, by portraying the engagement as that of an enormous number of voluntary "helpers", questions about the diversity of motives, practices, organizational forms and relations with given institutional frameworks often stayed covered or secondary. This article will give a more differentiated picture. And on this basis, it will focus on the question, to what degree this movement has as well a political dimension that is going beyond its impact as a contestation of human concern.

In this perspective the research presented in this article has taken up four issues: (1) Why did citizens become

engaged? (2) What impact did the design and variety of the organizational landscape have on the resulting activities? (3) What does civil society participation in local governance look like when it comes to practical handling and political decision making on refugee issues in cities and municipalities? And finally, (4) what has been the impact of a changing environment and a turn in the dominant political discourse from an overall positive attitude toward integrating refugees to the present focus on making borders close and safe?

The findings to be presented are based on a study that was part of a larger project network (www.reallabor-asyl.de) that also explored several other questions such as pathways of refugees into the labor market. As such, the research had two limits. First, its focus was on the local dimension of a development, movement and conflict that concerns society and politics in Germany as a whole. Second, it was limited to the cities Heidelberg, Sinsheim and Wiesloch, where—unlike in other cities and regions, especially in the new German states—a sharp counter movement of enraged citizens that rejected refugees did not exist locally.

The differentiated picture of the central features of local engagement for refugees in Germany to be presented here to a broader international public provides the basis for putting a widely held public notion to a test, often endorsed by government officials: the welcome and active support for refugees have been a sign of commitment and practical solidarity, organizing considerable additional resources that made it easier for local administrations, organizations and policy makers to cope with the sudden challenge of locally integrating refugees and asylum seekers. Our findings support a different, more complicated diagnosis than the simple picture of "a good government supported by good citizens". With respect to the four questions above we found:

(1) A heterogeneity of motives and actions, ranging from simple humanitarian support to critical political action; attitudes may be both "political" and "apolitical";

(2) Developments at the organizational level, that show a coexistence of traditional associations and new initiatives and organizational forms; they attracted volunteers and activists partly in similar, partly in different ways, some of them more, others less open to voicing concerns that go beyond practical help;

(3) Institutional forms on the level of governance and networking services, that differ from the traditional corporatist culture of inter-sectoral cooperation and from a fairly standardized service provision; the tension between old and new forms may be a politicizing issue to the degree it is brought to the surface;

(4) A development over time in this heterogeneous field, where so far tendencies that politicize and others that depoliticize support movements exist simultaneously.

Our research and the article based on it intertwine information that gives a broad understanding of refugee support on local levels and the discussion of a focal point—the more or less political character of this engagement. In a nutshell, "politicizing" tendencies are those by which conflicts between different actors and their respective goals, such as between local governments and local initiatives, become highly public issues, for example, regarding the impact of integrative as compared to repressive measures or the degree new forms of integrative support and cooperation call for changing services and governance. "Depoliticizing" tendencies, then, are those by which such potentially controversial topics are subdued by a discourse that portrays civic engagement in support of refugees as a purely humanitarian, largely technical and organizational affair, taking the existing political and administrative frameworks largely as given. In the following (Section 2), the conceptual background, the levels of observation and the empirical methods of the study are outlined. The next sections present the results of our analysis concerning the variety of forms and types of engagement (Section 3), the diverse organizational forms (Section 4), and the way new kinds of more or less institutionalized cross-sector cooperation and governance have been established (Section 5). In Section 6, we once again take up and discuss the findings in sections 3 to 5 with respect to the present and future, possibly more or less political meaning and impact of local support movements for refugees in Germany. The conclusions (Section 7) highlight questions from our study on civic engagement for refugees that may be likewise important in other policy fields and for the overall future status and political influence of civic movements and organizations in Germany.

2. Conceptual Background, Level of Observation and Method of the Study

The conceptual background of our study, focusing on the role of civic engagement, forms of its organization and the place this holds in the (local) governance system, is marked by two convictions shared by some approaches but not all (for the debate on such points in civil society research see Evers & von Essen, 2019):

- We think that civic engagement is an umbrella term for a wide field of differing forms of engagement that range from voluntary work, practices such as personal help and supportive services to civic action and diverse forms of participation in politics and from forms that support a prevailing consensus to others that are special interest based, innovative and controversial (for such an approach see Evers & von Essen, 2019; Zweiter Engagementbericht für die Bundesregierung, 2017, p. 68).

- We assume that the development and role of specific actions and organizations can be best understood through relational approaches—focusing on the ways changing environments, conditions and discourses alter the image of a specific initiative and engagement (Griggs & Howarth, 2014; Schmidt, 2010); for example, a concern with refugees may thus turn from being seen as a widely acclaimed humanitarian cause into a highly controversial political topic. Whether the narrative of a movement of "apolitical helpers" will stay as an uncontested "myth" (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017) or whether kind of "subversive" qualities of the humanitarian concerns that guide many of those engaged will become effective (Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019) depends very much from developments over time and a context wherein discourses and politics matter much. Local actors, movements and networks are very much dependent, neither victims nor masters of such developments.

It was from this background that our project explored the motivations and the means of engagement of individuals around the refugee issue, the trends and innovations involved, and how informal and formal civil society actors interact with each other and with policy makers, especially municipal actors, but also with actors from the private sector, and what significance this has with respect to conventional forms and understandings of local cooperation and governance.

This task led to three levels of observation in our research. We looked firstly at the actions and motives and forms of the actors and organizations involved in refugee aid. Secondly, we looked at the organizational forms, the already existing and the newly emerging ones´ in local civil society that dealt with issues of refugee aid. Thirdly, we looked at the networking and its links with local governance, both traditional and new forums for cross-sector mediation and cooperation.

As we began our research, the field of refugee aid and the actors involved in it were still in flux. Accordingly, an ethnographical approach was chosen that was able to reflect the unstructured nature and diversity of the situation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2009, pp. 3–5). This approach was embedded in a practice-oriented transdisciplinary setting, emphasizing the dialogue with individual and collective actors. In practice this means that for two years participant observations took place in the field and were recorded in a field diary. The subjects of the observations were networking events, citywide events and internal meetings of organizations in Heidelberg, Sinsheim and Wiesloch. At about 20 of such meetings we conducted, implying observations and supplementary discussions. The number of participants varied from five to over 20, depending on the event. In addition, 14 qualitative individual and group interviews between three quarters of an hour and two hours were realized, with a variety of volunteers and representatives of key organizations in the field, focusing on attitudes and experiences in relation to the three levels of observation mentioned above. The individual interviews were conducted mainly with representatives of organizations to learn more about their ideas, structures and activities. Institutionally independent volunteers were also interviewed individually. The group interviews were conducted with regular volunteers of the organizations to better understand the dynamics and negotiation processes within the organizations. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Furthermore, we did a document analysis of websites, newspaper articles, flyers and similar items related to individual organizations and to the general process of coping with the refugee challenge in the three cities. Our "dialogic" approach sought to avoid both judgements from an academic distance and a partisan view.

Several organizations, selected according to their position in the field, were described in more detail by case studies, compared with each other and placed in the local context. Organizations were explored that formed part of the mainstream of refugee support as well as others with different and unique profiles. The collected data were analyzed using grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1998). To generate relevant categories, the three steps of open coding, axial coding and selective coding were used, supported by the program Atlas.ti. Of the eight key categories that were generated, three are presented in this article. In between the analysis phases, we continued going back to the field in order to collect additional data. This iterative research process took place until a theoretical saturation was reached. For the reconstruction of the individual cases as well as the case comparison, a procedure of qualitative case contrasting was used according to the sequential method (Kelle & Kluge, 2010, p. 79).

3. The Diversity of Types and Forms of Engagement

Many of the findings on engagement in refugee aid in Heidelberg, Sinsheim and Wiesloch confirmed what is in principle known from debates on forms and motives of volunteering and civic action in general and in the field of pro-refugee engagement in particular (Karakayali & Kleist, 2015, 2016; Linnert & Berg, 2016). As described in the discussion about changing attitudes and ways of showing commitment among the volunteers of today, there are both a growing desire to pursue individual motives such as finding personal fulfilment and demands for more flexible time management, with an openness toward casual and temporary engagement (Peglow, 2002, p. 27). Among our respondents, the majority became involved in this field for the first time. They found their respective engagement through calls for support in the newspapers or through their own inquiries in city offices or on the internet. Mostly their main motive was to somehow help in what was perceived as a situation

of "crisis". The means of participation were very different, ranging from individual projects and events to provide personalized support by taking care of one or a limited number of refugees, to time-consuming paraprofessional engagement by setting up and finally organizing and leading a support association. On the one hand, the volunteers sought to make the work compatible with their own limits, preferences and timetables, on the other hand, they also accepted the importance of reliability and of being a role model in the usually fairly structured everyday lives of the refugees:

> Activities were organized by day's schedules about who comes for help at what times; from the very beginning we have tried to demonstrate reliability, making fixed dates and times for our tasks. (Interview Baumann)

A mix of rather classic, altruistic and self-related motives were depicted by the phrases coded under the category motivation. The altruistic side can be illustrated by phrases such as "co-shaping society on a micro-level", "help as a civic duty" or "being challenged by humanitarian emergency". When it comes to self-related motives, phrases such as "motivation through positive experiences", "motivation: meaningful pastime" or "motivation: getting to know foreign cultures" were often mentioned.

Beyond these basically known variations of balancing altruism and self-interest, three observations deserve special attention.

First, we found a difference between two types of engagement for refugees. The first type is more about giving the recipients a kind of support in which personal contact with the individual is secondary. Organizations that give legal support may have a highly fluctuating clientele, and those that give advice are motivated by a generalized concern with international support and solidarity. At the other end of the spectrum are those settings and initiatives in which the helpers built up a personal commitment to the people they supported over a longer time period; some kind of personal relationship, trust and solidarity that emerge along with that help plays much more of a role here. In such case-by-case relationships, people do not fight for a particular concept of refugee rights in the first place, but rather try to create the best possible situation for individual refugees for which they have taken personal responsibility. This kind of relationship promotes a morally grounded engagement based on values such as compassion and hospitality. In the German debate, "welcome culture" was an oft-used notion for this bundle of such motions and attitudes.

Second, we found that to a considerable extent the actions of the volunteers are determined by the dynamics of personal relationships and not primarily by their conformity with an organization, its purposes and status. We saw that helpers and volunteers build and use personal connections to refugees, other helpers and institutional partners to find or negotiate solutions outside of the official structures, rules and proceedings (e.g., exemptions, special agreements, etc.). Good relations with other persons or groups are important for this type of refugee aid. Such informal communications outside or underneath official levels and sectoral and institutional routines may work both as lubricants and as corrosive instruments. Via this pragmatic approach that seeks visible results in the face of administrations and rules that cannot be changed, personal networks are used to soften the rigidity of institutionalized rules. A form of engagement and cooperation takes shape at the local level in which the dynamics of interpersonal relationships are of primary importance rather than pre-defined functional provisions and task assignments of the respective organizations.

Such different kinds of intermeshing and balancing of a personal and a generalized responsibility have much to do with our third basic observation on the degrees and logics of politicizing or depoliticizing engagement around the refugee challenge. The engagement that we found is often both "political" and "apolitical".

There is a broad debate about the political dimension of civic engagement. Much of it is reflected in the differentiation between voluntary action and civic activism. While the former is mostly seen as a kind of practical action with mostly loose and often weak ties to the world of politics, the latter is defined by the degree citizens participate in, negotiate with or protest against state rules and politics. In this perspective civic action is more political than voluntary work since it is more entangled with politics. However, another perspective opens up once a distinction is made between "politics" and "the political", defining the latter according to what becomes openly controversial in public (for this and other determinations of the political, see Bröckling & Feustel, 2012; Mouffe, 2005). Accordingly, politicization means that (formerly) barely debated, almost natural facts and circumstances turn into contested topics of public debates and decisions. For example, there are circumstances in which engagement in providing refugee support can be widely accepted as an almost natural human gesture. However, the discourses and public controversies over multiculturalism and on the limits of open societies as they have arisen in the last decade (see, e.g., Betts & Collier, 2017) have revealed a process by which what is to be done and changed in the name of "good" and "human" attitudes has become highly disputed and therefore an increasingly "politicized" topic. People´s engagement may become politicized in that way. By the same token, depoliticizing dynamics might also exist, resulting, for example, from a discourse getting widely acceptance that favors closure over openness: if citizens that engage on behalf of refugees (must) accept this discourse's restrictions, they have to resort to doing what is possible, i.e., "sane" and "constructive" in such a narrowed space.

In conversations and interviews with people engaged in refugee support we found that very often the two

principles coexisted within the individuals, held in some distance to each other. On the one hand, people's engagement was related to political judgements and positions with regard to the controversies on the refugee question that are argued out in "big politics" by proponents and adversaries of the concept and feasibility of an "open society". The influence of this orientation was particularly strong in the first type of engagement, in which volunteers fight explicitly in the name of political principles such as international solidarity and legal status. On the other hand, the practical action on the local level was mostly morally grounded; it is a kind of humanitarian obligation to help the people that one finds next door in a refugee camp. Their opinions about the national-level controversies on ways to go about solving the refugee question are merely a bit of background that might be linked to but do not directly determine the local set of individual goals and actions. Therefore, national politics and local humanitarian action were often found to be two different spheres. This division evokes the reflections on the "politics of community" in *Habits of the Heart* (2008), where "politics is a matter of making operative the moral consensus of the community" (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 2008, p. 200). As long as politics is seen as a matter of controversies on the larger stage, a morally grounded humanitarian action at the neighborhood level can be taken nonetheless. Still, one's own local actions can be linked with "big politics" insofar as they help to strengthen one's own moral choice.

Things may change, however, the very moment a task or rule that comes from big politics has a concrete effect in one's own community, be it by forcing asylum seekers into camps segregated from the local community or be it by deciding to use some of the city's ever scarce public housing resources for refugees. We come back to this point later on in Section 6.

4. The Diversity of Organizational Forms

Supporting refugees locally must be seen as a kind of movement that fundamentally affects the organizational landscape across sectors although to different degrees. It is not just a matter of a delineated subsector of civil society organizations.

An Internet search and a newspaper analysis of the local newspaper *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung* in the period from January to December 2016 revealed a picture of the diverse organizational landscape of refugee aid in Heidelberg, Sinsheim and Wiesloch. This included not only civil society but also state, municipal, and private sector entities and not only specifically refugee aid organizations but also those that had expanded their field of activity, opening up their services for refugees. It was not possible to track down all organizations, as there are organizations that do not have an internet presence and do not report on their actions in the local press. What became evident was the great variety of organizations that deal with refugee challenges, both pre-existing and newly founded ones. Unfortunately, however, the exploration did not allow us to draw conclusions concerning the impact and share of support for refugee compared to other purposes.

In Heidelberg, 137 civil society, 22 private sector and 32 municipal actors were active in the period analyzed. In Wiesloch, 62 civil society, 10 private sector and 22 municipal actors were identified and for Sinsheim, 32 civil society, 4 private sector and 18 municipal actors (see Figure 1).

History and courses of institutionalization matter for understanding this picture. Within the organizational landscape of civil society organizations as it developed over more than a century (see Evers, 2019), there are large, well-established organizations dating back to the late 19th century, linked with the Catholic and Protestant churches and the labor movement. Then there are organizations that took shape alongside the "new social movements" of the 1970s, such as those that stand for international solidarity and human rights (e.g., Pro Asyl), and other groups dating back to former episodes of refugee influx in the 1990s, such as the Arbeitskreis Asyl (Working Group on Asylum Issues) in Heidelberg. Finally, as elsewhere, there are many completely new groups dealing with the refugee challenge such as the Kontakt-

Figure 1. Numbers of organizations in Heidelberg, Wiesloch and Sinsheim.

werkstatt (Contact Workshop). Unlike the old and traditional organizations, many of the more recent associations, projects and actions are concerned with advocacy, legal advice, and the organization of workshops and debates. Their focus is not on support that is intertwined with personal relationships but rather on the fate and the legal position of a target group.

In summary, our analysis showed that movements to support refugees are very heterogeneous, not only in terms of organizational structure but also in terms of goals and action. We found older and newer organizations in which the emphasis is on a more or less personalized help and support and others that focus on more controversial political tasks such as advocacy for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, on organizing public attention and debates, influencing the climate of opinion, and on taking the role of watchdogs with respect to administration and politics. Perhaps the people engaged in such activities would see themselves as "civic activists" rather than as "voluntary workers".

5. Cooperation and Governance across Sectors and Policy Fields: The Role of Networks and Intermediary Forums

Most of the organizations engaged on a largely voluntary base in refugee support have learned to build contacts with different groups, institutions and subject areas, in particular in order to build a flexible support network that links services from different fields, ranging from food and shelter to education, work and housing. Networking can involve cross-sector cooperation between administrative offices and policy makers, voluntary organizations and initiatives, potential employers, and the business sector. Arrangements have to be negotiated that allow for flexible adaptation to changing needs and circumstances. No wonder then that local platforms for cooperation and mediation play a major role in all three of our cities, both for joint action of local civil society organizations and for negotiating cross-sector arrangements.

Those forums and networks have very different shapes. In Sinsheim, a central network is coordinated by the local public authorities, while in Heidelberg a civil society organization was founded in order to take on this task. Quite often there are roundtable meetings of local networks, where people from different contexts and sectors usually meet on an equal footing. The main themes and aims of such meetings rarely relate to general questions, such as the operation of the whole refugee and asylum network, but rather focus on finding solutions to individual cases and problems and attempting to get every potentially helpful actor involved. Participating there is foremost about being part of a problem-solving process, where everyone contributes what resources he or she has to offer. This is where working groups can be established and projects and solutions for individual cases can be developed across traditional demarcation lines between policy fields and administrative structures. This means that the development of new forms of personalized support, centered on the whole person, and not just a coordination of specific traditional problem sections, stands in the center (Evers & Klie, 2018, p. 529).

However, such new ways of cooperation, a result of the local support movements as they took shape from the summer of 2015 onwards, shed some light on the earlier established structures. Germany's welfare regime is characterized by a welfare mix in which non-profit organizations play an important role as service providers and partners of the public authorities, which act as financing and regulating bodies. Over decades a strong culture of local corporatism (Thränhardt, 1981), a system of negotiation and joint planning, has developed in which the political administration and the most important traditional welfare associations take part. This system however proves to be inappropriate when it comes to integrating both new networked forms of personalized support and new approaches of self-organization that go beyond the traditional forms of negotiating tasks and contracts in committees dominated by firmly institutionalized conventional welfare associations and their ideas about proper services.

There is yet another point where we found that these new cooperation structures challenge the known style of corporatist governance. Unlike in the traditional corporatist settings, where citizens' participation was to be guaranteed by the representatives of welfare associations, the new roundtables and meetings are open to individual participation and a broader variety of more or less formalized organizations with new people engaged in often not yet routinized kinds of responsibilities. Of those engaged in refugee support, 42% were involved outside the existing organizational structures, and 5% even completely alone (Karakayali & Kleist, 2015, p. 25). No wonder then that the new collaboration platforms allow the loosely structured volunteers to learn about projects, needs for action and different requirements, so that they can spontaneously engage with their ideas.

Often however, the established welfare organizations were overstrained by the role of networking and rearranging their intermediary position between state and local politics. New platforms and roundtables for coordination were founded. In this article we cannot sketch the variations of the networking and intermediation processes and attempts that occurred in Wiesloch, Sinsheim and Heidelberg. But in Heidelberg, for example, an established refugee aid organization took over the role of network development and moderation:

> In the beginning, about 2014 to 2015, we tried to pass information in areas where one runs the risk to do things wrong, areas where you must have experience and knowledge and we told volunteers: "Okay, look at this and that institution, try to get information from them and in case you want to start up with a project, why not do it together and by an agreement

> with them". So, you see, we have tried to guide the activities a bit. (Interview Bravo)

As the quote indicates, networking and mediating were first and foremost about giving orientation and avoiding damage. However, this also resulted in longer-term cooperation, which further strengthened the position of the organization.

It should be emphasized that the new platforms for decision-making on local refugee work and the establishment of new forms of support in which a person-centered networking and cooperation plays a central role have only a short history. These are shaky institutions and there are no blueprints for effective work and further development of such intersectoral governance hubs. For any community that does not simply want to return to traditional corporatist forms, it remains a major challenge to negotiate such new ways of operating and communicating and to strengthen the respective platforms and ways of networking.

With respect to the question of politicization and depoliticization this altogether means that there is a latent conflict, so far managed and held down by the very pragmatic practices of many of the new actors. Their new forms of personalized support coexist but are not at ease with traditional administrative routines. And acting besides the traditional forms of cooperative local governance the new platforms and round tables that emerge have so far, an unclear and unsecure status. Will they silently vanish, get coopted or explicitly challenge the traditional institutions and practices?

6. Towards a Politicization of the Local Field? The Development over Time

In order to understand where, and in what ways, approaches to politicization emerge in the course of these developments, it is important to track the dynamics of local engagement and changes in the range of activities pursued.

The first phase of the refugee aid in mid-2015 was characterized by a broad spontaneous engagement to provide shelter—at railway stations, sports halls and similar temporary accommodation facilities—and material support with respect to food, clothing and health issues. The volunteers did not wait until the existing structures became active but took the given circumstances in a local context as a trigger for their engagement. This also resulted in the emergence of quite a number of new organizations and support networks.

Being aware that government officials had difficulties to act quickly, the volunteers' focus was on measures to address the humanitarian emergency at that time. The activities of the volunteers took place around initial reception, care, accommodation, collection campaigns and donations. In addition, there were already first offers of services such as language courses, assistance in dealing with authorities, help with translation, etc.

A second phase of engagement was accompanied by a decline in the number of new refugees arriving. Many of the spontaneous initiatives that emerged in the first phase went through a process of professionalization. An actor reports:

> And the cooperation with the volunteer network had been good right from the beginning, but it has become better all the time because, I think, by more work experience among those engaged a kind of increasing professionalization has built up. Possibly some people withdrew that did not engage so well which meant that those which stayed and engaged themselves really with heart and soul, doing high quality work; the retreat of some improved the cooperation between those that remained. (Interview Bravo)

The challenges turned from ad hoc help to societal integration, with facets ranging from questions of obtaining housing to working opportunities, establishing conditions for childcare and school attendance, and obtaining rights for monetary support. In all these areas, however, there exist rules, administrative and professional practices and routines that organizations and volunteers would have to deal with. They began to stabilize their structures and to specialize in various fields of activity. The kind of cooperation with the administrative system became then more differentiated and complicated—away from "managing chaos" to securing the livelihood of the refugees and following procedures in line with given rules and regulations and all the bureaucratic steps accompanying them. Networking and exchanging experiences about possibilities to cope with government officials became increasingly important. Cooperation with local authorities became more diverse and more detailed and changed in character. The activities became increasingly determined by the specifications and working methods of the various administrative offices. Cooperation moved away from direct contact with officials on provisional solutions towards cross-sector arrangements where the impact of administrative and professional traditions dominate over the more personal, flexible and communicative attempts to find ways of coping that are suited for a new clientele.

Charged with all the experience of over two and a half years of engagement for refugees in an ever less supportive policy environment and in front of administrations that push for old and new rules set by them, a new phase emerges. It is no longer about finding fast solutions for individual cases; the volunteers now encounter structural problems and questions of fundamental changes in the rules and practices of social administrations.

Many actors in the municipal institutions themselves have become aware of this, and it has also become their concern. However, so far just parts of the organizations of those engaged are prepared to take up the negative experiences and to voice their concerns in public. Quite often fatigue arises when short-term successes do not

materialize, and when bureaucratic hurdles and lengthy processes wear out the volunteers. For example, when volunteers wanted to act as advocates for the refugees in complicated clarifications about rights and rules, this was quite often made impossible due to data privacy prescriptions. The attempt to develop "networked help for the whole person" then became increasingly difficult or even unachievable.

Experiences with the system and bureaucratic procedures, by which the specific aspects of a "case" are negotiated separately by health, social, educational, housing and labor market services and that are not constructed for support of especially "weak" clients such as refugees (Bogumil, Hafner, & Kastilan, 2017), can have quite different effects. They can cause frustration but also contradictions and conflicts that politicize once they become topics of public concern.

