



Cities as sites of refuge and resistance

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Abstract

The article identifies some of the patterns and dynamics that have emerged in the uneven landscape and shifting constellations of local immigration regimes in the wake of the 2015 ‘summer of welcome’. Using the German case, it explores key players and institutions within this urban policy arena, and how their collaborative/competitive interactions in addressing the challenges of (receiving) the many newcomers have been shaped by supra-local as well as contingent and political factors. Firstly, it looks at the role and relative autonomy that municipalities exert in designing (proactive) refugee and integration policies. Out of the broad spectrum of civil society organisations that engage in this field, the paper then focuses on the new civic engagement often referred to as volunteer welcome initiatives, and on another civil society actor less frequently discussed in this context: the protest movement organised by refugees themselves. The evolving practices of, and interrelations among, these three sets of actors illustrate the trajectory of the transforming relations within the city as a networked and contested space of immigration policy.

Keywords

Civil society mobilisations, Germany, immigrant rights movement, irregular migrants, refugee politics, welcome initiatives

As nation states of the global North have responded to rising numbers of irregular migrants with increasingly restrictive asylum regimes, many cities in Europe and North America have espoused more welcoming and hospitable gestures to refugees and asylum seekers. Towns and boroughs of sanctuary have sprung up in the UK since 2007 (Bagelmann, 2016), while continental European cities have seen a steady growth in grassroots welcoming initiatives since 2011, which exploded into a veritable mass movement in the 2015 ‘summer of welcome’ (Karakayali and Kleist, 2016: 4) along the routes migrants were taking while the European Union (EU) border regime collapsed. Some city governments have launched ‘solidarity cities’ initiatives and established a network to advocate for migrant-friendly policies across the EU. Since 2012, many cities across Europe have also become sites for

new forms of highly visible refugee protest in their centres, where tent camps have been set up, churches occupied and demonstrations held to demand the right to stay, the right to work and the right to move freely. At the same time cities, large and small, have seen right-wing, xenophobic rallies and violent attacks on refugee accommodation.

Thus, a highly uneven landscape of localised border spaces and different urban spaces of contention have emerged, involving disparate sets of actors in new and shifting constellations. In such a complex, unclear and confusing situation, it is difficult to

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identify the patterns and dynamics that shape and characterise the emerging trajectory of urban politics between ‘refuge’ and ‘resistance’. This requires mapping the complete field of actors involved in the arena of refugee politics. Even though a Common European Asylum Policy attempts to shape EU Member States’ ways of dealing with displaced migrants, every nation state pursues its own policy and within those states, provinces, cities and boroughs frequently have high degrees of (relative) autonomy in the handling of irregular migration. The respective institutions and agencies within the local political arena of immigration policy, and the relations between these institutions, are shaped by very different and specific historical and cultural trajectories. Consequently, these arenas look different in each city and the relative weight of different players varies enormously. Therefore this article focuses primarily on one – the German – example, where municipalities, which are embedded in a multi-layered federal structure, interact, collaborate or compete with civil society organisations. These organisations include established welfare associations, private (for profit) and non-profit service delivery agencies (running reception and accommodation centres for refugees) and a host of other third sector organisations that, over the last few decades, have become rather accomplished in providing educational, training, social or labour market insertion services, as well as migrant organisations. The organisations also include new volunteer groups that have sprung up to fill the countless gaps in the structure of provision that became so painfully apparent in the summer and fall of 2015.

In the first section, the article presents the role that municipalities have played within this local political arena, and how the interactions of their various responsible agencies – in part due to programmes and incentives passed by higher levels of the state – with different non-state actors have been transformed in the process. It sketches the broad scope of a more or less proactive refugee politics that cities have engaged in and the reasons why some make use of their latitude to be more welcoming than others. The next two sections look at two of the civil society actors in this field, which are usually dealt with separately in different research

strands. Firstly, drawing on and synthesising recent survey data and pilot studies that attempt to capture the array of volunteer welcome initiatives, I explore their role in relation to other agencies and actors in the field. Secondly, the other civil society actor, less frequently discussed in this context, is the protest movement organised by refugees themselves, on occasion supported by various advocacy, human rights, anti-racist or left-wing political groups and organisations. A more complete map of all the relevant players in the field of local refugee politics, their interactions and relationships, would be necessary (importantly including traditional non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as Caritas, AWO, the Red Cross, the profession of social work and the various supporters, ranging from radical, leftist refugee support groups to humanitarian organisations) in order to be able to identify the direction of the emerging collaborative/competitive structures in this field. The final section draws some preliminary conclusions about the transforming relations within the city as a site of refuge and resistance.

The role of municipalities

Many have pointed to the city as a key site for resolving the politics of closure, and for building an open Europe. While some invoke ancient European traditions that allow us to recognise that the settlement and integration of foreigners takes place within the urban web (Douzinas, 2016), others point to the power of cities as sites of encounter and integration (e.g. Zechner and Hansen, 2016). Building on such observations, Barcelona’s mayor has launched a call for the creation of ‘cities of refuge’ in an effort to circumvent the EU and national state deadlock around the arrival of refugees and migrants:

We, the cities of Europe, are ready to become places of refuge. ... It may be that states grant asylum, but it is cities that provide shelter. ... Our municipal services are already working on refugee reception plans to ensure food, a roof and dignity for everyone fleeing war and famine. The only thing missing is the support of states. ... [W]e call on states to allocate funds to ensure refugees in transit are welcomed and to provide resources to cities that have offered themselves as places of refuge...¹

In September 2015, Barcelona declared itself a ‘city of refuge’ and has since worked on various funding and logistical schemes to facilitate the welcoming of refugees. In March 2016, Barcelona reached direct agreements with Athens, Lesbos and Lampedusa. The mayors of Athens and Barcelona negotiated a city-to-city agreement for Barcelona to welcome 100 refugees from Athens. This is intended to be a pilot initiative that both cities have indicated their willingness to continue in the future. However, because national government has authority of asylum matters, this plan cannot be implemented without the approval of Spain’s prime minister (Pescinski, 2016).

A similar effort, the ‘Solidarity Cities’ initiative, was launched by the EURO CITIES Social Affairs Forum, held in Athens in October 2016, to provide a common platform for city-to-city mutual assistance and advocacy for migrant-friendly policies across the EU (<http://solidaritycities.eu>; J  s  quel, 2016). At the Athens conference, elected officials and practitioners from 50 European cities discussed their common challenges in receiving and particularly in housing refugees in the face of national governments whose policy agendas seem to ‘be drifting further away from those adopted by the cities at the frontlines’ (Penny, 2016).

