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Solidarity Relationships in the No Borders Movement in Europe

An Impossible and Hopeful Struggle

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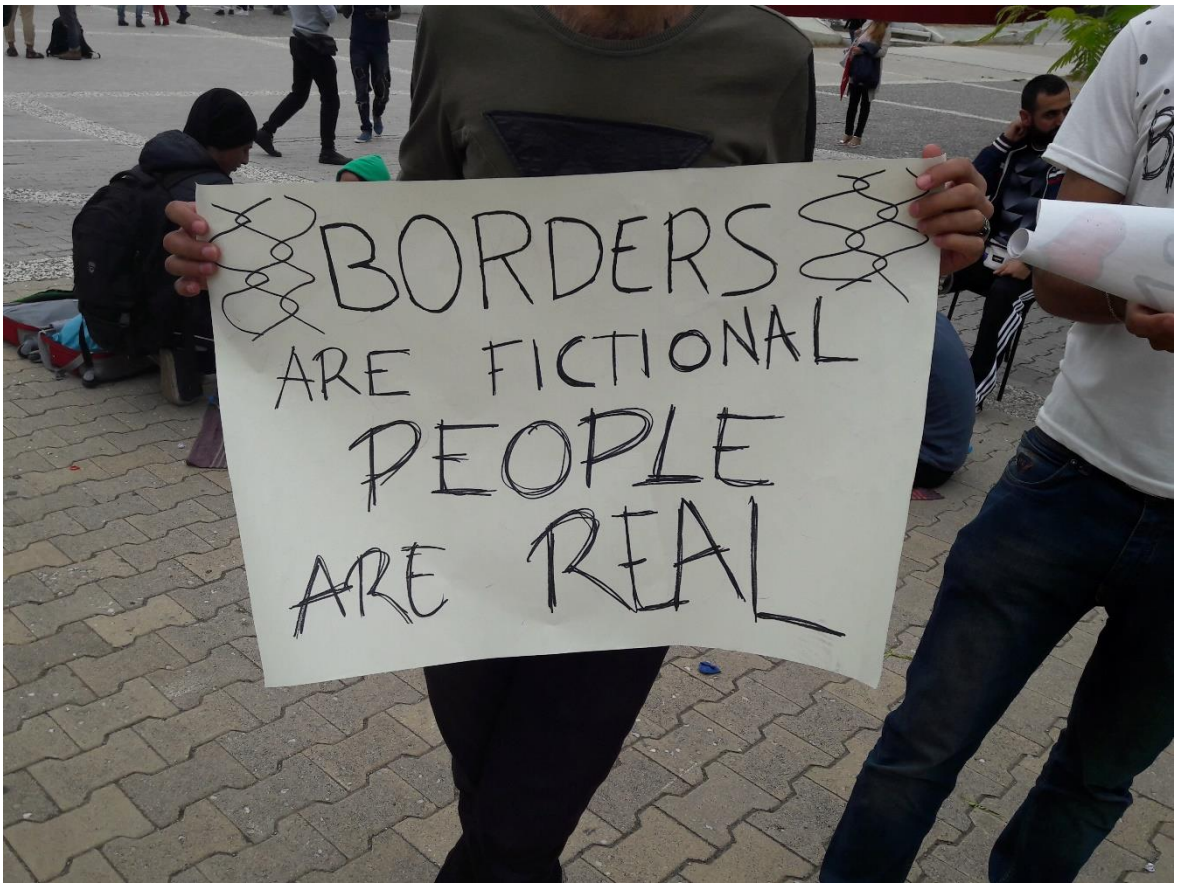

Figure 1 - Protesters during a demonstration under the slogan "Time's Up" on September 30th in Athens 2017. Photo taken by the author.

i. Acknowledgments

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I thought about dedicating this to my ancestors – those who might turn in their graves if they knew what I wrote about. But… nah. I dedicate this to Smilla, Cookie, Lotte, and most of all Lula – you cannot read this, but you certainly don't believe in borders and simply make the world a better place.

Be kind,
Leslie

Bremen, 04th of June 2021

ii. Executive Summary

This thesis investigates solidarity relationships in the No Borders movement in Europe and how relationships between very diverse and unequal activists are being built. It asks about activists' reasons for involvement, their strategies to build egalitarian cooperation, and the wanted and unwanted effects this endeavour has. These are crucial research insights, as it can be difficult to create social ties between diverse people and hard to create a movement's community of shared interests and mutual support that can bring about social change. Most social movements bring together heterogeneous people, but the No Borders movement is exceptionally diverse in its groups' internal composition, with key inequalities revolving around legal status and citizenship. Refugee_migrants and western citizens engage together in protest and direct social actions and struggle for freedom of movement and access to rights, and against deportations. They embrace prefigurative transborder practices to cooperate in an egalitarian way and transcend interpersonal barriers that divide them. No Borders' solidarity relationships were researched in Europe, where a transnational network of grassroot action exists since the 1990s. With the refugee crisis after 2015, No Borders' mobilisations multiplied. By following and contrasting activist hubs in Germany and Greece, significant activist networks could be investigated while taking into account EU policies that inform the relationships between diverse activists. A qualitative research project was conducted for which most data was collected between 2015 and 2018 and analysed via Situational Analysis. Resulting from the project, the thesis provides a conceptual description of No Borders as a movement, its practices, and ideological background. It develops the framework of transborder activism that gives a lens through which to view the interpersonal and organizational levels of activism. The analysis finds that No Borders opens activist spaces with diverse actors in which it is possible to get to know each other. Because differences and inequalities are made visible and can be discussed, activists negotiate their differences discoursively and practically to meet each other on common ground. Still, as practices are pragmatically situated in-between different forms of support – the charity of humanitarian aid, nation-state solidarities of welfare, and the radically egalitarian approach to solidarity of No Borders – activists navigate constant contextual ambiguity and flexibility, which is a strength of No Borders strategies but also makes the engagement exhausting. Three stressors were identified which can potentially lead to activist burnout: inadequate expectations, a split between life-worlds, and interpersonally not living up to egalitarian ideals. Specific community activities and subcultural codes can also separate people by drawing new lines of exclusion. Still, people engage in these specifically mixed egalitarian structures or alliances as the threshold to enter is low, and people can experience engagement in empowering and hopeful ways. The solidarity relationships in No Borders are best understood as solidarity among equals 'in the making', thus staying processual. This dissertation opens up new avenues to study mental health, diversity, and inequality in social movements.

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iv. List of abbreviations

dsa	Direct social action
EU	European Union
GJM	Global Justice Movement
GT	Grounded Theory
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-Government Organization
SMO	Social Movement Organization
SitA	Situational Analysis
UNHCR	United Nations High Council of Refugees

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Prelude

"Yeah, people need home. Also… I want to tell to.. I mean the message to EU, the message to the government, that: join us to save humanity. This is my word, this is my message for everyone. Humanity doesn't mean 'save refugees', humanity means all human beings. That's humanity. If someone has good life, good business, good home, they have to look around them… 'I can afford good food, I can afford good coffee, I can eat every day to restaurant', it's okay, but also, I should look around me. Who's hungry, who's homeless, who needs food, who needs clothes?

Because no one is perfect in this world. No one is perfect. We learn things with our mistakes. Without mistakes no one can learn anything perfectly, and no one is perfect. If they are doing mistake, EU, anyone, if they are doing mistake, it's okay they did. We have a big heart, we forgive them. They steal our rights, they steal our feelings, they steel our time, they steel our home, they steel everything from us, okay we forgive them. But they have to look around. They have to think about other people. They have to think about human beings. They have to see their neighbours in their building, in their office, everywhere. Their friends, their family members, their relatives. They have to see. They have to catch their relatives, they have to catch their neighbours, they have to catch their friends. "

Zabhi - Resident of City Plaza Squat, Athens; Summer 2017

Introduction: Solidarity Relationships in a Diverse Movement

This thesis is about solidarity relationships in the No Borders movement inside the European Union. The No Borders movement is an international, transnational social movement struggling for the freedom of movement of all humans and for the human rights of refugees and other immigrants. The activists advocate against any borders, mobility restrictions, nation-states, and deportations (Bridget Anderson et al., 2009, 2012; King, 2016). Thereby, they employ everyday politics and direct social actions such as squatting, food provision, or legal support and organise protest camps (Blumberg & Rechitsky, 2015; Burridge, 2015; Rigby & Schlembach, 2013).

The movement has roots in the sans-papiers movement and the Global Justice Movement, and employs grassroot organisation with antihierarchical, horizontal practices (No Border Network, 2004), which are also typical for the Occupy or anarchist movements. Many such movements consist of heterogenous, multilingual, transnational networks that employ unifying narratives (Daphi, 2017) or use political translations to sustain its democratic practices (Doerr, 2018). Still, compared to these other social movements, No Borders is uniquely mixed: In Europe, refugee_migrants with precarious legal status and other migrants mostly from the Middle East and Africa fight alongside leftist or autonomous-anarchist anti-racist activists who are legal citizens of European or other western countries (King 2016). Together they mobilise in transnational networks, working against deportations or enabling cross-border movements.

This diversity shapes the forms of solidarity practiced in this movement because individual differences often represent social inequalities and therefore inhibit cooperation on equal grounds (Blumberg & Rechitsky, 2015; King, 2016; The BridgeRadio, 2021). The inequalities can follow the lines of gender, race, sexuality, religion, status, or freedom of mobility and are intersectionally intertwined. Thus, the political ideal presupposes that activists are equal, yet, the realities of people's lives are marked by inequalities and differences that influence the way they engage in political activism. They result in vastly different access to material and immaterial resources and basic human rights, and people need and want to build alliances and cooperation to balance this. However, because of these unequal positions in the struggle, cooperation can not only fail but also do harm by reproducing inequalities or choosing strategies that mean well but do not benefit those who are in need.

Indeed, studies deplored a multiplication of hierarchical forms in of help during the refugee crisis after 2015 that produced top-down relationships of charity, and political groups have tried to counter this with migrant self-organisation and egalitarian No Borders practices to create egalitarian solidarity (Kwesi Aikins & Bendix, 2015; Omwenyeke, 2016; Picozza, 2021).

Solidarity refers to a form of help and (reciprocal) support among and between people in material, political or social ways (Karakayali, 2014). It is often discussed around demands of social justice about redistribution inside welfare states (Sangiovanni, 2015) but it is certainly not limited to this. Solidarity includes actions towards people in need and usually involves distributing and redistributing resources. A group of people who organises solidarity in a (more or less) reciprocal way is usually referred to as a particular community (Bayertz, 1999, p. 4). Building this community is key for solidarity since – as bell hooks stressed – strong political solidarity needs a "community of interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite" (hooks, 1984, p. 64). However, when activists from very different backgrounds and with very different identities engage in political action together, many intercultural, linguistic, religious, and ideological differences need to be considered to cooperate successfully and build such a community. They need to create interpersonal solidarity relationships which create understanding and bridge these differences.

Indeed, the building solidarity in No Borders is not institutionalised but a deeply relational and interpersonal, even "intimate" process (King, 2016, p. 346) work. It needs direct cooperation to create a better future, as is reflected in the definition of solidarity that a black activist who had come through Lybia to Germany gave me:

> Solidarity really means…finding people that feels what you are feeling. And be ready to lend a helping hand. Yeah, … to look for ways to know… To make people happy and achieve their aims and dreams in life. (Martha)

And because No Borders' practices involve many horizontal and interpersonal exchanges, they need informal relationships to work well. But individual differences can produce interpersonal conflict. Building friendships between fellow activists is not always easy because people at first do not have many things in common, or encounters are charged with (political) expectations (King, 2016; Kubaczek & Duman, 2020). Activists must work through differences and against inequalities to create social bonds and egalitarian relationships in order to struggle together. Therefore, building community and positive

relationships of solidarity can be difficult, exhausting, and even "unpopular" (King, 2016, p. 347). Nonetheless, many idealistic activists try to create a strong community of solidarity that can have transformative effects. And, as I saw during my research, they usually do it with great passion and pleasure, enjoying the connections springing from the political engagement.

For researching the cooperation and community building of diverse activists, No Borders groups is a perfect case because they have mixed groups of people with varying backgrounds, and they share an egalitarian approach that envisions working together without reproducing discrimination. When I turned to literature, I found several studies that discuss inequalities and dealing with them in refugee_migrant activism with egalitarian or radical practices (Blumberg & Rechitsky, 2015; Dadusc et al., 2019; Hinger et al., 2018; Mudu & Chattopadhyay, 2017; Stierl, 2019). Especially, engaged or militant knowledge production reiterates the challenges of working across differences and privileges, and the need to bridge them through understanding, listening, practical cooperation, or creating political friendships (Kubaczek & Duman, 2020; Osa & transact, 2014; Suárez-Krabbe & The BridgeRadio, 2018; Ünsal, 2015). However, the specific conditions and practices employed for the emergence of such interpersonal solidarity relationships among very diverse activists have not been solely focussed on in systematic empirical research yet.

Thus, I was interested in knowing more about why and how exactly activists in NO Borders build solidarity: What are the reasons for people to involve in No Borders' struggles, what are the strategies they use to build sustainable relationships and cooperative alliances under the conditions of high diversity, and what are effects of this diversity that really mattered to the activists?

My research interest led to a five years long qualitative research project for which most data was collected between 2015 and 2018, in Greece and Germany. Contrasting these national contexts had two analytical reasons: First, the two national contexts – one a country of arrival and transit in economic crisis, the other one a rich target country in the North of Europe – hold exemplifying different positions inside the EU-border regime and the EU-asylum regulations. Thus, to a certain extent, analytical inferences can be made about the EU context as a whole, which influences the solidarity relationships between diverse

activists. Second, during the research period, there were significant activist networks and migration movements between the two countries that created a transnational space of No Borders, even spanning the Balkans. Thus were was a significant amount of activism beyond borders to be researched.

Data was collected via interviews, participatory observation, and digital and visual tools and analysed via Situational Analysis (Clarke et al., 2018). Its interpretive methodology and abductive logic were a perfect fit to meet the research field's contextual, transnational circumstances and activists' diversity. From this research project resulted a few studies and texts, three of which make up the body of this Ph.D. thesis.

To frame these three studies (Chapter 1), I first describe the research subject of No Borders, and its approach to solidarity. I explain that No Borders employs prefigurative strategies to embody the political goals it wants to achieve in its practices. Nation-state borders divide people, and inequalities can create interpersonal borders that activists try to transcend their structures. I conceptualize these practices as *transborder activism* that involves a lot of language translation and learning of cultural sensitivity during participative decision-making. I then infer why prefigurative transborder practices are seen as socio-politically transformative. I discuss different concepts of solidarity and elaborate on how diverse activists try to build an egalitarian community of solidarity among very heterogeneous people. The first empirical study (Chapter 2), then asks about activists' ideals, their everyday practices, and the effects of activism that tries to embody political ideals. It gives a dense inventory of No Borders' history, ideological background, and interpersonal approach to political struggles. It was written chronologically first, after exploratory data collection and preliminary data analysis, thereby identifying the research subject of solidarity relationships in No Borders and developments in Europe. I find that the No Borders movement opens spaces of encounter that enable a learning environment regarding dealing with its specific diversity. Following up on this insight led to zooming into the case of Athens in the next study (Chapter 3). There, I investigate how people negotiate their differences in subcultural spaces. Also, already in the first study, I realized that the activists were often under a lot of emotional pressure. This led to further inquire about the specific stressors in No Borders, potentially leading to activists' burnout (Chapter 4). Taken together, all three chapters shed light on different facets of transborder activism

and its practice from discursive negotiations to egalitarian participation in decision-making, and it sees stress as a relational phenomenon in social movements.

Finally, I conclude the thesis with a summary of key findings and a discussion on the overall conclusions drawn from them regarding solidarity relationships. I find that it is qua definitionem impossible to create truly egalitarian solidarities between unequal people who are divided by socio-material conditions of legal status, but that working towards it is important for the activists both ideologically and to ensure the survival of the many. Moreover, the changes and positive relationships achieved on the interpersonal level create hope and enable people to keep going.

01. Chapter 01 - Solidarity and No Borders in Times of the Nation-State

In this chapter, I provide the conceptual and empirical framework for this thesis's research on solidarity relationships in the diverse social movement of No Borders. I first present conceptual discussions on the multiple meanings of the term 'solidarity' and clarify the status of people's diversity for forming different relationships in solidarity. I then provide a literature review on the discussions on solidarity relationships in struggles of migration and clarify the terminology used in his thesis to describe activists' diversity. Second, I then describe the socio-political context of this research project and why solidarity relationships are not only relevant during the refugee crisis. Third, after this, I introduce the research subject of the No Borders movement in more detail by describing its heritage and its practices. I describe its groups and alliances' mixed and unequal composition, and I explain their approach to solidarity beyond borders. And I find that what I call transborder activism is essential to this movement and that it plays a key role in the way activists understand and enact solidarity relationships between diverse and unequal activists. Also, I argue that transborder activism aims to transform exclusive and hierarchical forms of solidarity with marginalised people into an egalitarian solidarity among peers who fight against the border regime. Lastly, I give a detailed description of this thesis' research design, the collected data, and how the iterative research led me to the three research questions in the individual research papers that form the chapters that follow.

01.1 The Difficult Emergence of Solidarity: What We Know

What is 'solidarity' and who is doing it with whom - in general society and in particular in No Borders? Defining and discussing this in this section shall clarify what we know about solidarity and why relationships of solidarity between diverse people are difficult to create.

Solidarity is a social concept that guides political practice. Its general idea "is a peculiarly modern concern" (Sangiovanni, 2015, p. 340) because the emergence of fragmented western societies and its defining division of labour posed new challenges to traditions of social protection. Thus, solidarity is a mechanism of securing the livelihood and safety of people

beyond kinship in western social arrangements, which are dominated by individualization (Karakayali, 2014, p. 112). Also, this solidarity mechanism is intensified in densely populated urban settings that are structurally opaque to an individual, which complicates establishing sustainable connections (Ceylan & Kiefer, 2016, pp. 95–105). The idea of society became congruent with the nation-state, which is now still imagined as a community (Benedict Anderson, 2006 [1983].

Throughout the past decade, solidarity became a focal buzzword in European political debates (Wallaschek, 2019). Broadly speaking, solidarity refers to a form of help and (reciprocal) support among and between people in material, political or social ways (Karakayali, 2014). Thus it means *actions* towards people in need and usually involves distributing and redistributing resources. A group of people who feel responsible for each other and organise solidarity in a more or less reciprocal way becomes a *community of solidarity*.

This umbrella definition sounds easy, but many more definitions exist which differ in more or less detail. Common theoretical discussions concern social justice demands inside a welfare state but also the goals of social movements (Kymlicka, 2015; Sangiovanni, 2015). There are two important ideological traditions: those centring social cohesion and those seeing it as a fighting term to mobilise social struggle (Bayertz, 1999, xx?; Busen, 2016). In political discourse, Wallaschek (2019) finds that solidarity can, on the one hand, refer to different meanings (e.g., political, social, financial) and, on the other hand, to different scales on which the solidarity should be enacted (e.g., supranational, national or local). Importantly, the idea of solidarity needs an appeal for action to be relevant in (political) conflicts (Wallaschek, 2019, p. 167). Nullmeier (2006) mused that appeals to solidarity could be dismissed as merely moral if not understood as institutionalized solidarity in the welfare state. But this needs to be extended because solidarity can refer to many different political communities and can be applied in many different ways of action and redistribution.

Conceptually speaking, solidarity is used differently both in politics and political theory. This is a challenge for political praxis, as people tend to misunderstand each other about what they mean and what they want. Additionally, solidarity is usually appealed to and claimed in its absence in situations in which it needs to be created or at least defended.

Therefore, it holds a largely unknown position that makes it hard to implement and decide whom to support.

To focus on the main interests of this thesis, there is no space to summarize all different concepts or applications of solidarity. Instead, I discuss the differing composition of a community of solidarity and present the differentiation between *solidarity among* and *solidarity with.* Introducing this conceptual differentation is useful because it discusses and clarifies relevant actor groups and their form of relationship inside the frame of solidarity.

01.1.1 Solidarity Relationships with Whom - and How?

All of the different ways to conceptualize solidarity which have been mentioned above (e.g., inside a state, a social movement group, on a national, organisational, or transnational scale) have an impact on how the group of people is defined that is in relations of solidarity with each other. The community of solidarity around a certain issue is defined in sometimes contradicting ways. However, defining this community of solidarity or the conditions of its membership gives an important guideline for solidarity actions, because as Bayertz (1999, p. 4) points out: "solidarity relationships usually only include particular obligations. One is not 'solidary' with just anybody, but only with the members of the particular community to which one believes oneself to belong." Solidarity is not universal but particular.

People in such community of solidarity do not need to know each other (well) as in a family. Following bell hooks' take on feminist alliances, central to solidarity is forming a bond of ongoing commitment that endures conflicts, and works through dissent in order to learn to understand each other (hooks, 1984, pp. 62–65). The commitment and experience of solidarity are then in turn sustained through being part of the same "community of interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite" (hooks, 1984, p. 64).

However, these interests, goals, and beliefs – and thus an interest in each and the community in itself – can stem from different factors. These factors, to an extent, need to be created and constructed because seemingly common ground like similar socio-economic background or gender (and resulting common material or symbolic interests) are no sufficient justification for providing normative obligations for solidarity (Bayertz, 1999, p. 3). In fact, hooks argues that the community must include diversity and disagreement to grow (ibid.).

So the membership of a community of solidarity requires normative or ideological justification, while interest in each other needs to be formed and is understood as constructed. Central for understanding the construction of such interest is the seminal distinction along the line of reciprocity between the ideal types of *solidarity with* and *solidarity among* (O'Neill, 1996, 201f.). On the one hand, s*olidarity among* means the reciprocal support between people of an in-group who are affected by the same issues and challenges. They have the same interests because of these shared challenges and maybe a shared enemy. They are often oppressed or marginalised as a group. On the other hand, *solidarity with* refers to forms of help and support from those who are not affected by a specific grievance, with those in a specific out-group who are affected by it. Those in solidarity do not personally share the same affectedness of an issue problem but can nonetheless be interested in struggling to improve the situation for others, for example, due to political values.

Both forms are solidarity. However the horizontal or 'symmetrical' solidarity *among* a marginalised group is often understood as more impactful, insofar as it creates stronger bonds or motivation than an 'asymmetrical' solidarity *with* (O'Neill, 1996, p. 201; A. E. Taylor, 2015). The latter is often argued to be of high societal relevance as it ensures resources and help for those in need but can also be viewed critically as it implies a hierarchy. In this way, it can perpetuate existing dependences instead of alleviating inequalities (Wallaschek et al., 2020).

This can be illustrated by the example of class struggles. The term solidarity gained popularity with the 1900 workers' movement which not only provoked the introduction of social policies but also showed that social proximity could serve as a basis for political struggle as solidarity among workers emerged (Karakayali, 2014). In Marxist terms, the class-in-itself can become the class-for-itself if people are aware of their common interest. However, there are simultaneously people in the privileged class, like members of the bourgeoise, who can be in solidarity with members of the working class and aim to bridge the socio-economic inequality between them, for example through redistributive measurements and policies which most likely even harm their own privilege.

The example highlights the role of power and hierarchy/horizontality inside these two forms of relationship between group members. Both forms of solidarity establish relations

between people through practices of material or symbolic support, but in each form power is distributed differently. 'Solidarity with' implies a hierarchy between the distinct groups, with a more powerful in-group and a less powerful out-group. Whereas solidarity 'among' is understood to be more egalitarian, involving horizontal forms of relationship and therefore smaller differences in power dynamics.

However, creating a strong community and 'in-group' does bear the danger of creating new boundaries that exclude others in need. This becomes highly relevant when issues of power distribution are viewed from a more nuanced and intersectional perspective. Hooks for example discussed the case of feminism in the US: She analysed why common struggles and alliances between white cis-women and women of colour had failed many times. She found that white feminists had forgotten or ignored the specific interests of black women in their struggle for emancipation. As such, they and had therefore even harmed the disadvantaged black women, because white feminists' analysis had focused on victimization through oppression instead of establishing supportive and sustainable ties of "sisterhood"[1] (hooks, 1984, 45ff.). So the problem with an unequal power distribution among members inside one struggle is that strategies can be skewed, which would be to the detriment of those in need of support. And the example of failed sisterhood shows that if people share an interest around one issue, it does not mean that they cannot have different ones around another issue. The example shows how there was no given feminist solidarity among different cis-women. This discussion clarifies that diversity does not mean equality of differences and that this needs to be taken into account into how people relate to each other. In other words, the solidarity between racially divided women failed because the different women did not understand they were dealing with a solidarity "with" instead of "among." White and black women were divided by issues of racism which resulted in differing interest, an issue that intersectional strategies today try to take into account.

The difference between solidarity *with* and *among* runs along the construction of unity and fragmentation and specifies the ways that people find it possible to relate to each other.

[1] In practice, the question with whom one is in solidarity and why precedes questions of how solidarity is handled and implemented. But in order to create solidarity which is political and functional there must be commonalities. The foundation of solidarity which is not institutionalized or traditionally given needs to be constructed, negotiated and produced. For hooks that meant addressing differences and privileges amongst those women who aimed at forging solidarities according to e.g. realities of labour access, the right to vote, distribution of childcare and more (source).

Solidarity, in its core, is a modern concept developed to sustain support in fragmented societies. And in today's western societies, the possibilities of whom to be in solidarity with multiplied alongside societal fragmentation and the awareness of multiple possibilities of social belonging and diversity. This means that possibilities of alliances and communities of solidarity are unclear and fringed. This is particularly true in struggles of migration, in which the question of unity and belonging is complex.

01.1.2 Solidarity Relationships in Struggles of Migration

Solidarity as a concept and its different forms of solidarity relationships play an important role in struggles of migration, particularly in social movements in which migrants and non-migrants struggle together.

Riots and mobilisations around migrants are common and exceptional at the same time. Numerous studies investigated forms of protest against deportations (Rosenberger et al., 2018; Rosenberger & Winkler, 2014), for access to a right to stay or asylum (Borgstede, 2017; Mokre, 2015), health care and housing (Castañeda, 2013; Filhol, 2017; Romero-Ortuño, 2004) and also about exploitation in work labour, especially the agrarian sector where many undocumented people work under very precarious labour conditions in the European Union (Filhol, 2017; A. G. Papadopoulos et al., 2018; Tietje, 2018).

The issue of migration is contentious because undocumented people or people who live and work in states where they do not have citizenship usually do not have equal access to social and legal protection and (political) participation in the society they live in. Citizenship as a political tool has been developed with the aim to be inclusive and egalitarian, by granting every member of a political body the same political and social rights (Marshall, 1950/2006). People who reside in a European country can gain access to social rights (Kingreen, 2010) but full egalitarian inclusion is only true for full citizens. Those excluded from citizenship have been segregated based on sexist and racist-colonial ways from the beginning of modern state building (Boatcă, 2015; Boatcă et al., 2015; Boatcă, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 1997). Non-citizens or people who cannot prove their nationality are never fully included in social or political rights[2].