To be confronted with the alternative, to restrict and shape one's own activity according to the seemingly quite erratic rules of the respective professions and offices, or to become ineffective can become a central starting point for processes of politicization among volunteers. What is finally left for helpers in such a system? Why do their "partners" in administrations and politics not listen to their ideas or consider their practices and suggestions of doing it a different way?

One of the important factors in this respect is the role taken by various civil society organizations. There is a basic tendency among the large, established welfare organizations to act as service providers rather than as public advocates for policy change. In confronting the refugee challenge, their umbrella organizations may complain about scarce resources for integration and more emphasis on getting refugees back out of the country; but we did not find much voice or action from their side on the local level concerning these topics. Here, they were seemingly occupied with providing those services contracted by the public authorities. The advocacy organizations for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers and their local representatives have few resources and apparently little impact. The same can be said about the newer organizations that offer various kind of innovative services and support; they are often dependent on the financing that comes from special government programs on national, federal and local levels. In general, there is little opportunity to give the critical experiences of volunteers and activists an organizational voice.

At the same time however, problems experienced locally tend to become a political issue at a central, national level and vice versa.

An example for ways from "below" to "above" is a query from the parliamentary group of the liberal party regarding on the continued absence of an option to give financial support to persons with a tolerance or residence permit when they take up studies or training. Another example is the debate on recurring cases in which asylum seekers that had found an employer and a decent job as well as other means of integration, were forced to leave the country. Why not offer them a simplified path towards permission to stay? Here the abstract and general political question about a more or less "open society" takes on very concrete form and content. Moral questions and political alternatives intertwine. Lacking hope for better and more cooperative answers from the given administrative, professional and political system, issues concerning the need to change such frameworks become highly public topics.

A positive politicization of questions of dealing with refugees can also take the opposite route from "above" to "below"; "big politics" come into the local and find a stage there. This is reflected in Heidelberg, for example, with the case of a family who was deported. Many people accused the city of not taking advantage of its freedom of action to keep the family in place. They called for local political parties to take a stand and put the issue on the city's political agenda. Even beyond the local context, they tried to draw attention to the case by writing an open letter to the Baden-Württemberg Minister of Science and the Baden-Württemberg parliamentary group and the State Association of the Green Party. Here an engagement was shown that is "political" insofar as different moral viewpoints connect with concrete alternatives of action.

In addition, local confrontations with right-wing populist developments are expanding. For example, a local training program for volunteers picks up the topic in two workshops: "Pitting oneself against right-wing slogans" and "Highly dangerous: How the silence of the Middle strengthens the Right". Also, the volunteers in training are asked to think about what is needed to confront xenophobia.

> And you have to watch out that Germany does not undergo a strong shift to the right. That means that one has to stop the kind of political statements made increasingly now. This kind of hostility against strangers. That should be obvious. I think as well in the public reports, the media something should change. Putting it in more concrete terms, forums that report on the other side should get more room. (Interview Zimmermann)

It is obvious that shifting public discourses and politics, e.g., the increasing concern of many politicians with tighter borders of "open societies", more control and repression and less imaginative programs and resources for intercultural settings, change the conditions for local support movements. Their political significance may be reduced, and for many it may seem unavoidable to accept the role of subordinate helpers. But some may well become more political by struggling for a larger mandate. This is the case especially where it becomes apparent that good and sustainable support for refugees on the local level calls for changes of traditional rules and attitudes among bureaucracies and a kind of engagement that questions such restrictions. By the same token,

refugee support can become more political where nationwide contentious political debates are not the mere distant background for local humanitarian actions but where both dimensions intertwine. One's position in the debate should then prove to be more or less legitimate according to the actions taken and vice versa. Such a statement about the more or less political character of local support movements for refugees and asylum seekers does not deny basic tendencies once described by Eliasoph (1998) about much volunteer initiative "avoiding politics", tending to keep politics at a distance. But our findings point to the fact that how it plays out may vary considerably according to contexts and the ways leaders, activists and volunteers find to deal with them. Borders between political and apolitical engagement can blur and shift—not only according to "circumstances" but also as a result of decisions of the people engaged and their respective organizations.

7. Conclusions

Civil society engagement is particularly pronounced in the field of refugee policy. How does it look on local levels in Germany and in which respect and to what degree does it have a political character? We have analyzed this central question with respect to three dimensions of the support movement, i.e., motives, organizational forms and the relations with the institutional framework and moreover with an eye on the dynamics over time so far:

- Actions and motives: There are different types and forms of engagement at the local level. Quite often among helpers and activists, we found various kinds of intermeshing and balancing a personal and a generalized commitment for refugees as well as the co-existence of a kind of humanitarian obligation to help and a political standpoint in the overall controversy regarding refugee politics.
- Organizational form: These kinds of more or less political engagement go along with a wide variety of forms of organization, ranging from traditional, established entities to newer and brand-new groups, covering activities that span from the prevailing practical and often personalized help and support to advocacy and campaigning. Organizations act fairly different when it comes to take up controversial points about policies and politics of dealing with refugees.
- Networking and local governance: For most of these tasks, networking and cooperation on the local level are important, across both policy fields and sectors. New personalized forms of networked support, local platforms for cooperation and intermediation that differ from the traditional forms of local corporatism have taken shape. So far, the political challenge of coming to new forms of service-giving and to different institutional forms of cooperation is however mostly held at bay.

The findings concerning the diversity, dynamics and more or less political character of civic engagement in the field of local refugee support, seem to us as relevant beyond local settings and the special area of dealing with the refugee challenge. With an eye on that they may be reformulated:

- Volunteers as "helpers": Today we are experiencing a strong tendency, not only in the area of engagement for refugees, to perceive volunteers as mere "helpers". How can a new understanding of roles be developed that includes activities beyond being a "helper" who operates within prescribed rules, dominant institutions and assigned tasks? Should we not acknowledge the diversity of kinds of engagement, including dimensions such as innovative social support schemes, advocacy, campaigning and more voice in joint strategies for integration and inclusion? This is an eminent political question, a matter of controversies between those that want to upgrade the role of civic engagement and those who prefer to hold it on the level of an add-up to the given system.
- New organizational landscapes: The often-invoked new engagement—an attitude that mixes self-directed motives with solidarity, self-determination, and attachment in a variety of ways—is displayed in new forms of organizing and community building that include a voice for those engaged in its forms and developments. At the same time, space for an engagement that is sensitive to people's preferences can also be maintained by traditional organizations with stable frameworks that work as a relief; they offer potential helpers a choice of different kinds and degrees of engagement. How significant and politicized can volunteering become in both cases and settings? How much acknowledgement will be reached by new, often lesser and differently organized forms of an engagement, that is often not only about help but as well about advocacy and resistance?
- Civic organizations as parts of a new type of governance: Local refugee policy reflects a desire for new forms of cooperative local governance, with all their challenges and opportunities. As they gain visibility in the field of refugee support, can platforms and networks become sustainable in the face of established, traditional forms of corporatist mediation and trends towards privatization of public tasks handed over to agencies and subcontractors? This as well would be a serious political question, once it comes to the surface and gets a matter of public debate.

What about the future? Will refugee support and related volunteering and civic action become more or less political? One might speculate in both directions. We have highlighted two developments that are important in this

respect: one, the conflicts and frustrations that arise out of a mere bureaucratic handling of support and integration issues and, two, the interplay between controversial refugee politics at the national level and what seems reasonable and feasible on the local level. The often frustrating experiences with administrative and professional rigidities may reduce the space and meaning of volunteering since it would be difficult at present for these negative experiences to become the basis for a broader public push for reforms that might make established welfare services more responsive. Furthermore, there is a longing on various sides to return to "normality", and this is unfavorable for political debates over mainstreaming innovative concepts and initiatives. But there is also a positive interplay between local and central action that might strengthen the political dimensions of engagement in this field. On the central level, Germany experienced in late 2018 the largest demonstrations since decades (with more than 240,000 participants in Berlin) in support of refugees and against the positions of the radical right in this respect. This was only possible due to the significant support of the activated initiatives, organizations and scenes as they have built up locally in urban and rural regions over time. To the extent that people stand on the national level for an open society that recognizes limits and borders but must not close itself off, this can encourage local initiatives with their search and demands for solutions that are viable and innovative, offering helpers and activists horizons that go beyond filling gaps by way of a bit of human touch.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Verena Schmid is a scholarship holder of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and works at the Centre for Social Investment of University of Heidelberg. Her research focus lies on the issues of civil society and civic engagement. Furthermore, questions on the field of knowledge sociology and the sociology of organizations are included in her scientific work. Her doctoral thesis sheds light on how memories of the past construct the presence of the volunteers in the refugee aid.

Adalbert Evers is a Political Scientist, doing research and teaching on social policy and social services, civil society, third sector organizations, social innovation and governance. He is presently affiliated to the Ersta Sköndal University College, Stockholm and works as a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Social Investment (CSI), Max-Weber-Institute for Sociology, Heidelberg University.

Georg Mildenberger manages the research department of the Centre for Social Investment of University of Heidelberg. He has been working at CSI since 2007 and has been leader of different project teams working on social innovation in a European context. He holds a doctoral degree from Darmstadt University, and a master's degree in philosophy and political science from Tuebingen University.

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Article

The Imagination of the Other in a (Post-)Sectarian Society: Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Divided City of Belfast

Ulrike M. Vieten and Fiona Murphy

The Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, Queen's University Belfast, BT7 1NN, UK; E-Mails: u.vieten@qub.ac.uk (U.M.V.), f.murphy@qub.ac.uk (F.M.)

* Corresponding author

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Abstract

This article explores the ways a salient sectarian community division in Northern Ireland frames the imagination of newcomers and the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. We examine the dominant ethno-national Christian communities and how their actions define the social-spatial landscape and challenges of manoeuvring everyday life in Northern Ireland as an 'Other'. We argue all newcomers are impacted to some degree by sectarianism in Northern Ireland, adding a further complexified layer to the everyday and institutional racism so prevalent in different parts of the UK and elsewhere. First, we discuss the triangle of nation, gender and ethnicity in the context of Northern Ireland. We do so in order to problematise that in a society where two adversarial communities exist the 'Other' is positioned differently to other more cohesive national societies. This complication impacts how the Other is *imagined* as the persistence of binary communities shapes the way local civil society engages vulnerable newcomers, e.g. in the instance of our research, asylum seekers and refugees. This is followed by an examination of the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland. We do so by contextualising the historical situation of newcomers and the socio-spatial landscape of the city of Belfast. In tandem with this, we discuss the role of NGO's and civil support organisations in Belfast and contrast these views with the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. This article is based on original empirical material from a study conducted in 2016 on the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees with living in Northern Ireland.

Keywords

asylum seekers; Belfast; ethnic identity; gender; imagination of the Other; nationalism; refugees; sectarian omni-presence

Issue

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1. Introduction

In recent years, a heightened *moral panic* (Garland, 2008) has emerged with respect to the so called, 'refugee crisis', or as we suggest herein what is in fact, a 'border crisis,' a term which indicates a failure of particular nation states or supra-national organisations such as the EU to respond ethically to conflict and the mass-mobilisation of people from other regions. According to Yuval-Davis and Vieten 'This crisis is at the heart of relationships between states and societies and to constructions of subjectivity and thus needs to be seen as a doubly-related crisis of both governability and governmentality' (2018, p. 70). Triggered by different layers of social, economic and political crises, the world has been confronted by a backlash to cosmopolitan and multicultural concepts of plural and diverse societies coupled with a rise of far-right extremist political parties in different countries. One expression of this ideological shift to a far-right populist 'politics of fear' (Wodak, 2015) is a gendered moral panic in the form of blaming newly arrived male refugees for crime, and in particular, for

the physical and sexual harassment of white, Christian women in European public spheres (Vieten, 2018). Anchored in the current wave of far-right populisms and the growth of extreme right parties this gendered controversy confronts us with the legacy of Orientalism (Said, 1978), mainstream anti-Muslim racism (Poynting & Mason, 2006; Vieten, 2016) and—as far as Europe is concerned—'archives of European racisms' (Vieten, 2011). As such, a number of critical questions, which inform our reflection herein, need urgent answering, for example, how the 'Other' is imagined in different European societies and what that means for the perception and welcoming of asylum seekers and refugees. Further, a key question is what kind of learnings can we glean from the situatedness and ideological dimension of (gendered) othering from various societies across Europe? While continental Europe is mostly identified with Europe (or enmeshed with the European Union), a similar proxy exists when thinking of the United Kingdom (UK) of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. People might say the 'UK', but in fact what they have in mind is mainland Britain (Scotland, Wales and England). When we say 'Ireland', the average European lay person might think of another island, geographically (south and north), and thereby might find it difficult to comprehend that there is still a political space on the same island, 'belonging' to the UK: Northern Ireland. This has become particularly obvious during the Brexit crisis, with a clear lack of understanding of the relationship of Northern Ireland to both the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain having become startingly evident.

Despite its marginality, since 2016 Northern Ireland has newly been the subject of much discussion and debate in the UK, as well as received coverage by international and European media. Largely, this has to be understood in the context of the UK/GB decision to leave the EU. Underpinned by the political party strategy of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the dominant loyalist political party in Northern Ireland, has been in support of the British Prime Minister, Teresa May's, Tory–Conservative minority government in Westminster, since 2017. At the time of writing, the political future of the current Tory government is in turmoil. The decisive role of the DUP connects to the model of consociationalism enshrined as political mandate in Northern Ireland since 1998.

It is these complexities and the geographic focus of Northern Ireland that informs this piece. As people living in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, we believe that issues such as the rise of the far right, Brexit, and the ongoing legacies of the Northern Ireland conflict impact asylum seekers and refugees' everyday lives in Northern Ireland in quite distinctive ways. However, as social scientists living through and observing the intersecting crises of conflict, displacement and the rise of the far right, our aim in this article is to move beyond the moral panics surrounding such crises in order to critically examine how the particularities of Northern Ireland, especially the issue of sectarianism, present very specific challenges for asylum seekers and refugees. We are also concerned with how narratives of post-conflict and reconciliation in Northern Ireland hamper deeper discussion of these issues with respect to all people living on the island of Ireland, established communities and newcomers alike.

In the Northern Ireland context, questions with respect to the notion of difference and the situation of newcomers continually arise, specifically about the ways in which social and political divides anchored in sectarian mindsets impact newcomers to Northern Ireland. Key questions exist regarding the imprint and the consequence of this differently anchored, extremely divisive, imagination of community, which does not reflect Anderson's (1983) often cited notion of the 'imagined community'. Additionally, this connects to how the meaning of gender, or intersectional positions, and the imagination of the Other, unfold in different ways. The research for this article took place in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry[1] in 2016 and we draw on this empirical data for this article. Our research data was collected through a commissioned research tender for the *Racial Equality Unit* in Stormont (Office of the First and Deputy First Minister), Northern Ireland. A steering group comprised of a number of charities and NGOs across Northern Ireland oversaw the research process for the duration of the project. This process of having regular meetings with an advisory board anchored in civil society provided revelatory insights into the challenges for this sector in Northern Ireland, but also generated conversations useful for our broader academic research. The project was largely qualitative with a short quantitative Northern Ireland wide survey targeting civil sector society whose scope was to feed into the development of a refugee integration strategy. Currently, Northern Ireland is one of the only jurisdictions in the UK which does not have a refugee integration strategy (Murphy & Vieten, 2017), and has been without a regional devolved government since January 2017. A refugee integration strategy was drafted from our research report, but is, at the time of writing (March 2019), currently waiting to be implemented due to the political stalemate in Northern Ireland.

Herein, we argue that all newcomers, apart from the established majority and minority communities are affected by an ideological sectarian divide. Given the particular vulnerabilities of asylum seekers and refugees, especially as dedicated asylum housing is often located in sectarian areas—we posit that the everyday lives of asylum seekers and refugees are deeply entangled with the vagaries of sectarianism and its associated politics. While living in legal and economic limbo asylum seekers depend on local institutional provisions, and everyday sectarian culture impacts on their lives, often in unforeseen ways. First, we review some conceptual debates on the

[1] In the hegemonic language Derry is called Derry/Londonderry.

notion of the Other, gender and the role of national imagination with respect to Northern Ireland. Then, we briefly talk about the spatial complexities of Belfast with respect to the sectarian divide, social divisions, and highlight the dearth of a holistic approach to combat race hate crimes. Third, we contextualise the phenomenon of immigration to Northern Ireland with a focus on migrants who have fled persecution and war in their countries of origin and illustrate how sectarianism and the imagination of the Other framing perspectives of everyday life in Belfast. In the fourth section, we present some of the findings of our research. We concentrate here on the views of service providers and activists of local NGOs supporting asylum seekers and refugees and contrast these views with the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. We conclude with some precautious remarks on what that means to the temporary and situated ideological construction of the (gendered) Other, e.g. with respect to the situation of refugees in (Continental) Europe.

2. Imagining the Other: Ethnicity, Gender and 'Nation' in Northern Ireland

In their important discussion on cosmopolitanism, Szerszynski and Urry (2002) also engage the concept of nationalism positing that 'the system of nation states and national identities involved antagonism towards the "stranger", especially those strangers deemed to have a different colour, creed or culture.' (p. 462) Whereas mainstream and male theorists of nationalism and the modern nation state largely ignored the built-in ideological function of gender (see, for example, Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1992) feminist theorising (McClintock, 1995; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 2011) on the relationship between gender and nationalism has become more prominent since the 1990s. Yuval-Davis' (1997) seminal[2] text 'Gender and Nation' is pivotal to unpack these structures as her analysis helps to understand contemporary constructions of gendered community boundaries in the West, in Europe and beyond. Yuval Davis argues that 'the woman' is primarily identified with particular ethno-national communities as motherhood carries the biological and symbolic representation of the nation and becomes intertwined with a nation's sense of *morality* and honour. While referring to the Algerian war of independence and the contested debates on the veil, then and now, Calhoun (1997, p. 113) contemplates 'more generally, it suggests reasons beyond simple patriarchy for the tendency of nationalist movements so commonly to affirm masculinist practices rooted in traditional cultures (see also Chatterjee, 1994).' Erel (2018) proposes that the gender conservative or even anti-gender rhetoric of the far right and mainstream right parties is blurred, and that social, cultural and national reproduction is bounded to the way gendered and ethnic relations are constructed, and how and why migrant families are positioned as Others. If we agree with Erel (2018), who argues that 'gender imagination of the nation have [sic] been instrumental in *reconciling* contradictory aspects of the nation' (p. 174), what does this mean when applied to the context of Northern Ireland, where the legacy of the violent conflict, called the 'Troubles', posits two adversarial ethno-national religious communities, vis a vis other Others?

Rooney (2006, 2007) and other feminist scholars (Hinds, 2014; Kennedy, Pierson, & Thomson, 2016; Ward, 2015) have analysed Northern Irelands' conservative gender regime which they posit impacts all relevant public and semi-public spaces such as media, legislation (justice), policy, academia and politics. According to Rooney (2007):

> The invisibility of women in conflict narratives and the absence of gender awareness in the transitional context is core to understanding how women's day-to-day lives get left out of consideration in the context of negotiations. The precarious role of women in conflict discourses maintains the invisibility of gender regimes operating within conflict scenarios. This precarious role is vital to the sustenance of the narrative fiction that conflicts are gender-free. (p. 98)

This 'invisibility of gender regimes' certainly impacts the perception of difference and otherness. As we argue here, 'othering', and the imagination of the Other, has to be analysed differently as there is another 'Other' historically constructed in the visibility of the 'Other' established ethnonational collective in Northern Ireland society. The 'legacy' of sectarian violent conflict and the appeasement politics of consociationalism, focusing on the two majority Christian ethno-national communities in Northern Ireland, in effect, means that there is lack of a cohesive understanding of *one* nation (Yuval-Davis & Vieten, 2018). Nevertheless, even without having a cohesive narrative of a single nation, the (gendered) imagination of community boundaries in Northern Ireland operates within a patriarchal frame policing female bodies according to the normative assumptions of the two intra-Christian ethno-national communities. Strict anti-abortion laws and an anti-gay marriage consensus[3] in Northern Ireland (different to both Britain and the Republic of Ireland) are expressions of a gender regime that assigns different expectations and social roles to men and women. Intertwined with the persistence of a sectarian split it seems therefore that *gender* is not placed at the heart of male and mainstream debates

[2] Farris' (2017) work addresses the pitfalls of contemporary liberal feminism supporting mainstream anti-Muslim politics and policy, in France and the Netherlands, for example. However, here we are discussing the symbolic positioning of 'the woman' as cultural boundary marker of a national imagination, and as belonging to specific ethno-national communities, which is more relevant to the situation in Northern Ireland.

[3] The anti-gay marriage and homophobic political landscape of Northern Ireland means that Puar's (2007) focus on 'homo-nationalism' referring to an ideological support of some members of gay communities for mainstream anti-Muslim discourses as it is growing in some countries is not the main angle of our debate as far as Northern Ireland is concerned.

on sectarianism and consociationalism. In consequence, academia, policy and politics underestimate the ideological function of hegemonic masculinities and femininities in containing the status quo of the sectarian political-social landscape of Northern Ireland. This is the ideological frame that shapes the relationships of established communities and newcomers alike.

3. Northern Ireland and the Continuity of Sectarian Tension: The Landscape of Belfast

The issue of *sectarianism* lingers long in the Northern Ireland imagination, as does the political appeasement constructed to comfort both ethno-national communities, post-1998, which is called *consociationalism* (Garry, 2012; O'Leary, 2005). Both concepts might be of less interest abroad, but after the violent conflict called *The Troubles*[4], in 1998, the *Good Friday Agreement* settled for a more peaceful outlook and cooperation between the two dominant ethno-national communities, the Catholic Republicans, and the Protestant Unionists, the latter loyal to the UK/GB and wishing to keep this Union. As part of the 1998 Peace agreement, the citizen rights of Catholics were ameliorated, and with consociationalism and anti-discrimination law institutionalised, Northern Ireland now strives to establish parity between the two communities. Interestingly, post-1998, Belfast saw a rise in ghetto-like homogenous neighbourhoods (Murtagh, 2011), as some ethno-national communities prefer to live amongst one another. This restructuring of the landscape, for example, in Belfast, created—either on purpose or as a side effect—highly sectarian local spaces across the city. O'Dowd and Komarova (2009, p. 7) note, 'The longevity of communal territories and their boundaries, and of the struggles to control them, is testimony to enduring significance of sectarian territoriality in Belfast.' Shirlow (2006) regards the social-spatial segregation of Belfast as an ongoing rupture to a normal use of the city space for its urban citizens. In consequence, the urban environment is defined by historically loaded group identities and so called 'shared space' is confined to inner city, mainly shopping miles and consumerist, areas. By drawing on the work of Bell (1990) and Boal (1996), Smyth and McKnight (2013, p. 307) describe the signifiers of post-Troubles community conflict in everyday situations as follows:

> Many ordinary activities, such as standing at specific bus-stops, using particular playgrounds or parks, wearing specific school uniforms, football shirts, remembrance poppies or St Patrick's Day colours, all carry the potential of low level [sic] hostility and conflict.

Everyday encounters with sectarianism might occur in any local public space, and particularly in neighbourhoods where family and social life takes place as Smyth and McKnight (2013) emphasise. These kind of everyday life encounters shape housing and livelihood in more socially deprived, working class areas in West and North Belfast. That means that the spatial confrontation with sectarian performance is classed and gendered and dependent on where, and how you move through the city. As indicated above 'gender' rather is absent in the Northern Ireland public discourse when it comes to the political business of sectarian parties and public debates on violence. As such, the classed gender of sectarian activities rarely is spelled out. A report in 2007 (cited in Montague & Shirlow, 2014) showed that sectarian divisions cost Northern Ireland £1.5 billion each year. Predominantly, these costs are associated with the rituals of sectarian social identities (e.g. 13 July marches, 12 July bond fires) and with this an ongoing adversarial community organisation is creating immense economic, but also social costs for the public.

