should be a right and should not be conferred selectively on some residents and denied to others". In his writings on migrant solidarity, Bauder (2019: 7) also stresses that "the solidarities that emerge from migration give rise to 'place-based politics' [...] these politics relate to the local presence of international migrants and refugees". Similarly, the volunteers in the area of my field research often stressed the significance of implementing a more inclusive alternative in *their* neighbourhood, village or region and, in doing so, placed an emphasis on the local level.

Yet, scholars have also pointed to the contested nature of alternative modes of belonging that form 'below' the nation-state. There is a fruitful strand of literature that scrutinizes differing understandings of belonging (see for example Yuval-Davis 2006; Pfaff-Czarnecka & Toffin 2011; Yuval-Davis 2011). For instance, Youkhana (2015: 11) emphasizes that modes of belonging are subject to manifold contestations, opening up "a politics of belonging": "Belonging is produced beyond ethnic or national boundaries but is contested on interrelated sites, scales, and networks" (Youkhana 2015: 14). This contested nature of social membership is also emphasized by Soysal's works on postnational forms of citizenship: "Postnational rights are results of struggles, negotiations, and arbitrations by actors at local, national, and transnational levels and are contingent upon issues of distribution and equity" (Soysal 2012: no page number).

In a similar vein, the alternative visions of belonging that were articulated and enacted through practices of refuge support in the area of my field research also proved to be highly contested among different individuals and groups involved. They oscillated *in-between* calls for a radical egalitarian society and more conditioned and hesitant views. It is these diverse positions that I aim to grasp with the concept of a *politics of presence*. In the remainder of this chapter, I scrutinize the contested alternatives to national citizenship that emerged around the German migration summer, arguing that they revolved around a demand for equal rights (section three), a demand for a right to stay (section four) and a demand for a right to migrate (section five).

4.3.   Contestations around Equal Rights

In his closing statement, the moderator at the Welcome2Stay conference put forward a demand for radical political equality: "[...] Secondly, all of us should have *the same political and social rights*! Including to education, housing and

health" (Field notes: 12/6/2016, emphasis added). In his view, such a call for equal rights mirrored a demand shared not only by the audience members of the conference but by many that engaged in practices of refugee support. In contrast, I would suggest that a universal demand for equal rights for all those present on the ground was a highly contested claim among those who supported refugees. In the following subsections, I scrutinize the differing views towards such a demand among the individuals and groups I encountered in the course of my field research. Although some articulated and enacted a universal call for equal rights (first subsection), others made their efforts to integrate asylum seekers as equals contingent on certain categories and, thus, put forward more ambivalent and conditioned positions (second subsection).

4.3.1.   Solidarity Cities: Universal Demands for Equal Rights

In the wake of the migration summer, incentives to implement "Solidarity Cities" emerged in many German cities. A striking example is the Solidarity City network in Freiburg, the second largest city in the southern German state of Baden-Württemberg. This network consisted of a loose alliance of individuals and groups supporting refugees in the city. The main impetus, however, stemmed from the group "Freiburger Forum aktiv gegen Ausgrenzung" (roughly "Freiburg Anti-Exclusion Forum"), as I discovered via its regular email newsletters, to which I subscribed. From mid-2016 on, the Solidarity City Freiburg became a major focus of the group's activities. In the course of my field research, I found the Freiburger Forum to be one of the most visible, well known and influential of the groups across Baden-Württemberg taking a critical stance on the situation of asylum seekers. The group openly voiced dissent with certain asylum policies through demonstrations, open letters and other campaigns that gained high public visibility. Although these actions might mark the group out as more politically informed than others, it neither presented itself as "activist" nor as acting from a leftist political position. This was also mirrored by the Solidarity City Freiburg network, which did not present itself as 'politically activist' but, instead, as an 'open alliance' of diverse groups and individuals.

The Solidarity City Freiburg campaign is a clear example of a group that put forward a radical call for equal rights for all those present within the confines of the city. This is best illustrated in the official flyer that promoted the Solidarity City idea and featured the silhouette of Freiburg in the background. In the foreground was the following statement:

"Our demands are simple: every person living in Freiburg … should have a right to basic services; should have access to the infrastructure of the city; should be able to receive education; should be able to access medical health services; should be able to take part in political decision-making; should have the right to cultural participation; should have the right to stay! And these rights should be independent of the status of the individual person."[3] (Flyer, Solidarity City Freiburg, 2017)[4]

Solidarity, in this context, thus meant a vision of a socially and politically egalitarian society within the confines of the city. This vision is very much in line with what Schwiertz (2016) calls "radical egalitarian citizenship". The rights to be granted in this utopian Solidarity City include not only the right to equal access to the city's basic services but also the right to "take part in political decision-making processes", a right conventionally limited to those classed as national citizens. Furthermore, the Solidarity City project was presented as benefitting *all* and, thus, as a means to improve the city as a whole. This was reflected by the headline of the flyer, which proclaimed "an opportunity for a more just city" (Flyer, Solidarity City Freiburg: 2017).

