governance of migration, while practices of refugee support were stripped of subversive and dissonant and hence political potentials.

I employ the term *governance* in order to depict the very principles and objectives that guide acts of governing. With the terminology *governance of migration*, I refer to the particular techniques with which migrants are governed in contemporary European migration societies. One is the ordering of migrants into neat categories of victims and villains of migration. Such modes of governing draw a neat demarcation line between those who become the 'rightful' subjects of protection and those who are excluded, marginalized and rendered deportable (Papadopoulos, Stephenson & Tsianos 2008; Squire 2009; De Genova 2010; Scheel & Ratfisch 2014). Around the long summer of migration, this demarcation crystallized most strikingly in the discrimination between 'genuine refugees', who fled war and persecution, and 'bogus asylum seekers' or 'economic migrants' who ostensibly claimed asylum for false pretences. At times, volunteers in the area of my field research appeared to act as "street-level bureaucrats" (Lipsky 2010 [1980]) who uncritically accepted and implemented such categorizations in the governance of migration. For instance, some of my interlocutors had quite clear preconceptions of who was deserving of their support and who was not, based on the asylum seekers' legal "perspective of staying" ("Bleibeperspektive"). As Agamben (1998: 78) aptly puts it, those who care for the marginalized can "maintain a secret solidarity with the very powers they ought to fight".

An 'apolitical' positionality can thus not only serve as a political position from which to explicitly or implicitly challenge, contest or interrupt dominant exclusions and discriminations. At the same time, ostensibly 'apolitical' forms of refugee support might also end up reproducing or aggravating exclusions and discriminations in migration societies. The five empirical chapters of this book shed light on these ambivalent and contested (anti)political meanings and effects of refugee support around the long summer of migration.

1.3.   Conceptualizing Solidarity in Migration Societies

This book revolves around the concept of *solidarity*. I use this analytical term to describe the social dimensions of 'doing good' – the manifold social imaginaries pertaining to practices of refugee support. In social anthropology, 'solidarity' has long been neglected as a field of interest. As Komter (2005: 1) states, the term has traditionally been used in a highly descriptive and abstract way,

while there has been a notable lack of empirically grounded studies investigating concrete instances of solidarity behaviour. In 2016, however, the journal *Social Anthropology* published a special issue on the "Anthropology of Solidarity" focussing on the practices of solidarity that developed around the fiscal crisis in Greece (Cabot 2016; Green & Laviolette 2016; Rakopoulos 2016; Rozakou 2016; Theodossopoulos 2016). In one, Rakopoulos (2016: 142) argues that "solidarity has not received the attention it deserves from ethnographers".

In the field of critical migration studies, the term solidarity is frequently mentioned (see for example Ataç, Rygiel & Stierl 2016). Until recently, however, it was often more or less taken for granted, with little conceptual reflection (cf. Zuparic-Iljic & Valenta 2019: 134; Schwiertz & Schwenken 2020: 408). Many works employ it vaguely in reference to political lobbying for marginalized others, or they use it as a synonym for activist stances on the topic of migration. In the past years, however, the term began to attract more thorough attention from scholars working on migrant or refugee solidarity (Zamponi 2017; della Porta 2018; Squire 2018; Agustín & Jørgensen 2019; Bauder 2019; Hansen 2019; Siapera 2019; Bauder & Juffs 2020; Parsanoglou 2020). For instance, Agustín and Jørgensen (2019: 2) analyse the meanings of solidarity around the so-called 'refugee crisis' in 2015, arguing that "solidarities, in their different forms and practices, afford a lens for understanding how the crisis also presents a moment for rupture and for creating new imaginaries and for testing new alternatives for more inclusive societies". In their introduction to a special issue on "inclusive solidarity and citizenship along migratory routes in Europe and the Americas", Schwiertz and Schwenken (2020: 406) propose a non-essentialist understanding of solidarity, one that focusses on 'doing solidarity'. Such a perspective, they argue, "sheds light on how practices and acts of solidarity adopt, transform, or produce discourses, spaces, subjectivities, and networks" (ibid.: 418). Thus, scholars have begun to take into account the transformative potentials of practices of solidarity in migration societies.

