13 Crisis and *Willkommenskultur*

Civil society volunteering for refugees in Germany

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The German experience of the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016 was closely linked to the mobilization of large-scale civil society support for incoming refugees. By autumn 2015, when the number and circumstances of asylum seekers arriving in Germany had come to be referred to as a ‘crisis,’ volunteering to support the newly arrived refugees became an activity of national significance, both in terms of the unprecedented number of people involved and the large amount of overwhelmingly sympathetic attention volunteers received in cross-party politics and the media. Katrin Göring-Eckhardt (2015), then co-leader of the Green Party, summed up the dominating atmosphere by linking the situation to Germany’s hosting of the football World Cup in 2006 – a time when patriotism had surged amidst the redefinition of German national identity around the values of hospitality and cosmopolitanism – and calling Germans ‘world champions in providing help’ (*Weltmeister der Hilfsbereitschaft*). Even the country’s largest tabloid newspaper, the center-right *BILD-Zeitung*, whose polemics have often targeted immigrants, joined in the mood of humanitarian outreach by starting its own campaign to sign-up celebrities and business leaders to assist newly arrived asylum seekers. Notably, the *BILD hilft* campaign used the slogan ‘Refugees Welcome’ as part of its logo, previously the sole domain of political activists from anti-border and human rights contexts. If the crisis context gave migrant support predominantly humanitarian connotations, it did, at least temporarily, have the underpinnings of a normative cosmopolitanism, since it suggested both that Germany was under an obligation to take in refugees, and that the diversification of Germany’s population resulting from refugees’ immigration was a good thing.

In hindsight, the temporary alignment of the refugee crisis discourse, the mainstreaming of pro-refugee volunteering and pro-migrant political positions disintegrated. Under the crisis paradigm, German and EU migration policy has seen some of its severest restrictions in years, both in terms of access to protection, and in terms of integration. While the EU is actively pursuing the externalization of protection obligations to third countries, despite their lack of Geneva Convention standards for refugees (Lübbe 2018), Germany has, in the period between 2015 and 2017, introduced

residence requirements for recognized refugees, re-introduced the possibility to cut social security benefits below subsistence level for rejected asylum seekers, abolished the right to family re-union for persons with subsidiary protection status, and made analyzing and saving asylum seekers' mobile phone data standard procedure, in violation of the right to informational self-determination.¹

These restrictions were introduced while policy-makers in Germany explicitly praised volunteers, often simultaneously emphasizing that Germany would not have been able to manage the refugee arrivals without them and that they represent the best of what Germany stands for (Göring-Eckhardt 2015; Gauck 2015; see also, Speth 2017). How, then, to square *Willkommenskultur* [Welcoming Culture], Germans' unprecedented public commitment to supporting refugees, with the outcome of a more restrictive asylum and border policy? More specifically, I would like to look at the role of the 2015 and 2016 refugee volunteer movement within the dynamics of Germany's migration policy restrictions. Was civil society's support for incoming refugees mostly a humanitarian movement that, eventually, ended up re-enforcing the exclusionary mechanisms it had briefly suspended, as some commentators have claimed (Graf 2017; Steinhilper & Fleischmann 2017; Ratfisch & Schwiertz 2015)? Or do volunteers testify to the polarization of German society with regard to migration issues? In other words, were the asylum policy restrictions passed *in spite of* and not in line with the unprecedented popularity of pro-refugee volunteering? The question bears on wider issues of how to approach recent authoritarian and communitarian challenges to cosmopolitan projects, including that of the European Union itself. We can understand the convergence of Germany's pro-refugee volunteer movement with an increasing restrictiveness in migration politics as testimony to a deepening cosmopolitan-communitarian cleavage (see Teney et al. 2014). But the fact that pro-refugee volunteers often entertained co-operative rather than antagonistic relations to government agencies, plus, as we shall see, their ambivalent attitudes to immigration also makes plausible a different story. Germany's converging of hospitality and restrictiveness would then imply not so much a deepening of social antagonisms but a change in public reasoning about what it *means* to be cosmopolitan.

I will approach the question about pro-refugee volunteers' role within the wider developments of Germany's 'refugee crisis' by analyzing available data in light of the normative commitments pro-refugee volunteers have expressed, both through their actions and as personal attitudes. While the available data do not allow for a comprehensive evaluation of these because no single data set integrates questions on volunteers' motives, values, political attitudes, and general moral commitments, I maintain that a combined review of the available quantitative and qualitative data does yield some conclusions about how Germany's surge in refugee support volunteering fits into wider developments.² First, data on post-2015 volunteers show that they are more skeptical towards questions of access and less inclined to see a

political dimension in their activities than previous generations of refugee supporters. Second, additional data on volunteers' individual values and motives highlight a strong emphasis on humanitarian values and reveal a surprisingly strong degree of civic identification among volunteers. Third, data on volunteers' activities and forms of organization as well as qualitative studies on volunteer groups in local settings reveal that, on the ground, volunteers pursued a diversity-sensitive and inclusion-based understanding of integration – one that was often mediated through a strong identification with local communities.

