Self-Organized Struggles Against Racism

Duygu Gürsel, Çağrı Kahveci

In the social sciences, interest in the antiracist self-organization of people has recently been increasing. To examine actors and their coping strategies in their struggle against racism, migration studies, racism research, and social movement research all approach the issues of identity, representation, resource mobilization, opportunity structures, and acts of citizenship from empirical and theoretical perspectives. Research on antiracist self-organization is very closely linked to the political atmosphere in our highly polarized contemporary society. The outcomes of this academic research are thus also political, because it may produce knowledge that contradicts existing stereotypes of racialized people. In Germany, antiracism has become more publicly visible in recent years in response to increasing acts of right-wing terror (e.g., NSU, Kassel, Halle, Hanau) and in the wake of solidarity with refugees, and it encompasses multiple actors and forms. In fact, people with plural subject positions constituted by different forms of racism in intersection with other mechanisms of oppression – such as migrants, people of color, and Black, Jewish, Sinti, and Roma people and their organizations – have become central actors in the struggle against racism and are (increasingly) perceived as such in the public and scientific communities. This was not always the case. In the following, we will show how the public perception of autonomous antiracist struggles has changed after years of silence and ignorance, and how it has recently found its way into research. In presenting the state of research, we will be guided by essential questions such as: What constitutes antiracist self-organization? What distinguishes it from other forms of antiracist political action? How has antiracist self-organisation been constituted as political subject over time, and how has the understanding of this category been challenged and expanded? Besides addressing those questions, we will also show how the central political position of migrants in the fight against racism extended to other racialized groups in the 1980s, how the struggle against racism has taken on various new names, and which fundamental political debates have taken place in the process.

Our purpose here is to provide an overview of the state of research. Discourses, central findings, and open questions will be presented chronologically. We will draw upon the self-representation of organizations as well as theoretical-conceptual and

empirical studies. We will also explore the central European debates and movements that have affected the situation in Germany. Finally, we will identify research gaps for future research.

Antiracist Theory Formation/Research and Practices in Germany

In contrast to the humbly increasing number of studies on racism in the 1990s breaking the silence on racism in post-war German academy (Rommelspacher 2011), Hess & Linder (1997: 18)[1] identified a lack of research on antiracism in the social sciences and in new social movements research. Although there were already studies discussing (the pitfalls of) antiracism in German-speaking countries in the early 90s (Reemtsma 1991; Haug 1992; Müller 1992; Jäger 1994), these have been criticized as making abstract general reccomendations because they were not taking the earlier and current struggles of migrants into consideration (Pühretmayer 2002: 291; see also Bojadžijev 2002: 269). Besides, these marginalized debates were dominated by an understanding of racism that focused on the topoi of migration and the asylum regime, and criticized the exploitation and discrimination of migrants. Germany's colonial history and its continuities, however – not to mention the antiracist postcolonial knowledge production of Black German women and migrant feminists – were mostly ignored.

Although the self-organized antiracist struggles of the 1990s or before were ignored or went unrecognized[2] in academic studies at the times, they played an important role in the social transformation and formation of the 2000s' new political conjuncture. This is when these struggles gained more visibility, both in the public political culture and in the academy. Terkessidis (2004) describes this new period as a fundamental change in the analysis of racism and draws attention to the works of researchers of not-German origin who took experiences of racism (Mecheril 1997) and struggles against it (Bojadžijev 2008) as starting points of their analyses (Terkessidis 2004: 88–89). However, the number of systematic empirical studies explicitly focusing on antiracist self-organizations still remains low, although this may have started to change with the research on the recent refugee movement, which has seen an academic boom.

1 Hess and Linder (1997) conducted a socio-biographical study on antiracism. However, it was limited to examining the motivations of liberal-humanist, autonomous, and feminist white antiracists who supported refugees.

2 The struggles of migrant workers and their following generations have mostly been analyzed in terms of their contributions or hindrances to integration (cf. Diehl 2002; Elwert 1982; Esser 2001; Fijalkowski/Gillmeister 1997; Heckmann 1992; Lehmann 2001).

While some use the label »antiracism« without hesitation, there are also reservations about using it to explain migrants' social struggles. Bojadžijev (2008), for example, arguing from the perspective of the autonomy of migration, defines the social struggles of migrants in the 1960s and 70s more modestly – because they were not explicitly directed against racism – and at the same time more comprehensively – because they were directed against a capitalist structure (2008: 94). From a critical pedagogical perspective, Mecheril and Melter (2010) argue for replacing the signifier »antiracism« with »racism critique,« because the former runs the risk of reproducing the logic of racism through essentialization (assumption of unitary racialized subjects), reductionism (simple explanations and solutions), and moralism (2010: 170–173). Being aware of these problems, we will explore the literature on struggles both explicitly or implicitly directed against racism and on the conflicts that emerge from the disputed categorization of self-organized antiracism. In this contribution, we use the concept of struggle (of racialized subjects) as an umbrella category which covers both social struggles which implicitly fight racism and self-organizations which explicitly fight racism. It also helps us to draw attention to how these categories sometimes overlap.

We have decided to orient ourselves according to a periodization of these struggles based on the political conjuncture. By focusing on four periods shaped by pre-reunification, reunification, post-citizenship reform and post-NSU[3], we will introduce the central debates and contributions on self-organized antiracism mostly as they emerged from political contexts and actors.

Pre-reunification: From Social Struggles to the Forerunner of Self-Organizations

The imagination of »Stunde Null« in post-war Germany[4] dominated the pre-reunification period and created a blind spot in national historiography and racism research. This »Zero Hour« narrative has been challenged through the struggles of different racialized people. These struggles can be divided into two periods, with 1973, when the so-called Gastarbeiter/guestworker recruitments ended[5], a turning point

3 We employ and expand the periodization of the political scientist Petra Rostock (2014). She discusses the history of the antiracist movement in three periods: pre-reunification, reunification, and post-1998. The first is characterized by social struggles, the second by conflicts with white antiracists, the third is the most differentiated one. We add to this a fourth period starting with the uncovering of the NSU murders.

4 »Zero Hour« stands for the social construction of racism as something which happened »back then« or »back there« that suddenly disappeared after the Nazi regime fell in 1945.

5 West Germany had signed recruitment agreements for migrant workers from Italy (1955), Spain (1960), Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), South Korea (1963), Portugal

both in the organization of migration and racism, and also in the struggles against it (Bojadžijev 2008). In the pre-1973 period, we will focus on the literature examining the anti-colonial struggles/exile politics, the relation to the student movement, trade unions, and the social struggles of migrant workers. Post-1973, we will explore the literature on the predecessors of the 1990s' self-organizations, migrant feminists, second-generation migrants, Black (or Afro-)Germans, Roma, and Sinti. Because of the different political conjuncture of the GDR, we will introduce the struggles of migrants there GDR separately, but since they concerned the social struggles of migrant workers they can also be categorized under the first period.

Anti-colonial and Social Struggles

In the past decade, the early anti-colonial struggles and the solidarity that played an essential role in forming the new left in the 1960s (Weitbrecht 2012) have been re-examined and revised from a new perspective, emphasizing the role of foreign students. Historians Quinn Slobodian (2012) and Nils Seibert (2008) both challenged the commonsense idea that these solidarities in Germany were imported from the United States, an abstract copy of an international youth movement. These scholars' archival research draws attention to the forgotten but essential role of foreign students[6] from Africa and Asia at German universities. They organized demonstrations, criticized West German students' apolitical donation drives, and instead pushed them to take a political stand in solidarity with anti-colonial struggles and condemn the German state's position. The leading figure of the student movement, Rudi Dutschke, famously described the 1964 anti-Tschombé demonstration as the beginning of their cultural revolution. And according to these studies, it was dissident foreign students, who were also coming from recruitment countries, who built a bridge between the German student movement, trade unions, and the social struggles of migrant workers (ibid.).

Like in France, migrant workers were not allowed to be politically active, which led to the emergence of many other forms of organizations, such as sports clubs, parents' associations, cultural and religious organizations which substituted the function of political organizations. Migration studies on West Germany (FRG) have long ignored migrants' struggles against the living and working conditions caused

(1964), Tunisia (1965), and Yugoslavia (1968). A so-called guest-worker program was planned to recruit temporary migrant workers, but many of them stayed after recruitment ended in 1973. Migration after 1973 was initially shaped by the family reunification of these migrant workers.

6 In the first half of the 1960s, 8 % percent of the students at German universities were foreign (Slobodian 2012: 28).

by racism[7] (Bojadžijev 2008: 82–84). Besides grey literature that partly documents these struggles, mainly from German leftist groups' perspectives,[8] it is probably Anglophone literature that first drew attention to the political activity of migrant workers. Mark Miller (1981) defined foreign workers as »an emerging political force« in 1981. Stephen Castles (1984) argued that the attitude of the left towards the struggles of immigrants were contradictory: whereas the leaders of the student movement initially imagined migrant workers as a picture-perfect proletaria under the abstract slogans of international solidarity and unity of the working class, migrants' self-protection mechanisms against racism have been interpreted as backward and reactionary by the majority of leftist groups.

Manuela Bojadžijev's *Die windige Internationale. Rassismus und Kämpfe der Migration* (2008) is one of the first monographs which analyzes struggles of migration in Germany exclusively as antiracist practices. Basing her work on her dissertation in political science, Bojadžijev focuses on the social struggles of migrants in the 1960s and 70s in West Germany. She emphasizes that these migrants did not articulate these struggles as antiracist practices. Because the exploitation and oppression which they were experiencing on the borders, in the factories, on the housing market etc. can not be explained only by an analysis of racism, but it requires also an analysis of the capitalist society (ibid.: 94–95). For her analysis, it is crucial to focus on the social struggles against racist conditions,[9] not on the racialized subjects. By social struggles, she means autonomous ways of organizing migration, legalization practices, and wildcat strikes, as well as daily struggles such as self-organized community centers and housing protests (ibid.: 94–228). Her analysis relies on the approach of autonomy of migration which emphasizes the subjective dimension of migration (Moulier Boutang 1993).

