Introduction

My research for this book began with a genuine interest in the fate of the volunteers, activists, groups, and organizations who engaged in refugee support in 2015 and 2016. During this period, more than one million people applied for asylum in Germany. Approximately five million people in Germany provided support to refugees[1] during this time. The pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 was characterized by a significant amount of informal volunteering and activism, the creation of approximately 15,000 new projects and groups dedicated to supporting refugees, and the participation of numerous established civil society organizations and groups (Schiffauer et al., 2017, p. 13ff.). Scholars in Germany and across Europe have produced rich insights into the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 (Boersma et al., 2019; Gundelach & Toubøl, 2019; Simsa et al., 2019; Monforte & Maestri, 2023; Alcalde & Portos, 2018; Feischmidt et al., 2019; Schiffauer, 2022; Karakayali, 2016; Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017b; Carlsen et al., 2022; Toubøl, 2019). However, there has been limited research on what came once mobilization declined after 2016 (Dinkelaker et al., 2021).

Five years after this unprecedented increase in civic action in Germany, I was curious about the lasting effects of the pro-refugee mobilization. What happened to all those volunteers and activists, to the new initiatives and projects, and the organizations involved in supporting refugees? Did this spontaneous upsurge in civic action have a lasting impact on the structures and connections between these diverse actors? I quickly realized that research on this question was limited. Civil society research has not yet systematically tracked the consequences of the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 on civil

1 In the book, I use a broad definition of "refugee" that encompasses forced migrants with a wide range of legal statuses, including asylum seekers, persons with a humanitarian protection status, or persons with temporary protection from deportation.

society itself. By the end of 2016, around one year after the peak of the mobilization, support activities for refugees had begun to decline. Along with the decreasing activities and shrinking number of refugees entering the country, public attention and media coverage also declined (Gesemann et al., 2019; van den Berg et al., 2020). However, it was unclear whether this decline marked the end of the story or whether something else had happened.

To fully understand this phenomenon, I began researching the effects of the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 as part of a larger research project called "The Activated Civil Society"[2] (German: "Die Aktivierte Zivilgesellschaft") funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany. In order to gain initial insights into the lasting impacts of the pro-refugee mobilization, my colleague and I conducted a pilot study in three cities in southern Germany at the beginning of 2020. We had heard from acquaintances that southern Germany had witnessed quite strong pro-refugee mobilization and wanted to see whether one of the cities would be a good place to start our research.

We interviewed three volunteers who were involved in the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 and had since then engaged in refugee support. Luisa, a volunteer from the very beginning, was one of them. She told us that her involvement had started in 2014. In that year, her city and many neighboring cities and villages in the district were already experiencing an increased influx of refugees, which only intensified in 2015. To support these newly arriving refugees by providing them with the basic necessities, Luisa and a small group of 10 other volunteers created a refugee-support group. Simultaneously, across the entire district, volunteers and activists created new refugee-support groups. Stephan, a Lutheran pastor and volunteer whom I also interviewed for this project, recalled how fortunate it was that so many people wanted to help:

2 The three-year research project, titled "The Activated Civil Society. An analysis of the sustainable impact of civic engagement on social capital and public welfare in Germany" (2020–2023), was a collaborative effort between the WZB Berlin Social Science Center, the German Center for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM), and the Institute of Intercultural Studies at the University of Osnabrück. The project partners examined the long-term impacts of the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 at various levels: (1) the impacts on the lives of volunteers and activists, (2) the impacts on inter-organizational networks, and (3) the impacts on the relationships between civil society and the state.

> "That was a stroke of luck for us. Not only the left-wing students, of whom we have very few in the district anyway, but also doctors or teachers who had just retired got involved. […] And so seven or eight refugee-support groups were already founded [in 2014] […]."

When the number of refugees arriving in the district rose even more in 2015/16, the number of volunteers and activists in each refugee-support group increased from around 10 people to 60 people. Additionally, many more groups were founded in the district that year. By the summer of 2015, the district, with around 150,000 residents, had 28 refugee-support groups. Luisa recalled her surprise when so many people showed up to their small group in 2015:

> "2015 was a remarkable mobilization when you think about it. In my village and neighboring towns and villages, there were groups of five to six people who had started helping refugees in 2014. Then, in 2015, we all decided to make our small group meetings public: 'We meet on Thursdays at 8 p.m., and anyone who wants to help with the refugees is invited to come'. We set up 20 chairs. Suddenly, each group had about 60 new people attending. This was an amazing turnout."