Decision makers and providers within cities ‘are often eager observers and fast adopters’ of innovative practices developed elsewhere (Katz et al., 2016: 21). Their networking amongst each other reflects not only that they confront enormous challenges in urgent need of resolution, but also that city governments have some autonomy in how they design and implement immigration and integration policies. City governments utilise this autonomy because as transit hubs, points of arrival and ultimate destinations of new migrants they are key arenas where solutions need to be found for new types of ‘regulatory problems’ that manifest on the ground (cf. Brenner and Theodore, 2002). In particular, the many forms of exclusion that irregular migrants face create accumulated social problems in cities, which in turn increases the pressure on municipalities to ease such problems. For pragmatic reasons, local politicians are therefore often more concerned with maintaining public order in their jurisdictions than

they are with the legal status of their residents, and may thus be inclined to take more favourable positions towards undocumented residents within their districts (cf. Nicholls et al., 2016: 3). What motivates cities to such pragmatic action is often a logic of emergency, which leads them to provide some, at least temporary, partial or improvised form of membership based on human rights, as with the UK’s *Cities of Sanctuary* movement or the city of Utrecht’s policy to provide shelter for rejected asylum claimants. Thus, the position of cities as the ‘last instance’ of government and their proximity to problems of exclusion puts them in a peculiar position regarding access to and take-up of rights (Gebhardt, 2016: 850).

Even though cities are tied into the implementation of federal politics of migration control (through registry offices, social services departments, schools, etc.), and even though in most countries they do not have legal competence to care for asylum seekers and refugees, the recent scale of arrivals and the slow reaction of national authorities have often left cities at the forefront, forcing them to play a role without having either a legal mandate or any specific budget to do so (EURO CITIES, 2016: 13). While a large number of EU and national guidelines, laws and ordinances appear to restrict German municipalities in how they might implement refugee and asylum policies, in practice they have rather broad leeway in how they interpret and implement the respective laws, which, already in the past, they have been utilising in variegated ways (Buckel, 2011; Schammann and K  hn, 2016: 5).

This leeway applies not only to areas where cities are, in any case, able to work with greater flexibility and creativity than higher governmental units and thus may, for example, assemble refugee taskforces in a matter of days, rapidly launch pilot projects for refugee reception or coordinate different city services and external stakeholders. It applies, of course, to the ‘voluntary tasks of municipal administration’ (*freiwillige Selbstverwaltungsaufgaben*), which by definition offer the most autonomy. However, it also applies to the prescribed mandated tasks for which municipalities are constitutionally responsible within the federal division of labour (*weisungsggebundene Pflichtenaufgaben*, see Schammann and K  hn, 2016).

Even in this latter area, where higher levels of government prescribe in some detail both the substance and procedure of the task (as, for example, with the issuing of residence titles), the framework set by national and state politics can be stretched. The agency in point is the municipal immigration agency (*Ausländerbehörde*),² which is closely supervised by the *Land* government. However, even here it is up to the staff of this local agency to decide, for example, whether specific factors might prevent deportation of a rejected asylum claimant, that is, whether a temporary permit (*Duldung*) should be issued, whether the asylum seeker has ‘failed to cooperate’ and therefore whether his/her access to the labour market or to schooling should be restricted. On the basis of a local qualitative study, Bendel (2016) emphasises that, if the municipal leadership wants, they can prioritise integration over regulatory/policing imperatives, and thereby turn their immigration office into a ‘welcome office’.

As with decisions on residence permits, the provision of social benefits and accommodation also falls under cities’ prescribed mandated tasks. While *Länder*/states may prescribe quite narrow parameters in these areas, in practice it is up to municipalities as to whether, and to what extent, they wish to involve civil society groups in setting up emergency refugee accommodations (an issue that has frequently led to local conflicts). Due to vagueness in the legislation regulating residence permits and depending on levels of intensity of political lobbying by local refugee support organisations, significant variation across municipalities has emerged, allowing even for control agencies such as the immigration office to implement not only policing functions but also to provide supportive measures (Schammann and Kühn, 2016).³

With regard to areas that are under the control of municipalities (e.g. ‘voluntary tasks of self-administration’) – which usually include core local services such as child care, adult education, basic social assistance, cultural facilities and newcomer orientation – cities can define access criteria as they see fit. For example, it is completely up to the municipalities whether they want to provide services such as legal advice, counselling services or language classes not only to those entitled to these services, but also to

asylum seekers whose chances of gaining asylum status and thus residence permits are ‘deemed to be slim’ according to recently introduced categories of ‘secure’ versus ‘insecure’ states of origin.⁴ Municipalities are thus confronting a situation where one section of ‘their’ refugees are allowed (or required) to participate in federally financed language classes, while another section does not qualify. While the federal government finances such services only for those with a ‘promising perspective to remain’ and the states may or may not provide incentives, municipalities have mobilised their own funds or drawn on a variety of subsidies, especially from the EU, in order to provide such services, mostly in the area of language acquisition (Schammann and Kühn, 2016: 22ff). Depending on the financial wealth of the municipality, but also depending on the political will or orientation of its political leaders (cf. De Graauw and Vermeulen, 2016), these ‘voluntary tasks’ have been interpreted in more and less generous ways. This has created an uneven landscape of provision of, and access to, public social infrastructure as municipalities use their latitude very differently: not all are flexible and fast, nor do all strive to create inclusive infrastructures. Aumüller et al.’s (2015) survey of the practices of reception across German cities reveals that, in addition to financial resources, it is the self-perception of a city that explains how municipal autonomy is made use of. Those that treasure an open, cosmopolitan tradition strive to organise irregular migrants’ access to public goods either through parallel structures via civil society organisations such as welfare associations, churches and informal groups, or through incorporation into regular systems, where citizenship status or residence title are irrelevant, and irregular migrants have the same access as all other residents (cf. Buckel, 2011).

The large leeway that cities have (and hence the broad variation in practices) is available because of the many contradictions and vague legal terminology in the legislation, which reflects unresolved conflicts between the federal and state level. Hence, it has been up to the local state to translate ambiguous legal prescripts into concrete administrative practice, creating a patchwork of different and contradictory models. It was not until the 2015 influx of

newcomers that these contradictions came to the fore and municipalities made efforts to create greater coherence with regard to the organisation and practice of refugee and ‘integration’ policies.

Thus, it can be argued that the urban context, more than the national or regional context, shapes the kinds of immigration policies that city officials adapt and implement (cf. De Graauw and Vermeulen, 2016). Precisely because cities have the latitude and the instruments to constructively deal with the challenges posed by large numbers of new arrivals, they are also an important focus for social movements and the political mobilisations for migrants’ rights.