Refugee support volunteering: leap in numbers, shift in outlooks

Since 2015, civil society support for refugees in Germany has not only dramatically increased in numbers, but it has also undergone a qualitative shift. Whereas migrant support has had a social movement character before 2015 – focusing on political change, often via public protest and acts of civil disobedience foregrounding migrant agency (see della Porta 2018; Rosenberger et al. 2018; Forschungsgruppe 'Staatsprojekt Europa' 2014) – it has mostly focused on concerns of humanitarian support and integration since. Representative data on volunteering in Germany (Simonson et al. 2014; Gensicke & Geiss 2009) and volunteering in support of refugees and migrants, more specifically (Ahrens 2017; Allensbach 2017; Jacobson et al. 2017), document the quantitative leap that pro-refugee volunteering has taken amidst the 2015 German experience of the 'refugee crisis.' While refugees and migrants made up less than 1 percent of the targets of volunteer activities in 2014, according to the German Volunteer Survey (Simonson et al. 2014), recent studies have consistently shown that volunteering for refugees has increased more than tenfold, drawing around 11 percent of the German population between 2015 and 2017 (Ahrens 2017; Allensbach 2017; Jacobson et al. 2017). As such, it became the second most popular of all volunteering activities, topped only by volunteering within sports clubs (Simonson et al. 2014). Taking into account not only active support, but all those who had volunteered for refugees at least once between 2015 and 2017, the influential conservative *Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research* sees the share of Germans involved in refugee support rising to 25 percent. If one also counts donations and political engagement, the number adds up to as much as 55 percent of the population (Allensbach 2017).

This surge in pro-refugee volunteering has been accompanied by a qualitative shift in both the volunteers' socio-economic composition and their normative outlooks. The volunteers' demographic make-up differs markedly from that of pre-2014 migrant supporters – they are older and more rural than their predecessors, coming closer to matching the overall structure of the German population. While Karakayali's and Kleist's (2016) data suggest that at least a third of pre-2015 volunteers were aged below 30 and a disproportionate amount of them were students, supporters who became active

from 2015 onwards were typically middle-aged or older. Similarly, while the majority of volunteers were recruited in cities before 2015, volunteers have mostly been recruited in small and medium-sized towns or rural areas after 2015. The only factors that clearly and consistently set volunteers in refugee support apart from the wider population are their relative wealth and high levels of education (Ahrens 2017; Allensbach 2017; Jacobson et al. 2017; Karakayali & Kleist 2016). While volunteers in other areas, too, tend to have higher levels of education than the population at large (Simonson et al. 2014), this tendency is exacerbated with refugee support volunteers, of whom a clear majority has completed upper secondary education – compared to around a third of Germans overall. The effect is even more marked when it comes to income levels, with half of the pro-refugee volunteer households situated above the income levels of 80 percent of the general population (Allensbach 2017: 21). Compared to migrant supporters before 2015, who tended to replicate the young and urban socio-demographics of both social movement activists (Karakayali & Kleist 2015; 2016) and those strata of the population most susceptible to holding cosmopolitan attitudes (e.g. Hanquinet & Savage 2013; Pichler 2009), Germany's refugee support volunteers in 2015 and onwards have been remarkably cross-sectional. In 2015, only wealth and education, but not age or affiliation with an urban milieu were decisive in the recruitment of refugee supporters.

The cross-sectional composition of pro-refugee volunteers is matched by data on Germans' political attitudes towards refugees and migrants in 2015. Positive attitudes towards an 'extended *Willkommenskultur* for migrants in Germany' (Preuß & Zick 2017: 5), shared by around a third of the population, had become age-independent in 2015 and 2016, whereas in previous years, the youngest generation held significantly more favorable views than the oldest. This pattern is mirrored in opinions on the take-in of refugees: When events started to be referred to as a 'crisis' in 2015, just over half of the German population thought it a humanitarian duty for Germany to take in more refugees, dropping to 37 percent in 2017 (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2017: 12). Pro-refugee views were age-independent in 2015, only to go back to being significantly stratified across generations in 2017. Two years after Germany had publicly embraced *Willkommenskultur*, less than a third of people over 60 still thought that Germany had a humanitarian duty to take in more refugees, while the youngest generation's pro-refugee attitudes remained stable at just over 50 percent (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2017: 13). In each case, higher education and wealth levels made favorable views significantly more likely. The cross-sectional composition of 2015 pro-refugee attitudes is especially startling if one considers that Germans' attitudes to non-EU immigrants in general, and more specifically, towards receiving refugees had not been excessively positive before 2015. In 2014, less than a third of Germans held favorable views of immigrants from outside the EU, setting Germany below the EU's average, and roughly on par with attitudes in Hungary (European Commission 2014). Asked about the reception of