[2] Refugee_migrants and western citizens have different access to rights inside the EU because citizenship legally regulates access to claims for social justice and human rights. Possessing EU-citizenship does not guarantee equality in every aspect of life because discrimination works through other mechanisms but claims

This political exclusion from full participation in democratic societies multiplies for people who choose to enter European nation-states by applying for asylum (see also subsection three for more information about political context). The EU wanted to harmonise asylum laws regulations, but in reality, they differ in each country. To a certain extent, however, they are all defined by mobility restrictions, work prohibitions, education restrictions, and camp accommodation (Kasparek, 2019). People applying for asylum are subject to repression and are under constant threat of deportation (Genova, 2010). Policies are realized on the basis of international human rights agreements, which are generally poorly implemented, often degrading people to passive objects. People are expected to be grateful, and when they still protest, this often happens with only a small audience (Moulin, 2012). Both individually and in sum, these measures have grave negative effects on mental and physical health. They limit the options available to refugees to shape their future positively and in a prosperous way, especially compared to those people holding citizenship. Their possibilities to change this in nation-states are severely limited by what Dana Schmalz calls the "democratic paradox of a refugee" (Schmalz, 2015, p. 391): those who are subject to the border and migration policies under European Law have almost no possibility to define laws and policies.

In this context, structures that create action and empowerment for refugee_migrants have socio-political relevance because they can change the composition of a society or political body. Studies on struggles around, for example, illegalised women (Schwenken, 2006), or undocumented youth in Germany and the US (Schwiertz, 2019) have analysed subversive strategies on how such disadvantaged refugee groups represent their political claims and become political subjects. Oftentimes, these struggles reveal ambivalences of desiring citizenship and rejecting its exclusionary notion (Erensu, 2016). Self-organised refugee_migrants have used bodily and radical practices to fight for their rights like squatting of public places, hunger strikes or even stitching their mouths shut to prove their ability to be political and resist charitable spaces (Kwesi Aikins & Bendix, 2015; Tyler, 2013). Such studies show migrant self-organisation – in the sense of refugees practicing solidarity

for social justice can usually only be made through the legal bodies of state, this is why Hannah Arendt famously coined citizenship is necessary for the "right to have rights" Arendt (1949/2009); consequently, possessing a nationality is a human right in itself (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 15).

among themselves – as a key factor for protest, which leads to mutual empowerment and to the use of strategies which they actually benefit from.

Other studies looked at the benefits and pitfalls of solidarity of people with secure legal status who are not considered migrants on the one hand, *with* refugee_migrants on the other. They emphasize that citizens, their NGOs, and religious institutions can bring vital resources like access to medical aid (Castañeda, 2013), prevent deportations (Houston, 2017; Ruedin et al., 2018), and provide translations and insights into the receiving countries' politics. In general, these activities support marginalized claims on various political levels in such a way that they receive attention from politicians (Alcalde & Portos, 2018a; Mokre, 2015). Now interestingly, emotions and emotional ties are often shown to play a role in mobilising those who are not marginalized by the border regime (Kleres, 2018; Milan, 2018) and solidarity often has personal relationships as a starting point: Rosenberger and Winkler (2014) find that friendship and other social ties are a precondition to anti-deportation protests. It can be difficult to bind social ties between diverse people with different cultural or legal backgrounds in general, and the asylum system places additional barriers between them. For this reason, Hinger and Kirchhoff (2018) argue that social relations constitute their own form of protest or resistance against the deportability and isolation of people in the asylum camps. However, in other instances, solidarity with refugee_migrants is shown as ambivalent: supporting citizens' actions reproduced or created dependencies, or strengthened the official, exclusionary migration management (Decker, 2019; Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2016; Omwenyeke, 2016; Sutter, 2020).

A limited number of qualitative studies zoomed in on solidarity between actors with different power and privilege in spheres of refugee_migrant solidarity activism. Curiously, they consistently and repeatedly document and discuss the reproduction of discrimination and social barriers among activists, even though western activists generally tend to believe in human equality and eagerly try to use horizontal practices against such unfair treatment (Blumberg & Rechitsky, 2015; English, 2017; Lang & Schneider, n.d.). Thus, Stierl (2019, p. 120) points out: "Solidarity cannot be thought to simply exist ... solidarity attempts at the border are saturated by asymmetrical power relations, meaning that those encountering one another inhabit vastly different positionalities." He further argues that inequalities can

"neither be denied nor avoided". Still, he comes to the political conclusion that this is also "the reason for their desperately needed formation." (Stierl, 2019, p. 120).

It is thus possible to conclude that activism which finds strategies to interact beyond inequalities without reproducing them or even harming the disadvantaged group, seems to be ethically important to the affected people. At the same time, it also seems to influence the efficiency of solidarity. However, in social movement studies, neither the conditions for the emergence of solidarity relationships between diverse activists nor the effects of efforts to create them have been systematically researched in a way that speaks to creating a political community of solidarity and its different hierarchical forms.

Finding out the reasons and motivations of different people to involve in No Borders' struggles and the strategies they employ to build sustainable relationships and cooperative alliances under the conditions of high diversity and stark inequality contributes to understanding how to build such a community. Also, the effects of these efforts need to be examined to understand the ongoing processes, detect unwanted results, and evaluate the quality of working strategies.

To research solidarity relationships in No Borders groups is a perfect fit because they have mixed groups of people with varying backgrounds, and they have an egalitarian approach. Furthermore, they want to work together without reproducing discrimination. Understanding solidarity relationships in No Borders will be very relevant to other activist groups, and the results will be transferable to other movements in which diversity plays a decisive role.

Further, appeals to produce knowledge that is relevant to practitioners have been uttered by social movement scholars for years (Bevington & Dixon, 2005), and such knowledge on producing solidarity is highly relevant to practitioners. They do have knowledge about how to build solidarity or when relationships work in a socially transformative way, but this knowledge might always trickle away in the embodied knowledge of individual persons as it is hardly shared beyond interpersonal contact. Research can help to avoid that.

In order to explore the solidarity practices in No Borders in the following, I first describe what constitutes the No Borders movement and the language I use to identify relevant actors. Then I clarify the activists' egalitarian claim to solidarity and the meaning they ascribe to the relationships between different people. I discuss how No Borders' egalitarian

activism against and beyond borders is always somehow situated in-between different logics and practices of solidarity (from radical anarchy to hierarchical welfare institutions), thereby creating a complex field of action for individuals to navigate. Lastly, the research design of this thesis, its claim for validity, and ethical considerations are be presented.

01.2 Terminology and Research Subjects: About Refugee_migrants, Western Citizens and Activists

> "Talking about migration is complicated, because all the terms we could choose to use are so infused with assumptions about who or what we are speaking about that it's near impossible to say anything about it without inferring some kind of power play." (King, 2016, p. 45)

This study's research design - as is explained in more detail below - needs to account for the intersectional diversity and different positionalities of research subjects of the No Borders movement and who are in solidarity with each other. I argue that it is necessary to terminologically reflect on the intersectional diversity of the research subjects because, as Nadiye Ünsal has pointed out, binary categories such as 'refugees' and 'supporters' prevail in research and activism but do not reflect the real "nexus of class, race, gender and other power relations" (Ünsal, 2015). Nor does this binary thinking do justice to the prevalent activists' efforts to fight such simplistic categories. However, pragmatically there is a necessity in the analysis to identify the individuals and different actor groups that build solidarity relationships. This entails an irresolvable ambivalence that has to be endured in the course of this dissertation: Categorizations are both a human and an academic dilemma because one needs to define what they are talking about in order to be able to speak but this simultaneously limits possibilities of perceptions.

Out of this dilemmatic necessity, I shortly clarify three central discursive categories (*activists*, *refugee_migrants*, and *western citizens*), which in this dissertation are used to specify people, and explain why I chose them.

Activists, their actions, and sense-making are the main subjects of this dissertation. I define activists as people who challenge politics and society in a transformative way or with transformative intent. They engage in extra-parliamentary political practices, which can range widely from discursive strategies that aim at influencing public discussions to

militant action. If connected through networks and a shared collective identity, they can form a social movement (Diani, 1992). Activists bring together a variety of means and resources from different positions in life. As individuals or on the group level, they identify themselves through different features (Haunss, 2011). In the No Borders movement, sometimes activists are refugee_migrants, sometimes they are western citizens.

As *refugee_migrants,* I refer to people who live in European and other western countries who are *discursively and/or legally shaped* as 'refugees', 'asylum seekers', 'undocumented people', or 'economic migrants'. While I understand that the experiences of migrants in transit, asylum seekers, and acknowledged refugees may differ significantly, in the following, the term refugee_migrant will be used to represent these people collectively. Specifications of legal status are made when appropriate. I use the terms refugee_migrant and refugee_migration, which are loose translations of the wording *Flucht_Migration* (lit. flight_migration, forcibly displaced_migrants) and *Flucht_Migrant*innen* (lit. fe*male forcibly displaced_migrants). Margret Kaufmann, Laura Otto, Sarah Nimführ, and Dominik Schütte substantiate that this terminology rejects the dichotomy often made in public discourse between "real refugees" who are victims of war and "(work) migration" and they aim to emphasize that all migration is a fluid and dynamic process contingent upon the social and political projects they are embedded in (Kaufmann et al., 2019, pp. 6–7). Indeed, this dichotomy reflects hierarchical categories drawing on a colonial orientalist and racialized imaginary (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018) and which inform how migration bureaucracies grant access to rights and resources (Eckert, 2020). The reference to queer/gender wording by the _space is adopted deliberately because space represents what lies in-between, what is in motion, and perhaps cannot or must not be categorized.

Western citizens are people who hold powerful passports of the EU, the US, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand and whose being in the world is discursively shaped by being a part of the hegemonic notion of "the west". As Stuart Hall (1992, 186ff.) pointed out, 'the west' is not restricted to geographic locations but refers to hegemonic ideas, which spread from Europe throughout the globe and formed so-called 'developed' and 'modern' societies whose members are consciously or unconsciously bound to believe in their own superiority and advancement.

Using selected categories highlights the concepts behind them. Manuela Bojadžijev argued that discourses and struggles of migration must be understood according to their social or political configurations. She pointed out that the way in which autonomous migration is regulated, controlled, or prevented is constantly changing over time. As an example, she showed that in Germany discursive and legal regulations of the asylum regime have become dominant since the 1980s, but that restrictive policies do have recurring traditions, for example, through reductions in child benefits as a means to discriminate against immigrants (Bojadžijev, 2012, 145-148; 224ff). Throughout the 2010s, refugees were central to socio-political debates, but a perspective beyond the analytical separation of refugees and migrants gives relevant insights into the overall systemic conditions and logics.

"Western" as a category only makes sense through simplification and by its distinction from "the rest" as an orientalized, racialized "other" (Hall, 1992). In the political situation in which this dissertation collected data, refugee_migrants and western citizens are bound to each other in othering, contrasting relations towards each other.

In the situation of action of this dissertation, the distinction between refugee_migrants and western citizens formed an axis which gave shape to all other identarian categorizations and intersectional discriminations people did or did not experience: citizenship in all its racist, capitalist, colonial and gendered notions is the base of concrete material conditions dividing people, and it is likewise the origin and the effect of discursive distinctions like "refugee_migrants" and "western citizens". Moreover, this distinction was central in shaping everyday situations and interactions of diversified activists – often precisely because activists did not accept it, but simultaneously because people were hardly able to think and act differently. This is also troubling because the distinction between refugee_migrants and western citizens is as prevalent as it is historically contingent.

So, in many ways, throughout the 2010s, refugee_migrants became 'the other' to western citizens reproducing inequalities that were highly orientalist, racialized, and gendered. Methodically, they are contrasted in terms of their legal access to a variety of rights. However, this too does not work along a binary axis of inclusion/exclusion through citizenship but has grey areas: Many people are still 'othered' and categorized as refugee_migrants although they do possess a western citizenship or are second or third generation. This discrimination limits their access to safety and equal rights in Europe.

Likewise, the western norm was always eerily present as desirable and enacted by many people from western societies as well as immigrants.

So while the choice of the terminology of *refugee_migrants* is embedded in a larger research context, ethical reasons differentiating between western citizens and refugee_migrants implies *othering*, which I hereby problematize but cannot overcome. Lastly, I can note that the study in chapter three discusses how those affected by these limiting categories deal with it creatively.

01.3 The Situation of Action

Describing the political context of the EU border regime is necessary to understand the particularities of No Borders activists' efforts to fight inequality. This is because EU policies and the EU asylum system (on the macro and meso level) shape the interpersonal divisions between people and their interactions (on the micro level) substantially. Following the analytical method-theory-tools of Situational Analysis (SitA), I understand this context not as external to individual social practices but rather as immanent to a specific situation of action, which constitutes the key unit of analysis of a specific study (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 26). A 'situation' is understood to involve "a somewhat enduring arrangement of relations among many different kinds and categories of elements that has its own ecology." (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 17). While this explanation might appear vague at first, the methodological benefit is its radical approach: it takes into account all elements relevant to human action in the light of their *situatedness* and acknowledges the partiality of knowledge (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 26).

This serves the method's intention to develop new concepts to understand a specific social phenomenon in relation to other social elements and phenomena: Situational Analysis (SitA) is a postmodern, interpretative extension of Grounded Theory (GT). And while Classical GT focuses on individual social action, SitA puts into effect a scale shift and understands socio-political phenomena through the meso level (Keller, 2020, p. 531). Analysing institutional and routinized collective settings is argued to show how power structures manifest on the individual level and influence each other (Clarke & Keller, 2014, pp. 5–6).

In the following, I describe the situation relevant to the No Borders Movement in the data collection time frame for this thesis, in the 2010s in Europe. I clarify the political background

of asylum policies and how analytical inferences are made from the two national settings about the EU context as a whole and the analytical significance of the European refugee crisis.

01.3.1 The Asylum Regime in the EU

This thesis investigates the social phenomenon of interpersonal relations in the No Borders movement in Europe. How activists build these relationships is informed by socio-political circumstances described in the following.

No Borders' activities exist in European countries and other western countries and at their borders, such as Canada, Australia, or the US-Mexican border zone. Activists always criticize the exclusionary mechanisms of nation-states (see section 01.4). However, the details of this exclusion are contingent on socio-political peculiarities.

In Europe, the possibilities to form relationships between diverse activists are substantially informed by the inequalities produced by EU asylum policies and citizenship rights. They are part of an overall EU border regime that grants access to social and civic rights according to citizenship and country of origin (Hess & Kasparek, 2010; Squire, 2009). To this regime, exclusion through borders is critical, as access to immigrant rights and social rights is usually granted through physical presence (Kingreen, 2010). This means, on the one hand, exclusion at the EU external borders as defined by the Schengen agreements and defended by military means such as FRONTEX (Casella Colombeau, 2017; Kasparek, 2019). And, on the other hand, restrictions of the freedom to move at the internal EU borders, e.g., through the Dublin regulation: Since 1997, the regulation determines that the EU country in which an asylum-seeker first sets foot is responsible for this person's asylum claim (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2016). During an Asylum application procedure in the EU, persons cannot freely determine what country or city they want to live in (Brekke & Brochmann, 2015; Middelbeck, 2012).

Thus, both asylum policies and citizenship greatly impact the freedom of movement of people: EU citizens can move freely and usually work inside every EU country, Switzerland and the Balkans, without any significant trouble. By contrast, someone coming from the Global South can, in most cases, only legally cross these borders after long application processes. Additionally, racist and racialized controls by the police and border security restrict freedom of movement on different scales and differ according to legal status

(Casella Colombeau, 2017; Golian et al., 2021; Schulze Wessel, 2016; Wihtol de Wenden & Ambrosetti, 2016).

However, the exclusion is not absolute but selective and works through more elements than territorial border controls; this is what Feldman (2012) calls the "EU's migration management apparatus". This apparatus identifies wanted and unwanted migrants. It is not restricted to a specific locality but includes human rights agreements, passports migration policies, policemen, camps, registers, official interpreters, or boats that make possible the specific exclusion and management of migration to the European Union.

Thus, geographically, the situation of action analysed in this thesis is bound to the European continent, including the EU countries, their bordering states, and waters. Occasionally, it stretches into more abroad places like Canada or Sub-Saharan states through policy agreements of resettlement. In ideological terms, this European situation also consists of Eurocentrism and postcolonial awareness of othered countries. They influence the racialized ways immigrants are selected or how immigrants perceive the EU.

This constructs an overarching political frame for the activism and solidarity practices examined in this thesis. The power structures of this frame influence action and constrain people's agency.

At the same time, EU migration management provides specific fractures and opportunities for resistance and subversion. The autonomous movements of people play with legal regulations and build their own networks and common hubs where possible with the technical means at hand (D. Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013; Trimikliniotis et al., 2015). It is in these fractures that the support structures and diverse activists are nested and create their own life-worlds. Refugee_migrant support includes kitchens, informal translators, transcultural encounters, smartphones, social media, pamphlets, money sharing, strategic marriage, social events, or smuggling. All of this informs a life dealing with the power structures of migration management.

01.3.2 Geo-politics and Activist Networks: Germany, Greece, and Beyond

I chose Germany and Greece as places of data collection to show the research situation's variety in the EU, first because of the countries' contrasting geo-political situation inside the EU and second because of significant activist networks.

First, due to the EU Dublin regulation (see above), both countries hold very different positions for refugee_migrants inside the Schengen area. According to Dublin, those countries at the periphery with sea- or land-borders to non-EU countries (e.g., Greece to Turkey, Italy and Spain to North Africa) have to process most persons' asylum claims, while Northern European countries (e.g., Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark) which are situated in the middle of other EU- and Schengen countries receive comparably few asylum applicants.

Due to that, throughout the 2000s, Greece was a transit country, where many people arrived from Turkey and the MENA area. This was made possible by lax border controls by Greek, Italian or Balkan state authorities. This led to a situation in which many people passed through to Northern European Countries such as Germany, which was an attractive destination because of its social and economic stability. The relatively poor country of Greece did not have a stable Asylum provision, and it deteriorated further as the economic situation escalated after the financial crisis of 2008. In 2011 the European Commission recommended temporarily suspending inside-EU-deportations to the Hellenic Republic (European Commission, 2016). However, in the subsequent years, the number of immigrants looking for Asylum increased due to armed conflicts, especially in Syria. This became known as the so-called refugee crisis (see next section) because the European system was not able or willing to take care of or integrate these people according to currently valid Human Rights agreements.

Thus, Greece and Germany represent the different extremes in the EU with regard to refugee_migrants. From this point of view, it is possible, with some limitations, to make preliminary methodological, analytical inferences about the EU as a whole. Moreover, the two countries could not be considered self-contained case comparisons because there were massive exchanges and mobilities between them, which informed the solidarity relationships.

Therefore, I *secondly* chose to contrast Germany and Greece because the explorative investigation revealed relevant activist transnational networks between these national settings. Many networks could be approximated through researching hubs in the activists' scenes in Hamburg and Athens. I then followed up on connections to several other sites both inside these countries and transnationally because the multi-sited setting was

informed by many experiences and places of transit in-between the countries of Germany, Greece, and beyond.

In 2016, a wave of re-installing border controls in the EU and Balkan states inspired many Western citizens to travel to the EU's external borders to support those who were stuck or still arrived. These migration movements were relevant for building solidarity relationships because they intensified a personal exchange alongside pre-existing axes in volunteer and activist networks, which had been criticizing migrant and refugee laws and restriction of movement since the 1990s. This applies notably to the 'no border camp' on Lesvos in 2009 that German-based activists have described as "the most inspiring Noborder-camp, which we ever have organized" (welcome 2 europe, 2019, p. 4). However, the networks are not limited to Germany and Greece but represent similar struggles that manifest inside and outside the European Union. For example, Lesvos took place only one month after a noborder-camp in Calais at the border of the UK and France. The struggles around Calais informed another pillar of struggles for freedom of movement, which by 2015 also informed the activist scene in Athens when several people who had collected experiences there came to Greece with the 'new crisis'. Also, many new projects and connections were established and then intensified through many new small projects.

Transnational networks are important for building solidarity relationships because they give a frame to stay connected and to let relationships grow in a field of activism where people are usually changing locality constantly. For example, when someone is being moved to another camp by Asylum procedures or being deported, or when someone has to earn money somewhere else than the often remote locality of activism at a border or abroad. Transnational networks give insights into how people connected beyond borders.

Thus, spatially, the situation of refugee_migrant support in the EU in the 2010s that I researched stretched the European continent because the transit countries on the Balkan and Switzerland shaped mobilities and people's experiences. People on the move were connected by several communicative possibilities of the digital age and by people's movement through these countries. Additionally, political events in the Middle East or Africa were symbolically relevant to people's social behaviour and, of course, formed policies and other realities inside the European Union, for example, through resettlement.

Moreover, throughout the progress of the research period, I noticed scale shifts in terms of local affiliations and levels of communication of the activists in the situation. On the one hand, transnational migration flows of refugee_migrants and western citizens between the north and south-east EUrope, and the Balkans increased between 2015 to 2017, as described above. When western citizens travelled between their country of origin and other countries or refugee_migrants made it up north, they had usually built up a more transnational network. Simultaneously, on the other hand, digital communication became more accessible. More people had smartphones and used social media like Facebook and messengers to stay in contact with but also to organise action in large groups. Mobile phones are a vital resource that enables refugee_migrants' transnational mobility (D. Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013) and an important means to care for emotional health through staying in contact with loved ones in other parts of the world. The abolition of EU roaming charges in 2017 made it easier to use all the possibilities of smartphone apps and under the same number, and dependence on Wi-Fi access decreased. In effect, transnational interpersonal networks grew and intensified along with these increasing possibilities for people to stay in touch and work together digitally from different locations.

Methodologically speaking, I theorized abductively by contrasting all the different hubs and settings among themselves and with the EU frame as a whole. Of course, sampling and selection were limited by time and resources. For a discussion on the uncertainties of multi-sited research to adequately grasp the whole context, see also section 03.6.1.

01.3.3 Solidarity Relationships and the Refugee Crisis

The situation in which I have collected data for this dissertation cannot be understood without the framing of "crisis", and more specifically, the European refugee crisis between 2015 – 2018. However, this thesis's findings are meaningful beyond this period of time and the narrative of a specific crisis. This is important to clarify and put in context in order to understand the analytical logic of this study and the claim for validity and meaningfulness of the results.

Crises are states of exception which pass over time. Evidently, many people experienced existential crises during the time of inquiry of this study. But this was not limited to the perception of the refugee crisis because displacement and forced migration can always result in a state of emergency for the individuals affected by it. For the phenomenon of

building relationships between diverse activists in the No Borders movement, it was no exception but rather showed pre-existing problems and issues very clearly. Thus, in order to adequately analyse the relationships in the No Borders movements, it is methodologically necessary to put the logic of the crisis upside down and see it as a systemic crisis, or rather a crisis for migrants produced by systemic conditions which have existed for decades. This is to be explained with two reasons:

First, the research was temporally situated in the socio-political formation of the so-called European "refugee crisis", "migrant crisis", or sometimes "immigrant crisis". The terms refer to the increased autonomous influx of people into the EU in the years 2015 to 2018, mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, and neighbouring countries because of the armed conflicts in these countries. However, it is problematic because it suggests that the influx of refugee_migrants was the cause of a humanitarian crisis as if migration were a "natural disaster". For displaced people and other precarious migrants, leaving home and arriving in the EU was usually a crisis situation. However, in Europe after 2015, the reality was a crisis of the asylum reception structures[3]. This led to a wave of civic support, which temporarily filled that gap, the so-called "welcoming culture" (Dinkelaker et al., 2021). No Borders' activism practically intersected with the welcoming culture but also pushed for political change.

Second, the discourse of crisis supported the discourse of politicians that the events were unforeseen and unforeseeable, bringing about a historical break for immigration societies. Academia has repeatedly (re-)produced such discourse of the refugee crisis, and the years after 2015 saw a sudden increase in the number of research projects around forced displacement, refugees, and other migrants (Braun et al., 2018; Fleischmann, 2015). Many researchers became newly attracted to the topic and thereby voluntarily or involuntarily overlooked continuities of the systemic conditions around the Asylum system, which were obvious to many scholars who had been working on the topic for years (Cabot, 2018, p. 8).

[3] The European asylum system follows humanitarian principles of caring for those on a life-threatening emergency, which are essential in the first few weeks of arriving to a new place but make people passive and dependent. Policies of mobility restriction, work prohibitions, insecure future prospects as well as bureaucratic solutions which shape the "border regime" Hess and Kasparek (2010) and EU Migration apparatus made it immensely hard for people to be empowered and find new life prospects in the long-run. Thus, human suffering was often times caused or exacerbated by restrictive policies or a lack of adequate care structures.

Carastathis, Spathopoulou, and Tsilimpounidi (2018) argue that the refugee crisis was also "nesting" in the measurements against the financial crisis after 2008 and that, in fact, the crises narrative made it possible for the asylum system to become even more restrictive through emergency measures. We can see similar trends during the so-called "Corona crisis", which led to e.g., a crackdown of quality of camp provision, medical care for irregularised persons, provision for homeless people, and of course, a tightening of border controls unknown before in peaceful times in the EU.

To conclude, the conditions imposed by the border and Asylum regime in Europe, against which No Borders activist struggle, are far from limited to those years of 2015 to 2017 but were valid before and are valid until today. The ongoing attempts to distance activist work from humanitarian action are a result of this. In fact, a lot of the interviews for this study discussed events and struggles before 2015. Between 2015 to roughly 2018 refugee_migration was one of the most discussed socio-political public issues in the EU and sparked heated debates around national identities and welfare states. Today, with a climate crisis and a pandemic, they tend to be forgotten - but the need to cross and transcend borders has not vanished at all.

01.4 No Borders, No Nations – Why No Borders?

In this chapter I give insights into the activism which was the empirical object researched in this thesis. Below, I first summarize the history of the No Borders movement in Europe, and describe its ideological background and its central political practices. This clarifies No Borders' claim to solidarity and the significance that activists ascribe to relationships between different people. This subchapter largely draws on existing literature on No Borders and refugee_migrant support, and it also consists of analysed data from my empirical study. Afterwards, I connect these insights with the discussion on concepts of solidarity in section 3 and I show how the movement is situated in-between forms of solidarity.

Central to the actions of No Borders is human migration. Of course, humans have always migrated from one region to another (Weis et al., 2019). However, migration seems to have never been as globally and politically significant as today (Nail, 2015). Historically speaking, people's migratory movements are usually followed by some sort of regulation by those who control or want to control the territory that "others" want to move to. Today,

migration control takes on a contingent formation in which state borders are decisive because the nation-state is the hegemonic political form.

Next to being territorial, state borders are embodied, as the mechanisms of control and selection only become visible to those who are excluded, especially to undocumented people (Schulze Wessel, 2016). The state borders in the European Union are embodied in this way. The European Union can be considered a real "borderland" (Balibar, 2009) because of the overlapping borders inside and outside its territory. These overlapping borders have led to a complex set of policies and regulations to manage immigration which critical migration scholars refer to as the "EU border regime" (Hess & Kasparek, 2010). This regime follows neoliberal selection criteria, which determine whose labour is wanted inside the EU.

The border regime includes a specific set of asylum regulations for those who experience displacement, which was developed after the experience of WWII and for which, depending on the case, access criteria are based on vulnerability and human rights that ensure protection against persecution (Kasparek, 2019; Wroe, 2018). Asylum regulations are of global relevance, as 1 out of 110 people globally is considered displaced or on the move. These numbers have doubled from 1990 to 2019 (UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019b). In 2019 Europe hosted 14% of those displaced persons under the mandate of the United Nations (UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019b, p. 13).

Many states try to prevent the immigration of asylum seekers. NGOs regularly report human rights violations and other violent measures to prevent people from entering EU territory as well as a criminalization of people entering (Fekete et al., 2019; Hammerl, 2019). In fact, empirical analyses suggest that instead of ending immigration, the EU-border regime rather forces people to choose to live illegally (Czaika & Hobolth, 2016) or take more dangerous routes to arrive in Europe (UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019a).

