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Within and Against the National Doxa

*On the Historical Emergence of (Pro-)Refugee Politics in the Federal Republic of
Germany, 1980-1993*

PhD Thesis

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Introduction

The main purpose of this research project is to explore, examine and evaluate the largely forgotten early period of (pro-)Refugee activism between the late 1970s and early 1990s in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). My focus lies on the ambiguous positioning of Refugee actors and their supporters vis-à-vis the ‘national order of things’ (Malkki 1995, 512). I trace the different ways in which Refugee actors and their supporters drew upon orthodox narratives of German identity and how these changed throughout the 1980s. Particular attention is paid to the actors’ framing and critique of the nation-state in its institutionalised form and the public as a potential source of solidarity as well as conflicts around questions of representation. The nexus of (forced) migration, national identity, and memory politics will play an important role throughout this discussion with a particular focus on the legacy of German Nazism in pro-Refugee protests. The project is guided by the following questions:

- Which symbolic repertoires did Refugee actors and their allies develop to make their claims, and to prepare and justify their practices? How did the actors relate to the nation-state order and the German political field in this regard?
- How did they use and criticise dominant narratives about national identity and collective memory in relation to questions of immigration and asylum? Do the different framings demonstrate tensions and conflict among actors?
- Which theoretical and analytical perspectives are useful to grasp these complex relations between (pro-)Refugee actors and the nation-state order which they set out to criticise, oppose, and co-opt?

As will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, dealing with this set of research questions allows me to make an innovative contribution to and critical intervention in the existing field of (critical) migration studies. More specifically, there are two main reasons why I consider such a focus on the historical emergence and socio-political entanglement of (pro-)Refugee actors in the West-German context fruitful both for providing original empirical insights and for critically dealing with theoretical and analytical problems and limitations.

First, I want to contribute to strengthening research approaches that put the political perspectives and practices of Refugees and migrants centre stage. While an ever-growing field of (critical)

migration, forced migration, and Refugee studies has emerged throughout the past four decades¹, most research takes a state- and policy-oriented perspective that leaves little space for the political struggles of Refugees. The thematic structure of the *Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies* offers a good example in this regard (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2014). The vast majority of the fifty-three chapters is indeed highly critical of the negative humanitarian consequences of (the political responses to) forced migration and many explore the everyday experiences of Refugees looking at different intersecting categories. However, there is only one article that explicitly deals with the challenges of refugee activism (Sigona 2014). These approaches indeed make valuable contributions to the critical analysis of the violent implications of contemporary migration and asylum regimes – and in this regard they are highly relevant for my research project. A key problematic of such policy-oriented perspectives is that they tend to reproduce the marginalisation of those who are negatively affected by these forms of state control and repression (Squire 2009; Morris 2002; Kofman 2005; Kleist 2015; Labor Migration 2014). Although the suffering and victimisation of refugees, displaced persons and illegalised migrants figures prominently within many of the above-mentioned approaches, there is much less attention to the everyday and organised political practices and forms of resistance of these migrant groups. When it comes to the politicisation of migration and asylum from a marginalised and oppositional perspective, their contribution thus remains limited.

In answer to this problem, there has been a growing number of contributions to the so-called ‘mobility turn’ since the 1990s: a research paradigm that emphasises the significance of migrant and Refugee struggles as a point of reference and source of inspiration for critical theory, social and political research (Squire 2011a; Nyers and Rygiel 2012; Atac, Rygiel, and Stierl 2017; Carauş and Paris 2019; Labor Migration 2014; Schwiertz 2021). As Vicki Squire puts it, the twofold goal of this mobility turn is to ‘politicize mobility’ and ‘mobilize politics’ (Squire 2011b). An important feature of these contributions is a strong influence by various approaches and debates in critical theory. Although there is now a plethora of different approaches associated with this discussion, three largely dominate the field: first, various approaches on current structures of border control and excessive state power which are primarily influenced by Giorgio Agamben (Agamben 1998; Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2004; De Genova and Peutz 2010); second, the Autonomy of Migration paradigm which is inspired by the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (Hardt and Negri 2003; Hardt and Negri 2004; Rodríguez 1996; Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013; Scheel

¹ For an overview, see: (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2014; McGuire 2020; Castles 2003; Castles, Haas, and Miller 2013; Boswell 2005; Lambert and Goodwin-Gill 2010; Aas and Bosworth 2021)

2013b; De Genova 2017); and third, the paradigm of Critical Citizenship Studies, which reformulates Jacques Rancière's work in light of the significance of migrant activism (Rancière 2004; Schaap 2011; Isin 2009; Isin and Turner 2007; Rygiel et al. 2015). Most notably, for all three, it is the work of Arendt that is valued as an early attempt to put Refugees centre stage in political reflections, but which is criticised for its depoliticising implications. It is this body of literature around the 'mobility turn' (Faist 2013) which is most important for my own research insofar as it takes the political agency of Refugees seriously. At the same time, however, these contributions are characterised by various limitations which I seek to address in this research project. Most notably, they tend to homogenise and romanticise Refugee struggles, thus losing sight of the highly precarious and contradictory conditions of Refugee activism. As Vaughan-Williams phrases it, we are thus left with 'an intellectual and practical impasse, which is often presented in zero-sum terms as a simple interpretive "choice" between privileging borders over migration, control over escape, closure over openness, violence over agency, and death over life, rather than seeing these as being mutually constitutive' (Vaughan-Williams 2015, 123).

Against this background, I intend to further develop a perspective which avoids both victimising and romanticising simplifications. Based on a re-examination of the critical potential of an Arendtian theoretical framework (Arendt 1973; Schulze Wessel 2015), I seek to aim at a middle ground between structure- and agency-oriented approaches by looking at the embeddedness of such struggles in the national order they criticise and oppose. Put differently, Refugee self-organisation and pro-Refugee solidarity is embedded within and informed by the institutional framework and political culture of the nation-state in which they take place. To draw out these ambiguities, I propose to make use of Bourdieu's state- and field-theoretical approach as well as his reflections on the nation-state and symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2009). On a theoretical level, this research project thus contributes to the interdisciplinary understanding of (pro-)Refugee struggles by bringing Bourdieu's relational outlook into dialogue with discussions of Refugee protest. In doing so, I also build on a small but growing body of literature explicitly inspired by Bourdieusian perspectives focusing on this complex relation between (pro-)Refugee and (pro-)migrant struggles on the one hand and the nation-state order on the other (Nicholls 2013; 2019). Together with some approaches in the area of Critical Citizenship Studies (McNevin 2013; McNevin 2011; Ticktin 2011), these are closest to my own research agenda.

