

ically and morally informed perspective, I take a critical view of the deliberate blurring of the distinction between scientific research and political activism, something evident, for example, in works by scholars associated with *Krit-net*, the German network of critical migration and border research (see for instance Kasparek & Speer 2013). Publications in this research network often speak from explicitly left political perspectives, calling for the unrestricted free global movement of people. Moreover, the network tends to regard itself as a mouthpiece for refugee activists and, in turn, contributes ideologically to activist networks (see Carstensen et al. 2014). This book, by contrast, is guided by the notion that it is a key responsibility of social researchers to consider the multiple perspectives pertaining to a field of investigation; to remain as independent as possible from the subjects of investigation; and to keep a certain critical distance to the topic of investigation. As Czarniawska (1992: 73) aptly puts it: an empathetic stance towards the research subjects should go hand in hand with “a constant urge to problematize, to turn what seems familiar and understandable upside down and inside out”.

1.7. An Outline of *Contested Solidarity*

The following empirical investigation into the contested solidarities that developed around the German ‘summer of welcome’ consists of five chapters. These distinct but interrelated parts analyse differing forms of *contesting*, that is, of making claims and intervening in the conduct of refugee support. The outline of this book thus attests to the elusive character of solidarity. Practices and discourse of migrant solidarity continually adapt to new circumstances; are subject to constant intervention and manifold negotiation processes; and respond to the needs of various actors involved in their contestation. Each of the five subsequent chapters deals with another form of intervention that I encountered in the course of my field research: the *mobilizing, governing, politicizing, recasting* and *breaking of* solidarity with refugees. In the first of these chapters, I start with an analysis of how solidarity was mobilized and how the notion of a ‘welcome culture’ translated into concrete practices of refugee support on the ground (Chapter 2). In the third, fourth and fifth chapter, I investigate how solidarities and related practices then became subject to the (de)politicizing interventions of different actors, including the state government of Baden-Württemberg, political activists and the asylum seekers themselves. In the sixth chapter, I investigate how solidarities might eventually dis-

solve and ultimately be broken again. This outline takes into account the wide range of actors involved in the contestation of solidarities and thus offers a multi-perspective view on practices of refugee support. The chapters focus on the solidarity networks that were forged between different groups and individuals (Chapter 2) or on how solidarities and related practices of refugee support were governed through governmental actors (Chapter 3), politicized by those acting in support of refugees (Chapter 4), recast by the asylum seekers themselves (Chapter 5), and eventually broken by refugee activists (Chapter 6).

The second chapter, *Mobilizing Solidarity*, investigates how the notion of a ‘welcome culture’ became enacted in a small town in the area of my field research and how it translated into immediate practices of refugee support on the ground. I illustrate how different actors mobilized, forged and shaped relationships of solidarity with refugees. My investigation also sheds light on the differing social imaginaries at play as well as on the positionalities and interests of different actors involved. For the purpose of this chapter, I take as my case study the small Swabian town of Ellwangen, which saw the establishment of a new initial reception centre that had to cope with up to 5,000 asylum seekers at a time. The practices of refugee support that developed in this specific context responded to *a moral imperative to act* and *a need to help* that crucially shaped the humanitarian imaginaries at play. The mobilization of such a humanitarian imaginary came with quite contrasting antipolitical and political meanings and effects, ranging from a complicity in the local governance of asylum seekers to the promotion of alternative political and religious world views.

The third chapter, *Governing Solidarity*, analyses how the state government of Baden-Württemberg intervened in order to organize, regulate and coordinate practices of refugee support. Guided by the idea that refugee support requires governmental interference in order to be ‘effective’, governmental actors launched numerous policies and programmes targeting the section of ‘civil society’ concerned with refugees. Around the long summer of migration, thus, solidarity with refugees became a major site of governmental intervention. Put differently, the state government sought to govern the rising numbers of asylum seekers through extended state-citizen networks that put an emphasis on humanitarian help and compassion. These *depoliticizing* interventions sought to make committed citizens complicit in the governance of migration, reordered tasks and responsibilities between the entities imagined as ‘civil society’ and ‘the state’, and restricted the space for disagreement

between the two. Yet, those who engaged in practices of refugee support were often quite critical of these interferences in their role and conduct. Thus, this chapter also illustrates how solidarity with refugees proved to remain to a certain extent ungovernable.

The fourth chapter, *Politicizing Solidarity*, investigates the manifold political possibilities emanating from the practices of refugee support that emerged around the long summer of migration. It sheds light on how different actors or individuals *politicized* the social imaginaries at play, put forward alternative visions of a 'better society' and voiced dissent at governmental policies. What proved to be of particular importance for the purpose of this chapter were my observations at the regular conferences of the Refugee Council of Baden-Württemberg, the umbrella association of citizens' initiatives across the state. This non-governmental organization served as an important platform for volunteers for elaborating political positions towards the governmental handling of asylum seekers. Building on the insights of my field research, I argue that those who supported refugees engaged in a *politics of presence* that sought to bring about change while emphasizing *co-presence*, the physical act of 'being there'. Thus, this chapter investigates how 'the local' became an important means for political claims-making around the long summer of migration.

The fifth chapter, *Recasting Solidarity*, analyses the possibilities for asylum seekers to contest the conditions of their reception and to have a stake in the relationships of solidarity that emerged around the long summer of migration. In the course of my field research, asylum seekers repeatedly staged acts of protest in makeshift reception facilities that were established during the long summer of migration. However, their scope for political agency proved to be contingent on the *intermediation* of the actors involved in their reception, including those who engaged in practices of refugee support. Through their (de)politicizing responses to the protests, these actors influenced whether the asylum seekers' acts were regarded as meaningful political action or emptied of political content. Food, in this context, gained important political meanings: while it served as a means for the asylum seekers to draw attention to their reasons of protest, actors involved in their reception reduced the protests to a distaste for German cuisine. In the course of this chapter, I show how the protesting asylum seekers nonetheless *recast* the social imaginaries of those who engaged in practices of refugee support in a variety of ways.

The sixth chapter, *Breaking Solidarity*, investigates the elusive nature of relationships of solidarity and illustrates how they dissolve and might even-

tually be broken again. I draw on an intriguing case study in Schwäbisch Gmünd, a small town in the area of my field research. From 2012 to 2015, it became the site of repeated conflicts and disputes between a group of self-described ‘refugee activists’ and local actors, including citizens supporting refugees in town. My analysis of these moments of conflict illustrates how the social imaginaries pertaining to relationships of solidarity can be so contrasting and conflictive that it becomes impossible to find a common denominator. While the refugee activists accused the local volunteers’ initiative for its ‘deceptive solidarity’, volunteers eventually withdrew all offers of help and support that were previously made to the refugee activists.

The concluding section summarizes the findings on the contested solidarities that emerged around the long summer of migration in Germany. It argues that these findings are telling in regards to wider disputes concerning the parameters of living-together in an increasingly heterogeneous and diverse society. I thus sketch out three lines of contestation in contemporary migration societies that crystallize over the course of this book.