Beyond the 'cultural' display of distinctive ethno-national community identities in local public spaces, e.g. flagging, July parades and bond fires, hate crime is an ongoing issue. Here, sectarian violence is understood as the violence enacted against members of the established two communities (e.g. Loyalist/Protestant and Republican/Catholic), e.g. focusing on 'religious' divisions. By contrast, race hate crime highlights a different quality of attacks on 'newcomers': all Others, equally black people, white or black EU citizens-migrants, refugees and asylum seekers might be victims of those attacks. Further, travellers are mentioned in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (n.d.) reports as a separate ethnic group, outside of the two sectarian communities. These distinctions are problematic as they sub-divide groups that are affected by different forms of violence without looking at the broader picture of a *sectarian omni-presence*. There is very little research extant, to substantiate the links between religiously segregated places and racism (McVeigh & Rolston, 2007; with respect to encounters of difference, Piekut & Valentine, 2017). The media, however, has drawn a number of links between divided areas and an increase in racism. This means that newcomers, and this applies particularly to asylum seekers and refugees, are fearful about being housed in certain areas even without ever having visited them (Murphy & Vieten, 2017). But it also means that it is difficult to talk about these anxieties with service providers as long as sectarianism is not accepted as an everyday issue affecting all newcomers as much as established communities.

Belfast carries the legacy of 'The Troubles' and its violent conflict has distorted the urban landscape, making it seemingly ill-equipped to manage the arrival of larger

[4] The hegemonic term 'The Troubles' could be also read as euphemism. Catholics were institutionally discriminated in Northern Ireland, and the violent conflict started after a peaceful demonstration for civil rights and the demand to end institutional discrimination of Catholics. Police attacked civilians, and thereafter, from 1969 on and for three decades, military police and para-militaristic attacks on people in Northern Ireland, Ireland, England and also Europe, defined the everyday life.

scales of newcomers. The civil society and social fabric continue to be defined by the legacy of the violent conflict and a politics that is centred on the appeasement of the two dominant ethno-national-religious communities whilst largely ignoring the place of gender in constructing community boundaries inside, and against Others. In the next section, we briefly contextualise immigration to Northern Ireland with a focus on migrants who have fled persecution and war in their countries of origin in the 20th and 21st Century.

4. Newcomers to Northern Ireland: EU Migrants and Asylum Seekers

Though Northern Ireland largely appears as a white homogenous society—there are long established ethno-national minority communities of Chinese (Delargy, 2007) and Indians (Delargy, 2008; Marger, 1989). Jews, for example settled in Belfast in the 1860s, and Northern Ireland has also welcomed boat people from Vietnam (see for details Murphy & Vieten, 2017). However, it is only since the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 that Northern Ireland is regarded as a more peaceful society (Brewer, 2010), and now attracts more immigrants (Malischewski, 2016). Recent years have seen a larger number of workers moving from the A8 countries (in particular Poland), post-2004, based on EU citizen freedom rights (cross-border mobility), as well as a higher number of asylum seekers and refugees. Belfast hit the international media headlines in 2005, following several racist attacks on Roma in South Belfast. According to Russell (2016), a higher number of Roma—estimated are about 1000 living in Northern Ireland—settled in Belfast, e.g. particularly 'in the Botanic Lower Ormeau areas of South Belfast' (2016, p. 14).

It is crucial therefore to recognise that Northern Ireland is now a culturally more diverse region. The ongoing process of normalisation also means that since the 2000s asylum seekers consider staying in Northern Ireland. Through the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme Syrian refugees have arrived as programme refugees to make a new life in Belfast and Derry. In 2018, there were approximately 700 asylum seekers living in Northern Ireland (mostly residing in Belfast), with an average of 200–300 new applications per year. While this represents less than 1 per cent of the overall UK figures, the accommodation of asylum seekers and refugees and the 'integration' of the latter, nonetheless poses challenges for state policy, social institutions and employers in Northern Ireland, particularly given Northern Ireland's status as a post-conflict/divided society. There is some research on the spatial dimensions of settlement for asylum seekers and refugees (Franklin, 2014). The areas in which asylum seekers and refugees are housed impact on access to employment and health, as well as broader social networks with the host community and other members of the asylum and refuge seeking community. The spatial complexities of Northern Ireland are compounded by its history. Belfast as a city with high levels of spatial segregation as indicated above can be a complex place for asylum seekers and refugees to live and settle in. Often asylum seekers and refugees are housed in lower quality housing in underprivileged areas with high levels of segregation. In the context of Belfast, where there are higher levels of National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation, South Belfast has become somewhat of a hub for asylum seekers and refugees and also a number of civil society sector organisations supporting them (see also Kerr, 2013). In summer 2018, a number of Syrian refugees—part of the VPR Scheme—spoke publicly about the alarming housing situation and racist attacks in Belfast (Morris, 2018). Though North and West Belfast often are referred to when speaking about sectarian neighbourhoods it seems that South Belfast, too, hosts sectarian and racist pockets that are not welcoming to newcomers (Roma/EU migrants, and Syrian refugees). In what ways are asylum seekers and refugees affected by sectarianism and sectarian omni-presence and racist violence in Belfast? Do they feel as 'the Other' in Northern Ireland, and what do service providers do in order to make them feel more welcomed?

In the remaining part of the article we introduce more details of the methodological approach, followed by a discussion some of the findings.

5. Researching Difference

For this research, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 48 asylum seekers and refugees from ten different countries, including-Somalia, the Sudan, Kenya, China, Zimbabwe, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Iran and Syria. Further we spoke to 50 members of the NGO/Charitable sector and service providers (health, education, labour and housing) in Northern Ireland. Asylum seekers and refugees interviewed have lived in Northern Ireland from a period of three months—ten years (with two having achieved naturalisation; full citizenship). We interviewed both male and female asylum seekers and refugees and conducted a mix of single and mixed gender focus groups.

The spread of interviews across different kinds of civil sector organisations—religious charities, volunteer groups, and NGOs and service providers working in different spaces provided very clear and broad insights into the supports extant for asylum seekers and refugees. Our research approach was informed by the methodological construct of *intersectionality* as well as the author's professional orientations as social scientists (a sociologist and an anthropologist). We used the notion of intersectionality as a lens through which to analyse and document the life worlds of refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland. We posit that the feminist concept of 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005; Vieten, 2008) provides a critical conceptual and methodological toolbox through which to analyse a plurality of individual subjectivities whilst also shedding light on the

structural order of social inequality. The most relevant analytical entry points for us as researchers were the overlapping social divisions which include: nationality, legal status, gender/sex, sexuality, class, religion, ethnicity/race; age and location. The two field sites were chosen for different reasons: Belfast is home to the largest number of asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland and is a city that continues to be highly segregated along religious and national lines with Protestant and Catholic communities often living in distinct areas in the city (McNulty, 2016). Belfast also has a larger number of voluntary sector organisations working with asylum seekers and refugees, and this facilitated contact with research participants. We also undertook some short field visits to Derry/Londonderry and Craigavon as there are a growing number of asylum seekers and refugees located there (McNulty, 2016). Derry/Londonderry, in terms of its proximity to the Republic of Ireland and the Irish border, also provided some interesting data specifically related to the challenges of living so close to a border. We used a process of grounded theory to analyse our interviews and focus groups utilising both inductive and deductive techniques. Such a process permitted patterns of data to be identified through reading and re-reading of texts, allowing both descriptive and analytical accounts of asylum seekers and refugees lives in Northern Ireland to be developed. According to Malischewski (2013), who conducted a small-scale study in Northern Ireland (on asylum seekers and refugees), the perceived homogeneity of groups poses one of the main challenges of this kind of research. She argues (2013, p. 6) that:

> The Northern Irish case presents a dramatic example of social division, one in which the question of 'what' refugees and asylum seekers are integrating into is particularly poignant. Indeed, though sectarianism plays an overarching role in dividing society, other factors such as age, gender, class, race, and ethnicity also contribute to social positioning and division.

It is this argument of intersectional social divisions that inflected our study of the particular situation and experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland in 2016.

6. Conversations with Civil Society

A particular aspect of our original research was to examine the role of civil sector society and state bodies in the support and integration of asylum seekers and refugees. Northern Ireland is home to a large body of NGOs and volunteer groups, some of this is a legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland. State supports for asylum seekers and refugees are in line with broader supports in the UK, even though Northern Ireland remains outside of the broader system of dispersal. Beyond measuring the status quo of service delivery, our research went deeper, in terms of discussions with civil sector organisations and service providers on some of the very specific challenges that Northern Ireland, as a post-conflict society, presents for asylum seekers and refugees. Some of these discussions, were unsurprisingly, revealing of how issues of sectarianism impact on the perception of asylum seekers and refugees. While a number of our research participants spoke openly about this, others asked for their comments on this topic to be anonymized as they did not want to be identified in their workplace as someone openly discussing this particular issue. Invariably, in all of our interviews the issue of sectarianism arose, even though it was not one of our formal questions in our interview schedule. In some cases, it went as far as respondents denying the idea that Northern Ireland's experience of sectarianism was in anyway impactful on asylum seekers and refugees. With one NGO worker stating:

> I do not believe sectarianism impacts on asylum seekers and refugees. I'd like to see how Belfast compares to somewhere like Glasgow, which is also a sectarian city. Or even, how does it compare to the experience of asylum seekers and refugees living in an underprivileged area of Dublin? No, I don't think sectarianism is something that comes into play in asylum seekers and refugees' experiences here in Belfast. (NGO Professional, 2016)

As we show in this article and elsewhere (Murphy & Vieten, 2017), asylum seekers and refugees themselves frequently point to how the particularities of Northern Ireland as a post conflict, sectarian society impacts their everyday. What we call—'the *sectarian omnipresence*' shapes expectations of relationships, and possibilities to move safely through space.

The everyday life experiences of asylum seekers and refugees are affected foremost when confronted with *spatial segregation*. It results in no-go areas, or as far as housing and neighbourhoods are concerned anxieties of asylum seekers and refugees of where to live, and at best stay in South Belfast, where most of the local ethnic networks are located, near Queen's University Belfast. Given the pressure on the housing system, this is not always possible and so asylum seekers and refugees find themselves living right across the city. The reasons why newcomers, and particularly asylum seekers choose South Belfast are complex and related among others to this area being perceived as a 'mixed' neighbourhood, more multicultural-with different communities of students and visible internationals living near Queen's University and in the Botanic Quarter. This neighbourhood has become somewhat of a hub for asylum seekers and refugees and also a number of civil society sector organisations supporting them (see also Kerr, 2013).

The assumption that it is difficult for visibly different refugees to settle in certain neighbourhoods is an idea perpetuated by host community members as much as by anyone else. As one female research participant articulates it:

> We had a friend actually who was saying who lived in north Belfast, his dad was really old. And he was saying to me if my area was okay for you, I would have given you my daddy's house for the time being until you get a permanent home, which was very kind of him. But then he said people might not receive you around there so I don't want to cause you problems. So he couldn't give us that house. And also he had a landlord who had a nice apartment in north Belfast which was manageable. Their rent was reasonable. But I did not want to change the school. And then he said the colour might cause a problem when the children come back from school. The colour of the uniform. (Sudanese refugee, L.)

The projection of a sectarian threat (the *sectarian omni-presence*) is running through these lines. Our interview partner perceived North Belfast with its majority of sectarian Loyalists and as a white working-class neighbourhood as being more adversarial towards asylum seekers than other neighbourhoods in Belfast. It might be striking, too, that the meaning of 'colour' with respect to 'uniforms' is introduced here as even more threatening than 'colour' of the skin as everyday racism. While anecdotal, what L says, in effect means that alternative sources of accommodation become unavailable due to sectarianism and racism. As a female black refugee, L's testimony is echoed in other strands of our research. Living alone with her children as a single mother whilst facing the challenges of being housed in a sectarian area was an issue a number of our other female research participants pointed to. Our research highlighted that asylum seekers are subject to multiple, often indiscriminate house moves which creates further instability for their families. The intersecting positions with respect to gender/sex (female), race (black), legal status (seeking asylum) and being a parent (mother) shapes possibilities of movement and settlement, even if it is temporarily. The issue of walking through sectarian areas clad in a religious school uniform of the wrong orientation was flagged in a number of our interviews by mothers fearful of what might happen to their children if deemed 'Catholic' in a loyalist area or vice versa, 'Protestant' in a republican area. A number of our research participants were in fact single mothers and therefore, subject to both the everyday structural violence of mothering alone in a conservative society as well as being forced to live in substandard asylum accommodation in sectarian and often, conflictual spaces. In Northern Ireland, and in line with other UK jurisdictions, accommodation is decentralised, and asylum seekers live in a variety of privately rented flats or in social housing. The *Northern Ireland Housing Executive* runs an extra funded program (Refugee Floating Support) to ease 'the transition to a more permanent relationship to Northern Ireland' (Murphy & Vieten, 2017). As accommodation for asylum seekers in Northern Ireland is funded through the NASS moving into accommodation is dependent on the stage of the asylum application. If granted refugee status people have to move out from provided accommodation during a 28-day period. But, what does this mean when trying to establish bonds with members of local communities?

Another male research participant shared with us how sectarianism has impacted his ability to settle in Belfast:

> It does affect me because, especially because now for me, I have a child with an Irish woman…because she wouldn't go to Protestant areas, which limits my movement with my daughter, to wherever I want to go and definitely, it affects me too much, because I used to and I stay in…a lot. Like if I go looking for a house now, she's not happy because of where I'm going to take, do you know what I mean? (Kenyan Refugee, M.)

When thinking of relationships that develop, or in M's case, finding love, making a home and starting a family with a child, the effects of the *sectarian omni-presence* becomes an everyday issue. As soon as newcomers settle down and come to know individuals from 'local' settled communities they are all too often confronted with prominent ethno-national divisions.

These testimonies, and there were more of them, largely stand in contrast to what service providers presented to us. The claim that sectarianism does not make a place quite uniquely different or less tolerant was one that we met with frequently from civil sector professionals over the course of our research. In the case of the NGO professional cited above, his broader denial of the role that sectarianism plays in shaping asylum seekers and refugees' experiences of Northern Ireland also extended into a gender blindness regarding the specific experiences of male and female refugees. When attempting to unpick the problematics of his rather ideological stance, our conversations with him ended abruptly. This gender blindness emerged a number of times in different conversations with some of our (male and white) civil sector research participants. It was also very visible in issues pertaining to health and employment as well as child care provision. Many of our female asylum seeker and refugee research participants highlighted issues with the use of male interpreters (or in a number of cases, fathers and sons were asked to do this) during their interactions in hospitals. This is an issue we broached with a number of civil society groups, in some instances, only to be told that this had been addressed and dealt with a number of years ago. In practice, however, our research found that this was often not the case and women, in particular, were being put into possible spaces of discomfort, even fear/risk with the inappropriate use of male interpreters around female health issues. This blindness also extended into other spaces with educational or employment training providers not always understanding the needs of women, in particular single mothers, around child care. This issue, however, is something which the

civil sector groups we worked with were seeking to remedy to the best of their abilities. Questions of funding or a lack thereof continually blight the provision of such necessary elements of services for asylum seekers and refugees, and our research found that, it was female asylum seekers and refugees that are often most adversely impacted by such issues.

Such intersections between sectarianism and gender blindness make for a complex picture for many of our research participants. While a number of our civil sector research participants were acutely aware of these challenges, other interviewees argued that it was not sectarianism but rather a deeply anchored, all pervasive culture of mistrust which impacted most the experience of asylum seekers and refugees in such communities:

> One of the main issues in these communities is that people are still afraid, years of not being able to trust nearby neighbours, it's probably normal that people still have not learned how to trust one another or even newcomers. (Health Professional)

In addition to the question of trust was the notion that Northern Ireland needs a better way of defining and operationalising the notion of integration-one which does not make invisible people's presence rather instead, would work to embrace diverse values and ideals outside of the parameters of the so-called 'two community' worldview:

> We have to respect people's cultures, traditions, and their reasons to come here and we have to respect their languages. We don't want them to become white Catholics or white Protestants. We want them to be what they are and recognise and value their contribution to our society. (Health sector professional)

The service providers we spoke to, defined the idea in their own terms and language and then connected it to what they saw as the main issues for 'integration' in Northern Ireland. A recurring theme in our interviews was the issue of what exactly asylum seekers and refugees were being asked to integrate into in Northern Ireland, especially given the ongoing challenge of sectarianism. One voluntary sector professional outlined the challenges as follows:

> There are still certain areas where they don't have any respect for anybody who is of difference. They don't even respect their own. So, like there is a big divide between Catholics and Protestants. Then on top of that they have other issues with migrant and refugee and the very well settled BME communities like Indian, Chinese, Jewish, Pakistani community who have been here from 1940s and they're very well settled. (Voluntary sector professional)

Implicitly, however, this very clear boundary drawing is also responsible for positioning the 'Other' (all Others), as static and bounded, outside of the integration imaginary (if such a thing can be said to exist). Though the local conditions in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry are very distinctive (Murphy & Vieten, 2017), the overarching picture was that the omnipresence of sectarianism and associated social-spatial divisions frames a principal boundary between established communities and newcomers, e.g. asylum seekers and refugees.

7. Concluding Remarks

The construction of difference, and therefore, processes of othering, are historically situated (Vieten, 2012; Vieten & Valentine, 2016) and have to be contextualised in terms of particular geo-political spaces. In this article, we have discussed the ways in which the Northern Ireland legacy of conflict and sectarianism continually imprints public and political discourse (e.g. consociationalism) and shapes everyday life, particularly that of asylum seekers and refugees. It is these striking linkages between a culture of distrust and constructs of othering across space and time that we have found in our study. High levels of community and domestic violence, unemployment and poverty have created a legacy of mistrust that constitutes a driving force in generating suspicion of the Other. This intertwined with a layering of different kinds of invisibilities means the position of asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland is highly precarious. While this is similar in other nation-states, in Northern Ireland this is a precarity heightened by sectarian divisions and gender blindness. For many of the female asylum seekers and refugees whom we interviewed this precarity is further compounded by a lack of understanding of their positionality-cultural, social and economic. Unlike other European countries, Northern Ireland hosts only a small numbers of asylum seekers and refugees, and as such, the gendered moral panic so visible in other nation-states has not become central to the main debate on asylum and refuge. Quite the opposite, for better or worse, the absence of gender in approaches to contemporary policy and politics means that 'the Muslim male Other' has not received populist far-right attention, so far, however, race crime on Muslim groups has increased in Northern Ireland. As argued elsewhere (Yuval-Davis & Vieten, 2018) there is not (yet) an established imagination of *one* cohesive and uniting political community that constructs itself against the Other. Sectarianism and the political framework of consociationalism (Angelov, 2004) shape how everyday life as well as policy and governance are organised in Northern Ireland (McGarry & O'Leary, 2006; see for a detailed critique Kennedy et. al., 2016). We do not know yet in what ways post-Brexit Northern Ireland might see a shift in this regard as an increase in articulations of xenophobia and social distress will further impact the perception of the 'other' e.g. the welcoming or rejection of asylum seekers and refugees in future.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Ulrike M. Vieten is a Sociologist and will be based as a Lecturer in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast, from July 2019. Her work focuses on situated, constructed and shifting gendered, classed and racialised group boundaries in historical and contemporary perspectives. Ulrike's research and publications span conceptual debates on cosmopolitanisms, far right populisms, racisms and gender in Europe as well as empirical and comparative studies on visible minorities, loss, displacement and refugees. Countries of expertise include England and Northern Ireland, Germany, Austria, Poland, the Netherlands and Turkey. She is author of *Gender and Cosmopolitanism in Europe* (2012) and co-edited several books such as *Cartographies of Differences* (2016), and *The Situated Politics of Belonging* (2006).

Fiona Murphy is an Anthropologist and Research Fellow in Queen's University Belfast. She specialises in Indigenous politics and movements, refugees and mobility studies, and sustainability in Australia and Ireland. The key thematics in her work include trauma, memory, reconciliation, mobility and integration. She works extensively on the topic of asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland, the UK and Turkey. She is co-author of *Integration in Ireland: The everyday life of African migrants* (MUP, 2012). She has also written for Allegra: A Virtual Lab of Legal Anthropology Blog, Open Democracy, the Conversation, RTE Brainstorm and the Irish Times.

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Article

The Discursive Appeal to Solidarity and Partisan Journalism in Europe's Migration Crisis

Stefan Wallaschek [1,2]

[1] Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences, University of Bremen, 28359 Bremen, Germany
[2] Institute of Social Sciences, University of Hildesheim, 31141 Hildesheim, Germany; E-Mail: wallaschek@uni-hildesheim.de

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Abstract
The article analyses the discursive appeal to solidarity in the mass media during the unfolding of Europe's migration crisis. Solidarity was claimed by numerous actors in the public discourse to legitimise political decisions and mobilise public opinion. While it seems that the call for solidarity was shared by many actors, media studies show the 'partisan journalism' of media outlets. Thus, the political orientation of media outlets influences their coverage of public debates. Hence, to what extent do different quality newspapers cover the same solidarity claims in times of crisis? In order to answer this question, the crisis coverage of two German and two Irish newspapers with centre-left and centre-right political orientations is examined via the discourse network methodology. Germany is selected due to high political parallelism and a strong affectedness by the crisis, while Ireland is selected because of low political parallelism and a weak affectedness by the migration crisis. The findings demonstrate that partisan journalism persists during Europe's migration crisis. Especially German party actors are present in both countries, underpinning the central position of Germany. Regarding the appeal to solidarity, political solidarity claims prevail in all four newspapers, indicating the political-institutional asymmetry in the Common European Asylum System. The study contributes to the strategic framing of concepts in public debates and demonstrates that the left-right distinction of media outlets is hardly affected by the migration crisis.

Keywords
discourse networks; Europe; Germany; Ireland; migration crisis; partisan journalism; solidarity

Issue
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1. Introduction

Solidarity was a buzzword in Europe's migration crisis in 2015. Numerous actors claimed solidarity with refugees and called for solidarity among member states of the European Union (EU). Commentators called the time period from August to October 2015 the 'long summer of migration' and appreciated volunteering by citizens across Europe (Della Porta, 2018; Hamann & Karakayali, 2016; Kasparek & Speer, 2015; Wallaschek, 2018). Other studies showed that the public discourse during the crisis rather focused on security and economic frames (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Rheindorf & Wodak, 2018). Hence, media outlets report about the crisis in different ways. One reason for this is 'partisan journalism'. Media news coverage and commentaries are influenced by political ideologies which lead to a specific framing of issues in the respective newspapers (Brüggemann, Engesser, Büchel, Humprecht, & Castro, 2014; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; van der Pas, van der Brug, & Vliegenthart, 2017). Moreover, journalists quote and interview other actors to support their own opinions (Hagen, 1993). The question is then whether ideological differences between media outlets vanish or increase during the crisis? To what extent can a discursive contestation of solidarity and security frames be observed?

The article investigates the solidarity discourse in two German and two Irish daily quality newspapers in 2014

and 2015. One centre-right (Welt, Irish Independent) and one centre-left (Süddeutsche Zeitung [SZ], Irish Times) newspaper in each country is selected to analyse the different political orientations as well as different models of political parallelism. While Germany was strongly affected by the migrant crisis in 2015, receiving hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers within a few months, Ireland hardly received any refugees which is mostly due to the geographical location of the island (European Commission, 2017). Regarding political parallelism, Germany is sorted into the Northern European democratic corporatist media model that assumes a close relationship between party organisations and press outlets. Ireland, however, is included in the North Atlantic liberal model which assumes the press and party organisations to be rather distant (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Accordingly, both countries have been affected differently by the migration crisis in 2015 and follow different versions of political parallelism.

I analyse the framing in the media outlets by applying the discourse network methodology. This method combines discourse analysis and social network analysis by examining the interdependent process of actor presence and concept formation in public discourses (Leifeld, 2016). I analyse which actors are present in the newspapers and which frames are deployed. Since solidarity is understood as 'contested concept' (Gallie, 1956), I focus on different meanings of solidarity and which concepts are most present during the migration crisis discourse. *First*, I demonstrate that party actors, national executives and EU representatives dominate the solidarity discourse. The partisan journalism persists in both countries during the migration crisis. *Second*, I show that political solidarity is a shared claim in the four selected newspapers despite the different political orientations of the media outlets. The study demonstrates that the actor constellation corroborates previous work on partisan journalism and 'opportune witnesses' while the omnipresent discursive appeal to solidarity challenges the expectation that solidarity is predominantly invoked by leftist actors.