Second, I also seek to make an original contribution to empirical research on the history of political struggles over migration and asylum in contemporary Germany. There are undoubtedly many possible socio-geographical contexts that could have been chosen to engage with these issues. However, there are various reasons why I considered the context of the FRG particularly useful

for my research project. Apart from my own familiarity with the field of (pro-)Refugee politics in Germany, which allowed me to effectively carry out the required fieldwork and quickly delve into the nuances of the empirical material, there were also some substantial aspects that made this context particularly instructive. Most notably, existing research on the German context offers a good example of the lack of historical perspectives characteristic of most contributions in this field. This research paints a false image of (pro-)Refugee struggles as relatively spontaneous, unorganised, short-lived phenomena without any longstanding impact. This can be illustrated by the fact that most current research contributions focus on the protest dynamics that have arisen from the ‘long summer of migration’ in 2015 (Tsianos 2016, 19; Georgi 2016; Hess et al. 2016). What is oftentimes missing, however, is an examination of the historical emergence and long-term trajectories of (pro-)Refugee struggles, including their impact on the contemporary moment. Even those contributions that show some historical awareness tend to begin their inquiries in the early 1990s, most notably the political developments and conflicts around the 1993 ‘asylum compromise’ (Luft and Schimany 2014; interface 2005; Ünsal 2015; Jakob 2016). Put differently, the events and protests that shaped (pro-)Refugee struggles before the 1990s are usually not taken into consideration and often even ignored and forgotten. While the history of immigration and asylum politics in Germany received much attention with regards to the policy level (Bade 1994; Herbert 2001; Poutrus 2016; Schuster 2003; Gibney 2008), the simultaneously existing (pro-)Refugee protests have barely received any academic attention.² Thus, my project to explore the *pre-history* of the current cycle of (pro-)Refugee struggles in the FRG is useful not only to fill an historiographical gap, but also to stress the advantages of a theoretical and analytical framework that is attentive to the socio-historical embeddedness of this type of oppositional politics.

The German context is also instructive due to the great significance of political discussions and conflicts about ‘coming to terms with the past’ [Vergangenheitsbewältigung/Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung] regarding Germany’s Nazi legacy, which are well known beyond the German context and serve as resources for claim-making in numerous ways (Rothberg 2009; Dolgoy and Elżanowski 2018; Goldberg and Hazan 2015; Jansen 2015). Against this background, hegemonic political debates about national identity, citizenship, migration, and asylum have always been linked to debates about collective memory. This also raises interesting questions about the relevance of questions of national history and collective memory as symbolic points of reference for (pro-)Refugee actors as well. In other words, the German context offers a fruitful basis to examine how (pro-)Refugee actors demonstrated a historical consciousness, that is, actively related to and

² This is less the case activism of the so-called ‘guestworker’ generation. See: (Bojadžijev 2008)

situated themselves within a wider configuration of ‘German history’. Within the field of critical migration research, there is a relatively young strand of research on this relation between migration and memory politics (Glynn and Kleist 2014). My research project is especially suited to further shed light on this nexus of migration, memory, and national identity from an activist perspective.

In the first two chapters, I develop the theoretical perspectives which will guide the empirical analysis that follows. *Chapter 1* begins with an outline of Hannah Arendt’s conceptualisation of the paradox of rights Refugees are faced with in the context of the nation-state order. I then discuss the above-mentioned three paradigms that, in contrast to Arendt, attempt to take Refugees seriously as political actors. While I embrace many aspects of *Critical Citizenship Studies*, I also argue that these should remain attentive to Arendt’s reflections on the contradictions of the nation-state to fully grasp the ambiguities of (pro-)Refugee protest. In order to bridge the gap between Arendt’s structural and more recent agential perspectives, I propose to draw upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu. *Chapter 2* therefore introduces main concepts of his relational state- and field-theoretical approach. Using his conceptualisation of the nation-state as principle of orthodoxy, I focus on how (pro-)Refugee actors both criticise and contest the national doxa but also draw upon it as a resource. In *Chapter 3*, I provide an outline of my chosen research design as well as the process of data collection, selection, and analysis. This will include a discussion of the paradigms of critical discourse and frame analysis as well as reflection on the challenges of conducting archival research.

Chapter 4 offers the historical context for the analysis of the (pro-)Refugee struggles in the subsequent chapters. My focus in this chapter lies on the post-war German doxa and the particular relevance of memory politics as an especially important terrain on which German national identity has been constructed. I look at orthodox constructions of the FRG as a post-Nazi and Western European nation with an ethno-nationalist outlook and bring these discursive constructions into dialogue with the post-war history of German asylum politics. Moreover, I provide an overview of the actors involved in early pro-Refugee struggles throughout the 1980s. In the following three chapters, I then take a closer look at the ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors made their claims both against and within the national doxa. These chapters centre around framings of the state, society, and the notion of representation respectively. In *chapter 5*, I turn to the ‘inner’ politics of (pro-)Refugee struggles by looking at the practices of political (self-)representation as well as their role for internal tensions and conflict dynamics. In *chapter 6*, I discuss different framings of the German state in its relation to the German Nazi past and as an international actor. The primary focus here lies on the differences in the ways in which the (pro-)Refugee actors constructed the state as their primary object of critique. In *chapter 7*, I go on to look at the attempts to mobilise

solidarity with Refugees among the wider public audience. This analysis will focus on different framings of ‘the public’ which either directly use national terms or seek to bring in broader socio-political categories. In a conclusion, I provide a summary of the overall line of argument and key research findings and touch upon future research objectives.

Finally, a brief note on terms. First, the term ‘Refugee’ is not used in a prescriptive or legal sense but refers to any non-citizen groups or actors who refer to themselves or are referred to in ways that focus on their forced migration and/or danger in case of their deportation. At the heart of my research project is thus a variety of groups who are in different legal positions and have different national and ethnic backgrounds such as legally recognised refugees from Iran, Turkish asylum-seekers in danger of being extradited, or legally ‘tolerated’ Sinti and Roma in danger of being deported. To distinguish this term from the legally specified notion of ‘refugee’, the term is written with capital ‘R’ throughout the thesis. I decided against broader categories such as ‘migrants’ or ‘immigrants’ as all the actors looked at here put forward claims about specific needs for protection due to the forced aspect of the migration in question. However, the term Refugee does at times also include those migrants who are oftentimes referred to as ‘irregular’ migrants as their residence in a country is either categorised as illegal (McNevin 2011), or ‘undesirable’ (Squire 2009). The term thus includes both those legally recognised as refugees and all those who are de facto not able to claim rights on the basis of their citizenship as they do not (de facto) belong to any political system that would be able to protect them (Agier 2011, 18). In order to make clear when I am talking about the legal status, I use the term ‘refugee’ instead of Refugee. I use the term ‘asylum-seeker’ for all persons applying for asylum in the FRG, independent of the actual outcome of the asylum procedure. Second, I am looking at both self-organised Refugee protest and activism in support of Refugees, which is why I am using ‘(pro-)Refugee’ as a shorthand for referring to both sets of actors. Lastly, given the focus on the German context, the vast majority of archival sources used was written in German. In those cases where I translated terms and phrases into English, it is noted in the reference. However, various terms lose some of their meaning in the process of translation relevant to the points made here. In these cases, I also provide the original word used in brackets.