According to Luisa, she and her fellow volunteers were astonished by the amount of support offered in 2015. Similar scenarios occurred in neighboring towns and cities, where over 100 people suddenly wanted to contribute in various ways, including donating clothes, teaching German, and providing childcare.

Five years after they had begun volunteering in refugee support, the three interviewees from the pilot study still met with other volunteers from that time and remained involved in their local refugee-support groups. There were fewer people involved in refugee-support activities than during the height of the mobilization period, but the groups were still thriving. They were excited to tell us about *Asylum with Us*, the semi-institutionalized volunteer network they had founded to combine some of the efforts of each refugee-support group. They also informed us about the twice-yearly asylum summits organized by different refugee-support groups in the region. The summits brought together volunteers and activists from various groups in southern Germany to discuss the current state of refugee support and advocate for progressive changes in asylum and migration policy.

Although mobilization reached its peak one year after it began, and the number of volunteers and their activities declined in scope after 2016, my three interviewees from southern Germany gave me the impression that a community had emerged. To me, it appeared that something had stuck. However, it was unclear what exactly had stuck. Based on these initial findings, my research explored whether the observations in the pilot study were coincidental or if the development and survival of pro-refugee communities could be systematically observed as an outcome of the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16.

Research Question and Design

To take a big step forward in understanding what really happened after the decline of pro-refugee activities, I investigated the lasting effects of the pro-refugee mobilization in Germany six years later. In this book, I examine whether the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 led to the development and survival of new pro-refugee communities. The results of my comparative case study of four German cities indicate that pro-refugee communities developed and sustained themselves in two of the four cities. Consequently, this book specifically examines the factors and conditions that contributed to the development and survival of these types of communities in two cities and their failure to survive and develop in the other two.

This book explores pro-refugee communities as a case of *local civic action communities*. I developed this concept to study community building in the differentiated civic landscapes of today, which encompass a broad range of entities and activities. Local civic action communities consist of individuals and collective actors who work together towards a shared vision through civic action (for more on civic action, see Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014). Individuals such as volunteers, activists, mayors, social workers, and business owners and collective actors such as organizations and groups, alliances, and coalitions are engaged in civic action in a particular locality and have a shared vision toward which they are working. This vision is derived from a local problem or set of problems that the collective actors wish to address.

My concept of local civic action communities is related to the concept of social movement communities developed by Suzanne Staggenborg (2013, 2020). However, the actors involved in what I consider local civic action communities are less politicized and do not support or identify with a particular social movement as in Staggenborg's (2013, 2020) conceptualization. Moreover, most

of the community activities I looked at are concerned with local or regional manifestations of global problems rather than global problems themselves. Local civic action communities also do not necessarily actively oppose authorities and they do not have a clear political agenda, which social movement communities tend to have.

The concept of local civic action communities offers a framework to study community building and resilience in such differentiated civic landscapes over time. As an idea, it has the potential to enrich civil society research as it provides significant insights into community building and grassroots mobilization across these diverse sets of actors. Since the notion of local civic action communities involves this broad range of actors, with varying degrees of political actions and agendas, it allows me to also examine the role and position of different actors in community building, resilience and civic action.

To explore the development and survival of pro-refugee communities and the drivers and barriers to their development, I have used a qualitative embedded case study approach. I have examined four different medium-sized cities in Germany, each with a unique civic landscape, within the larger context of pro-refugee mobilization. All the cases shared the experience of pro-refugee mobilization, which was the larger phenomenon I studied. Through my research, I identified three major features that characterized the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 across cases: (i) the significant rise in spontaneous civic action, (ii) the increased interaction between individuals, groups, and organizations, and (iii) the emergence of new, more informal groups and initiatives. After the end of 2016, the scale and intensity of civic action declined again in each case.

Based on extensive case research and expert interviews, my colleagues from the larger research project "The Activated Civil Society" and I selected four cities that were representative for their region and experienced the pro-refugee mobilization with the three features mentioned above. The final cases selected were the following four cities, each in one of the main regions in Germany: Loburg (East), Altenau (North), Neheim (West), and Lauda (South). As I explain in more detail in the research design (Chapter 3), I chose to anonymize the city names to protect the privacy of the interviewees.