The article proceeds as follows: In the next section, I briefly outline the research on partisan journalism and Europe's migration crisis. Thereafter, I describe the data and the discourse network methodology. The next section presents the results of the discourse network analysis, followed by a discussion of the findings and implications of the study.

2. Partisan Journalism

Previous studies show that media outlets have a political orientation which impacts their news coverage. The seminal work by Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 21) refers to political parallelism as "the degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties or, more broadly, the extent to which the media system reflects the major political divisions in society". Hence, journalists do not cover news in a neutral way, but mostly follow the general political orientation of the media outlet (Hagen, 1993). Hallin and Mancini (2004) distinguish between a Northern European democratic corporatist media model, a Mediterranean polarised pluralist model, and a North Atlantic liberal model. Regarding the dimension of political parallelism, the first two models share the high alignment between party organisations and the press whilst the North Atlantic liberal model assumes a rather distant relationship between party and press due to a loose tradition of party presses. Brüggemann et al. (2014) revised the typology by Hallin and Mancini and added a fourth media system. Nonetheless, Germany and Ireland are prototypical cases for the democratic corporatist model (Germany) and the liberal model (Ireland) which offers the opportunity to compare both cases with regard to different modes of political parallelism.

Most studies analyse the appearance of specific parties in the respective newspapers and the issue framing in order to observe a close or distant alignment of party actors and the press (Berkel, 2006; Brüggemann et al., 2014; van der Pas et al., 2017). However, as others argue, this is a rather narrow understanding of political parallelism. Political orientation is not only reflected in party actors' statements in the media and party actors are not the only actor group in the media. Broadening the scope of the analysis shows that other actors also appear in the newspapers that are ideologically close to the political orientation of the media outlet (Allern & Blach-Ørsten, 2011; Kaiser & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2019). Hagen (1993) describes this strategy as calling "opportune witnesses" since journalists do not report balanced or objectively about an event, but are rather biased in their selection of interview partners and the representation of quotes. Additionally, specific national-oriented frames might guide the news coverage more than political ideology. Especially in times of crisis, the degree to which a country is affected by the crisis might be more relevant for the media coverage than the political orientation of the outlet (Salgado & Nienstedt, 2016).

Accordingly, I expect that more party actors appear in the German newspapers' coverage than in that of the Irish newspapers. Additionally, I expect that centre-left newspapers (SZ, Irish Times) tend to feature actors from the left political spectrum to a greater extent while centre-right newspapers (Welt, Irish Independent) give more actors from the right political spectrum a voice in their coverage of Europe's migration crisis.

3. Security and Solidarity Frames in Europe's Migration Crisis

Studies on Europe's migration crisis have mainly exhibited two aspects: *Firstly*, scholars demonstrated the incompleteness of the European migration policy, and *secondly*, they highlighted the public debate on a security and solidarity framing of the migration crisis.

The EU's lack of supranational authority in dealing with Europe's migration crisis has been noted (Genschel

& Jachtenfuchs, 2018). The EU has developed a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) to harmonise the different national migration policies across Europe, but the European Council is still the main institutional body that decides on the rules and further political development of this policy area. Moreover, the member states are still the main regulators by setting norms and rules (Zaun, 2016). Europe's migration and asylum policy is based on three principles of the Dublin Regulations: *First*, the member state in which an asylum seeker first enters the EU has to deal with its asylum claim. This regulation gives the border countries of the EU, especially Spain, Italy, and Greece, a one-sided responsibility. *Second*, the Dublin Regulations try to avoid an ambivalent legal status of asylum seekers by attributing the responsibility to deal with the asylum claim to one country. *Third*, asylum seekers cannot claim asylum in more than one member state simultaneously or try to get asylum in another member state after the first rejection. However, this leads to the fact that claiming asylum in non-border EU countries such as Germany or Ireland is made almost impossible (Chetail, 2016). Or as Bast (2013) sums up the institutional discrepancy: "In the European treaties it is expressly mentioned that there must be solidarity among the EU member-states in terms of burden-sharing—but this organizational task has not yet been implemented. There is no asylum system based on solidarity." Hence, while solidarity is a guiding principle in the Lisbon Treaty, the current EU asylum policies are hardly perceived as solidary.

Scholars investigated how the migration crisis was depicted in the public debate. They show that security and economic frames prevailed in the media while humanitarian claims were rather marginal (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). Others demonstrate how security measures such as border surveillance were depicted as humanitarian acts and indicate a discursive shift towards right-wing populism (Colombo, 2018; Musarò & Parmiggiani, 2017; Rheindorf & Wodak, 2018). Furthermore, solidarity movements and pro-refugee protests were quite visible and active during the crisis. They influenced public opinion, mobilised citizens to help refugees and therefore shaped the perception of the migration crisis substantially (Della Porta, 2018; Karakayali, 2017; Lahusen & Grasso, 2018). The image of Alan Kurdi, a 3-year-old boy who was found dead at the Turkish coast received massive media attention and created a public outcry about the dangerous route to Europe and the lack of solidarity with refugees. The 'We can do it' ('Wir schaffen das') statement by German Chancellor Angela Merkel regarding the reception of hundreds of thousands of refugees stuck in Hungary created a very positive (but volatile) public opinion on receiving refugees who are in need of protection (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). While the call to solidarity strongly resonated with the public, there has been little investigation into how actors frame solidarity (Closa & Maatsch, 2014; TransSOL, 2018). Therefore, I build upon research that looks at the *discursive construction of solidarity* (Wallaschek, 2019) and differentiates solidarity into various meanings. For the present study, four meanings of solidarity are most relevant: *Political solidarity* refers to new institutional mechanisms and instruments that foster cooperation; *cultural solidarity* promotes supportive action for shared norms and identity; *monetary solidarity* is based on risk-sharing and financial support for others; and lastly, *social solidarity* claims to redistribute resources and refers to voluntary actions by individuals and social groups.

These four meanings are expected to be present in the migration crisis, because of the asymmetrical CEAS and the need for new institutional instruments (political solidarity). The EU asylum policy strongly rests on human rights and solidarity as a guiding principle in the Lisbon Treaty (cultural solidarity). Financial help as humanitarian aid or to other member states dealing with incoming asylum seekers is important during the crisis (monetary solidarity). The voluntary actions by citizens and activists helping refugees as well as social policy measures might feature in the public discourse (social solidarity).

Accordingly, I expect that meanings of solidarity are more prominent in centre-left newspapers than in centre-right newspapers. Conversely, I expect that non-solidarity claims are more prominent in centre-right newspapers than in centre-left newspapers.

4. Data and Methods

The study analyses the migration crisis coverage of four newspapers, two daily quality newspapers in each country (Germany and Ireland) in the years 2014 and 2015. While the analyses of Europe's migration crisis often begin in 2015 (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018), the first signs of the migration crisis emerged before 2015. The 'Mare Nostrum' mission of the Italian Navy started in October 2013 after a tragic shipwreck on the coast of Lampedusa in which more than 360 migrants died. Mare Nostrum lasted for a year and saved approximately 150,000 migrants. The Italian government urged the EU to establish a follow-up mission. While the Italian mission was a 'save and rescue' mission, the following Frontex-led mission 'Triton' was oriented towards 'sea border protection' (EPSC, 2017). Lasting conflicts and civil wars in the Middle East (Syria) and Northern and Eastern Africa (Libya, Somalia, Eritrea) prompted further migration movements towards Europe. In 2015, more than one million migrants reached EU territory while at the same time approximately 3,800 people died in the Mediterranean. Nonetheless, the EU did not agree on a substantial reform of the Dublin system or EU migration and asylum policy in general. The European Commission's proposal to relocate 160,000 registered refugees across the member states was approved by the European Council by majoritarian vote, but the current numbers of relocation show that hardly any member state completely fulfilled its obligations (European Commission, 2017).

The four selected newspapers are the German newspapers SZ and Welt, and the Irish newspapers Irish Times and Irish Independent. They have a large readership, a nationwide circulation and represent the different political ideologies of centre-left (SZ and Irish Times) and centre-right orientation (Welt and Irish Times). Choosing the Welt instead of the FAZ as the German centre-right newspaper is based on previous work that demonstrates that SZ and Welt differ more on migration policy issues than SZ and FAZ (Eilders, 2002). Hence, partisan journalism on solidarity during the migration crisis might be more pronounced between SZ and Welt.

Quality newspapers still have an agenda-setting function and strongly influence the public debate with their comments, interviews and reports on political issues. Moreover, quality newspapers cover more political and policy-related issues than tabloids (Koopmans, 2007; Nossek, Adoni, & Nimrod, 2015; Reinemann, Stanyer, Scherr, & Legnante, 2012). The newspaper articles have been coded by applying the political claims analysis (Koopmans & Statham, 1999). Rather than coding the entire article, it focuses on the specific claims made by actors. Claims are defined as "the purposive and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals, criticisms or physical attacks, which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors." (Koopmans, 2007, p. 189). This study is not only interested in the claimant (actor) who makes a statement on a specific issue, but also in the justification the claimant uses (de Wilde, 2013). By focusing on this aspect, the partisan journalism as well as the framing of solidarity are examined.

The selection of newspaper articles is based on a nominalistic approach and thereby the keyword search string includes the term 'solidar*' or close synonyms. I selected 967 articles in the four newspapers via the database Factiva and coded 633 claims. Using a nominalistic approach reduces the number of articles and sets a rather high threshold to select newspaper articles. Since the study is interested in how actors frame solidarity, using the term 'solidar*' in the search string increases the likelihood of retrieving the most relevant articles during the migration crisis. Table 1 summarises the number of claims in the four newspapers in each year.

This overview shows that German newspapers cover more claims than Irish newspapers, which reflects Germany's strong affectedness by the crisis and the public relevance and interest in the topic. Nonetheless, the number of claims increases in the Irish newspapers from 2014 to 2015 which shows that Europe's migration crisis gained media attention in peripheral countries not directly affected by the crisis.

The discourse network methodology is deployed to study the co-occurrence of framing and actor appearance in the selected media. It takes into account that actors refer to certain frames in their claims which might be shared by other actors in the public debate. These actor-frame relations are studied in discourse network analyses (Leifeld, 2016; Leifeld & Haunss, 2012). This perspective highlights agenda-setting processes and how actors frame public debates. Accordingly, the discourse network structure is a two-mode network, because two types of nodes (actor and concepts) appear in the network. Only those claims are used for the discourse network analysis in which actors justify their claim. This reduces the number of claims that are analysed, because claims without a justification have been coded as 'no justification' and are not considered in this study.

To account for the most present actors and concepts, the eigenvector centrality is calculated. It measures how central a node is in a network by counting the number of edges between two nodes and considering whether the node is linked to other central nodes in the network. The scale ranges from 0 to 1 and the closer the value is to 1, the more central the node is (Bonacich, 1987). The network statistics are calculated and the network figures are visualised with the R package igraph (Csardi & Nepusz, 2006).

5. Results

The findings are presented in the order of the articulated expectations in Sections 2 and 3. First, I turn to political parallelism and then focus on the framing in the four newspapers. The expectation was that more party actors appear in German than in Irish newspapers on the solidarity debate during Europe's migration crisis. Additionally, due to the political orientation of the newspaper, more left or right party actors are featured in

Table 1. Number of claims in German and Irish newspapers, 2014–2015.

Year\Newspaper	SZ	Welt	IT	IInd	Total
2014	54	74	10	2	140
2015	219	138	87	49	493
Total	273	212	97	51	633

Notes: SZ: Süddeutsche Zeitung, Welt: Die Welt, IT: Irish Times, IInd: Irish Independent. For the German migration crisis debate, I used the following keyword string in the database Factiva: *'(Flüchtling* or Flucht* or Migrant* or Einwander* or Zuwander* or Asyl*) and Solidar* and (EU or Europ*)'. For the Irish migration crisis debate: '(Refugee or escape or Migrant* or Migration* or Immigrant or Immigration* or Asyl*) and (solidar* or mutual w/1 support* or cooperat*) and (EU or Europ*)'*. An asterisk controls for multiple endings of a word. Duplicates of articles were excluded from the article population.

the newspapers with a similar political ideology. In order to give an overview of the different discourse networks, Table 2 summarises the network statistics of the four newspapers.

5.1. Political Parallelism and Partisan Journalism

The differences in the representation of party actors between the newspapers is rather marginal. 64 per cent of all actors in German newspapers are party actors while 60 per cent of actors have a party affiliation in the Irish newspapers. The centre-right newspaper Welt features, with a share of 76 per cent, the highest number of party actors. German newspapers predominantly cover claims from domestic party actors, although some EU actors (Juncker, Avramopoulos) are also present. The Irish newspapers feature Irish party actors, but also represent other European party actors like German politician Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) or EU actors like Jean-Claude Juncker. Thus, the first expectation is not corroborated. Both Irish and German newspapers focus on party actors in the migration crisis discourse.

The representation of centre-left and centre-right actors follows the expected direction. The centre-left newspaper SZ features actors who are ideologically close to the SZ like the Catholic cardinal Marx or the SPD. The Welt covers more claims from centre-right actors like German Chancellor Merkel or Minister of Interior Thomas de Maizière (both CDU). Nonetheless, the most central actors in both German newspapers are conservative politicians (Merkel, de Maizière, CDU, CSU, Avramopoulos) while centre-left actors are less visible in the discourse. These conservative politicians have central policy-related competences and thereby get more public attention from the media outlets. Hence, the expectation in relation to 'opportune witnesses' is mainly corroborated for the German case, but it is also affected by the involvement of conservative politicians in government coalitions during the time period.

In the Irish case, the Irish Times focuses less on domestic party actors than the Irish Independent. However, the latter covers the solidarity debate in Europe's migration crisis to a lesser extent. If the Irish centre-right newspaper covers solidarity, party actors predominantly appear. Moreover, these party actors have a centre-right political orientation. More and different actors appear in the Irish Times, but there are hardly any left-leaning party actors. Nonetheless, more pro-refugee groups (e.g. Amnesty, Irish Refugee Council) are represented in the Irish Times. Hence, the expectations for the Irish newspapers can be almost completely corroborated. The Irish Independent represents more party actors than expected but features more claims by centre-right (party) actors. The Irish Times represents, as expected, not many party actors and covers more claims by centre-left actors.

5.2. Framing Pro- and Contra-Solidarity

The following section focuses on the framing in the solidarity debate. The expectation was that solidarity frames appear more likely and more pronounced in centre-left newspapers than in centre-right newspapers. Figures 1 and 2 show, however, that political solidarity dominates the discourse in the four newspapers and this is underlined by the eigenvector value of 1 in Table 2. This demonstrates the positive discursive appeal to solidarity. If actors refer to solidarity, then they seldom contest this concept, but support solidary actions in their claims.

Most actors in the four newspapers refer positively to solidarity and demand a reform of existing regulations. After a dozen migrants were found dead in a lorry on a highway in Austria in August 2015, the Irish Independent reports the political reactions and cites German Chancellor Angela Merkel:

> Ms Merkel told a news conference at the summit on the West Balkans in Vienna: "We are of course all shaken by the appalling news. This reminds us that we must tackle quickly the issue of immigration and in a European spirit—that means in a spirit of solidarity—and to find solutions." (Irish Independent, 2015)

Table 2. Network statistics about the four discourse networks.

	SZ	**Welt**	**IT**	**IInd**
Number of actors	33	21	29	15
Number of edges	90	58	51	18
Main component	41 nodes	25 nodes	32 nodes	16 nodes
Degree centralisation	0.37	0.39	0.44	0.47
Network density	3.32	3.12	2.31	1.9
Most central concept	1.00 (political solidarity)	1.00 (political solidarity)	1.00 (political solidarity)	1.00 (political solidarity)

Notes: SZ: Süddeutsche Zeitung, Welt: Die Welt, IT: Irish Times, IInd: Irish Independent. A threshold for the eigenvector centrality of the nodes is applied to focus on the most visible actors in the respective network. Only nodes with an eigenvector centrality of at least 0.1 appear in the discourse networks. Following De Nooy, Mrvar and Batagelj (2011), the network density for two-mode networks is computed as the mean degree centrality of the respective network.

SZ, 2014-2015

Welt, 2014-2015

Figure 1. Discourse networks in the German newspapers (SZ, Welt). Notes: The graph depicts concepts as circles and actors as squares. The size of the nodes indicates the eigenvector centrality. The bigger the node, the more central it is. The thickness of the edges shows how often an actor refers to a concept. The bigger the edge, the more often the actors uses the concept.

Figure 2. Discourse networks in the Irish newspapers (Irish Independent, Irish Times). Notes: The graph depicts concepts as circles and actors as squares. The size of the nodes indicates the eigenvector centrality. The bigger the node, the more central it is. The thickness of the edges shows how often an actor refers to a concept. The bigger the edge, the more often the actors uses the concept.

Political solidarity is in particular linked to solidarity among EU member states. These claims show that the national governments are aware that the current Dublin Regulations do not properly work if hundreds of thousands of people try to claim asylum in the EU. They attribute too much responsibility to EU border countries in dealing with migrants and asylum seekers. Moreover, Greece and Italy had been hit hard by the Euro crisis and did not have the capacities to host and deal with the large number of refugees. Therefore, many actors demanded more (political) solidarity with Italy and Greece. In 2014, Dimitris Avramopoulos, the designated European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship at the time, claimed:

> "We have to show solidarity with Italy", said Avramopoulos at his hearing with members of the European Parliament. Clear asylum regulations, measures against illegal immigration and human traffickers as well as more opportunities for legal immigration are necessary….Italy and Greece feel disadvantaged [due to the Dublin Regulations]. (Welt, 2014)

Solidarity claims also address the cultural dimension, promoting equal rights and demanding more moral support for refugees. Pope Francis publicly demands more support and empathy regarding refugees, the Irish Times reports on a call to demonstrations by pro-refugee and civil society groups in Ireland to show solidarity with refugees while:

> "It cannot be accepted that the Mediterranean becomes a big graveyard", he [Pope Francis] said. "The boats, that daily arrive at the coasts of Europe, are filled with men and women who need empathy and help." (SZ, 2014)

> Today [September 5th 2015] has been declared a Day of Action in solidarity with people seeking refuge in Europe. The Irish Refugee Council and Migrant Rights Centre Ireland have called on people to gather at the Famine Memorial on Dublin's Custom House Quay at 1 pm to show their solidarity with refugees. (Irish Times, 2015a)

Non-solidarity frames are present in the discourse, but rather on the margins despite the political orientation of the newspaper. Actors hardly oppose solidarity claims directly. Rather, they try to reinterpret the crisis by emphasising security and demarcation frames in their public claims. Especially conservative politicians claim both, namely more solidarity in the crisis and increasingly emphasising security issues. For instance, the president of the European Council Donald Tusk demanded a stronger emphasis on border surveillance in October 2015 as the Irish Times reports:

> Mr Tusk, who has steered the EU towards a more hardline approach to the refugee crisis in recent weeks, reiterated the need for Europe to reinforce its external borders. "Today, no task is more important for the moderate centre right than the re-establishment of Europe's external borders," he said. "We can no longer allow solidarity to be equivalent to naivety, openness to be equivalent to helplessness, freedom to be equivalent to chaos." (Irish Times, 2015b)

To sum up, the expectation that solidarity claims are more likely to be prevalent in centre-left newspapers than in centre-right newspapers is not corroborated in either country. Instead, the positive discursive appeal to (political) solidarity is observable in the German and Irish newspapers during Europe's migration crisis.

6. Conclusion

The article analysed the solidarity debate in German and Irish newspapers in the midst of Europe's migration crisis. It highlighted the actor constellation in the public discourses and how actors frame solidarity. It is the first study to focus on the influence of partisan journalism on the coverage of the solidarity debate in Europe's migration crisis.

The article provides three novel insights into the study of political parallelism, the research on solidarity and Europe's migration crisis. *Firstly*, the article highlights that the left-right orientation of newspapers persists. Although a crisis might be understood as a 'critical juncture' that changes institutional settings and leads to a redefining of positions, centre-right and centre-left newspapers feature 'opportune witnesses' in their news coverage. Moreover, both Irish and German newspapers predominately feature party actors, mainly domestic government actors, in their news coverage. Hence, the study corroborates the 'structural bias' of newspapers towards the representation of government actors as well as the fact that government actors are the winners of Europeanised public debates (Koopmans, 2007; Van Dalen, 2012).

Secondly, solidarity seems to be *everybody's preferred concept*. If political actors refer to this concept, it is in a rather positive valence. It is rather unusual to openly reject the call for solidarity and claim that it is not necessary or falsely claimed. This prompts the question as to why this is the case, especially if the recent crises are strongly linked to the conflict over solidarity in the EU (Hutter, Grande, & Kriesi, 2016). One reason might be the historical legacy of the concept. Solidarity is an important concept in the labour movement but also in Catholic social teaching. Moreover, it is one of the fundamental norms in European countries (Featherstone, 2012; Sangiovanni, 2013; Stjernø, 2009). Hence, publicly rejecting solidarity seems rather unlikely. Instead, the discursive battle is about the interpretation of solidarity, how solidarity is framed and with whom solidarity is (not) expressed.

Lastly, the study demonstrated that political solidarity is the common denominator in the public debate. Re-

forming the existing CEAS and supporting border countries are fiercely debated among actors. However, the (non-)reform of the CEAS and the failed implementation of an EU-wide quota to relocate refugees across member states (Biermann, Guérin, Jagdhuber, Rittberger, & Weiss, 2019; Zaun, 2018) demonstrate that political solidarity failed to be institutionalised. It created public awareness about the pitfalls of the policy area, but the opposition of several member states led to the failure of political solidarity after 2015. Nonetheless, these political conflicts are crucial for the future development of the Home and Justice Affairs of the EU as well as in the societal handling of refugees and migrants in European countries.

The study also bears some limitations. Focusing only on a rather short time period might exaggerate the general level of public solidarity claims. Hence, future studies might take a more extensive historical perspective on the framing of solidarity which goes beyond a crisis period. Moreover, further analyses could focus on online and social media in order to study the appeal to solidarity in media outlets beyond the mainstream media. Quality newspapers have a selection bias towards certain frames and powerful actors. Lastly, the study only considered articles and claims that contained solidarity or close synonyms for the subsequent analysis. Using a more general approach to investigate norms and values in public debates can illuminate the framing structure and use of such concepts in public discourses.

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About the Author

Stefan Wallaschek is a PhD Fellow at the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS) at the University of Bremen and a Research Associate at the University of Hildesheim. His dissertation investigates the discursive construction of solidarity in Europe in times of crisis. His research focuses on European politics, European politcal sociology, migration and refugee studies, political communication as well as theories of solidarity.

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Article

Solidarity Cities and Cosmopolitanism from Below: Barcelona as a Refugee City

Óscar García Agustín and Martin Bak Jørgensen *

Department of Culture and Global Studies, Aalborg University, 9220 Aalborg, Denmark; E-Mails: oscar@cgs.aau.dk (O.G.A.), martinjo@cgs.aau.dk (M.B.J.)

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
The so-called 'refugee crisis' provoked a wave of solidarity movements across Europe. These movements contrasted with attitudes of rejection against refugees from almost all EU member states and a lack of coordinated and satisfactory response from the EU as an institution. The growth of the solidarity movement entails backlash of nationalized identities, while the resistance of the member states to accept refugees represents the failure of the cosmopolitan view attached to the EU. In the article, we argue that the European solidarity movement shapes a new kind of cosmopolitanism: cosmopolitanism from below, which fosters an inclusionary universalism, which is both critical and conflictual. The urban scale thus becomes the place to locally articulate inclusive communities where solidarity bonds and coexistence prevail before national borders and cosmopolitan imaginaries about welcoming, human rights, and the universal political community are enhanced. We use the case of Barcelona to provide a concrete example of intersections between civil society and a municipal government. We relate this discussion to ongoing debates about 'sanctuary cities' and solidarity cities and discuss how urban solidarities can have a transformative role at the city level. Furthermore, we discuss how practices on the scale of the city are up-scaled and used to forge trans-local solidarities and city networks.