Historian Simon Goeke (2020) describes all of these struggles as a social movement, also relying on the approach of autonomy of migration. Through the material he collected in trade union, movement, and migration archives, he invites us to

7 For an exploration of the concept of migrant struggle in the collaborative project of collective writing, see the keyword »struggle« in De Genova/Tazzioli (2021): 14–26.

8 Unfortunately, documentation of these struggles from a migrant perspective does not exist to this extent. One possible reason has been that migrant organizations did not document these because of the political ban, the threat of losing their residence permit, or the surveillance of home country government. Another reason has been the non-organized and invisible character of everyday struggles. Some archives have been trying to fill this gap by collecting personal photos, objects, and documents and by recording oral histories of this period (DOMiD – Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany, the open archive at FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum etc.)

9 In her article »Anti-racism as method,« Bojadžijev (2020) further develops her thesis on taking struggles against racism as the methodological starting point to analyze racism.

see »the experiences of migrants and Germans in common struggles – internationalist protests, factory struggles, mobilization against discrimination and capitalist state planning – as an important starting point for later antiracist political practice« (Goeke 2020: 351, own translation). Goeke identifies a difference between these struggles: whereas the factory and housing struggles initiated by or participated in by migrants were built upon asserting common interests, struggles like the one over child allowance were more based on solidarity between the affected people and their supporters (»Betroffene und Unterstützende,« ibid.: 357).

Some works focus on specific forms of social struggles during this period; wildcat strikes/labor activism (Birke 2007, Toksöz 1991; Mattes 2005; Engelschall 2005; Miller 2013), struggles for legalization (Karakayalı 2008; Berner/Choi 2006), tenants' strike and squattings (Karakayalı 2000; Schubenz et al. 2018; Frankfurter Archiv der Revolte et al. 2020), or child allowance protests (Stokes 2019). These social struggles differentiate themselves from the upcoming early self-organizations by not explicitly fighting against racism but against working and living conditions shaped by racism and other oppression and exploitation mechanisms.

Early Self-Organizations

The end of guest-worker recruitment in 1973 marked a new phase for the struggles of migrants. Bojadžijev (2008) argues that the earlier struggles of migrants were recuperated through the new organization of the migration regime and the integration imperative[10] (2008: 228–245). Already in the 1980s, migrant women and youth, both explicit targets of anti-migration policies and violence,[11] especially started to orga-

10 Recuperation describes the process by which politically radical ideas are taken, assimilated, appropriated, and interpreted into a benign or more socially traditional perspective through the dominant mainstream discourses. Thus, the meaning of these radical ideas and the message they contain are completely changed in this process. The genealogy of the integration discourse is a good example of how the »migrant struggle« and the demands for social inclusion of migrant communities have been reinterpreted by the state in a different framework since the late 1970s. Migrant communities and radical leftist groups used the concept of integration in the 1960s and 1970s to demand social rights and political participation, the right to stay, the provision of language courses and decent housing etc. Basically, it marks the inclusion of migrants based on collective rights and social entitlements. In the late 1970s, the state reorganized integration as an imperative of the individual (disciplinary) practices that immigrants had to undertake in order to integrate into German society.

11 The new phase is shaped by the Fordist crisis, migrant workers leaving the factories, and family reunification, through which a newer group of migrants arrive –family migrants whose precarious residence permits were bound to their partners and their children who were seen as temporary and marginalized in the education system through foreigners' classes. This situation intensified with a rise in asylum seekers, the 1982 election of a new conservative government (which denied that Germany was a migration country and even introduced a return

nize themselves against racism. Their practices also shaped the struggles and discussions of the 90s. According to Bojadžijev, the following two struggles marked the new type of political migrant »self-organization« that would define 90s' antiracism: migrant feminists' critique of German feminists and migrant groups turning away from exile politics and focusing on antiracist politics (2008: 253). The self-organization of other racialized subjects, such as Roma, Sinti, and Black Germans also traces back to this period. These organizations generally differentiate themselves from previous social struggles in terms of their explicit focus on (anti)racism, identity, self-empowerment/defense, and self-determination.

Although migrant women were already involved in many social struggles, and even led factory strikes such as the Pierburg Neuss, in which migrant women »revolutionized wages« by struggling successfully against wage discrimination in the FRG for the first time (Miller 2008: 160; Braeg 2012), squatted flats (Schubenz et al. 2018), fought for their right to stay (Berner/Choi 2006), organized themselves in associations (Erdem 2003), and wrote poetry against racism (Ertan 2020)[12], their struggles remained invisible in the public culture. They felt treated derogatorily, unequal, and discriminated against in their relationship to the white West-German women's movement[13] (Schwenken 2000: 699). They encountered each other mainly in social work, where migrant women mostly were clients (ibid.).[14] In this context, migrant women[15] started to intervene and criticize the ignorant, paternalistic, and eurocentric attitude of the white West German feminist movement (s). Already in the early 80s, these critiques started to be published in social work journals such as »Informationsdienst zur Ausländerarbeit« (Apostolidou 1980; Camlikbeli 1984; Gültekin 1986; Kalpaka/Räthzel 1985). The »first common women congress of foreign and German women,« which took place 23–25 March 1984 in Frankfurt a.M., has been regarded as the origin of the debates on racism in the German women's movements, and as an important reference point in the attempt to form a common struggle against racism and sexism (Arbeitsgruppe Frauenkongreß 1984).

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program for so-called guest-workers and their families), and the rise of cultural racism and neo-Nazi violence (Chin 2007).

12 Semra Ertan came to Hamburg as the daughter of a »guest-worker« family in 1972. She wrote over 350 poems (Ertan 2020). In 1982, she set herself on fire in protest against racism.

13 Ilse Lenz draws attention to the heterogeneity of the white west German women's movements, which represented different feminist standpoints (2008: 708).

14 In the post-1973 period, the relationship between leftist groups and migrants began to change into a pedagogical one, under the label of »Ausländerarbeit«/»Ausländerpädagogik,« ignoring the subjectivity/agency of the latter. Through this process, migrant women were either constructed as ultimate victims or completely ignored, especially by the white West German women's movement(s).

15 Migrant women who were themselves social workers or studying did not fit into the victim image and were therefore considered exceptions.

Anti-migration policies that threatened migrant youth with deportation[16] led to the first demonstrations of Turkish migrants against their legal situation in the FRG, signalizing a shift from exile politics to migration/antiracist politics (Gitmez/Wilpert 1987; Özcan 1992). The rise of neo-nazi attacks against migrants has been regarded as another catalysator for migrant self-organizations to focus on antiracist politics. Köxüz, a migrant self-organization, described the murder of Ramazan Avci, a young Turkish migrant man, by neo-Nazis in 1985 Hamburg and the following spontaneous mobilization of different migrant groups as kickstarting the migrant movement (Köxüz 1997: 10–11). In response to the rising neo-Nazi violence, multiethnic youth gangs (of second-generation migrants) for self-defense were founded in metropolises. This phenomenon was initially framed as a dangerous consequence of the failed integration of migrant children and their destructive violence in the mainstream media and the academy (Tertilt 1996; critically Ronneberger et al. 1999). Farin's and Seidel-Pielen's book (1991) instead paints a heterogeneous picture of multiethnic youth gangs. It shows how marginalized youth with a »migration background« (together with some white German youth) organized in youth gangs against racial discrimination, exclusion and social marginalization.

The self-organization of Black German women made another essential contribution to addressing racism regarding the women's movement (Räthzel 2008; Lenz 2008), and for a general discussion on racism (Kaynar/Suda 2002: 171). Audre Lorde, an Afro-Caribbean American feminist and poet who came to Freie Universität Berlin as a guest lecturer in 1984, was an essential inspiring figure[17] in bringing Black German women together out of isolation.[18] One of the products of this affective attachment (Florvil 2013, 2020), the anthology »Showing our Colors. Afro-German Women Speak Out« (Ayim et al. 1986) collected the personal experiences of Afro-German women from 16 to 70 on racism and on growing up during the Kaiserreich, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, the Post-war occupation, and East and West Germany in different formats such as poetry or memoir.

16 The infamous »Lummer-Erlass« aimed to deport the children of migrants who could prove neither a job nor a training position. This led to a 1981 demonstration with 15,000 Berliners protesting under the slogan »We are not temporary people« *(Wir sind keine befristeten Menschen)*, and after this pressure, the decree was defused (Kantemir 1985). Heinrich Lummer (CDU) was the senator of internal affairs between 1981 and 1986 in Berlin. His restrictive policies against »foreigner« played a forerunner role for other federal states (Kantemir 1985; Lanz 2007: 105).

17 Fatima El-Tayeb (2011) finds the representation of Lorde as the »mother« of Afro-German movement problematic because it privileges African American experiences.

18 There are several autobiographical texts on the theme of isolation; being the only Black person in white surroundings; and on the importance of Audre Lorde how she brought them together.

The catalyzing impact of this feminist and diasporic book project for the Black German movement has been examined in detail by historian Tiffany Florvil (2013).[19] She showed that this project led to the networking of Black Germans in Germany (reading groups/events engendered the founding of city branches of still-existing Black German organisations) and establishing transnational connections with the Black diaspora. It also created a tradition of Afro-German intellectual activism, which continued with several other publications: magazines of Black self-organizations *(afro look*, *Afrekere)*, poetry volumes, and books (ibid.: 138). Writing about personal experiences, emotions, and identity has emerged as a strong empowering tool to become visible, to challenge the mythos of white homogenous national identity, and »to write themselves into a postwar German public culture that denied their existence« (ibid.: 17). On the one hand, this tool was not all that different than the feminist movement's definition of the personal as political or the politics of recognition (Florvil 2013: 137; see also Eggers 2007[20]). On the other hand, it activated new dynamics in challenging the two racial denial narratives in the FRG during this period: »Germany is not a migration country« and »There is no racism in Germany« (Wiedenroth-Coulibaly/Zinflou 2004: 135; Florvil 2013). Two important Black self-organizations that still exist today, Adefra[21] and ISD,[22] were also founded in this period.