We decided to sample medium-sized cities (20,000 – 99,999 inhabitants) because there has been a disproportionate focus on large cities in case study research. Yet, this focus is out of step with the actual movements of refugees, who were distributed relatively evenly across Germany and reached many cities of that size. Small and medium-sized cities (5,000 – 99,999 inhabitants)

are where the majority of people in Germany live (Deutscher Städtetag, 2022). Given that refugees often end up in such cities[3] and the majority of people in Germany live in them, it is imperative to monitor the impact of migration on civil society in such smaller urban centers. Moreover, the smaller population size of medium-sized cities enabled me to interview most, if not all, of the key actors engaged in refugee support and advocacy in each city.

The principal data for my study came from extensive qualitative interview material combined with field visits, participant observations, and additional document analyses. Between 2020 and 2022, I conducted 83 semi-structured qualitative interviews in the four selected cities, each lasting between 45 and 90 minutes. The interviewees were volunteers, activists, and employees from volunteer-run refugee-support groups, grassroots associations, and political initiatives to sports clubs, church congregations, and welfare organizations. In addition, I analyzed meeting minutes, brochures, and newsletters provided by the interviewees. I also attended some meetings where the actors active in the pro-refugee communities came together, such as summits and council meetings.

In my research design, the focus is on organizations and groups involved in the pro-refugee mobilization. The aim was to understand the extent to which these organizations and groups developed new and more extensive networks through continuous interaction in the post-mobilization period. To measure the emergence and survival of pro-refugee communities, I investigated sustained forms of interaction between the organizations and groups involved in the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16. Based on this information, I investigated the relational impacts of the pro-refugee mobilization by using the thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and conducting qualitative ego-centered network analyses (Crossley et al., 2015) on the interorganizational and intergroup level.

To summarize, this book aims to determine whether the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 contributed to the development and survival of pro-refugee

3 The distribution of refugees in Germany is done according to a calculated admission quota called the "Königsstein Key". Depending on a state's tax revenue and population, refugees are distributed relatively evenly across Germany, where they can then apply for asylum (BAMF, 2022). The federal states have their own laws regarding the distribution of refugees within their state, but refugees are distributed across federal states in different districts and cities of different sizes (Leitlein et al., 2015; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021)

communities in Germany. In particular, the book explores the factors and conditions behind the development and survival of those communities.

Overview of Contributions

This book makes a big step towards better understanding the lasting effects of the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 on the structures of local civil society and community building. As I will discuss in greater detail in the next section, scholars in Germany and across Europe have conducted extensive research on the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16. Nevertheless, most studies have not explored the lasting effects of the mobilization. Furthermore, they have tended to examine the situation in isolation, focusing on specific types of organizations and groups (De Jong, 2019; Easton-Calabria & Wood, 2021; Hunger & Holz, 2019; Kanellopoulos et al., 2021; Meyer & Ziegler, 2018; Simsa et al., 2019; Wyszynski et al., 2020); on volunteers' and activists' lives, motivations, and struggles (Carlsen et al., 2022; Feischmidt & Zakariás, 2020; Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017; Gundelach & Toubøl, 2019; Karakayali, 2016; Schwiertz & Steinhilper, 2020); or on the experiences of refugees and the effects of refugee support on refugees themselves (Bagavos & Kourachanis, 2022; Bergfeld, 2017; Easton-Calabria & Wood, 2021; Funk, 2018; Zick & Preuß, 2019).

There has been insufficient attention to the differentiated civic landscape as a whole that we see in refugee support and advocacy today. By exploring the bigger picture, I show how the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 affected civil society's relational foundations and structures. Consequently, rather than focusing on single organizations or on the lives of individuals, I aim to demonstrate whether and how pro-refugee communities emerged and survived in the kind of differentiated civic landscape that is typical for today; this is one that involves volunteers and activists, informal groups and traditional membership-based associations, and other entities situated between and beyond these categories (see della Porta, 2020a; Diani, 2015; Edwards, 2014).

In addition to taking a big step forward regarding the study of the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16, my work advances the research on solidarity towards migrants and refugees more broadly. While the scholarly literature on refugee and migrant solidarity actions is not extensive, it has expanded over the last years. These scholars have focused on how solidarity towards refugees and the pro-migrant movement has manifested in Europe and the United States (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019; Bloemraad & Voss, 2020; della Porta, 2018;

della Porta & Steinhilper, 2022; Feischmidt et al., 2019; Gundelach & Toubøl, 2019; W. Nicholls, 2019), on the emergence and continued support of refugees from Ukraine (Bang Carlsen et al., 2023; Haller et al., 2022; Höltmann et al., 2022; Mikheieva & Kuznetsova, 2024), and on the relationships between volunteers and activists with refugees and political institutions (Bock, 2018; Carlsen et al., 2022; Eckhard et al., 2021; Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017; Parsanoglou, 2020; Schiffauer, 2022; Toubøl, 2019). My work contributes to this research by examining the challenges encountered in campaigns of solidarity towards refugees and migrants, especially those relating to the specific conditions present in specific localities. Notably, in my empirical chapters, I will shed light on the factors and conditions driving community building regarding the agency of actors in creating ongoing forms of interaction, organizational differences, and local political opportunity structures.