Under these contemporary circumstances, social movements which are migratory or pro-migrant challenge the EU-border regime itself. The specific strand of activism researched in this thesis does this quite consciously: they use slogans like "no borders, no nations, stop

deportations" to try to transform not only the practices but also *the logic* of the border regime itself.

Historically the No Borders movement can be seen as starting in the 1990s, when antiracist groups in Europe formed the transnational *No Border Network,* whose local groups organised activist camps and anti-deportation protests (Mudu & Chattopadhyay, 2017; No Border Network, 2004)

Parts of the networks emerged from the Global Justice Movement that developed antiracist claims during the 2000s (Mezzadra, 2016). Further, direct and indirect connections can be traced to environmentalists, and the degrowth movement(s) as climate change increases migration from the global south to the global north (Bernau, 2020; Cattaneo, 2017). Also, self-organised refugee groups often integrate a postcolonial critique in their analysis, e.g., on motivations for fleeing countries whose economies have been damaged by colonialism (e.g., Niger, Kongo, Tunisia), or where (neo-)colonial interventions cause ongoing conflict (e.g., Afghanistan, Israel/Palestine).

The No Borders movement's particular interests are migration, (anti-)racism, and a critique of humanitarianism. It is not a stand-alone movement, though, and exists in interaction with several other movements from Occupy to Antifa and Black Lives Matter. In fact, its political activism must be understood as activists' struggles against broader inequalities on a global level[4]. No Borders activists integrate an anticapitalistic analysis because they criticize that globalized neoliberalism opened borders for goods and trade but not for people (Gill, 2009). Today, groups identifying with the claim of "No Borders" are found on all continents. This thesis investigates networks that operate in Europe.

01.4.1 Roots and Prefigurative Egalitarianism

Noborder activism can be understood in relation to horizontal mobilisations of the past two decades and what Richard Day called "newest social movements": movements whose activists shifted from a "politics of demand" to a logic of affinity and united struggles (Day, 2004). Movements like the 'Indignados', 'Syntagma Square' or 'Gezi Park' can have parliamentary consequences but were mostly characterized by direct action, autonomous or non-representational politics, with horizontal organisation, technopolitical

[4] See also the paper in chapter 2 for more detail on the No Borders roots as a movement.

communication and consensus decision-making (Castells, 2012; Flesher Fominaya, 2014, 2015; McCurdy et al., 2016). They led and inspired many debates on direct and participatory democracy. Mario Azzelini (2014) refers to the multiplication of such politics as an "epochal break" and it has since influenced extra-parliamentary politics.

Specifically, the No Borders movement's history of transnational (no)border camps and big protest events is intertwined with that of the networks of Global Justice Movement (GJM) actors. Protest events and other big activists' gatherings played a decisive role in building international solidarity in the transnational GJM (Daphi, 2014). Thereby, creating solidarity inside and across countries was motivated by an analysis of their problems as global and "international protest events are often described as places of mutual learning and as processes of opening up the horizon" (Daphi, 2014, pp. 171–172). As is shown in the empirical chapters, the refugee_migrants housing squatting in Athens and other support projects can partially be traced to similar networks, and therefore can be seen as an extension of these experiences.

Such movements of horizontal democracy emphasize the potentialities of human interaction being shaped by democratic practice through the emotional experience (J. Juris, 2014, p. 232) of the people involved. The focus on emancipatory struggles and an analysis of inequalities as structural also enabled alliances of refugee_migrant struggles with other anti-capitalist movements, as for example has been the case for a while with the right to the city movement (Plöger, 2014).

This explains why No Borders is described as "a practical project" (Bridget Anderson et al., 2012). Its main actions concentrate on direct action and direct support. It is rooted in a loose anarchist tradition with an affinity for autonomous movements, especially antifascist ones, defined by horizontal egalitarian principles to organise mutual support. Militant actions include cutting fences or preventing a plane from taking off. Central are "direct social actions" (dsa) that aim to transform the social grid by directly supporting people who were, or are, on the move (Zamponi, 2017) like squatting to provide housing, medical support, social kitchens, or educational offers (see also next section). For two decades now, people in Europe and beyond gather in horizontally organised No Borders protest camps in order to share experiences and plan actions (Blumberg & Rechitsky, 2015; Lang & Schneider, n.d.; Walters, 2006). Other activist practices are invisible to governments or not perceived as

political, for example when people autonomously migrate from territory to territory without being detected (D. Papadopoulos et al., 2008, p. 73). Lastly, more common forms of protest, like participation in demonstrations or campaigns, result from everyday necessity to engage with policymakers around asylum and migration.

The idea that all humans are equal and that borders, capitalism, and colonialism produce unjust inequalities do not only show up in protest claims but is also reflected in the movement's internal structures. The egalitarian principles are put into practice through *prefigurative politics*. Prefiguration means that internal modes of organisation reflect political and societal forms of cooperation that transcend the individual movement and point to a different socio-political organisation (Dinerstein & Ferrero, 2012; Yates, 2014). Prefigurative practices, like consensus-decision-making, establish the formation of a 'We' which aims to fulfill collective political goals, and they draw a lot of strength from face-to-face interaction, which is understood to bind trust and provide stability (Pritzlaff-Scheele, 2015, pp. 52–63). Activists do not 'wait' for a better future. Instead, they try creating the world they desire through their present actions.

This is easier said than done, and the devil lies in the details of implementation. Reflection on one's own practices is necessary, for example, to avoid repeating the mistakes of some charity NGOs and other types of humanitarian action, which are often described as creating passivity and depoliticizing its recipients (here mostly refugees and other asylum seekers) and reproducing dependencies and inequalities (Benhabib, 2014; Fassin, 2012; Moulin, 2012; Pallister-Wilkins, 2019; Sciurba & Furri, 2018). Humanitarianism is usually intended to ensure survival but can have discriminatory effects. However, already changing small details in routines and practices can already have a big impact. No Borders implements such details. This is well reflected in the account of Ali in a No Borders project he volunteered in, that he told me about in an interview and which is worth quoting in its full length:

> I have been in places where they give the food because I was hungry, and other NGO, mostly, not generalizing anybody, but mostly they are like "you go there". Sometimes you have to wait two hours and the food is from yesterday …. That is embarrassing, that is insult. What I love [here] is that people coming in the cafeteria and the volunteers are going to them and bringing food to them. Asking them "what you want to eat?" …
> There are some very, really really small things, small gestures but these things make the person feel good, feel respected, feel important - that his existence has some value.

> "You are like us. Okay, we were born in a rich family, we have a privilege, but still you are human and you deserve respect. We give it." (Ali)

Activist try to distance themselves from humanitarians through creating egalitarian relationships of solidarity. In fact, legitimation inside No Borders' circles emanates from these relationships to a high degree. Hence, building radically egalitarian relationships between diverse people is a core feature of this sort of activism and structures the way activists approach their solidarity actions.

01.4.2 Radicality of Diverse Activists and Protest Repertoire

The No Borders' protest repertoire is wide-ranging. It includes actions directed at influencing the public and policy makers like demonstrations, campaigns and press releases, as well as actions which directly support people, like food distribution, squatting to provide housing, knowledge sharing, or civil disobedience (e.g. against deportations or by helping people cross borders they do not have legal ways of crossing). Groups regularly shift their use of repertoire as well as their level of radicality over time and according to the political necessities.

I adopt the lens of the No Borders movement as described above, well knowing that it is ambiguous concerning the radicalness of activists. No Borders has many quite radical claims; to abolish all borders and capitalism, and there is militant radical action like squatting buildings. In reality, however, not all refugee_migrant, leftist and antiracist groups are, or stay, equally radical. As Schwiertz discussed on the basis of the case of undocumented youth, such struggles are seldom purely on a radical path of No Borders (Schwiertz, 2015; 2019, 170ff.): Many of the young people individually had a utopian No Borders anti-state vision but chose less confrontative strategies out of pragmatic reasons of being embedded in hegemonic structures, needing alliances with less radical actors or just needing documents to survive or not be deported.

This makes visible the ambiguities around what to protest for as people do not just want to gain citizenship and assimilate into one national context but want to challenge the exclusionary notion of citizenship, be acknowledged as full human beings, and bring their own diversity into their new homes (Erensu, 2016; Schwiertz, 2015).

Struggling in No Borders has many actual and perceived advantages for the activists. For refugees and other migrants, and other marginalized groups, activism provides

possibilities to find support and to build alliances both for their humanitarian and political needs. Political activism and engaging in direct social action provide them with possibilities to get in contact with diverse people. Self-organised groups of refugee_migrants usually seek this out. This can be illustrated by the struggles of the group Lampedusa in Hamburg, an activist group loosely composed of around 200 people who mostly had fled Libya to Italy, and travelled from there to Hamburg to find better living and working conditions. The success of each individual differed over time according to what support they got and whom they chose as allies[5]. But to find allies in the first place was the first big challenge:

> You know, to get in contact with the German society is not something very easy, because there is this kind of…, margin between the German society and the foreigners. There are now a lot of foreigners that they have been here for 20 years, but they don't have a very close contact with it. Our political activity make it a little bit easier for us to get in contact with this German society. Because most of the people that gave us political support, humanitarian support, they are Germans, and it's a little bit easier for us to get in contact with them. Not very easy, but a bit easier. (Abimbola)

This is interesting because a much discussed issue in the field as well as in scholarly work concerns the questions of whether the activities are really political activism or 'just' civic engagement or humanitarianism or a mixture of these social logics and spheres (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017; Vandevoordt, 2019; Stavinoha & Ramakrishnan, forthcoming). This categorization is important in the field because throughout the research I repeatedly heard the following accusations meant to delegitimize the activism: that the leftists, western activists would instrumentalize refugees who were not interested in political agitation themselves. The reality is more complex, with different people having different motivations to engage in political struggles. Some people who join a group or protest already were political activists before and might have even left their country because of this, others are politicized through their experiences.

In the realities of refugee_migration, humanitarian aid is necessary but needs to be politicized in order to fight societal hierarchies as well as those reproduced through human impulse to only help those you are already close to us. In fact, studies show that No Borders groups can have a politicizing effect through their struggles. Simone Borgstede (2017) emphasized that the struggle of the group Lampedusa in Hamburg (LiHH) (I also

[5] For more information about Lampedusa in Hamburg see Borgstede (2017), Odugbesan and Schwiertz (2018) or Niess (2018).

interviewed some of its members), changed public opinion and that activist discourse politicized the topic “by the perspective that humanitarian help, if one took this seriously, could only be secured through political change" (Borgstede, 2017, p. 169). She describes further, some inner-movement disputes about how some "more radical" activists did not want to provide “social care” and were in favour of LiHH escalating the protest (Borgstede 2017, p. 166). These are key issues and debates that need to be kept in mind in order to understand the logics of the practices implemented.

These practices are foremost direct social actions against hierarchies to create horizontal structures. Thereby the relationships in the practices must not be paternalistic because the top-down or belittling paternalistic hierarchies that can be found at the individual level ultimately reflect the structuring of the state, which is rejected by certain activists and whose patriarchal colonialism also structures humanitarian aid work.

No Borders structures are not always anti-state but work through different legal forms. For example, a building known as OM10 in Göttingen (Germany) started out as a squat for refugee_migrants in 2015. The core activists bought the house in 2017 and chose the legal form of a cooperative in order to share responsibility. They thereby took it off the capitalist housing market, but of course, they were less radical than illegal squatters, who probably would have been evicted quickly.

Figure 2 - Banners at the squatted OM10 in Göttingen saying "here to stay", displaying the squatting sign, and "So that your racism will drown in our mischief". Picture taken by the author, summer 2016.

By the time of this writing (summer 2021), I wonder if the slogan of No Borders is getting old and if new forms of resistance will become more important – and I am curious what they will be about.

01.4.3 Mixed Groups and Transborder Activism

One central way in which egalitarian principles and practices are put into action prefiguratively is the mixed group structures and how people deal with it. No Borders means joining solidary struggles between those who are considered refugees and migrants and those who are not (King, 2016), usually because they are citizens of a European country. By 'mixed' I mean a mix of people from different countries and different ideological backgrounds that are united by the perspectives and practices described in the section above.

This joining of struggles gained more relevance around 2011 as migrant self-organised protests increased in influence and visibility in various European countries (Ataç et al., 2015; Jakob, 2016). These groups were able to mix with leftist, antiracist, and anarchist groups and create the mix of people we know from No Borders. This mix of people with different backgrounds inside groups and alliances between different groups influences the organisational practices of activists because different people bring together diverse perspectives, interests, and needs, which all have to be taken into account.

The mix brings about many personal differences across gender, race, political ideology, language, sexual orientation, religion, and so forth. These differences usually imply social inequalities and can thus represent interpersonal barriers and borders that people have to work through and try to communicate in different languages and across intercultural differences. So, in their struggles for immigrant rights and freedom of movement, activists not only struggle against nation-state borders but also embodied ones. To give an example[6], race and legal status influence the opportunity to go to a demonstration as this is a public event that can be photographed or can involve encounters or clashes with the police. Black people and people of colour are much more likely to be controlled or face heavier punishments, like staying in jail, than white people. If someone has no resident permit or is even illegally staying in a country, showing up in public spaces or getting controlled by

[6] More examples and more detailed discussions of them are given in all of the individual papers.

the police can lead to deportation or long jail sentences. But also internally, the inequalities need to be considered, as, for example, white people often dominate discussions or choose a European language that not everybody knows, thereby privileging themselves to influence decisions.

Social movement studies have discussed the specificities of transnational activism, but the No Borders groups, as well as their alliances, are not only transnational but also highly diverse in national settings, with individuals working together from very unequal starting points. Working together does not only mean working against national borders but also working against cultural and linguistic ones which are gendered and racialized. People are separated by inequalities of educational background, of legal status, mobility restrictions, and even personality (f.e. how outgoing you are as a person influences how easy you find connections). It is not only international and transnational cooperation of people but one that tries to transcend these national identifiers and create real solidarity. Therefore, I adopt the term *transborder activism* to describe the interpersonal and prefigurative features of No Borders' practices. Transborder activism refers to the efforts around e.g., linguistic and cultural translation, consensus-decision making, and other practices that aim at enabling democratic participation of all the different voices of activists. It includes making space for and trying to meet each other on an equal footing whilst pursuing the radical political goals of No Borders.

Conceptually speaking, transborder activism aims at tackling and transforming inequalities, and activists thereby aim at internally producing a new and inclusive political community beyond borders. Below I argue that they aim at transforming solidarities between privileged western citizens and refugee_migrants into a solidarity among all these diverse activists who together aim at dismantling the systemic inequalities produced by the EU border regime.

01.4.4 Why Transborder Activism is Considered Transformative and Challenging

Some scholars argue that such activism, which in this thesis I call transborder activism, can transform the border regime. Dadusc, Grazioli, and Martínez suppose that "the solidarities and collaborations between undocumented and documented activists challenge hitherto prevailing notions of citizenship and social movements" (Dadusc et al.,

2019, p. 521). Similarly, Stierl (2019, p. 121) argues for the political advantages and creative processes of migratory solidarity between diverse people:

> "As borders shift, proliferate, and become increasingly diffused but not less violent, solidarity, too, has entered spaces of abjection in order to establish a contentious presence that exceeds and unmakes sedentary and identitarian frames, quite literally, in motion."

The authors see solidarity between diverse activists in a context of social and political transformations beyond the individual level.

As I have argued above, transborder activism aims at transforming the solidarity between privileged activists with marginalised activists into a solidarity among everyone who is affected by the capitalist, sexist and racialized divisions of the border regime. Discussing the ambiguity of radical action in No Borders also shows that this solidarity among does not aim at including everyone into the order of citizenship but instead create something beyond it.

One has to note, however, that in practice, egalitarian work in mixed groups that is trying to transform the socio-political order is not only hopeful and empowering but also emotionally difficult and conflictual. If perceived in a prefigurative way, the egalitarian relationships people try to build can have a very loaded purpose of legitimising specific forms of organisation and justifying a distinction from 'purely' humanitarian aid. It thus becomes important for several reasons to organise and mobilise in 'a right way'. Therefore, that conceptual prefigurative link between "macro" transformation and "micro" interactions bears the weight of the embodied and affective experiences of real people in real-life relationships. And real people tend to find challenging situations difficult. In her study on solidarity groups in Sweden, Christina Hansen finds that what she calls embodied solidarity "presupposes a mutual emotional and bodily engagement between people in unequal power relations." (Hansen, 2019, 310ff.). This means that everyone involved has to put in emotional and social energy while the prevalence of power structures and (unintended) discrimination on the individual level creates conflicts in everyday situations and in political actions.

Regularly activist solutions and practices can be well-meaning but reproduce inequalities or cause further harm. For example, a simple idea, which is often implemented to improve understanding and empathy, is to create mixed working groups and organize events in

which people can informally get to know each other. However, in the leftist activist settings that I studied, western people were usually strikingly unaware of the exclusivity of gatherings that involved drinking alcohol in public places - especially for Muslim women - which they saw simply as a site for informal decision making and bonding. Moreover, activities organised on Friday evenings can have low participation rates of Muslims while being a favoured time slot for Christians or non-religious Westerners.

Also, the building of strong new in-groups who share solidarity among each other can produce new exclusions. For example, friendships, which have a reputation for egalitarian bonding, have their own ambiguities in organisational settings. Connections between diverse activists which are built around friendship and other intimate relationships ideally build an "affinity in difference" (King, 2016, pp. 165–167) of trust and improve the will to support each other short-term and in the long run and create an atmosphere in which people like to come together (Kubaczek, 2017; Kubaczek & Duman, 2020)

On the flipside, when working relations and cooperation result from of a network of friendships or are embedded in them, the reasons for responsibilities and accountabilities can seem opaque to outsiders. At a community centre, where I did participatory observation, many key positions were held by western citizens, and the way in which refugee_migrant volunteers were included in working groups depended, to a certain degree, both on luck and personal preferences by the people already in the working groups. This at least partially sprung from the centre's organisational nature of being horizontally self-organised, where dynamics easily developed along with basic human sentiments, such as "I want to do a shift with someone I like". Informal and horizontal structures have been proven to have their own "tyranny" of elitism and favouritism (Freeman, 1972-73; Polletta, 2002). Indeed, an angry debate sprung up in which some who identified as refugee_migrants complained that western citizens shared their privileges only with their "favourites". This verbally escalated when a limited number of stipends was available to people in precarious positions and the neutrality of the criteria was questioned.

This all means that in No Borders, the old feminist slogan of 'the private is political' remains true: In solidarity, the personal relationship between diverse people is politically charged. It is not enough to just be friendly, instead, people also need to work consciously against

their privileges and fight their personal inner struggles in sometimes very demanding, precarious life circumstances.

01.5 In-between Solidarities

In No Borders, as I argue, activists try to transform the solidarity of western citizens with refugee_migrants into solidarity among diverse people affected by the divisions put into effect by nation-state logics and the EU border regime. This is not a linear process or a clear goal but a complex endeavour, as the activists' practices are situated in-between different political realities and logics, which I discuss in this following section.

As discussed above (see section 01.1), the general idea of solidarity is a particularly modern concern. In other words, solidarity makes sense if thought about in terms of modern society, which is defined by fragmentation and a division of labour. Thus, solidarity is a mechanism of securing the livelihood and safety of people beyond kinship in western individualized social arrangements. Society is often understood as congruent with nation-states, and membership is regulated via citizenship – excluding non-citizens through racist and neocolonial structures and institutions. Formally all members of a society are equal and have equal rights. This theoretical equality is the basis through which we can understand inequality in the first place and through which claims for redistribution between members are derived. This is the basis of solidarity. Solidarity becomes something that bridges inequality. Solidarity needs inequality to exist.

Hence, solidarity is never universalistic. This distinguishes it from humanitarian actions. Solidarity is particular and refers to a specific community of solidarity. This community can be a state but can be defined by many other things.

The emergence of the No Borders movement, its actions, and logic is contingent on the hegemony of the solidarity in nation-states (and supra-national political institutions that follow the same exclusionary lines at their outer borders) because it opposes its exclusionary lines. They counter it with another solidarity which is based on the idea of equality on the whole globe beyond specific state formations. This is different from universalist ideas of humanitarianism, in which everyone deserves basic help. There, transborder activism aims at creating egalitarian forms of relationships of solidarity that bridge the inequality of citizenship and try to avoid reproducing (other) inequalities and

discrimination. The activists' efforts include aiming to build an inclusive community of solidarity of people who are usually divided by the modern border regime in the EU.

In their own structures, I argue, they are trying to get from a *solidarity with* - of privileged western citizens with refugee_migrants - to a *solidarity among* – among people who are mainly divided by citizenship and its inherent institutionalised racism but have other things in common.

Solidarity with those who are separated by borders should become a solidarity among people who defend the same interests of equality and freedom beyond nation-state borders. Finding these common interests and ways to mutually support each other is key. This is reflected in the following statement by a refugee_migrant activist in Hamburg:

> From my own point of view, solidarity is a social responsibility for individual or group of people who realize that they have to give the support to people living around them. Because for me, solidarity don't really mean the refugees, you understand? Maybe your focus [me, the author as interviewer] is really on refugee, but for my own side I can still be in solidarity with you, because I also don't know, maybe you are a lesbian, maybe you are a queer or something like this, you know. If I discover something like this and I see space where I also have to support what you are doing you know, it's also a solidarity. (Abimbola)

Abimbola substantiated his stance by saying that needs for solidarity are not fixed in the course of a lifetime. Those who are strong now may need help at another time. "Life changes, you know", he sighed.

Recurring statements of No Borders groups make similar claims, arguing that they are not interested in saving refugees or migrants but that they want to defend equality and human rights for everyone. To find these spaces of mutual support, which are not limited to the grievance of inequality through citizenship and racism, is an essential part of transborder activities when mixed groups struggle together. The aim is to find interpersonal connections and new ways to support each other and create a world *without borders*. The exclusion of people of a community of solidarity along the lines of citizenship and legal status is rejected, and transborder activism aims at creating a new community full of egalitarian relationships.

For this to make sense, equality must be seen as potentially global in scope. But as it is difficult to fight political inequality on a global level, the prefigurative logic to transform problems in local spaces and the individual or organisational scale of direct action could be

assigned to the slogan 'think globally, act locally'. A slogan that can be attributed to the GJM and whose heritage can be traced through both activists' networks and the emphasis of horizontal practice and prefigurative deliberation in No Borders (see above).

Thereby, adapting to root for alliances with marginalized ones is exceptional because social psychology informs us that humans tend to try to belong to groups with people who are either very similar to us or those who are very high status (or both) (Grigoryan, 2019).

Still, as has been described above, no matter how radical the claim or the movement's heritage, many times, pragmatic ways of support demand inclusion in citizenship and other systems of state-run welfare solidarity or humanitarian means. Usually, activists are aware of this tension between the solidarities. On occasions, they play with the tension to substantiate their claims, as can be illustrated by the creative design of a slogan used by squatters in the Göttingen.

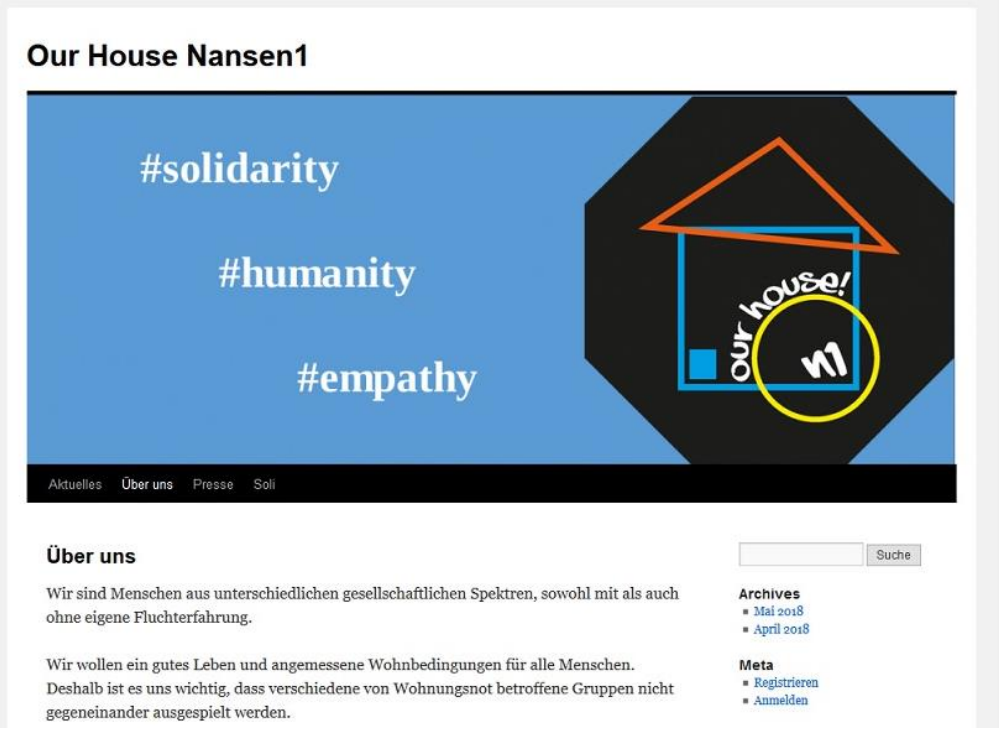

Figure 3 - Header of the public blog of the Nansen1 squat. https://nanseneins.noblogs.org/. Last seen 28.05.2021.

They replaced the three mottos of the French Revolution - freedom, equality, fraternity - which serve as values for enlightened nation-states, into mottos that better serve their inclusive political project: solidarity, humanity, empathy.

To summarize, in practice, the strategies and actions in the European No Borders movement, that I encountered and researched, were situated between different types of

solidarities – a radically inclusive anarchist one and a hierarchical exclusionary citizenship one. Activists want to transform systemically unequal relations of solidarities. While they want to fight the exclusionary notion of the nation-state, everyday struggles usually involve finding ways to include someone in the hegemonic system's protection. All this while opening spaces of diversity and managing everyday inequalities, human suffering and political problems.

It is this constant ambiguity and flexibility which, on the one hand, is a strength of No Borders, but that also make the fight exhausting. Navigating strategies and relationships can be difficult for individuals and groups as there are no ready-made solutions and guidelines on how to proceed. This is the frame in which the No Borders movement's relationships of solidarity are embedded.

01.6 Research Design of the Thesis

After having laid out the social phenomenon researched in this thesis, I now clarify the methodological premises and tools used to conduct this research and analysis. I then describe ethical considerations informing the study.

The overarching frame consists of an interpretative methodology that embraces the perspective that all knowledge is socially constructed and perceives the researcher as internal to the research process, and not an objective external observer who is in need to be reflexive. The logic of generalization follows inductive validity, inside a specific case or situation, and the analysis follows an abductive reasoning that is interested in identifying patterns, practices and processes that shape and are shaped by human meaning making (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2014a).