The alternative understandings of belonging formulated by the Solidarity City Freiburg connect strikingly to the literature on forms of 'urban citizenship' (see Bauböck 2003; Varsanyi 2006; Lebuhn 2013). Different authors suggest that such forms of citizenship present an activist strategy that challenges the nation-state 'from below' by calling for equal rights for the inhabitants of a city (see Kalandides & Vaiou 2012; Canepari & Rosa 2017; Kandylis 2017). Many of these works refer to the writings of Henri Lefebvre (1996) and David Harvey (2012) on the 'right to the city', calling for all of a city's inhabitants to have the right to transform and participate in the reworking of its structures.

Drawing on these works, Purcell (2002: 100) outlines how demands on the 'right to the city' "offer an alternative that directly challenges and rethinks

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3   Translation by LF. German original: "Unsere Forderungen sind einfach: Jede Person, die in Freiburg lebt […] soll ein Recht auf Daseinsgrundversorgung haben; soll Zugang zu Infrastrukturen der Stadt gewährt werden; soll Bildung und Weiterbildung ermöglicht werden; soll medizinische Beratung und Versorgung in Anspruch nehmen können; soll politisch mitbestimmen dürfen; soll das Recht auf kulturelle Teilhabe besitzen; soll das Recht zu bleiben haben! Und diese Rechte sollen unabhängig vom jeweiligen Aufenthaltsstatus der Person sein.".

4   See: https://www.freiburger-forum.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/solidaritycity-flyer-Freiburg.pdf (last accessed 1/8/2020).

the current structure of both capitalism and liberal-democratic citizenship". He thus argues that they not only articulate an alternative vision of social membership but also directly challenge the current status quo. This is also mirrored in the Solidarity City project in Freiburg: the flyer not only put forward a demand for a radical egalitarian alternative but also entailed a critical examination of current conditions of inequality affecting the inhabitants of the city. For instance, it drew attention to the marginalized political status of illegalized migrants, stating that "not all of our fellow citizens hold a German passport and not all have a secure residence status"[5] (Flyer, Solidarity City Freiburg: 2017). The flyer thus spoke out against the distinction between national citizens and aliens, a distinction that creates a situation of unequal rights on the ground. It also repeatedly criticized German asylum laws such as the "Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz", which determines the material and monetary benefits asylum seekers receive from the German state. This law, it claimed, resulted in a situation where asylum seekers were "even worse off" than those on social security benefits. Thus, the project highlighted various ways in which national laws produce inequalities on the ground.

Scholars have engaged more thoroughly with the Sanctuary or Solidarity City movement in the Anglophone world, in particular in Canada and the US (see Ridgley 2008; Ridgley 2011; Bauder 2017) but also in the UK (see Squire 2011b; Squire & Darling 2013). These works outline how such utopian projects challenge the exclusion of marginalized parts of society from national citizenship rights. Squire (2011b: 290), for instance, points out how their campaigns "enact a mobile form of solidarity based on participation through presence", cut across social hierarchies, and blur the distinction between 'guest' and 'host'. Others put forward a more sceptical view of the transformative power of Solidarity Cities. For instance, Bagelman (2013) argues that such imaginaries mobilize "a politics of ease" that is complicit in the existing asylum regime, deferring the debate about exclusionary mechanisms and laws that render asylum seekers vulnerable to the operations of the state.

In the German context, Solidarity Cities have not yet received the same attention as those in the United States. This might be partly explained by the fact that American cities have coped with a substantially higher number of undocumented illegalized migrants for years, from Central American countries for instance. And yet, the example of the Solidarity City network in Freiburg

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5   Translation by LF. German original: "Nicht jede_r unserer Mitbürger_innen hat einen deutschen Pass, und auch nicht jede_r hat einen gesicherten Aufenthaltsstatus.".

clearly illustrates that such alternative imaginaries of urban citizenship have also started to take shape in Germany. In the wake of the long summer of migration, similar drives to implement Solidarity Cities emerged in various cities across the country, for instance in Berlin, Hamburg and Augsburg. Further research is needed in order to investigate their possibilities and limitations when it comes to enacting alternative visions of belonging.

To sum up, the example of the Solidarity City in Freiburg illustrated how alternative visions of society and belonging formed in response to the long summer of migration, alternative visions that revolved around a radical demand for equal rights for all those present on the ground. In the following subsection, I illustrate how many of the volunteers I spoke to in the course of my field research put forward more hesitant and conditioned views on a demand for equal rights. Nevertheless, they positioned themselves in manifold ways in relation to existing exclusions while forging new relationships that aimed to foster more egalitarian alternatives.