1 Theoretical Perspectives I: Arendt and her Critics

At the heart of this thesis are the various ways in which (pro-)Refugee struggles are embedded in the nation-state order, both in general and in the particular context of the Federal Republic of Germany in the decade and a half prior to the so-called ‘asylum compromise’ of 1993. By embeddedness, I do not mean a process of official integration and recognition, but rather the problem that even those actors who are strongly excluded from, or actively reject, a given political order are nonetheless (that is, *ex negativo*) bound to and confronted with that very political order. My perspective is informed by and draws upon discussions around the condition of rightlessness and the politicisation of the figure of the Refugee. The main argument I advance in this chapter is that although Refugee activism has become a crucial subject of academic inquiry over the past decades, it is especially the inescapable embeddedness of their strategies within the nation-state order that needs to be taken into account more explicitly and scrutinised in more depth. It is only in light of this embeddedness that the challenges and dilemmas of (pro-)Refugee activism can be analysed in a sufficient manner.

To develop this argument, I start with a brief reconstruction of Hannah Arendt’s analysis which catapulted the figure of the Refugee into the centre of political theory and social research in the mid-20th century (1.1). My focus lies on how she conceptualises the problem of rightlessness as a fundamental aspect of the very contradictions and limitations of modern nation-state power. Reading the figure of the Refugee therefore both as product of and problem for the nation-state order already outlines important conditions and challenges for the struggle for Refugee rights and recognition. Simultaneously, this primary concern with the plight of Refugees as an expression of the structural problems of the nation-state order also raises the problem of depoliticising Refugees through the misrecognition of their actions. In a second step, I will therefore critically examine three major attempts to (re-)politicise the figure of the Refugee and ascribe Refugee protests major global political relevancy (1.2): first, approaches inspired by the political philosophy of Agamben; second, Hardt and Negri’s notion of the ‘multitude’ that inspired the ‘autonomy of migration’ (AoM) paradigm; and third, Rancière’s theory of political agency that was taken up by Engin Isin and other scholars of Critical Citizenship Studies (CCS). This discussion will show that these approaches indeed played an important role in (re-)orientating academic research towards questions of Refugee struggles; however, they tend to romanticise the political agency or relevancy of Refugees because they lose sight of key insights about the structural conditions of these struggles thematised by Arendt. In the final section of this chapter, I will seek to resolve this

tension by taking seriously the ‘agential turn’ of these approaches, especially the central insight of CCS that Refugee protest should be regarded both within and beyond the confines of the nation-state and its regime of citizenship, while making a case for the significance of an Arendtian approach so as to avoid the risk of romanticisation (1.3).

1.1 Hannah Arendt: The Refugee as Product and Problem of the Nation-State

Hannah Arendt has become a major reference point in social and political theory (Benhabib 2004; Gündoğdu 2015; DeGooyer et al. 2018; Schaap 2011; Schulze Wessel 2017; Volk 2010a; Hayden 2008; Hayden 2009; Schulze Wessel 2015; Balibar 2013; Balibar 2004) and the social sciences more generally (Marrus 2002; Skran 1995; Zolberg 1983; Morris 2002) regarding any discussions on Refugees. This is unsurprising insofar as Arendt indeed set the scene for an intellectual reflection on the paradoxes of modern democratic societies that puts the figure of the Refugee at its centre. As she famously states in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Refugees are ‘the most symptomatic group in contemporary politics’ (Arendt 1973, 277). In order to understand their relevance, it is important to keep in mind that Refugees and the problem of state- and rightlessness are not her primary object of inquiry but rather become important as part of her analysis of the rise of totalitarianism in Europe (Arendt 1973). One crucial step in this development is the disintegration of the European order of the nation-state in the early 20th century as the context in which ‘the refugee’ enters the political stage of modern history. It is especially this socio-historical contextualisation which makes Arendt’s account so compelling: instead of side-lining them as marginal, negligible figures, Arendt puts the stateless at the centre of the modern nation-state order. In her account, it becomes impossible to make sense of the specific legal and political status of Refugees without analysing the foundations and contradictions of modern nation-states that create this status in the first place. Simultaneously, the figure of the Refugee is introduced as the key for understanding the main limitations and contradictions of the nation-state.

Before taking a closer look at Arendt, I want to briefly consider the historical changes that have taken place since Arendt’s writing. In the aftermath of World War II, the world could witness the rise of various legal institutions established for the protection of human rights in general and rights

of refugees in particular.³ Thus, ‘a plethora of treaties and conventions now exists and can be called into play to assert the rights of noncitizens, and in some cases be tested in international and/or national courts’ (Morris 2011, 4). Moreover, some authors have interpreted this fundamental process of Europeanisation as an important symptom for the decline of the nation-state and the emergence of a post-national constellation in this region (Soysal 1994; Jacobson 1997). These points should not be overstressed, however. First, such a perspective neglects the political relevance of conflicts between European governments over the overall dynamic of European integration (particularly with regards to immigration), so that it seems to be more productive to assume a complex articulation of processes of national reproduction, inter- and transnationalisation (Brenner 1999; Buckel and Wissel 2010). Moreover, such a focus tends to disregard that legal improvements concerning the rights of some cannot be equated with the overall improvement of the legal, political and social position of all non-citizens. Thus, even though various changes have taken place, the nation-state ‘remains the principal unit of membership’ (Morris 2011, 4). Against this background, I do not propose to take Arendt’s perspective as a blueprint, but rather as a starting point that offers us key insights into the tensions of the nation-state order.⁴

Refugees and the Condition of Rightlessness

Arendt’s conceptualisation of terms such as ‘refugee’, ‘rightlessness’, and ‘statelessness’ goes beyond the confined area of legal questions. She uses the terms ‘refugee’ and ‘stateless’ – at least when she refers to the time and context since the First World War – largely synonymously. She

³ Most prominent among them is the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 which also refers the plight of refugees. Article 14(1) states that everyone has the ‘right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution’ and Article 15 includes the universal ‘right to a nationality’ (Art. 15(1)) stating that no one ‘shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality’ (Art. 15(2)). Even though the UDHR is not legally binding in itself, its influence on other international acts and contracts cannot be overestimated. Furthermore, the experience of the two world wars also led to the establishment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as well as the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees which was agreed in Geneva in 1951. Among other things, this convention includes the principle of ‘non-refoulement’ which states that “no Contracting State shall expel or return (‘refouler’) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (Art. 33(1)). Other internationally binding contracts and conventions for the protection of refugee and stateless persons followed such as the Additional Protocol to the 1951 Refugee Convention in 1967.