Keywords
Barcelona; cosmopolitanism; municipalism; refugee crisis; solidarity

Issue
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1. Introduction

When UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon spoke at a conference in Washington DC in April 2016 addressing the forced displacement of millions of people taking place at the time he said: "We are facing the biggest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. Above all, this is not just a crisis of numbers; it is also a crisis of solidarity.…We must respond to a monumental crisis with monumental solidarity" (UN, 2016). It is easy to see why he believed that the refugee crisis was also a crisis of solidarity.

Unable to launch a common approach, what happened across Europe was a 'race to the bottom' in terms of developing deterrence policies to prevent refugees from entering a particular country. The refugee crisis caused a 'domino effect' when the migrant/refugee flows advanced from the southern and southeast part of Europe towards Central and Northern Europe (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019a). In the months following, most of the EU member states claimed that they were unable to cope with the situation and they found themselves in states of emergency, which called for—but also allowed for—exceptional measures, in reality breaching the

principles of the Schengen agreement. Tensions arose around specific internal borders such as the French–Italian, the German–Austrian, the Slovenian–Austrian, the German–Danish, and the Danish–Swedish borders, and Europe went through a re-bordering (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019a).

While border closing illustrates a rejection of refugees, during the same period, Europe witnessed a wave of solidarity movements all across Europe taking different forms, depending on the context. The event at Budapest Keleti railway station is one example. On 4 September 2015, thousands of migrants and refugees had been encamped at the station. Hungarian police had started denying them access to the trains and were beginning to reroute them towards detention camps outside the city (De Genova, 2016). More than a thousand migrants and refugees then self-mobilized and started chanting 'Freedom!' and soon took to the road, heading towards Vienna in what was soon called the March of Hope (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019a). The Hungarian authorities capitulated and, with opportunistic motivations, assisted the marchers towards Austria and Germany who then declared their borders to be open. The 2015 long summer of migration marked a clash between the principles of Schengen—implying that asylum seekers could move to their preferred destinations after entering the EU—and those of Dublin II procedures (Bauböck, 2017). At the same time, the marchers called for European solidarity, symbolized by a man carrying the flag of the EU at the fore of the march, and it spurred the development of a multitude of solidarity networks—or made the already existing ones visible—across Europe.

In the article, we argue that the European solidarity movement has shaped a new kind of cosmopolitanism: cosmopolitanism from below, which fosters an inclusionary universalism, which is both critical and conflictual. The urban scale thus becomes the place to locally articulate inclusive communities where solidarity bonds and coexistence prevail before national borders and cosmopolitan imaginaries about welcoming, human rights, and the universal political community are enhanced. Our focus to conceptualize the shaping of those imaginaries is mainly based on the cities. We do not wish to imply that cities are inclusive per se. We may find examples where cities or regional states take an exclusivist stance towards immigration and immigrants. However, we do see the new municipalism as a progressive political force. This implies looking not only at civil society movements, but also at the intersections between civil society and local or municipal governments. The implications are twofold: the articulation of cosmopolitanism from below in which civil society plays a major role in the redefinition of being European, in conflict with the EU institutions, and the network of municipalities as a genuine alternative—with all its limitations—to the nation states and nationalism as the dominant answer to the humanitarian crisis of 2015. To illustrate how this happens in practice, we use the example of Barcelona and its work on defining itself as a refugee city.

2. Solidarities and Cosmopolitanism from Below

Cosmopolitan imaginaries and practices "must entail forms of solidarity, which we understand as mutual constitutive relationships, the shaping of common ground, and the claim for an inclusive universality" (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019b, p. 133). It would be important here to explain our understanding of cosmopolitanism and solidarity. By referring to cosmopolitanism from below, we highlight the opposition to cosmopolitanism from above and place our approach within that of critical and conflictual cosmopolitanism (Agustín, 2017; Caraus, 2015). As pointed out by David Harvey (2009), critical cosmopolitanism must avoid false dichotomies between universal and rooted cosmopolitanism which ignore the dialectical relation between the universal and the particular and must aim to explain "moment of openness", which develops new relations between the self, the other, and the world (Delanty, 2006). Thus, cosmopolitanism does not imply an uncritical assumption of universalism or the rejection of the conflictual dimension. Universalism can indeed entail a dialectical function to contest existing imaginaries and open up the possibilities of thinking of alternative political orders or a more just world (Caraus, 2015). Cosmopolitanism from below combines rooted practices and solidarity relations without renouncing to a common ground shared by different solidarity movements. Such a common ground would be the basis for a new cosmopolitan 'we' (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019b; Caraus, 2017) grounded in inclusive universalism and the translation of rooted solidarity struggles. On the other hand, solidarity is a relational practice, and in opposition to reductionisms or strategic emptiness, solidarity is contentious; it emerges strongly in moments or conjunctures, it is generative of political subjectivities and collective identities, it entails alliance-building among diverse actors, it is inventive of new imaginaries, it is situated in space and time and organized in multi-scalar relations, and it is linked in different ways to institutions. Solidarity practices can, in any case, connect different places or geographies and enable relations that go beyond national borders, without having anything to do with nation-states' own interests (Featherstone, 2012).

The 'refugee crisis' and the arrival of refugees ruptures the imagined national community, as xenophobic reactions and implementation of restrictive policy measures make evident how national border-regimes create injustice, inequality, and divisions between human beings (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019b). The nation-state contains both inclusive and exclusionary forces. The exclusionary forces of citizenship are often felt by immigrants. The conjuncture of the 'refugee crisis' enhanced the exclusionary forces and led to a 'race to the bottom' between nation-states to limit the number of incoming refugees. Likewise, we can identify an ambiguity be-

tween inclusion and exclusion within the EU framework. The European border regimes (Schengen and Frontex) at the same time have ideals of openness and free mobility as well as exclusionary aspects of controlling external borders. During the 'refugee crisis', the European Commission tried to appeal to the exclusionary forces by securing the external borders and by creating the EU–Turkey deal, as well as launching a refugee relocation scheme in 2015 aiming at relocating 160,000 refugees who had arrived in Italy and Greece to other member states. The scheme was a failure on all accounts as it relocated less than 28,000 refugees and was terminated in September 2017. Thus, when we discuss practices of solidarity, we do so in relation to scales: local, regional, national, international, and transnational. The concept of scale connects to the (possible) institutionalization and materiality of solidarity (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019a).

The solidarity movements developing all over Europe show how such exclusivist regimes can be challenged—and to some degree—undone and replaced by new imaginaries of inclusivist, just, and equal communities. This will not remove the nationalized identities supporting the existing regime(s), but it counters the existing hegemony both discursively and materially. David Featherstone has used the term "nationed geographies of crisis" to "suggest ways in which the nation is reasserted as the primary locus through which grievances are articulated and envisioned" (Featherstone, 2015, p. 21). As the term suggests these nationed geographies generate exclusionary articulations of the nation. Translocal solidarity networks connecting local and international geographies (Agustín, 2017), as well as cosmopolitan imaginaries, are essential to re-drawing progressive cartographies "and relate to diverse internationalist trajectories and connections" (Featherstone & Karaliotas, 2018, p. 299). In this regard, solidarities are central to the formation of transformative political subjectivities. Practices of solidarity can include people and communities excluded in existing policies, or they may enact new alternatives by generating entirely new subject identities (Bauder, 2016, p. 258).

Our conception of cosmopolitanism from below is grounded in the constitutive role of trans-local relations and their capacity to shape a cosmopolitan 'we', which is universal but rooted in practices and solidarity relations. It is important to highlight that talking about cosmopolitanism from below implies not renouncing the idea of universalism since the universal is the result of shaping inclusive common ground and not of the imposition of an abstract (exclusive) universalism. Thus, cosmopolitanism from below becomes the key to interconnecting the local practices of urban solidarity beyond national borders and, extremely important in our case, it reveals that the true agents of cosmopolitanism have always been migrants (Nail, 2015). In a similar manner to sanctuary cities, the solidarity city movement is, according to Thomas Nail, a migrant justice movement with the goal to create a true cosmopolis and bypass the idea behind nation-states. In order to achieve such a goal, new imaginaries must be generated which oppose the city (as a place for all residents) to the exclusionary national policies.

3. Cities and Urban Solidarities

Changing the focus and scale of the city brings a different perspective and practical alternatives which can challenge national governments and political inertia. Throughout the world, cities have responded to the disjuncture between exclusionary national migration and residency policies, and the need to be inclusive at the local scale (Bauder & Gonzalez, 2018). Today, 55% of the global population lives in cities; by 2050 that number will have increased to 68%. Migrants and refugees may enter a given country in remote coastal areas or enter through the countryside or desert—but they inevitably move towards cities. As Benjamin Barber argued in If Mayors Ruled the World:

> The politics of the city have a very different character to the ideological politics of the nation. [They] are about making things work—you've got to pick up the garbage, you've to keep the hospitals open, it doesn't matter if the immigrants are legal or illegal—they have children who get sick and who have to go to school, they ride buses, they drive cars. If you asked a mayor, 'Do you think immigrants should be allowed in or not?' they'd say, 'They are here'. (Barber, 2013)

Cities must find a way to secure access to legal residency, social protection, and cultural belonging, and accept the physical presence of illegal migrants. This is not an easy task, as national governments hold the right to issue visas, permits, residence, etc.—yet the new municipalist surge demonstrates that the municipality is becoming a strategically crucial site for the organization of transformative social change (Roth & Russell, 2018). The city can be—and is—a strategic location for an emergent and active citizenship. As Jean McDonald has argued, the city is a space in which formal notions of citizenship have been challenged and where social, economic, and political rights typically associated with formal citizenship have been substantially demanded, acquired, and enacted by non-citizen actors (McDonald, 2012).

As we have already argued, we do not consider cities as such, as an inherently inclusionary or progressive force, as opposed to the nation-state. As studies on immigrant integration have shown, it is the particular urban context which shapes the approach to migration issues and the local politics of migration. De Graauw and Vermeulen (2016), for instance, show that cities are more likely to develop inclusionary approaches if the cities have left-leaning governments, if a large part of the electorate being immigrants, and by having an infrastructure of community-based organizations that actively represent immigrants' interest in local politics and policy-

making. Alongside these tendencies, we could add that relations between (racialized) minorities and the political establishment, including the political left, also influence how urban solidarities are articulated. Bertie Russell (2019, p. 1) argues that: "Rather than essentializing cities as inherently progressive or democratic, the municipal is instead becoming framed as a 'strategic front' for developing a transformative politics of scale". From this, it follows that local loyalties and solidarities can be mobilized as part of a progressive scalar strategy without falling into the trap of a 'particular localism'. The latter notion stems from Mark Purcell, who claims that "as we discover, narrate, and invent new ideas about democracy and citizenship in cities, it is critical to avoid what I call the local trap, in which the local scale is assumed to be inherently more democratic than other scales" (Purcell, 2006, p. 1921). He further argues that scales "are socially constructed strategies to achieve particular ends. Therefore, any scale or scalar strategy can result in any outcome. Localization can lead to a more democratic city, or a less democratic one" (Purcell, 2006, pp. 1921–1922).

A lens to understand urban solidarities is the idea of 'sanctuary' cities. There are several definitions of sanctuary cities, which tend to differ according to national perspectives. A short functional definition is the deliberate municipal practice of not enforcing strict immigration laws. Instead of restricting access, the sanctuary city offers entitlements to otherwise illegalized migrants. Looking in particular at 'sanctuary' cities, Harald Bauder takes a spatial perspective and argues that such cities switch from the national to the urban scale by recognizing migrants through their domicile, their urban presence, rather than excluding them based on their national status (as 'illegal'). He contends that "the city, not the national, is the scale that defines community" (Bauder, 2017). We can identify this practice not only in sanctuary cities in North America, but also in the development of solidarity cities or Refuge Cities in Europe.

4. Intersections between Civil Society Municipalities: Forging New Imaginaries

In our own work, we have described solidarity cities through the notion of institutional solidarity, which represents the formalization in different degrees of solidarity, connecting the civil society arena with that of policymaking (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019a). Here we argue that the key to characterizing institutional solidarity (in opposition to institutionalized solidarity) is the capacity to enable (infra)structures to materialize solidarity and maintain (and foster) the connections with civil society and migrants and refugee organizations. For this reason, it is logical that institutional solidarity, as in the case of the 'sanctuary cities', happens at the local (urban) scale where the relations (and also the tensions) between institutions and civil society are closer. The relationship with the state (and its form of institutionalized solidarity) is often conflictual since the aims and realities dealt with are different. Where, for instance, the state can suggest an exclusivist approach limiting access to health, education, and labor, the municipalities at the local level have no choice but to deal with the people residing in the given municipality. At the local level, policy-based exclusivism is often replaced by local pragmatism or inclusiveness. This situation of conflict between the local and the national levels explains how the international scale is promoted to find transnational alternatives that go beyond the opposition and restrictions shown by nation-states. Regardless of the label, cities seeking to become spaces of sanctuary or solidarity must do so through institutionalization, alliance building, and civil society engagement.

We regard solidarity is contentious and, as such, a counter-hegemonic social and political mode of action which can unify diverse actors to come together to challenge authorities "in order to promote and enact alternative imaginaries" (Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008, p. 157, who describe contentions politics). The potential and ability to not only envision but also enact alternative imaginaries is another important aspect of solidarity and one which is decisive for analyzing how solidarity responds to the 'refugee crisis' (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019a, chapter 2). The city has particularly been perceived as an open space of imagination: what Harvey (2000) has called "spaces of hope". Haiven and Khasnabish (2014) have coined the notion 'radical imagination', which they define as the ability to imagine the world, life, and social institutions not as they are but as they might otherwise be. They argue that "the radical imagination is not just about dreaming of different futures. It's about bringing those possibilities back from the future to work in the present, to inspire action and new forms of solidarity today". (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014, p. 3)

5. Barcelona's Municipalism and Refuge Plan

In May 2015, Barcelona en Común (Barcelona in Common), a citizen platform created less than one year before the elections, won the municipal elections. Ada Colau, a well-known social activist who is particularly involved in the stop-evictions movement, became mayor. One year later, Barcelona en Común launched the guide "How to Win Back the City in Común", elaborated by their own International Committee. The intention of the guide is already presented in the first lines:

> From the very beginning, those of us who participate in Barcelona En Común were sure that the democratic rebellion in Barcelona wouldn't be just a local phenomenon. We want Barcelona to be the trigger for a citizen's revolution in Catalonia, Spain, Southern Europe, and beyond. (Barcelona en Común, 2016)

Two dimensions converge here: the local and the international. The experience of Barcelona, being locally rooted, aspires to connect with other international experiences.

The place of politics (with citizens as its actors) is the city and the connection between cities creates a new scale that is not monopolized by the nation states and is open to new forms of cooperation between institutions and civil society. Thus, Barcelona becomes "the heart of a new global political phenomenon known as municipalism" (Gessen, 2018), which challenges the distinction between traditional political parties and citizens, and between institutions (and political decision-making) and civil society. Municipalism reflects the major role played by the cities and attempts to "open up important fields of action when it comes to the flow of global capital into and out of cities; the ecological consequences of overpopulation; and the growing social, economic, and ideological divide between urban, suburban, and rural areas" (Rubio-Pueyo, 2017). Migration and refuge have also become part of those important fields, as proven after the 'refugee crisis' in 2015.

Following these statements, we consider municipalism as a space for radical imagination since the possibilities of producing policies driven by politicians in cooperation with citizens (as a 'democratic rebellion') are already provoking new ways of solidarity that can inspire other spaces (cities) and even change the way we understand politics. Regarding migration, the radical imaginary on democracy forged by municipalism is shaped by cosmopolitanism from below, where the local connects with the universal and the city become the space of coexistence between equals. Within this logic, the City Council launched Barcelona's Refugee City Plan in 2015, conceived as "a citizen space to channel urban solidarity and to set up coordinated ways of participating in its application" (Barcelona Ciutat Refugi, n.d.). The plan is a reaction against the restrictive politics towards refugees carried out by the Spanish government. Despite the commitment to receive 17,313 refugees, according to the refugee relocation scheme and the resettlement scheme, Spain received only 1,910 (Sánchez & Sánchez, 2017). Barcelona's response connected with the multiple forms of solidarity expressed by civil society. The idea of 'refugee city' already activates an imaginary of the city as a place of solidarity in contrast with the hostility shown by the national government. The imaginary of solidarity converges with that of municipalism. This confluence explains why the idea of 'refuge cities' evolved quickly into the establishment of a national network in Spain and a European Network. Although the state is the main decision-maker in asylum policies, municipalism entails a new space to do everyday politics and to challenge the absolute lack of a humanitarian approach by the national government.

Previous to the launch of the Refuge City initiative, Mayor Ada Colau wrote a letter to Mariano Rajoy which reflected two totally different modes of approaching the solidarity movement and the efforts made by civil society. Colau offered to cooperate and receive more refugees and emphasized the role that the representative institutions should play: "We as institutions must rise to the occasion of this wave of solidarity. It is not about charity. It is an obligation" (Colau, 2015). Not surprisingly, the Spanish President, Mariano Rajoy, not only refused the offer but also the possibility of managing the situation at a level which was not the European one. He did not consider that the city level should be the level of action, and not even the nation-state. Consequently, Rajoy talked about solution patches, or short-term measures, and thus removed the political solutions from the actions carried out by the citizens. On the other hand, the idea sustained by Colau of institutions obliged to follow the solidarity movement points to a completely different direction in which the solutions are designed from below and transcend the interests of the national governments and the constraints imposed by the EU. Both positions illustrate the differentiation above between institutional and institutionalized solidarity. Furthermore, the case of Barcelona offers a dual horizontal platform to articulate cosmopolitanism from below: between institutions and civil society (by strengthening the link and cooperation) and between cities from different geographies (by establishing a national and international network of 'refuge cities').

Barcelona as a 'refuge city' develops the idea of municipalism reflected in its "inter-city network's four strategies—the reception model, care for refugees already in Barcelona, citizen participation and information, and action abroad" and "emphasizes the assertive influence of the local government" (Irgil, 2016, p. 10). It does not imply a completely harmonious relation between civil society and the municipality or the fulfillment of all goals, which is far from happening. However, as Hansen (2019) has pointed out, the 'refuge city' "must crucially be read as a Europe-wide campaign against a climate of fear and closure". Therefore, urban solidarities and cooperation between civil society and institutions become relevant to promote an imaginary which works against the one produced from nationalist and xenophobic positions.

Finally, it is important to stress that the tensions between civil society and the municipality have become evident in the case of the migrants and the enormous difficulties in offering satisfactory solutions from local institutions. The case of the *manteros* (street vendors) is probably the most emblematic. The recognition of unions of *manteros*, as well as the willingness of the City Council to improve the conditions of the group, have been obscured by the continuing police control and repression. The critiques of *manteros* were also aimed at the municipal initiative to create cooperatives by ex-vendors who want to sell 'legal' products. The initiative has been considered as an attempt to improve the image of the city council without addressing the real problems on the street. The case of the *manteros* would be an example of the limitations of the left in Spain (Barcelona en Común, but also Podemos) to change institutions substantially (Sabaté, 2019). The difficulties in opening up institutions to groups like *manteros* are also reflected in the way in

which solidarities are constructed, particularly from an institutional perspective.

6. Institutionalizing and Imagining Solidarities

The urban scale (and the corresponding form of institutional solidarity) opens up the potential to articulate solidarity but still in relation to other scales and their constraints, both nationally and internationally. The focus on local realities also implied that the Barcelona as Refuge City Plan had to modify their goals and understanding of solidarity. The initially declared goals consisted of providing "support for refugees reaching Barcelona under their own steam, not part of European quotas and initiatives for direct support for the Mediterranean cities most affected by the humanitarian crisis" (Barcelona Ciutat Refugi, 2016). Nonetheless, the strategy changed to address the everyday situations not corresponding with the wave of solidarity from 2015. The new strategy consisted of: the strengthening of the Care Service for Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER); the application of the program for accommodation and support called "Nausica"; increasing work on awareness and education; the creation of the neighborhood document brochure in order to facilitate the integration of residents regardless of their legal condition; and continuing with international cooperation. All these efforts reflect a new phase of institutional solidarity. In a conversation with Ignasi Calbó, coordinator of the plan, he explained that there was a shift from the 'refugees welcome' phase to managing other realities and situations which did not correspond with the most stereotypical media representations of refugees. In our understanding, this second phase implies a new imaginary of refugees if we consider 'refugees welcome' as the first moment of solidarity. The imaginary provoked by the Syrian 'refugee crisis' was very powerful and motivated many of the acts of solidarity. By recognizing other realities to deal with, the City Council likewise demanded a change of imaginary related to the autonomy of immigrants and the city as a place of coexistence.

Gloria Rendón, coordinator of SAIER and the "Nausica" program, explains the change with the following words: "When the 'Barcelona Refuge City Plan' was created, the impact on the city was more media than real….Now we have a real impact but less media" (Barcelona Ciutat Refugi, 2017a). Her words portray quite accurately how the Refuge City was indeed part of the wave of solidarity since it emerged from civil society's demands, and how it needs to adapt to the existing scenario in the aftermath of the crisis. Therefore, we identify tension between institutionalizing and imagining solidarity since the imaginary of refugees differs from the one used by the municipality. This situation requires the responsible people of the plan to contest the idea that no refugees were arriving in Barcelona by highlighting that refugees were coming, but with a different profile than expected in 2015 and that the new refugees and asylum seekers do not reach the same media scope. The interest in addressing realities could evolve into disconnection between the political institutions and the citizens and put the intersection between politicians (and policy makers) and citizens at risk. Therefore, the second phase of institutional solidarity focuses on increasing solidarity through participation. Pablo Peralta de Andrés, responsible for sensitivity and participation of the plan, places urban solidarity at the level of the neighborhood:

> When we talk about solidarity and refugees, there is a problem in that we talk in general terms. If we only look at their administrative situation and their needs, we ignore their particularities: It is not the same to be a man coming from Venezuela, a woman coming from Pakistan, or a child from Honduras. So solidarity shouldn't be with the refugees in general but with a population that is coming and with a logic of a good and new neighborhood. (Barcelona Ciutat Refugi, 2017b)

Although the plan aims to enhance participation in the neighborhoods by supporting the ongoing work of social organizations, it is difficult not to interpret the words of Peralta de Andrés in terms of cosmopolitanism from below. He rejects talking about solidarity in general and prefers contextualized solidarity instead. The opposition to reducing refugees to an abstraction and solidarity to a general relation shows how cosmopolitanism from below can contribute to a universal rooted in local realities. As a consequence, there is a shift from talking about people as 'refugees' in general to talking about 'communities and neighborhoods', enhancing solidarity links among them.

The third phase of Barcelona as a 'refuge city' is provoked in this case by civil society. In February 2017, around 160,000 people demonstrated in the streets of Barcelona to demand a change in refugee policies. The campaign "Casa Nostra, Casa Vostra" ("Our Home, Your Home") recovered the spirit of the 'refugees welcome' wave and the constitution of a cosmopolitan 'we' as expressed in banners such as: 'We Welcome', 'No One Is Above Another, No One Is Illegal!' or 'Enough Excuses!'. The solidary 'us' contrasts with the reticent 'them', attributed to politicians incapable of taking the necessary actions to receive refugees. However, local and regional politicians participated in the demonstration since it was mainly the Spanish government that was blamed. One of the organizers of the campaign, Rubén Wagensberg (cited in Colás, 2017), explained that the initiative emerged from a group of Catalan people who met in the refugee camps in the North of Greece, on the border with Macedonia. When the refugees were being evicted, spontaneous camps were created and managed by volunteers. Some of those volunteers decided to expand their experience and connect the geographies of resistance from Greece to Barcelona. The forging of the campaign shows how trans-local solidarity works by con-

necting people and geographies. The mobilization also showed the willingness of civil society to influence, from the city level, national and international politics to receive more refugees. Civil society scales both the problem and the solutions by targeting the national government and proving the influence of trans-local solidarities.