4.3.2.   Ambivalent Positions and Conditional Hospitality

Many of the volunteers who engaged in practices of refugee support around the long summer of migration were mobilized by a desire to change the status quo in their local communities in favour of a different alternative. Nonetheless, they often refrained from a radical demand for equal rights. In order to illustrate this, I draw on an intriguing interview with two volunteers supporting refugees in the small village of Berglen. Birgit Frank and Julia Kuch were leading figures in the local citizens' initiative "Network for Refugees" ("Netzwerk für Flüchtlinge"), which had around 80 active members when I interviewed the two women in March 2016. This initiative formed in response to the allocation of around 100 refugees to Berglen in 2015, the first time the village had received asylum seekers. During our interview, I asked the women what had motivated them to get involved in practices of refugee support. Birgit Frank explained there was both a "human" and a "political component" behind her involvement. She explained the latter as follows:

> "I think it is also an opportunity for something to happen regarding social housing, and not just because of the refugees, but also for us to make sure that we don't pit the weak against the weak, that everyone has a minimum standard of living and that there is enough social housing. And that might also wake some of our politicians up to the fact that something has to be

done here because otherwise people really will vote AfD."[6] (Interview with Birgit Frank and Julia Kuch: 14/3/2016)

Quite similar to the Solidarity City network in Freiburg, Birgit Frank thus claimed to be motivated by a vision of society in which "everyone has a minimum standard of living", and equal access to benefits such as social housing. She also problematized the current situation of inequality, in which asylum seekers were pitted against others in "weak" positions, while depicting her actions as an opportunity to "wake up" politicians. I would argue that this clearly illustrates how my interlocutor regarded her helping practices as a means to enact a more egalitarian alternative in her local community, although she did not directly demand equal rights for the newcomers.

In contrast to Birgit Frank, her colleague Julia Kuch explicitly denied that her actions were "political". Nevertheless, she also emphasized her motivation to contribute to the public good in Berglen, saying:

"So from the beginning, I said: I'm not just doing it for the refugees, I'm doing it as much for the people of Berglen, just so that the two can live side by side more tolerably. In that sense, we see ourselves as intermediaries."[7] (Interview with Birgit Frank and Julia Kuch: 14/3/2016)

Julia Kuch thus aimed to change the situation in her local community by "intermediating" between newcomers and established residents. She regarded her practices of refugee support as a means to forge new relationships and to counteract exclusions and isolations on the ground. To Julia Kuch, helping refugees served as a way of ensuring everyone could live side by side and avoiding conflicts, while helping, to Birgit Frank, drew attention to the problems of 'weaker' groups. All the same, both volunteers sought to change their local community by enacting a 'better' alternative on the ground.

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6   Translation by LF. German original: "Ich denk, das ist auch eine Chance, dass jetzt was Richtung Wohnungsbau net nur wegen den Flüchtlingen was passiert, sondern dass wir alle dafür sorgen müssen, dass nicht Schwache gegen Schwache ausgespielt werden, sondern dass wir alle einen Mindeststandard haben und genügend Wohnraum da ist und dass das auch manche politische Ebene wachrütteln wird, dass man was tun muss, weil sonst wird wirklich die AfD gewählt.".

7   Translation by LF. German original: "Also ich hab von Anfang an gesagt, ich mach das nicht nur für die Flüchtlinge, sondern ich mach das genauso gut für die Bevölkerung von Berglen, um einfach ein Zusammenleben zwischen beiden Parteien erträglicher zu machen. Insofern sehen wir uns schon so als Vermittler zwischen beiden.".

In their attempt to conceptualize the "role of individuals in creating change", Martin, Hanson and Fontaine (2007) pose the question: "What counts as activism?". They propose opening up the category of political activism to include not only actions that are conventionally considered 'political' but also everyday actions with a more limited geographic reach. They thus emphasize the significance of local and everyday forms of interaction:

> "activism […] emerges from the everyday lived context (place) in which people are embedded; activism entails an individual making particular kinds of new connections between people that alter power relations within existing social networks" (Martin, Hanson & Fontaine 2007: 80)

Similarly, I would argue, many volunteers in the area of my field research aimed to foster new relationships within their community in order to alter and transform existing power imbalances – and thus engaged in forms of everyday activism. Nevertheless, the volunteers' positions regarding the question of how the more egalitarian alternatives should look like in practice were highly contested and debated. During my interview in Berglen, the two volunteers repeatedly argued when responding to my questions and apparently held quite different standpoints in this regard. To varying extents, their views also differed from the radical call for equal rights made at the Welcome2Stay conference and by the Solidarity City network.