⁴ It should be highlighted at this point that it is not possible within the limits of this thesis to provide an encompassing reconstruction of all aspects of Arendt’s work that form the wider theoretical and historical horizon within which her reflection on the figure of the Refugee is situated. Most notably, I will not expand in detail on her analysis of the historical emergence of totalitarian regimes in the early 20th century, but rather focus on the structural conditions which made the emergence of such regimes and, as a crucial part of that process, the creation of conditions of statelessness possible. For more detailed engagements with these other aspects, see: (Stoetzler 2007; Volk 2015; Robitzsch 2019; Balibar 2013; Bernstein 2018; Benhabib 2010).

herself only addresses the differentiation of ‘refugees’ and ‘stateless persons’ in a footnote: ‘The many varied efforts of the legal profession to simplify the problem by stating a difference between the stateless person and the refugee [...] were always defeated by the fact that “all refugees are for practical purposes stateless”’ (Arendt 1973, 281). In other words, her focus lies less on the question whether a person would legally be allowed to go back to her home country as on the question of whether s/he is practically able to do so. Gündoğdu remarks in this regard that Arendt’s term of the ‘stateless’ or ‘refugee’ refers ‘not only to those who formally lost their nationality but also those who could no longer benefit from their citizenship rights’ (Gündoğdu 2015, 2). Benhabib therefore points out that the concept is a shorthand for a variety of groups:

One becomes a refugee if one is persecuted, expelled, and driven away from one’s homeland; one becomes a minority if the political majority in the polity declares that certain groups do not belong to the supposedly “homogeneous” people; one is a stateless person if the state whose protection one has hitherto enjoyed withdraws such protection, as well as nullifying the papers it has granted; one is a displaced person if, having been once rendered a refugee, a minority, or a stateless person, one cannot find another polity to recognize one as its member, and remains in a state of limbo, caught between territories, none of which desire one to be its resident. (Benhabib 2004, 55)

The term ‘refugee’ can thus refer to people who hold different kinds of juridical status and includes all those who have either formally or functionally no access to rights as citizens (DeGooyer et al. 2018, 6). But even this expansion of the notion of Refugee that includes not only their official legal status but also their practical living conditions is not sufficient for Arendt. On the contrary, Arendt is especially interested in examining what implications the situation of statelessness has for questions of political agency and belonging. More precisely, she observes how the situation of stateless people goes beyond various ‘losses’ associated with basic human needs by resulting in the ‘loss of a polity itself’ which implies the ‘loss of a community willing and able to guarantee any rights whatsoever’ (Arendt 1973, 297). In other words, Arendt argues that Refugees’ loss of access to rights is essentially an expression of their exclusion from the political community that can offer and guarantee these rights. In a world organised by nation-states, those who are unable to be (re-)integrated into the nation-state system, that is, (de facto) stateless people, find themselves in the situation of rightlessness.

For Arendt, this loss of political integration and protection not only becomes a key source of the plight of Refugees, but also significantly impedes their ability to act autonomously and collectively, and to make claims in the public space in a relation of equality to others. Thus, Arendt’s concept of rightlessness should not be misunderstood as a strictly legal term as it is crucially linked to processes of depoliticisation due to essential inequality. She remarks:

The human being who has lost his place in a community, his [sic!] political status in the struggle of his time, and the legal personality which makes his actions and part of his destiny a consistent whole, is left with those

qualities which usually can become articulate only in the sphere of private life and must remain unqualified, mere existence in all matters of public concern. (Arendt 1973, 301)

Put differently, according to Arendt, people who are put into a position of ‘mere existence’ are not able to be political actors. The fundamental problem she sees is that they are not in a position of equality, which is the pre-condition for being active as recognised participants in the public sphere. Following this perspective, Gregory Feldman points out that what ‘renders people “migrants” is their lack of possibility to constitute (and reconstitute) the places they inhabit in direct negotiation with others inhabiting those same places’ (Feldman 2015, xii).

This inability to act politically goes hand in hand with another challenge: the dependency on those institutions who control the boundaries of the political community, as well as on those groups who are located within these boundaries and are therefore able to act politically. Thus, expelled from ‘a place in the world which makes opinions significant and actions effective’ (Arendt 1973, 296), Refugees become fundamentally dependent on the goodwill of the political community in which they currently reside, but to which they do not belong. In the absence of formal procedures, this can only be arbitrary. This does not mean that all Refugees find themselves in necessarily terrible material circumstances, nor that they are entirely deprived of the capacity to engage in any form of individual or collective action. The problem is rather that their living conditions and their room for manoeuvre are constrained by circumstances that are beyond their control, as they are shaped by the arbitrary decisions of others: ‘Privileges in some cases, injustices in most, blessings and doom are meted out to them according to accident and without any relation whatsoever to what they do, did, or may do’ (Arendt 1973, 296). The paradoxical result is that Refugees need the support and charity of citizens, which at the same time makes them dependent on and vulnerable to their actions: ‘[t]he prolongation of their lives is due to charity and not to right’ (ibid.). Hence, what Arendt offers here is a critical reflection on what Gündoğdu calls the ‘vulnerability of lives that are dependent on the favors, privileges, or discretions of compassionate others’ (Gündoğdu 2015, 95). The problem Refugees therefore face is that they are being reduced to passive and dependent figures, as part of ‘the huge and nameless crowd’ (Arendt 1973, 287) that has no say in the public affairs of the society they now live in.

Arendt did not simply describe and problematise these deprivations: she saw them as expressions of fundamental tensions in the global political order of nation-states. Thus, in order to understand why Arendt thinks that the lack of access to rights as a citizen implies rightlessness, we have to understand key characteristics of the nation-state system. It is only in this context that the particular political relevance of the figure of the Refugee becomes clear.

The Contradictions of the Nation-State

Arendt's problematisation of the nation-state is not purely abstract, but historically embedded in an analysis of the paradoxes of European modernity. Both its emergence and development are seen as products of a complex interplay between state power, nationalism, and territorial conflicts in the context of modern capitalism and colonialism.⁵ Even though her writings do not include a full-fledged theory, a comprehensive genealogy or a historic reconstruction of the emergence of the nation-state, her analysis does offer a clear critique of the latent tensions inscribed into the nation-state as a form of political organisation, as well as of their violent manifestation in different historical contexts – ranging from the French Revolution to the regimes of colonial imperialism, European fascism, German Nazism and Stalinism (Arendt 1973).

At the heart of these tensions lies the coupling of two ideas whose traditions analytically stand in opposition to each other: the idea of the state and the idea of the nation. The historically older and (to some degree) less problematic concept for Arendt is the concept of the state, which she sees as being historically 'derived from centuries of monarchy and enlightened despotism' (Arendt 1973, 230). Following Stoetzler, Arendt's notion of the modern state is developed 'in highly idealist and normative terms' (Stoetzler 2007, 136) insofar as her notion is closely connected to the idea and ideal of the rule of law. Arendt indeed sees the state's 'supreme function' as 'the protection of all inhabitants in its territory no matter what their nationality, [...] supposed to act as a supreme legal institution' (Arendt 1973, 230). In that way, the state represents and manifests a universalistic idea of rights, for its protective role is demarcated by its territory alone, not the people on that territory (Benhabib 2004, 54; Bernstein 2018, 16).