This book adds to these discussions by (a) contributing to the conceptual understanding of the term solidarity in social anthropology and (b) providing an empirically grounded understanding of solidarity and its practices in migration societies. On the one hand, solidarity is the analytical prism that guides my empirical investigation into practices of refugee support. On the other hand, I sketch out instances in the subsequent chapters of this book when people used the term solidarity as an emic expression. As Parsanoglou (2020: 4) notes, in the wake of the migration summer, solidarity became a

"self-defining label" that is frequently used as a signifier for different forms of collective action (see also Oikonomakis 2018).

My conceptual take on migrant solidarity considers the diverse interests, motivations, effects and imaginaries pertaining to practices of refugee support and argues that they are subject to contestation. Such a perspective allows consideration of the ambivalent (anti)political effects and meanings of refugee support outlined in the previous section. Existing works on refugee support often tend to overlook such ambiguities and ambivalences, distinguishing between forms of 'political activism' and ostensibly 'apolitical humanitarian assistance' from the outset of their analysis then focussing on one or the other. With the analytical bracket of *contested solidarity*, this book demonstrates that it is fruitful to think about both aspects together and to take into account how the political and the humanitarian intermingle in complex and ambivalent ways.

The concept of *contested solidarity* is underpinned by five key elements. Firstly, solidarity is shaped by social imaginaries that are contested among different actors. Secondly, solidarity entails ideals of a 'better society'. Thirdly, solidarity brings into being transformative relationships. Fourthly, solidarity is intertwined with power asymmetries in migration societies. Fifthly, solidarity forges collectivity across differences in migration societies. In the remainder of this section, I introduce these five elements on which my analytical consideration of *contested solidarity* rests in more detail, while connecting my arguments to works that have so far conceptualized the term across the social sciences.

1.3.1. Solidarity as a Contested Imaginary

Migrant solidarity is embedded into social imaginaries that are contested among different actors. These social imaginaries are shaped by personal needs and interests as well as by claims made in the name of the greater public good. What is central here is that these social imaginaries vary among actors and individuals and thus inspire various ideas of solidarity and of the 'right' way to 'do good'. I refer to these differing ideas as *solidarities*, in the plural form. Solidarities come with contrasting meanings and effects and are the subject of constant negotiation between different actors. They give rise to various claims made in the name of solidarity and open up a struggle over the interpretive power to define its parameters. As Agustín and Jørgensen (2019: 28) put it strikingly: "solidarity is itself a battlefield, concerning which type of solidar-

ity should prevail and how". Bähre (2007: 52), in a similar vein, argues that "solidarity is the conflict about the parameters of inclusion". In my reading, thus, conflict and rivalry are part and parcel of solidarity practices. It is these moments of claims-making among different actors, of negotiating the social imaginaries at play, of highlighting certain interests over others that I aim to capture with the notion of *contested solidarity*.

Solidarity is thus a highly ambiguous word that opens up differing interpretations and imaginations (see Fillieule 2001). This ambiguity could even be seen as a central aspect of the term, as Karakayali (2014) argues. Like concepts such as 'democracy' or 'freedom', he asserts, solidarity represents an "empty signifier" (Laclau 1996) that can be filled with a variety of particular messages (Karakayali 2014: 111; see also Agustín & Jørgensen 2019: 25). Lagroye (1996) points to the socially constructed and elusive nature of the term and exhorts us to search for the essence of solidarity, writing: "the expression does not always have the same meaning, being itself the object of controversy between those involved in its promotion" (cited and translated in Fillieule 2001: 54).

In her book *The Ironic Spectator*, Chouliaraki (2012) analyses how the meaning of solidarity has been subject to historic shifts and transformations. She identifies chronologically successive understandings of solidarity that went from an understanding of 'solidarity as revolution' to 'solidarity as salvation' to the recently dominant notion of 'feel-good altruism' (ibid.: 3). The book at hand argues that there is not only a chronology of successive or neatly distinguishable 'types' of solidarity. Migrant solidarities, in my reading, always exist in the plural form. A typification of different forms of solidarity thus risks overlooking how contestation and interpretation always form a constitutive factor in the different understandings ascribed to the term.