Since city agencies administer many of the programmes and deliver most of the services relevant to the daily lives of immigrants, and since they are also more accessible, the threshold for participation in local governments is lower. This encourages ‘aggrieved local actors to transform the local arena into a major front in national immigration battles’ (Nicholls et al., 2016: 3). Since municipalities are closer to civil society organisations, they frequently cooperate with NGOs and non-profits in the delivery of local services and on many consultative round tables. For such reasons cities are of strategic significance for immigrant movements – and conversely, they play an important role in determining the directions that immigrant movements take.⁵ Unlike rural areas, cities (especially large ones) concentrate a critical mass of migrants and refugees. Cities also have a long history and experience with migration, have evolved relevant institutional structures and civil society organisations both of advocacy and support in addition to migrant organisations and their interests are frequently represented on round tables or advisory boards. Cities are thus more than a mere backdrop, stage or container for social movements; rather, they can be seen as strategic sites for activating complex activist networks (Nicholls and Uitermark, 2016a, 2016b; Nicholls and Vermeulen, 2012: 93).

Welcome initiatives

Volunteer helpers became a mass movement during the 2015 ‘summer of welcome’. In cities and towns across Germany, a broad and diverse spectrum of

help and solidarity sprang up, triggered by widespread encounters of, and media reports about, catastrophic and degrading situations at the borders, in trains and buses, as well as at the reception centres and processing facilities that appeared to be completely overburdened with registering and taking care of the new arrivals. The estimates at the time were of over a million refugees arriving in Germany in 2015⁶; more than 80,000 came to Berlin alone. In cities such as Berlin, Munich and Hamburg thousands of refugees were present without state agencies able to register them – making orderly asylum procedures as impossible as deportations. This meant that the refugees were excluded from any public social benefits. All over the country, minimum standards of providing for asylum seekers were systematically violated. Sub-standard and mostly insufficient emergency systems for accommodating the newcomers (in tents, sport halls, hangars, etc.) were set up, where situations of overcrowding, chronic shortages, lack of privacy, etc., created dramatic consequences not only for vulnerable groups.

A new ‘civil society’ mobilisation

Many locals who witnessed the despair and dire needs of the new arrivals in these situations spontaneously provided help and solidarity. This outpouring of concern and support led to a novel form of activism around migrant rights: a sudden surge of non-traditional civic engagement that arose next to, and only partially out of, existing human rights, refugee, anti-racist and urban movements. Although many volunteer groups in the field of refugee support had been formed since 2011 (a few have even existed since the 1990s), this level of volunteering was not anticipated. In Berlin alone about 150 new initiatives sprang up – not counting church-based activism or established NGOs, whose volunteer numbers also exploded. A representative study by the German Institute for Economic Research found for February 2016 that 10% of Germans above 14 years of age engaged in volunteer work in refugee contexts (Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaft (DIW), 2016), and more than 40% worked independently from organised civil society or state structures (Karakayali and Kleist, 2015: 5). From youth groups

to start-ups (Coldwell, 2015), from sports clubs to senior citizens, all the way to tabloids such as *Bild Zeitung* (which launched the campaign ‘Wir helfen!’), across all strata and age groups, everyone seemed to jump on the bandwagon of the new ‘welcome culture’ – except those German citizens who reacted with hostility and xenophobia and increasingly also with violent attacks, and their numbers, too, were growing.⁷

‘Civil society’ (or the ‘third sector’) has been frequently evoked as the civic ‘glue’ that might compensate for a shrinking public sector. This discourse has been popular since the 1980s when ‘shifts in the welfare mix’ were first diagnosed (as well as advocated) as a response to the ‘crisis of the welfare state’ (e.g. Evers and Olk, 1996; Evers and Wintersberger, 1988; for the local level, cf. Mayer, 2003, 2006, 2007). As austerity regimes have intensified the erosion of social welfare states, increasingly intrusive versions of this discourse have sought to mobilise ever more capillary structures of civil society into co-producing social cohesion. However, ‘civil society’ remains a complex category encompassing *all* activity outside the realm of the state and the private market.⁸ It thus includes not only social movements and grassroots civic engagement such as the welcome initiatives, but also non-profits and NGOs, which nowadays come in more and less established forms. Germany’s established welfare associations, which are affiliated with the main churches and political parties, and which receive most of their revenues (payments and subsidies) from the public sector, are large and highly professionalised social service organisations (cf. Zimmer, 2000). The organisational cultures, goals and motivations prevalent in these organisations are quite different from those shaping the grassroots solidarity movements that have sprung up to address the very same needs that these professionals address. Even within the new volunteerism, dispositions range from altruism-based charity to left-radical ambitions of *No border!* activists. The field of activism in support of, and in solidarity with, refugees is thus extremely heterogeneous, and its relations with more established, formally organised parts of civil society as well as with local government are sometimes fraught with tensions. At the same time, the boundaries between

what is often described as ‘apolitical’ volunteerism (prone to be instrumentalised by the state) and self-organised projects of state-critical activists are often fuzzy, shifting or contested. Thus the actors who are – or see themselves as – involved in creating the ‘culture of welcome’ make up a motley and fragmented group, and their engagement is fed by rather different motivations and ambitions. Converging around the defence of irregular migrants’ rights against xenophobic aggression or divisive state policies, their political self-definition has been evolving, prompting some observers to diagnose accentuated politicisation if not radicalisation of this volunteering movement (e.g. Schiffauer et al., 2017: 22-23).

The focus here is on the new segment of this civil society engagement, which sprang up when state agencies and even the large welfare associations appeared to be ‘overwhelmed’ – even though they are equipped with the pertinent experience, management structures and resources. In what appeared to be an organic, spontaneous process, scattered initiatives sprang up to offer what they could, at first informally, but increasingly evolving their own organisational structures: they surveyed what was needed, collected donations, provided refugees with food, clothing, German classes and help with translation, accompanied refugees to appointments at administrative agencies as well as doctors’ offices and helped with finding housing. They provided legal counsel, offered children’s programmes, made multilingual maps highlighting relevant infrastructures in the neighbourhood, threw welcome parties, organised neighbourhood assemblies to allow for everyday interactions with the locals and for space to collectively develop demands and they coordinated what other support structures have to offer (cf. *fluchtlinge-willkommen.de*, *wirmachendas.jetzt*, *berlin-hilft.com*). As the list makes clear, volunteers would be more or less well prepared in offering such a variety of support; some activities required more skills or knowledge than others. Also, some of these activities were actual state functions that cannot be provided effectively and equitably in the long term by volunteers, and others made accessing state services only possible (such as informing the arrivals about their rights or accompanying them to state agencies).