In contrast to the state, which is structured by an inclusive logic, the nation is based on a particularistic and exclusive principle. According to Arendt – and in contrast to nationalist discourses and popular myths – nations are a much younger phenomenon than states, as they only entered history when 'peoples had acquired a consciousness of themselves as cultural and historical

⁵ Despite her emphasis regarding the importance of imperialism, various authors have already concluded that 'what Arendt understood to be the exact nature of imperialism – its dynamics, novelty, and content – as well as its precise connection to totalitarianism, however, are neither straightforward nor free from contention' (Mantena 2010, 86). Two points of debate should be stressed. First, there has been wide discussion on Arendt's idea of the 'boomerang effect' which establishes a more or less direct connection between colonialism and the Holocaust (see: Grosse 2006; Malinowski and Gerwarth 2009). Second, Arendt's analysis has been criticised from a postcolonial perspective for reproducing racist views (Moruzzi 1991). As Mantena rightfully points out: 'Arendt can be legitimately charged with Eurocentrism; but this has less to do with any purported idealization of European imperialism than the underlying fact that, for all her critical attention to it, imperialism appears only as an episode of and for European history. That is, Arendt's interest in imperialism is limited to how imperialism impinges upon, and indeed radically disrupts, the moral and political coordinates of Europe, and has very little to say in terms of its specific and catastrophic legacy for the ex-colonial world' (Mantena 2010, 103–104).

entities, and of their territory as a permanent home' (Arendt 1973, 230; see also: Gellner 1983; Smith 2010; Anderson 2016). According to this understanding, the nation refers to 'the dominant group with its culture, language, and shared history living in a bounded territory' (Bernstein 2018, 16) and is thus 'attached to the soil' (Arendt 2005, 208). It therefore relates to the territory in a more exclusive way than the state does: only those who are born on or otherwise attached to the sovereign territory enjoy basic rights guaranteed by the state.

Even though the nation-state seemed to offer a solution to a severe social problem⁶, Arendt regards it as inherently problematic from the beginning, as it is unable to fulfil its own promise of equality. More precisely, the constellation which Arendt refers to as the 'Western national trinity of people-territory-state' (Arendt 1973, 232) leads to the entanglement of the rights that a person can claim as a human being and the rights of the citizen. She sees this contradiction most clearly pronounced in the founding moment of the modern nation-state, the French Revolution and its *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* in 1789 (ibid., 229) that, according to her interpretation, equated and confused the idea of universal rights with the idea of national sovereignty in the sense that the 'same essential rights were at once claimed as the inalienable heritage of all human beings and as the specific heritage of specific nations' (ibid., 230).

A mediation between a particularistic notion of equal rights based on the principle of nationality and the universalistic idea of the 'Rights of Man' only becomes possible through an encompassing picture of the 'family of nations': human rights are universal because every human is a citizen of a nation-state. Principally, the nation-state system is also able to take care of those exceptional cases where individuals are not protected by a state through the institution of asylum, which (temporarily) reintegrates a person into the national trinity of 'people-territory-state', until the person can be either repatriated or naturalised. Put differently, the nation-state can provide for people who fall outside the realm of national protection as long as they constitute *exceptional* cases and are, thus, few in number. While Arendt assumes that this contradictory relation remained latent in the early modern period of the 18th and early 19th century, she attempts to reconstruct

⁶ In Arendt's understanding, the coupling of these two ideas and the emergence of the nation-state as the dominant form of political organisation in Europe was the result of two related crisis tendencies: the end of monarchic rule and the disintegrating effects of capitalism. Both these tendencies not only affected the material cohesion of the social order, but also entailed severe crises of political legitimacy. While in the pre-modern period, absolute monarchs had claimed to represent the 'common interest' of all their subjects, modern-capitalist societies were characterised by the intensification of socio-economic disparities and political conflicts. Against this background, the idea of national unity established itself as the predominant form of constructing a 'common interest' under increasingly fragmentary and instable social circumstances: 'Nationalism, then, became the precious cement for binding together a centralized state and an atomized society, and it actually proved to be the only working, live connection between the individuals of the nation-state'. (Arendt 1973, 230–231). In other words, the nation offered a solution to the socio-structural problem of 'keeping society together' under capitalist conditions (Volk 2010b; R. H. King and Stone 2007; Balibar 2013).

how it became manifest in the context of modern imperialism and the accompanying dissemination of the nation-state as the global political order of the late 19th and early 20th century. For her, it was particularly in the moments of mass displacement and denaturalisation in the aftermath of World War I that the nation-state's inherent inability to guarantee equality came to light most clearly. Moreover, the dissolution of multi-national empires and the subsequent formation of new nation-states at that time left vast groups of minorities stranded without citizen protection in their former home countries. This mass displacement led to the breakdown and (de facto) abolition of the right of asylum, which had been the 'only right that had ever figured as a symbol of the Rights of Man in the sphere of international relationships' (Arendt 1973, 280). Unable to 'repatriate' Refugees as they had no country to go back to or no country that would accept them (ibid., 283) and unwilling to naturalise them as they were seen as violations of the principle of national homogeneity (ibid., 284-285), European nation-states moved towards a solution which has ever since shaped the global migration and asylum regime: the detention of Refugees. Arendt therefore argues that the system of detention camps that had emerged in Europe in the first half of the 20th century is no aberration of the nation-state order, but instead emerges out of its very essence. As she puts it, it became obvious by the mid-20th century that the internment camp 'was the only "country" the world had to offer the stateless' (ibid., 284). Since the 'old trinity of state-people-territory' did not apply to them, the European nation-states began to primarily deal with Refugees as political threats and bureaucratic problems (Malkki 1995). Arendt observes:

The conception of human rights, based upon the assumed existence of a human being as such, broke down at the very moment when those who professed to believe in it were for the first time confronted with people who had indeed lost all other qualities and specific relationships-except that they were still human. The world found nothing sacred in the abstract nakedness of being human. (Arendt 1973, 299)

Because of the above-described position of rightlessness, the Refugee personifies the broken promise of equality in the nation-state system. We now turn to Arendt's analysis of why Refugees find themselves in this situation in the first place and why this is a problem both *of* and *for* the nation-state.