asylum seekers in 2014, the majority of the population thought that Germany should have stricter rules and policies (Robert Bosch Stiftung 2014: 23). Interestingly, however, the majority of those in favor of stricter rules of access for asylum seekers also stated that they could imagine volunteering to support asylum seekers (Robert Bosch Stiftung 2014: 32–3), including around 20 percent who could imagine getting actively involved in helping with refugees' integration (Robert Bosch Stiftung 2014: 33; see also Eisnecker & Schupp 2016: 6–7). Though we can exclude right-wing nationalists from the pool of potential volunteers relatively safely (Beckmann et al. 2017), it does seem like volunteers were also recruited among people without strong cosmopolitan attitudes. Some potential volunteers combined strong motivations to help the incoming refugees' integration with restrictive views on refugees' access.

The gap between attitudes on integration and access is confirmed by a two-part non-representative, but extensive study Karakayali and Kleist (2015; 2016) conducted among refugee support groups in 2014, and 2015. They note a marked shift in the self-understanding and normative outlooks of 2015 volunteers in contrast to those supporters who had started supporting refugees earlier. Only among pre-2014 supporters did a majority support the notion that the basis for taking in refugees should be 'open borders' rather than any particular reason for leaving one's home country, such as human rights violations or, more generally, the idea of forced migration (Hamann & Karakayali 2016: 78). By contrast, at least three quarters of supporters who started in 2015 seemed to believe that the distinction between refugees and migrants should be upheld. Pre-2014 supporters were also more likely to understand their volunteering as an act of support for the right of residence for asylum seekers than later cohorts of supporters (Karakayali & Kleist 2016: 33). Earlier refugee supporters were not only more concerned with universalizing possibilities of territorial access, but they also understood volunteering for refugees as a political experience more often than those who started later, who in turn tended to think of it more in terms of an emotional experience (Karakayali & Kleist 2016: 20–1).

In sum, the data on Germany's new refugee volunteers yield ambivalent results about volunteers' normative commitments. It can be observed from the data discussed above that Germany's 2015 surge in refugee support volunteering coincided with a general increase in favorable attitudes towards refugees and migrants. A larger and more cross-sectional share of Germans both thought that Germany should provide wider access to refugees and saw the growth of Germany's immigrant population as something positive. However, we can also observe that, compared to previous refugee supporters, pro-refugee volunteers from 2015 onwards were more prone to understanding their activities as humanitarian rather than political. The data also suggest that volunteering in refugee integration and restrictive views on refugee access are not necessarily exclusive.

A question of values?

While comprehensive data on refugee support volunteers' political opinions and normative outlooks are lacking, the *Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research* has collected representative data on 2017 volunteers' values. The data indicate that Germany's new pro-refugee volunteers hold stronger altruistic values than volunteers in other areas, and decidedly stronger altruistic values than the rest of the population (Allensbach 2017: 24). They are a lot more likely than other Germans to name 'helping those in need' and an orientation towards 'social justice' among their value priorities, and a lot less likely than other Germans to prioritize materialist values such as 'a high income, material prosperity.' But to what extent can an understanding of volunteers' values yield insights into their self-understandings and their political positions on questions of migration?

Values, as measured by the Allensbach Institute, are understood as a someone's personal ideas of what is ethically good or worth striving for in their own lives (Allensbach 2013: 10). They do not immediately reflect political opinions: a person might be strongly religious in private, but might still agree with the principle of separating church and state politically. To mark the difference, we would have to look beyond a person's value set to find out where she situates her own identity within her views on society's wider goals and the norms by which it should be governed.³

Moreover, even where correlations between values and political attitudes have been measured, values are understood as describing a person's long-term commitments as opposed to their short-term political judgments (Inglehart 1977). Most scholars are of the view that values are acquired through childhood and rarely change throughout a person's adult life (Inglehart 1977; Joas 2001). To explain sudden shifts in an actor's practices or political attitudes, empirical studies on values must, therefore, take into account additional factors that can make sense of the fact that someone previously not particularly concerned with a specific political view or practice, starts taking to it *now*, rather than before. Germany's 2015 to 2017 leap in pro-refugee volunteering is a case in point. A more situational analysis is required to explain why members of previously unsupportive strata of society came out volunteering for refugees in 2015.