A second phase began with the closing of the Balkan route in February 2016, when state agencies regained more control and agency, introduced various programmes, and took an active interest in shaping the new civic engagement. The motto became: the welcome culture needs to be complemented with a welcome structure. Media and politicians have since been highlighting the integration efforts under way (limited as they were, cf. Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (IAB), 2016) while downplaying the simultaneous legal and administrative measures that increasingly limit the rights and options of asylum claimants and seek to expel those who do not meet the increasingly restrictive criteria (see below). Before examining how state actors designed that ‘welcome structure’, a closer look at the make-up of the volunteering is in order, as this, too, has undergone some changes, yet continues to be ambiguous.

The profile of the new volunteers

A few large surveys and local case studies have been undertaken, which reveal the facets and dynamics of the local welcome initiatives as well as previously active groups that have expanded their engagement in the face of the urgent problems. Summarising this data we know that 70% more people have become involved in civic engagement in support of refugees during the last three years than previously (Karakayali and Kleist, 2015).⁹ More than a third of the volunteers became active in self-organised groups and initiatives rather than in established associations: this spontaneous and self-organised form of volunteering is much higher than average in voluntary civic engagement (Karakayali and Kleist, 2015: 21, 25). Unlike in the first phase of voluntary engagement for refugees beginning around 2012, when the motivation was mostly a desire to learn about the world and different cultures, those who became engaged in 2015 formed a cohort characterised by more intense spontaneity, who only recently became interested in refugees, and who gave the ‘community feeling of the voluntary work’ as the primary reason for their engagement, that is, the experience of the ‘summer of welcome’ (Karakayali and Kleist, 2016: 4).

Unlike in other volunteering work, where gender does not matter so much, three quarters of these volunteers are female. In contrast to the first survey, by the time of the second survey the proportion of middle-aged and above-50s (and members of the workforce) had risen to approximate the average volunteering demographic, while the proportion of young and students had decreased (it was above average in the 2015 study). Most volunteers have high educational attainment, an indicator that most are not recruited from the working class but from higher socio-economic groups, as is usually the case in civic engagement (Karakayali and Kleist, 2015: 19). Unlike in traditional volunteering, and disproportionate to their representation in the general population, the percentage of migrants is higher.

The great majority of the volunteers see their engagement not only as a way to provide support for refugees, but also to oppose migrants’ social exclusion and marginalisation. A total of 90% view their engagement as a statement against racism and xenophobic tendencies (older volunteers more so than younger ones). The *Alliance ‘Refugees welcome’ Leipzig* is not alone in positioning itself explicitly against racism (<http://refugeeswelcome.blogspot.eu>). Case studies presented by Aumüller et al. (2015: 131) reveal that the volunteers, through engaging with and caring for refugees in a local accommodation facility, frequently succeed in counteracting hostile attitudes amongst neighbours and curtailing right-wing mobilisations against these facilities and their residents. One also finds a significant number of groups, such as the Medibüros (who organise access to health services, cf. <http://www.medibuero.de/en/>) or the anti-deportation initiatives who, apart from offering concrete help to refugees, engage in campaigns against the anti-migrant politics of the German government and EU institutions and provide support for the self-organisation efforts of refugees (cf. Lambert et al., 2015; Schiffauer et al., 2017; Van Dyk and Misbach, 2016: 207).

At the same time, a quarter of the volunteers did not want their engagement to encourage more asylum seekers to come to Germany (Karakayali and Kleist, 2016: 5). An ambiguous or critical view among at least half of the volunteers about potentially problematic effects of the recent immigration

on Germany is also found by a DIW study (2016: 163). Furthermore, a Shell Youth Study in 2015 (<http://www.shell.de/aboutshell/our-commitment/shell-youth-study-2015.html>) found that youth civic engagement for refugees is as much fed by a patriotic desire to guard and preserve their homeland's qualities (by helping to quickly integrate newcomers into German society and culture) as by humanitarian motivations (Gensicke, 2016: 180). Fewer than half (45%) perceive their work as a critique of the German government's refugee policies, although young people are more critical than older volunteers (Karakayali and Kleist, 2016: 33-34).

While only 9% of volunteers see their work as substituting for state tasks (Karakayali and Kleist, 2016: 28), they frequently provide services that the refugees are by law entitled to receive from governmental agencies. When the responsible agencies fail to provide such services, and self-help and civic engagement pitch in, a set of dilemmas arises, which have been widely studied ever since the state's retreat from social reproduction (cf. Mayer, 2003). Thus, it has been found that while volunteering can often ameliorate a terrible situation and safeguard social reproduction in the face of emergency, it may also create problems, because qualifications are erratic, the services not comprehensive and because governments may use such civic engagement, in spite of its unevenness, as a pretext to cut rather than adjust public social service provision to meet needs. Thus, while providing practical help was – in the face of the failures of state agencies – a humanitarian necessity and heartening with its anti-racist message, it has also harboured risks: as state tasks are outsourced to unpaid and not always sufficiently trained volunteers, seizing on the voluntary sector in a move to compensate for state failure has, as seen before in other areas of the care field, negative consequences for social rights and the quality of services (Bröse and Friedrich, 2015; Van Dyk and Misbach, 2016).

In addition, this form of civic engagement remains caught up within structural power imbalances. No matter how egalitarian the initiatives' approach, refugees and volunteers are not equal as long as social, political and civil rights are tied to citizenship. Particularly under conditions of mass accommodation, where the refugees can hardly organise around

their interests, 'avoiding paternalism is pure theory' (Jungk, 2016: 103).

Summarising the picture provided by these surveys and case studies of welcoming initiatives, it appears that this mobilisation constitutes a new social movement that reaches far beyond traditional activists. Distinguishing features in comparison with other progressive movements (e.g. the anti-nuclear or environmental movements) include its large size and the fact that many of its activists are engaging in very concrete, locally embedded ways, on a daily basis, often committing to new everyday practices. At the same time, the co-presence of countless such locally robust initiatives has so far only rarely generated supra-regional voice and visible political demands.

Welcome initiatives and the state

Some of the new initiatives began to feel upset in the course of the autumn of 2015 by what they saw as state agencies making their integration work difficult. In an 'Open Letter' by 47 welcome initiatives they complained that, while they worked hard to welcome and integrate refugees into German society, their partners in municipal and provincial offices were increasingly sorting refugees into more and less welcome categories and banished the latter into camps where their rights were being severely restricted, if not denied (Open Letter of Welcome Initiatives in the State of Brandenburg, 2015). Rather than appreciating the expertise and knowledge that the volunteers had been gaining in their daily interactions with the refugees, the authorities would all too often reject or restrain essential parts of their engagement.