Although the emergence of the civil rights movement of Sinti and Roma in Germany has also been dated back to this period,[23] research on these early struggles still largely remains missing from both national historiography and social science research, which has mainly focused on antigypsyism (Klein 2016).[24] Romani Rose, the president of the central committee of Sinti and Roma, which was founded right after the 1982 recognition of the genocide against Sinti and Roma (also known as the Porajmos), already published a book on the emergence of this civil rights movement and racism five years later (Rose 1987). Historical and social science studies on this topic, however, only emerged much later (Matras 1998; Jonuz 2009).

Using a theory of recognition perspective, historian Anne Klein (2016) reconstructs different forms of protest and resistance by Roma activists to gain participation, visibility, and recognition between 1950 and 1983. The year 1979 emerges

19 In 2020, Florvil published her dissertation, titled »Mobilizing Black Germany,« in which she traces the pioneering role of these queer and straight women in the formation of the Black German movement using a variety of archival materials and interdisciplinary methods.

20 In this article, Eggers (2007) employs Frigga Haug's method of collective »Erinnerungsarbeit« to enrich critical theory with diverse experiences.

21 For more information, see: www.adefra.com/

22 For more information, see: https://isdonline.de/

23 According to the central committee of Sinti and Roma, their civil rights movement started with the memorial rally at the former concentration camp Bergen-Belsen in 1979.

24 See the anthology edited by Krahl & Meichsner (2016) for texts by Rom_nja activists.

as a turning point. That year, twelve people, three of them Roma who survived the Holocaust, started a hunger strike in the former concentration camp Dachau for »the right to live equally as a citizen without discrimination and fear« (Rose 1986: 190). This strike was very influential, gaining the movement public visibility and prominent support. With the support of the Society for Threatened Peoples Germany, a crucial civil society partner, they organized the first memorial rally at the former concentration camp Bergen-Belsen in 1979. These struggles for recognition were then institutionalized through the recognition of the genocide against Sinti and Roma in 1982. Klein (2016) argues that the emancipation movement of Roma and Sinti has succeeded in connecting individual and collective interests with their struggle for recognition, referring to Fraser & Honneth (2003: 259), and adds that Roma activists were already in 1979 seen as the »Avantgarde of a socio-cultural transformation« (Rabe 1979: 8, cited in Klein 2016: 295). Through the end of the 1980s, a new form of struggle emerged: the right to stay for Roma and Sinti from south-east Europe.

Migrant Struggles in the GDR

The GDR officially declared itself an antiracist state. The ambivalences of this status and the real existence of racism[25] have been explored in several studies and exhibitions (Behrends/Potrous 2005; Slobodian 2015; Mende 2013; the recent exhibition »1 Million Roses for Angela Davis« at Dresden's Kunsthalle im Lipsiusbau[26]). In migration studies, dominated as they are by migration in West Germany, migration in the GDR[27] has been mostly ignored or regarded as a side issue (Goel 2013). Besides, the fact that self-organization was not allowed in the GDR makes the search for literature on self-organized antiracism there quite tricky. Most of the studies that mention or deal with strategies adopted by migrant workers to struggle against racism and exploitation in East Germany appear to use the concept *Eigensinn* (obstinacy[28]). Although this concept is not theoretically defined in most

25 The experiences of racism and racist violence were neither reported, nor part of a public debate (Mende 2013: 160).

26 For more information, see: https://lipsiusbau.skd.museum/ausstellungen/1-million-rosen-fuer-angela-davis/

27 There were migrant workers from socialist »brother countries,« first in small numbers from Europe (Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria between the 1960s and mid-70s), and then from non-European countries; Algeria (1974), Kuba (1978), Mozambique (1979), and Vietnam (1980). Especially in the second half of the 80s, the number of migrant workers from the latter two countries increased. There were also international students living in the GDR. For a periodization of migration in GDR, see Mende 2013.

28 This translation does not give the full meaning. It has been described »as putting up with political power to the degree that one must, while pursuing one's own ends to the degree that one can« (Eidson 2003: 1), with a warning against equating it with resistance (Lindenberger

of these studies, it seems to mainly come from the historian Alf Lüdtke[29] (Mende 2013), who used it in the context of everyday life in the GDR (Kamińska/Vondráček 2014). It is probably no surprise that initial widely received works on racism (which used to be called *Fremdenfeindlichkeit*, literally meaning opposition to strangers) and the everyday life of migrant workers in the GDR were published in relation to the project group »Herrschaft und Eigensinn« at ZZF Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (Behrends et al. 2003; Behrends/Poutrus 2005; Müller/Poutrus 2005).

Although a systematic monograph is still lacking, there are articles on *Eigensinn* and the resistance of migrant groups, mostly according to their nationalities: for Vietnamese workers (Dennis 2005; Nguyen 2020), for Algerian workers (Zwengel 2011), for Mozambican workers (Mende 2013), and for a general overview (Gerbing 2011; Poutrus 2020). Although migrants in the GDR were under strict surveillance and threatened with deportation if they protested, they did protest to improve working conditions (Dennis 2005: 35; Mende 2010: 87–97; Uladh 2005: 55–56) and transformed their migrant hostels into spaces of solidarity and creativity (Miguele 2005: 817).

In recent years, there have been more and more texts, documentations, and exhibitions in which the protagonists of these self-organizations speak for themselves and through which their descendants can exchange experiences (Lierke et al. 2020; Nguyen 2020), especially on the occasion of the reunification anniversary and after calls for a new memory culture (for a project which focused on the perspectives of migrants from East Germany, see the web documentary *Minds of their own: Migrants in the GDR*[30]; for multidirectional memory[31], see Lierke/Perinelli 2020; for an intersectional movement history from East and West, see Piesche 2020).

1999). This concept has been also used to describe the everyday resistance of migrants in West-Germany, instead of »autonomy« (Benz/Schwenken 2005), with reference to Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt (1993).

29 Lüdtke originally used this concept to make sense of both the absence of working-class resistance after the Nazis came into power and the stability of the Nazi regime (Lüdtke 1993, 1995)

30 The filmmakers initially planned to call this documentary (https://bruderland.de/) »Aufbegehren im Bruderland« (Revolt in the Bruderland), but the protagonists said »we cannot find ourselves in this concept, it does not fit to us, we did not revolt.« https://www.neues-deutschland.de/artikel/1121436.ddr-eigensinn-statt-aufbegehren.html

31 With the concept of multidirectional memory, Rothberg (2009) argues that the collective stories of violence and the collective memories of marginalised groups that come into the public sphere provide material and symbolic resources for other groups to bring their own demands for recognition and justice into the public sphere. Contrary to the common perception that memories are seen as competing, Rothberg argues that memory works efficiently through negotiation, cross-referencing and borrowing.

Reunification Period: Self-Organizations and Confrontation With White German Left-Wing Groups

> »›Who is speaking for whom?‹ has been a central question for the newly forming social movements of migrants, Black Germans, and Jewish Germans in the 1990s. The subject of these movements has built itself in confrontation with the German left, anti-racist movement and/or women's movement.« (Erel 2007: 147)

The emergence of antiracist self-organizations has been mostly dated to this period of reunification. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the following German reunification process had serious immediate and long-term consequences for racialized people on both sides of the wall.[32] However, as we introduced in the former section, many scholars also drew attention to these self-organizations' early formations in the 1980s. What makes the reunification period a new chapter for antiracist movements in Germany is on the one hand due to the emergence of more militant and assertive forms of antiracist self-organization[33] and the formation of white leftist antiracist groups on the other (Rostock 2014: 146). Erel (2007: 147) has highlighted the role of confrontation between these groups and the question of representation in defining this period. Hess & Linder (1997) describes this time as »orientation in contradictions.« Kalpaka & Räthzel argue that the reason behind the heightened confrontation between migrants and white German leftist groups was that the latter's paternalistic, moral antiracism did not respect or recognize the self-organization of migrants (1990: 80).

Besides, the racialized division of labor between the German left and migrants was reproducing the division of *us* Germans and *them* migrants by assigning migrants physical activities such as authentic catering, cultural entertainment, and bravery, and mental activities such as the theorization of racism or intellectual activities to German activists (Arranca 1994; Köxüz 1997; Räthzel 2012: 196). However,

32 Accompanied by the rise of nationalist discourse and the mainstream media's stigmatization of migrants and refugees, racist violence also intensified, with increased street attacks and pogroms in Hoyerswerda (1991), Mannheim-Schönau (1992), Rostock-Lichtenhagen (1992), Mölln (1992), and Solingen (1993). In addition, migrant workers from East Germany suddenly lost their jobs and residence permits, and were illegalized. Only in 1997 it was possible to legalize their residence (Schüle 2002).

33 As the violence intensified and increased, migrants felt more and more unprotected by the state. Self-defense thus gained legitimacy for self-organizations and was supported by the first generation (Kaynar/Suda 2002: 173). Different antiracist self-organizations performed (symbolic) acts of armed self-defense (Schwenken 2006: 139–140; Kahveci 2016: 165–167).

the migrant self-organizations' critique did not immediately lead to a confrontation with the white German left's paternalistic attitude. Instead, the latter mainly downgraded migrant antiracism to bare identity politics (Rostock 2014). In this period, we will focus on the migrant Antifa, feminists of color, and the emergence of two forms of struggle after the defeat of the antiracist movement: refugee struggles and cultural production as political resistance.

Coarticulation of Antiracism and Antifascism

Although the self-organized antiracist migrant groups of this period, especially Antifa Gençlik, Köxüz, Café Morgenland, and Femigra,[34] are mentioned in several publications, and there is grey literature including their texts/journals, a systematic study and categorization of these groups is unfortunately still largely lacking. Bojadžijev (2008) refers to these groups as self-organizations of second-generation migrants who focused on their life in Germany instead of exile politics. Odugbesan/Schwiertz (2018) highlight that these organizations were shaped by empowerment and self-defense, similarly to the Black Power movement in the United States. Antifa Gençlik (Anti-Fascist Youth) was founded in 1988 by migrant youth as a self-defense organization against fascism and racism. It tried to politicize the multi-ethnic youth gangs that had emerged in the big cities in the 1980s. Its militant rhetoric and political practice (e.g. anti-fascist squadism, i.e. physical confrontations with the right) gained in popularity among migrant youth. It was well anchored in West Berlin's Antifa scene, but at the same time criticized the latter's paternalistic and ignorant attitude. The author collective ak wantok (2014) later published the theoretical foundations and political activities of Antifa Gençlik based on articles, discussion papers, and interviews published between 1988 and 1994. Based on a group discussion with Antifa Gençlik activists, Kahveci reconstructs the history of their political mobilizations in the 80s and early 90s, shows the complex and heterogeneous character of migrant activism from a social movement literature framework, and refers to the symbolic and cultural meaning of the autonomous organization of migrants, but also its contradictions and pitfalls (2016). Some articles discuss the case[35] that led to the group's dissolution from different perspectives (Café Morgenland und Berliner MigrantInnen 1995; Geronimo 1997; Kaynar/Suda 2002: 172–174) or provide interviews on the history of Antifa Gençlik and its influence (Arranca 1994; Türkmen 2020).