The Allensbach volunteer survey did not only collect data on volunteers' personal values, but also on the motives and triggers that brought them to volunteering. Triggers are understood as the external factors that contribute to causing a person to act in a particular situation rather than in another. Values and motives, on the other hand, both describe internal drivers of action. But while values describe a person's long-term ideas of what is worth striving for in her own life, motives describe the reason a person gives in justifying a particular action (Vorstenbosch 2006) – in this case, starting to volunteer for refugees. Motives, then, include a judgment on the kind of situation a person found herself confronted with before acting, while

values do not. Therefore, the content of values and motives can, but need not be the same. Religious values, again, make for a good example. Various studies have shown that adherents to religious faiths are overrepresented among refugee support volunteers, with Islam being especially significant (Ahrens 2017: 45; El-Menouar & Nagel 2017). However, the data also indicate that religious volunteers tended not to think of their faith as an important reason for volunteering (Ahrens 2017: 47; see also Karakayali & Kleist 2016: 14–15).

In this context, I argue that three aspects stand out when contrasting volunteers' motives in refugee support with the motives volunteers in other areas of society have cited. First, pro-refugee volunteers cited a general altruistic orientation as their prime motive, thereby framing refugee support as a question of humanitarian values. Second, volunteers also understood refugee support as a general duty, not as an activity aligning with their particular interests. Third, volunteers often cited a concern for Germany's future as a motive for their activities, offering a surprisingly civic outlook. I will briefly elaborate on these motives and how they might fit together, before going on to consider criticisms of humanitarianism in the context of refugee and migrant support.

When asked about their motives for getting involved in supporting refugees, pro-refugee volunteers who have started their work since 2015 most often replied 'Because, as a basic principle, I want to do something for others, help them' (Allensbach 2017: 26; see also Pfundmair et al. 2017), thereby re-iterating the altruistic orientation most had already cited as a value.⁴ In my reading, the coincidence of refugee support volunteers' values and motives is not trivial. It implies that volunteers understood the events associated with the 'refugee crisis' as the kinds of situations where their values become important in volunteering. This contrasts with volunteers in other areas, whose most prominent motive – by a margin of almost 20 points – has been enjoying their activities, with specific concern for the group in question and maintaining social networks also featuring prominently (Allensbach 2013: 15). Making volunteering for refugees a case where personal altruistic values *matter* frames this activity in a particular, humanitarian way. Refugee support volunteers clearly imply that, in doing what they do, they are going out of their normal way to sacrifice time for those they understand to need help.

At the same time, framing helping others as a personal value rather than, say, a duty that simply arose from a given situation relates one's humanitarian behavior back to one's own identity. Obeying duties need not be a question of values. The sight of a drowning person equally obliges all passers-by to do their best to help, independent of what they value personally. It would indeed be strange if the person eventually throwing in a lifebelt would point to her humanitarian values as the motivation to do so, rather than some form of obligation arising from the simple facts of the situation. Explaining the reasons for one's actions in terms of one's personal values,

then, gives the situation at hand a subjective touch, it implies that someone else might have acted differently if confronted with the same situation (Wils 2006). One acted as one did, on this view, because the basic dispositions of one's personal identity brought one to understand a specific situation as significant.

Apart from linking refugee support to humanitarian values, the motives and triggers most important to refugee support volunteers frame refugee support as a general concern, not as an activity that aligns with their *particular* interests. Volunteers in refugee support are a lot less likely than volunteers in other areas, such as animal support or music education, to identify their area of volunteering as a single issue focus, that is, a concern they take to be important for themselves, but not necessarily for others (Allensbach 2017: 26).⁵ That Germany's 2015 refugee support volunteers were not motivated by any particular interests to come out in support of refugees is confirmed if one considers the list of triggers that volunteers named. Less than a third indicate that value-specific or issue-specific affiliations, such as being part of a church group or an NGO with a prior focus on refugees, prompted them to start volunteering (Allensbach 2017: 27). Instead, the majority replied either that they became active on their own initiative, often after seeing media reports, or that personal encounters with refugees triggered them to volunteer (Allensbach 2017: 27). The importance of media reporting underlines the event character the 'refugee crisis' took in the eyes of volunteers. It seems like a substantial proportion of volunteers was prompted to start in 2015, not because of group affiliation or slowly-building peer pressure, but by the impression that something exceptional was happening.