From the perspective of state agencies, particularly municipal administrations, the sudden surge of non-traditional civic engagement necessitated somehow incorporating this engagement into a municipal strategy and steering it (Aumüller et al., 2015: 88). City administrators, while seeing the new citizen engagement as valuable for getting the migrants 'integrated', often perceive it as linked to unwelcome political protest. This seems especially irritating when the volunteers protest impending deportations of asylum seekers or of people who had been granted

temporary permits (Aumüller et al., 2015: 99; cf. Speth and Becker, 2016: 1-22).

Different models have emerged, depending on the local political culture in the respective municipal offices and pre-existing relations with civil society organisations. These range from hands-off approaches limiting the municipal role to coordinating supply and demand while respecting and supporting the competence and needs of the volunteers (e.g. *Stadtteilstiftungen für Flüchtlinge* in Bremen), to approaches where the departments tasked with integration try to nudge the volunteers' engagement into directions that allow them to 'save' on professional social work and legal counsel. The temptation to use volunteers to compensate for structural deficits in the administration is particularly intense in cities impoverished by austerity.

Since 2015, most municipalities have created new positions for the purpose of coordinating and training the volunteers, frequently with support from the *Land* government. Federal and state governments subsidise training programmes for so-called 'integration pilots' or 'integration guides'. In the state of Baden-Württemberg, the Ministry of Integration subsidises more than 150 positions for refugee commissioners (*Flüchtlingsbeauftragte*) conceived as an interface between the administration and civil society (Aumüller et al., 2015: 90-92). While various surveys confirm that more and better forms of coordination of initiatives, coordination of networks and central forms of coordination are indeed crucial (cf. Hamann et al., 2016), it is also the case that too much of a good thing can turn into a problem. Since the welfare associations and churches also saw and acted on the need for coordination, and frequently volunteer networks themselves had developed some nodes of coordination, all too often parallel structures have emerged (Schammann and Kühn, 2016: 26). Yet, this is one of the primary areas where large amounts of public money have been invested: in posts and taskforces for coordinating – between volunteers and public agencies, between different levels of state, between different service providers and between private and public and third sector actors – to the point that volunteers complain of being overly 'networked' by the municipality, while not receiving what they sorely need.

The 'nudging' and steering of the volunteers' work is also structured by the significant material and symbolic efforts of federal and state governments to mobilise and strengthen civic engagement. The federal government expanded its volunteer service programme (*Bundesfreiwilligendienst*) in the autumn of 2015 by adding a three-year volunteer programme to assist with housing and supporting refugees. It comprises 10,000 positions (in addition to the existing 37,000) and costs 50 million Euros (<https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/engagement-und-gesellschaft/freiwilligendienste/bundesfreiwilligendienst/75014>). These funds support the activities and the training of volunteers (not of refugees), who, working fulltime, receive a monthly allowance of Euro 363, plus a subsidy towards social insurance, as well as accommodation and board. Regular volunteers outside of this programme receive, at most, reimbursement for their transport costs and flat-rate (low) allowances from the municipality – and frequently symbolic recognition in the form of official awards.

Also new federal programmes were launched, either to incentivise people to 'adopt' individual refugees or families in order to support them in their day-to-day lives (*Menschen stärken Menschen*) or to support municipalities in integrating refugee youth (*Willkommen bei Freunden*). The largest programme *Demokratie leben!* (50.5 million Euro) supports local partnerships between civil society and public organisations and institutions as well as model projects that encourage work against racism, xenophobia, anti-Islamist and anti-Semitic tendencies (<http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/freiwilliges-engagement.html>; <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/engagement-und-gesellschaft/78204>). State governments have also established programmes for furthering civic engagement such as, for example, the *Engagementfond Willkommenskultur Sachsen-Anhalt*, which invites groups and individuals to file applications for small subsidies in order 'to supplement' professional services with civic engagement initiatives (Graf, 2016: 92).

Far more widespread is the symbolic appreciation of volunteers. Giving honours and prizes at reward ceremonies, and a panoply of events of official acclaim and recognition of the 'volunteers'

commitment to the integration of refugees' proliferate on all levels.¹⁰

While some groups appreciate the (small) subsidies and (large amount of) political recognition, others are frustrated. The Schammann and Kühn study (2016: 27) found that, in spite of all the rhetoric and some monetised appreciation, volunteers miss transparent communication structures and would like to be included more in decision-making and information sharing. An Open Letter by initiatives complains that the incentives municipalities and supra-local agencies provide are targeting and furthering only those forms of civic engagement that stay out of politics, while discouraging autonomous, possibly inconvenient forms that may come with civil disobedience (Open Letter of Welcome Initiatives in the State of Brandenburg, 2016). There have even been various 'strike actions' by volunteers – for example, a 24 hour strike in November 2016 against the Bavarian Integration Law and a wider strike on the International Day of Civic Engagement (5 December 2016) to protest the instrumentalisation of volunteer labour (<http://gesundheitsgefluechtete.info/ehrenamtlichen-streik/>).

The way that the various subsidy programmes work is designed to foster apolitical types of engagement that complement (rather than challenge) state integration policies. Their temporary and limited structure favouring localised initiatives tends to reproduce the uneven landscape of volunteer-provided services, leaving gaping needs unaddressed. In addition, the state programmes foster and honour primarily the 'white helpers' – while the refugees themselves rarely appear as subjects. Their civic engagement and their struggles over the last years are thereby made invisible, implicitly putting them into the position of thankful supplicants. Most state programmes thus contribute, albeit indirectly, to making the refugees appear only as passive, as needy and as victims – as objects of compassion instead of recognition.

Self-organised refugee movements

New forms of self-organised refugee protest emerged across Europe from the 1980s onwards (cf. Schröder 2014), but it was the marches, demonstrations,

encampments, hunger strikes and occupations taking place since the autumn of 2012 that galvanised more public reaction in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands than any migrant or refugee mobilisations before.¹¹ In them, extremely heterogeneous groups, from regions around the world, with vastly different experiences of flight and background, of different classes, ethnicities, castes and genders, with vastly different types and levels of skills and training and of different and shifting legal status have come together. Further, this movement's actors are characterised by a severe lack of resources and extremely restricted, yet differentiated, access to rights, depending on the legal status. They were driven to encounter each other by Germany's restrictive asylum policies, and they were brought together by their common struggle for a right to stay and live a normal life here. Rather than play the role of humanitarian victims and needy applicants, they have organised to demand access to Europe and to social and political, not just human, rights (Bareis and Wagner, 2016: 37).

As they do this primarily in cities, this section examines a few instances of how this movement has evolved in four cities with an eye to the mobilisation process, the use of (urban) space and the encounters with other players in the field of refugee politics. As will be seen, most often municipal authorities have responded to this movement rather differently than to that of the welcome initiatives. Even though the issues fought over are the same as those addressed by the NGOs working this field, by the welcome initiatives, and, indeed, by the various departments in hospitable municipal administrations, due to the different framing very little overlap has evolved.