34 Although we will explore Femigra in the next section, it is important to mention that they also worked with other migrant groups such as Café Morgenland (Rostock 2014).

35 G. Kaindl, a neo-Nazi functionary of the German League for the People and the Homeland, was killed in 1992 during a meeting in Neukölln, after which Antifa Gençlik activists were criminalized.

To our knowledge, there unfortunately is no systematic study of groups such as Café Morgenland or Köxüz. Café Morgenland[36] was founded by migrants in 1991 in Frankfurt in reaction to the increasing racist violence after reunification. Their understanding of racism was based on Auschwitz as the beginning of German racism, which they believe persisted in German left-wing structures (Kaynar/Suda 2002: 180). They started prioritizing confrontation with the German left, which was then criticized by Köxüz, which focused more on migrant communities (Köxüz et al. 2000). Köxüz[37] was founded in 1995 in Hamburg as a newspaper collective[38] after the defeat of the migrant movement[39] and distanced itself from the emerging apolitical and collaborative tendencies of migrant communities (ibid.: 181). Despite the valuable and informative content of their contributions, they couldn't maintain the discussion on self-organization and the search for alliances (ibid.: 182). Both groups used the concept of migrant to refer to racialized people in Germany; for Café Morgenland that was a compromise, for Köxüz it was a social category that also included Sinti and Roma, Jewish people, and refugees.

Attempts to form a continuous nationwide alliance among migrant self-organizations have mostly failed due to their different positions on cooperation with white leftists, sexism, identity, and antisemitism (Kaynar/Suda 2002: 181). Exceptions to this were the short alliances between different groups and nationwide meetings of antiracist self-organizations of women, which took place continuously (ibid.).[40]

Feminists of Color

As already mentioned, feminists of color's criticism of the white feminist movement goes back to the 1980s. However, it only found resonance in the white feminist movement and feminist studies in the early 90s. The 1990 publication of the volume on »geteilter Feminismus« (divided/shared feminism) in the journal *Beiträge zur feministischen Theorie und Praxis* (Nr. 27) is especially worth mentioning here. Many scholars

36 For more information, see: : https://cafemorgenland.home.blog/

37 For their self-definition, see: https://kxzarchiv.wordpress.com/zum-selbstverstaendnis-von-koexuez/

38 Some issues are available here: https://kxzarchiv.wordpress.com/2016/09/

39 Köxüz highlights the pogrom in Solingen and the following mobilization as the peak and at the same time beginning of the fall of the migrant movement that emerged in the mid-80s (Köxüz 1997, Nr. 7)

40 Antiracist self-organizations of women do not necessarily fit into the antiracist movement's male-dominated narrative. Helen Schwenken argues that Kanak Attak's typology of 1990s migrant organizations as migrant lobbying, self-organization, and Kanak Chikeria (Bojadžijev/Tsianos 2000: 36) falls short in explaining migrant women's self-organizations (Schwenken 2000: 143). According to her findings, relationships between these types are more complex; lobbyists do not necessarily make less radical demands, and Chiceria, by which she means migrant intellectuals, do not necessarily think any success is accidental (ibid.).

refer to this publication as the first time feminists of color's critique became visible in an important medium of the second-wave women's movement in Germany. (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 1996: 166; Lutz 1999: 139; Eichhorn 1992: 96). However, after white mainstream feminists would not face with their critiques at a feminist conference in 1990, the representatives of migrant, Jewish, and Black women's initiatives declared any cooperation with white feminists to be impossible due to the latter's ignorance[41] (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 1996; Walgenbach 2007; Rostock 2014) and started to organize their own conferences (Kaynar/Suda 2002: 174–179; Schwenken 2008: 904; Rostock 2014).

These conferences opened spaces to discuss differences, develop common perspectives, and discuss common self-definitions, such as the political category of Black (Ayim/Prasad 1992). Kaynar and Suda (2012) briefly introduce the self-organizations that organized and participated in these congresses; Femigra, Adefra, De Colores, and Ak Wi(e)dersprache. Whereas the conferences' key themes, starting with disassociating from the white women's movement, moved from self-definition, to the legal situation and cultural production, discussing the »politics of identities« was constant (ibid.: 178). The last conference in this tradition, also attended by white women, exposed the difficulties of building alliances (Ani 1999).

Femigra was founded in 1991 in Frankfurt a.M. by a group of intellectual migrant women influenced by the writings of Black feminists and the formation of the Black German movement.[42] Initially they identified themselves as Black as a political category, similarly to the UK's political identity debates in antiracist politics. However, after joining the fifth Congress of Black Women in 1991,[43] they realized that the category of »Black« did not grasp their specific experiences as migrants. Their manifesto-like text »Wir, die Seiltänzerinnen Politische Strategien von Migrantinnen gegen Ethnisierung und Assimilation« (Femigra 1994)[44] introduces the political category of »migrant« to describe their political position against their hitherto

41 The way some white women and lesbian movements dealt with has been criticized. Whereas initially white (lesbian) women reacted with guilt and defense to these critiques, later a new form of speech or positioning developed that was widespread at every political women/lesbian plenum till the mid-90s: »me as a white, Christian-socialized, abled lesbian from a middle class background …«. This ritual has been criticized as leading to (self-)acquittal ritual instead of further reflection, critique, and transformation (Leidinger 2010: 25–28). Another problem was the division of labor in the feminist movement: antiracism was seen as the natural working field of racialized women, whereas white women were engaged in other fields.

42 Unfortunately, the group did not have a website.

43 The fifth Congress of Black Women which took place in Germany in 1991, has also been regarded as important to the reception of this critique (Eichhorn 1992: 96).

44 Text is available online: https://www.nadir.org/nadir/archiv/Feminismus/GenderKiller/gender_5.html.

dominant interpellation as foreigners. The authors draw on discourse-theory, deconstructivism, and postcolonialism to describe the specific dimensions of racism in Germany.

Employing a sociology of knowledge approach to analyze grey literature from the political movement context and expert interviews with former Femigra members, Rostock (2014)[45] discusses their positioning as migrant women. She highlights the role of the historical-social context as an important factor in the political strategies of self-organizations. Femigra was active in the 90s, during the violent national identity-building process based on an imagination of an ethnically ›pure‹ Germany in the aftermath of reunification. In this context in which migrants were experiencing massive racism and were not recognized as equal and political subjects, Rostock argues their self-positioning as migrant women was necessary to be heard and become visible as political subjects and cannot be categorized as identity politics as such. She gives also examples of Femigra's interventions, in which they manage to be recognized as political subjects in the first step of their political action, so that in their second step they could overcome their counter-identity and break the binary between self and other by articulating their demands for political and socio-economic rights (ibid.).

Another group that was active at these conferences was Adefra, which was founded by Black German women as early as 1986, parallel to the publication of the book *Showing Our Colors*, and still exists. Several publications have been written on Adefra, either by scholars or the intellectual activists associated with the group (Piesche 2012; Eggers/Mohamed 2014; Florvil 2013). Analyzing its journal *Afrekete*, Florvil discusses how Adefra achieved visibility and solidarity through constituting a feminist and queer Black diasporic project, as writing and the journal cultivated female bonds that shaped both women's identities and politics, as well as transnational and diasporic connections (2013: 183–242). Adefra's explicit feminist agenda and strong lesbian presence, and their strong presence in networks and platforms on antiracism, have led to some unresolved tensions within the Black German Movement (El-Tayeb 2011: 71).

The Defeat of the Antiracist Movement?

Though the antiracist feminist self-organizations of migrants discussed above prove an exception, some have claimed that the antiracist movement was generally defeated after the de-facto abolishment of the right to asylum in 1993[46] (Bojadžijev 2002: 270; Köxüz 1997). The prominent groups either disintegrated or could no

45 Rostock (2014) also discusses the group Kanak Attak in her dissertation.

46 Faced with an increased number of asylum seekers, the CDU-CSU-FDP coalition continued an anti-asylum campaign (thereby legitimizing racism and racist violence), which led to the

longer draw public attention. We think that the antiracist movement only experienced a decline; it had not disappeared. A new cycle of political mobilization had begun and two new areas of self-organization emerged: refugee organizations and cultural production as political resistance.

The restrictive regulations resulting from the asylum abolition saw refugee self-organizations resist agaist deportations in the middle of the struggle against racism. The right to stay also been articulated before: Roma whose asylum applications were denied at the end of 1980s, for instance, protested deportations with actions such as marches, occupations, and church asylums (Brenner 2000).[47] In 1994, the first explicit refugee organization in which mainly African refugees were represented, The Voice, was founded in Mühlhausen, an eastern German city (Igbinoba/Zülch 2005; Ebua 2007; Jakob 2016). They focused on campaigning against isolation, deportation, and the *Residenzpflicht* (the requirement of a mandatory residence).

Some scholars have used a broader understanding of political activity to show that, as early-90s antiracist politics got into a crisis, cultural production emerged more and more as a form of struggle, resistance, and empowerment. Historian Rita Chin claims that »the ideological work of writing and representing alternative conceptions of the nation … was absolutely crucial for initiating critical dialogue on the place of labor migrants in postwar German society« (cited in Goeke 2014: 167). Fatima El-Tayeb analyzes the hip-hop community as a site of political activism for racialized young people who could not find themselves in antiracist groups (2011: 32–34). She also examines the use of poetry and autobiography to create a counter-memory discourse »challenging the amnesia erasing their presence in the nation« (ibid.: 49). Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2003) also draws attention to how minority women question homogenous »German« culture and hegemonic representation with their cultural production and textual intervention to create a self-determined representation politics.