The Perplexities of (Human) Rights

Overall, then, Arendt provides a theoretical explanation for the condition of rightlessness which is centred around the contradictions of the modern nation-state system. Despite (exceptional and temporary) measures such as the right to asylum to hinder its emergence, Arendt nonetheless sees rightlessness as necessarily inscribed into the texture of the nation-state. Quite similar to Adorno's

and Horkheimer's thesis that the Enlightenment turns against itself and enters into a process of 'self-destruction' (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, xvi), she stresses that the problem of rightlessness is no exception from an otherwise working nation-state system, but, to the contrary, originates from the exclusionary principles of that very system. As Butler summarises, 'for structural reasons, the nation-state produces mass numbers of refugees and must produce them in order to maintain the homogeneity of the nation it seeks to represent, in other words, to support the nationalism of the nation-state' (Butler 2012, 121).⁷ Arendt therefore observes that 'it appears that every political event since the end of the first World War inevitably added a new category to those who lived outside the pale of the law' (Arendt 1973, 277). Thus, Refugees' rightlessness and subsequent dependency on 'compassionate others' is a product of the above-described tension between the universalistic logic of rights and the particularistic logic of national sovereignty:

The Rights of Man, after all, had been defined as 'inalienable' because they were supposed to be independent of all governments; but it turned out that the moment human beings lacked their own government and had to fall back upon their minimum rights, no authority was left to protect them and no institution was willing to guarantee them. (Arendt 1973, 291–292)

What is most compelling about Arendt's work is that it also attempts to show how the structural contradictoriness of human rights (their necessity *and* impossibility in the contemporary nation-state order) impacts on the lived experience and political practices of those affected by its exclusionary dynamics. The most famous example in her own work is the following remark:

We became aware of the existence of a right to have rights (and that means to live in a framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinions) and a right to belong to some kind of organized community, only when millions of people emerged who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation. (Arendt 1973, 296–297)

In other words, because it is only as citizens that people can actually enjoy any rights, 'the one right that is really needed, and missing, is the right to be a citizen of a nation-state, or at least a member of some kind of organized political community' (DeGooyer et al. 2018, 9). This paradoxical dictum is of the utmost importance insofar as it illuminates how the political fight for Refugee rights and recognition is for structural reasons characterised by practical dilemmas. On the one hand, Refugees need to claim their human rights as they were forced into a condition which Arendt calls the 'abstract nakedness of being human and nothing but human' (Arendt 1973, 297). On the other

⁷ In the words of Balibar, the nation state 'rests upon the formulation of a *rule of exclusion, of visible or invisible 'borders,'* materialised in laws and practices. Exclusion – or at least unequal ('preferential') access to particular goods and rights depending on whether one is a national or a foreigner, or belongs to the community or not – is thus the very essence of the nation-form. As a structure, the nation-form produces and perpetuates a differentiation that it must defend' (Balibar 2004, 23). Accordingly, as Honig and Ngai have argued for the case of the USA, the notion of 'the foreigner' is central to the repeated re/founding of the nation. However, the nation-form as such is not static, but permanently transforms itself according to changes in the conditions of its existence (Balibar 2004, 21). For contemporary elaborations of the relationship between nation-states and minorities, also see: (Schuster and Solomos 2002; Appadurai 2006).

hand, the only institution which in the modern world that is capable of granting, guaranteeing, and protecting these rights is the (sovereign) nation-state, thus indicating the limitations of an abstracted, detached notion of human rights. Thus, Arendt highlights that in a world organised by nation-states, the ability to act politically and claim civil and political rights depends on the official recognition as political actor which, in turn, is closely connected to the guarantee of those very same rights. However, insofar as the modern nation-state is based on the principle of national homogeneity⁸ defined by territorial and/or biological exclusiveness, it tends to become the very institution that excludes Refugees from their ability to claim their human rights. In other words, the only guarantor for human rights in the nation-state system is the nation-state itself whose legitimacy, following Arendt, is based on the prioritisation of the nation over universal laws: ‘the nation had conquered the state, national interest had priority over law’ (Arendt 1973, 25). The ironic result is that it is precisely in the moment a person has nothing to fall back upon but her most basic rights as a human being (i.e., ‘human rights’ or ‘the Rights of Man’), that it proves most difficult to claim and exercise these rights – she finds herself in the predicament of rightlessness (see also: Moyn 2010; 2010; 2014; Brown 2004; Perugini and Gordon 2015). But this does not lead to a situation where the political agency of Refugees becomes entirely futile. Rather, Arendt’s dictum of ‘the right to have rights’ helps us understand that Refugees as political actors are confronted with the predicament that the only institution able to grant them rights tends to deny them this status. Thus, Arendt’s analysis of the condition of rightlessness and the perplexities of rights still sets the stage for Refugees as political actors by emphasising the symbolic and material conditions for the very possibility of their political action, and the political pitfalls that result from the lack of such conditions. Her emphasis on a ‘right to have rights’ thus urges us to think about the practical consequences this paradoxical configuration has for the possibilities, limitations and challenges of Refugee protest and pro-Refugee solidarity.

It is important to emphasise, however, that Arendt does not offer any clear solutions to this problem. As Benhabib remarks, it is ‘one of the most puzzling aspects of Hannah Arendt’s political thought that, although she criticized the weaknesses of the nation-state system, she was equally skeptical [sic] about all ideals of a world government’ (Benhabib 2004, 61) and her ‘more experimental, fluid, and open reflections on how to constitute democratically sovereign communities, which did not follow the model of the nation-state, were not explored further’ (ibid., 64). In short, while Arendt introduces us to a fundamental paradox, namely, that the nation-state

⁸ I come back to this point in the next chapter. It is important to note that this problem concerns both ethnic and civic variants of nationalism. For an in-depth discussion, see: (Yack 1996; 2012; Hearn 2006).

is both problem and solution at the same time for those who lack (de facto) access to citizenship, she does not present us with a satisfactory alternative. Given such a bleak view as well as the lack of a theoretical and political alternative, Arendt has oftentimes been accused of depoliticising Refugees as passive victims who because of their total exclusion from the nation-state are incapable of political action (Gündoğdu 2015; Rancière 2004; Schaap 2011). This criticism needs to be taken seriously if one seeks to rely on an Arendtian approach on the politics of Refugee self-organisation and (pro-)Refugee solidarity. In the following section, I will therefore discuss three major attempts to (re-)politicise Refugees, both with and against Arendt.

1.2 (Re-)Politicising the Figure of the Refugee

In order to (re)politicise the Refugee, various attempts have been made to reformulate or find an alternative to Arendt's approach. I will now turn to the major ways in which this has been done by focusing on approaches drawing on Agamben's 'homo sacer' project (1.2.1), Rancière's notion of 'dissensus' and Isin's related concept of 'activist citizenship' (1.2.2), and the notion of the 'autonomy of migration', inspired by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's thinking (1.2.3). I have selected these three – at times overlapping⁹ – currents not only because they have gained a dominant position in contemporary critical migration research (Atac, Rygiel, and Stierl 2017; Fleischmann 2020; Nyers 2006; Nyers and Rygiel 2012; Tyler and Marciniak 2013), but also because they can be used to reflect on major pitfalls both of research that too closely replicates Arendt's perspective on the one hand, and research which is too agency-focused on the other.