Although the City Council lacked continuity in civil society actions and civil society lacked more political action, the mobilizations of 2017 reinvigorated the imaginary of refuge as an international issue and reclaimed playing an active role. Solidarities are thus local and trans-local and the tensions, or different perspectives, between the municipality and civil society are produced by different ways of institutionalizing and imagining solidarity.

7. Scaling-Up Solidarity

Urban solidarity emerges as the necessity of exploring an alternative to the states, with its obstruction of the reception of refugees, and the EU, incapable of offering coordinated and satisfactory solutions. Besides strengthening local solidarities, Barcelona has developed a determination to scale up solidarity and connect different cities. In this way, the municipal level becomes an alternative level of governance which is shaped by other channels than the national and the EU ones. Three initiatives are important to remark: the Refuge Cities network, both Spanish and European, the EU initiative "Solidarity Cities", and the internationalization of municipalism through "Fearless Cities". The latter is not specifically about migration and refugees, but migration was highlighted as one of the core issues of the new municipalism. Together, the three initiatives address different types of institutional solidarity across borders, with the involvement of the city council and civil society.

In September 2015, Ada Colau, together with Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris, Spyros Galinos, Mayor of Lesbos, and Giusi Nicolini, Mayor of Lampedusa, wrote an open letter entitled *We, the Cities of Europe*. They opposed the will of citizens to the lack of will of the states. The gap between the cities and the states generates a new space of governance: "We, the cities of Europe, are ready to become places of refuge. We want to welcome these refugees. States grant asylum status but cities provide shelter" (Colau, Hidalgo, Galinos, & Nicolini, 2015) The idea of creating a Refuge Cities network was launched also in Spain and represented the cooperation between the two most significant cities of municipalism: Barcelona and Madrid, and 25 other cities which joined the network.

Fearless Cities is an example of both the scaling-up of the organizing processes as well as the expanding of their focus. In June, Barcelona en Común hosted the first international Fearless Cities summit. The summit brought together more than 700 officially registered participants from six continents. Fearless Cities gatherings have been organized throughout 2018 (in Warsaw, New York, Brussels, and Valparaiso). Fearless Cities was the first time many of these initiatives were brought into conversation (Russell, 2019). The gathering in Barcelona, as well as the work that occurred before June 2017, point to an orientation towards urban politics and shared commitment to the progressive social force that Barcelona en Común had come to represent (Russell, 2019). The Fearless City summit, as the name indicates, not only related to the issue of refugees and migration, but to how cities have a transformative potential based on local solidarities and with the ability to both develop new imaginaries and materialize these through practices. The summit addressed issues such as commoning practices, new participatory models of budgeting, developing new models of direct democracy, etc. The organizers describe the purpose and work ahead as: "[A] goal of radicalizing democracy, feminizing politics, and standing up to the far right. Since then, these neighborhood movements, mayors, and local councilors have been collaborating to build global networks of solidarity and hope from the bottom up" (Fearless Cities, 2018).

Although migration and refugee issues were central to the summit—the summit was initiated by a public rally for the establishment of a global networks of refuge and hope with mayors from 16 cities and three continents standing as organizers—it can still be discussed if a platform such as Fearless Cities is favorable for transforming urban solidarities into practices relating to migrants and refugees. As pointed out by Gonick (2017), neither "Fearless Cities" nor Barcelona municipalism have been capable of incorporating the question of immigration and ethnic and racial difference as constitutive of urban governance since migrants still appear as objects of political action rather than subjects. Ignasi Calvó (quoted in Ciudades sin Miedo, 2018, p. 182) argues that "migration and refugee policies must influence all the other policies in the municipal sphere, from those of economic and social character to urban planning. They should be perceived as a value, not as a problem". While this is doable at the local level, it remains to be seen how the upscaling can forge trans-local solidarities and how it can affect the development of progressive politics and policies. Fearless Cities is a direct response to what Wodak (2015) has described as a "politics of fear", which is a normalization of nationalistic, xenophobic, racist, and anti-Semitic rhetoric. Gatherings such as the Fearless Cities summits are examples of how trans-local solidarities and cosmopolitanism from below challenge established and institutionalized politics of fear.

8. Concluding Remarks

In this article, we have focused on the intersections between civil society and local or municipal governments and discussed how urban solidarities can materialize into new practices based on cosmopolitanism from below. In this political geography, cities hold a special role. Returning to Barber's (2013) question, "what would happen if Mayors ruled the world?", we will let Iago Martínez

from the platform La Marea Atlantica, which governs La Coruña's council, indirectly answer the question:

> If the 19th century was that of Empire, and the 20th that of the nation-state, the 21st is the century of the city….Cities are our greatest hope for democracy. While traditional political institutions lose space and power in a system which has surpassed the boundaries of the nation-state, new local sovereignties emerge as authentic protagonists of the present through their capacity to respond…to the key challenges of our age. (Gilmartin, 2018)

In our example of Barcelona as a 'refuge city', we see how a Spanish city engages in a progressivist manner to develop mechanisms of inclusion towards migrants and refugees. In this way, the new municipalism in Barcelona (and the democratic and inclusive imaginaries associated with it) becomes a paradigmatic example of how a solidarity city develops and what kind of potential it holds. Not all cities are like Barcelona, and as we previously argued in this article that we should be aware not to assume that all cities are progressive per definition. From the perspective of academia, these are analytical questions and we not only need empirical studies of the many different city approaches but also to theorize the dynamics of solidarity cities.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Óscar García Agustín is Associate Professor in the Department for Culture and Global Studies at Aalborg University, Denmark. He is head of the DEMOS research group. He works on populism, social movements, and migration. He recently co-edited *Podemos and the New Political Cycle. Left-Wing Populism and Anti-Establishment Politics* (Palgrave, 2018) and, with Martin Bak Jørgensen, the books *Solidarity Without Borders. Gramscian Perspectives on Migration and Civil Society* (Pluto Press, 2016) and *Solidarity and the 'Refugee Crisis' in Europe* (Palgrave, 2019).

Martin Bak Jørgensen is Associate Professor in the Department for Culture and Global Studies at Aalborg University, Denmark. His main research areas include migration and integration policies, social movements, civil society, and precarity. He has co-edited with Carl-Ulrik Schierup *Politics of Precarity: Migrant Conditions, Struggles and Experiences* (Brill, 2017), and with Oscar Garcıa Agustın the books *Solidarity without Borders. Gramscian Perspectives on Migration and Civil Society* (Pluto Press, 2016) and *Solidarity and the 'Refugee Crisis' in Europe* (Palgrave, 2019).

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Article

Challenging the Nation-State from within: The Emergence of Transmunicipal Solidarity in the Course of the EU Refugee Controversy

Christiane Heimann [1], Sandra Müller [1], Hannes Schammann [1] and Janina Stürner [2,*]

[1] Migration Policy Research Group, University of Hildesheim, 31141 Hildesheim, Germany;
E-Mail: heimann@uni-hildesheim.de (C.H.), sandra.mueller@uni-hildesheim.de (S.M.),
hannes.schammann@uni-hildesheim.de (H.S.)
[2] Centre for Area Studies, Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg, 91054 Erlangen, Germany;
E-mail: janina.stuerner@fau.de

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
In the context of the so-called refugee crisis, political disputes about solidarity become a central issue with member states applying competing concepts. At the same time, European cities use transnational networks to implement a new form of solidarity among municipalities via city diplomacy (Acuto, Morissette, & Tsouros, 2017). Analyzing the deadlock between member states and the emerging activities of cities, we scrutinize the limits of existing approaches to political solidarity (e.g., Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019; Knodt, Tews, & Piefer, 2014; Sangiovanni, 2013) to explain this phenomenon. Based on expert interviews and document analysis from a study on transnational municipal networks, we identify an emerging concept of solidarity that challenges the nation states as core providers of solidarity from within: transmunicipal solidarity focuses on joint action of local governments to scale out and scale up.

Keywords
city networks; concepts of solidarity; European Union; integration policy; migration policy; refugee controversy

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1. Introduction

Solidarity—or rather the lack of solidarity—had become a contested topic already during the Euro crisis from 2007 onwards. Although solidarity has been formalized in Article 80 TFEU, its meaning is formulated only vaguely (Karageorgiou, 2016). Consequently, back then, discussions arose about financial aid and burden sharing between member states (Billmann & Held, 2013; Kneuer & Masala, 2014; Wallaschek, 2018). Although solutions and solidarity mechanisms were created, there never seemed to be a broad consensus or even a model for dealing with potential crises in the future. When the refugee controversy hit Europe several years later, the quest for solidarity continued and even intensified. In this context, the concept of solidarity refers to two dimensions: firstly, an internal dimension that calls for the "burden sharing" between member states, and secondly, an external dimension when it comes to mitigating the consequences of increasing numbers of displaced persons worldwide. It might not come as a surprise that the EU has failed to develop any solid solidarity mechanism that could be accepted by all member states. This is not only true for the external dimension, but even for the internal one, which has been at the center of attention for the European Commission and the member states (Thielemann, 2017).

Knodt, Tews and Piefer (2014, p. 121) underline that different perspectives on solidarity and different political representations of solidarity are likely to clash in con-

tested sectors such as refugee reception. Consequently, the debate on solidarity in Europe has never before been as intense, chatoyant, diverse and fragmented as it has become during the so-called refugee crisis. Following Mayer (2018) and Agustín and Jørgensen (2019), this has also become relevant for the subnational level, especially in response to more restrictive measures on both the EU and the national level. Local administrations as well as civil society actors increasingly engage in the debates on the entry and resettlement of asylum-seekers and refugees. While the efforts of EU member states to reach an agreement on how to proceed with the Common European Asylum System seem to go around in circles, it is the municipalities and their networks that offer solutions. When nation-states refused rescue ships safe harbor in the Mediterranean, among others the mayors of Barcelona (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2018), Naples (Balmer, 2019), Bonn, Cologne and Düsseldorf (Welt, 2018) offered to host asylum seekers. They put their nation states under pressure, which resulted in their taking in a limited number of refugees rescued in the Mediterranean (Braun, 2019; FAZ, 2018; Welt, 2018). In order to influence migration and integration policies, cities also make use of their network structures at EU level such as Eurocities or create new ones, such as Solidarity Cities.

These developments take place within a broader debate on "city diplomacy" or, more generally, on municipal strategies and coalitions to engage beyond the national territory (e.g., Acuto & Rayner, 2016; Aldecoa & Keating, 1999; Alger, 2011; Barber, 2014; Chan, 2016; Lecours, 2002; Marchetti, 2016; van der Pluijm & Melissen, 2007). Over the past 15 years, new opportunities for political participation have been opening up for municipalities and transnational municipal networks (TMN), especially within the EU multi-level system (Acuto, Morissette, & Tsouros, 2017, pp. 14–22; Zapata-Barrero, Caponio, & Scholten, 2017). TMNs have a long tradition in working directly with the European Commission and other EU institutions. Achievements like the "Committee of the Regions" (established as early as in 1994) and especially the "Urban Agenda for the EU" of 2016 helped to even institutionalize municipal participation on EU level. TMNs engage in the fields of environment, climate, poverty and peace (Acuto & Rayner, 2016, p. 1153).

In this article, we will trace the question of whether the activities of TMNs in the field of refugee reception could be conceptualized as a new form of cross-border solidarity provided by government levels other than the national one. To this end, we firstly trawl through the growing theoretical debate on political solidarity in order to identify concepts to build on (e.g., Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019; Knodt et al., 2014; Sangiovanni, 2013, 2015). Secondly, we analyze the activities of TMNs in the European refugee controversy, exemplified by Eurocities and its sub-networks Integrating Cities and Solidarity Cities. In doing so, we will introduce an emerging concept of solidarity that thrives while others fade: transmunicipal solidarity. This concept originates from practices of "institutionalized solidarity" (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019, pp. 97–117) on the local level, focuses on local governments but is nurtured by the interplay of state and non-state actors.

2. Analytical Framework: Rethinking Political Solidarity in EU Refugee Reception

In philosophy and social sciences, a rather comprehensive body of literature is available on solidarity, dating back to Durkheim (1933) and Weber (1925). In this contribution, however, we will focus on more recent approaches to political solidarity (Scholz, 2008). Following Sangiovanni (2015), we understand solidarity as joint action between people/groups/political entities who share the same goal "to overcome some significant adversity" (Sangiovanni, 2015, p. 343). They advance that goal without "bypassing each other's will" (Sangiovanni, 2015, p. 343). Building on that basic definition, we can identify two important aspects for conceptualizing political solidarity: Firstly, there is no such thing as unilateral solidarity. Consequently, actors do not express solidarity with each other if some of them do not share the same goal, do not see the same urgency of an adversity or seek to dodge political or financial costs of a joint effort. Secondly, solidarity requires action *with* another rather than *on behalf of* another (p. 350). From that point of view, national governments usually do not act in solidarity with individuals, e.g., refugees, but rather act on behalf of them, i.e. perform an asymmetrical act of charity. In this contribution, we focus on joint actions of comparable communities or political entities in the EU indicating solidarity with another in the refugee controversy. The institutionalization of solidarity between individuals within a community, however, can determine how communities and their local governments act (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019).

Political solidarity is often viewed through a national or European lens. Sangiovanni (2013), identifies three main manifestations for political solidarity in the European Union: "national solidarity", "member state solidarity" and "transnational solidarity". National solidarity refers to the relationship of citizens and residents within member states. It does, therefore, not apply directly to the question addressed in this article. Member state solidarity, on the other hand, is discussed most frequently in European asylum politics. It is often referred to as "intergovernmental solidarity" (Knodt et al., 2014) or "interstate solidarity" (Karageorgiou, 2016). Concerning refugee reception, it leads to the question of how "burden sharing" amongst EU member states can be organized (cf. Bauböck, 2017). Following Knodt et al. (2014), the intergovernmental quest for solidarity can be replaced or at least accompanied by "supranational solidarity". In this concept, the EU's "sui generis" character establishes a second political community that demands joint action on the basis of the treaties and also involves EU organizations. However, the nation states remain the

principal actors of solidarity. It might not come as a surprise that taking member state solidarity (or any of the related concepts) as a framework for analyzing the deadlock in European asylum politics unequivocally leads to the conclusion that there is not much political solidarity left regarding refugee reception in the European Union. The main reason is that member states do not share the same goal, which creates diverging perceptions and claims for solidarity as we will elaborate on further down the line.

With member state solidarity ailing, the basic research question of this article steps in: Is there any form of cross-border solidarity in Europe concerning refugee reception and "burden-sharing" which is emerging from another government level than the national one? Sangiovanni's (2013) third manifestation of political solidarity—transnational solidarity—might serve as a starting point. It places emphasis on social movements and/or individual commitment originating on the local level and developing strong bonds with individuals/groups across borders. Transnational solidarity, therefore, introduces actors below and beyond the nation state as providers of solidarity. However, Sangiovanni's definition of transnational solidarity does not encompass any form of government or administration. This is also true for the vast majority of concepts on solidarity that take the local level into account but limit themselves to civil society (e.g., Finke & Knodt, 2005; Knodt et al., 2014). Especially when it comes to refugee reception, though, local authorities play a crucial role in providing shelter, food or health care. Consequently, there cannot be any talk of "burden sharing" between local communities without involving local administrations.

While local authorities had for a long time been considered to be merely implementing actors—and not just in the field of refugee reception and migration—the increasing awareness of the fact that global challenges such as migration and displacement have to be addressed at the local level, has changed that view (e.g., Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Hinger, Schäfer, & Pott, 2016; Kos, Maussen, & Doomernik, 2015; Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017). Following Rosenberger and Müller (2019), municipalities can in times of conflicts establish structures to oppose and contradict national refugee policies, both protesting against the reception of asylum-seekers and balancing out national shortcomings. As Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) illustrate for the city of Barcelona, local practices and policies might result in a coherent pattern of solidarity mechanisms, e.g., a local strategy that involves concepts on refugee reception as well as organizational arrangements and a supportive local political culture. Thus, the municipality can evolve into a place of "institutional solidarity" (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). Reaching out to likeminded municipalities, cities like Barcelona create a network that transcends regional and national borders, thus scaling up their ideas to have an impact on other political levels (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). This is in line with Mayer (2018) who argues that municipalities contradicted this approach with welcoming stances and "established a network to advocate for migrant-friendly policies across the EU" (p. 232) as a response to more restrictive asylum policies on the national level.

In Agustín and Jørgensen's (2019) study, Barcelona's scaling up-activities are conceptualized within the "institutional solidarity" developed on the local level. However, following Sangiovanni (2015), it might be useful to distinguish between the solidarity among local people and the solidarity among likeminded cities. Roth and Russell (2018) introduce the concept of "translocal solidarity" that, prima facie, seems to provide us with a solution. From their perspective, local movements develop solidarity amongst each other in order to strengthen their own capacities (scaling out). However, in this concept, municipalities and/or local movements do not necessarily aim at scaling up, i.e., influencing the national or even higher levels. Translocal solidarity also conceptualizes local authorities rather as a potential element of the local movements but not as the main provider of cross-border solidarity.

Based on the analysis of our data on TMN presented below, we found empirical evidence for another manifestation of political solidarity which is not covered by the existing concepts. It captures (1) joint action amongst municipalities with (2) a focus on local governments and/or authorities whose common goals are (3) to scale out in terms of capacity building (4) and to strategically scale up their policy agenda via city diplomacy. We call this concept "transmunicipal solidarity". From the concepts of transnational and translocal solidarity, it inherits the focus on sub-national providers of solidarity. However, it is not primarily driven by civil society actors but instead roots in the debate on burden sharing—and thus member state and intergovernmental solidarity. This accounts for a strong emphasis on local authorities. Focusing on the case of Eurocities and its sub-networks Integrating Cities and Solidarity Cities, we will illustrate the concept in the following sections.

3. Methodological Approach

For our analysis of political solidarity expressed by TMNs, we triangulated data from document analysis and expert interviews (Denzin, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The documents derive from the networks' websites, reports, policy statements and recommendations. They offer insights into both activities of scaling out and scaling up. In addition, we conducted 49 interviews with experts on EU migration policies and city networks in two waves: 21 interviews in autumn 2018 and 28 interviews in spring 2019. These experts included members and representatives of the TMNs analyzed in this contribution, such as Eurocities, Integrating Cities and Solidarity Cities. Furthermore, we interviewed experts from the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Committee of the Regions (CoR), URBACT, various

think tanks, administrative bodies on local, national and EU-level, Members of the EU Parliament, Members of the European Commission, especially from the LIBE Committee, researchers, and NGOs working on migration, asylum and integration. We identified and contacted the experts in a two-step approach. Firstly, we identified relevant networks, members and representatives via desk research. In a second step, a snowball system was initiated in which interviewed experts recommended other relevant experts. We developed interview guidelines and informed our interview partners about the research project and the basic objectives. All quotes are taken from the interview transcripts mentioned above. Direct quotes will be associated with (groups of) organizations but not with specific individuals. Therefore, no further references will be done given.

We assessed the data by methods of qualitative content analysis (Gläser & Laudel, 2010; Mayring, 2000). The data supplies comprehensive information on the policy activities of TMNs and their reasons to pursue specific political objectives. In this article, we will mainly focus on our findings for "scaling out" and "scaling up" of TMNs, exemplified by Eurocities and their cooperation partners. As a category, scaling out is indicated in the data, by way of example, whenever we find narratives or reports on activities of knowledge exchange or workshops on good practice. On the other hand, text segments are marked as "scaling up" if they entail, for instance, lobbying or the consultation of EU-bodies.

4. Political Solidarity in Practice: From Member State Solidarity to Transmunicipal Solidarity

Presenting our empirical data on TMNs we will, in a first step, briefly sketch how conflicts of interests and national circumstances among EU member states prevent national governments from finding an EU-wide solidarity approach—leaving the floor to new actors engaging in solidarity mechanisms. Secondly, we will illustrate how municipalities try to step in by living-up to the concept of transmunicipal solidarity.

4.1. Turning the Back on Supranational Solidarity: Flexible Member State Solidarity

As mentioned before, there is not much left of member state solidarity in the EU when it comes to refugee reception. Although all member states have implemented more restrictive refugee policies since 2015 (Bendel, 2018), there is also much divergence. To begin with, the refugee controversy is fueled by the fact that there is no agreement on the meaning of solidarity in the EU as several of our interview partners highlighted. A member of the European Parliamentary Research Service explained most precisely:

> The problem is that solidarity is not yet described by a real definition in our treaties. It appears four times in European treaties—the word solidarity and we also have the word responsibility…, it is about financial responsibility but it is in itself Eurocentric. It is not about burden sharing with migrants.

Moreover, referring to Sangiovanni's basic definition of solidarity (Sangiovanni, 2015), member states do not share the same goal or even the same assessment of the adversities to overcome. Depending on their specific situation as recipients of asylum-seekers and their stance on the refugee controversy, EU member states can be grouped on a continuum in terms of their asylum policies and their degree of restrictiveness according to Bendel (2018). We examined the type of solidarity these classified groups do or do not show among and between each other.

The first group covers the Mediterranean states at the EU's external borders, such as Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Spain and Malta, which are mainly interested in border security, extraterritorial asylum procedures, and relocation of refugees. The second group supports the internal integration of refugees along with limited entry of refugees. In order to avoid intra-EU disputes on how to deal with refugees this group aims at a two-speed Europe in which countries that are willing to do so will receive refugees while others do not. France, Germany, Portugal, Luxembourg, Finland and Sweden belong to this group. These countries are interested in a coordinated EU foreign policy regarding immigration and asylum (Bendel (2018). As these two groups called for an EU-wide distribution key for member states to receive refugees, we claim that they support mechanisms of supranational solidarity. However, right-wing political forces put pressure on these countries to focus on active repatriation and integration rather than an EU-wide distribution key. The third group demands a more restrictive asylum and integration policy at EU level and includes countries such as Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark. In these countries, governments and government coalitions include right-wing, conservative and/or populist parties. They focus on border security and reduce integration measures to avoid pull-effects that might trigger further refugee migration. The fourth group is the most restrictive one regarding asylum policies as it rejects immigration and integration of refugees; it includes countries such as the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. They refuse to receive refugees, foster border controls and deny integration measures in order to avoid pull-effects to attract additional immigration. These countries have low immigration rates and little experiences with refugee reception. Additionally, populist streams play a substantial role in these countries. United under the designation of Visegrad countries they build an alliance against refugee reception and relocation (Bendel (2018). We interpret this alliance as a mechanism of intergovernmental solidarity between member states for border security.

We conclude that each group of member states is united by a different cause, which enables them to show

member state solidarity internally. However, looking at the EU as a whole, this creates diverging or even conflictive perceptions and claims for solidarity, leading to the widely adopted notion of a "solidarity crisis" in EU asylum politics. One of our interview partners working for an international organization remembered the emergence of the political buzzword "flexible solidarity" as an attempt to prevent the complete collapse of the Common European Asylum System:

> Everybody has a different understanding of solidarity. The Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU tried to open the term in order to achieve a buy-in of more member states. This was called "flexible solidarity", anything goes, however you may interpret the term. That's the beauty of constructive ambiguities….On the one hand, you achieve a multilateral buy-in and therefore it is better to use a less determined term, a more open one. On the other hand, it leads to the point that solidarity becomes an empty, meaningless wording.

4.2. The Eurocities Network: Using Cross-Border Solidarity among Municipal Authorities as a Political Tool

The deadlock situation between member states and the eroding of the concept of member state solidarity opens a window of opportunity for actors on the sub-national level, especially those who are well organized across borders, above all TMN as a member of the Eurocities working group on migration and integration puts it in one of our interviews:

> Transnational municipal initiatives are very interesting in a context, where Member States are abdicating not their rights but their obligations to participate as a Union.

Another interview partner from Eurocities adds:

> Cities have a tendency to go over borders.…There is of course a big discussion on the concept of borders, but for us borders are easy to overcome. This is not a question of being in favor or against an open border policy but for us cities it is easy to discuss without borders.