The new wave of refugee protest started in Holland in 2011, when a group of rejected yet undepotable Somali asylum seekers set up tents in a small village near a deportation centre, demanding food and shelter. In the course of 2012 more such camps were set up by Iraqis and supporters. When this new form of protest, the encampment, went to Amsterdam, it expanded and allowed different types of supporters and activists to network with each other (Nicholls and Uitermark, 2016a: 262).

The Amsterdam mayor's strategy, in 2013, was to evict the camps while holding out the option of individualised assistance and review of individual

asylum applications to those who would cooperate. With the help of squatters, the refugees who rejected this offer occupied a vacant church until the mayor made an attractive enough but conditional offer that allowed them to stay together as a group in one building (a former prison) for six months on the condition that they individually collaborate with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (Immigrati- en Naturalisatiedienst, IND) to get decisions on their asylum claims. Such offers usually split up the groups, as was also the case here (Nicholls and Uitermark, 2016a: 266).

In Vienna, the municipal authorities responded quite similarly to actions organised by refugees. In November 2012, refugees and supporting *No Border!* activists marched from a reception centre in Traiskirchen to Vienna and set up camp in a central park, which attracted more refugees. What began as a protest against the overcrowded and squalid conditions at the intake centre turned into a highly visible protest movement that would continue for almost a year. By moving from a remote and isolated location into the centre of the city and there claiming space, first with a tent camp in the park, then by seeking shelter in the Votive Church, and finally by attempting to create a communal space at the Serviten Monastery, the movement directed public attention to the restrictive policies levied against refugees and, at the same time, mobilised asylum seekers (many of whom had failed to obtain residence permits) and allies. By holding daily plenary assemblies (in several languages with translation), organising demonstrations and releasing press statements, they created a political space and formed a collectivity, which helped with gaining more recognition and visibility. After moving to the church, however, decisions were no longer taken through common meetings, and the spatial separation made the collaboration between refugees and supporters more difficult (Ataç, 2016: 642).

In Germany, the struggle of the so-called Lampedusa refugees made headlines for years. More than 300 refugees from North Africa (mostly Tunisia and Libya) who had arrived in Europe via the island of Lampedusa (from where they were sent on by the Italian authorities after two years) have fought for their right to stay and for social participation in

Hamburg since May 2013. The so-called ‘secondary movement’ within the EU, which is still legal until Dublin IV is adopted, although it excludes the right to work and social benefits, creates a particularly disenfranchised group. To underline their demands for the recognition of their Italian papers and for work permits, they erected a tent near Hamburg’s Central Station on 22 May and registered it with the city as permanent vigil. The tent became not just a meeting and information point, but also a centrally visible symbol of their struggle. The group *Lampedusa in Hamburg* has been supported by different local groups with many actions and weekly demonstrations, the largest with 15,000 in November 2013 (Spiegel staff 2013). When Hamburg’s authorities refused to meet the demands for residence permits, negotiations mediated by the Lutheran church took place, but the only concession offered was temporary residence permits until each individual claim for asylum could be decided. Seventy-four members of the group accepted the offer and filed claims,¹² but the majority have continued to fight for a ‘group solution’. In this, they continued to be supported – if no longer by the church¹³ but by various other civic organisations and individuals, including prominent artists and intellectuals. A *Charter of Lampedusa* (<http://www.lacartadilampedusa.org>) was jointly drafted in early 2014, declaring the right to stay and move freely, which has become a point of reference for many local (pro-)migrant movements (Ataç et al., 2015: 10). In February 2016, *Lampedusa in Hamburg* initiated a three-day international conference of refugees and migrants, attracting more than 1500 participants. While the Green Party in its electoral campaign 2015 had demanded a ‘political solution’ for this group of refugees, the Hamburg Senate refused to talk to its members. On 10 September 2016, the group staged a *Tent Action Day* to protest the city’s current plans to remove the tent from its location near the central station (<http://www.thevoiceforum.org/node/4227>).

The most spectacular and sustained mobilisation of refugees in Germany began after the suicide of Iranian Mohammad Rahsepar in January 2012 in asylum seekers’ accommodation in Würzburg in Bavaria. Refugees camped out in the centre of the city for months, demanding free mobility, an end to

deportations and to being housed in desolate container camps. After several demonstrations and a hunger strike of Iranian refugees, protest camps and local protest actions such as vigils spread to other German cities (so-called *Refugee Tent Action* from July to September), and on 8 September about 50 refugees together with supporters began a 600 km march from Würzburg to Berlin, in direct violation of the law forbidding refugees to leave the district they have been assigned to (*Residenzpflicht*). A month later, after 30 stops, they arrived in Berlin, and continued their protest in a tent camp set up at *Oranienplatz*, where about 80 refugees from Sudan, Macedonia, Iran, Afghanistan, etc., held out, with others living in a nearby squatted former school building. Six thousand people joined their demonstration on 13 October to the German parliament in support of their demands, the largest demonstration so far for the rights of refugees in Germany.

With the protest camp at Berlin's *Oranienplatz* the refugees had succeeded in creating a social space and an audible voice; this space allowed for a social network, alliances and innumerable personal connections to be forged between refugees, supporters and residents (cf. Ataç et al., 2015: 4; Wilcke and Lambert, 2015). After three years, in April 2014, it was cleared on the basis of a negotiated agreement (the so-called *Oranienplatz-Einigungspapier*, http://www.fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/fr/pdf/Kolat_Einigungspapier_fertig.pdf). This 'agreement' included both the taking down of the tents at *Oranienplatz* and for the refugees to leave the squatted school building at Ohlauer Street, but not all members of the group agreed to this (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin, 2014). Consequently, a few dozen refugees remained, and demanded the set up of an international Refugee Centre there (Berlin Refugee Movement, 2015).¹⁴ After a 10-day siege by police in July 2014, the group was again split by offers of a resolution, but 24 refugees refused to leave and have remained in the south wing of the school (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin, 2015). They have attracted more activist refugees to join them, and are running language classes and various projects where new and old residents can meet and cooperate. While an administrative court has repeatedly confirmed their right to stay, the district is attempting to have the refugees living in the squatted part of the school

evicted (Peter, 2016). The north wing of the school has meanwhile been turned into emergency accommodation (run by a welfare organisation) housing about 100 Syrian refugees – with the district government now giving favourable treatment to the 'new' refugees who have not been struggling in Berlin for the last five years while discriminating against the 'old' refugee tenants of the school, ignoring the agreement negotiated with them before.¹⁵