In order to investigate the relationships of solidarity in the No Borders movement, I produced and collected substantial qualitative data to asses sense-making and the everyday life of the movement activists. Through interviews, ethnographic observations and the collecting of documents I could approximate the way people were making sense of their relationships, and what discourses were relevant to them. I began exploratory data collection in 2015, and did focused data collection between 2016 and 2017 with few follow ups in 2018 to 2020. I mainly conducted issue- and problem-centred interviews (Witzel & Reiter, 2012) with strong narrative passages so that people had the opportunity to tell me their perspectives on solidarity activism and put their own emphasis on issues which were

relevant to them. When sampling individuals for interviews I balanced interviewing both western citizens and refugee_migrants about similar issues and projects. I unintentionally created a gender disparity with an underrepresentation of female refugee_migrants, but after consideration, I realized that this did mirror the group compositions (see also concluding discussion of limitations).

I also engaged in participatory observations (Schöne, 2009) while helping with organising protest action and in social kitchens and teaching languages. This enabled me to see everyday interaction and understand the life-worlds in which solidarity relationships took place and, thereby, interpret interview content more precisely and also build hypotheses to follow up on. It also helped me gain trust and access to interview partners. Lastly, I selected flyers, statements on blogs, social media, and homepages of activist projects and policy information for further analysis of relevant discourses, and additional information about activities. I personally collected all of this data in Germany and Greece, but also digital information and communication about other localities (see below).

These types of data collection fit under the umbrella-frame of a multi-sited and non-local ethnography in the tradition of George Marcus (1995) and border-regime analysis (Hess & Tsianos, 2010). In such frameworks, comparative case selection is replaced by the principle of following people and issues, as well as allowing for the combination heterogeneous types of data, thereby doing justice to the migrant realities in which locality and belonging increasingly blur and multiply. Data is collected along certain issues of friction, in order to approximate an understanding of why a phenomenon is like it is and why it is not different (Tsing, 2005).

This research design represents an attempt to look at activism beyond methodological nationalism, which means that it neither negates the relevance of nation-state settings nor presupposes them as a starting point for the individual formation of personal relationships. Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz (2018, p. 1) wrote: "Migration is not only transforming […] countries, but also social scientific studies". And following Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004), transnationality is understood as a social field which is inhabited by people to different extents depending on their life circumstances. Social phenomena and social structures are understood as springing from (differences in) how people make sense of their life-world.

For *data analysis*, the theory-method tool of Situational Analysis (SitA) was chosen because it is the best method to understand recurring intersectional, prefigurative 'scale shifts' between individuals' behaviour, structural inequalities and ideological discourses which formed the conditions under which solidarity was built between diverse actors.

Situational Analysis (SitA) is a method-theory-tool, developed by Adele Clarke as a postmodern extension of Grounded Theory (GT). While classical GT focusses on individual social action, SitA puts into effect a scale shift and understands social phenomena through its situatedness in the meso level (Keller, 2020, p. 531). Clarke argues that analysing institutional and routinized collective settings shows how power structures manifest in the individual level and influence one another (Clarke & Keller, 2014, pp. 5–6). Within an interpretative framework tools are used to analyse this *situatedness* of human action and acknowledge the partiality of knowledge (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 26). Consequently, in SitA the key unit of analysis is "*the situation of inquiry itself*" (Clarke, 2015, p. 133), sometimes also called *situation of action*.

Activist scholar Nadiye Ünsal has argued that in the movements the prevalence of binary categories like 'refugees' or 'supporters' do not reflect the intersectional "nexus of class, race, gender and other power relations […] and prevent us from dealing with them." (Ünsal, 2015). Similarly, after analysing a No Borders camp 2007 in the Ukraine, Blumberg and Rechitsky (2015) argued for an feminist, intersectional lens to account for the diversity and such very different positionalities as we find in No Borders. SitA stems from such a feminist tradition and provides tools to conceptualize outside of the "box" of predefined categories (e.g. citizenship, refugees) and therefore can work around reproducing potentially discriminating and harmful categorizing. It is important to be able to reflect the actual diversity in the situation and trace the issues (e.g. being right, sharing, interpersonal pressure, trauma) categorial 'borders' (e.g. being a humanitarian, ethnicity), and embodied 'borders' that were most significant to the activists' efforts of building solidarity in real life. In this way, transborder activism in the EU in the 2010s could be understood with all its intersectional challenges and prefigurative logics which formed individuals' behaviour, structural inequalities and ideological discourses.

Under the umbrella of this research design, the data collection was done under the umbrella of the whole thesis. Throughout iterative analyses the research questions for particular

papers were developed and then data was selected from the whole body of data for more detailed analyses alongside the interest of these questions. Also, the analytical procedures differed in details, which is described in the respective chapters. This was possible because SitA is a theory generating method and its processes run iteratively. Theoretical concepts generated by SitA are seen as "on probation" and tested by its usefulness (Clarke et al., 2018, pp. 31–32).

This means that important issues in the field were followed up and could lead to further research interest and particular research questions. The results were generated by travelling between activists' or other practitioners' knowledge and the theoretical lens I as researcher have been trained to see through, and interpretation was influenced as well by my embodied experiences in the field. The results of this thesis' papers, then, are theoretical concepts and analytical interpretations of structures that determine how people make sense of the solidarity relations they build.

01.6.1 Multi-sited Data Collection in the EU: Hamburg, Athens and Beyond

Data collection took place in a multi-sited framework because the relevant situation of action was broader than one locality, and actors moved through different spaces. Such research that spans different localities causes uncertainties for a researcher at various stages of the process because: "multisite research does not mean that any single research project has covered/researched all the sites that could help one understand a given phenomenon. But living with the tension between density and chaos that characterizes multisite work will likely be an ongoing art of the research experience." (Clarke, 2005, pp. 166–167). This is a delicate matter to handle in order not to lapse into over-interpretation of single events or miss important local details. However, eventually, only such a research design can approximate the multiplicity of realities in which transit migration and transborder activism occur.

I collected data in projects in Germany and Greece in sites in which many refugee_migrants and western citizens engaged together in No Borders activism. None of the social situations I looked at could have been understood through its mere locality and without taking into account the transnational links of people, symbols, or ideas. Thus, in such a framework, data is collected along certain issues of friction to approximate an understanding of why a phenomenon is like it is and why it is not different (Tsing 2005).

For ethnographic, participatory observation and conducting interviews, I zoomed into the urban settings of Hamburg and Athens. This was fruitful to find similarities in contrasting settings. Both cities share an active squatting scene which joined forces with refugee_migrants in the 2010s through various forms of protest repertoires. Notably, there is awareness relating activists and activist issues between these cities to each other.

This history of connection can be illustrated by the fact that there is an active fanclub and friendships between Greek football fans of the FC St.Pauli, a football club in Hamburg, internationally known for its political stances on the left. Furthermore, there are a number of graffiti paintings and murals referencing and supporting each other's political struggles. In 2017 for example there was a lot of graffiti in Athens on the G20 in Hamburg.

Figure 4 - Picture of the City Plaza truck at the United against racism parade in Hamburg. In the front Mohammed Jouni from Youth without Borders Berlin (no member of City Plaza) celebrates the day. Picture taken by the author, September 2018, Hamburg.

There is also personal exchange. For example, in September 2018 activists from the City Plaza squat in Athens travelled to Hamburg to participate in a political carnival under the slogan "United against racism". The relationship between the cities is not exclusive, for example, many former residents of Athens' City Plaza squat now reside in Germany and live in Berlin or wherever the asylum system placed them. Still, there are similarities and

diffusion in discourse and practices which make sense since both urban settings contain autonomous-anarchist scenes which know one another.

I sampled those activist projects which involved direct social actions supporting refugee_migrants because they involve a high interpersonal involvement between diverse activists: Activists distributed food and provided or organised housing through squatting or space sharing. They organised donations, legal support, medical provision, and child care, and when possible, offering education of skills that were helpful for living in the EU (mostly language classes). I sampled and selected them on the assumption that these activists' projects replaced institutionalized forms of solidarity, like the welfare state and humanitarian provision for asylum seekers, and only zoomed into those projects which had (or claimed to have) egalitarian, horizontal modes of organisation and decision-making to account for the egalitarian approach of No Borders.

In summary: I conducted formal interviews with current or former members of (in alphabetical order): Better days for Moria, Café Exil Hamburg, City Plaza Squat Athens, EcoFavela Kampnagel, Flüchtlingsrat Hamburg, Fux e.V., Greek refugee Council, International Refugee Conference Hamburg 2016, informal support Victoria Square 2016, Lampedusa in Hamburg, Lesvos Solidarity (former PIKPA), noborder school, Notara Squat, Thési Community Centre Athens and Times Up. I had informal conversations with individuals informally active in Idomeni and individuals active or living in various squats in Athens. Further, I had informal encounters with and participated in Devenion Kitchen Crew, OM10 Göttingen, squatted Polytechnical University 2016, Recht auf Stadt kennt keine Grenzen, Sprachraum e.V. Hamburg, We'll come United and Welcome 2 Europe. I did formalised participatory observation in the Thési Community Centre Athens. All of the projects had transnational connections to other groups, projects, and localities through which they organised new people, donations, and knowledge. The connections could be formal (e.g., donors of an NGO) or informal through friendships between activists. I followed some individuals, projects, and issues to Mytilene, Dresden, Leipzig, and Bern. Lastly, I followed the digital outlet of all of these projects (e.g., statements on blogs and campaign announcements). I am deeply indebted to all these projects and individuals who gave me their time.

01.6.2 Description of Data and Analytical Procedures

As described above, the situation of action was transnational, transborder, multi-facetted, and complex. For data collection, I looked at No Borders activist projects which had mixed groups, transborder activism, and aimed to support newly arrived refugee_migrants in Germany and Greece and people on the move in Europe. Thereby, and especially for the interviews, I sampled diverse standpoints and positionalities inside the situation.

The types of data which are analysed include (for more detail, see table in appendix): 31 formal interviews with 34 persons, 10 whom I identified as female, 24 whom I identified as male; 11 whom I identified as refugee_migrants, 18 whom I identified as western citizens and 5 with people whom I identified somewhere in-between these categories. Each Interview was accompanied by interview memos in written or audio form; in three interviews, I additionally asked participants to draw a map of their social network to enhance the conversation. I also conducted several informal interviews and participatory observations, documented in 78 digital and audio research diary entries, in 3 structured field notes, and in uncounted rough memos in 4 notebooks of different page counts. Lastly, I selected 38 documents, press releases, and social media posts by No Borders activists for detailed analysis. To transform emotional and physical resonances into data, I extensively kept a research diary. I often did not write to avoid documenting too slow and less descriptive. Instead, I recorded a lot of my experiences in the form of audio memos. Additionally, in 2016 my friend Romana who was familiar with the field, interviewed me to document emotions and processes inside me after the first field phases and produce a document for self-reflection in an autoethnographic tradition (Ellis, 2004; Ellis et al., 2010).

All of this data was coded in more or less detail according to both deductive and inductive Grounded Theory coding procedures of open and axial coding and some theoretical coding (Flick, 2011; Hernandez, 2009). I also used emotion and problem coding (Saldaña, 2003). Coding was done with the help of Atlas.ti 7.5.18. Afterward, I used the same coding schemes for all the different types of data and in different languages (see below).

Additionally, mapping procedures according to SitA (situational mapping, position mapping, and open mapping) were applied to gain insights into the systemic and contextual elements of the encounters I made. Most fruitful was the overview of the relevant

social worlds around activism and humanitarianism and visualising the human and non-human elements relevant to them (for some analytical maps, see the appendix)

Codes, categories as well as key issues to follow up on were identified through the literature as well as through iterative data collection. I also followed up on or kept in touch with the stories of people who moved beyond borders or settings as the research questions developed further.

Moreover, the research was informed by 256 screenshots from online communication and social media communication (often including visual data) of public online conversations (homepages, blogs, public social media outlets on Facebook) of different No Borders projects and NGOs, and 60 photographs. I also kept myself informed through less public social media (e.g., WhatsApp, closed Facebook groups) but did not include this in the formal analysis because of ethical considerations and issues of consent.

The issues of friction identified in the building of relationships between refugee_migrants and western citizens included "friendship", "categorization of activism", "activism vs. humanitarianism", "mental health", "nationalism", and "privilege / discrimination" – the reasons for this are described in the respective chapters below. According to the principle of following people and issues in the situation, data was collected about those issues which were relevant to people in forming solidarity, and were taken apart and put together guided by the research interests and questions, and revealed (new) aspects and theoretical connections.

Each of the individual studies of this thesis differs slightly in their analytical procedures and approach. These are explained in the method sections of chapter 2 to 4.

01.6.3 Multilingual Data

Multilingualism in No Borders is an important fact and issue for the building of relationships, and it needed to be included in the study. It was also a methodological challenge that I handled pragmatically in this study.

The transnational and transborder nature of the situation of inquiry entailed multiple languages. The most relevant languages around the data that I collected included Arabic, Dari, English, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Kurmanji, Sorani, Pashtu, Tigrinya, and Urdu. Many European languages were used depending on the majority of people in a project and

country of concern, with English, French, Spanish and Italian speakers very common in diverse settings.

This means that usually, in a group, people did not have the same 'native' language or native language skills. Often not everyone in a group shared a common language that everyone could speak on a conversational level. Therefore, in face-to-face situations and media outlets, activists had to find either a) one language that everyone could speak and read, b) one major language to communicate in but also provide translation for those who did not understand it (e.g., simultaneous or consequent interpretation in digital communication and chains or whisper-translation during meetings), or c) determine a mix of relevant languages and communicate in more than one language. To give two examples: First, the newspaper "Daily Resistance" (available in print and online), which is published in a rhythm of several months with an editing team in Berlin around refugee_migrant struggles in Germany and beyond. It publishes articles usually in the author(s)' native language or English, with French or German translations, sometimes with one issues also published in different versions. In the screenshot, information about the newspaper is given in English, Farsi, French, Arabic, and Slovenian.

Figure 5 - Cover of an irregularly published newspaper from Berlin. The newspaper's language varies. The heading is in English, Arabic, French, Farsi, and Slovenian. Source: https://i2.wp.com/oplatz.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/daily-resistance_oplatz-net . Last seen 21.04.2021.

The second example shows a protest banner in downtown Athens during a small protest against a squat eviction and for the housing needs of a group of immigrants who fled the official asylum camps and came to the capital. The group of activists communicated in a mixture of Greek, English, and French, the latter being the colonial language the group of immigrants spoke. The banner is in Farsi, English, and Lingala to communicate with most

people who were in that public area and concerned by the protest (considering that most Greeks and many immigrants speak English well, Lingala being the native language of many individuals in the group (a common language from a region in present-day Congo) and many people being in that public space being Farsi speakers whose solidarity the people from Africa seemed to seek.

Figure 6 – A banner at a small rally in downtown Athens. Slogan "Common struggle between locals & Immigrants" in Farsi, English, and Lingala. Picture taken by the author, 22.11.2019

Also, the research quickly revealed that No Borders' projects and other refugee_migrant settings like camps all showed some form of a unique slang, which in the case of camps on the island of Lesvos has even been described as a Pidgin language (Broomfield, 2017). Therefore, it is simply impossible to speak "the right" language. However, I adapted as much as possible to the local contexts.

For this study, the sampling and collecting of the data were limited by the languages spoken by me (German, English, Spanish, French, basic reading skills of Greek), the translators, and digital translation tools (mostly google translate) available to me. The 30 formal interviews conducted in this study were collected in the following languages:

Language	**Number**	**Comment**
English	17x	[15 with non-natives]
German	12x	[1 with non-native speaker, 3 with different mother-tongues but native conduct of German]
Spanish	1	[with some switches to English by the interviewee and me]

Farsi	1	[with simultaneous translation in a mix of German & English by an informal translator]

Thus, most interviews and many conversations lack the nuances of a conversation between two native speakers. However, this was normal in this field of activism, and people were used to dealing with linguistic uncertainties or miscommunication. Methodologically I accounted for the multilingualism as I coded pragmatically for content and information. Also, I coded most types of data and data in different languages together and grouped similar terms in a different language when I felt they did not have a shift in meaning (for example, 'solidarity', 'Solidarität', 'solidaridad' and 'Αλληλεγγύη') or coded with one language where a change of language would have meant a shift in meaning (for example 'bullshit'). While this, on occasions, can create impreciseness, it also aids in challenging language barriers.

01.6.4 Research Ethics, Methodological Consequences and Influence on Research Questions

> [M]oving between public and private spheres of activity, from official to subaltern contexts, the ethnographer is bound to encounter discourses that overlap with his or her own. (Marcus, 1995, p. 112)
>
> "Representing is intervening." (Clarke 2012a: 392; emphasis in original)

The quality of interpretative, meaning-focused research cannot be measured by statistical significance or replicability well-known from positivist, quantitative studies. Therefore, Schwartz-Shea (2014, pp. 130–140) argues for other means of measurement: First, trustworthiness, thick descriptions, reflexivity, and triangulation/intertextuality all refer to efforts to collect and handle data in ways that let it "speak" in the context it was collected in and not abstracted from the humans who produced it, and that it is comprehensibly documented. Secondly, evaluation criteria involve direct interaction with practitioners, scholarly colleagues, and other readers. They should be convinced and assured that the research is ethical and the results are trustworthy through informant feedback or member checks, audit and transparency of documenting research procedures, and negative case analysis. To a certain extent, evaluating the quality of the research must be invoked by the final text and is also intersubjective, as it involves the reader's engagement.

In this study, emphasis was put on the triad of *reflexivity, positionality, and situatedness* to ensure the quality of the analysis because they connect the (inter)personal level with the "social" (the societal or institutional "meso" scale) in which practices of relationship-making take place in.

Further, the above criteria for quality show that much of the quality depends on ethically sound procedures. Thereby, what research behaviour is considered ethical is context-specific (Unger, 2018, 2f.), and indeed, big parts of this study's research design must be understood through ethical considerations as described in the following.

01.6.4.1 Reflexivity and Situatedness, and their Effects on Transparency and the Research Design

Reflexivity is a necessary tool inside the interpretative paradigm as it serves to access the intersubjective layers of research. Reflexivity as a method addresses different stages of a study, from developing a research question to the data collection and analysis. The need for reflexivity is implied in the name-giving premise of Situational Analysis that every production of knowledge is *situated* in a specific social setting. Thus, researchers are part of the situation and need to be reflexive themselves. SitA stands in a feminist tradition that consciously foregrounds marginalised positions and takes into account the power structures informing the social world (Clarke, 2015). To produce high quality research, steps of reflexivity must be transparent to the reader for them to be able to follow an author's train of thought.

For this study, the relevant disciplinary traditions of both refugee and migration research and social movement studies call for reflexivity because topics are usually sensitive for the people who are being researched (and are sensitive due to the same reasons they are academically interesting. People are, for example, vulnerable, struggle to survive, engage in illegalized activities, or both at the same time (e.g., migrant squatting, crossing borders autonomously). Such situations can also limit possibilities for transparency. This makes it necessary to ethically reflect on what to do and what not to do during research. The "Do No Harm"-principle from NGOs can be applied (U. Krause, 2016), which means that a researcher should try his or her best to prevent causing any physical or mental harm to the people you work with and during every step of the research (from collecting data to effects on people or the field through publishing information). In many research areas, such

sensitivity is met with transparency and consent; however, as von Unger points out (2018), the precarity which shapes the lives of refugee_migrants (e.g., in legal, social, and economic ways) has an impact on the possibilities for transparency and the opportunities of participants to consent in research fully. Reasons that limit transparency can be language barriers, time, or a lack of formal education to understand what academic publishing implies. Others can feel pressured to participate or hope to gain advantages through access to the privileged researchers whom people mistakenly believe in having the power to change policies. Sometimes people try to manipulate researchers. Therefore, researchers need to be even more considerate and reflect on the effects their work has. At least I encountered all of these issues during my research.

Many refugee_migrants and activists are aware of such problems which research brings along and are aware of the disparities between their own possibilities and those of researchers who might want to be nice and helpful but whose research does not directly benefit those in need or even harms their (political) goals. Thus, some people or groups right-out refuse to participate. These are effects of inequalities and hierarchies in the (educational) system, which are partially out of the control of the researcher but can be moderated through an engaged approach (Odugbesan et al., 2019). In social movements studies, this has been called activist scholarship (Gittell & Newman, 2011) or militant research (Bookchin et al., 2013). While I do not apply such labels to this dissertation, I do believe that a researcher's ethical responsibility largely stems from the trust you gain from individuals and a subcultural environment in order to conduct qualitative, engaged research (Gauditz, 2019). Keeping one's distance in research involving ethnographic elements is neither possible nor does it imply better results or more ethical research. Often the duality of my role as an engaged person in the field and researcher was not very transparent because of the informality of encounters. Also, sometimes people did something that I found highly relevant to theorize upon in private situations, and I had not intended to "do research" in these situations, but it turned out to be insightful. To minimize the possibility of any harm done, I guaranteed anonymity to everyone who spoke to me and asked for it. Following Hugman, Pittaways, and Bartolomei's (2011, 1267f.) idea to balance the effects of vulnerability through participation, I asked for feedback and guidance in as many stages as possible. I asked for directions on the research questions from

interviewees. In situations in which actors were not aware of my intentions as a researcher, but which I drew textual corpus and relevant insights from, were clarified later over feedback loops. I've been mistaken for a journalist several times, and corrected this assumption. Only in one case I anonymized the person without checking in, because of a language barrier and out of fear to complicate the relationship to this person.

I also aimed to produce knowledge that was not only academically useful and asked research participants about their interests to guide my research. I also discarded research interests and questions that could be ethically problematic and harm groups. Moreover, I left out details about romantic and sexual relationships in solidarity settings and did not follow up on issues concerning those.

01.6.4.2 The Author's Positionality and its Influence on the Study

> "An experience is something you come out of changed. If I had to write a book to communicate what I have already thought, I'd never have the courage to begin it. I write precisely because I don't know yet what to think about a subject that attracts my interest. In so doing, the book transforms me, changes what I think. […] When I write, I do it above all to change myself and not to think the same thing as before."
>
> (Foucault, 1991, p. 27)

The term positionality refers to the social position a person inhabits in the world and how personal values, views, and experiences shape how we understand this world. Feminist scholars have stressed that reflecting on a researcher's position and making it visible is key to quality knowledge production (Haraway, 1995; Wylie, 2004). Reflecting the researcher's positionality is inevitable in interpretative research for ethical and analytical reasons. Ethically, because of the power, a researcher can exert over research subjects and analytically, because of how the researcher is situated in the world, usually influences the research design, research interest, and data collection. To define my position in the world, I also used SitA mapping tools (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 52).

I am a white cis-woman and a German citizen born with a German passport and a family history of Nazis, who identifies with leftist and antiracist ideologies. I have participated in demonstrations around such issues since I was a teenager and first became active in refugee_migrant support activism in 2009. I do not identify as a refugee or a migrant. In Greece I came to identify as western and foreigner and connected better with everyone who

was not Greek than I connected in Germany to non-Germans and PoC citizens. In Germany I felt very settled and often experienced a high barrier in connecting with migrants.

Figure 7 - The banner reads, "Migration is the mother of all societies". The picture is of the author, taken by Anne at the antiracist parade "United Against Racism", September 2018 in Hamburg.

Reflexivity of an author's position and her emotional experience can be transformed in the source of data, and it usually influences the course of qualitative data collection. As I have expanded on elsewhere (Gauditz, 2019) qualitative research can bring you in situations that push you beyond your personal boundaries, which you would not necessarily stretch if your livelihood did not depend on it. Generally speaking, the time of my Ph.D. was a time of personal growth to a sometimes brutal extent, in which I learned much more than expected. To channel this analytically, I participated in an ethnographic supervision group from 2017 to 2018. This supervision method was developed to avoid exoticizing the 'other's' we meet in ethnography and project on them those parts in ourselves we do not want to recognize as part of ourselves (Bonz et al., 2017b, p. 3). As a white, privileged woman, I had to channel a lot of (white) guilt, partly inherited from my family, who has a Nazi history. My research interests stem from reflecting on my positions and wanting to find out how to work against privileges and create relationships in which people can meet on an equal footing. I personally had the experience that it felt liberating to cooperate in a friendly and equal way with empowered people who are usually discriminated against in the settings that I live in. As a woman, few people felt threatened by me. In interview situations, I tried to establish trust through an emotional connection and trustworthiness by pointing out my ideological goals of an equal world.

Lastly, I turned to psychotherapy in 2016 and 2020, which partially became necessary because the research triggered personal struggles in me. Identifying personal issues was necessary to avoid confusing my issues with information in the data. However, my personal history with mental health helped me see psychological challenges in the field. Moreover, it also intuitively led to me connecting more deeply with people who also had a history of mental health challenges and which led to me being able to relate to them in a way, which made them trust me. Both of these experiences contributed to the development of chapter four and its focus on burnout, as well as understanding the social pressure people are under in chapter two.

01.7 Preliminary Summary and Outlook on the Next Chapters

Solidarity is a social concept that guides political practice and needs to be appealed to but has been defined in such multiple ways that it is difficult – both conceptually and for practitioners – to avoid misunderstanding. However, successful political solidarity always implies particular obligations or moral appeals to support other members of a community of solidarity which is formed around common interests and goals, especially if not already institutionalized or when intersectional differences lead to differing needs.

The way the relationships between members of the community of solidarity are formed can vary according to the power or privilege individuals and groups hold. They can be top-down and compensate or balance a specific form of inequality, which can be called 'solidarity with'; or they can be more equal between people who identify as peers or are affected by the same grievance, which can be called 'solidarity among'. Oftentimes, this binary differentiation is too simplistic. Bridging inequalities is often more complicated because different discriminating components intersect, meaning that people might be similarly affected by one grievance but might be different in another regard.

Previous scholarship shows that the form of relationship between members of a community of solidarity impacts the effectiveness of common struggles between diverse and unequal people because communication about common interests, goals and even norms has to ensure that strategies do benefit all the people affected by a specific grievance.

The main inequality that No Borders activists try to tackle concerns inequalities through legal status and citizenship, which restrict freedom of movement and the possibilities to build the life and work that one wants. This inequality is represented in the relationships

between western citizen activists and refugee_migrant activists who are diverse and unequal In various intersectional ways. Therefore it is a fitting social movement in which to research solidarity relationships in diverse movements. Researching this in localities of Germany and Greece, including the manifold transnational links through digital data and narratives, was very beneficial because the two national contexts hold contrasting positions inside the EU border and asylum regime. Greece has an external border of the European Union and due to the financial crisis was not attractive for many migrants. As such, until now, it is a transit country for many migrants (who usually need to stay undocumented in order to travel further due to the Dublin regulations) but to which international activists and humanitarian volunteers flocked to support refugee_migrants. Germany, on the other hand, has no external borders and received far fewer arrivals but was a target country for many refugee_migrants, mostly due to its economically prosperous situation. Looking at similarities and differences between those local contexts, as well as tracing and following the transnational links and relationships between people, made it possible to grasp a more nuanced understanding of what solidarity relationships in No Borders entails in Europe.

In the chapter above, I clarified the intersectionally diverse activists about whom I speak and argued that the results of this research project are not limited to the refugee crisis. I described the research design, how diverse the data was in itself – e.g., interviews, observations, digital communication, and visual data in various languages and from different localities - and I explain that I am theorizing abductively.

From my personal position – as a privileged white western citizen who had experienced the barriers to equal cooperation in diverse settings in western countries – stemmed the overall interest in finding out how to form a diverse form of solidarity in a sustainable and egalitarian way, which is not only effective but also feels liberated and joyful. At the same time, an ethically sensitive approach was necessary precisely because of the power position created by my relatively privileged position in the field.