Especially larger cities do not only use the media by offering to receive refugees rescued in the Mediterranean, they also make use of their network structures at EU level, such as Eurocities, to foster political forms of solidarity. A member of Eurocities points out:

> Solidarity as a principle is very useful. Politically we use it as cities in order to promote and implement policies saying that we show solidarity to each other and that we are there for each other.

The activities of Eurocities as well as its sub networks Integrating Cities and Solidarity Cities have had a particularly noticeable impact within the EU migration and integration policies based on forms of solidarity among municipalities, as we will examine in the following sections.

The Eurocities network was founded on the initiative of cities themselves and currently accommodates 140 big European cities (Eurocities, 2018). It is an influential lobby organization relying on voluntary coordination and a high degree of flexibility (Niederhafner, 2007, pp. 173–175) due to its specific organization. Membership is voluntary, the network constitutes non-hierarchical, horizontal and polycentric governance, and decisions are normally implemented by city members themselves (Kern & Bulkeley, 2009). Generally, Eurocities is financially independent as it relies mainly on membership fees, although the network also makes use of other sources, such as EU funds or private (business) sponsors. The network is well connected to other institutions, including the European Commission, the European Parliament, the CEMR, the CoR and the United Nations. On this basis, Eurocities is able to develop common positions in a short amount of time and to voice the joint interests of the biggest European cities effectively within the decision-making processes in Brussels as highlighted by our interview partners. In contrast to other local movements described by Roth and Russell (2018), Eurocities explicitly involve different stakeholders on the local level, including municipal administration, civil society and authorities of the local government. Their representatives are typically mayors and/or administrative staff of local authorities.

The representatives of 79 cities form the Eurocities working group on migration and integration. It supports the visibility of cities and municipalities in the EU multilevel system for the integration of migrants and refugees. The working group has a long-standing tradition of knowledge exchange among member cities and supported the European Commission in developing a database on good practices of integration policies (Eurocities, 2018). Thus, the joint efforts of the city representatives in the working group are (1) to share experiences among its member cities and (2) to lobby the EU government to maximize the impact of cities' interests and expertise in EU migration and integration policies following a "bottom-up" approach. Contrary to the movements described in the concept of translocal solidarity (Roth & Russell, 2018), Eurocities explicitly enforce the process of scaling out by sharing good practices but also the process of scaling up by influencing the policies on both the EU and the national level. An employee of a Transnational Municipal Network, who had worked as a policy consultant for many years before joining the network, claimed:

> Local authorities engage at EU-level in these fields of migration asylum and integration policies, because they are the first in line. I think, for what I could see is that it has been the work of networks

> like Eurocities that actually make the EU-level institutions—Commission, Parliament, Council—to understand and to actually start changing their mindset and starting to involve cities really from design-level, not only evaluation of policies and implementation, but really from the design point. They finally understood that the cities are actually the ones that are taking and adding on their shoulders all the burden that came from the recent crisis.

In this context, city diplomacy gains increasing importance. Firstly, municipalities deploy city diplomacy to create soft-law. Secondly, they develop strategies to hold national and European actors accountable by their own norms and values. Thirdly, cities increasingly demand a place at European negotiation tables (Stürner & Bendel, in press). Thus, they play a crucial role in solidarity processes of scaling out and scaling up. In the following, different strategies aiming at fostering solidarity among Eurocities members will be introduced.

4.2.1. Integrating Cities: A Platform for Scaling-Out

In 2006, the Eurocities working group on migration and integration in cooperation with the European Commission launched the conference series Integrating Cities to enable interested Eurocities members to share good practices and develop recommendations. In this context, the Integrating Cities Charter was developed, which encourages local authorities to guarantee equal opportunities for and non-discrimination of all citizens (Eurocities, 2010). The Charter includes specific commitments launched by 17 European mayors at the Integrating Cities IV conference in London in February 2010. Until November 2018, it has since been signed by 39 cities and presents an interesting example of municipal soft governance that supports cities by offering them specific toolkits and evaluation reports published in 2013, 2015 and 2018 (Integrating Cities, 2018). Since 2007, the working group has directed projects on migration and integration, which have been funded by the INTI-Programm and the European Integration Fund. In the framework of the Integrating Cities process, cities developed benchmarks and peer-reviews for integration governance (INTI-CITIES), exchanged good practice for policy development to promote diversity (DIVE), created structured exchange workshops and toolkits to support cities in implementing the Integrating Cities Charter (MIXITIES) and addressed implementation gaps in migrant integration policies and practices through city-to-city mentoring schemes such as IMPLEMENTORING and CITIES GROW (Eurocities, 2018; Integrating cities, 2018).

This brief overview of the different projects within the network shows that Integrating Cities work together on capacity building to scale out by sharing good practices, setting local standards for immigrant integration and offering mutual mentoring. A member of this network confirmed:

> Our work is mainly on sharing best practices, mutual learning, knowledge sharing. We try to foster that amongst our partners.

Hence, by scaling out Integrating Cities aims at creating soft law in the field of immigrant integration and fostering solidarity of participating cities. A member of the Eurocities working group on migration and integration underlines the value of this diverse local-to-local cooperation:

> Cities help each other and I think that is also based a lot on solidarity because we are in this situation together….It is a curious mix of personal relationships but also political necessity, and political openness, because elected city representatives and administration have an open mind and understand if you invest time and money because it is necessary to help another fellow vice-mayor or another fellow director of services it will be beneficial for both sides. So, we pick each other's plates and we find good solutions.

4.2.2. Solidarity Cities: Fostering Progressive Migration Policies through City Diplomacy

Another sub-network of Eurocities which was explicitly formed by mayors to proactively take on the challenge of the so-called refugee crisis, is Solidarity Cities. The Mayor of Athens initiated and launched Solidarity Cities within the Eurocities network. Solidarity Cities strives to provide a framework for cities' actions and initiatives addressing the various adversities of the European "refugee crisis", describing itself as an "initiative on the management of the refugee crisis" that aims at "highlighting the political leadership of cities in addressing this challenge" (Solidarity Cities, 2019). As a representative of the City of Athens points out:

> When cities speak about the Solidarity Cities initiative, not only in the Eurocities context but in the context of the work that they do in the European scene or globally, then they promote the idea of solidarity not only as a theoretical and philosophical concept but also as a political tool. This can help cities or countries to implement policies under difficult circumstances.

In Solidarity Cities, "the cities want to abide by the principles of responsibility and solidarity", as has been stated in an open letter from Eurocities for the International Refugee Day, 20 June 2016. The network is "open to all European cities wishing to work closely with each other and committed to solidarity in the field of refugee reception and integration" (Solidarity Cities, 2019). Solidarity Cities points out four main topics it is working on. Firstly, it fosters the exchange of information and knowledge on the reception situation in cities. Secondly, it lobbies for better involvement and direct funding for cities with regard to the reception and integration of

refugees. In order to strengthen their position, they mobilized the support of Eurocities and members of the Urban Partnership. Thirdly, member cities support each other in this area by capacity building, as well as technical and financial assistance for active burden sharing. Fourthly, Solidarity Cities promotes the responsibility of European cities to receive relocated asylum seekers (Solidarity Cities, 2017).

As our interview partners stated, efforts to relocate refugees between member cities have been prevented by their nation states so far. For instance, Amsterdam was willing to take in refugees from Athens, but the Dutch government put an end to that already quite elaborate initiative as stated by our interview partners. Hence, the symbolic political value of Solidarity Cities still seems to be much higher than the measurable political output. Nevertheless, the network puts pressure on nation states, while raising public and political awareness to adversities of the "refugee crisis" and the need for cross-border solidarity in EU migration and integration policies. The structural integration of Solidarity Cities into the Eurocities networks is a big advantage as Eurocities as a platform substantially strengthens the political weight and visibility of Solidarity Cities. In this context, their achievement is to spread progressive ideas in the debate on refugee reception and integration. Their innovative political message provides a new framing of burden sharing and solidarity:

> So, when you speak about solidarity, it's an emotional word, and it strikes to the emotional side of things, but you can also use it as a political tool. In between these two different concepts, it allows us to promote a discussion that is usually difficult and complicated.…I think that this principle of solidarity and engagement and presence is very crucial for municipalities. Politicians should take these initiatives of local authorities very seriously, because the political change will come from the local authorities. (Member of Solidarity Cities)

In conclusion, we can say that Solidarity Cities aims at scaling out in the fields of refugee reception, immigration and asylum. Member cities share good practices, technical and financial resources and promote certain standards in the reception of refugees. Simultaneously, Solidarity Cities conducts active city diplomacy to scale up: Influencing other TMNs, such as Eurocities and the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, they contribute to consultation processes of EU institutions and member states, engage in bilateral exchanges with these actors and demand a voice in areas that exceed municipal competencies such as irregular migration and relocation. Furthermore, the active lobbying of Solidarity Cities for better municipal access to the funding of reception and integration shows that this network is highly political, as has also been confirmed by our interview partners.

4.2.3. Eurocities' Diplomatic Engagement with Other Players

As stated above, Eurocities is a platform for different activities of scaling out and scaling up. However, the political activities of Eurocities reach beyond capacity building among their members and representing cities' voices at national and EU-level. There is a wider political engagement in city diplomacy. The network also constantly looks for cooperation partners and builds strategic alliances to improve the effectiveness of their capacity building and their lobbying strategies. On the local, regional and national level, Eurocities cooperates with a wide array of NGOs and companies in order to put the standards for integration policies they developed into practice. To find support for their political positions the Eurocities network builds alliances, especially with other networks that represent municipalities and/or regions of EU member states, such as the CEMR or the CoR as well as the national networks of cities and regions. City networks and like-minded initiatives work together to a certain extent to increase visibility and lend their demands greater weight. They do so especially for consultation purposes of the EU Commission.

Since 2016, cooperation between the Commission and local actors has been intensified by the "Urban Agenda for the EU", which was adopted in the Pact of Amsterdam. The goal is to improve cooperation between the Commission, member states and local stakeholders (such as city representatives, NGOs, etc.), so that local and regional players are more effectively involved in agenda setting and monitoring of EU provisions (European Commission, 2018). In this framework, the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees was established, which brings delegates of different networks and organizations together, such as representatives of cities, of the CEMR, the CoR, Eurocities or the European Development Bank and its Council. The Partnership adopted an Action Plan consisting of eight concrete actions developed by partnership members to improve regulation, funding and knowledge sharing. Examples include recommendations for better municipal access to EU integration funding, developed under the lead of Eurocities, the establishment of an Urban Academy on Integration and the elaboration of joint integration indicators (EU Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, 2017, 2018). Summarizing, we find that not only do TMNs demand a greater say in migration and integration policies, but also the Commission explicitly offers increasing structural opportunities for local and regional actors to participate in the political processes of agenda setting, monitoring and evaluation.

In this context, the efforts of TMN to scale up are accompanied by processes of coalition building with other important players focussing on the local and regional level and are politically active in the field of migration and integration policies. In this regard, TMNs take each other into account as important players for lobbying on

the EU-level, which is also indicated by the overlapping and aggregation of city representatives' positions, as an employee of one of these networks explains:

> And then you have some political authorities, where effectively this person is an international diplomat for the city or region. So there are a range of networks…and you can be a member of the CoR and at the same time you can be a member of Eurocities, at the same time you can be a member of something called Metropolis…, at the same time you have lots of members that go to the Council of Europe's local government wing. So, you have people that are essentially international diplomats for their region or city.

Thus, local authorities place themselves strategically in and between different networks in Brussels, which is proof of the relevance of city diplomacy on both local and EU-level. These representatives pursue a diplomatic mission by aggregating positions in different European networks.

5. Transmunicipal Solidarity: A Municipal Quest for Agency in the European Refugee Controversy

In conclusion, our analysis of Eurocities and its subnetworks reveals a manifestation of political solidarity, which has not been covered by any other concept so far. It cannot be termed transnational solidarity (Sangiovanni, 2015) as it not only involves civil society, but also local administration and political leaders such as mayors. Furthermore, it does not fit in the concept of translocal solidarity (Roth & Russell, 2018) as the emphasis is on local authorities and the solidarity among cities not only aims at scaling out but also at scaling up, making use of city diplomacy such as standard setting of good practices at horizontal level and lobbying at national and EU level. The TMNs analyzed in this article strategically use different instruments, including lobbying, public calls and recommendations along with soft law agreements. In order to achieve their goals, they interact with a variety of stakeholders to mobilize resources and connections for policy change. They use this kind of city diplomacy to demand increasing competences and resources not only in integration but also in migration policies.

In the concept of transmunicipal solidarity, we capture these joint actions amongst municipalities with a focus on local authorities regarding processes of scaling out und scaling up. The concept might help us to understand how and why municipalities have become key actors in responding to a crisis of solidarity between the EU member states. It could also provide insight into how local governments might use a potential window of opportunity to strengthen and widen their competences. Prospectively, this development might produce spill-overs to other policies and even alter the political system of the EU. With the "Urban Agenda" already giving municipalities another regular voice in EU politics, this projection might not be too daring.

The activities of cities and their networks show that many municipalities pursue an active role in the Common European Asylum System. Further studies will have to make an attempt to find out how effectively municipalities can actually change the European approach to migration and refugee reception. For the time being, the emergence of transmunicipal solidarity is just a glimmer of hope in the deadlocked controversy on refugee reception. It is up to member states—especially those who are willing to take in refugees—to encourage the municipalities' quest for more agency in migration politics and refugee reception.

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Conflict of Interests

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About the Authors

Christiane Heimann is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Hildesheim working on the project "When Mayors make Migration Policy". Previously she conducted research and taught at the University of California Berkeley (USA), University College London (UK), Universidad Pompeu Fabra Barcelona and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain), Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg as well as Technische Universität Kaiserslautern (Germany). She completed her PhD at the Bamberg Graduate School of Social Sciences (BAGSS) and studied European Social Sciences in Bamberg (Germany) and Salamanca (Spain).

Sandra Müller works as Research Assistant at the University of Hildesheim, Germany. Before she worked in research projects at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Vienna as well as at the Generation and Educational Science Institute, Vienna. Prior to this, she gained practical experience, e.g., as coordinator and project manager in several national and international NGOs. In her PhD project, she explores the politics and policies of asylum in Austria within the analytical framework of Europeanization and De-Europeanization.

Hannes Schammann is Professor of Migration Policy Analysis at the University of Hildesheim, Germany. A good deal of his current research focuses on the role of local administrations in the multi-level governance of migration and asylum. Before turning to academia, he gained extensive experience in the field, e.g., as a policy advisor with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in Germany. He is frequently consulted on migration issues by both governments and non-governmental organizations.

Janina Stürner is a Research Fellow and PhD student at the Centre for Area Studies of the University Erlangen-Nuremberg. Her research analyses migration governance in complex multi-level systems and the changing role of city networks in EU migration, resettlement and asylum policies. In her PhD project, she focuses on migration and development dynamics based on ownership of refugees, migrants and host communities in alternative settings to camps.

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Article

Reimagining a Transnational Right to the City: No Border Actions and Commoning Practices in Thessaloniki

Charalampos Tsavdaroglou

Department of Planning and Regional Development, University of Thessaly, 38334 Volos, Greece;
E-Mail: tsavdaroglou.ch@gmail.com

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Abstract
Although there is extensive literature on State migration policies and NGO activities, there are few studies on the common struggles between refugees and local activists. This article aims to fill this research gap by focusing on the impact of the transnational No Border camp that took place in Thessaloniki in 2016. The border region of northern Greece, with its capital Thessaloniki, is at the heart of the so-called refugee crisis and it is marked by a large number of solidarity initiatives. After the sealing of the "Balkan corridor", the Greek State relocated thousands of refugees into isolated and inappropriate camps on the outskirts of Thessaloniki. Numerous local and international initiatives, with the participation of refugees from the camps, self-organized a transnational No Border camp in the city center that challenged State policies. By claiming the right to the city, activists from all over Europe, together with refugees, built direct-democratic assemblies and organized a multitude of direct actions, demonstrations, and squats that marked the city's social body with spatial disobedience and transnational commoning practices. Here, activism emerges as an important field of research and this article aims to contribute to activists' literature on migration studies after 2015. The article is based on militant research and inspired by the Lefebvrian right to the city, the autonomy of migration, and common space approaches. The right to the city refers to the rights to freedom, socialization, and habitation, but also to the right to reinvent and change the city. It was recently enhanced by approaches on common spaces and the way these highlight the production of spaces based on solidarity, mutual help, common care, and direct democracy. The main findings of this study point to how the struggle of migrants when crossing physical and social borders inspires local solidarity movements for global networking and opens up new possibilities to reimagine and reinvent transnational common spaces.

Keywords
commons; No Border camp; refugees; right to the city; Thessaloniki

Issue
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1. Introduction

Political actions and collective projects that took place in Greece before and during the first years of the so-called "economic crisis" are well known and have been thoroughly examined (Arampatzi, 2017; Daskalaki & Kokkinidis, 2017; Karaliotas, 2017; Tsavdaroglou, Petrakos, & Makrygianni, 2017). However, apart from a few studies mostly on the cases of Athens (Lafazani, 2018; Oikonomakis, 2018; Squire, 2018), the island of Lesvos (Papataxiarchis, 2016; Vradis, Papada, Painter, & Papoutsi, 2019), and Idomeni (Anastasiadou, Marvakis, Mezidou, & Speer, 2018), little attention has been paid to emergent activists' struggles in Thessaloniki since 2015, during what has come to be known as the "refugee crisis". During this period there has been a kind of renewed political awareness, inspired and motivated by solidarity with the refugees who were crossing Greece that gave way to new political collectives and numerous refugee solidarity initiatives.

Even though there is a plethora of studies and published papers on State migration policies, social charity and NGO actions (Gabiam, 2012; Ihlen, Figenschou, & Larsen, 2015; Rozakou, 2017), as well as on arrival cities (Saunders, 2010; Taubenböck, Kraff, & Wurm, 2018), sanctuary cities (Darling, 2009; Roy, 2019), and the broader issue of refugees and the city (Hatziprokopiou, Frangopoulos, & Montagna, 2016; Sanyal, 2012), there is a lack of studies examining common struggles of locals and refugees and the ways these can re-shape local movements and re-invent new fields of social and political intervention. This article explores the above issues, inspired by the Lefebvrian notion of "the right to the city" and the approaches on "common space" and "autonomy of migration". According to Lefebvre (1968/1996), the notion of the right to the city is a superior right that includes the rights to freedom, socialization, and habitation while several scholars (Dikeç, 2002; Harvey, 2012; Marcuse, 2009; Mayer, 2009; Mitchell, 2003;) emphasize that the right to the city is not just a juridical claim but also a right of every resident to reinvent and change the city. The notion of the right to the city has been recently supplemented by approaches on common space (Dellenbaugh, Kip, Majken, Muller, & Schwegmann, 2015; Tsavdaroglou, 2018; Stavrides, 2015) that stress the potentiality of the creation of self-organized urban spaces based on the principles of solidarity and direct democracy. Focusing here on the refugees' struggles for the right to the city, we can link the approaches on common spaces and the right to the city with the theory of autonomy of migration (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, & Pickles, 2015; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Nyers, 2015), which highlights the agency of migrants and refugees against the dominant State and hyper-State controlling and policing structures.

Thessaloniki, Greece's second largest city, is an interesting case study to explore such concerns as there is an ongoing spatial, social, and political conflict over the refugees' right to housing and to the city. During 2015–2016, we witnessed a massive movement of refugees from the conflicted areas of the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa heading mainly to North Europe. The main route followed was the Balkan corridor in South-eastern Europe and the city of Thessaloniki, as it is located in northern Greece near the border with North Macedonia, is an important hub in this journey. According to UNHCR (2016), from July 2015 to March 2016 about 777.487 refugees crossed the northern border of Idomeni and arrived in North Macedonia, most of them from Syria (55%), Iraq (26%), and Afghanistan (15%) and the remaining (4%) representing other nationalities such as Iranians, Palestinians, Pakistanis, Somalis, Congolese, and Bangladeshi. Idomeni, a small village with 154 residents (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011) located at the northern border of Greece with North Macedonia, is around 70km from Thessaloniki. In March 2016, following the Euro-Turkish statement (European Council, 2016) that aimed "to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU", the Balkan countries and Macedonia sealed their borders. In the borderscape of Idomeni, there was already a makeshift settlement with about 20,000 refugees who were relocated in the summer of 2016 to 13 State-run camps on the perimeter of Thessaloniki. The State-run camps were organized in old factories and military bases within industrial zones in extremely polluted and dangerous areas, with poor facilities and services for shelter, safety, food, health, education, and psychological support. At the same time, a diverse body of local and international activists with leftist and anarchist backgrounds and a multitude of solidary people that mobilized primarily in Idomeni and in State-run camps provided autonomously organized housing structures to refugees in Thessaloniki and later organized the transnational No Border Camp in the summer of 2016.

The structure of the article is as follows. The second part presents the methodological approach of militant ethnographic research. The third examines the theoretical approaches to the right to the city and how it can be enriched through the literature on commons and autonomy of migration. The following two parts examine the particular features of the emerging refugee housing commons in Thessaloniki between 2015 and 2016 and the No Border Camp that took place in Thessaloniki in the summer of 2016 as well as the repressive policies of the "yes border" authorities. Finally, the article ends with some concluding thoughts on how to reimagine a transnational "no border" right to the city of commons.

2. Methodology

The article is based on participatory observation and militant ethnographic research. I draw particular attention to the call of De Genova (2010, p. 11) for "a genuinely critical scholarship of migration" that " must in fact be addressed to the task not merely of describing but also theorizing…actual struggles, the real social relations of unresolved antagonism and open-ended struggle that continuously constitute social life". In order to reflect on and theorize the examined struggles, I follow the methodology of militant ethnography (Bookchin et al., 2013; Colectivo Situaciones, 2003) that "seeks to overcome the divide between research and practice" (Juris, 2007, p. 165). Although similar methodologies like "participatory action research" (Cameron & Gibson, 2005; Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007) and "scholar activism" (Chatterton, Hodkinson, & Pickerill, 2010; Derickson & Routledge, 2015) examine the interaction between academia and activism, they remain within the academic production. Yet, militant research aims to produce "politically applicable knowledge from within movements, for movements" (Apoifis, 2017, p. 5) and as Shukaitis, Graeber and Biddle (2007, p. 9) claim, militant research is "not a specialized task, a process that only involves those who are traditionally thought of as researchers. It is an intensification and deepening of the political". Along this process, it is im-

portant to acknowledge the researcher's own positions and privileges as a white middle-class man, and the potentiality of repositions through emergent coexistences with refugees.

The study is based on 30 semi-structured interviews with refugees from Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria, Iran, and Afghanistan and activists from Greece, Germany, and Spain. Most interviews lasted between one to two hours and took place in Thessaloniki during the days of the summer 2016 No Border camp, while further interviews followed the next couple of years. Half of the participants self-identified as male, 45% as female, and 5% as queer and transgender. Most of the participants were graduates of higher education or university students. The interviews were conducted in Greek and English and some were translated from Arabic and Farsi into English. The article is further based on the discourse analysis of material texts, manifestos, and posters of activists' campaigns in order to examine stated goals and objectives. It should be noted that the names of the participants in the research, refugees, and solidarity activists have been changed in order to protect their anonymity and replaced by culturally appropriate names that maintain the liveliness of personal narration.

3. Commoning Practices for the Right to the City and Autonomy of Migration Approach

The point of departure for the discussion on the right to the city is Henri Lefebvre's homonymous work, which was published 100 years after Marx's *Capital* and a few months before May 1968. This was a period of various emergent movements addressing political and social rights for workers, students, women, people of color, homosexuals, the right to freedom of speech, and environmental issues. In this historical context, Lefebvre aims not only to understand the city but also the social relationships that can change it. As he stresses:

> The city [is] a projection of society on the ground that is, not only on the actual site, but at a specific level, perceived and conceived by thought…the city [is] the place of confrontations and of (conflictual) relations…, the city [is] the 'site of desire'…and site of revolutions'. (Lefebvre, 1968/1996, p. 109)

Lefebvre defines the right to the city as follows:

> The right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: the right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit. The right to the oeuvre, to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property), are implied in the right to the city. (Lefebvre, 1968/1996, pp. 173–174)

The above definition of the right to the city is extremely important here as it highlights the following features: freedom, individuality through collectivity, the concepts of "habitation" and "inhabitation", the notion of "oeuvre" (work) as a participatory activity and the concept of "appropriation" against private property. The critical point in Lefebvre's formulation is the "socialization", or collective meeting as a necessary condition for freedom. In addition to socialization comes the "participatory activity", which produces the city as a collective "oeuvre" of the actions of the associated subjects-inhabitants.