Lastly, I suggest that refugee support volunteers reveal a surprisingly civic perspective on their activities, with many of them stating that they are 'convinced that it is important for Germany's future that the [sic] refugees' integration works well' (Allensbach 2017: 26).⁶ Among the three motives named most often by pro-refugee volunteers, this answer has no equivalent in Allensbach Institute's earlier questionnaire on general volunteers' motives (see Allensbach 2013). It describes volunteering in refugee support as a civic duty rather than a duty immediately held towards refugees. It seems like volunteers who gave this answer espouse a version of the communitarian argument that, in order to function properly, state institutions need some degree of social cohesion at its base, which ensures that there is trust and solidarity among the members of a given society (Miller 2016; Walzer 1984). Moreover, a number of studies confirm that volunteers seem to think, at least partly, that bringing about the kind of social cohesion needed is a task for civil society (Karakayali & Kleist 2016: 29; Allensbach 2017: 38), rather than just a question of adequate legal provisions. Even though, in this reading, the volunteers' aim was primarily to ensure the functioning of state institutions in the future, their means of doing so were *cultural*, by advancing refugees' integration to generate what they seem to have taken as the necessary amount of social cohesion at the state's basis.

Read like this, the data on refugee support volunteers' values and motives suggest that the volunteers combined a focus on humanitarian values with a degree of civic identification. They expressed the latter as a concern for the role played by the refugees' integration in the proper functioning of state institutions. That a combination of humanitarianism and civic identification was a major motive for the volunteers seems to be confirmed by what a number of commentators had critically highlighted when Germany's volunteer movement made headlines in 2015 and 2016. Whereas earlier cohorts of refugee supporters emphasized solidarity and common anti-statist political interests as important themes, some commentators highlight that the volunteers' humanitarian outlooks in 2015 and 2016 were politically useful to reinforce statist policies, marking the influx of refugees as a national state of exception (Graf 2017; Steinhilper & Fleischmann 2017; van Dyk & Misbach 2016; Ratfisch & Schwiertz 2015). In the following section, I take up this discussion and set it in the context of quantitative data on pro-refugee volunteers' more concrete activities and forms of organization as well as qualitative data on refugee support groups' self-understandings and interactions with refugees. Introducing the framework of care ethics as an alternative to humanitarianism, I argue that, on the ground, interactions more often took the form of care relations rather than mere humanitarianism.

Modes of other-orientation: humanitarianism and care relationships

Was *Willkommenskultur* an essentially humanitarian movement, and is this the reason why it seemed to have been interested so little in wider questions around migration policy and migrants' rights? A number of German social scientists have applied critical readings of humanitarianism (Fassin 2011; Ticktin 2011; Agamben 1998) to Germany's new refugee support volunteer movement. They have criticized the fact that the volunteers' focus on the passive suffering and immediate bodily needs of the newly arrived refugees has contributed to delegitimizing migrants' self-organization (Fleischmann 2015; Ratfisch & Schwiertz 2015; Steinhilper & Fleischmann 2017). Some have also suggested that, by uncritically assuming central tasks in refugee reception that are normally performed by the state, volunteers have – unintentionally – perpetuated the state's withdrawal from these tasks (van Dyk & Misbach 2016). Lastly, others highlight that the volunteers' continued portrayal around values of altruism and self-sacrifice prompted several politicians to justify the curbing of migrants' rights by pointing to the overburdening of volunteers (Graf 2017; Hinger 2016).

Though some of these criticisms are valid in assessing Germany's discourse on the 'refugee crisis' on the level of national politics and public opinion, I argue that studies on the volunteers' on-the-ground activities suggest that the dynamics were a lot more heterogeneous, often taking the form of care relationships rather than humanitarianism (see also Stock 2017).

'Care' has been a concept advanced by feminist activists and scholars to grasp, first, the specific type of reproductive labor that has disproportionately been carried out by women within a social division of labor in modern societies (Federici 2012); and, secondly, a specific ethical outlook often associated with care work or with women as care-givers, more generally (Gilligan 2016; Noddings 1984; Tronto 1993). Care relations share some features with humanitarianism: They are also needs-oriented and, as such, establish a hierarchy between the care giver and care receiver. They are also, at least partly, pre-discursive, relying on emotive states and mutual recognition rather than interests and rational argument. However, I argue that there are some important conceptual differences between the care giver and the humanitarian Samaritan. While humanitarianism suggests that someone may bridge the distance to an outsider on the basis of a sense of compassion for the outsider's exceptional suffering, care relations, on the other hand, start from the assumption that bridging differences is not exceptional, but the daily work done in sustaining networks of social relations. Identities, in this view, are not given to be penetrated by outsiders, but are themselves dependent on concrete others' recognition.