In this chapter, through introducing the research object of the No Borders movement and a preliminary discussion of data, I describe that in No Borders activism, besides trying to change political context, activists are prefiguratively aiming to bridge their unequal positionalities and resources in their own practices. They do so to avoid reproducing discrimination and instead meet each other on an equal footing. Activists consider it an

interpersonal tactic. A high level of interpersonal involvement is considered a chance of collective and personal growth as well as an opportunity for finding new forms of solidarity. At the same time, it is also acknowledged as a complicated process. This is what I call transborder activism. Transborder activism constitutes the theoretical lens through which the following chapters are structured.

I find that what I call transborder activism is essential to the No Borders movement and that it plays a key role in the way activists understand and enact solidarity. I argue that transborder activism aims to transform an exclusive and hierarchical form of solidarity with marginalised people into an egalitarian kind of solidarity among peers who fight against the border regime.

But further research is needed to clarify how this worked exactly; which strategies did the activists find to achieve their political goals, and which - often unintended – effects did this have? The sheer diversity of many activist settings made them fascinating and joyful, as well as exhausting and challenging places.

The knowledge gained from researching solidarity relationships between the diverse activists of No Borders is very interesting to transfer to other diverse (activist) settings. It also can be made useful to create more egalitarian but diverse societies.

Thesis Overview

Above, to frame the individual studies, I described the research subjects of the No Borders movements, the study's logic of inquiry, and its conceptual framework. Throughout the iterative research process, I derived several research interests. They resulted in five smaller research questions answered in three papers that form the body of the next three chapters. They have also been published elsewhere or are about to be published, respectively.
Below, to provide a table listing all chapters, including their titles, state of publishing, and particularities according to questions, methodology, or results.

Title of Chapter	Status	Research Question(s)	Analytical Particularity	Key Results	Comments
Solidarity and No Borders in Times of the Nation-State	Unpublished part of the thesis	▪ Why do solidarity relationships matter ▪ What is the No Borders movement? ▪ What is the No Borders movement's approach to solidarity?	▪ Both conceptual and clarification of state of the literature on solidarity relations in struggles of migration. ▪ Detailed methods section	▪ Transborder activism describes the egalitarian practices that aim at bridging differences and inequalities between diverse activists. ▪ Transborder activism takes place largely on the interpersonal and organisational levels and is considered transformative. ▪ No Borders practices are often pragmatically situated in-between the nation-state solidarities of welfare and humanitarian aid and the radically egalitarian approach of social movement actors and direct action.	▪ Chapter frames the thesis' papers. ▪ Clarification of the conceptual background (transborder activism and solidarity) of the following chapters. ▪ Clarification of relevance of research question(s).
The Noborder Movement: Interpersonal Struggle with Political Ideals	Published 2017 Open Access	▪ How do No Borders activists try to meet their political ideals in their everyday practices? ▪ What effects do these intentions entail?	▪ Result of exploratory data (2015 & 2016). ▪ Description of the research subject, central concepts, and practices.	▪ Two types of self-organisation ▪ Projects create spaces for diverse activists to meet. ▪ People try to work productively through conflicts they see as being produced by a global system of inequalities. ▪ Social pressure to self-reflect and to transform interpersonal relationships among activists.	▪ A broader society could learn from this to build more inclusive, heterogeneous societies ➢ Finding around social pressure helped develop research question paper three. ➢ Findings around spaces of encounter shaped paper two.

The Opportunity of Encounter: Negotiating Difference in the No Borders Movement in Athens	Submitted 2nd round of revisions	▪ How did No Borders actors negotiate the differences between individuals under conditions of high diversity?	▪ Analysis of discursive elements. ▪ Focus on data collected in Athens. ▪ The analytical assumption that inequalities shape solidarity relations and therefore must not be concealed. ▪ Ethnographic style of writing.	▪ Athens after 2015 change through transnationalization, gentrification, and refugee_migrant support ▪ Relevant differences: legal status, nationality/citizenship, ethnic belonging, age, skin color/Race, sexuality, gender, language skills, activity/organisational role, political ideology, religion, and moral behaviour. ▪ Discursive transborder negotiations: People avoid 'refugee' and other terms which centre migration and use terms that focus on skills and activities. They also switch from citizenship to ethnic group to describe someone, if this is adequate for colonized peoples.	▪ Results especially connectable to the study of other antiracist struggles ▪ Description of an example of diversity in No Borders groups and ambiguous subcultural bubble.
Activist Burnout in the No Borders Movement	Revise & Resubmit, 1st revision has to be made	▪ What causes activist burnout in No Borders? ▪ What are specific mental health stressors in the No Borders movement in Europe?	▪ A model was derived from the data that mentioned mental health. ▪ Research design combines social movement and psychological literature. ▪ Positivist style of writing.	▪ Identification of three stressors: *The Split*, *The "Bullshit"* and *Inadequate Expectations*. ▪ Social worlds emphasis on the overlap of humanitarianism and activism in No Borders.	▪ The study can inform preventive and therapeutic measures. ▪ Research design can be transferred to other cases.
Transborder Activism and Solidarity Relationships - Discussion and Conclusion	Unpublished part of the thesis	▪ What have we learned about solidarity relations in the No Borders movement?	▪ Summary of key findings. ▪ Discussion of solidarity relationships' effect on creating a political community in the movement.	▪ Creating a hopeful spirit is an important interpersonal feature that sustains the movement. ▪ Transborder politics are always a 'solidarity among in the making'. ▪ A community of solidarity in No Borders is by definition always fragile.	

02. Chapter 02 - The Noborder[7] Movement: Interpersonal Struggle with Political Ideals[8]

Abstract

Over the last decade, self-organized refugee protests in Europe have increased. One strand of activism in Europe, noborder, involves a transnational network of people who are heterogeneous with regards to legal status, race, or individual history of migration, but who share decolonial, anti-capitalist ideals that criticize the nation-state. Noborder activists embrace prefigurative strategies, which means enacting political ideals in their everyday life. This is why this article asks: How do noborder activists try to meet their political ideals in their everyday practices, and what effects do these intentions entail? Noborder practices take place at the intersection of self-organization as a reference to migrants' legal status or identity, on the one hand, and self-organization as anti-hierarchical forms of anarchist-autonomous organization, on the other. On the basis of empirical findings of a multi-sited ethnography in Germany and Greece, this article conceptualizes that noborder creates a unique space for activists to meet in which people try to work productively through conflicts they see as being produced by a global system of inequalities. This demanding endeavor involves social pressure to self-reflect and to transform interpersonal relationships. Broader society could learn from such experiences to build more inclusive, heterogeneous communities.

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To link to this article: https://www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion/article/view/968

[7] During earlier stages of this PhD project I used this notation of "Noborder" commonly used in German. Upon realizing the more common use of "No Borders" in English and English speaking communities I switched the spelling. In this chapter, I now remain with the spelling of the version that has already been published.

[8] Chapter 2 has been published online *in Social Inclusion* on March 31th of 2017.

03. Chapter 03 - Opportunity of Encounter: Negotiating Difference in the No Borders Movement in Athens[9]

Abstract

Much political struggle presupposes that all people are equal. Yet, the realities of people's lives are marked by intersectional inequalities and differences that influence the way they engage in political activism. This could be observed in Athens in the 2010s. There, the solidarity structures for refugee_migrants were highly transnational and diverse but influenced by egalitarian ideals of the No Borders movement. Activist groups tried to build communities of refugee_migrants and other activists who had very different life situations and needs. The interaction in squats and other activist projects created opportunities to make differences tangible for each other. This article embraces the conceptual assumption that inequalities that shape solidarity relationships must not be concealed so that the different activists can truly work together on an equal footing. Therefore, it examines how No Borders actors negotiated the differences between individuals under conditions of high diversity. Through an analysis of discursive practices, I show what differences were relevant for No Borders activists. I discuss negotiations, which are made to avoid the term 'refugee' and other denominations which centre origin and migration and instead focus on skills or activities. Data was collected through a multi-sited ethnography from 2015 to 2018 and analysed with Situational Analysis.

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[9] This chapter has been published in the journal "Social Identities." In the PhD defense in 2021 I defended an earlier version under the same title.

04. Chapter 04 - Activist Burnout in No Borders: The Case of a Highly Diverse Movement[10]

Abstract

Activist burnout is a common threat to activists' personal sustainability and affects a movement's effectiveness. Compared to related fields such as humanitarian aid or social work we know relatively little about mental health risks in activism or how a specific activist environment may contribute to mental health outcomes. This study examines the case of the No Borders movement in Europe, a grassroots movement fighting for migrant rights. The movement's groups are highly diverse in terms of nationality, ethnicity, culture, and religion because they are composed of refugees, other migrants and local populations. Following the vulnerability-stress-model the paper asks: which specific stressors occur in the No Borders movement? The analysis is exploratory and based on ethnographic research and qualitative interviews (N=26). Situational Analysis (SitA) shows that a) activists have to navigate a complex environment in which radical grassroot activism meets humanitarian emergencies and b) in dealing with diversity and intergroup conflicts they are under pressure to live up to their political ideals. These insights led to the identification of three stressors: prefigurative betrayal, inadequate expectations, and split of life-worlds. Understanding these stressors can contribute to informing preventive measures in No Borders and in other migrant or antiracist movements.

Published version

to be expected in late 2023 or early 2024 in the journal "Transcultural Psychiatry"
https://journals.sagepub.com/home/tps

[10] This chapter has been accepted by the journal "Transcultural Psychiatry" in May 2023. In the PhD defense in 2021 I defended an earlier version of this article with the title Activist Burnout in No Borders: The Case of a Highly Diverse Movement.

04.1 Introduction

> Get some… rest AND recreation - let go, have a laugh, dance, do some martial arts, get into the countryside, make love, eat well – do whatever you need to feel good and remind yourself that life is worth living. And if/when those little/loud voices creep into your thoughts allowing guilt in, acknowledge it, smile at it and tell it to mind its own business. You are in this for the long haul and need to look after yourself, and you will be back in the fray soon enough if you look after yourself.
>
> (Activist Trauma Support, n.d.)

The above quote comes from a leaflet aimed at activists who advocate for "No Borders", the rights of refugees and other migrants[11], and the freedom of movement for all people. The leaflet addresses No Borders activists who, in 2016, engaged in the so-called "Jungle of Calais", an informal camp settlement of people who wanted to cross from France to the UK. Activists there found themselves confronted with overwhelming human suffering and violent behavior from state authorities trying to destroy the camp. No Borders practices often take place in such "situation[s] which [are] *simply traumatizing*" (King, 2016, p. 347). Thus, the authors of the leaflet address a widespread problem in their groups: burnout and other mental health issues, which can interfere with someone's ability to work. Facing emergencies, activists push their boundaries, but they often lose momentum. On top of this, the No Borders groups are highly diverse with regard to nationality, ethnicity, religion, or race and frequently deal with intercultural conflicts or discrimination inside their own lines.

However, the leaflet's advice comes across somewhat powerless. The recommendation of self-care strategies reveals lacking structured mental health support within the informal activist networks. In fact, as my years of research in this field suggests, awareness of mental health challenges in the No Borders movement is usually rare and support structures remain to be scarce.

Indeed, studies on other social movements suggest that *activist burnout* is a major threat to the sustainability of activist or social movement organizations, eventually affecting the effectiveness of a movement (Chen & Gorski, 2015; Gorski, 2018; Plyler, 2009). Still, mental health remains a niche topic in social movement studies and psychological disciplines have not engaged with the topic to such an extent as with regard to humanitarian or social work. Thus, there is no research examining the mental health of refugees as activists nor is

[11] The term refugee can exclusively refer to people who have been legally accepted as refugees after claiming asylum in a state they have no citizenship of. In this paper, migration is understood as a fluid human process, and the term 'refugee' covers all people who have been forced to migrate due to personal or collective persecution, war, or poverty, irrespective of their legal status.

there a closer understanding of mental health in activism around displacement in general. In the context of the No Borders case, this study aims to examine how specific activist environments contribute to burnout and asks which specific stressors occur in the No Borders movement.

Data stems from multi-sited qualitative research conducted between 2015 and 2018 in Europe, focusing on Germany and Greece. Ethnographic data and interviews (N = 26) were analyzed using interpretative grounded theory tools, the situational analysis (SitA) (Clarke, Friese, & Washburn, 2018). The aim of this paper is both theory-generating and explorative.

In the following sections, I define the term *activist burnout*, review relevant research, and describe the methods applied in this study. Then, I provide an analytical description of the No Borders movement and its history. Lastly, I describe the stressors derived from the data, propose a visual representation of their influence on burnout and discuss strengths and limitations of the analysis.

The findings may be interesting to practitioners as they inform preventive measures. They can also be relevant to scholars exploring issues of mental health in (diverse) social movements, as the study deepens the understanding of how activist burnout can emerge and unfold in specific activist contexts.

04.2 Framework

04.2.1 Defining Activist Burnout

Activism is emotional work revolving around "passionate politics" (Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001). It involves the whole range of human emotions from love and passion to guilt and shame. Studies show the essential roles of anger, fear, or sadness, as well as joy and excitement to mobilize or demoralize people for social struggle (Ford & Feinberg, 2020; Milan, 2018; Rodgers, 2010; Steinhilper, 2019). Emotions inform political identities (Berezin, 2001), and emotional, relational ties (e.g., friendship) create trust and foster people's commitment to the largely informal networks characteristic of most social movements (Polletta, 2002, p. 149). Emotional and relational ties between activists provide a strong base for solidarity with marginalized people like asylum seekers (Hinger,

Kirchhoff, & Wiese, 2018; Rosenberger & Winkler, 2014). As Wettlaufer (2015, 21f.) pointed out, activism is “not just a job”. Rather, she notes, it is usually a vocation intimately linked to an individual’s identity and social network. This intimacy can exacerbate mental strain and harm. Activists want to “keep going” (Cox, n.d.), and not being able to do so due to mental strain produces stress and suffering.

Subsequently, the term *activist burnout* was coined to describe what occurs “when activists are forced to disengage involuntarily from their activism due to the accumulative effects of activism-related stressors “ (Gorski & Erakat, 2019, pp. 364–365). Activist burnout is not a clinical diagnosis but serves as an umbrella term under which activists and scholars discuss phenomena of mental health they consider connected to engaging in social struggles. These include, for instance, depression and fatigue.

The use of the term *burnout* emphasizes its contextual component: The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies burnout as an “occupational syndrome” instead of a medical condition which means that for a burnout to be diagnosed as such, it must be identified as resulting from “chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed” (World Health Organization, 2019a).

Burnout symptoms are largely indistinguishable from those of depression. Symptoms of the latter usually present themselves differently according to both culture (Kanazawa, White, & Hampson, 2007) or subculture (Ter Bogt, Hale, Canale, Pastore, & Vieno, 2020). However, several specific burnout characteristics exist and include a) persistent exhaustion, b) cynicism and other negative feelings towards one’s job, and c) a decrease in professional efficacy (Maslach, Leiter, & Schaufeli, 2009; World Health Organization, 2019a). Additionally, emotional symptoms involve tiredness, the difficulty enjoying things one used to like, sadness, shame, or guilt. Behavioral side effects may include crying, withdrawal, aggression, changes in sexual behavior, or substance abuse.

People suffering from serious burnout lose the ability to ‘function’ as they experience loss of concentration, lose hope, and can develop suicidal ideation.

While burnout usually refers to mental illness in a professional context, this paper refers to mental illness in social movements influenced by specific stressors in that particular environment. My assumption is that the characteristics and symptoms of general burnout apply here as well.

The next task is identifying predictive stressors.

04.2.2 Activist Environments and Stress

The WHO (2019b) emphasizes that employers and organizations have responsibility to support individuals with mental disorders. This can also be applied to activist environments. Similarly, scholars noted the importance of social movement culture and organizational factors impacting emotions or inciting burnout (Cox, n.d.; Kemper, 2001). Nevertheless, emotional strains in the activist world are often framed as something to self-manage. For example, Barker et al. (2008, p. 423) recommend mindfulness for “aware activists”. Straining situations as they are often encountered in activism, however, make it difficult to ‘be aware’. Gorski et al. suggest that this push towards self-management can result in blaming activists for experiencing burnout in risky or poorly structured settings. This burden is further increased by individualized self-care activities (Gorski et al., 2019, p. 377).

Clinical and behavioral psychology commonly use the “vulnerability-stress” model to understand mental health outcomes. This model understands individual mental health as the interaction of personal and situational predispositions (e.g., genetics, social and family background) with environmental stressors coming from life experiences (e.g., bullying, discrimination, death of loved ones, or displacement) (Quaedflieg & Smeets, 2012; Zubin & Spring, 1977). Awareness of psychosocial stressors people are exposed to in a particular

activist environment and regular activist activities helps understanding mental health outcomes.

04.3 Literature Review: Stressors in Activism around Forced Migration

04.3.1 Activist Burnout Stressors

Case studies identified several stressors in activist activity, which seem to apply to different fields within activism. They can be categorized as interpersonal, organizational, and structural.

The first category, interpersonal stressors (also "within-movement" stressors), refers to relational conflicts between activists: Activists are stressed due to disrespectful or violent behavior within the movement, fueled by political conviction and the idea that there is only one right form of activism (Gomes, 1992; Plyler, 2009). Intergenerational tensions may lead to a lack of knowledge transfer that burdens activists (Plyler, 2009).

Moreover, activists with marginalized identities are subject to different interpersonal stressors than more privileged ones: Gorski (2018) showed that *white* activists were protected from having to cope with everyday racism which accelerated burnout in non-*white* activists. In racial justice groups, activists of color partly attributed their burnout to (low-threshold) racist behavior of white fellow activists (Gorski & Erakat, 2019, pp. 18–19). Experiences of exclusion and discrimination based on race or sexuality amongst activists can harm mental health and lead to activists dropping out (Vaccaro & Mena, 2011).

Organizational stressors make up the second category, which includes practices and cultures in movement groups and organizations. Movement organizations promoting "selflessness" or "martyrdom" often push people into disregarding their boundaries resulting in exhaustion (Chen & Gorski, 2015; Gorski, Lopresti-Goodman, & Rising, 2019;

Wettlaufer, 2015). Nah (2020) points out that many of these cultural "feeling rules" are gendered. The norm of "martyrdom" has been well studied in professionalized social-justice-activism (Avula, McKay, & Galland, 2019; Rodgers, 2010); The results are just transferable to a limited extent to informal, horizontal structures (like the No Borders movements). Nevertheless, it is known that the latter have their own "tyranny" of elitism and favoritism (Freeman, 1972-73; Polletta, 2002). Interpersonal stressors feed into the organizational level as the ability to rely on fellow activists' support makes a difference in how personal burnout is perceived and whether it leads to disengagement (Klandermans, 2009, 133f.).

Thirdly, structural (also "external") stressors refer to the impact of societal and political contexts of social movements on an individual activist's mental health. Maslach and Gomes (2006, p. 43) argue that activism cultivates awareness of overwhelmingly large social problems societies often do not acknowledge, which "can lead to feelings of pressure and isolation that easily feed into burnout". Structural stressors can manifest in interpersonal conflicts. Maslach and Gomes (2006, p. 47), for instance, suggest that a mismatch in guiding values and actual practices creates cynicism in activists. Especially the reproduction of conditions that the movement aims to fight against (e.g., sexism, racism) are perceived to hasten burnout (Gorski et al., 2019; Gorski & Erakat, 2019; Plyler, 2009).

Repression was often found to impact activists' mental health (Jones, 2007). It is a structural stressor, which may include police violence, surveillance, or group infiltration by the police or another security institution when inflicted by political or state bodies (Earl, 2013). Repression is often discussed as hindering movement participation and its impact on mental health has only recently begun to be discussed (Nah, 2020). In democratic societies like the EU, repression targets radical activism more often than the more

politically centered activism with the aim of discouraging radical activities. Conversely, this seems to radicalize activism tactics further (Earl, 2013). As No Borders movements are considered radical, this also applies to them.

Lastly, all of the activist burnout stressors discussed above can perpetuate mental harm by being experienced as traumatic[12].

04.3.2 Stressors around Forced Migration and Humanitarian Work

In No Borders activism, the demands of political activism are stressful, as are the effects of forced displacement.

The so-called "refugee experience" (Stein, 1981) is marked not only by high rates of psychological disorders stemming from stress of forced displacement and experiencing violent conflicts, but also from "post-migration" stress, which includes limited educational or working prospects, insecure prospects of permanent residence, and inadequate accommodation, e.g. in refugee camps (Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2016). Positive expectations about the post-arrival living situation in the host country that are unmet have been found to have a significant negative effects on the mental health of recently arrived refugees (Allinson & Berle, 2022).

However, not only refugees are affected in such an environment: Aid and humanitarian workers deal with heavy workloads and a high occurrence of traumatic events they have to work through (Snelling, 2018; Young, Pakenham, & Norwood, 2018). Therefore, they are at a higher risk of burning out (World Health Organization, 2019b). Those who live and work with traumatized populations can experience secondary

[12] Trauma is defined as a persistent response to one or more stressful event(s) that threaten one's physical or personal integrity in a situation, which is (perceived as) without escape. Responses include feelings of hopelessness, difficulties in emotional regulation, or flashbacks [Cloitre (2020); Cougle, Kilpatrick, and Resnick (2012)]. Aftershocks of traumatic experiences can be long-lasting, significantly restricting daily life, and leave activists "feeling like they are in ruins" [Jones (2007, p. 65)].

traumatic stress up to the point of developing post-traumatic stress symptoms themselves (Jenkins & Baird, 2002; Rizkalla & Segal, 2019; Shah, Garland, & Katz, 2007; Strohmeier & Scholte, 2015). Not seeing a (positive) impact of great efforts by highly motivated humanitarian workers is associated with a higher likelihood of burnout (Jachens, Houdmont, & Thomas, 2019).

Having now reviewed relevant literature on activism and displacement, I find that, to date, there is no research examining the mental health of refugees as activists nor is there a closer understanding of mental health in activism around displacement in general.

04.4 Methods and Positionality

This paper draws upon a larger qualitative study interested in migrant solidarity by the author. Data was collected between 2015 and 2018 using a multi-sited ethnographic approach (Marcus, 1995) in urban areas of Germany and Greece and the transnational networks between them[13].

I collected data in activist projects in mostly urban areas where many No Borders groups were active and followed individuals to conduct issue-centered interviews (Witzel & Reiter, 2012) in Hamburg, Leipzig, Athens, and on Lesvos island, with 29 activists. Interviewees were selected because they held positions of responsibility in the No Borders projects and the selection was purposefully balanced in terms of whether they had lived experience related to displacement. Interviews lasted between 20 to 210 minutes and were conducted in English, German or Spanish, except one which was carried out in Farsi with

[13] Germany and Greece offered insightful observations as the countries hold different geopolitical positions inside the EU. The EU Dublin Regulations define that the country a person first sets foot on is responsible for the asylum applications of this newly arrived person. Due to its outer borders this leaves Greece with a relatively high proportion of asylum applications, in contrast to Germany, which is bordered mainly by other EU states. In the 2010s, a high number of applications contributed to a breakdown of the Greek asylum procedures (Aida 2015) and many people tried to travel further. In turn, volunteers from northern European countries traveled to Greece to support those who were stuck. Thus, the activist networks were highly transnational. The multi-sited research design allowed for tracing movement practices in their transnationality and fluidity.

the help of a translator. Native speakers when necessary supported transcription. During the interviews, without having been prompted, 24 participants mentioned their own or a second person's experience of mental harm and their symptoms (e.g., being too tired to keep going). These interviews were recorded and examined in detail. Interviewees held diverse positionalities and perspectives, identifying as refugees (N=9), Western citizens (N= 10), or both (N=5). Gender was unbalanced, with 19 interviewees identifying as male and only five as female. Two expert interviews with mental health aid practitioners in the field supplemented the analysis (both Western citizens and male). Thus, in total, 26 interviews were analyzed. Most activists in the field were in their twenties or early thirties and accordingly the interviewees' age ranged between 23-50years, excluding minors due ethical reasons.

Furthermore, I made participatory observations during which I cooked in squatted kitchens, taught German and English in community centers, or helped mobilizing for protests. The observations facilitated understanding activists' everyday experiences and meaning making, which enriched the interpretation of the interviews.

Data was analyzed via SitA, the interpretative version of grounded theory (Clarke et al., 2018, Gauditz et al. 2023). SitA derives theoretical concepts from empirical data. It was a methodological fit, as it understands human interaction through its situatedness, in this case, the context of (inter-)personal experiences of stress. I used abductive methods of coding and mapping, utilizing Atlas.ti 7.0 and MS Word tables.

My, the author's, positionality is that of a cis-gendered white woman in her early 30s. Like most of my family, I was born and raised in Germany and hold a German passport. I had been engaged with No Borders groups since 2009. I struggled with

depression and an eating disorder at various points of my life. These experiences helped me explore mental health issues in the research field[14].

04.5 Description of the No Borders Movement

In order to understand activist burnout in No Borders, some knowledge of the movement itself is needed. In the following section, I describe its history, regular activities, routines, and ideological framework.

04.5.1 History and Actions of No Borders

No Borders refers to a movement with anarchist roots enacted by those fighting for everyone's freedom of movement (King, 2016). Today, this freedom of movement is restricted by modern capitalist states and nationalist exclusions. In the 1990s, a unified reform of EU asylum policies after the Cold War brought about new restrictions for migrants (Kasparek, 2019, 18ff.). The No Borders movement emerged as a critique to these restrictions, organizing grassroots protests against deportation or border controls. Activists coined the slogan "No one is illegal" and connected antiracist and leftist or anarchist groups (No Border Network, 2004; Nyers, 2010). No Borders networks expanded all over Europe, with mobilizations also reaching North America (Anderson, Sharma, & Wright, 2012; Walters, 2006). During 2015-2018, the European refugee crisis led to

[14] This study did not pass through a formal ethical review as this is still uncommon in German institutions of social sciences. There were, however, extensive discussions around ethical issues with peer-researchers and some of the interviewees around dependencies, participation, and research participants' safety. I further participated in an ethnographical supervision group throughout 2017 in order to identify problematic (e.g. discriminatory) data interpretations due to my positionality. Such were, for example, feelings of guilt and not having the right to voice my opinions very strongly as I were not a "real activist" but a researcher in disguise. Such feelings sometimes dominated my field notes and obscured more relevant topics during interactions.

increased solidarity with refugees and other migrants in most EU states, a context in which the mobilization of No Borders movements grew as well.

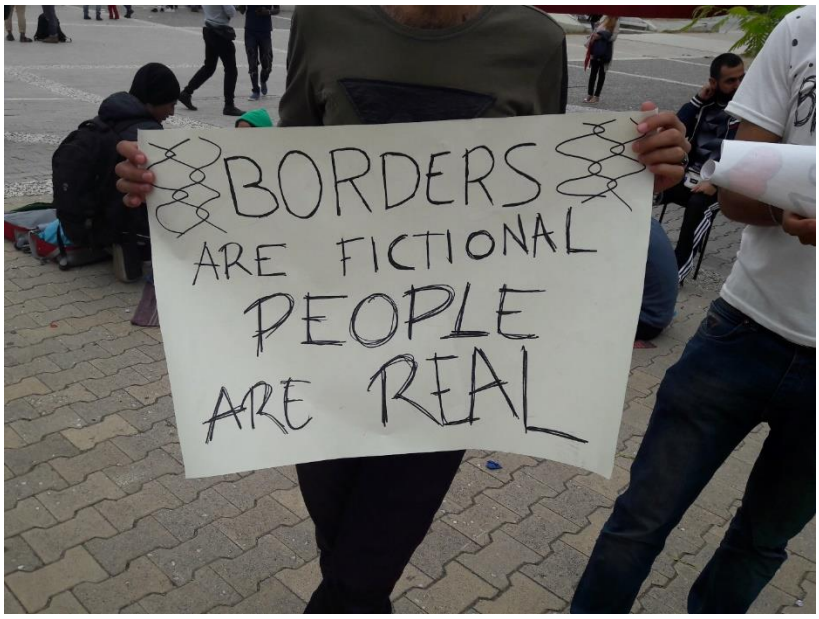


Figure 8 Protesters during a demonstration campaigning under the slogan "Time's Up" on September 30th in Athens 2017. Photo taken by the author.