1.3.2.   Solidarity as Utopian Ideal

Migrant solidarity is driven by ideals of what society should look like in an age of intensified migration and how people should relate to one another in migration societies. In the course of my field research, such ideals of social togetherness were revealed to be a central mobilizing factor in the emerging solidarities around the long summer of migration (cf. Rozakou 2016). Practices of refugee support often sought to enact certain visions of future society and thus related as much to the present as they did to the future (cf. Vandevoordt & Fleischmann 2020). As Alexander (2006: 3) suggests, there is an important transcendental aspect to solidarity: "Solidarity is possible because

people are oriented not only to the here and now but to the ideal, to the transcended, to what they hope will be the everlasting". Scherr (2013) argues that a utopian moment is central to the meanings of solidarity in that they contribute to the creation of a society based less on competition and inequality and more on cooperation and mutual help.

Migrant solidarity is thus "inventive" of new social relations and political possibilities (see Featherstone 2012: 6; Agustín & Jørgensen 2019: 34). It gives rise to new ideas of belonging beyond the parameters of the nation-state (Rakopoulos 2016: 144). As I outlined in the previous section, however, there is also a 'dark side' to solidarity (see also Komter 2005). Solidarity does not necessarily make for a more egalitarian society; it can have unintended consequences and adverse effects. For instance, it can serve the interests of those who are already 'better off', or it (re)produces dominant categorizations and discriminations, further excluding those who are already marginalized. In the empirical analysis of this book, I thus examine how solidarities foster alternative ideals of social togetherness in migration societies while also considering their contradictions and adverse effects.

1.3.3.   Solidarity as a Transformative Relationship

Migrant solidarity brings into being transformative relationships between established residents and newcomers. It creates new ways of relating across social groups and places that were formerly isolated from one another (see Featherstone 2012: 4). Put differently, solidarity constitutes a "bridge concept" (Rakopoulos 2016) that directs our attention to the relationships that are forged between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in a society. As Reshaur (1992: 724) argues, solidarity is "world-building" in that it establishes a relationship between those who are marginalized and those who are 'better off'. In a similar vein, Hansen (2019: 8) regards solidarity "as a relationship forged between actors in unequal power relations that aims towards a more equal order".

Migrant solidarity is also generative of collective identities and forms a central part of political subject formation (cf. Bauder 2019). For instance, Agustín and Jørgensen (2019: 30f) outline how solidarity is "central to the formation of transformative political subjectivities", while "alliance building is a crucial aspect of solidarity". Quite connectedly, my empirical investigation revealed how practices of refugee support produce transformative networks that involve various actors and individuals and that go far beyond the linear relationship between benefactors and beneficiaries. Practices of solidarity

can also forge new relationships between and among volunteers, established residents, local and national governmental actors, political activists, church representatives, social welfare organizations and other actors involved in the reception of asylum seekers. Migrant solidarity situates these different actors in relation to each other, assigns functions and responsibilities among them and (re)produces hierarchies. These relationships are not primarily established through the rule of law or via formalized regulations, but might be better described as a "sphere of non-contractual relationships" within the nation-state (Karakayali 2014: 115). However, they nonetheless become subject to governmental control and influence: in the third chapter, I illustrate how governmental actors increasingly sought to govern such ostensibly non-contractual relationships through interventions in the self-conduct of committed citizens.

These relationships of solidarity in migration societies are far from static. As I will illustrate in the following chapters, they are highly volatile and elusive. Bauder (2019: 3) puts this as follows: "solidarity is a never-finished practice that prevents political closure and preserves plurality, while acknowledging the complex, fragmented and multifaceted relations between people and groups in different circumstances". This book takes into account how relationships of solidarity are forged and mobilized (see Chapter 2) but also how they dissolve again and can ultimately even be deliberately broken (see Chapter 6).

1.3.4.   Solidarity as Power Asymmetry

Migrant solidarity is intertwined with power asymmetries. It is thus central to consider the power dynamics at play when investigating relationships of solidarity. Those depicted as the ostensible beneficiaries of support, the asylum seekers, do not hold the same citizenship rights as their benefactors. As non-citizens they are in a disadvantaged position, with their rights, possibilities and resources limited in comparison to those recognized as citizens. I would therefore echo the interpretation of Hannah Arendt (1966 [1963]: 84), who calls solidarity a principle that establishes a "community of interest with the oppressed and exploited". Put differently, solidarity produces relationships between groups and individuals with unequal rights and resources.