Lastly, this book bridges social movement studies with voluntarism/nonprofit studies by linking crucial theoretical and empirical perspectives from both fields and exploring the "relational" outcomes of mobilization periods. First, the boundaries between both fields have become increasingly blurred, but the two are rarely brought together, as I will highlight in a subsequent section in more detail (but see Diani, 2015). The hybridization of these fields was evident in recent crises such as the Great Recession or the pro-refugee mobilization as it involved forms of actions and types of actors that are typically studied in either of the subfields of the civil society literature (della Porta, 2020a).

Second, research on the relational outcomes of mobilization periods is scarce in civil society research overall. The general assumption is that the civil society networks spawned during mobilization periods are spontaneous and issue-specific and that they break down easily when the problem becomes less present in the public imagination. In fact, this is not always the case. As I show, in two of the four cities, pro-refugee communities not only emerged but sustained themselves over a period of six years. While social movement researchers have extensively studied movement outcomes (Bosi et al., 2015), they have devoted less effort to examining how mobilization periods transform movements themselves and specifically how they affect their relational foundations and interconnections within the broader civic landscape. To answer how interaction and networks are sustained in the post-mobilization period, I bring together studies of social movements, voluntarism, and nonprofits with organizational sociology, public administration studies, and network studies.

To sum up, research on the lasting effects of the pro-refugee mobilization is scarce. However, we know a great deal about the mobilization period itself. This understanding is crucial with a view to understanding the effects of this mobilization period, because it allows us to comprehend the nature of the civic landscape in which the mobilization took place and the opportunities that may have been created during this period. In the following section, I provide a brief overview of what we know about the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16. I highlight the types of actors who were mobilized, their activities, and their motivations. I subsequently present a discussion of current research on the effects of mobilization periods and the lack thereof, demonstrating how my research is embedded in the current discourse in the scholarly civil society literature.

The Pro-Refugee Mobilization of 2015/16

The movement of refugees to Europe underwent a significant shift in 2015, with hundreds of thousands of individuals seeking refuge in the Near and Middle East, particularly in countries such as Turkey and Jordan, subsequently crossing into Europe. This development coincided with the suspension of the Dublin Agreement by several European nations during the summer of 2015, leading to the opening of their borders to a substantial influx of refugees entering Northern and Western Europe. Consequently, substantial numbers of refugees arrived at prominent train stations in major European cities, such as Munich and Berlin, over the course of several weeks and months. (Alcalde & Portos, 2018; Boersma et al., 2019; Carlsen & Toubøl, 2022; Schiffauer, 2022; Simsa et al., 2019).

In European civil society, the stark increase in refugee numbers sparked an unprecedented pro-refugee mobilization. While some European politicians and citizens advocated for stricter isolation policies, many host communities also demonstrated a strong sense of solidarity with refugees (Boersma et al., 2019; Carlsen & Toubøl, 2022; Feischmidt et al., 2019). Volunteers and activists in countries like Germany (Schiffauer, 2022; Schiffauer et al., 2018), Denmark (Toubøl, 2019), Sweden (Kleres, 2018; Povrzanović Frykman. & Mäkelä, 2020), the Netherlands (Boersma et al., 2019), Austria (Simsa et al., 2019) and Spain (Alcalde & Portos, 2018) came together, initially very informally, to support the newly arriving refugees by providing them with basic necessities. While the situation varied in scale and quality across countries, most of the initial support was similar to that provided in disaster relief efforts. Volunteers provided

basic supplies of clothing, food, and care. Faced with national authorities and governmental agencies that could barely cope, a host of civil society organizations, associations, and individuals provided emergency aid throughout their communities. In addition to this emergency aid, volunteers and activists also engaged in more contentious activities such as demonstrations and street protests (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019; Aumüller, Jutta, 2016; Boersma et al., 2019; Carlsen & Toubøl, 2022; della Porta, 2018; Hamann & Karakayali, 2016; Simsa et al., 2019).