The movement is organized in largely informal, transnational networks and activists act in local and flexible structures. Protest forms have an affinity with autonomous movements and include militant actions (e.g., cutting fences, preventing an airplane to take off). Demonstrations or campaigns regularly engage with policymakers but *direct social actions* are vital to everyday activism. They include providing food and healthcare, and squatting of buildings to arrange for shelter and community spaces. Such direct social actions aim at transforming society by directly supporting people who were, or are, on the move (Zamponi, 2017, 2018). Regular activities involve ample planning and debating of strategies or practical support. Communication via social media is common.

04.5.2 Diversity in No Borders

Movement groups are highly diverse with regard to nationality, ethnicity, culture, and religion. This can be ascribed to the fact that they include refugees, local populations, and other migrants. The groups are usually a more or less balanced mix of refugee activists

(e.g., from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan or Nigeria) and Western European citizen activists (e.g., from Germany, Greece, France or the UK) who support them. The borders they want to abolish refer to nation states' borders as well as interpersonal divisions imposed by racism, colonialism, or sexism. Thus, activists try to work together as equals: they embrace anti-hierarchical, organizational practices such as consensus-based decision-making and/or put significant effort into multilingualism (Gauditz, 2017). This effort to embody egalitarian ideals in their organizational structures and daily practices is called *prefigurative politics* and it is a more or less strategic feature of a number of grassroots movements proliferating in the 1990s aiming at working against inequalities (Cornish et al., 2016; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Polletta & Hoban, 2016).

These mixed No Borders groups and networks are a vital resource of knowledge and constitute a practical support for marginalized, displaced people. They provide possibilities to meet other activists and build alliances. It should be noted that many of the activists and volunteers active in support groups have been affected by the refugee experience themselves. Hence, even though the activities that different activists engage in may be the same, different activists in a group are exposed to (partly) different stressors on their emotional and mental health.

04.5.3 Humanitarianism Action and Grassroots Activism: Conflicts and Necessity

No Borders practices have been described as often taking place "in situation[s] which [are] *simply traumatizing.*" (King, 2016, p. 347). An extreme statement, which my own ethnographic fieldwork helped me understand better. In No Borders, issues regarding survival must be addressed at the same time as political goals are pursued. Demands of political grassroot activism are combined with humanitarian emergencies and police repression.

No Borders activism takes place in intense situations where livelihoods and the physical integrity of many people are at risk as they have no place to live or they have to live in camps and are not allowed to work with limited access to medical aid. Imagine this fictional but realistic example: a man in his thirties with a heart condition flees Afghanistan. He lives in a camp, hardly receives medical attention, let alone surgery covered by health insurance. He is not able to pay for medical bills as he is not allowed to work. Hope for a better future fades as he has no access to education. He only has access to language classes offered by volunteers on a irregular basis. When he receives a deportation notice, he develops panic attacks and insomnia. Nightmares already haunt him from encounters with border police and violent security guards. He starts to sleep on a friends' sofa he met during protests so the police will not find him.

This example illustrates a situation in which activist support is vitally needed to survive and stabilize. The support in vital areas can provide the base for political activism as Babatunde[15], a thirty-year-old man from Nigeria from a self-organized group of displaced asylum seekers, explained to me:

> It always depends. Because, like I said before [the group] got this accommodation support, humanitarian [aid], that also may give us the ability to be active politically. … So, you can see that they work together.

In such situations, activists sometimes try to replace the work of humanitarian and emergency relief actors, while also often having to cooperate with them (e.g., UNHCR, Red Cross, or national asylum organizations). However, there is a certain dissent between political activists and humanitarian agencies. Humanitarian actors are usually defined by their aim of adopting a neutral stance toward the political conflicts within which they act. Projects are often short-term due to funding logics (e.g., Krause, 2014), whereas political

[15] Informants' names are anonymized throughout.

activists aim at political transformation and look for medium or long-term solutions to secure people's livelihoods, for example a working permit to sustain a living instead of short-term housing provided by an NGO. In fact, the passivating, inhumane conditions in asylum institutions (Agamben, 2005) are something displaced people often protest against, when they demand access to political and human rights (e.g., Moulin, 2012). This view, that transformation is needed, is also reflected in a statement of interview participant Giorgos. He organized therapeutic aid in the Aegean Islands, where the "Moria" registration camp is notorious for its terrible living conditions. Giorgos said:

> There is no use to offer therapy in Moria. Psychotherapy there, is to free people from these living conditions. You need to abolish Moria.

In the face of this conflicting reality, the practices of No Borders must respond to both competing social logics. In emergencies, activism can rarely be planned in terms of political strategy. At that moment, circumstances tend to call for humanitarian measures such as social kitchens or the provision of housing (e.g., through squatting).

In such instances, No Borders activists aim at implementing egalitarian, politicized practices such as consensus decision-making or bottom-up education, creating spaces where everyone can participate as an active individual, as I describe in more detail elsewhere (Gauditz 2017, 2022).

In this way, the practices of No Borders create a socio-political sphere marked by ambiguity due to the different demands of both humanitarian and political activism.

04.5.4 Informality and Care Structures

Activists have developed their own practices of horizontal, self-organized grassroots support and direct social action to deal with precarious situations. Activist groups operating within this framework have flexible, informal structures, largely based on

personal knowledge and friendly relationships. This can be regarded a strength but may also lead to unstable structures.

Typically, activist groups reject financial support from political parties as well as state agencies in order to remain independent and rather rely on donations from individuals or foundations. This renders group income uncertain, thus, individuals usually rely on other sources of income, which means they often have to balance (legal or illegalized) paid labor and activism.

Additionally, informality of horizontally organized group structures usually also means that the scope of individual and collective obligations is undefined or ill-defined. This includes that people usually choose for themselves how many working hours they invest in activism and no supervisor coordinates assignments where emotional resilience is considered a qualification for a particular job . Then, faced with constant emergencies, activists easily take on too much responsibility. At the same time, this situation renders the creation of stable and effective mental health care structures complicated. In several years of data collection, I sometimes encountered care structures such as supervision or activities to increase well-being, like excursions or therapeutic art sessions. However wherever I saw them they were offered on a irregular basis and without future sustainable funding.

Jacqueline, a young Black woman born in Germany who had a precarious legal status herself, used to engage full-time in an activist counseling center for refugees. She reflected:

> … you know there's this emotional attachment. […] You take this home with you. It somehow is your responsibility and uhm that's why I found it so wrenching.

Jacqueline's time resources became more limited as she enrolled in university and continued to face her own legal battles. She then joined another project that was more hierarchical in structure, which gave her the opportunity to hold fewer responsibilities[16].

04.6 No Borders Stressors

Until now, I described No Borders as a social movement and presented specifics around diversity, grassroot structures, political idealism, and the ambiguous overlap with the field of humanitarian work. These specifics include particular challenges for activists. Based on the insights gained from my qualitative research, I derived three stressors. They either add to stressors already known in activism and humanitarian work, or present variants, as I will discuss in the next sections.

04.6.1 Prefigurative Betrayal

As mentioned above, prefiguration refers to everyday political and organizational practices which embody the political goals the movement strives for; it is usually a strategic practice to implement antihierarchical ideals (Maeckelbergh, 2011). In the case of No Borders, the goal is equality between people who are subject to inequalities due to legal status and who aim to work together as equals in mixed activist groups.

The stressor “Prefigurative Betrayal” refers to the frustration and arising anger when other activists fail to live up to the groups’ radical egalitarian ideals. In No Borders, it often refers to the reproduction of discrimination - especially racism - or the lack of recognition of suffering due to (post-) migratory conditions. Being neglected by other

[16] I could instantly relate to this decision, as I had switched engagement from this particular group as well to a volunteer-based language school, some years before this interview was conducted. The fixed schedule of language classes was easier to coordinate with other daily tasks. I had found it unsatisfying and guilt-inducing how many tasks were left to do and how many people kept needing support.

activists who supposedly share the same goals and should be trustworthy is perceived as betrayal and fuels conflicts.

During fieldwork, conflict arose when different life experiences were not acknowledged and needs were not met. Katharina, a German white woman was involved in organizing an international conference on migrant rights and described the atmosphere after it ended: At the event, migrant women staged a protest because they did not feel adequately represented. Many Western citizens and male refugees felt insulted.

> A few people fought a lot, right? ... the follow-up meetings were shaped by these stark conflicts: men against women, supporters, activists, and refugees. Everyone was exhausted and demoralized. Everyone felt 'Wow, what we organized was important, but damn, now all problems are on the table.'[17]

Unfortunately, achieving truly egalitarian cooperation within the No Borders movement is a rather impossible undertaking, as people are exposed to very unequal living conditions. Lacking equalization of inequalities implies stress in itself. For example, working tasks were often distributed, in a way which left refugees with less responsibility (e.g., over schedules or finances), which effectively pushed them out of decision-making positions. Egalitarian political values were then perceived as insincere. On one occasion, a South Asian activist who reacted angrily and emotionally to such dynamic was advised to

[17] What fueled this conflict I witnessed myself but also heard different accounts thereof, was a gendered dynamic which was common in mixed No Borders groups: Western supporters predominantly identified as female and the migrants as male. These groups reproduced a militant political style of activism, which I would describe as somehow "male" as schedules seldom accommodated child care but often involved leisure activities around partying, including substance use - which also could lead to romantic interactions. I found it hard to watch how the prefigurative betrayal in this conflict became intersectionally complex (refugee women against refugee man against white women) but hard to work through. I did not get involved as I was not a member of the organizing groups.

be more "diplomatic." By doing so, his critique of racism and inequality within the movement was effectively dismissed. English-speaking activists adopted the term "bullshit" to call out other activists for such discriminatory behavior.

Intercultural misunderstandings often aggravated these conflicts when sensitivity and patience were needed most. The informally organized projects, however, were usually overwhelmed with acknowledging and handling the effects of diverse stressors and mental strains, which sometimes led to people feeling neglected or betrayed. Ahmud, for instance, a man from Pakistan, experienced violence at the hands of a mentally ill person. When that person was not excluded from the group, Ahmud questioned the entire egalitarian, democratic decision-making process:

> You have taken the charge to keep people safe, to keep them in nice friendly environment. At the same time you are helping the abuser… by not punishing him but helping him in different ways, psychologically. But… you are leaving the victim alone… That's why I was questioning their authority, their legality, their ability to take some kind of decision, I mean… What is the criteria?

Anger over 'bullshit' was not limited to marginalized people. French, white activist Pej became very frustrated with the violence and ego-clashes he witnessed in Greek anarchist groups who defended a migrant squat. They had armed clashes with other groups or drug dealers to keep them out of their territories thereby creating a retraumatizing environment for those who had fled war, often including children. Pej told me:

> Coming to Greece I wanted to understand the local structures. … Then I understood the structures, and I realized [how] fucking fucked up it was ((laughs)). And then, I got very frustrated and left for two months of holiday.

So, living up to political ideals can lead to exhaustion and people leaving activism. Also Boris, a German citizen with roots in former Yugoslavia, found it too arduous to live up to politicized expectations while trying to help people in need: "It's like walking on

eggshells," he declared and added that he would stay away from political engagement in the future.

04.6.2 Inadequate Expectations

As explained above, No Borders' activist environment moves between humanitarian and political action. In order to resist deportations, organize shelters, or to provide legal assistance, activists must either cooperate with or work around various humanitarian NGOs and institutions of the European asylum system. Individual activists thus have to deal with different demands, requirements and logics in their daily work. Hence, unexpected challenges and misunderstandings are inevitable.

The stressor "Inadequate expectations" is important in No Borders because inexperienced people expect either the challenges of political activism or those of humanitarian aid. I found that people who are *new* to No Borders groups are either a) people with a political agenda, b) people with a humanitarian attitude, or c) people who are not interested in the political ideologies behind activism but engage because they need the support. All three groups have different expectations, which are inadequate to some degree. With many details of different social worlds to consider, people usually have (explicit or implicit) expectations concerning their initial engagement that correspond to only one of these worlds.

On the one hand, people with a political approach are usually willing to face militant conflict or police repression, but want to bring about change in return. They are stressed when no significant change or progress is possible due to the sheer scale of the problems caused by survival crises. As Pej recalled:

> This group stopped because everybody was kind of burned out. I was kind of frustrated ... It's quite like constant firefighting, so that we were not going anywhere, we were like all the time dealing with emergency situations… it was exhausting.

One the other hand, people with a more humanitarian, sometimes apolitical mindset often expected to swiftly come and help during a war-induced crisis which would end soon. They were overwhelmed, shocked or just unprepared to see political continuities of repression or xenophobia shaping that reality. Several people experienced politization through conflicts with the police or representatives of asylum administrations. As Mohammed, a Syrian student involved with squatting in Athens, tensely stated:

> About European Union. … I think that with the refugee crisis we really saw the real face of this criminal organization.

Last but not least, those in need of support to protect their freedom of movement (usually refugees) differed greatly in how much they welcomed political action or trusted the humanitarian system. For example, the Irani Samiak, deliberately sought out militant projects in which he felt empowered and that he perceived as safer environments than humanitarian asylum structures. He had fled political persecution and was happy to find shelter in a political squat, as he trusted them to fight ISIS members or Iranian spies he had seen infiltrating a refugee camp in Turkey. Abdul, from Afghanistan, however, became skeptical of political activists because he witnessed disturbing violence by a Greek anarchist group. Having fled Taliban persecution, he desired care and courteousness and did not want to tangle with European police. Out of necessity, he occupied houses and acted as a translator. After having been granted asylum in Germany, a few years later, he only occasionally participated in protests for the rights of refugees and is in training to become a tax consultant.

Inadequate expectations are stressful as people are blindsided by difficult situations and are left exhausted and disillusioned. Choosing the best strategy to deal with political conflicts is also a challenging task within activist collectives. Consequently, they grapple with different, often conflicting organizational demands, needs, and logics, while trying to find solutions to existential emergencies and other challenging problems.

It is certain that, activists who have been involved in No Borders projects for some time are usually aware of these complexities. However, the prevailing informality of the movement groups makes it difficult for people to share this knowledge and clarify expectations in advance.

04.6.3 Split between Life-worlds – Structures that Divide

During fieldwork, activists frequently reported suffering from a disconnect between their commitment to No Borders and other areas of their lives. They also reported an inability to relax or focus on anything other than activism because they were overwhelmed and needed to process their experiences. Reconciling different areas of life is stressful, which is why this stressor is called "split between life-worlds". No Borders activists report a split between their activist experience, or their experience as displaced people, and other areas of their lives.

The political and institutional structures that No Borders activists fight against are purposefully designed to create a distance to average everyday lives of citizens. Asylum camps, limited access to working permits or social welfare as well as restricted mobility (within and between states) create divisions constraining consistent education, labor, or seeing loved ones in other parts of the world so drastically that Suarez-Krabbe and Lindberg (2019) even suggest to view this as a form of Apartheid.

Furthermore, problems related to deportations or precarious living situations require time-consuming engagement if they are to be addressed effectively. Thus, it is often difficult to balance protests, direct social action and daily routines of a job or school. Highly routinized lives leave no room for the hours and days that effective resistance requires.

This stressor affects diverse activists differently creating a specific dynamic in itself. Consider Anne, a white British woman, in her thirties, who had set up a community center in Athens and who told me about her visit to England one summer:

> I was quite burned out and needed a break… needed to be with my old friends and family. I find my life is very split really between here and the UK.. I find it really hard to leave… partly the reality that I have the freedom to leave, and lots of people I'm with don't have that same freedom, so I usually have quite a lot of guilt and anger.

Trying to reconcile the split between activism and the safety of life with papers and privileges exhausted her. However, removing oneself from the situation also produced difficult emotions in privileged activists. The guilt associated with not feeling active enough can, in turn, fuel overwork and burnout.

Most refugees suffered additionally because they were not able to create an emotional distance between the activist setting, general human suffering, and their own problems. Having to reconcile the No Borders setting and other life-worlds would have been a welcome challenge to some whose life was severely restricted. Several refugees reported frustration over privileged activists taking days off or going on holidays without actively including the non-Western migrants (e.g., through sharing resources) because it openly demonstrated the different activists' unequal opportunities. In one group I observed efforts to balance this by redistributing resources e.g. that refugees did not have to pay for field trips or drinks during leisure activities. However, such relieve activities again were irregular and hardly planned formally but were an effect of institutional learning initiated by some specific individuals and among friends. This, however could neither be taken for granted nor reinforced. The informal structures of most groups, which involve unpaid, volunteer-based engagement, limit activists' possibilities to sustain the same level of energy and time. It is usually accompanied by a high person turnover.

The split complicates processing stressful and traumatic experiences adequately

because an important way to process such events is by talking about them with people who understand and empathize. Often, this means talking to people who have experienced similar things. Jones (2007, p. 48) argues that every movement has “secret societies” of activists who “must have nightmares that only they can fully understand.” Typically, many people in one's own social circle are not part of this activist experience full of state repression, and subcultural and intercultural peculiarities. Under these circumstances, it can be difficult for activists to communicate with people outside these life-worlds because the intensity of emergency situations after displacement or the absurdity of administrative battles are hard to grasp when living a legally secured life inside the EU, as Maarten, a white German volunteer on Lesvos, reports:

> It’s a rollercoaster of emotions but I think you learn to deal with it here, too. You have to keep an emotional distance. If you’re not able to deal with your own problems, then you can’t work. You have to try to process. You find friends here of course but when you have your friends and your parents … then you realize that you can transport nothing to them of what happens here.

Also, Spanish activist Fernando reflected on his and his comrades' experiences moving abroad for activism:

> The return is hard. There is a lot to work through. The return is very traumatic for a lot of comrades. Ooof ((exhales)), there’s a massive amount of stories that are hard to deal with. And on top, a lack of finding meaning in the relationships that you have. The context is super different.

When people outside movement circles do not understand the experience, the likeliness of healing conversations decreases. It can leave activists estranged from loved ones and support networks. Also, as the experiences of diverse activists inside the No Borders groups differ, sometimes even direct comrades cannot understand, fueling the prefigurative betrayal.

To summarize, activists try to bridge several splits both in their own life-worlds and between the life-worlds of different activists. They often have to deal with the fact that they cannot bridge them at all. Regular or institutionalized guidance around this matter inside groups hardly exists. Finding support outside of the movement's group or subculture can further be challenging because of the split itself.

04.7 Visual Representation of Factors Influencing Activist Burnout

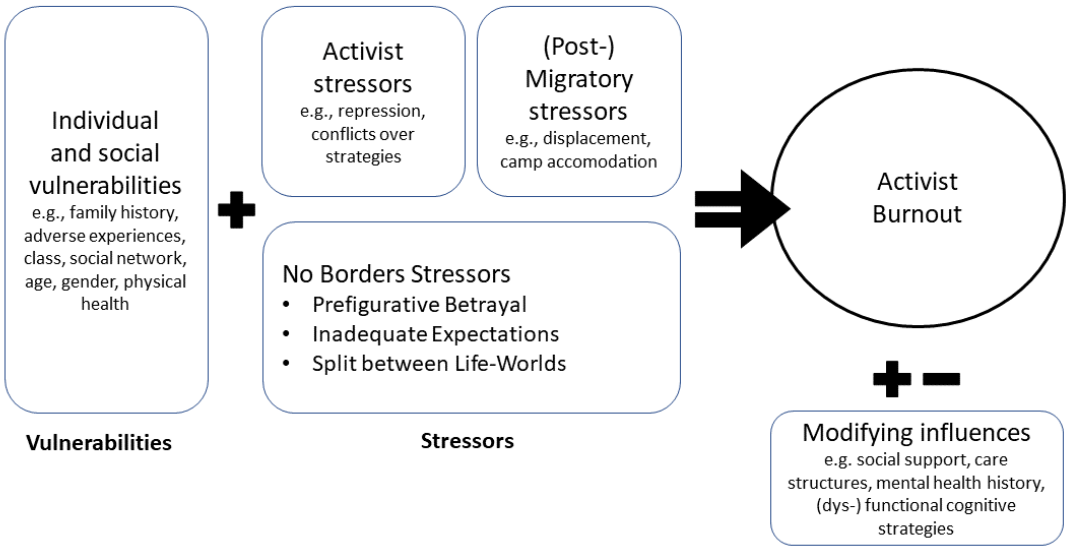


Figure 9 Visual Framework of Activist Burnout in No Borders. Note: Visual representation of different factors possibly leading to activist burnout in a No Borders environment. Adapted from Beesdo-Baum & Wittchen's (2011) model of depressive disorders.

Following the vulnerability-stress model, figure 2 gives an overview of the different elements that can lead to activist burnout in No Borders. The stressors are drawn from the literature review (activist stressors and stressors around forced displacement) and from the results of the empirical analysis of this study, as presented in the sections above. The stressors can have an additive relationship, but what applies to whom depends on the individual. Vulnerabilities and modifying influences are adapted from a textbook model of

depression; they are not specific to the No Borders movement and I am not aware of research on vulnerabilities and modifying influences in social movements.

Taken together, vulnerabilities, stressors, and modifying factors determine the activist burnout as a potential mental health outcome and the negative implications on individual activists and movements.

04.8 Discussion of Results, Strengths and Limitations

No Borders activists engage in a tense environment between humanitarian crisis and state repression, while at the same time trying to embody political ideals of equality. The three stressors described above have been derived from these insights and show how burnout emerges in this activist environment. These stressors largely coincide with insights from scholarship on activism, humanitarian work or forced displacement, as will be discussed in this section.

Prefigurative Betrayal: This stressor is structural as it is caused by systemic inequality and racist structures, but manifests at the interpersonal levels of activism. It is known that the reproduction of conditions a movement fights against (e.g., sexism, racism) are perceived to hasten burnout, especially if it comes from in-group members (Gorski et al., 2019; Gorski & Erakat, 2019; Plyler, 2009) and within-group betrayal has been associated with PTSD especially in marginalized groups (Gómez, 2022). “Prefigurative betrayal” adds to this literature because these dynamics have not yet been discussed in the context of prefigurative elements in a social movement or other organizations in which structures are meant to be meaningful in and of themselves. It reflects both the diversity in the movement and people’s antihierarchical goals.

Inadequate Expectations: This stressor relates to the organizational level as it involves the challenge of individuals in groups moving between the differing and often conflicting demands of political activism and humanitarianism. The damage inadequate expectations

can inflict on processing stressful events is not specific to movements and has been identified in refugees (Allinson & Berle, 2022) as well as humanitarian workers (Jachens et al., 2019). Finding this stressor is consistent with these studies' results, but additionally draws attention to the contextual ambiguities which arise when trying to engage politically with the issue of forced displacement.

Split between life-worlds: This stressor is structural insofar as the political conditions prevent the activists from integrating their different experiences into their life in a healthy manner; the stress results from acting inside the same political structures that people try to change. This insight is consistent with a split, similar to the one Snelling (2018) found among emergency responders who travelled to foreign countries to work. However, in No Borders this represents a specific variant as it is not (only) spatial distances which have to be bridged, but also mobility restrictions and the impossibility of access to certain spheres of society, or to sharing these spheres.

All three stressors affect diverse activists differently, however, this study does not differentiate between stress(ors) according to peoples positionality. Rather, I argue that (a) different positionalities cannot always be categorized separately for each person (b) that a distinctive feature of the stress dynamics in this movement is its mixed composition. The latter creates specific movement dynamics, such as the reproduction of discrimination inside groups or misunderstandings due to different expectations and possibilities.

04.9 Limitations and Implications

This study's design does not distinguish between stress(ors) according to people's positionality due to reasons laid out above. Accordingly, figure 2 cannot illustrate the relations of how these stressors affect people differently according to their positionality. It represents dynamics that can be applied to individuals in movements overall. This is an analytical strength as it contributes to understanding how stressors unfold in this specific

mixed activist environment. However, it limits understanding the specific causalities between stressors and people. Further studies could investigate the following aspects.

A more intersectional analysis (including gendered aspects) of activist burnout in such a diverse movement seems fruitful, as would be an analysis focusing on the experiences of activists and humanitarian workers who have been affected by the refugee experience themselves - either as first or second generation. Generally speaking, there is a lack of descriptive analysis of burnout in activists. Such analyses would contribute to understanding the effects of burnout on activists and whether there are specific activist burnout symptoms. Finally, protective factors and positive modifiers in movements could be identified by future studies.

04.10 Conclusion

This study investigated specific stressors occuring in the No Borders movement. This is relevant because, following the vulnerability-stress-model, such stressors can lead to burnout. Activist burnout can negatively impact both individual activists and the sustainability of the movement.

The No Borders movement in Europe consists of mixed groups of refugee and migrant activists and European citizen activists. Grassroots activism creates social spaces and personal bonds between people who are subject to inequalities such as legal status and citizenship, among other factors. Trying to work together in an egalitarian way is a challenge for the activists cooperating under unequal conditions in an intense environment involving border violence and human suffering. Movement structures are largely informal, which is why care structures are hard to implement in a way that they take place regularly, structural learning is difficult, and passionate people can easily overwork themselves. This analysis shows three important stressors that occur in No Borders repeatedly. *Prefigurative Betrayal* refers to frustration and anger due to the reproduction of discrimination. Stress

through *inadequate expectations* is created as individuals must deal with both different demands and logics of political activism and humanitarian work during daily activities, which most of all new activists do not expect beforehand. Thirdly, activists report a s*plit between life-worlds* of their No Borders experience and other spheres or people in their lives, leading to difficulties in healthily integrating activist experiences into their lives.

It largely depends on individual vulnerabilities and positionality which and how a stressor affects an individual activist. It can affect different activists inside one group differently, which creates conflictive dynamics in itself. Spreading knowledge on these topics can strengthen the No Borders groups' cohesion in the long run.

Conclusion: Transborder Activism and Solidarity Relationships

This thesis studies solidarity relationships in the No Borders movement in the European Union and, more specifically, how relationships between very diverse and unequal activists are being built. This is a crucial research insight, as it is not always easy to create social ties between diverse people, and even more tricky to create a movement's community of shared interests and mutual support that is able to bring about social change. Most social movements face issues around difference and diversity as protests bring together heterogeneous people. Researching this phenomenon of solidarity relationships in the No Borders movement is a fitting case because the movement is exceptionally diverse in its groups' composition, with inequalities revolving around the key issue of legal status and citizenship: In No Borders groups, there are refugee_migrants from various countries in the Global South with often precarious legal situations who are subject to restrictive asylum and migration policies which limits their possibilities and resources for mobilisation; and they engage in protest and direct social action with western citizens who enjoy more access to rights like the freedom to move and usually lack embodied understanding of these problems. Together they struggle against exclusion and marginalisation through legal status in modern nation-states, prefiguratively trying to embody egalitarian values in their internal structures while at the same time navigating human suffering and political conflicts and repression.