The literature mainly explains the emergence of self-organized groups during reunification by the conjuncture of racist oppression (Kaynar/Suda 2002: 167). However, that view reduces the politics of these groups to a one-sided reaction against racism (ibid.: 167). This narrative sees the actors' motivation for their actions as a refusal and frames the actors' subjectivity as born out of a lack: a lack of respect,

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de-facto abolition of the right to asylum in 1993 (Müller 1995; Räthzel 1997; Morgenstern 2002). The SPD, which was in opposition, agreed.

47 Daniel Josten's dissertation on migrant self-organizations (2012) summarizes the historical protest actions of Roma since the 1990s (»Bettlermarsch« in 1990; camping in front of the Düsseldorf Landtag in 1991; occupation of the Dachau concentration camp memorial in 1991), yet without analytically embedding them in the political discourse on migration.

recognition, diversity, social rights etc. Some scholars criticized this perspective because it saw the subjectivity of actors as fixed. Castro Varela (2007) focused on the utopias of second-generation migrant women and how their subjectivity took on a dynamic character beyond their immigration rights and predetermined subjectivities. By looking at the emotional and affective dynamics within and outside these groups, Florvil (on the Black German Movement: 2013, 2020) and Kahveci (on the self-organization of second-generation Turkish immigrants: 2016) have broadened the perspective on self-organized antiracism.

Post-citizenship Reform

After 16 years of a conservative government led by Chancellor Kohl (CDU-CSU-FDP), a Social Democrat-Green coalition reached a victory in 1998, promising liberal citizenship reform.[48] Though it was eventually passed with some restrictions, this reform represented a paradigm shift from the traditionally ethnic conception of nationhood to a civic identity and the acknowledgment of Germany's de-facto status as an immigration country (Triadafilopoulos 2012). This development opened a discursive space for racialized people in Germany, as they could no longer be categorically treated as outsiders. Their heterogeneity and their struggles started to become more publicly visible.[49] In this period, self-organization continued in refugee self-organizations. Kanak Attak challenged the category of self-organization by focusing less on themselves and more on their struggles. Lastly, the term people of color expanded the understanding of this category by attempting to unite racialized people who experienced different forms of racism under one empowering self-description.

Refugee Self-Organizations and the Struggles of Undocumented Migrants

The refugee self-organisations which started to emerge in the mid-1990s continued to grow in this period, for example Karawane für die Rechte der Flüchtlinge und MigrantInnen[50] (1998), Flüchtlingsinitiative Brandenburg[51] (1998), and Women in

48 However, the conservatives' populist campaign of »Yes to integration, no to dual citizenship« led to the second migration compromise post-reunification: citizenship reform without dual citizenship.

49 Yet this liberalization of the migration discourse was also accompanied by neoliberal measures, attacks on the welfare system, rising precarization, anti-muslim racism, Europeanization and securitzation of the migration regime, and the integration imperatives.

50 For more information, see: http://thecaravan.org/

51 For more information, see: https://www.fluechtlingsrat-brandenburg.de/fluchtlingsinitiative-brandenburg/

Exile[52] (2002).[53] Similar to the migrant self-organizations of the 80s and 90s, these refugee self-organizations were also critical of white leftist groups' paternalism (Flüchtlingsinitiative Brandenburg et al. 2005: 384; Igbinoba/Zülch 2005: 111–112). They also criticized discussions over the ›right‹ definitions or ›right‹ wording, the imposition of white antiracists' political programs, and their political leadership claim in mobilizing refugees while ignoring the self-organizations and not seeing them as an essential part of the resistance (ibid.). There were also positive examples of joint engagements of white antiracists, refugees, and migrants, such as the 1998 political tour initiated by Karawane[54] (Rostock 2014: 164). Another attempt to overcome the conflicts to build alliances has been the yearly No Border Camps initiated by white antiracist groups in 1998. However, these camps could not find a way out of the pitfalls of antiracist politics; they were either ignoring the different realities and positionalities produced by racist segmentation or were at risk of reproducing it (Rostock 2014: 168–174). Kanak Attak, which we will introduce in the next section, intervened and called for an antiracist politics that fought offensively for the right to have rights. They also connected antiracist politics with social struggles and with a critique of capitalism. Whereas some refugee self-organizations had problems with this approach (Alabi et.al. 2004/2005), others joined in and founded the Gesellschaft für Legalisierung[55] (Legalization Alliance) in 2003.

Compared to France and the US, where the undocumented became visible as political actors through their struggles (for empirical studies, see Cissé 2002; Laubenthal 2007; for a theoretical one, see Balibar 2013), a similarly visible undocumented movement could not form in Germany.[56] A reaction to this missing focus, the Gesellschaft für Legalisierung was a mixed group of migrants, refugees, white antiracists, and undocumented people. Inspired by the Sans Papiers movement,

52 For more information, see: https://www.women-in-exile.net/

53 *Widerstandsbewegungen. Antirassismus zwischen Alltag & Aktion*, edited by Interface (2005), provides a good overview of several refugee self-organizations, their campaigns and alliances, and the conflict points which emerged after 1998.

54 For Karawane's own reflection on this tour, see Akbulu 2007. This tour has been regarded as a success especially because of its politicization effect and the emergence of new groups and alliances in several cities (Cross the border 1999). However, it has also been criticized not being able to build connections to migrant communities and to their (history of) struggles (Bojadžijev et.al. 2001)

55 This alliance consisted of Kanak Attak, Flüchtlingsinitiative Brandenburg, Respect Netzwerk, Medizinische Flüchtlingshilfe, Frauen-Lesben-Bündnis, and others. For more information, see: http://rechtauflegalisierung.kanak-attak.de/index.html

56 This has been explained by Germany's institutional structure, more restrictive regulations, and the position of people with tolerated stay permit -*Duldung*-(Tometten 2013). Laubenthal (2007) studies the preconditions shared by three countries – France, Spain, Switzerland – in the emergence of Sans Papiers movements. For a genealogy of illegal migration in Germany, see Karakayal (2008).

they expanded their call to include the legalization of everyone without a German passpart, broadening the understanding of disenfranchisement in the process and relating to the international division of labor. A self-reflection paper (John et al. 2007) discusses how the alliance reached its limits, among other things because the organization could not overcome the activists' differences in race, gender, space, and class relations. They argue that they still managed to change the public perception of legalization (ibid.). In addition to this, especially due the work of the organization Respect,[57] undocumented women migrant workers managed to get the attention of trade unions, which led to the launch of counseling services for undocumented migrant workers (Wilcke 2018: 71).

Strategic invisibility has been discussed in the literature as an essential tool of undocumented migrants in becoming political subjects. The assumption one can only become a political subject through visibility (Rancière) has been challenged by recognizing undocumented migrant workers' everyday strategies of invisibility as imperceptible forms of politics that have a transformative power (Wilcke 2018). Studies with other theoretical frameworks also drew attention to how undocumented workers become political subjects (beyond public visibility and protest) by informally enacting their rights (from a social movements perspective: Schwenken 2013; from a citizenship-from-below perspective: Shinozaki 2015).

Autonomy of Migration

Kanak Attak (KA),[58] an antiracist collective with mixed ethnic backgrounds founded in 1998 (Gürsel 2013), has been in the middle of Germany's antiracist discussions and alliances. KA has been regarded as the first antiracist group which »received as much as media and political attention, as well as critique and dismissal« (Heidenreich/Vukadinovic 2008: 134). Their provocative critique of 1990s antiracism[59], avantgarde self-positioning[60] and controversial autonomy of migration (AOM) approach (Bojadžijev/Karakayalı 2007, 2010) have been hotly debated.

57 Respect is an European network founded in 1998 to organize women domestic workers of different origins. For more information, see: www.respectberlin.org/wordpress/

58 Their website includes a rich archive of their texts and activities: https://www.kanak-attak.de/ For their own history, see Güngör/Loh 2002; Heidenreich/Vukadinovic 2008; Mestre Vives 2006; and Perinelli 2009.

59 KA criticized the following aspects of antiracist politics of 1990s: identity politics, antiracist division of labor, defensive politics.

60 KA positioned itself through a political attitude instead of racialized identities and called for an offensive politics in antiracist politics.

The autonomy of migration[61] approach can be read as KA's response to the crisis of antiracism got into in the 90s. According to KA, that crisis emerged out of the inability to retreat from the reactive and spontaneous identity politics of migrant antiracist self-organizations on the one hand[62] the abstract anti-essentialism or classical universalism of white German antiracists on the other (Bojadžijev 2002: 270). As a third option between that difference and universalism, they introduced AOM (Kanak Attak 2004). This approach aims to shift the perspective from the racialized subjects' identities or abstract universalism to the historical and current everyday struggles against racism (ibid.). However, the (individual-based liberal) misunderstanding of autonomy as »of one's own will« led to critiques of romanticization, especially from refugee self-organizations Karawane and The Voice, for whom the emphasis on flight against one's will is central for their politics,[63] and also from a certain Marxist perspective, which believes it impossible to talk about autonomy and oppression at the same time (Pieper 2004). Besides, AOM has also been critized over its lack of emphasis on gender relations (Benz/Schwenken 2005) and from a cultural studies perspective (Binder et al. 2011). On the other hand, since it has influenced many scholars and their studies (Scheel 2015, 2019; Wilcke 2018), and has been further developed through international reception and collaboration (Papadopoulos et al. 2008; Mezzadra 2011; Casas-Cortes et al. 2015; de Genova 2016, 2017), it has been regarded as a turn in migration studies (Fedyuk/Stewart 2018).

KA's critique of identity politics has been the topic of several studies (Ha 2009a; El-Tayeb 2003, 2011; Rostock 2014). The provocative taking on of the slur »Kanak« has been argued to have had a short-term subversive effect that was then sadly appropriated by the culture industry (Ha 2009a). Rostock, in her discussion on KA's non-identitarian politics as a strategy of *undisambiguation* (Engel 2001), concludes that they managed to subvert identitarian ascriptions. However, they could not avoid such a politics' inherent risk of reproducing exclusions and hierarchies in their own organization[64] (Rostock 2014: 290). In her study, Rostock compares KA to Femigra and

61 Castles and Miller's classic *The Age of Migration* (1993: 299) already partially acknowledges the thesis of autonomy of migration in how migrants defy migration policy objectives (as Scheel 2019; Mezzadra 2011 already noted).