The increase in the number of refugees arriving in Europe in 2015 and 2016 is commonly referred to as the "European refugee crisis". However, migration and civil society scholars have referred to the recent increase in refugee migration to Europe as the "long summer of migration" (Kasparek & Speer, 2015) or the "refugee reception crisis" (see Ambrosini et al., 2019; Rea et al., 2019). Rea et al. (2019a, p. 16) have noted that the summer of 2015 and the arrival of many refugees was portrayed as an "exodus" to create panic, which served the agenda of certain media and international institutions. The term "refugee reception crisis," which I employ in this book, highlights that the crisis was not due to the increased number of refugees per se, but to the poor preparation of authorities and governmental agencies in the countries of arrival (Eckhard et al., 2021; Simsa et al., 2019).

Of all these countries, Germany was considered to have an unparalleled "welcoming culture" and a strong sense of solidarity with refugees (The Economist, 2015). There was an upsurge in spontaneous, grassroots support for refugees, which had not been seen since German unification (Schiffauer et al., 2018, p. 29). In 2015, news spread worldwide that Chancellor Angela Merkel had decided to open the borders, famously declaring "wir schaffen das" (Engl.: "we can do it") (Cohen, 2015). In the spring of 2014, just 1 percent of the German population was involved in refugee support and advocacy (Robert Bosch Stiftung, 2014, p. 19), but by the fall of 2015, this figure had surged to 11 percent (Ahrens et al., 2021) (Ahrens et al., 2021). Compared to the years between 1990 and 1992, when around 890,000 asylum applications were registered in Germany in the context of the Balkan war, the support in 2015/16 was much greater in scope and in terms of organizational structures (Speth & Becker, 2016, p. 39). Between 2015 and mid-2017, 25 percent of adults in Germany were involved in civil society efforts to support refugees (BMFSFJ, 2017).

The German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) indicates that in 2015 and 2016, approximately 32 percent of the German population participated in some form of refugee support. Most individuals (28 percent) provided financial

or material donations, while smaller groups volunteered locally (6 percent) or joined signature campaigns and demonstrations (5 percent) (Alscher et al., 2018, p. 380). According to Schiffauer (2017, p. 13), more than five million citizens were engaged in around 15,000 projects and refugee-support groups during this time. Additionally, various local civil society organizations, such as sports clubs, recreational associations, church communities, and welfare organizations, played an active role in refugee assistance across Germany (Krimmer, 2019).

Similar to mobilizing structures in other European countries, many people who began engaging in refugee support in Germany did so informally. In contrast to traditional volunteering, which is organized under the umbrella of established civil society organizations, the volunteers and activists of 2015/16 organized themselves in small groups, mainly through informal personal networks (Hamann & Karakayali, 2016). This stronger informality is often associated with social movement activism (see della Porta, 2018, p. 11) and volunteering in response to natural disasters (Boersma et al., 2019; Simsa et al., 2019). Of course, during 2015 and 2016, established organizations such as the Red Cross, humanitarian and disaster relief organizations, and traditional NGOs were active in refugee support. Yet, studies have also shown that informal volunteering and volunteering by small groups, such as refugee-support groups, played a significant role in supporting refugees (della Porta, 2018, p. 11; Schiffauer et al., 2017).

The pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 attracted many individuals who had previously been active in civil society. At the same time, numerous individuals who had no experience in traditional volunteering were also mobilized (Ahrens et al., 2021; Mutz & Wolff, 2018). In an online survey of 460 volunteers, Karakayali and Kleist (2016, p. 19) found that more than half of the people who became active in refugee support in 2015 did not engage in volunteering or activism in the years before. These findings are also supported by the results of the 2017 ZiviZ survey (Priemer, Jana, 2017, p. 39).

Studies show that people had varied motivations for engaging in refugee support. According to Daphi (2017, p. 41) involvement was influenced by the humanitarian needs of the refugees. Therefore, their support of refugees could be seen as a humanitarian engagement kindled due to compassion for refugees. According to Karakayali and Kleist (2016, p. 31ff.), the primary motivation for most volunteers was a sense of community and the opportunity to learn about other cultures. A smaller study conducted by Mutz and Wolff (2018) on refugee support in Munich suggests that many volunteers viewed their engagement

as a form of political engagement. Regarding the diversity of individuals involved in refugee support, Schiffauer et al. (2017, p. 22ff.) has noted that this group included many people who had never participated in a demonstration before. In 2015/16, they observed that these individuals were exposed to more politically active people and began considering participating in these forms of protest themselves (Schiffauer et al., 2017, p. 22ff.).