These two groups (refugee_migrants and western citizens) are ideal types, and an intersectional perspective shows that individual activists each bring nuanced perspectives and problems into the movement. Many outcomes of structural inequalities – next to cultural or linguistic barriers – hinder building sustainable, egalitarian cooperation and solidarity relationships. Conflicts about choosing the right strategy for everyone can destroy groups and alliances, also because these conflicts often reflect larger, structural issues of discrimination and inequalities.

In a five-year-long qualitative research project, I studied activist practices, discourses, and emotional experience on the interpersonal and relational levels. I was interested in how this

movement works, the different reasons why people are motivated to engage in it, the strategies they used, and the effects this activism entails. In the individual studies I iteratively developed, I first asked about how No Borders activists try to meet their political ideals in their practices. I then studied the ways No Borders' actors negotiated the differences between individuals under conditions of high diversity. I also investigated the specific mental health stressors in the No Borders movement in Europe because activist burnout fosters conflicts and drop-outs.

The data was collected between 2015 and 2020 in Germany and Greece. Contrasting these national contexts highlighted the complexity of the EU border regime and asylum regime, which framed solidarity actions between diverse activists, especially during the so-called refugee crisis. In that time, No Borders projects multiplied that had already emerged in the 1990s. Qualitative data was analysed via Situational Analysis which aims at generating analytical concepts. Its interpretative methodology and abductive logic were a great fit to meet the research field's transnational setting, activists' diversity, and the power relations this entailed.

Each chapter of this thesis and each research paper respectively proposed concepts and interpretations that aimed to answer research questions related to the overall interest in solidarity relationships by iteratively following activists' motivations and strategies.

In the following, I will summarize the central findings of this dissertation as described in three research papers and discuss their implications for the scholarly understanding of solidarity relationships. Lastly, I will describe the limitations of this study's claims as well as the benefit of this thesis' finding for future research projects.

1.1. Summary and Key Findings

In the following, I summarize the key findings of this dissertation along the lines of the overarching research interests in activists' reasons for involvement in No Borders' struggles, their strategies to build sustainable relationships under conditions of high diversity, and its effects of efforts to build solidarity relationships that mattered to the activists.

During three papers that resulted from a broader research design, I asked about how No Borders activists try to meet their political ideals in their everyday practices, the effects these intentions entail, and how actors in Athens' subcultural refugee_migrant bubble

negotiated their differences. Further, I conceptualized specific mental health stressors in No Borders in Europe that can cause activist burnout.

Let me iterate first that – to a certain extent – social movement research always means constructing a research subject. In the case of the No Borders movement, this means subsuming many different individuals with different motivations under one analytical framework. Thus, this thesis adds to the existing literature on No Borders by providing a conceptual description of No Borders as a movement, its practices, and ideological background. It provides the conceptual framework of transborder activism that gives a lens through which to view the interpersonal and organisational levels of activism. Also, an analysis of the social worlds in which No Borders is situated shows the overlap of humanitarianism and activism in the realities of direct social actions and other forms of protest. It explains how this overlap is caused by people's immediate need for survival and access to rights while trying to stay true to egalitarian political ideas. This is also why I argue that No Border's practices are pragmatically situated in-between different forms of solidarity, like the charity of humanitarian aid, nation-state solidarities of welfare, and the radically egalitarian approach of social movement actors. Moreover, an ethnographic account of Athens between 2016 and 2018 showed the effects of transnationalization and even gentrification caused by refugee_migrant support on the urban level.

Second, the reasons for people to become involved in No Borders' struggles are manifold but dependent on people's positionality. No Borders' struggle for the freedom of movement unites people on the move and other refugee_migrants with precarious living situations with more privileged people through using practices with autonomous-anarchist roots. Many people join a project because they are themselves in need of social and political support. Others mainly relate to these struggles through egalitarian values and want to induce social transformation. Thereby, the groups neither become homogeneous nor can they be identified in binary ways (western citizens and refugee_migrants). In the data I collected, people distinguished each other at least along the lines of legal status, nationality/citizenship, ethnic belonging, age, skin colour/Race, sexuality, gender, language skills, activity/organisational role, political ideology, religion, and moral behaviour. No Borders' groups are therefore highly diverse.

While people have different backgrounds and needs, the egalitarian idea that everyone should be free to move is a common ground on which people in No Borders projects meet. On the organisational level, this mix can be categorized along the lines of the two types of 'self-organisation' in transborder activism: migrant's self-organisation or self-determination and self-organisation in the sense of horizontal, egalitarian practices. People engage in these specific mixed egalitarian structures or alliances as the threshold to enter is low, and people experience engagement in mutually empowering ways. They enjoy protest and direct social action activities, just as they like the relationships with diverse people resulting from it. The informal and interpersonal relationship can, in turn, become a reason for engagement as they can bind trust and raise motivation to engage with other people's problems.

Third, this thesis' research revealed several strategies that activists use to build sustainable relationships and cooperative alliances under the dense condition of high diversity: No Borders activists' actions include a wide-ranging repertoire of collaborative protest action, self-organised conferences, 'no border camps' or squatting of buildings and squares. The horizontal ways these activities are organised need a lot of direct interpersonal exchange. Hence, I argue that these actions thus establish more or less stable sites in which learning processes around building solidarity and working through conflicts can occur. This interpersonal exchange fosters the building of something communal. Across the EU and Europe, several, more or less loose, transnational networks connect hubs of increased engagement through which experiences and learning can travel. Examples of transnational networks (e.g., no border camps to squats) showed how experiences and practices travelled through localities over the years. Specifically, after the crucial year of 2015, many long-standing activist groups saw themselves challenged by multiplying paternalisation in the welcoming culture; No Borders' values influenced many more groups outside their own circles. Many actors wanted or needed to learn how to meet each other on equal ground.

Moreover, the sudden multiplication of activities after 2015 clearly showed the key importance of direct social action for No Borders, meaning social kitchens, medical aid, and centres but also education and travel support. The movement always involves responding to personal crises.

Thereby, both the self-organisation of refugee_migrants and the use of anti-hierarchical practices aim at directly democratising both the activists' practices and people's relationships with each other. They want to ensure representation of everyone's needs and demands in political strategy and practice. However, by combining both forms and people of different backgrounds and privileges, people opt for equality while still being deeply divided by systemic conditions.

Understanding this led to identifying and contextualising key issues around which conflict re-occurred: First, issues of representation ("who speaks for whom") in the public and media, as well as in internal meetings. Second, language barriers were bridged on different scales and ways (e.g., in face-to-face meetings or social media communication). Third, sorting out who can fill in organisational positions and participate in specific protest action and take what risk (e.g., if an illegalized person participates in a rally with police) were prevalent.

Interestingly, activists did do not give up but tried to work against barriers and through emerging conflicts productively. Their egalitarian practices, e.g., consensus-decision making and translation chains, are intentional and groups often highly reflective. Key conflicts were tried to solve through talking and negotiating but also through introducing quotas. For example, privileged people were asked to leave the room in some decision-making processes to balance out power differences. This means the actors found solutions to transform systemic problems on an interpersonal level – thereby building meaningful relationships. Activists prefer egalitarian friendships and networks to a hierarchical organisation.

On a discursive level, people negotiated terms that point towards differences in a discriminative or simplifying way. In contrast, they used terms to identify people that go beyond binaries and power relationships. For example, many people avoided 'refugee' and other terms which centre on migration or origin and use ones that focus on skills and activities (e.g., translator, teacher). They also switched from citizenship to ethnic group to describe people when this was deemed adequate for colonized peoples.

Eventually, all these transborder practices aimed to build an inclusive solidarity among, to create a practical and prefigurative 'we' that can be put into opposition to the exclusionary communities of citizenship. However, specific community activities and subcultural codes

can also separate people by drawing new exclusions, and not least, substance abuse was repeatedly reported as problematic.

Fourth, researching the effects of activists' diversity and transborder activism that mattered to the people led to understanding emotional effects and issues of mental health.

The ways that activists try to meet their political ideals in their everyday practices while navigating human suffering, frustration, and political conflicts need a lot of emotional self-management. This goes hand in hand with social pressure in groups to choose egalitarian practices, which often are considered morally superior to humanitarian works. Social pressure also calls for emotional self-management to embody the egalitarian values which are promoted – to self-reflect and transform interpersonal relationships among activists. This is sometimes perceived as quite grim.

In general, the institutional overlap of activism with civic volunteers, social workers, and humanitarian aid carries stress because people navigate very different expectations and different socio-political logics and barriers. At the same time, everything is tied up in the crises of humanitarian disasters and individual suffering that harms mental and bodily health. For example, people might criticize humanitarian, pacifying aid and its short time solutions and prefer institutional change and abolishing the nation-state, but because of instant suffering and the need to survive, many depend on apolitical, fast solutions.

Sub-culturally, many ambiguities persist, as differing ideology and expectations lead to misunderstandings and can produce new exclusionary effects along the lines of particular friendships or rivalling ideas of the best ideology or strategy. All of this while repression, discrimination, financial and legal problems are omnipresent. Trauma and secondary traumatization are prevalent phenomena.

While navigating such complex realities, people did not always live up to the egalitarian, antiracist values. That was perceived as stressful and often called out as "bullshit," mostly by marginalised people. Also, many activists experienced a painful "split" between their former life and the realities of activism and displacement, which was stressful to reconcile. Further, many people were involved in activities, with overburdened expectations that turned out to be too high and could not be met due to the complex realities in refugee_migrant support. This caused frustration.

The analysis also revealed that No Borders' stressors have relational effects. On the one hand, burnout can be caused by conflicts, and conflict can cause burnout at the same time. On the other hand, due to the diversity, activists were usually differently affected by different stressors, which can hasten stress and produce discrimination if needs are not acknowledged.

From a social movement perspective, this is important because if the stress manifests in activist burnout, it threatens the movement's sustainability by losing people's productivity or dropping out. Analysing mental health from a structural perspective also nicely confirms the prefigurative link between micro phenomena (e.g., interpersonal conflicts, experiences of discrimination, fatigue depression) and macro structures (e.g., repression, colonialism, borders).

Lastly, I can summarize that opening these activist spaces made it possible to negotiate differences and to get to know each other exactly because differences and inequalities were made visible and discussed. But trying to build this inclusive community of solidarity is also exhausting, and the – oftentimes informal activists' networks – are fluid and lack adequate care structures.

1.2. Creating Hope

This research reveals how motivated and inspired activists are by the dream of a more egalitarian world, the actions they perceived as creating change, and by the sheer will to survive.

I wish to conclude the discussion of my findings by giving space to some excerpts of analysis that were not included in the published research papers due to the limited word count in academic journals. The excerpts focus on the hope and positive feelings No Borders activists hold in relation to their activism. Expanding and emphasizing this aspect is an important piece of the puzzle to understand when transborder activism – and the relationships of solidarity it creates – is evaluated by the actors as successful and henceforth reflects and fosters activists' motivations.

Activism can be exhausting, full of pressure, and a threat to mental health, but it includes rewards and positive emotions and can be an outlet for anger, guilt, or sadness (Jasper, 2011). Every movement has specific stressors and specific rewards and motivators. In this study, a recurrent activist motivation was the wish to create secure life prospects and give

hope to those who wait in desperate conditions. Yannis, a white left activist in Athens, stated that only by doing something, the spirit could be held high:

> Yes, of course [I have hope]. For me and for my children and for the children of people here. Yes. I have hope, but I have to fight, not to wait. You do not wait for the future. (Yannis)

Data collection after the exploratory stage showed that in very direct ways, projects aimed to 'raise the general mood, to raise the idea of community.' (Pej). Repeatedly, activists identified a nice and friendly atmosphere as important in itself. That even inspired further mobilisation. Achim, a white, retired German lawyer in Greece, spoke about this certain positive 'feeling' that the City Plaza squat gave him and which made the project worth the effort.

Up north in Hamburg, I spoke to Abir, a black refugee_migrant from the Ivory Coast who, when I spoke to him in the summer of 2017, had found a secure job, a rental contract, and legal papers through western activists' support, after many years of struggle. To Abir, it was vital to be able to support his family back home financially. Still, he also emphasized how important it was to him to have good relations with his colleagues in the activist project he did paid labor in. He expressed hope for more people to receive the support that he had received. He didn't believe he would have been able to do this on his own. Similarly, Abdul, who fled the Taliban in Afghanistan and who repeatedly received help through volunteer and activist networks on the journey as well as in Germany – where he eventually received asylum – told me in awe: "I can't believe that. Really, dreams can come true." (Abdul – no member of a specific activist group, Leipzig; summer 2017)

Horizontality and informality can be challenging, but the grassroots form of solidarity enabled new members to include quite easily. This gave possibilities to all activists to create agency which helped them cultivate confidence in overwhelming and tiring situations. As Efi Latsoudis from a horizontally organised shelter on Lesvos said:

> I am a bit tired because.. I am many years in this and in one point also… it is too hard... to face all the situations for years. Because it was also… deaths, it is political issues, it is a lot of confusion. But [solidarity] is the only thing that makes us feel good." (Efi)

Everyone can create a hopeful spirit: Political discourse around No Borders often focuses on marginalized people like refugee_migrants and their problems to emphasize the need for action. But obviously, they are not passive victims, nor are western citizens always

strong and stable people without the need for help: everyone brings skills and abilities for mutual support. The radical and politicized belief in human equality under unequal conditions is based on the assumption that under different political conditions, power, opportunities, and chances would be distributed differently. Or in the words of Abimbola of Lampedusa in Hamburg: „Life changes, you know." (Abimbola – activist, Hamburg; spring 2017).

Given these circumstances, Zabhi, a resident of the City Plaza Squat, who fled Afghanistan, stressed that to ease the pain of others was a means to ease emotional harm in itself:

> When you help someone, you feel very relaxed. And this relaxation you cannot find anywhere else. (Zabhi)

Helping with small things creates a hopeful and positive spirit and is an important feature of many No Borders' activities. They might not immediately transform the system and abolish nation-states, but on an interpersonal level, helping someone survive while giving hope and energy is evaluated as successful – prefiguratively. No Borders' activism, with its low threshold to enter its informal groups and its focus on direct action and activity, in itself can be a means against losing hope and a motivator to keep on struggling.

1.3. Egalitarian Solidarity is Impossible, Working on it is Not

Most social movements are diverse in one way or another. They have key divisions or relevant heterogeneities which they need to address to create a community of solidarity from which real support and socio-political transformation can spring instead of producing or reproducing interdependencies.

In No Borders, it is the key dilemma to opt for radical equality under conditions of intersectional inequality between western citizens and refugee_migrants that is caused by legal status.

This thesis showed that the social movement of No Borders tries – prefiguratively in its own structures – to build solidarity among people who are usually divided by inequalities of citizenship and other legal issues. These efforts entail mixed groups and horizontal practices in direct social action. They try to transcend embodied borders – which I call transborder activism. For such a process to work, activists need to make visible their manifold differences and discuss them, which can only be possible as the activism opens spaces to work through interpersonal conflicts productively. However, the analysis also

showed how exhausting these efforts can be and that stress endangers the movement's sustainability.

The way I perceive the data, transborder activism is one way to deal with diversity in social movements – a diversity that is not equal – but one that targets differences that represent inequality. Activists try to shape their encounters as egalitarian as possible, while socio-political structures have the opposite effect every day.

While activists often aim at radical egalitarianism beyond citizenship, ensuring people's safety and survival often depends on finding ways to include them into institutionalized welfare solidarity and the asylum regime. Thus, as previously discussed, the movement's practices are always situated in-between different logics and practices of solidarity.

As No Borders projects are in the grip of contemporary politics, they do not present an 'outside' to nation-bound solidarity. Groups must work through contradictions and challenges that such horizontal movements often have to work through - they reproduce the structures they challenge. This interwovenness with hegemonic politics on the embodied level becomes visible in the conflicts that No Borders activists face during the implementation of egalitarian practices.

To some level, reproducing inequalities needs to be accepted where sheer survival and gaining rights are more important for individual activists than political ideals. Conceptually speaking, finding good strategies is difficult as activists simultaneously deal with balancing a combination of charity, *solidarity with,* and *solidarity among* whilst trying to transform it.

In addition to the diversity, the groups' compositions are often changing. Ongoing commitment, learning processes, and sustaining activism are difficult to achieve. Few people have the resources for long-lasting commitment over the years, and many people eventually want to leave engagement to find secure life circumstances.

Hence, a community of solidarity in No Borders is by definition always fleeting, fragile, and incomplete because of the differences and inequalities it consciously includes. To an extent, No Borders activist's understanding of solidarity can be located as a counter-draft to a nationalized, institutionalized solidarity based on citizenshipas practiced inside the EU or European nation-states. At the same time, the activism does not remain a countermovement but creates something of its own. This creative-utopian element is inherent in its

prefigurative features. Transborder politics are a solidarity among people who are in a process together because they want to be equal, a *solidarity among equals 'in the making'*.

We can understand this irresolvable ambiguity by remembering that solidarity is a political ideal that guides practices that try to bridge the multiple fragmentations of modern societies. The need for solidarity exists for the same reason that makes people unequal: If there were no inequality, we would not be in need of solidarity.

In this context, social relationships are important, but they cannot replace changing material conditions and policies. No discursive approach can abolish the inequality, e.g., in the possibilities to legally work or leave the country which prevailed between western citizens and refugee_migrants. In many instances, transborder activism was empowering and gave people new resources to create their lives. Still, it was hardly able to dissolve systemic inequalities in personal actions. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to evaluate the effectiveness of the No Borders movement in abolishing state borders, but it is easy to determine that in the last years, nation-states' borders have not been abolished.

No Borders uses direct social action and interpersonal contact, and this is crucial and important to activists: Onara O'Neill (1996), who introduced the difference between *solidarity among* and *solidarity with*, already pointed out that a direct expression of social virtues like solidarity, through care and concern, are important to people and that its absence is particularly disheartening. She states: "Although no amount of virtuous action can compensate for the injuries of injustice, it can make some difference." (O'Neill, 1996, p. 201)

Indeed, given that these situations are very difficult, transborder activism is often experienced as highly useful and inspiring. Its direct ways of engagement create hope, and the spaces opened for encounters also enable the creativity to find solutions. Egalitarian ideals serve as a common ground in these struggles. The intersectional guiding principle "[w]hen they enter, we all enter" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 167) is reflected in centring strategies around those who are marginalized. People hope to develop strategies that liberate and unite everybody – both privileged and unprivileged people.

Practices often fall short of the ideal to really create something new and equally around everyone's experiences: this is, for example, already the case when the domination of

European languages is reproduced[18], but the goal remains inspiring new actions that go beyond "saving refugees" or charity for marginalised people: It is about a different and better world for everyone.

In their solidarity relationships, No Borders activists have not found the final solution for creating a truly equal community. Still, their experiences can be understood as a first step in creating a diverse community that supports each other. Relationships of support can travel further into other contexts. Eventually, solidarity between unequal, diverse people is always *in the making* and full of obstacles and misunderstandings. To continue the struggle, they keep up hope as much as they can.

I would think that exactly because the interpersonal and prefigurative notion of solidarity relationships cannot – on its own - overcome the structural inequalities they are fighting, it is key to cultivate hope and a positive working atmosphere. At least relationships should be handled in a kind and respectful way.

1.4. Limitations and Future Research

This thesis has theoretical and empirical limitations, three of which I shall discuss in more detail: (1) the gender imbalance among the interviewees, (2) the prevailing western perspective in the analysis, and (3) the limited country and case selection.

First, I had a gender imbalance in the interviewees as I interviewed more female western citizens as opposed to male refugee_migrants (and did not take into account non-binary or intersexual identities). The imbalance happened unintentionally by picking out relevant actors as interviewees, but upon reflection, I realized that it mirrored a general dynamic of gender structures in the field with male* refugee_migrants being more involved in direct social actions and more western women* holding together the prefigurative structures, which usually fulfilled care activities. So clearly, there were gendered aspects at play in the organisational structures and decision making processes. Moreover, female refugee_migrants had many gendered issues around child-care or sexual abuse. Some of these gendered dynamics and issues are briefly discussed by Musty (2019). The analysis had a blind spot in gendered dimensions, although there were gendered aspects prevalent. I did realize this throughout the second main phase of data collection, mostly during

[18] As also reflected in writing this analysis in English language.

informal conversations and observations. Personal discussions on these topics found their way in Picozza's (2021) take on hierarchies through maternalism inside activist and charity structures. However, certainly due to my emphasises during the interviews, the collected data did not hold enough substantial insights into such topics. Other gendered aspects – such as sexual and romantic relationships (on which Mokre (2015) has written about) – were so sensitive that they would have needed their own frame and approach and were finally excluded from the analysis for ethical reasons.

Further, the No Borders movement involved several intersections of discrimination or exclusion, which deserve more attention but were excluded for analytical clarity. This is, for example, shortly mentioned in chapter three around disability.

Future research on privileging able-bodied people in No Borders and romantic relations in solidarity communities between unequal activists would certainly be interesting. Investigating the gendered dynamics in transborder activism and care aspects in direct social action in more detail is surely very fruitful to understand solidarity after all and should involve queer positions in a more focussed way than I did.

Second, while I tried to investigate the interplay between different actor groups equally, there is a prevailing western perspective in the analysis, surely stemming from my positionality and also reflected in an imbalance in interviewing western citizens compared to refugee_migrants. This means that I investigated the difficulties in building transborder solidarity by trying to give a voice to marginalised people. In reality, though, it was not their experiences in themselves which were centred but their experiences *in relation to* the western_citizens. Also, the perspective of second generation refugee_migrants who were often involved in support structures was not given explicit emphasis. Conceptually, the western perspective is, for example, reflected in chapter four where I chose a western approach to psychology instead of learning about non-western practices of sustaining well-being. Similarly, this is reflected in certain black boxing or silencing of religion in this dissertations analysis. Religious values and practices were surely important to many people and guiding for their practices. However, human rights or political ideology are central to Western, European discussions and understanding of political activism and discussed in much more detail than religious guidelines or morals. Certainly, this focus on human rights or political ideology reflects certain anti-religious sentiment in leftist and anarchist circles.

Many people (both western citizens and refugee_migrants) I met did personally voice resentment around the patriarchal or oppressive notions of fundamentalist religious strands of Christianity or Islam. I also know of individuals who concealed parts of their (religious) identity, such as a Jewish person, to avoid conflict. Thus, I argue that this anti-religious perspective is inscribed into the roots of No Borders' as a movement and subsequently reproduced in my analysis.

What follows from this is that future research should take on concepts of transborder activism from a non-western or non-white perspective. For example, asking how refugee_migrants experience western citizens and the strategies they employ to deal with them. Further, the relationship of anti-religious sentiments and engagement in No Borders would be interesting to study, for example, by investigating if people with anti-religious sentiments are drawn more to such settings or if they develop such opinions through subcultural interaction.

Third, methodologically, there are limitations with regard to case selection. Firstly and pragmatically, my language skills and positionality limited the possibility for me to engage with certain people (e.g., observe dynamics in refugee_migrant self-organisation) or read and analyse media and other material beyond my own language skills. I do not speak many commonly used languages of the field (see Section 01.6.3). Thus there were projects as well as topics that I might have overlooked and could not include in the analysis. Secondly, based on my methodological framework, especially in chapters two and four, I made analytical inferences from several points in two national settings to the broader EU context. I do assume that the contrasting of German and Greek contexts shows quite well which socio-political details are important for the relationship in the EU overall. However, this assumption certainly needs to be tested in other country settings. This, of course, is only conditionally a limitation, as it is also simply inscribed in the research design's approach to knowledge production. The analysis remains partially throughout. Concepts developed through any Grounded Theory approach – such as Situational Analysis – are always on probation and need to be tested and developed further.

Future research should try to prove and test my results and claims in other national cases. Moreover, a controlled comparative case study of two or more country contexts that builds upon this thesis' results could provide valuable insights.

Moreover, it would be interesting to see if the insights gained in the EU are transferable to other settings outside Europe. This concerns, on the one hand, western countries and their border zones areas in which No Borders groups are active (e.g., Australia, Canada, USA/Mexico, Marocco/Spain). Colonial, legal, and racist formations took different trajectories there and thus should form a different contextual situation. On the other hand, it concerns activist groups in the Global South that do not fight for the freedom to move to western countries. I am not aware of groups that use similar No Borders slogans or struggles with an asylum system in South-South relations. Still, decolonial and indigenous struggles, for example, in Chile, Bolivia, or South Africa, formulate comparable critiques to nation-state borders and oppression. In such contexts, the relationships between diverse activists, the interpersonal borders that separate them and that they try to transcend, could be investigated where they exist.

As the fourth, I wish to conclude this section by pointing towards additional avenues for future investigations that concern practical implications and dialogue with social movements.

There are possibilities for analytical transfer of my research to social phenomena of discrimination and inequality in other social movements cases. This thesis has been shaped by insights from feminist and migratory struggles. In turn, the dialogue should be sustained between other movements on (anti-)racism and migration and all movements in which intersectionality and diversity play a role, for example, in disability activism or around feminist and class issues.

Thereby, on a more general note, I would like to raise the issue of mental health in social movements and its relational and contextual component. Studies on this seem particularly important to understand the sustainability of movements and implement care structures. For example, the model developed in chapter four can be adapted to other movement cases to identify its specific contextual stressors.

Simultaneously, futures studies should produce insights on the practices that keep up the spirit and sustain mental health, such as community practices around food or play. This might also aid in providing improved care structures. I even dare say that western activism, in general, should rely more often on hope, positive relationships, and maybe some good food.

The overarching interest concerns the question of how to forge alliances and structures which hold space for strategies and needs of both privileged, western, "leftist" activism, that tends to reproduce individualistic and patriarchal positions, and marginalised activists and issues, for example of migrants, or gendered issues (e.g., as Birken and Eschen (2020) discuss exclusion of children and child care in activist subculture). Reproducing hierarchies through relationships in informal horizontally organised movements deserves more attention to understand how solidarity can go beyond personal favouritism and maybe become a "political friendship," as the activist scholar Rosa Burç recently proposed in a discussion.

However, lastly, my take on the practical implications of this thesis is limited by the nature of the research output, which is rather conceptual and analytical. Hence, developing strategies towards implementing insights from this thesis would be the next step. However, it requires cooperation with practitioners. Activists are always producers and users of theory themselves. The results of this dissertation were already generated by travelling between activists' and researchers' knowledge and theories; hence, it is worth reiterating that in any case, the dialogue between activists and scholarship should be fostered, e.g., through workshops and media outlets that use accessible language.

Epilogue: What Happened Next – Backlash and Covid-19. Yet Another Crisis

On a personal level, solidarity means acknowledging structural inequality. It means understanding that we produce and reproduce violence due to our position in society - that we hurt each other without even wanting to. On an interpersonal level, solidarity means struggling with this together. Being in a process together. Finding ways to work together and challenging yourself. It can hurt. But this is where we can find solutions and beauty.

This is the takeaway message after five years of research on solidarity relations – more specifically, research on how relationships of solidarity are being built between refugee_migrants and western citizens in activist settings. I investigated this in the European Union in the 2010s.

I started this research project in 2014 when displacement was still considered a niche topic. With the long summer of migration in 2015, this changed drastically. The numbers of people arriving at the EU multiplied, as did the support and, sadly, the attacks. It became impossible to watch the news without hearing something new about refugees.

However, after 2018, the euphoria of the refugee crisis and welcoming culture faded. The opportunity structures for pro-migrant action that it had produced closed again with conservative and right-wing governments boost. In 2019, a lot of the civic initiatives shrank all over Europa, and for example, in Athens, most people in housing squat got evicted. They were put on the street or into camps after governments changed and wanted to take control again (Gauditz, 2020).