Quite often, volunteers set certain limits on the inclusion of asylum seekers as fellow citizens within their local community and made their efforts to foster a more egalitarian alternative depended on certain categories. My conversation with Julia Kuch illustrated this strikingly: her practices of refugee support turned out to be conditional on the nationality, race and gender of the asylum seekers. This is illustrated by the following statement, in which she talked about the new accommodation centre that had been set up in a former schoolhouse in Berglen:

> "So, we are kind of very blessed here. Up there are many families, many children – they all give you a hug when you get there. If there were 60 black African men up there, that would be something quite different. Just in terms of the character, the potential, the appearance"[8] (Interview with Birgit Frank and Julia Kuch: 14/3/2016)

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8   Translation by LF. German original: "Also wir sind halt schon auch verwöhnt, da oben sind viele Familien, viele Kinder, die nehmen einen alle in Arm, wenn man da oben ankommt. Wenn da oben jetzt 60 schwarzafrikanische Männer wären, dann

Most of the refugees who had arrived in Berglen, Julia Kuch told me, were families of Syrian or Iraqi origin. Therefore, they had good chances of being recognized as 'genuine' refugees in the course of their asylum process, while, in the long-run, they could be socially integrated as equal citizens in Berglen. However, if it had been "black African men" that would have been quite different, my interlocutor asserted. I came across many cases in the course of my field research, where people from Sub-Saharan African countries were depicted as 'bogus' asylum seekers who had claimed asylum for what were considered bogus economic reasons, a perception also mirrored in their generally low rates of recognition by the German government. My interlocutor Julia Kuch, along with her bluntly racist attitudes, thus also made her efforts to support refugees in Berglen contingent on governmental categorizations of 'genuine' and 'bogus' asylum seekers.

Furthermore, volunteers in the area of my field research often made the social integration of asylum seekers as equal members subject to certain rules of conduct. This became strikingly illustrated at the Welcome2Stay conference in Leipzig. As outlined above, the moderator of the final plenary discussion demanded equal rights for all in his closing statement. Yet, this demand also evoked sceptical reactions among audience members, some of whom commented critically on the moderator's proposition. Most strikingly, an elderly woman remarked that these demands were "too universal" and needed to be tied to certain conditions and obligations for the newcomers, such as respect for gender equality and non-patriarchal behaviour (Field notes: 12/6/2016). This comment, I would argue, epitomizes how many of my interlocutors tied their visions of a more egalitarian alternative to certain expectations concerning the behaviour of the present asylum seekers, such as gratitude.

Rather than supporting radical demands for equal rights, many of the volunteers in the area of my field research thus made their hospitality contingent on categories such as nation, gender or expected behaviours. These observations connect with Jacques Derrida's writings on the ethics of hospitality (see Derrida & Dufourmantelle 2000). Building on Kant, Derrida distinguishes between forms of "conditional hospitality" and "unconditional hospitality". The former, the unconditional reception of the foreigner, he argues, would always only present an ideal, a fiction that is impossible to implement in practice (Derrida & Caputo 1997: 110). Enacting hospitality, on the other hand, would

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wäre es auch nochmal was Anderes. Schon allein vom Charakter, vom Potenzial, vom Auftreten.".

always require the imposition of certain conditions and terms upon it. The implementation of hospitality thus revolves around a "negotiation of the impossibility", as O'Gorman (2006: 54) remarks. This, I would argue, is also mirrored in the differing views among those volunteering with refugees in the area of my field research. While the Solidarity City network and the moderator of the Welcome2Stay conference issued a universal call for equal rights – for unconditional hospitality – those who sought to help refugees in their local communities, and thus practically enacted hospitality, often tied the integration of asylum seekers as fellow citizens to certain conditions. Nonetheless, all of them sought to enact a different alternative 'from below' the nation-state.

4.4.   Contestations around a Right to Stay

Along with equal rights, the moderator at the Welcome2Stay conference in Leipzig demanded "a right to stay" (Field notes: 12/06/2016). During my field research, however, I realized that many of my interlocutors had quite ambivalent, and at times conflicting perspectives towards this demand. This was particularly evident in the context of deportations: whether or not asylum seekers whose asylum case was rejected should be granted a right to stay proved a central issue that regularly provoked discussions among those supporting refugees. In the following two subsections, I scrutinize how people in the area of my field research positioned themselves in relation to a demand for a right to stay.

4.4.1.   Taking, or not Taking a Stand against Deportations

For many of my interlocutors, the question of whether all asylum seekers should be granted a right to stay or not was not an easy one. This became most apparent when volunteers discussed the issue of deportations, i.e. the forced return of rejected asylum seekers to their countries of origin or, as in the case of Dublin III deportations, to the EU member state responsible for processing the asylum case. Deportations were a subject that regularly eschewed controversial discussions among the volunteers, for instance, at the conferences of the Refugee Council of Baden-Württemberg. In a nutshell, these debates revolved around the question of whether governmental decisions to reject and deport certain groups of migrants were acceptable or