After what has been referred to as a "magical moment" of 2015 (Schiffauer et al., 2018, p. 9), the number of volunteers and activists supporting refugees declined in 2016. And not only did the number of volunteers and activists decrease; so, too, did the scope of support activities. Although there are fewer large-scale systematic studies that have measured this downward trend across Germany, it is quite evident that the mobilization period peaked in 2015/16 and then declined (Gesemann et al., 2019; van den Berg et al., 2020; Wagner et al., 2023).

There has been rigorous research on the pro-refugee mobilizations of 2015/16 in Germany and other European countries. However, as I have emphasized, there has been limited attention paid to the lasting effects and potential transformations of civil society structures. Empirical studies have documented the emergence and growth of civil society activities in 2015 and 2016 but they have not gone beyond 2017. This research gap even extends to the study of the relational effects of mobilization periods more broadly and to research on today's differentiated civic landscape, as I will show in the next section.

Research on Mobilization Effects in Today's Civic Landscape

So far, I have highlighted the limits of research on how the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 lastingly impacted the relational foundations and structure of civil society. In the following, I will further situate my research at the intersection of social movement studies and voluntarism/nonprofit studies. I will discuss the limited attention given to the relational effects of mobilization periods and to today's differentiated civic landscape.

When do mobilization periods, such as the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16, have lasting effects on the activities, patterns of interaction, and connections between the volunteers, activists, and organizations and groups involved? Civil society research has not confidently answered this question. The main strands of scholarship—social movement studies and voluntarism/non-

profit studies—have scarcely focused on the relational impacts of heightened periods of mobilization or on the broader, more differentiated type of civic landscape in which mobilization occurs (but see Diani, 2015). Social movement studies have significantly contributed to understanding the political, institutional, and biographical outcomes of collective action since the late 1990s (see Bosi et al., 2015). However, they have offered limited insights into how these periods shape the civic landscape itself, including the networks and interaction dynamics within that landscape[4]. Similarly, scholars in the field of voluntarism/nonprofit studies have provided rich insights into the effects of mobilization (e.g. post-disaster or pro-refugee mobilization) on the emergence of new ad hoc volunteer engagement and organizational capacities and resources (Boersma et al., 2019; Hawkins & Maurer, 2010; Kim et al., 2022; Toubøl, 2019). Yet, they also fail to address the impact that these mobilization periods may have on civil society structures and community building.

Scholarly discussions have tended to focus more on the initiation of mobilization and collective action than on how they conclude (Tarrow, 1998; Zeller, 2022). Yet, scholars have consistently shown that periods of intensified mobilization lead to greater interaction between individuals and organizations. In such periods, people modify their interaction habits and deepen their relationships, often solidifying existing bonds or establishing new ones (della Porta, 2020b; della Porta & Mosca, 2005; Hawkins & Maurer, 2010; McAdam et al., 1996; Staggenborg, 2020). Even when mobilization diminishes and the factors driving increased interaction change, these connections can endure. I highlight under what conditions mobilization periods can lead to the formation or strengthening of networks that continue to thrive and expand, even in periods of low mobilization.

In addition to the research gap regarding the relational effects of mobilization, social movement studies and voluntarism/nonprofit studies have typically focused on studying actors and actions that are representative of their

4 While there has been little research that calls these effects "relational" outcomes (but see Wood et al. 2017), there are scholars that have mentioned the impacts of campaigns and protests on organization's and activists' relationships. For instance, Staggenborg and Lecomte (2009) pointed to the positive impacts of the Montreal Women's Movement on the relationships between the organizations involved. Similarly, Taylor (1989, p. 762) highlighted in her research on abeyance structures that the women's movement continued to exist due to strong social movement organizations and strong activist networks that sustained goals and tactics on the one hand, but also the collective identity, on the other.

field while paying less attention to the diverse contemporary civic landscapes (but see Diani, 2015; Eliasoph & Cefaï, 2021; Lichterman, 2021; Staggenborg, 2020). In other words, social movement researchers have focused on protest and activism, while other civil society researchers who study voluntarism and the nonprofit sector have had a greater interest in volunteer organizations and groups, nonprofit management, and formal collaborations (della Porta, 2020a).