Let me briefly identify some of the criteria by which to differentiate care practices from humanitarian practices, before I will go on to outline the extent to which the idea of care ethics describes refugee support volunteers' practices better than humanitarianism. First, care ethics is reciprocal, insofar as it focusses on the *relationship* over time between a care giver and a care receiver, rather than on the goods an active helper may re-distribute to a passive victim. Although care relationships are unequal, too, in the sense that they happen between concrete individuals with differing needs and vulnerabilities, care ethics assumes that no side of a care relationship is self-contained. Care ethicists often point to friendships and love relationships to show that care relations are not only exchanges of goods and services, but they also sustain more identity-defining features, such as recognition, trust, and solidarity. Second, care ethics is hence distinguished from humanitarianism by its broad definition of needs. Needs are not only understood physically, but also as the social resources and networks ensuring that a person can develop an individual identity and pursue individual goals in life. Third, care relations are often multi-polar rather than bipolar, focusing on the interdependencies between different poles of a social network (Gilligan 2016; Kittay 1999; Tronto 1993).

Finally, while humanitarianism works to bring close what is remote, care relations assume the otherness of what is near-by. They typically start with the kinds of interpersonal relations that are normally taken to belong to the private rather than the public realm – friendships and family relations, and the informal social relations built in local communities. While feminist care ethicists have maintained that the boundary between private and public is itself contestable (Benhabib 1987; Tronto 1993), it remains unclear how care ethicists can square their emphasis on the special duties owed to the

significant others of one's immediate social network with obligations to those who are far removed or, like migrants, claiming to be given access to a given community.

From the perspective of humanitarianism, it could have been expected that refugee support volunteers focused their activities on addressing refugees' physical needs, which would privilege making and organizing donations as a form of engagement. Although data on the volunteers' activities confirm that donations indeed made up the largest part of volunteer activities in 2015 (Ahrens 2017: 41; Allensbach 2017: 17), it is noteworthy that the majority of volunteers went on to take on other, mostly integration-related tasks later, such as giving language classes, accompanying refugees to appointments with government authorities, and helping refugees to establish social ties (Ahrens 2017: 41–2; Allensbach 2017: 11–12). In this context, it is also notable that many volunteers chose to describe their activities in non-specific terms, such as 'helping refugees to find their way around here' or 'spending leisure time with refugees' (Allensbach 2017: 17).⁷ Most volunteers, it seems, understood volunteering for refugees as a cross-sectional task, not as conveying a specific skill, but helping with refugees' integration more widely.

A look at the volunteers' forms of organization also speaks against a purely humanitarian outlook. While, from a humanitarian viewpoint, the most preferable type of organization would be whatever is thought to serve refugees' immediate needs most efficiently, volunteers have often chosen forms of organization which run counter to the rationale of efficiency. Most 2015 volunteers founded their own self-organized groups rather than joining an established organization to orchestrate their activities (Karakayali & Kleist 2016). Up to a third of the volunteers even stated that they organized their activities entirely by themselves, outside of any type of group (Allensbach 2017: 28; see also Mutz et al. 2015: 34). Even though these informal types of organization also testify to the ad-hoc character of Germany's 2015 refugee reception, studies on the relationship between volunteers and municipalities as well as on volunteer groups' forms of funding show that volunteers often upheld and defended them later on. Although volunteer groups often worked closely with local governments in the name of guaranteeing refugees' frictionless integration (Speth 2017), many chose to stay autonomous or demanded on-par relationships, insisting that their work was both necessary for refugee integration to run smoothly and that the specific relations volunteers had forged with refugees through their informal approach were not replaceable by the more formal structures of municipalities and organizations (Hamann et al. 2016; Daphi 2017; Karakayali et al. 2018: 46).

Beyond the data on refugee support volunteers' activities and forms of organization, a number of qualitative studies (Hamann et al. 2017; Karakayali 2017; Hinger 2016; Speth 2017) highlight that volunteers combine a focus on diversity with a strong sense of identification with local communities, adopting an outlook that can be situated within care ethics. Though volunteer activities focused on questions of integration rather than access, volunteer groups

were often deliberate in distancing themselves from demands of cultural assimilation. In contrast to rights-oriented groups (Steinhilper 2018; Bendix & Danielzik 2017), some volunteer groups explicitly affirmed what they understood as the refugees' cultural otherness. One study (Karakayali 2017: 20–1), for example, observed that volunteers often expressed the wish to participate in trainings on cultural practices in other countries, so they could better understand how refugees deal with death, mourning, and joy. Though themes of cultural otherness were mostly raised with regard to refugees, a number of studies find that volunteer groups emphasized their own plural composition as well. Many volunteers testified to the diversity of their members and emphasized the performative effects refugee support has had on the integration of their wider communities. Hamann et al. (2017), for example, quote one volunteer from a rural town, who 'realized that founding this initiative brought people who hardly had anything to do with each other to work together and get to know each other' (p. 17). She continues:

So, our group is very variegated, from long-established residents who were born here, I would say, to newcomers ... these people now have something to do with each other and this, of course, has its own impact. (Ibid.)⁸