62 In a discussion with Café Morgenland and Köxüz, a KA activist makes a distinction between self-organization as experience and as politics: whereas the former is necessary and legitimate, the latter is necessary as well as deficient (Köxüz et al. 2000).

63 Kanak Attak aimed to bridge a gap in antiracist struggles and connect them to social struggles through the common experience of precarization (Rostock 2014). However, the differences expressed by one Karawane activist, »Refugees escape against their will, migrants with their will« (cited in Samsa 2003), could not be overcome. Refugee self-organizations wanted to focus on their struggle against deportations and for a right to stay.

64 The problems that emerged in the Gesellschaft für Legalisierung alliance have been discussed as exemplary for the risk post-identity strategies run of sidelining or obscuring real power imbalances (Rostock 2014: 289, also El-Tayeb 2011: 157). As Rostock puts it: »Während

highlights the role of the political context that enabled KA to move beyond ascribed identities, in contrast to Femigra, which had to struggle to become visible first. Fatima El-Tayeb also draws attention to how KA profited from »the desire for ›diversity‹ within multicultural neoliberalism. This opened spaces for minority visibility in restricted areas, using it as a starting point to voice a critique of the very limits of this discourse by constantly violating its rules« (2011: 150). She argues further that they were successful in intervening in German political discourse and practiced queering ethnicity in terms of rejecting representation (ibid.: 158). However, KA's anti-essentialist strategy could not deal with the conflicts emerging from different positionalities of migrants and minorities (ibid.: xlvi).

People of Color

Another approach which emerged in this period and has been contrasted with Kanak Attak's, is the »people of color« (POC) approach. The edited *volume re/visionen. Postkoloniale Perspektiven von People of Color auf Rassismus, Kulturpolitik und Widerstand in Deutschland* (2007) by Kien Nghi Ha, Nicola Lauré al-Samarai, and Sheila Mysorekar introduces the concept of people of color as an empowering and uniting label for racialized people in Germany[65]. They argue that the general category of migrant, which made sense to highlight racism in postwar Germany, is inadequate to describe the people who are affected by contemporary racism: »Muslim communities, illegalized migrants from Latin America and Asia, German Turks who ›refuse to integrate‹ and criminalized African refugees« (Ha et al. 2007: 11). Through new hegemonic border configurations, the differentiation between »German« and »Foreigner« has shifted to one between »Europe« and its so-called »Other.« To explore and fight these postcolonial power relations, new analytical categories such as »POC« were introduced to unite people who experience racism. Resistance against racism through self-ascriptions has also been covered in other publications that center the role of language in (re)producing racism and fighting it (Nduka-Agwu/Hornscheidt 2010, Arndt/Ofuatey-Alazard 2011). They argue that self-ascriptions are empowering and discrimination-free because they are self-determined. Any discussion of who belongs to this POC self or how this self is constructed remains conflictual (for a partial discussion, see Ha 2007: 445–450; for the ambivalences of the question, see Mohseni 2020: 82–90). Whereas some

Kanak Attaks Verständnis von Widerstand diesen als Teil der Macht konzeptualisierte, wurde die Kehrseite der Medaille, dass Macht auch immer den Widerstand formt, nicht ausreichend berücksichtigt.« (2014: 289)

65 They introduce this volume as the first book on this topic in Germany exclusively by people of color, which was also the central foundation of the project. There is also a discussion on this form of identity politics between Kien Nghi Ha and a Kanak Attak member, published without the latter's responses.

work with a more temporarily defined concept according to one's origin (Ha 2009b), others prefer a more open concept that prioritizes self-ascription (Dean 2011). The concept of POC by now is established in the field of antidiscrimination[66] counseling services,[67] in Black self-organizations,[68] in political/activist networks such as the »Move on up« forum, in community work,[69] and in empowerment workshops[70] (Mohseni 2020: 74–75)[71].

The POC approach relies mostly on postcolonial studies. Unlike in Britain and France, postcolonial studies was introduced to Germany by feminist Black German and migrant intellectuals whose experiences were not shaped by German colonialism or anti-colonial resistance (Albrecht 2011: 2–3; Ha 2007: 270; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010). These scholars of color focused on breaking the colonial aphasia (Stoler 2011) and highlighting the continuities of colonialism. At the same time, they revealed the challenges of the overlapping histories of German colonialism, antisemitism, and restrictive asylum and migration politics[72] (Gelbin et al. 1999; Steyerl/Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2003; Ayim et al. 1986; Popoola/Sezen 1999). According to Gutiérrez Rodríguez, they focused on two levels of postcolonial critique: the formulation of resistance and the deconstruction of the dominant knowledge and the figure of the migrant and/or Black woman (2010: 273). Cultural and textual forms of expression by women of color have been explored as survival strategies and resistance against hegemonic knowledge and representation politics (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2003: 32–33). Complicating the relationship between antiracism and postcolonialism,[73] Castro Varela and Dhawan pointed out a challenge in adapting a postcolonial approach to the German context: »a growing immunization against

66 Germany got its first antidiscrimination legislation in 2006: https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/EN/AboutUs/TheAct/theAct_node.html

67 For instance by Antidiskriminierungsnetzwerk, Reachout Berlin e.V., Lesmigras e.V., GLADT e.V., and Migrationsrat Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.

68 Such as Adefra e.V. and Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland e.V.

69 Though reading groups, yoga classes, cafés etc.

70 Project Hakra introduced the POC concept in their empowerment workshops. (Yiğit/Can 2006)

71 Mohseni's dissertation (2020) focuses on empowerment workshops for people of color. Her empirical data is based on qualitative expert interviews with empowerment workshop trainers of color, and her methodology is based on grounded theory.

72 The film *Leere Mitte* by Hito Steyerl (1998) shows these overlapping histories by focusing on Berlin's central Potsdamer Platz.

73 Castro Varela and Dhawan (2015), in their critical introduction to postcolonial theory, draw attention to Gayatri Spivak's warning against the self-evident relation between postcolonialism and antiracist politics, and against limiting postcolonial critique to metropolitan spaces and defining postcolonial migrants as agents of decolonization (ibid.: 310). They add that the popularity of »migrant as subaltern« or as »hybrid« in German discourse is symptomatic for this danger (ibid.: 311).

critique and the monopolization of victim role in many texts and positions of so-called politicized minoritized people«[74] (2003: 271).

Post-NSU Period

This period is shaped by turbulent forms of self-organized struggle against racism. The NSU protests made the critique of structural and institutional racism louder and have been regarded as attempts for a transversal antiracist politics that could overcome previous eras' problems. The refugee movement became the most visible antiracist self-organization in Germany's postwar history. Lastly, the critical whiteness (CW) debate appeared to open a dialog between different perspectives on antiracist politics.

Uncovering of the NSU Murders and Antiracist Mobilization

The uncovering of the nine racially motivated murders of small business owners with an immigrant background (eight of them of Turkish origin and one of Greek origin) perpetrated by the far-right terrorist group National Socialist Underground (NSU) in major German cities between 2000 and 2006 marked a turning point in the public political culture of addressing racism (Bojadžijev 2015). The actions and efforts of local antiracist and antifascist groups contributed to the public discourse recognizing racism as the motive for the murders (Kleffner 2013; Burschel et al. 2014).[75]

The state apparatuses' active denial and sabotage policies during the investigations underscored the importance of civil society actors' knowledge and expertise, including that of the victims' families, in the criminal proceedings. Particularly revealing and worth mentioning are the demonstrations organized by relatives of the murdered in Kassel and Dortmund in 2006, years before the NSU uncovered itself, at which point they clearly announced that racism was the main motive behind the murders based on their own research and called on the state to finally investigate this. Remarkably, these mobilizations neither caught the general public's media interest, nor were they noticed by migrant initiatives or the otherwise vigilant antifas-

74 Instead of this self-centered politics of so-called politicized minoritized people, which does not fight hegemonic structures but stabilizes them, they argue for a critical self out of positioned responsibility (Castro Varela/Dhawan 2003: 287).

75 Investigative journalists, parliamentary investigative committees, and political pressure from civil society have shown that the NSU enjoyed the support of a broad network of neo-Nazi structures and could not have carried out its murders, bank robberies, and bombings without the financial, personal, and informational support of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the police (Aust/Laabs 2014; von der Behrens 2018).

cist circles. This ignorance of the »situated knowledge« of those affected was later processed in many critical (self-)reflections (Daimagüler 2017; NSU-Watch 2020).

In the course of the political mobilization to investigate the NSU, a transversal politics was emergent. The categorical separation between separate actors or fields – such as migrant/non-migrant, antiracist/antifascist, white/non-white, and academic/activist – seemed to be overcome in the struggle against racism and right-wing extremism (Perinelli 2020). Key to the confrontation with the NSU were uncovering of the »truth,« punishing the perpetrators, and putting racism on trial. Thus, local initiatives (consisting of migrants and non-migrants) informed the public and tried to play an active role. The Initiative 6. April in Kassel, where the NSU killed one of its victims, debunked the official narrative that presumed state institutions' innocence with an independent forensic report (Gülec/Schaffer 2017). The Keupstraße ist überall initiative in Cologne, where the NSU carried out bomb attacks on stores owned by migrants and injured several people, has worked to rehabilitate the victims. This rehabilitation includes, above all, self-empowerment, i.e., ensuring that the victims could overcome their fear, tell their story, break out of isolation and stigmatization, and collectively claim their right to compensation (Dostluk sinemasi 2014; Perinelli 2020). It was intended to make the suffering of the victims and their families, survivors and their communities visible and to create a counter-narrative to the official narrative that reduced years of murder spree to an ordinary »despicable criminal case« perpetrated by a few Neo-Nazis (NSU-Watch 2020)

Demonstrations, memorial and information events, workshops, and psychosocial counseling services for relatives of victims and survivors were organized in many cities (Dostluk Sinemasi 2014). Some of the NSU terror victims' relatives have published about their experiences with the security authorities, which investigated *them* as suspects for years. They shared their anger, pain, and loss, but also their memories and demands, showing that they have a voice to constitute themselves as political subjects (Simsek 2013; John 2014).