Response 1: Agamben and the Refugee as *Homo Sacer*

One of the most influential thinkers who has contributed to the renewed usage (and criticism) of Arendt's reflections on the figure of 'the Refugee' today is Giorgio Agamben. His main argument is that the centuries-old history of occidental politics has culminated in the creation and generalisation of a form of life which, having lost all political and legal protection, is reduced to its bare existence and therefore exposed to violence and death (Agamben 1995; 1998). Similar to Arendt's notion of the 'abstract nakedness of being human' (Arendt 1973, 299), he asserts that this phenomenon of 'bare life' has entered the foundations of the political order with the historical

⁹ It is important to note that there have been several attempts to combine different aspects of these approaches (Atac, Rygiel, and Stierl 2017; Fleischmann 2020; McNevin 2011; Stierl 2018). However, as we will see on the following pages, these approaches have different core assumptions which makes their separate discussion analytically valuable.

emergence of the modern nation-state order. In contrast to Arendt, however, Agamben dissolves the clear-cut distinction between the citizen and the Refugee altogether. For him, human rights are not only a mockery regarding the dehumanised situation of Refugees but are, above all, ‘the original figure of the inscription of bare natural life in the legal-political order of the nation-state’ (Agamben 1995). According to this view, the totalitarian potential is therefore no longer located only in the emergence of the Refugee as the citizen’s ‘other’ but inscribed in the concept of citizenship itself.

Compared to Arendt, this is an even more radicalised conceptualisation as the danger of falling back to ‘bare life’ is not restricted to Refugees, that is, those who are radically excluded from citizenship regimes, but is instead seen as a ubiquitous reality.¹⁰ Against this background, Agamben goes as far as to claim that ‘we are all virtually *homines sacri*’ (Agamben 1998, 115). However, while Agamben depoliticises the notion of citizenship, he simultaneously attempts to re-politicise the notion of the Refugee in whom he locates the only possibility of revealing and interrupting the violence of citizenship regimes. As a mass phenomenon, the figure of the Refugee puts modern sovereignty into crisis as s/he ‘causes the secret presupposition of the political domain – bare life – to appear for an instant within that domain’ (ibid., 131). One reason why Agamben sees the Refugee as particularly important in this regard lies in the Refugee’s (literal) presence in the camp which is ‘*the space that opens up when the state of exception starts to become the rule*’ (ibid., 168-169 – original emphasis). Whereas, in Agamben’s understanding, Arendt hopes to dissolve the dehumanised situation of Refugees through their integration into a political community (through the ‘right to have rights’), Agamben refuses citizenship altogether and inverts the problem: it is not the Refugee who has to gain citizenship but the citizen who has to ‘acknowledge the refugee that he himself is’ (Agamben 1995). Thus, for Agamben, Refugees are not political subjects in the sense that they are active agents, but they reveal the grey zones between inclusion and exclusion through their *sheer existence*. ‘The refugee must be considered for what he is: nothing less than a limit concept that radically calls into question the fundamental categories of the nation-state’ (Agamben 1998, 134). It is this role of the Refugee as a limit concept – and this role alone – that makes him/her the ‘central figure of our political history’ (Agamben 1995). Any transformative political potential they have is a passive ontological potential: what makes them political is not what they do but what

¹⁰ In contrast, Arendt claims that the problem of rightlessness is not only harrowing for the Refugees themselves but can also backfire upon the majority of the people living in a state, those who understand themselves to be a legitimate part of the nation: ‘The clearer the proof of their inability to treat stateless people as legal persons and the greater the extension of arbitrary rule by police decree, the more difficult it is for states to resist the temptation to deprive all citizens of legal status and rule them with an omnipotent police.’ (Arendt 1973, 290)

they are and is thus independent of action. Any active political struggle for citizenship, on the other hand, is completely meaningless as it cannot lead to any better position – even as citizen one still remains a virtual *homo sacer*, the camp is the ‘biopolitical paradigm of the modern’ as such (Agamben 1998, 117).

Agamben’s approach has been widely influential in critical migration studies (Diken 2004; Diken and Laustsen 2002; Dosthossein and Nasimi 2020; Edkins 2000; Loick 2016; Walters 2008; Buckel and Wissel 2010; Karakayalı 2011; Vaughan-Williams 2009; 2015). The account is often used as a theoretical lens through which to look at the dehumanising effects of detention and Refugee camps (De Genova 2010) and border controls (Buckel and Wissel 2010) on the living conditions of contemporary Refugees. For instance, Rajaram and Grundy-Warr (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2004; see also: Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007) use the concept of *homo sacer* in order to describe the living conditions of irregular migrants in detention camps in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Similarly, De Genova and Peutz (De Genova and Peutz 2010) conceptualise the violent ramifications of current ‘deportation regimes’ based on Agamben’s notions of sovereign power and the state of exception. It has also been used in order to theorise the political role of Refugees, not as active agents, but rather as a passive mass potential for rupture. Soguk, for instance, develops the notion of ‘insurrectional migrants’ whose ‘subalternity [...] inspires the insurrectional politics, for their structural and discursive political and economic vulnerabilities demonstrate the very hierarchies that capture them and commodify their bodies in the first place’ (Soguk 1999, 306–307).

Even though Agamben’s work has certainly been important for the critical evaluation of migration politics, it should also be viewed with caution. Apart from the problem that the rhetoric equation of contemporary refugee camps (and virtually many more spaces) with concentration camps has a strong potential to ‘seriously banalize the Nazi genocide’ (Mezzadra and Neilson 2003), an Agambian perspective depoliticises Refugees even more than Arendt’s. What is missing, is how Refugees collectively respond to these systems of exclusion and dehumanisation. Even though Agamben stresses Refugees’ political nature, this (re)politicisation does not go beyond Arendt who already presents us with the problematic and even potentially destructive nature of the Refugee vis-à-vis the nation-state order, but rather reframes what it means to be political in the first place. While Arendt focuses on the structural conditions that deny Refugees to be political actors in the first place, Agamben obscures any possibility of agency and instead focuses on ‘the political’ in structural terms and thus decouples it from any idea of action. This is also echoed in the empirical literature informed by Agamben’s political philosophy: although authors such as Soguk frame Refugees as strictly confrontational political figures (‘insurrectional’), they ironically identify this

notion of political rupture with the condition of absolute victimhood. While it is indeed crucial to do justice to the desperate living conditions of Refugees, it would be insufficient to restrict the lived experience of Refugees to this moment of victimisation. As William Walters puts it, ‘refugees and migrants are depicted as *cast* into spaces at the limit of the law, *contained* outside the system of legal protection, *trapped* in zones of indistinction. [...] they are subjects to whom all manner of things are done, [...] but rarely agents in their own right’ (Walters 2008, 188 – original emphasis). Moreover, as McNevin rightly points out, even though the deaths at borders can at times be viewed as political ruptures, most often they remain unremarkable in the sense that the people in question are simply framed as lawbreakers (McNevin 2011, 98).