In this light, the volunteers' frequent emphasis on their proactive approach to refugee support – in the words of one interviewee: 'Just doing it, just helping, it was wonderful' (Hamann et al. 2017: 8) – must not only be read as a humanitarian suspension of rules and procedure, but also as testimony to their dynamic understandings of community. Local volunteer groups seemed to have understood themselves as *creating*, rather than defending, the communities they aimed to integrate refugees into (see also Gesemann & Roth 2017). Their emphasis on diversity, however, did not prevent volunteers from relying strongly on community identity. Indeed, volunteer groups often explicitly motivated local identities, choosing to name themselves after the town or neighborhood their activities were centered in: 'Moabit hilft [Moabit helps]', 'Neue Nachbarn Burtscheid [New Neighbors Burtscheid]', 'Angekommen in Fürth [Arrived in Fürth]'. Rather than being seen as a question of rights or particular interests, the volunteers' emphasis on inclusiveness was organized around communal values.

The volunteers' inclusive understanding of integration becomes significant where volunteer groups' cohesion-oriented efforts came up against status distinctions emerging from regional and national asylum and integration policies. Although most volunteers, as I have shown above, conceptually upheld the distinction between refugees and economic migrants, and the stratification of access legitimacy that comes with it, the majority of studies also observe that, on the ground, volunteers often sought to compensate for the differentiation of rights that came with the acceptance or refusal of asylum claims. Thus, volunteer groups often turned to targeting integration

measures, such as language classes or assistance in searching for apprenticeships, specifically to rejected asylum seekers, who were not eligible for state assistance in these areas (Karakayali 2017; see also Hinger 2016: 84). While their inclusive approach to integration prompted most volunteer groups to adopt critical stances towards local and, more often, regional and national authorities (Speth 2017; Daphi 2017), there is also evidence that volunteer groups influenced municipalities in adopting more inclusive understandings of local identity. For local administration, this meant, in some cases, using their administrative discretion to cultivate deliberately generous interpretations of available legal regulations, for example, when it came to issuing work permits or residence permits on the grounds of good integration (Schammann & Kühn 2017). In others, it meant the provision of funding and training for programs specifically aimed at the integration of rejected asylum seekers (Schammann & Kühn 2017).

One last criticism associated with refugee support volunteers' humanitarian approach is that it ignored the contentiousness of social relations. In letting *Willkommenskultur* appear as a pre-discursive, intuitive, and unified reaction to refugees' suffering, it failed to account for the fact that refugee reception rested on conditions that social movements have fought for – both against existing structures of exclusion and those interests and ideologies that defended them (Steinhilper 2018; Buckel 2013). However, a number of studies find that many volunteer groups sought to create inclusive community identities explicitly against the background of growing anti-migrant sentiments – especially in the East of Germany, where anti-migrant groups had been particularly salient.⁹ They recount situations in which local administration cooperated closely with volunteers explicitly in order to prevent 'the mood from shifting' (Speth 2017: 46) in the face of lingering anti-migrant attitudes. One study narrates a moment where volunteers themselves urged their co-residents in a rural town citizens' assembly to understand the reception of refugees as an identity-defining question, addressing those who had expressed anti-migrant positions: 'Listen, think about it, is this really who you are? What we are doing here is helping people in need' (Hamann et al. 2017: 14). Therefore, it seems inaccurate to claim that volunteer groups had no understanding of their position's contentiousness. It does seem, however, that they dealt with it differently than social movements do – rather than marking divisions and exclusions through the strategic use of protests, petitions, or litigation (Buckel 2013), they understood the project of creating inclusive societies as a question of identity organized around communal values.

Conclusion: values, humanitarianism and care ethics

What, if anything, then, links the volunteers' preoccupation with humanitarian values and sense of civic identification with their on-the-ground

concern with creating inclusive local communities? To begin with, it is important to keep in mind the volunteer groups' diversity. As Karakayali and Kleist (2015; 2016) document, in Germany's post-'crisis' refugee support landscape, established migrant support networks, activist groups, and migrant self-organizations overlap with a new volunteer movement that broadened civil society support for refugees beyond its base in urban cosmopolitanism, and changed its aims and dynamics.

Recent volunteers understood their humanitarian values as important motives for getting involved in volunteering. As I discussed, this implied, *qua* humanitarianism, that helping refugees in the 2015 and 2016 'refugee crisis' context was seen as a basic principled response, rather than a question of specific interests or political agendas. At the same time, it implied, *qua* values, that volunteers thought it took a specific personal disposition to want to help – one that others may not have. On top of that, many volunteers thought that the integration of incoming refugees was important for Germany's future, which seems to reinforce the idea that volunteers understood Germany's mass refugee intake as an exceptional event, which, if perpetuated, would threaten the functioning of Germany's state institutions. According to this line of thinking, volunteers understood their own task as maintaining the social cohesion they took to underlie the proper functioning of state institutions.

