over committed citizens did not go uncontested, while volunteers proved to remain to a certain extent *ungovernable*. Volunteers did often not hesitate to voice dissent towards governmental actors, to point at shortcomings in the handling of asylum seekers and to demand reforms.

What is more, my investigation illustrated that the shifting of responsibilities from 'the state' to committed citizens not only extended governmental control and power over the sphere of 'civil society' but, at the same time, opened up new possibilities for political action. The enhanced role of committed citizens in the management of asylum seekers might therefore also be read as a greater capacity to exert influence and foster change towards a different alternative on a grassroots level. The (re)ordering of responsibilities around the long summer of migration, I would suggest, redistributed power from formal governmental actors to individual citizens striving to build a 'better society'. Assuming a position that does not stand in opposition to 'the state' but instead puts an emphasis on cooperation can thus provide quite a strong position from which to foster political change. Often, those supporting refugees also demanded a say in local political decision-making processes and in the handling of asylum seekers on the ground. Local authorities that, in their view, did not take volunteers "seriously" or consult them on matters concerning the handling of asylum seekers were a major source of frustration.

I would thus suggest that committed citizens did play an active part in shaping the ways in which asylum seekers were governed and managed on the ground. My findings illustrate that the line between the entities imagined as 'the state' and 'civil society' is opened up for reconsideration and renegotiation in light of increased migration movements. The ways in which intensified migration is causing the relationship between 'the state' and its citizen-subjects to be reshaped is a topic that merits further research and consideration and provides an interesting avenue for future research.

7.3. The Contested Relationship between 'the Local' and 'the World Out There'

Last but not least, my empirical findings illustrate how those supporting refugees (re)considered the relationship between 'the local' and 'the global' in the course of their practices of solidarity. The increased willingness to get involved on behalf of migratory newcomers spoke both to a growing awareness of the transformative effects of intensified *global* migration movements and

to a desire to foster *local* alternatives to a world that is increasingly in flux (see Chapter 6). I would therefore suggest that 'the local' and 'the global' can be read as mutually constitutive, entangled frames that crucially shape and structure practices of solidarity in migration societies. Seen from this perspective, my insights into the contested solidarities of the German 'summer of welcome' were also revealing in terms of how 'the local' and 'the global' become related to each other in contemporary migration societies. This chimes with academic works that have investigated the relationship between rootedness and rootlessness (Pailey 2018), mobility and stasis (Glick Schiller & Salazar 2013), and 'nomadic metaphysics' and 'sedentarist metaphysics' (Cresswell 2006) in an age of intensified migration. My analysis in the previous chapters illustrated that the aspirations for local togetherness, on the one hand, and the growing awareness for an increasingly entangled global condition, on the other, brought forth differing, ambivalent and contested social imaginaries. This was most clearly illustrated in Chapter 6, where such imaginaries proved to be so contrasting and conflicting that relationships of solidarity were eventually broken.

On the one hand, those who supported refugees were driven by an impulse to forge alternative forms of social togetherness 'from below' the nation-state, alternatives that they regarded as being 'better' equipped to cope with an increasingly diverse migration society. Over the course of the previous chapters, I outlined how practices of solidarity thus kindled a sense of community that revolved around 'the local' and, to differing degrees, included whoever was present on the ground, regardless of national origin or cultural belonging. In the fourth chapter, I argued that practices of solidarity are inventive of new ways of relating on the local level, while also offering political possibilities to bring about change and enact a different alternative on the ground. However, these imaginaries often went hand in hand with an idealized account of 'the local' that produced romanticized and nostalgic notions of 'local community' as an antidote to the 'world out there' (cf. Bauman 2001). For instance, many of those supporting refugees viewed their actions as a means to enact a local alternative to an ever more divided European Union and its flawed border and asylum policies. In this context, 'the local' was often painted as a safe haven in an increasingly inhumane world. The significance of a romanticized imaginary of 'local community' for practices of refugee support was particularly evident in the narrative of the *Gmünder Weg* (see Chapter 6). This narrative, which depicted the small south German town of Schwäbisch Gmünd as a successful example of the implementation of a local 'welcome culture', conveyed

warm feelings of local togetherness and portrayed the 'local community' as being characterized by extraordinary levels of personal immediacy and mutual help. I argued that its great success – the town gained nationwide attention as a model of best practice – spoke to a contemporary longing for a togetherness rooted in 'the local'. These insights point to a more general desire in contemporary migration societies to feel embedded in a tangible 'local community'.

On the other hand, my empirical investigation showed how the extraordinary willingness to support newly arrived migrants spoke to a growing awareness of the increasingly entangled global condition. With their practices, I would suggest, those supporting refugees also embraced that migration forms a constitutive element of living-together in contemporary migration societies. In his seminal book *Distant Suffering*, Boltanski (1999: 23) claims that compassion for 'suffering others' ends when the unfortunates "invade the space of those more fortunate". The humanitarian imaginary at play around the summer of 2015, however, clearly did not end when asylum seekers "invaded" the space of those who were mobilized to support refugees. In fact, I would suggest that the immigration of large numbers of asylum seekers triggered an extraordinary level of humanitarian help and support *because of* their spatial proximity (see Chapter 2). Their arrival illustrated that 'suffering' is no longer something gazed at from a 'safe' distance. It becomes tangible in people's own neighbourhoods and affects the living-together on the ground. In the months preceding what came to be described as the 'refugee crisis', national and international media reported extensively on examples of 'distant suffering', on the atrocities in war-torn Syria, for instance, or migrants dying as they tried to cross the Mediterranean in small vessels. Meanwhile, a growing number of asylum seekers arrived in towns and villages across Germany, leading established residents to recognize that 'the world out there' cannot be shut out. Instead, intensified global migration movements brought the impacts of such 'distant suffering' to their own village, town or neighbourhood. This recognition was apparent from conversations with various volunteers during my field research, in which they told me that they were deeply shocked and affected by the first-hand accounts of violence and the graphic stories of flight they heard from asylum seekers. Often, this led them to reflect on injustices related to increasingly fortified borders, motivating them to take a stand against flawed migration policies (see Chapter 4). At times, those supporting refugees also embedded their immediate practices in a wider sociopolitical and economic context of global inequalities. For instance, the refugee

activists in Schwäbisch Gmünd regarded their immediate living situation in the small Swabian town as contingent on a wider landscape of unequal rights and (post)colonial continuities (see Chapter 6).

Practices of refugee support thus lead committed citizens to (re)consider their place in the wider world and to (re)situate themselves both in relation to 'the local' and to the 'world out there'. Put differently, migrant solidarity brings 'the local' and 'the global' together in an ambivalent, contested and at times contradictive relationship, demonstrating that these scales are enmeshed in complex ways. Perhaps, the contested nature of migrant solidarity indicates that people struggle to make sense of their place in an increasingly entangled world. What seems more likely, however, is that the contested forms of migrant solidarity herald new possibilities of bringing 'the global' and 'the local' together in a meaningful relationship, one that fosters a more egalitarian and inclusive way of living-together in contemporary migration societies. After all, migrant solidarity illustrates that the rootedness in a harmonious 'local community' does not necessarily require shutting off the 'world out there', as groups inciting hostile attitudes towards migrants claim. Perhaps migrant solidarity can even provide a template for a future society – one that is rooted in tangible 'local communities' yet remains open to migrating newcomers, accepting the ability of today's intensified global migration movements to shape those communities in profound ways.