Academia has also dealt with the NSU, albeit insufficiently and relatively late. Some social scientists focused on the social structures and institutional anchoring of racism in »mainstream« society (Karakayalı et al. 2017; Gomolla 2017; Karakayalı/Kasparek 2018). Other researchers contrasted migrants' situated knowledge with state institutions' knowledge, which they viewed as an epistemological conglomerate of domination (Gülec/Schaffer 2017; Kahveci/Sarp 2017) and corrupted knowledge (Perinelli 2017: 146). Ayata (2016) used a postcolonial perspective to show how the migrants' perspective was delegitimized by the epistemological ignorance of the majority of society.

A significant reappraisal that combined academic, political, activist and artistic approaches was the NSU Tribunal 2017. The NSU Tribunal 2017 was a symbolic court that took place at the Schauspielhaus Kölln, organised by the nationwide initiative »Unraveling the NSU Complex«. For five days, participants used intensive

workshops, theatre performances, installations and sound art to create a political space to lament, accuse and demand an investigation into the crimes of the NSU. In the end, they wrote an indictment exposing the scandalous failures in the NSU investigation, criticising institutional racism, but also demanding measures to create a racism-sensitive society. Many initiatives, such as podcasts, documentaries, and information events by victim advocates and political observers and journalists, still carry on the political mobilisation (Daimagüler 2017; von der Behrens 2018).

Out of the spirit of these struggles, other antiracist mobilizations and organizations have developed. In response to the antisemitic and racist attacks in Halle and Hanau, the Migrantifa initiative was founded. Inspired by Antifa Gençlik (Yaş 2020; Türkmen 2020), Migrantifa mobilizes the younger generation against police violence and racial profiling, and proves that racialized people can raise their voices and show themselves as political actors. In this context, it is also worth mentioning the Black Lives Matter mobilizations which brought thousands of (mainly young) people to the streets across the country. The interference in the public discourse and pressure on politicians by these movements emerged in Post-NSU period led to the government convening a cabinet committee »to combat right-wing extremism and racism« chaired by Chancellor Merkel in 2020.

Refugee Movement

Although refugee self-organizations had long existed, as introduced in earlier chapters, they first gained broad public and media visibility in the 2010s. It started with the 2012 suicide of the Iranian Mohammed Rahsepar at an asylum center in Würzburg and was followed by a hunger strike. Radical methods spread to other cities, with a refugee protest march, refugee tent actions, several demonstrations, bus tours, and occupations.[76] Its wide reception in academic studies also strongly differs from that of other antiracist self-organizations. The literature on refugee struggles, which used to be limited to critical migration[77] and citizenship studies, is being broadened by social movements (della Porta 2018),[78] urban (Mayer 2018), and

76 Refugees have published a history of their movement's first two and a half years: https://cargocollective.com/Movementmagazine

77 This field has also expanded with this academic boom. Since 2015, an academic journal on critical migration and border studies focuses on struggles: https://movements-journal.org/issues/01.grenzregime/01.editorial.html

78 Due to their precarious status, migrants have long not been considered »contentious actors« by the dominant social movement theories.

comparative studies (Schwiertz 2019; Ataç/Steinhilper 2020).[79] Steinhilper (2019)[80] sees this as part of a general academic boom concerning migration and asylum since at least 2015.[81] Whereas this enabled a theoretical bridge between critical migration and social movements studies, new ethical and methodical challenges alos arose (ibid.).

These refugee movements, which also emerged in other countries, have been regarded as a »new era of protest« (Ataç et al. 2015; From the Struggles Collective 2015; Odugbesan/Schwiertz 2018). However, there have been plenty refugee struggles before, and journalist Christian Jakob (2016) explores the recent struggles by contextualizing them starting in the 90s and focusing on how refugees have been transforming Germany for more than 20 years.

The transnational dimension of refugee protests has also been highlighted by considering the experiences of refugees in Libya and under different European asylum regimes as resources for their protests in Germany (Meret/Diener 2019); Steinhilper 2017), and by considering them together with the recent cycle of protests occupying public squares such as Tahrir and Gezi (Plöger 2014: 595–596).

Some scholars have discussed the occupation of public squares in terms of visibility, radical democracy, acts of citizenship, and becoming political subjects in Rancière's sense (Ataç et al. 2016; Meret/Diener 2019). In addition to these visible forms of politics, Wilcke and Lambert (2015) also draw attention to refugees' imperceptible politics, which take place in the »informal creation of work and legal status.« Bhimji focuses on the antiracist and anticolonial perspectives emerging from these struggles, which she argues have been neglected in previous studies (2020: 239–240).

The conflicts within the refugee self-organizations have been explored from different perspectives. The struggles' weakening has mainly been blamed on refugees' different legal situation, which the authorities have used to divide the movement[82] (Langa 2015; Odugbesan/Schwiertz 2018; Meret/Diener 2019). Male domination in the struggle and the male-dominated representation of refugees and their struggles

79 There are several articles and books exploring this movement from different perspectives in addition to their own reports, texts, magazines, and interviews. To cover all of them requires another study.

80 Steinhilper (2019) warns that this development may be temporary and insufficient with regard to the attention of social movements literature. To consolidate this hype, the interdisciplinary dialog should continue by responding to the challenges.

81 Since at least 2015, there are several new research projects, new professor positions, and institutes (Braun et al. 2018; Kleist 2018 cited in Steinhilper 2019).

82 The authorities' response to refugee movements has tended to be divisive. Where movements were strong, the repeated strategy of offering conditional concessions that are accepted by some, thus enabling the displacement and oppression of others, has contributed to dividing and weakening movements and eroding solidarity among more established supporters.

have been challenged by drawing attention to gender relations within the movement mostly by the activists themselves. The International Women* Space[83] emerged out of this critique and they also documented their own lives and stories (IWS 2015). Women in Exile[84] highlighted their gender specific demands and problems in interviews and in their own publications (Women in Exile/Gürsel 2013; Women in Exile 2022). The intersectional power structures and intersectional feminist solidarity within the refugee self-organisations have been also drawn attention (Ünsal 2015, Bhimji 2020). Although there is an emergent research focus on flight and gender (Hess et al. 2017),[85] an academic focus on refugee women's struggle is still lacking (excepting Bhimji 2020).

Critical Whiteness Debate

Critical Whiteness is an approach which aims to move the focus away from the racialized ›other‹ by unpacking whiteness as an invisible structure which creates and reproduces white supremacy and its privileges. In the preface of the analogy which introduced CW in the POC context in Germany (Eggers et.al. 2005), El-Tayeb claims that CW is »one of the important steps out of the political dead-end which Paul Gilroy (1990) defined as ›the end of anti-racism‹« (El-Tayeb 2005: 8).[86] Ironically, it has also been criticized for placing antiracism at a dead end (Karakayalı et al. 2012; Perinelli 2019). Although that critique has alonger history, one concrete occasion was a Cologne antiracist No Border Camp in the summer of 2012. A group of antiracist activists reported about certain practices from this camp which they associated with Critical Whiteness and criticized as authoritarian (NoLager Bremen 2012). *Kritnet* authors (formerly from Kanak Attak) wrote a provocative text accusing the CW approach of drawing antiracism into new pitfalls (Karakayalı et al. 2012).[87] Supporters of the CW approach claimed the authors used a reductionist

83 The International Women* Space is a feminist political group of migrant and refugee women in Germany formed in 2012 within the occupation of the Gerhart-Hauptmann School in Berlin Kreuzberg. Learn more here: https://iwspace.de/about/

84 Women in Exile is an initiative of refugee women founded in Brandenburg in 2002 by refugee women to fight for their rights. Learn more here: https://www.women-in-exile.net/en/ueber-uns/

85 There is also a working group on gender in the Fluchtforschung network: https://fluchtforschung.net/ak/gender/

86 Because this approach is more fitting to de-essentialize the concept of race than simply speaking for oppressed others, which leaves white racializing dynamics unchallenged (ibid.)

87 This article was published in the leftist magazine *ak – analyse & kritik*. After the debates on the public discussion over racism, and upon the ISD's initiative to hold a discussion among different perspectives, it included them in a special issue in Fall 2013.

interpretation of the approach and had a color-blindness problem (Dugalski et al. 2013).

Political scientist Kien Nghi Ha (2014) argues for a middle ground by questioning the critiques of CW and POC approaches but accepting their challenge to reflect on problematic interpretations of CW in POC contexts. Unfortunately, this reflection stays limited to an analysis of a »perversion of the approach« through »stolen identities« in the name of critical POC approaches by a »white group« (ibid.).[88] Social scientist Jasmin Dean (2015) also engages with the critique against CW and criticizes the representation of CW adherents as a monolithic block. However, unlike Ha, she finds crucial points in the critiques of essentialist tendencies that point to conflicts and different CW interpretations (ibid.). For instance, she refers to a conflict that occurred while preparing the anthology which introduced CW in the German POC context (Eggers et al. 2005), as, after some criticism,[89] the initial categorizations of perspectives into two sections -Black and white authors- was expanded with a third category called »transitions« for »ambiguous« articles which were co-authored by Black/POC and white scholars (Dean 2015). She states that this, among other examples, reveals how the political category of Black and the identity politics-based categorization of perspectives are also questioned in CW approaches (ibid.).

Karakayalı (2015) invites us to see the theoretical and political narrowness of identity politics oriented approaches like CW as a symptom and legacy of a failed theoretical and political practice: the fusion of Marxist and racism analysis prominently represented by Stuart Hall (1980) and Etienne Balibar (1990). He contextualizes this defeat historically around the end of the Soviet Union and argues that this led to a radical differentiation in the field of antiracist political subjectivation (Karakayalı 2015: 131). Ina Kerner (2013) also traces CW practices back to the 1990s, particularly the antiracist interventions of feminists of color in the feminist movement and the »alarmingly perfectionist« reaction of white feminists who wanted to have a sudden transformation in their behavior and consciousness. Tsianos/Karakayalı (2013), reflecting on this CW debate, call for an antiracist politics with contradictions and conflicts, referring to Paul Gilroy's (2004) concept of conviviality.