While, from this perspective, it is unsurprising that the volunteers' activities concentrated on a broadly defined idea of refugee integration, on the ground, their practices seemed to have been more inclusive than a concern with humanitarian suffering, on the one hand, and social cohesion, on the other, would suggest. I argued that the volunteers' focus on diversity and sustaining local networks is better understood within a framework of care ethics rather than humanitarianism. On the ground, volunteers have set out to create local identities around diversity and hospitality, in a number of places quite explicitly in contentious circumstances. Here, again, the volunteers' self-understanding appears strongly value based. Rather than framing the reception and integration of refugees as a question of rights, a common political project, or balancing specific interests with others, they worked at preventing 'the mood from shifting.' That is, they worked to ensure – often in cooperation with local administration, though many groups remained independently organized – that a community developed and maintained basic dispositions to view diversity and hospitality positively. In hindsight, this seems to have gone together with, rather than challenged, a re-affirmation of statist politics that can be linked to a more restrictive migration policy. At the same time, there is evidence (see Bendel et al. 2019; Schammann & Kühn 2017) that the volunteers' emphasis on inclusive community values has contributed to a strengthening of municipalities' self-understanding as actors in their own right when it comes to migration and integration policies.

Notes

- 1 An overview over the many changes in German migration law since 2015 is provided by *Flüchtlingsrat Berlin e.V.* at: http://fluechtlingsrat-berlin.de/recht_und_rat/sylg-2015/#14-8222gesetz-zur-einfuehrung-beschleunigter-asylverfahren8220-8211-a-sylpaket-ii (last accessed 10 August 2019, in German).
- 2 On the empirical study of moral development, see, famously, Kohlberg (1984). On methods for the empirical research of cosmopolitan attitudes, see, among others, Roudometof (2012), and Helbling & Teney (2015).
- 3 Ronald Inglehart's (1977) as well as Inglehart's and Pippa Norris's (2019) influential work on value shifts in prosperous societies has built on extensive empirical material to show that political attitudes are indeed grounded in values, which they expect to evolve across generations. Under conditions of continued economic prosperity and relative political stability, Inglehart's (1977) core thesis claims, forthcoming generations will develop increasingly non-materialist values and instead focus on issues surrounding the quality of life, demanding individual self-realization and social recognition. Inglehart and Norris (2019) have recently updated this theory in the face of the current surge of right-wing authoritarian political movements, claiming that right-wing authoritarianism's recent appeal can be understood as a backlash reaction against the fact that previously hegemonic conservative values are gradually marginalized as new generations develop increasingly 'post-material' value sets.

Much of Inglehart's and Norris's idea that political attitudes can indeed be explained in terms of values is borne out by the fact that they, unlike the Allensbach Institute, understand values as someone's long-term *societal* rather than *personal* ends. Even so, it remains disputed to what extent values can inform attitudes to immigration. A study by Helbling and Teney (2015) on cosmopolitan elites in Germany, for example, shows a significant relationship between postmaterialist values and a willingness to help people outside of one's own country, but no relationship between postmaterialist values and openness towards immigrants.

- 4 All translations from the Allensbach surveys are mine. The German original reads: 'Weil ich grundsätzlich etwas für andere tun, ihnen helfen möchte.'
- 5 The answer designed to tap this dimension reads: 'Because the refugees who came to Germany are of particular concern to me' (Allensbach 2017: 26). The German original reads: 'Weil mir insbesondere die Flüchtlinge, die nach Deutschland gekommen sind, besonders am Herzen liegen.' In the Allensbach Institute's 2013 survey on volunteer motivations in general, a version of this answer reads 'Because the area or group that I volunteer with is of particular concern to me, e.g., the environment, children or the elderly' (Allensbach 2013: 15). The German original reads: 'Weil mir der Bereich bzw. die Gruppe, um die ich mich kümmere, besonders am Herzen liegt, z.B. die Umwelt, Kinder oder ältere Menschen.'
- 6 The German original reads: 'Weil ich davon überzeugt bin, dass es für die Zukunft Deutschlands wichtig ist, dass die Flüchtlinge gut integriert werden.'
- 7 The German original reads: 'Flüchtlingen dabei helfen, sich hier zurecht zu finden,' and 'Freizeit mit Flüchtlingen verbringen.'
- 8 All translations from Hamann et al. 2017, are my own.
- 9 In his narrative account of the events that formed Germany's experience of the 'refugee crisis,' Robin Alexander (2018) recounts that this also goes for the initially favorable reaction of Germany's national government itself. Senior politicians were pushed to take uncharacteristically pro-refugee stances as they responded to a series of violent right-wing attacks against refugees over the summer of 2015.

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