Lefebvre's work has inspired a number of scholars and thinkers and continues to expand its influence and extend in multiple directions. For example, Harvey (2012) identifies the question of "what kind of city we want" with the question of "what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold" (Harvey, 2012, p. 4). Therefore, the right to the city becomes "far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts' desire" (Harvey, 2012, p. 4). Furthermore, Mitchell (2003) insightfully comments that the most important point in the right to the city is "the right to inhabit the city—by different people and different groups" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 18), and how "new modes of inhabiting are invented" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 18). While Merrifield (2011) expands the previous argument and stresses that during metropolitanization and urban sprawling, particular attention should be paid not only to the right to the city but also to the Lefebvrian "right to centrality". In his words:

> Not a simple visiting right…no tourist trip down memory lane, gawking at a gentrified old town, enjoying for the day a city you've been displaced from, but a right to participate in life at the core, to be in the heat of the action. (Merrifield, 2011, p. 475)

Moreover, Marcuse argues that the right to the city "is not meant as a legal claim enforceable through a judicial process today" (Marcuse, 2009, p. 192) and Mayer (2009, p. 367) claims that "it is less a juridical right, but rather an oppositional demand…it is a right that exists only as people appropriate it (and the city)". In addition, Dikeç (2002) points out that the right to the city "implies not only a right to urban space but to a political space as well, with the participation of all city residents" and argues that this participation concerns the "resistance to the state" and "the very possibility of the formation of voices, of political subjectivization it generates in and around urban space" (Dikeç, 2002, p. 96). Finally, Purcell (2013a), in his reading of the Lefebvrian right to the city, draws particular attention to the concept of "autogestion" that refers to the way inhabitants come "to manage the production of urban space themselves" (Purcell, 2013a, p. 150).

Recently, the aforementioned approaches to the right to the city have been enriched by theories on urban commons and common spaces. The discussion on commons takes Hardin's (1968) "tragedy of the com-

mons" as a reference point, which describes how a shared resource is in danger of being depleted when the users behave as selfish "free riders" and overuse it. As a solution to the overuse of common resources, free-market supporters propose privatization (Smith, 1981; Welch, 1983), while the supporters of State regulation (Ehrenfeld, 1972; Heilbroner, 1974) argue that the State is the best guarantor for the protection and regulation of efficient use of common pool resources. Beyond this binary, Ostrom's (1990) approach, based on the study of a rich variety of common pool resources and natural resource management across the globe, argues that producers' communities are able to self-organize and achieve effective economic outcomes. While the discourse on urban commons and common spaces has further highlighted that, beyond the logic of the State and the market, it is possible to produce spaces based on solidarity, mutual help, common care, and direct democracy following the long tradition of autonomous Marxism (Dellenbaugh et al., 2015; Stavrides, 2014; Tsavdaroglou, 2018). According to Chatterton, Featherstone and Routledge (2013, p. 610), the common "refers to the social process of being-in-common, a social relationship of the commoners who build, defend, and reproduce the commons". Moreover, Caffentzis and Federici (2014) emphasize the political character of the commons as a continuous social struggle; in their words, "commons are not only the means by which we share in an egalitarian manner the resources we produce" but "a commitment to fostering common interests in every aspect of our life" (Caffentzis & Federici, 2014, p. 103). As they stress, "no struggle will succeed in changing the world if we do not organize our reproduction in a communal way...and the rejection of all principles of exclusion or hierarchization" (Caffentzis & Federici, 2014, p. 103). At the same time, the right to the city enriches the discussion on commons. As outlined by Stavrides (An Architektur, 2010, p. 17), the right to the city "can be produced through encounters that make room for new meanings, new values, new dreams, new collective experiences. And this is indeed a way to transcend pure utility, a way to see commons beyond the utilitarian horizon". The crucial point in Stavrides' work is that the city of common emerges between "thresholds", which are "open to use, open to newcomers" (Stavrides, 2014, p. 548). This is particularly important, as it describes the interaction of local movements with newly arrived refugees. According to Stavrides (2014, p. 547), "thresholds explicitly symbolize the potentiality of sharing by establishing intermediary areas of crossing, by opening the inside to the outside". The refugee housing squats and the No Border camp depict a city as an open threshold to newcomers.

The discussed theoretical background shapes a fertile field for exploring the connections between the right to the city, commons, and the approach of "autonomy of migration". The scholars of "autonomy of migration" (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Nyers, 2015) seek to untie the discussion on migration from the dominant (State and hyper-State) structures of control, policing, and regulation, and highlight the power activities of migrants-agents who are struggling to cross the multiple physical, social, and political borders. This points to the so-called "mobile commons" (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013; Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, & Tsianos, 2015) the forms of commoning among moving populations and interactions with solidary people. Although mobile commons refer to the potentialities of mobile populations to self-organize and develop political and social struggles, they often acquire features of spatial disobedience. In the case of Thessaloniki and the housing squats and No Border camp, the emergent forms of socio-political struggles self-organized by mobile populations and solidarity activists and materialized in the urban fabric reveal the amalgamation of features of mobile and urban commons.

4. Inventing Transnational Housing Commons

Since autumn 2015 a multitude of actions has taken place in solidarity with refugees who have crossed mainland Greece trying to reach Idomeni, the northern border of the country with North Macedonia. Solidarity actions peaked when the borders closed and Idomeni's makeshift settlement started to take shape (Anastasiadou et al., 2018). In response to the State's threats of the evacuation of Idomeni's settlement, the first squat-housing project was organized in an abandoned building, an old Orphanage (Orfanotrofio in Greek) in Thessaloniki. The self-organized housing squat of Orfanotrofio, as well as the others that followed, were located in the center of the city. In contrast, State authorities relocated the refugees to 13 camps on the perimeter of Thessaloniki after the sealing of the Greek-Macedonian borders.

The State-run camps are former factory spaces and old military bases which do not follow international and national standards for the refugees' right to the city and to housing (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2005; Presidential Decree, 2007). According to several reports (Amnesty International, 2016; International Rescue Committee, 2016), there is a critical lack of adequate services for health, education, child-care, psychological support, protection, and safety for single women and LGBTQ people. Moreover, State-run camps are located in industrial zones, environmentally degraded and hazardous areas, with a weak transport connection to the city center (see Figure 1). This tends to make refugees invisible and forces them to live in extremely precarious conditions.

In contrast to the State policies that exclude refugees on the perimeter of the city, the housing project of Orfanotrofio, which hosted more than 100 refugees, was created in the city center, experimenting with the coexistence of different populations and the creation of a transnational social center for housing and struggle.

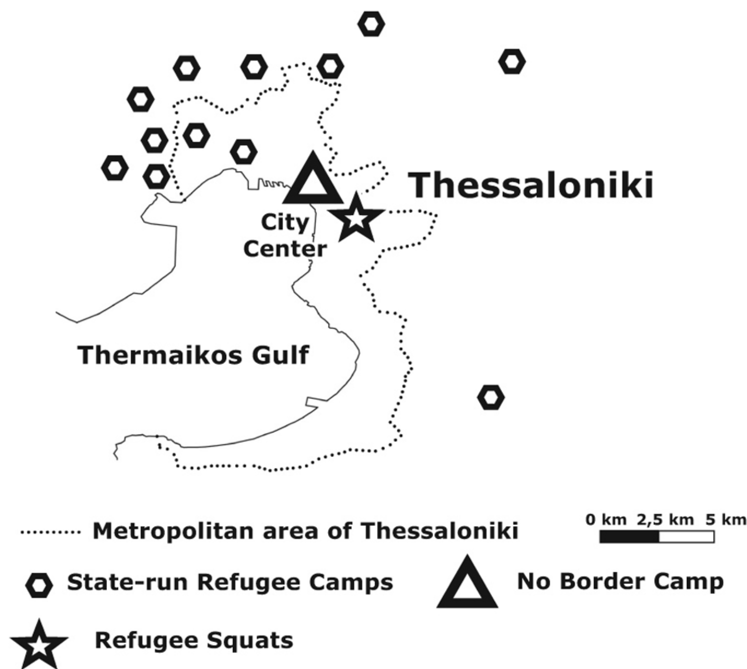

Figure 1. Location of State-run camps, refugee squats and No Border camp. Source: author.

It is especially important that the refugees in the housing project of Orfanotrofio met political groups and local residents and created a new political movement. In line with Dikeç (2002), this demonstrates that the right to the city is not only a right to the physical urban space but also a right to political space. In the words of Panagiotis, a member of the squat assembly, "against the police-military management of the migration, we do not just want to build a home, but our goal is to make Orfanotrofio a center of struggle" (Personal interview, March 15, 2018). This resonates with Purcell's (2013b, pp. 566–567) argument that "the act of inhabiting the city must be the basis for making claims on it". As Maria, another member of the squat assembly emphasized, "we wanted to create visibility for the refugees, to be in the city, to be in relation to the city, we wanted our struggles to be in common; we wanted to have common demands and we did" (Personal interview, September 23, 2016). It becomes clear that the creation of a common space is not just a claim to a physical space but also a process of organization of political struggle. Crucial to the development of a common political and social struggle according to Kostas, also a member of the squat assembly "is the difference between philanthropy and solidarity". He described: "in the first case, you believe that you are superior to the refugee, while in the second case, you try to become equal" (Personal interview, April 22, 2018). As the assembly of Orfanotrofio emphasized in an announcement:

> We do not perceive ourselves as privileged in relation to the refugees and immigrants, but we are in a common position with them, against masters and nations. We share all we have with them and we fight together. (Housing squat for immigrants Orfanotrofio, 2016a)

Particularly, as the founding proclamation of Orfanotrofio stressed, "we choose our actions to be collective and our words to be communicated, aiming at partnership and the development of communal relations" (Housing squat for immigrants Orfanotrofio, 2016b). In order to achieve this, the housing project was organized as a "socially open structure" and as the participants pointed out, "it was embraced by people of the broader radical movement (communists, anarchists, autonomists) and operated in a self-organized and anti-hierarchical way" (Housing squat for immigrants Orfanotrofio, 2016b). Occupation assemblies involved around 150 people and depicted a bold attempt to bridge political disputes. As members stated, "although we are an Orfanotrofio assembly formed by diverse people, we have managed to find and define common agreements and demands" (Housing squat for immigrants Orfanotrofio, 2016b). These claims concern "free movement and access to health for everyone, opposition to the Evros-river fence, and papers to all immigrants" (Housing squat for immigrants Orfanotrofio, 2016b).

The most important point in the operation of the squat is that the assembly was open and this openness made the project sustainable and feasible. However, openness does not mean the absence of rules. The transnational common space of Orfanotrofio squat was designed and crafted based on the principles of self-organization, anti-hierarchy, horizontal decision-making, and the explicit proclamation against any discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, and gender. Rizan, a

Syrian refugee and member of the squat, remembers that "the rules of the squat were: no violence in any way; no distinction between different ethnicities or religions; sexist behaviors were not allowed; there was equality between men and women" (Personal interview, February 10, 2018). The negotiation of multiple identities was an issue of experimentation, as previous experiences of common action by the local movement and refugees were absent or sporadic. Hence, in this case, such challenges were grounded and tested in everyday life. As a statement from the organizing assembly of Orfanotrofio announced:

> We want refugees in our neighborhoods, in our workplaces, in our homes, in our schools together with our children. We set up structures in our cities and in our neighborhoods as places of resistance and as places where our struggles meet with those of migrants because to struggle together, we must share our thoughts, our experiences, and our needs'. (Housing squat for immigrants Orfanotrofio, 2016d)

Consequently, the squat became the vehicle for claiming the right to the city, a right that was based on both equal access to public services and a collective and mutual struggle.

There were also several assemblies and solidarity structures created that provided food, clothes, and medical care. In addition, numerous political events, movie screenings, concerts, free bazaars, updates, and connections with refugee struggles from other parts of Greece and Europe took place. Moreover, actions against detention centers, solidarity actions in Idomeni, demonstrations in the center of the city, actions against racist and homophobic attacks, networking and coordination on pan-European days against the expulsion of immigrants and information events in other cities of Greece and Europe were organized (Housing squat for immigrants Orfanotrofio, 2016c). The most important is that this gave way to transnational proximity and a solidarity commoning which interacted with the neighborhood, with the local and the global. In the words of Fatima from Afghanistan:

> I met lots of people, refugees, people in solidarity from Thessaloniki and abroad. I enjoyed this very much. I just made friends all the time. That was our life, it was not a life revolving around money and work; it was a life of friendship, sharing and struggle. Our lives had meaning. (Personal interview, February 13, 2018)

Other occupied social centers, such as Nikis, Fabrika Yfanet, and Libertatia followed the experience and political struggle above and accommodated refugees. While new housing squats were also created by solidary people and refugees in the city center such as Albatross, Turtle Corner, and Hurriya (see Figure 2). Thus, abandoned houses were occupied and transformed into transnational communal houses, claiming the right to the city, to housing, and to political struggle. But most importantly, the residents of these occupied houses lived a threshold experience, a condition that, according to Stavrides (2015, p. 12), "gives people the opportunity to share a

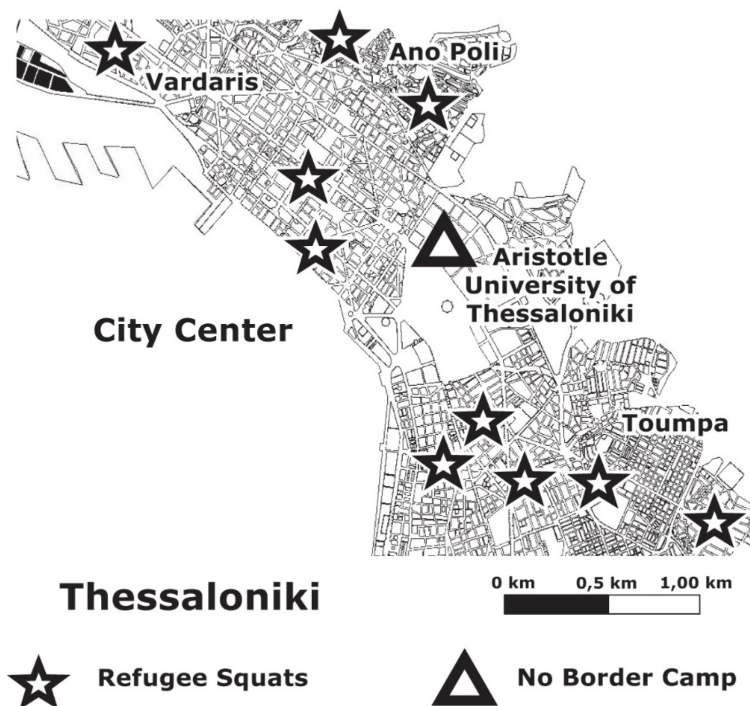

Figure 2. Location of refugee housing squats and No Border camp. Source: author.

common world-in-the-making". Therefore, these structures can be seen as solidary gestures that invent, craft, and test the creation of transnational threshold common spaces.

5. No Border versus Yes Border

One of the most important processes in the Orfanotrofio squat was the assembly meetings for the transnational No Border camp that took place from July 15th to 24th of 2016. It is worth mentioning that the No Border camp emphasized three reasons for choosing the city of Thessaloniki. First, the city's position, as it is located "at the core of conflicts over the control and management of immigration and of the freedom of movement, due to its geographical position in northern Greece, bordering Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria, with many detention camps…at its perimeter" (No Border Camp 2016 Organizing Assembly, 2016a, p. 4). Second, it enabled the creation of a variety of refugee solidarity initiatives and networks in northern Greece and in the Balkan region that could "be empowered and enhanced by the organization of a No Border camp" (No Border Camp 2016 Organizing Assembly, 2016a, p. 4). Third, Thessaloniki as a point of coordination for the aforementioned mobilizations and "its available grassroots infrastructures" seemed to "make the city a suitable and reliable choice for the organization of a global and transnational No Border Camp" (No Border Camp 2016 Organizing Assembly, 2016a, p. 4). Finally, the organizers of the No Border Camp underlined in their call that "meetings and struggles should be encouraged, should acquire steady and lasting structures and reinvent the joy and the charm of companionship and sharing" (No Border Camp 2016 Organizing Assembly, 2016a, pp. 3–4). Therefore, a gathering of solidarity initiatives, networking, and political awareness was proposed against the closing of borders.

The choices and practices of the No Border Camp constitute a political vision that corresponds to the Lefebvrian thought for an open city, for the right to the appropriation against private property and of participatory activity. In detail, the No Border Camp exhibited the following features:

First of all, the No Border Camp was established in the city center at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. This decision emphasizes the claim to the right to the city and highlights the Lefebvrian right to the center of the city. It appears to be in direct contrast to the State policies that place refugees in isolated camps on the outskirts of the city and exclude them from social and urban life. The No Border camp tried not only to occupy the physical center of the city, but also to provoke "existential" questions in the city's and country's central political sphere and to generate and reimagine an urban life based on non-discriminatory equality of access. These aspects revolve around Merrifield's (2011, p. 475) question, "isn't the right to centrality something internally generated, something existential, and not only geographical?"

Second, the No Border camp did not ask for legal permission from any authority but directly occupied the university's School of Law building and the surrounding park area. Hence, the right to the city is grounded here on the appropriation against the logic of private property, as the organizers of the No Border camp chose the open city and called for transnational networking and struggle against enclosures and fences, against borders and isolation. The commons emerge here in De Angelis's (2009) terms as a political struggle and open translocal spaces based on social relations.

Third, the No Border camp embraced and practiced participatory activity that transcends and transgresses the borders of ethnicity, religion, and gender. It is estimated that more than 3000 activists from all over Greece and other European and non-European countries gathered at the No Border camp for ten days. In addition, hundreds of refugees from State-run camps took part in events and actions.

During the No Border camp, more than fifty organized speeches were held that included topics related to refugee self-organization structures, State and hyperstate governmental policies for moving populations, gender aspects of immigration, and connections between the struggles of locals and refugees (No Border Camp 2016 Organizing Assembly, 2016b). Furthermore, during the ten days, a number of actions were organized, such as a massive demonstration in the city center, a demonstration against the State of emergency in Turkey, a demonstration against the fence in Evros river on Greek-Turkish borders, and protests in State-run camps in the outskirts of Thessaloniki. The most important event, however, was the movement of hundreds of refugees from the isolated State-run camps around the city to the No Border camp. Families, children, and elderly refugees interacted with each other at a lively meeting, producing a multi-ethnic space. The refugees organized meetings, sang, danced, expressed their problems and discussed immigration policies in other European countries with foreign activists.

It has been argued that the interests and perspectives of activists are not necessarily the same as refugees' (Agustín, 2008; Rozakou, 2018). However, it seems that in periods of intense social and political struggles and emerging common spaces like the No Border Camp, the boundaries between locals and newcomers, refugees and Europeans, are destabilized. The No Border camp describes not just a campaign of privileged solidary people in the name of refugees, but a shared physical and social space where decisions, actions, and daily life was co-organized by the commoners -refugees and activists. It created a multiplicity of affective and solidary interactions where the participants negotiated different identities and shaped a sense of togetherness. The manner in which the No border camp experimented with nascent threshold spaces is crucial because they are valuable in generating and nurturing, as Stavrides (2015, p. 12) notes, "a kind of equalising potentiality".

In the words of the Syrian refugee Mehdi:

> During the No Border Camp, I met solidary people from many countries. I was very impressed as people from very distant countries came to support us. I felt that all the solidary people were standing with me. When I shouted the slogan "open the borders", I felt that there were all those solidary people standing with me, next to me and supporting me. This strong voice from all the demonstrators was very encouraging, it was like they felt what I felt. Especially, the great demonstration in the center of Thessaloniki was very important, because in addition to the protesters, I saw in the eyes of the people on the road that we are welcome. (Personal interview, November 23, 2017)

This transnational community that claimed the right to the city and to visibility seemed at first to surprise the city authorities. The State began to see what it was afraid of, the political association of refugees with the local and global movement. The response of the State came the day after the No Border Camp, when police forces evacuated three refugee squats in the center of the city at six in the morning. In the words of the No Border Camp organizers, "it was made perfectly clear that practical solidarity and communities of struggle where locals and migrants fight together are most threatening for the authorities and the dominant order" (No Border Camp 2016 Organizing Assembly, 2017, p. 83).

However, the criminalization of solidarity did not discourage political awareness and over the following months, a number of solidarity actions took place in the State-run refugee camps, generating fruitful transnational personal relationships and new struggling communities. As a result of the refugees' and activists' struggles and the publicity of the conditions in refugee camps, most of the State-run camps in the perimeter of the city were closed over the following year and UNHCR set up the REACT-Refugees Assistance Collaboration in Thessaloniki (2016), a program for hosting refugees in rented apartments in urban areas. Although similar programs were run in other parts of Greece, Thessaloniki was the only case with a remarkable reduction in the number of State-run camps. Less than a year after the No Border Camp was established, the 13 refugee camps documented in July 2016 with 18.222 refugees were reduced to 4 camps with 1.430 refugees in April 2017 (Coordination Centre for the Management of Refugee Crisis in Greece, 2016, 2017). Moreover, the experience of the No Border Camp triggered the recomposition of the activist body, the setting up of new transnational political groups, and the strengthening of anti-racist actions against future xenophobic and fascist attacks.

6. Conclusions

The refugee squats and the organization of the No Border Camp reveal that it is possible to create a transnational common space that crosses borders shaped by ethnic, religious, gender, and cultural classifications. Refugees and solidary people expressed the ability to reimagine, reinvent, and reclaim a transnational right to the city of commons. Aiming to enhance critical scholarship, I would like to emphasize five crucial arguments:

First, refugees' movement across natural, social, and political borders inspired a number of political collectives and individuals to come together, to coordinate, to negotiate their internal political disagreements, to try to overcome their internal political borders, and to discover the joy of togetherness. Groups of refugees, anarchist political organizations, health workers, self-organized trade unions, met for the first time. In local movement, it is rare that such a political recomposition takes place that highlights a valuable political heritage.

Second, the very subject of the political struggle was altered as it was untied from the narrow context of the Greek or European citizenship and transformed into a multinational concern that could spring from the Middle East war zones to the northern European countries. A multinational struggle that can, as shown, bring people from all over the world and reinvent a culture of coexistence through sharing, commoning, and struggling practices.

Third, the No Border camp and refugees' housing squats were social laboratories in which new forms of social relations emerged which pollinated the values of solidarity, caring, and collective struggle. These experiences enrich the discourse of the Lefebvrian right to the city, as a right to inhabit, to appropriation against private property, to freedom of movement and movement of freedom (according to the famous No Border camp slogan), to collectivization and participatory activity. The desire to change the city connects to transnational common spaces towards the production of a solidary city.

Fourth, the examination of the No Border camp and the housing squats highlights the importance of the notion of threshold in the creation of commons spaces. Against the social and spatial segregation of the State-run refugee camps, activists decided to locate housing squats and the No Border camp in the very center of the city. Thus, both of these projects became social and political thresholds and functioned as bases for refugees to claim the right to the city.

Fifth, transnational meetings, participatory activities, and militant research problematize the European citizen's privileges and positionalities. Indeed, they can bring to the fore decolonial awareness and self-reflection beyond charitable and humanitarian structures, pointing to the potentialities for social change based on solidarity and equality that can form and reinvent transnational communities.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Charalampos Tsavdaroglou is a Postdoctoral Researcher of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation in the Department of Planning and Regional Development at the University of Thessaly, Greece. He holds a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning, School of Architecture, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. His research interests include land grabbing, the right to the city, common space and urban social movements on which he has published several journal articles and book chapters in English and Greek.

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