With actions such as protest camps and assemblies in public places, sit-ins and occupations, social media campaigns and PR work, exhibits and conferences and finally also hunger strikes not just in Amsterdam, Vienna, Hamburg and Berlin, but also Munich, Karlsruhe, Hanover and a number of other cities, refugees have been struggling for the right to stay, against being warehoused in mass housing facilities and other humiliating and restrictive elements of the German asylum law. By marching across state lines they actually *seized the right* to move about freely¹⁶; they have also organised bus tours to reach out to new arrivals at the 'reception camps' to inform them of their rights, as well as about the protests and their demands, with the goal of recruiting more activists. Again and again they have converged from distant, peripheral (rural, ex- and suburban) locations of 'reception centres' onto urban central spaces, churches and vacant buildings. Unlike the earlier, scattered and less radical refugee struggles, these protests have been sustained and linked transnationally (cf. Klotz, 2016: 62; McGuaran and Hudig, 2014). Their cause has thereby become more publicly present, especially where they employ spatial strategies such as occupations and claiming of spaces that transform selected – public as well as enclosed – locations into social and political spaces.

When their protest campaigns were organised to take place simultaneously across Germany and even across Europe, the media took note. Especially when, starting with the EU parliament elections in May 2014, refugees and undocumented migrants from France and other European countries undertook a transborder *March for Freedom* that started out in Strasbourg and ended in Brussels with massive rallies at the EU summit on migration policy on 26 and 27 June, and was accompanied by decentralised protests

in cities across Europe, enormous transnational visibility was generated.¹⁷

These successes appear all the more remarkable given the limited resources, enormous heterogeneity, precarious legal status, ban on free mobility, restricted participation rights and the high fluctuation among movement members (due either to deportation or to positive determination of asylum requests). They are attributable to strong and dense networks of self-organisation of refugees, and to their embeddedness in supporter networks. The cities presented in the above sketch of movements have all been sites of urban-based mobilisations that spawned cross-movement linkages in joint struggles against austerity cuts and affordable housing crises. In this context, refugees have been able to forge social and political alliances, in which transversal forms of politics have emerged that acknowledge the different experiences and realities of each group. This setting is providing favourable conditions for the convergence of diverse ‘urban’ struggles – over labour, gentrification, the right to the city, for free access to social and public infrastructures – with the struggles of refugees for the right to remain, the freedom of movement and social and political participation (cf. Ataç et al., 2015: 8; Mayer, 2016: 53-54).

Yet, while these resistance struggles of refugees against the European migration regime and against the excluding treatment they so often receive have been supported by a broad spectrum of solidarity groups, each case also makes clear that the authorities’ response to the refugees’ movements tends to be divisive. Where the movements were strong, the repeatedly adopted strategy of offering conditional concessions that will be picked up by some, thus allowing evicting and the repressing of others, has contributed to splitting and weakening the movements, and to the erosion of solidarity from the more established supporters.

Cities with their dense networks and legacies of (migrant) movement experience have certainly been of strategic significance for the refugees’ self-organised activism, only here has it been possible to organise sustained mobilisation and create visibility for their issues. What stands out are similarities of the ‘divide and rule’ strategies across the different cities – not likely the most productive way to resolve

the urgent grievances that the refugees make visible through their resistance.

Conclusion: Implications and future perspectives

It appears as if many of the achievements and successes of the struggles over the last few years are getting lost as the German national government – like others across Europe – is doubling down on restrictive policies towards refugees. Already while the ‘welcome discourse’ was at its peak, the federal government passed a law to accelerate the asylum process, reinstated national border controls and further restricted the right to asylum in October 2015, after it had already tightened access to asylum in June 2015. The new legislation included the expansion of accommodation in camps, the restriction of freedom of movement for asylum seekers and the reinstatement of the voucher system (instead of cash transfers). Since March 2016, most refugees from Syria receive only ‘subsidiary protection’, that is, a restricted asylum status, which limits their travel to other countries and instates a two-year waiting period before they can apply to bring their families. In addition, even though the Federal Constitutional Court had ruled in 2012 that the fundamental right guaranteeing basic human living standards should apply to refugees as well, the legislation repeals such social rights for various newly created categories of refugees. Finally, in August 2016 the new ‘Integration Law’ (<http://berlin-hilft.com/2016/08/integrationsgesetz-tritt-nun-in-kraft-uebersicht-ueber-alle-aenderungen/>) became effective, which drastically limits claims and reduces benefits for all categories of irregular migrants. It (re)defines integration by the acquisition of the German language and of a skill set that ‘does justice to the German labour market’ (Bundestag-Drucksache 18/8829:1). Thus, it makes language and integration classes as well as workfare jobs (paying 80 cents an hour) obligatory for recognised refugees. Non-compliance may result not only in benefit reductions, but also in the revoking of residence permits. Since the law does not provide for the creation of more training programmes or real jobs, its measures seem designed more to sort people than to provide them with real and decent work.

Even as the EU and national policy frameworks have stiffened immigration rules, tightly monitoring immigration status and accelerating deportations, a system of more and less formal integration management programmes for the new arrivals that are here to stay has been put in place, which relies crucially on civic engagement at the local level. Municipalities as well as welfare associations are looking for innovative practices for fast adoption and adaptation in order to create solutions for integrating the newcomers into housing and labour markets, schools and communities (cf. EUROCITIES, 2016; Katz et al., 2016: 21). The systematic involvement of civic engagement in these state strategies has had the effect of both supporting and dividing the initiatives engaged in refugee support, while marginalising and co-opting migrant self-organisations.

Multiple and contradictory agendas may be addressed with such efforts. The governing parties have good reasons for valorising the anti-racist work of the welcome initiatives, as it helps to rein in the xenophobic and racist mobilisations growing the votes for right-wing parties. At the same time, the newly launched programmes to further civic responsibility and expand volunteering in the context of refugee ‘integration’ could be seen as the latest version of ‘governing... through... community’ (Rose, 1996: 328, 352), using the ‘refugee crisis’ as pretext to deploy un- and underpaid volunteer labour instead of professional, skilled social workers, translators or health professionals.

While the solidarity work has been shown capable of pushing back racist attacks, as well as able to enhance the public/municipal provisions, it cannot compensate for shrinking social infrastructures, nor do the volunteers want to contribute to a de-qualification processes and a downgrading of social work. Such tendencies would be especially detrimental for the refugees, whose status as legal subjects with guaranteed social rights would be eroded as they were turned into recipients of charitable aid, dependent on arbitrary cycles of donations and volunteering.