In my work, I bridge the gap between two subfields in civil society research and examine the current diverse civic landscape, encompassing actors and actions that are typically studied in one of the fields only. In this vein, della Porta (2020a) has recently proposed bringing together social movement studies and civil society research, including voluntarism/nonprofit studies, as both fields share many theoretical interfaces and empirical overlaps. According to her, social movement studies have traditionally focused on conflict, while other strands in civil society research have been more concerned with connections, cohesion, and social capital (della Porta, 2020a, p. 2). In social movement studies, the focus has been on activism, protest, and collective identity, while scholars of voluntarism/nonprofit studies have tended to concentrate on volunteering and NGO cooperation. However, della Porta (2020) notes that the theoretical and empirical boundaries between both fields are becoming increasingly blurred. For instance, norms of solidarity and identity issues are receiving more attention, as are efficacy and citizen involvement. According to della Porta (2020a, p. 9), recent crises such as the Great Recession or the pro-refugee mobilization have empirically reinforced this hybridization. The pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 involved both typical volunteering activities and established civil society associations, such as sports clubs and church congregations, as well as activism and civil disobedience by more politicized NGOs (della Porta & Steinhilper, 2022; Monforte & Maestri, 2023; Stjepandić et al., 2022; Toubøl, 2019).

In light of these blurred boundaries, I employ a civil society definition that mirrors the diverse associational life that exists outside the state and market (see Anheier, 1990). I specifically subscribe to Michael Edward's understanding of associational life (2014, p. 33f.), which involves

> "all associations and networks between the family and the state in which membership and activities are 'voluntary,' including NGOs of different kinds, labor unions, political parties, churches and other religious groups,

> professional and business associations, community and self-help groups, social movements and the independent media".

Two major clarifications are necessary to this definition. First, as Edwards (2014) has noted, the term "voluntary" encompasses both paid professionals and volunteers. However, the involvement of these individuals is voluntary, and the practices are "voluntaristic", meaning that they are based on dialogue, bargaining, and negotiations rather than on enforced compliance (M. Edwards, 2014, p. 34). Second, the term "associational life" gives the impression that this life or "ecosystem" of civil society is strictly connected to formal entities. However, this ecosystem is constituted by a multitude of "overlapping memberships, cross-interest coalitions, hybrid organizations," and a vast array of grassroots organizations and informal groups (M. Edwards, 2014, p. 127).

In this vein, Tarrow (1993) and della Porta (2020a) have similarly noted that, in contemporary civic landscapes, actors cover a broad spectrum, ranging from professionalized organizations such as resource-rich social movements and welfare organizations to smaller associations and informal groups. Consequently, today's civic landscapes encompass both politically oriented organizations with extensive experience in protest and those operating within the nonprofit and voluntary sectors. Owing to the decline in traditional volunteering in membership-based organizations and the rise of individualized forms of volunteering, including project-based and temporary volunteering (Boersma et al., 2019; Cnaan et al., 2021; Hustinx, 2005; Hyde et al., 2016; Kewes & Munsch, 2019; Simsa et al., 2019, p. 104), today's civic landscapes encompass various informal forms of organizing, such as projects and small activist/volunteer groups.

Recent examples of these types of local mobilization periods include the solidarity actions and demonstrations in support of migrants and refugees in Europe and the United States (Bloemraad & Voss, 2020; Carlsen et al., 2021; della Porta & Steinhilper, 2022; Stjepandić et al., 2022), the community support and activism during and after the financial crisis in Greece (Malamidis, 2020; Tzifakis et al., 2017), the Women's March and anti-Trump resistance (Corrigall-Brown, 2022; Gose & Skocpol, 2019; Skocpol & Tervo, 2020), and the mobilization in response to emergencies such as Hurricane Katrina (Hawkins & Maurer, 2010; Rodríguez et al., 2006; Wang & Ganapati, 2018).

So far, scholars have not yet systematically studied the impact of these mobilization periods on sustained interaction and networking in the post-mobi-

lization period. While they have identified increases in interaction during mobilization periods, it is not clear what drives the persistence and development of networks and community building once the mobilization is over.

Book Outline

The goal of this book is to investigate how local civic action communities develop and survive after periods of heightened mobilization. Specifically, I explore whether and under what conditions the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 led to the development and survival of pro-refugee communities in four German cities.

Given the paucity of previous research on my specific topic, the structure of this book is largely informed by my empirical findings, which I generated by applying a combined inductive and deductive approach to analyzing the interview data I collected. The first part encompasses the theoretical framework (Chapter 2) and the research design (Chapter 3). Since previous research on my topic was scarce, I utilized Chapter 2 to introduce my concept of local civic action communities, discuss the research gap, and highlight three dimensions that guided the search for driving factors and conditions.