88 In a reflection paper, the group's co-founder and former member later called this misinformation (Mendívil 2015).

89 Maria do Mar Castro Varela and Nikita Dhawan rejected this exclusive Black/white categorization and their article was then published under the third category called »transitions« (ibid.).

European Debates on Antiracism

As we have seen, the literature and the debate on self-organized antiracism in Germany demonstrate manifold transnational interconnections, interactions, and mutual influences, especially with other European countries. In the following, we will briefly present which debate and movements from UK and French contexts have been influential in Germany. We focus on the UK and France[90] because antiracist movements and studies on racism in these countries arose much earlier, e.g. through the strong connection between abolitionism and the Chartist movement in the UK (Sivanandan 1976; Bonnett 1993; Featherstone 2012) and through the anticolonial struggles that politicized a large part of France's migrant population (Boubeker 2013). Not only were certain approaches and concepts »imported« from these contexts to analyze social conditions in Germany, but political subjects also adopted certain terminologies, attitudes, and cultural practices in the antiracist struggle.

Academic studies on antiracist migrant organizations and their political mobilization after the Second World War began much earlier in the UK than in Germany, where the institutionalization of critical racism studies remains precarious (Bojadžijev et al. 2019). Influential UK think tanks (e.g., the Institute of Race Relations was founded in 1958, publishing research worldwide) and university chairs contributed to knowledge production through groundbreaking research (Heineman 1972). Some key theorists and activists who came from migrant communities into public positions also generated and documentated new insights through empirical and analytical studies, and their fight against racism.

Instead of focusing on these differences in her reconstruction of how critical racism theory was established in Germany, Bojadžijev (2015) highlights the resonances of the racism debate in both countries by exploring the theory exchange between the UK Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) and Germany's Projekt Ideologie-Theorie/Argument (PIT). Although the CCCS focused more on »modalities of agencies,« whereas the PIT focused more on »aspects of domination,« both were interested in developing critical concepts of antiracism (Bojadžijev 2014: 1812). Both traditions aimed to develop a materialist framework and warned against the risks of identity politics that would arise from the subjectivation processes constituted in the context of racism and resistance to it (Bojadžijev 2015).

As our review suggests, the development of migrants' antiracist struggles in Germany more closely resembled the French context. One purported reason has been migrants' different legal status: Whereas labor migrants from former British colonies (Commonwealth) held British citizenship, those from France did not hold

90 Although exploring the connections with the United States would also be interesting, that would go beyond the scope of our paper.

French citizenship (Favell 1998; Lloyd 1998). As the historian of radical left movements in France and England Daniel Gordon (2015) noted, in France the demand for citizenship and protection from deportation constituted an important mobilizing motive, while British migrants sought more collective cultural recognition. Like in Germany, in France the self-organized antiracist struggle after the Second World War was first discussed in relation to immigrant associations organized along ethnic lines (Abdallah 2000, 2002; Sayad 2004) that shifted their political focus with the permanent settlement of the migrant population. Protests against racist violence and for better working conditions (King 2019) and housing access (Silverstein 2004; Lentin 2004) laid the groundwork for a long history of political activism within immigrant communities that began in the late 1960s (Silverstein 2004). In the 80s, the denial of migrants' civil rights, racist legislation, deportations, unemployment, police violence, and deprivation in »banlieues« that especially affected second-generation migrants (Jazouli 1986) led to the emergence of a new antiracist Beur movement led by young people of North African (especially Algerian) origin (Lapeyronnie 1987; Poinsot 1993). Similar conditions in Germany also led to the emergence of antiracist self-organizations as we discussed above, but not to this extent.

Another antiracist struggle from the French context which influenced refugee self-organizations and the foundation of the legalization alliance in Germany has been the Sans Papiers. In France, undocumented migrants have organized themselves into numerous informal local »collectifs des sans papiers« to fight for their rights (Cissé 2002).[91] Through hunger strikes, demonstrations, multiple alliances, and the solidarity of celebrities, the movement succeeded in legalizing about 80,000 undocumented migrants (Fassin 2001). Though this mobilization was perceived as an insurgent force of modern democracy or democratization (Balibar 2013), the movement had lost its political power by the 2000s due to the state policy of co-opting some collectives,and through internal ideological differences, power struggles, and disputes with large NGOs due to their patronizing, instrumental logic (Gibb 2008; Nicholls/Uitermark 2017).

German debates on identity and self-positioning in antiracist struggles also demonstrate certain similarities to the British ones. For antiracist organizations and discourses in Britain, the question of the political subject of antiracism played an increasingly important role from the 1980s onward. Autonomous antiracist organizations were influenced by Black Power in the US and rooted in the experiences of the UK's Black (and ethnic-minority) population. These movements developed the ideas of »political Blackness« and »community« as key antiracist vocabulary. Similarly to the critical whiteness approach first introduced in Germany in the 2000s,

91 The initial limited local struggle to obtain temporary residence permits proved ineffective until it expanded to the national level, becoming a radical critique of borders regimes and illegalization.

many antiracist groups operated with the concept of white privilege. Trainings on awareness and consciousness raising were developed to reflect on this privilege (Bonnett 1993). However, many criticized this way of analyzing and fighting racism. Sivanandan (1985), for example, rejected this approach, because it focused one-sidedly on individuals and their attitude, did not analyze structural power relations or economic exploitation, and operated with moral impetus.

Like in the German debates, rising awareness of the plurality of identities challenged the political category of »Black« as a unitary and authentic antiracist subject. Sociologist Tariq Modood (1988, 1992) is one of the most prominent figures to accuse radical antiracism of erasing the British Asian experience. His assertion of the importance of ethnicity is particularly evident in his suggestion that the antiracist agendas of different ethnic and religious groups will vary according to their particular interests. Privileging analyses of a colonial, »color-based« racism over other forms of racism has also been criticized for analytically neglecting anti-Irish and anti-Cypriot racism (Anthias 1992; Hickman/Walter 1997).

Although the debates and theoretical approaches in the UK and France share certain similarities with Germany, as we introduced, there are only a few studies on the theory exchange between these and other countries (see Bojadžijev 2015 for the resonance of racism debate in Britain and in Germany; see Florvil 2013, 2020 for Audre Lorde's role in the theory transfer of Black feminism in Germany) and comparing self-organized antiracist struggles (for a comparison of the self-organizations of migrant youth in the United States and in Germany, see Schwiertz 2019; for a comparison of the struggles of undocumented migrants in France, Germany, and Canada, see Monforte/Dufour 2013). The transnational location of antiracist discourses and movements in Germany, however, remains very much unexplored.

Research Gaps and Conclusions

As Hess and Linder already stated in 1997, the literature on (self-organized) antiracism in Germany to a large extent emerged from political or political-academic contexts, activists, and activist scholars. Though this tendency on the one hand carries some ethical and methodological problems, because of the double role of the researcher and activist, on the other hand it opens up possibilities to deconstruct the notion of the objective researcher. Some scholars dealt with this issue by exploring militant investigation as a methodological tool (see Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2006 for rethinking militant research with post-colonial and feminist methodology; Riedner 2014). But a lot of methodological and ethical problems in researching self-organized antiracist organizations or struggles still need to be addressed.

With the academic boom (especially on the refugee movement), the research gap has recently been addressed. The topic has entered new academic fields and

includes interdisciplinary studies involving non-activist researchers (Steinhilper 2019). A systematic historical periodization and thematic categorization of antiracist struggles is still partly missing from the literature, however. For the period up to 2000, there are studies dealing with the self-organization of migrant women (Schwenken 2000; Gutiérrez Rodríguez & Tuzcu 2021), the self-organization of migrants (Bojadžijev 2008), general antiracist struggles (Rostock 2014), and the Roma and Sinti struggles (Klein 2016). In contrast, there are no comparable studies on the past two decades. While there has recently been more frequent talk about alliances, solidarity, and intersectionality, both in academia and activist circles, there is a lack of scholarly resonance. There is a shortage of studies on the relationships between different forms of self-organization and on how particular groups/alliances develop and have changed over time. Some of the open research questions: What was the relationship between migrant self-organisations and feminists of color like in the 90s? How did the antiracist feminist alliances of the 90s develop in the past 20 years? How did the Jewish women who were involved in the alliances in the 90s stay involved? How did alliances transform with new actors such as queers of color, Romnja and Sintezza, and self-organizations of refugee women?

Since the dominant focus of the existing literature is on identity and representation issues, it may seem that the issues of freedom of movement, deportations, or access to housing and work only occupied the political agenda of migrant activists up to the 1970s or that of undocumented migrants in the 2000s. But we know these issues have always been central to the struggles of migrants and racialized people. This research gap only shows that there is an urgent need to discuss the social struggles of racialized people with an antiracism focus and, most importantly, to create new theoretical tools to break the constructed dichotomy between social struggles and struggles over identity and representation.

Although state institutions were involved earlier in the struggle against racism in the UK and French contexts (see Gilroy (1990) for a critical discussion on municipal antiracism), in Germany, state institutions used to either appropriate antiracist struggles through the integration imperative or criminalize these struggles. However, at least since the uncovering of NSU murders and the later attacks in Halle and Hanau, this appears to have started to change. The convening of a cabinet committee »to combat right-wing extremism and racism« chaired by Chancellor Merkel in 2020 may be interpreted as a sign of this change. Whereas many research projects will be financed by this state initiative, there should also be critical research on how the state frames racism and the fight against it, and how it involves self-organizations into this process.

Lastly, it is crucial to evaluate the antiracist struggles in Germany. Although there are many articles on the critiques, defeats, failures, and contradictions of antiracist strategies and approaches, only a few are based on empirical research (Rostock 2014; Florvil 2013, 2020). Besides, any focus on success, solidarity, effec-

tiveness, or conviviality is largely lacking. It would be a crucial contribution to work on this research gap, not only for academic reasons, but also to encourage antiracist politics.

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