Cities are at the forefront of organising refuge for those who make it into the safety of Europe; at the same time, cities constitute the arenas where new relationships between the relevant players from the public, private and complex, ambiguous civil society

sectors are fought out. Since much depends on the direction in which the interactions between these players move, we need to understand them well. Urban researchers have an important, yet barely begun, job in bringing social movement analyses of the two parallel local movements presented here to bear on urban scholarship about the significance of cities for shaping future integration policies.

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Notes

1. This manifesto was co-signed by the mayors of Barcelona, Paris, Lesbos and Lampedusa and published in *El País*, 17 September 2015 (retrieved from <http://adacolau.cat/en/post/we-cities-Europe>). Later, other cities, including Malmö, Milan and Wadowice, joined.
2. Almost all regulations pertaining directly or indirectly to the residence of foreigners – except for the asylum decision itself – are implemented by this municipal immigration agency: whether residence permits are extended, participation in ‘integration classes’ is made obligatory, work permits are granted, etc.
3. The analysis by Schammann and Kühn, based on a survey of how municipalities have used their relative autonomy, points to the immigration offices of Munich, Freiberg and Düren as having been turned into veritable ‘Service Centres’ and ‘welcome agencies’ (Schammann and Kühn, 2016: 9-10).
4. The arbitrary category *Bleibeperspektive* (i.e. having good chances of gaining asylum status) defines refugees from countries for whom the rate of acceptance has been above 50%, that is, refugees from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Eritrea, Somalia and Yemen, as having good chances of gaining asylum status. Thus, since November 2015 refugees from these states have been allowed to participate in integration classes even while still waiting for their asylum requests to be decided. The recognition rate of Afghans was slightly below 50% in 2015, from which the authorities

- concluded that Afghan refugees should not be considered as having promising chances to stay and are to be deported – even though in 2016 their rate of receiving protected status surged up to 55.8% (<http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2016-asyl.pdf>).
5. Some comparative studies of movements for migrant rights in the 1980s and 1990s have demonstrated that different (local) strategies of government control or political integration have determined the different directions that such movements have taken (De Graauw and Vermeulen, 2016; Nicholls and Uitermark, 2016a, 2016b; Nicholls and Vermeulen, 2012; Uitermark and Nicholls, 2014). The third section of this article explores to what extent the urban matters to *contemporary* refugee movements.
 6. This number has meanwhile been adjusted to about 900,000, as many have moved on, returned or were registered multiple times. Since the ‘Balkan route’ has been closed (9 March 2016) and because of the deal struck with Turkey (20 March 2016), the influx since then has slowed: by 23 December 2016, 358,403 migrants had entered Europe by sea – but the Mediterranean death toll reached a new high with over 5000 (Reuters, 2016). Still, the German agencies responsible for processing the asylum requests were struggling to catch up; in July 2016 there were still 526,000 unprocessed asylum requests plus about 250,000 refugees who have not yet even been registered as asylum claimants (Eisenring, 2016).
 7. Right-populist groups have experienced a rapid rise since 2013; their rallies and demonstrations becoming more numerous, more frequent and larger. The number of violent attacks, mostly arson against shelters for asylum seekers, has risen sharply. In three state elections of 2016, the right-populist party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) reached double-digit votes. However, opinion polls remain 50/50 on the refugee question. A representative Forsa survey for Stern magazine (9 March 2016) found that 49% of Germans find the number of foreigners and refugees high enough, no more should move in; 35% say it would be OK for their numbers to grow (Jungk, 2016: 100; cf. Rucht, 2018).
 8. Private providers are also part of the new ‘welfare mix’; in the area of refugee politics they play increasingly relevant roles in providing and running mass shelters, and in providing services from security to training or labour market insertion, which municipalities contract out to firms specialising in these areas. The problems arising in the relations between municipalities, private providers and refugees cannot be dealt with in this text, where the focus is on civic engagement.
 9. This first explorative online survey taken in November and December 2014 (and published in April 2015) of 460 volunteers and more than 70 refugee support organisations was followed up by a second study (carried out in November and December 2015 and published in August 2016) based on online questioning of 2291 volunteers. Together they provide not only insight into the demographics and motivations of the new civic engagement, but also into its development.
 10. These forms of recognition range from the well-endowed (10,000 Euro) special prize the federal government created (*Willkommenskultur gestalten*), which in 2015 was awarded to a volunteer organisation from Saxony for offering free German classes to refugees (<http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/freiwilliges-engagement,did=222188.html>), all the way to local receptions in honour of individual volunteers. Often, initiatives boycott such events out of protest against the official asylum politics, which, in their view, prevent rather than further integration (Schnell, 2016).
 11. In 1994 the first refugee organisation of mostly African refugees, *The Voice*, was founded, which is active until today as a network (<http://www.thevoice-forum.org>). In 1998 the *Caravan for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants* brought migrants from different states of origin together in a nation-wide initiative. Activists from *The VOICE Refugee Forum* and the *Caravan for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants* formulated their vision of autonomous political structures and organisations for and by migrants 20 years ago, receiving little public acknowledgement until 2012, when refugee struggles became a popular subject in the mass media. Another important self-organised group is *Women in Exile* founded in 2002 and still active today, to fight the double discrimination women refugees experience (<https://www.women-in-exile.net>).
 12. Only three of these claims were successful, 14 were rejected and the others are still pending (<http://www.mopo.de/hamburg/fluechtlinge-am-steindamm-bleibt-dieses-zelt-jetzt-ewig-stehen-24950174>).
 13. Hamburg’s Lutheran Church leadership had initially been a vocal supporter of the refugees’ demands, but on 22 October 2013 the bishop recommended to the refugees to accept the deal the city offered.
 14. Vice News documented the events from the demolishing of the Oranienplatz camp to the siege of the

- school and the negotiations between the refugees and the authorities, see ‘Evicting the Unwanted: Berlin’s Refugee Crisis,’ August 2014 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RESaTeWpPck>).
15. See <http://wer.oplatz.net/news-from-ohlauer-school-wer-13/>. Out of the O-Platz struggle came a newspaper produced by and for refugees, in six languages, called *Daily Resistance* (<http://dailyresistance.oplatz.net>).
 16. In response to the strengthening movements since 2012, some states relaxed the restrictive mobility rules and the mandatory housing in collective accommodations. However, the new integration law of 2016 again restricts the refugees’ freedom of movement, binding them to assigned districts even after their legal status has been recognised.
 17. For a selection of media coverage, see <http://asyl-strikeberlin.wordpress.com/press-reviews-pressespiegel/>; cf. also <https://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/post/tag/refugees/> and <http://www.bxlrefugees.be/en/2016/02/07/27-02-2016-european-march-for-refugees-rights-brussels%E2%80%8F/>

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