The second part presents a long and detailed empirical analysis of the overall results regarding the development and survival of pro-refugee communities in each case (Chapter 4). The objective of this second part is to demonstrate the development and survival of pro-refugee communities in two cities, as well as the absence of such communities in two others. This part closely follows the developments in each case, beginning with the pro-refugee mobilization of 2015/16 and the subsequent decline in mobilization from the end of 2016 until the year of 2020, which marked the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The third and final part of this book builds upon the extensive case analyses presented in the second part. This section presents a systematic examination of the factors and conditions that facilitate or impede the development and survival of new pro-refugee communities. In each of the three chapters, I conducted a paired case analysis with the objective of identifying one or more factors or conditions that either facilitate or impede community building. The three factors I identified are as follows: local brokers and their abilities to maintain interaction (Chapter 5), cultural, strategic, and resource differences across organizations with varying degrees of professionalization (Chapter 6), and trust-building in the interaction of civil society and local governmen-

tal representatives (Chapter 7). Using a combined inductive and deductive approach, I have generated these factors and conditions by analyzing and comparing major themes and patterns in each case, as well as by conducting extensive readings of the relevant literature. These extensive analyses and readings have resulted in the paired comparisons that I present in Part 3 of this book.

Chapter 5 highlights the role played by local brokers in sustaining interaction in the pro-refugee communities by continually creating a diverse set of interaction opportunities. I conceptualize local brokers as active agents who create opportunities for interaction and thus continually bring people together in their locality. This understanding of brokers builds on recent innovations in organizational sociology and was coined by David Obstfeld, Stephen P. Borgatti, and Jason Davis (2014). By employing this more nuanced conceptualization of brokerage, I advance the current understanding of brokers and supplement the literature of social movement studies with recent concepts in organizational sociology. I first demonstrate how local brokers built trust and recognition within their communities, a significant precondition for community building. In the second step, I show how brokers used a diversified approach to create interaction opportunities. This diversification included three types of interaction opportunities involving non-contentious and contentious actions: (i) maintaining the core work, (ii) policy advocacy on asylum and migration, and (iii) broadening the issue by organizing events beyond the issue of local refugee support (including connecting the pro-refugee community with activists combating far-right extremism). Through this unique lens of brokers as active agents, I explore how local brokers emerge and what kinds of strategies they employ to keep interaction and networking alive.

Chapter 6 highlights major obstacles to collaboration and community by focusing on the interaction dynamics between well-established, professionalized organizations and more informal volunteer and activist groups. I focus on the influential presence of well-established, professionalized organizations, a key contributor to the dynamics in these two cities. The primary question revolves around why the more informal groups had difficulties institutionalizing themselves and, more importantly, why there were so few sustainable collaborations between well-established organizations and more informal groups. To explain why the development of pro-refugee communities in these two cities did not occur, I draw on insights from voluntarism/non-profit studies and from social movement research and identify three major obstacles to collaboration and community building between different types of actors

in civil society: (i) differences in resource power, (ii) distinctions in networking strategies, and (iii) diverging cultures of interaction. Based on these theoretical building blocks, I highlight how these factors endanger collaborations between professionalized, well-established organizations and more informal groups, such as local community and grassroots groups.

Chapter 7 examines the dual importance of co-production in fostering improved interaction within civil society and enhancing civil society-state collaboration. Specifically, I investigate how trust is built in the interactions between local government officials, volunteers, and activists, which is essential for sustainable co-production. Drawing on the concept of linking social capital, I emphasize the importance of promoting norms of respect and fostering trust between individuals who engage across power divides (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). Co-production offers civil society actors significant opportunities to engage in policy-making and cultivate closer ties between organizations involved in refugee support and advocacy. Therefore, involving civil society in co-production can yield positive spillover effects on the development of interorganizational and intergroup networks within civil society. This final empirical chapter focuses on the processes that contribute to the creation and decline of linking social capital. The empirical analysis reveals that the trustful co-production of public goods and the development of linking social capital are not guaranteed and require sustained effort from all involved parties. Mediation and more formalized exchanges can enhance mutual understanding and strengthen cooperation after periods of severe conflict in initial interactions. However, even promising beginnings of cooperation and mutual respect can eventually give way to suspicion and frustration.