On the one hand, migrant solidarity can come with possibilities to bridge such inequalities between non-citizens and citizens. Giugni (2001: 236) points to the positive effects of such relationships for their ostensible beneficiaries in that they "put the needs of those populations higher in the political and

public agendas". Solidarity can thus contribute to the social integration and empowerment of asylum seekers in spite of their limited rights. Seen in this light, solidarity functions as "a powerful force for reshaping the world in more equal terms" (Featherstone 2012: 4).

On the other hand, relationships of solidarity can themselves contribute to the creation or aggravation of power asymmetries (see also Paragi 2017: 317). The practices of refugee support explored during my field research produced ambivalent effects that ranged from a levelling of inequalities and an empowering of individuals to the cementing of existing power asymmetries and the production of new discriminations (see also Theodossopoulos 2016; Kirchhoff 2020). Either way, the book at hand aims to contribute to our understanding of solidarity's ambivalent and complex entanglements with power asymmetries in migration societies.

1.3.5.   Solidarity as Social Glue

Migrant solidarity forges collectivity across differences. It serves as a social cement or glue that produces an 'imagined community' centring on the mutual dependency of diverse groups of individuals for the fulfilment of their needs and interests. With this conceptual approach, I highlight how migrant solidarity is driven by both individual *and* collective interests, with the fulfilment of each being dependent on the other. It is a notion that has parallels with the writings of Durkheim (1965 [1893]), a pioneer in the conceptualization of solidarity. He argued that there had been a shift from 'mechanical solidarity' to 'organic solidarity' in light of an increasing division of labour in industrialized societies. In consequence, social cohesion was no longer based on the homogeneity of individuals but on the mutual interdependence of different societal components. From his perspective, "collective consciousness", a unifying force in increasingly heterogeneous societies, emerged from the interdependence of different parts for the fulfilment of individual needs (ibid.).

Building on Durkheim's concept, I would argue that the solidarities that emerged around the long summer of migration responded to individual needs as much as they contributed to a greater public good. In other words, in migration societies, one's own place within a harmonious collectivity necessarily depends on the ability to integrate 'others'. Zoll (2000: 200) sums this up well, arguing that solidarity in migration societies is based both on notions of "concrete difference" and "abstract sameness". Mecheril (2003: 241) even asserts that solidarity actions are only possible on the premise that the actual

living situations of those involved differ from each other. Similarly, I would suggest that rather than erasing differences, the solidarities of the long summer of migration needed those very differences in order to effect meaningful action. Thus, this book also sheds light on the 'imagined communities' that were produced by practices of migrant solidarity.

1.4.   The Political Possibilities of Grassroots Humanitarianism

The practices and discourses of migrant solidarity that emerged around the long summer of migration often resembled what academic studies identify as key features of a humanitarian imaginary (cf. Vandevoordt & Verschraegen 2019: 103). Barnett (2005: 724) describes this as the idea of an ostensibly "impartial, independent, and neutral provision of relief to those in immediate danger of harm", often thought of as being located 'outside' or 'above' politics. Traditionally, academic works on humanitarianism have focused on professionalised international relief operations by large non-governmental organizations, such as *Médecins Sans Frontières* (see for instance Fassin 2007; Scott-Smith 2016). Recently, however, scholars have also directed their attention to what has been termed "grassroots humanitarianism" (McGee & Pelham 2018; Sandri 2018; Vandevoordt & Fleischmann 2020) or "citizen aid" (Fechter & Schwittay 2019). These works account for the increasing engagement of 'ordinary citizens' and less formalized non-professional groups in practices that are driven by a similar humanitarian logic. This book contributes to these debates by investigating the contested meanings and effects of grassroots humanitarian action around the German 'summer of welcome'.

Works in the field of the *anthropology of humanitarianism* have intensively discussed how actions based on a humanitarian imaginary, in fact, end up reproducing the unequal power relations at play (cf. Bornstein & Redfield 2011b). They illustrate that humanitarian action is deeply contradictive, entangled with governmental actors and complicit in the discrimination of marginalized subjects – and hence comes with antipolitical effects (cf. Ticktin 2011). My field research, however, revealed that there is more to such actions: an exclusive focus on the adverse antipolitical effects of humanitarianism risks overlooking how such an imaginary simultaneously opens up transformative political possibilities in the Rancièrian sense. I would thus echo the observation by Ticktin (2014: 283) that overly pessimistic interpretations lead conceptual works on humanitarian action into a "cul-de-sac of critique". In order to move beyond