Figure 10 - Former squat "5th school" in which many refugee_migrants lived from 2016-2019 was evicted and the entrance blocked by police. A graffito on the wall still promotes "hope". Picture by the author, November 2019.

Simultaneously the militarisation at the outer borders increased, and in 2019 the question of what is humanitarian and what is political was negotiated on the stage of rescue ships in the Mediterranean (Schwiertz & Steinhilper, 2021). It was thus negotiated on the back of those people that fled Libya. Sea rescue received increasing repression, and while rescue ships like the "Alan Kurdi" or "Sea Watch" kept on working, at least 5610 people have been confirmed to have died trying to cross the Mediterranean sea in 2018-2020 (IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre, 2021). Real numbers are probably higher.

And while initiatives tried to navigate the backlash, and I concentrated on writing down my findings in this very doctoral thesis, another crisis hit: The covid-19 pandemic.

The measures to contain the pandemic brought about a reintroduction of national sovereignty through severe mobility restrictions. Restrictions laid bare, among other issues, the dire working condition of many migrants inside the EU (Manolova & Lottholz, 2021) and limited possibilities to apply for asylum (Ghezelbash & Tan, 2021). Health requirements changed the situation both in institutionalised and informal refugee_migrant support

drastically. Journalistic and activist accounts reported prison-like situations in camps and centralized housing in which it was hardly possible to keep one's distance. They reported a dire lack of hygiene, possibilities to move further or educate children, and riots attempting to escape such situations occurred in many localities all over Europe (Bormann & Huke, 2021; Lavelle, 2020; Noll, 2020; TheBridgeRadio, 2018).

Activists' responses were limited, and with border controls increasing, the possibilities for transnational migration and actions, as known before, shrank. The German initiative Seebrücke (*lit. bridge over the sea*) launched a campaign to #leavenoonebehind, meaning that asylum seekers and other migrants should also be included in emergency aid during the pandemic. They specifically called to help minors, and other vulnerable people to leave the Aegean islands and to continue their family reunification procedures between EU-states. However, cases in which people were allowed to travel were few and fell short of politician's promises. Deportations were suspended for a couple of months but resumed soon.

Many No Borders organisations tried to keep going. For example, the social kitchen Khora in Athens, whose main target group had been migrants, accommodated many more homeless people now (see figure 19). But overall, an unforeseen withdrawal into privacy and shelter of welfare aid cut through preestablished bonds of solidarity.

Figure 11 - The team of the 'Khora social kitchen' showing their engagement during the Christmas days of 2020 on Facebook. 25.12.2021 https://www.facebook.com/KhoraAthens/photos/1653396741499594 . Last seen 02.05.2021.

Life is always a crisis for people who have to leave their homes and get used to the very precarious living conditions that the EU provides for illegalised, asylum-seeking, and other precarious migrants. The past few years have shown that structurally hardly anything has improved. Sustaining and fostering the connections, which were made in the past decade, in order to seize opportunities again when possible seems to be of utmost importance. I again want to point to what Efi Latsoudis from the horizontally organised shelter of Lesvos Solidarity already said in 2016:

> … it is too hard... to face all the situations for years […]. But [solidarity] is the only thing that makes us feel good. (Efi)

Exactly because the interpersonal and prefigurative notion of solidarity relationships cannot overcome the structural inequalities, people are in need of political struggle and cultivating hope. A positive working atmosphere is key to give people the possibility to survive difficult times.

The facts that personal contact has decreased due to the pandemic conditions, and that volunteers are hardly allowed to go to shelters, let alone come together in transnational networks, diminishes the power of solidarity. I hope that we can get back to fighting in solidarity with new energy soon.

A. Appendix

A.1 Overview of Interviewees

No	Name Anonymisation*	Gender (ascribed)	Age (categorized 0-5)	Language n = native level non-n = non-native	Description wc = western citizen r_m = refugee_migrant ib = in-between wc and r_m	Date	Place
01	Martha* and M. Ali	w m	30-40	En (non-n)	African (country of origin/ legal status unknown to me), activists (r_m)	28.04.2015	Hamburg
02	Amelie Deuflhard Moka Farkas	w w	40-50	Ge (n) Ge (non-n)	German, artistic director Kampnagel (wc) German inhabitant, Hungarian origin, artist/activist, member of Baltic Raw art collective (wc)	30.04.2015	Hamburg
03	Korina	w	25	En (non-n)	Greek, student (wc)	08.03.2016	Athens
04	Yannis	m	40	En (non-n)	Greek, leftist activist/journalist (ib)	11.03.2016	Athens
05	Siarmak*	m	40	Farsi (n) + simultaneous translation to En/Ge	Irani, squat inhabitant (r_m)	13.03.2016	Athens
06	Vice-Mayor of City of Piraeus	m	50	En (non-n)	Greek, Politician (wc)	15.03.2016	Piraeus

07	Maarten	m	30	Ge (n)	German, volunteer, Better days for Moria (wc)	16.03.2016	Moria
08	Dimitris Papargeiou	m	60	En (non-n)	Greek, sociology professor (wc)	16.03.2016	Mytilini
09	Efi Latsoudis	w	40	En (non-n)	Greek, activist Lesvos Solidarity (wc)	17.03.2016	Neapoli
10	Mohammed*	m	30	En (non-n)	Syrian, inhabitant and anarchist activist in Exarcheia (r_m)	20.03.2016	Athens
11	Hannes*	m	40	Ge (n)	German, volunteer at Main station Hamburg (wc)	15.04.2016	Hamburg
12	Alireza	m	20	Ge (n)	Afghan origin, German inhabitant, legal status unknown to me (ib)	02.05.2016	Hamburg
13	Katharina*	w	45	Ge (n)	German, activist, Right to the City knows No Borders (wc)	02.03.2017	Hamburg
14	Jacqueline*	w	25	Ge (n)	German, Black person (ib)	04.03.2017	Hamburg
15	Babatunde*	m	30	En (n)	Nigerian, activist, Lampedusa in Hamburg (r_m)	28.05.2017	Hamburg
16	Thomas*	m	30	Ge (n)	German, independent activist (wc)	31.05.2017	Hamburg
17	Felix	m	40	Ge (n)	German, activist Fux e.G. (wc)	27.07.2017	Hamburg
19	Abir*	m	30	Ge (non-n)	Cote D'ivorian , worker/activist Lampedusa in Hamburg/Fux e.G. (r_m)	27.07.2017	Hamburg
18	Abdul*	m	25	En (non-n)	Afghani, refugee (r_m)	17.-18.07.2017	Leipzig
20	Mirko*	m	40	Ge (n)	German, worker (ib)	13.07.2017	Hamburg
21	Achim	m	65	Ge (n)	German in Greece, activist, Lawyer (wc)	11.09.2017	Athens
22	Ahmad*	m	30	En (non-n)	Balochi, activist/poet, Thési community centre (r_m)	13.09.2017	Athens
23	Ali	m	40	En (non-n)	Pakistani, volunteer, Thési community centre (r_m)	15.09.2017	Athens

24	Mohsen	m	30	En (non-n)	Afghani, activist, interpreter, squat inhabitant (r_m)	19.09.2017	Athens
25	Danae Spyros	w m	35 30	En (non-n) En (non-n)	Greek, work at legal NGO (wc)	29.09.2017	Athens
26	Anne*	w	35	En (n)	British, activist, Thési community centre (wc)	10.10.2017	Athens
27	Giorgios*	m	55	En (non-n)	Greek, pychologist/activist, member Babel NGO (wc)	12.10.2017	Athens
28	Fernando	m	25	Es (n)	Spanish, activist in a migrant squat in Athens (wc)	16.10.2017	Athens
29	Pej	m	30	En (non-n)	Frensh, independent activist (wc)	18.10.2017	Athens
30	Helene	w	20	Ge (n)	German, activist, City Plaza squat (wc)	21.10.2017	Athens
31	Zabhi*	m	25	En (non-n)	Afghani, activist, City Plaza squat (r_m)	22.10.2017	Athens
Descriptives statistics		w = 10 m = 24	En = 17 Ge = 12 Farsi = 1 Es = 1	wc = 18 r_m = 11 ib = 5		12 = 1st phase of data collection 22 = 2nd phase	
*32	Leslie – author, interviewed by Ramona for reflection	w		Ge (n)	(wc)		Bremen

A.2 Interview Guides

Below are two interview guides that I used during data collection.

In the first phase of data collection, I approached people very openly, asking about their background and the projects they engaged in regularly. I did ask about working relations with "other" people, but in general, the questions aimed at people's individual experiences and feelings during their activism/inside projects. They made their emphasis.

The second phase of data collection was more structured. The structure was given through those topics, which had proved important after the first analysis. Especially relational phenomena were focused. I asked three interview participants to draw relational maps/Venn diagrams. While they gave fruitful insights, they also took a lot of time to make. I stopped using this tool as interview settings developed to be more "on the run" and in public settings, especially with people who were factually homeless.

The interview guides were used for preparation and orientation. In individual cases, the order and wording have been adapted. The version at hand is a bilingual mixture I developed through the process and translated from case to case.

1st Interview Guide

Used in the 1st wave of data collection. Summer 2015 – spring 2016

Hi!

- How much time do you have?

Who I am, what I do. Anonymisation.

- Recording?!

Questions

- How did you come to XY (this project)? Was gefällt dir/Was gefällt dir nicht? Wie fühlt es sich an?
- How does solidarity feel to you? What does it mean to you?
- How is working with refugees/non-refugees for you?
- What does this project make political? Who is involved?
- What was your worst experience/what was your best experience?
    - ➢ immer Sachfragen: Finanzierung, wo kommen Ressourcen her etc. Wie ist das hier entstanden.

2nd Interview Guide

For the 2nd wave, which started March 2017, guide as of 28.5.2017

NOTIZEN & LEHREN aus 1st wave

Purpose: Auswahl schneidet sich zu. Thematisches sampling von Personen mit diversem Hintergrund; zögernd theoretisches sampling.

Partizipation: als zentrale Lösung für meine Probleme. Partizipation kann auch Offenheit sein und sagen, ob es etwas gibt, wonach ich hätte fragen sollen, was sie von mir als Wissenschaftlerin wollen/wissen wollen.

Offenheit sicher stellen und auf Person eingehen: Wichtig, unterschiedliche Selbstpositionierung von I im Feld. Gesprächsverlauf davon leiten lassen, ob die leute sich eher als politisch oder über ihre Beziehungen in das Gespräch finden.

BEFORE

Hallo!

- How much time do you have?
- Anonymisierung. Kann auch noch geändert werden!

Anonymization. You can always change your opinion on that.

- Aufnahme. Recording.

Interview	**Mit** **Netzwerkkarte** (betrifft 3 Interviews, Fragen wurden dann in Gesprächsverauf integriert)

ENTRY

Ich interessiere mich dafür welche Erfahrungen du hier im squat/Haus machst. Wie ihr miteinander lebt und umgeht.

I'm interested in what experiences you made living/working with non-refugees. How you live together.

Please just tell me in a general manner: Who are you and how did it happen that you are active in project XY / live(d) in project XY / get this benefits. Was there a specific incident or reason that caused it? And especially Is there a person, who was very important for you to be involved?

Dazu sagen:

Ich interessiere mich einfach für DEINE Erlebnisse und deine Einschätzungen. Dazu was DU erlebt hast. Du kannst einfach anfangen zu erzählen, was auch immer du möchtest und wenn du nicht weiter weißt oder mich etwas besonders interessiert, dann werde ich dazu speziell nochmal nachfragen. Es gibt da auch gar kein richtig oder falsch.

Bitte erzähle erst ganz allgemein: Wer bist du und wie bist du dazu gekommen in Projekt XY aktiv zu sein / zu wohnen / die Leistung entgegen zu nehmen.

Gab es ein bestimmtes Erlebnis, einen Anlass, wie es dazu gekommen ist? Und vor allem, gab es eine Person, die besonders wichtig war

Complement by saying:

You can just start out with your own experiences and opinions. I'm interested about what you have experienced. You can tell me whatever you think is important. There is no right or wrong. If you're not sure on how to proceed, or if there is something I am especially interested in, then I will ask specific questions.

BASICS • How did you come to this project? • What is/was your motivation or the reason to work/live with refugees // non-refugees. • Did you actually live there or how are you involved? • When was the first time, you saw a squat /activist project / have been involved with activism? RELATIONSHIPS (START Netzwerkkarte)	Dazu sagen:

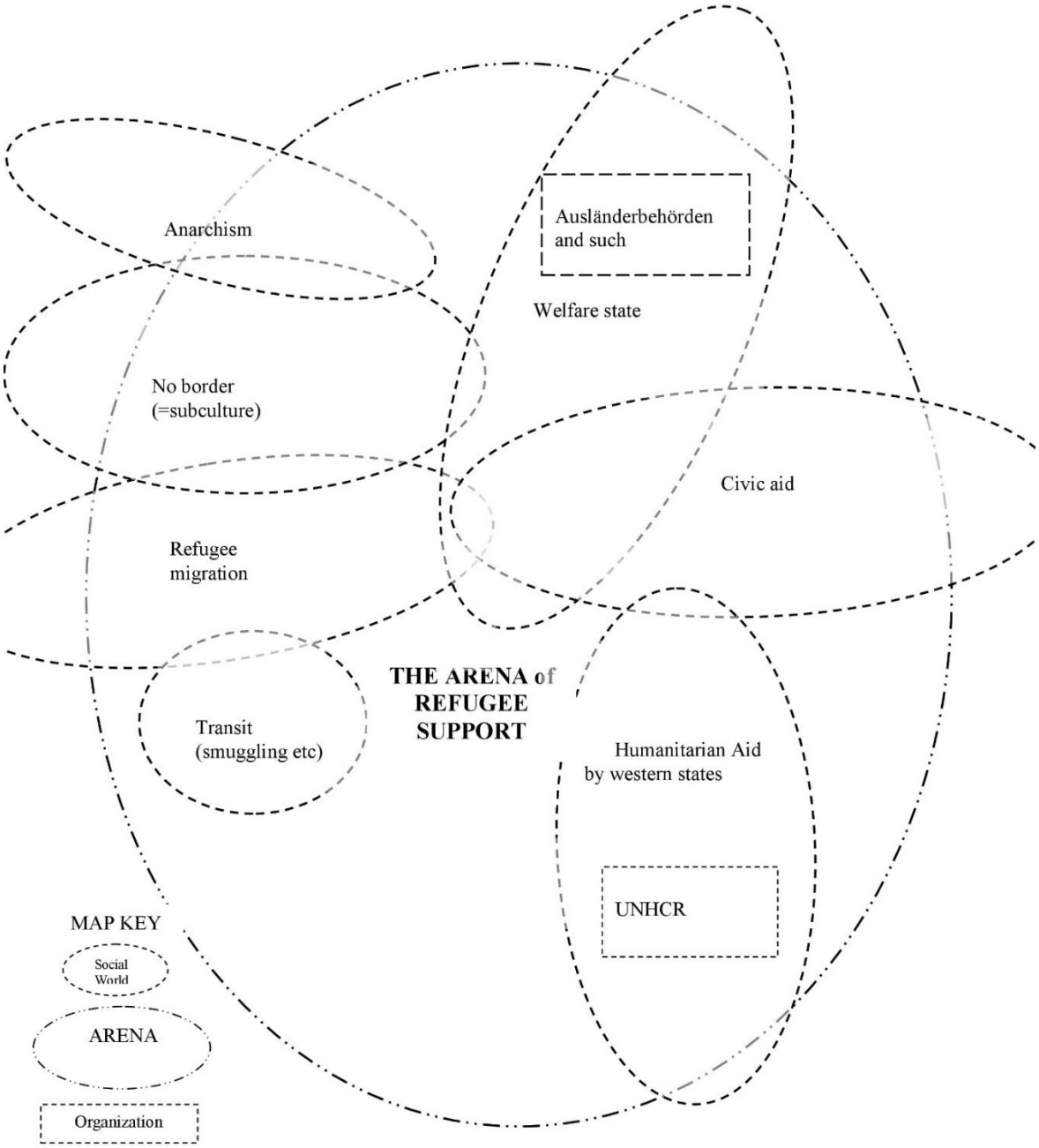
• Who is/was involved in you being involved with project XY / living here. • Who, what person or what groups was important for your experience at project xy (and for what has happened since/ are you still in contact/ friends)? LIVING HERE/ THERE • Gab es ein Ereignis, dass dich besonders glücklich gemacht hat? Wie bist du damit umgegangen, wie ist die Gruppe damit umgegangen? • Living here, Gab es ein Ereignis, dass dich besonders traurig oder wütend gemacht hat? Wie bist du damit umgegangen, wie ist die Gruppe damit umgegangen? Who supported you? • Fühlst du dich manchmal überfordert / Hast du dich schon mal überfordert gefühlt? Was machst du dann? • Why did you wanna be part of project xy/take/part/live there? (What do you think is special about project xy?) POLITICAL DIMENSIONS • When someone calls you an activist, how do you feel? What do you answer? In what contexts do they tell you that? • What does Solidarity mean to you? TIME • How long have you been involved with the topic and what do you think, for how long will you keep being active? How long do people live there? • Did someone leave? Come new? • How do you feel when someone leaves the project again? TRANSVERSALITY • To your perception, has the neighborhood changed since the squat/project was opened? (-> how did the squat/project transform your local site?) • Have you been in contact with other squats/projects like that in other areas/countries (perhaps in Greece?) (-> Abstrakt gefragt: Wie ist die internationale Zusammenarbeit) **Special Questions:** o Have you ever lived with a/no refugee (activist)?	Die Netzwerkkarte ist dazu da mir ein paar Sachen visuell zu verdeutlichen und eine Hilfe für die Strukturierung des Gesprächs zu geben. Es gibt dabei kein richtig oder falsch. Du kannst Leute so sortieren wie du möchtest. Du kannst auch durchstreichen und neu setzen, was du willst. Du musst keine echten Namen von den Personen angeben. Es reicht mir, wenn du mir sagst, was die Person für dich bedeutet. <u>Nachfragen</u> • Who would you call "a friend" in this project? • Welche anderen Gruppen / Organisationen sind wichtig?

o What are you doing now after you got citizenship? Still active? o Gab es Inspirationen Austausch zwischen Project XY und YX	
FINISH • Willst du immer noch anonymisiert sein? Bzw. willst du jetzt doch anonymisiert werden? • Möchtest du etwas schriftlich nachgetragen kriegen? • Is there something that has not been mentioned before around the scene of refugee and migrant struggle in XY / CITY/Germany/the world that has not been said before? • Is there anything that I, as a scholar, can do for you?	

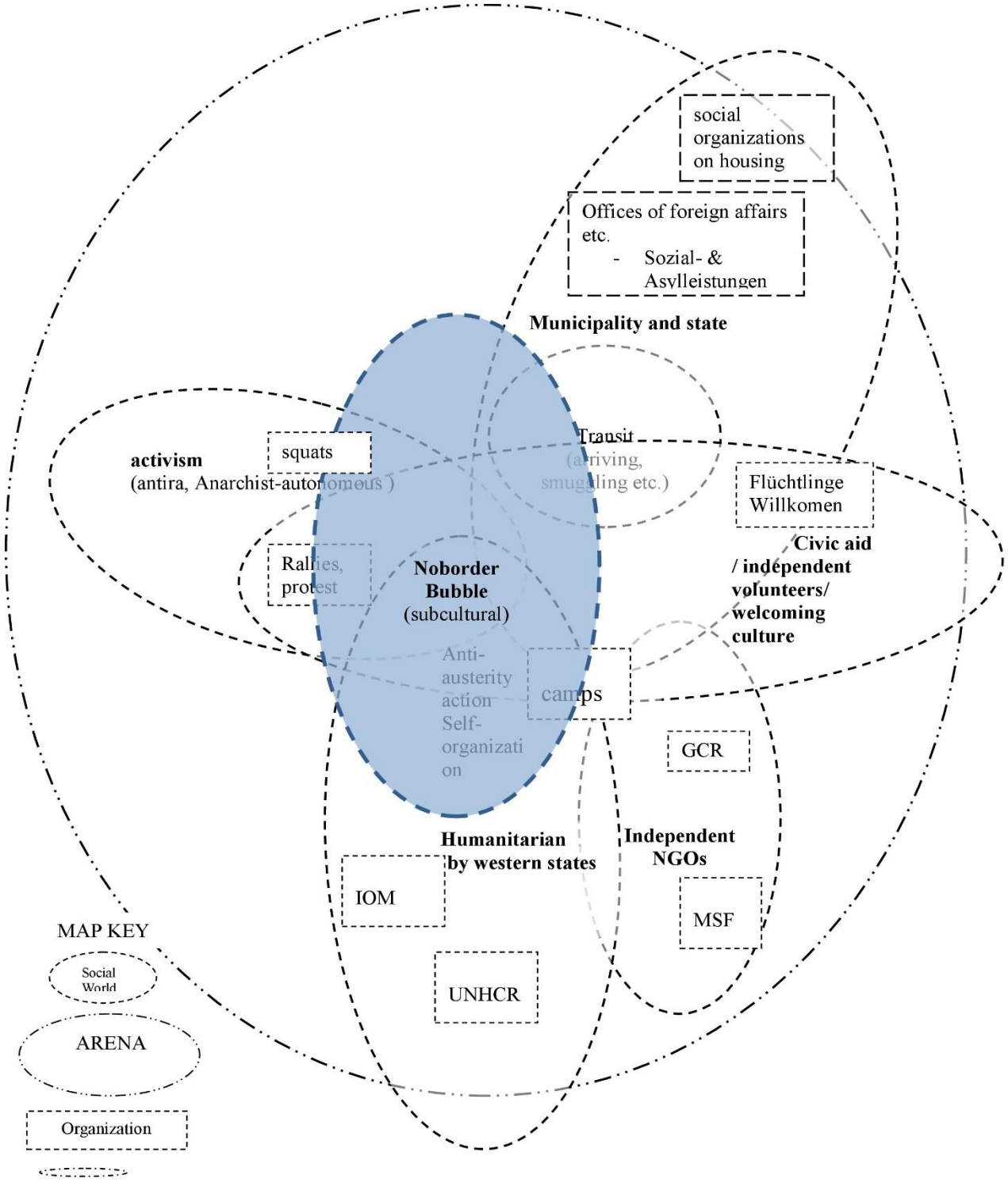
A.3 SitA Maps

The maps below are analytical maps done according to strategies of Situational Analysis. They are included in this thesis to make the method and analytical steps more transparent and give insights into analytical steps. The maps are merely analytical tools, and were everchanging throughout the research process. Maps are no research outcomes.

April 2016

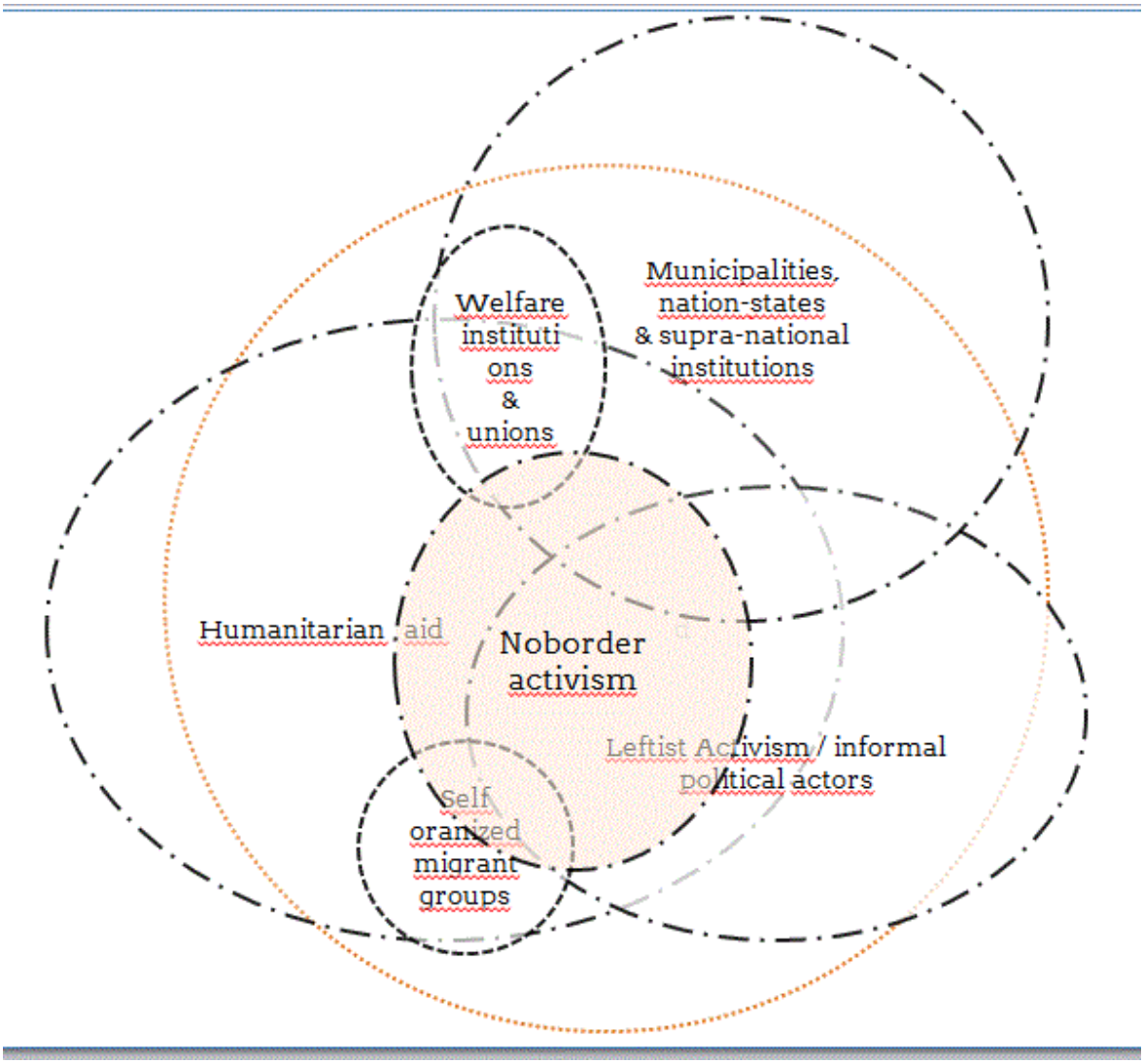


April 2018


social organizations on housing
Offices of foreign affairs etc.
- Sozial- & Asylleistungen
Municipality and state
activism
(antira, Anarchist-autonomous)
squats
Transit
(arriving, smuggling etc.)
Flüchtlinge Willkomen
Civic aid / independent volunteers/ welcoming culture
Rallies, protest
Noborder Bubble
(subcultural)
Anti-austerity action Self-organizati on
camps
GCR
Humanitarian by western states
Independent NGOs
IOM
MSF
UNHCR
MAP KEY
Social World
ARENA
Organization

April 2019

Simplified version of the above map, to be used as visualisation in academic discussions.



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I herewith declare that this thesis is my own work and that I have used only the means and sources listed. All excerpts and citations have been marked as such. I permit the review of this thesis via qualified software for the examination in case of accusations of plagiarism. No part of this thesis has been accepted or is currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification at this university or elsewhere.

Bremen, 4th of June 2021 _____ Leslie Gauditz