What is missing in this strand of critical scholarship are conceptual and analytical tools to account for the fact that Refugees are not reducible to passive objects, but instead have an active role in shaping their lives, even under extremely precarious conditions. Thus, even though Agamben explicitly ascribes Refugees a political role, his account fails to theorise possibilities of transformative politics in which Refugees have an active part. I would even argue that Agamben falls behind Arendt: for Agamben’s attempt to re-politicise the Refugee is actually no politicisation at all on Arendt’s terms because, for her, being political is directly connected to action. The differences in the respective understanding of ‘the political’ are developed on the ground of theoretical assumptions which can be legitimately interrogated and criticised on their own terms. When it comes to the *empirical analysis* of the complex dynamics and challenges of (pro-)Refugee protest, however, Agamben’s approach is much less fruitful because it forecloses any possibility of collective action.

Response 2: Hardt and Negri and the Autonomy of Migration

A second way of (re)politicising Refugees, which is in many respects the opposite to Agamben’s views (Walters 2008, 188), can be found in the *Autonomy of Migration* (AoM) literature (Andrijasevic et al. 2005; Casas-Cortes et al. 2015; De Genova 2017; Kaneti 2015; Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013; Rodríguez 1996; Bojadžijev and Karakayalı 2010; Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe 2007; Scheel 2013b). This body of literature is inspired by the tradition of autonomist Marxism that puts a strong focus on the autonomy of workers and other social struggles and has been particularly shaped by the work of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (Hardt and Negri 2003, 2004; Negri 2008; Pieper et al. 2007). However, even though there are shared assumptions, the autonomy of migration is evoked by a multiplicity of theoretical and activist approaches, which is why Walters proposes not to regard it as a coherent theory but an ‘emergent ethos operating within thought

spaces that bridge academic and activist milieus' (Walters 2008, 188; see also: Scheel 2013a, 579; Nyers 2015, 27).

According to Hardt and Negri, irregular migrants are an integral part of the antagonism between what they call 'Empire' and 'multitude'. While the former refers to the global constellation of power relations that are part of the reproduction of the nation-state system as a form of oppression, the latter is the name given to all those social and political movements that resist their oppression by the former: 'A specter haunts the world and it is the specter of migration. All the powers of the old world are allied in a merciless operation against it, but the movement is irresistible' (Hardt and Negri 2003, 213). The most important characteristic of this multitude is its capacity for self-determination and self-liberation. Thus, in contrast to Agamben's emphasis on the ubiquitous reach and totalitarian potential of modern power, Hardt and Negri assume that autonomous social and political movements are still possible. Despite their recognition of nation-states' attempts to oppress the multitude, they assert that '[t]hese imperial practices in themselves [...] still do not touch on the political tension that runs throughout the spontaneous movements of the multitude. *All these repressive actions remain essentially external to the multitude and its movements*' (ibid., 397 – original emphasis). What is most interesting about Hardt and Negri's approach is their attentiveness to the subversive, empowering potential of irregular border crossing practices: 'Autonomous movement is what defines the place proper to the multitude. Increasingly less will passports or legal documents be able to regulate our movement across borders. [...] Through circulation the multitude reappropriates space and constitutes itself as an active subject' (ibid., 397). However, they do not think that the autonomy of migration is political as such. In contrast to Agamben's assertion that the sheer existence of *homines sacri* such as Refugees makes them political, they assume that 'the action of the multitude become political primarily when it begins to confront directly and with an adequate consciousness the central repressive operations of Empire' (ibid., 399). In other words, the active confrontation of regimes of oppression is seen as necessary for social practices to become political acts.

It is this emphasis on the autonomy of social movements that has received much attention in critical migration studies. Papadopoulos et al. make the case that an AoM-perspective goes against understanding migration simply as a response to structural conditions which have traditionally been studied in the form of simplistic push-pull-models (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos 2008). The underlying assumption is that no matter how restrictive existing forms of border control are, people will always attempt and eventually manage to cross borders. It is because of their ability to subvert the power of nation-state's border control regimes that Refugees and irregular migrants are understood as political actors. This does not mean that we can consider

mobility independent or in isolation from socio-political, cultural or economic structures but should instead understand it as ‘a creative force within these structures’ (ibid., 203) and even as ‘a constituent force in the formation of sovereignty’ (ibid., 202). Thus, what is specific about the AoM approach is to reinterpret the oftentimes desperate attempts to cross nation-state borders in search for a more humane life as genuine acts of political subversion or, as De Genova et al. put it, as a ‘heterogeneity of insistent, disobedient, and incorrigible practices of appropriating mobility and making claims to space’ (De Genova, Garelli, and Tazzioli 2018, 240).

The positive rhetoric of migrant agency and autonomous mobility has been particularly subject to extensive criticism. In her review of *Escape Routes* (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos 2008), for instance, Sharma (2009, 474) asserts that the authors approach the activities of migrants in a way that ‘smacks of objectification and romanticization’. What is made invisible within such a conceptual framework, she further states, are the messy, precarious and vulnerable conditions under which refugees and illegalised migrants are forced to live (ibid.). Similarly, Stierl states that AoM approaches ‘cannot account for this network of migration governance and its horrible productivity’ (Stierl 2017, 229). Other authors argue that this romanticisation is accompanied by a certain simplification of the complex and messy living situations of irregular migrants. For instance, Benz and Schwenken argue that AoM literature runs the risk of ‘conceptualising the complex relationship between state, migration and society by simply juxtaposing the state versus migrants as an autonomous (collective) subject’ (Benz and Schwenken 2005, 370). What these critiques foreground is that AoM approaches tend to lose sight of the symbolic and material force of the nation-state and its official culture in shaping the living conditions and influencing the political activities of Refugees. Moreover, I would argue that they tend to overemphasise the moment of uncontrolled, oftentimes invisible border crossing, while underestimating the moment of organised struggles in the public sphere. This also prevents AoM-inspired research from taking into consideration the significance of political alliances between Refugee activists and those activists with a more privileged position within the majority society and its citizenship regime. In this context, AoM-approaches have also been criticised for misrepresenting the acts of migrants as necessarily and fundamentally positioned *against* the existing order. McNevin, for instance, rightly criticises these assumptions for not considering the possibility that Refugees might not want to denounce the order as such, but in many situations are forced to improve their situation within the given system, using the language of citizenship and belonging (McNevin 2011, 97; 2013, 194; see also: Ticktin 2011).¹¹ We have already seen that Arendt was aware of these complexities and

¹¹ Roberts (2017, 762) describes such ‘conflation of agency with resistance’ as a more general problem of the New Left.

attempted to express them using the paradoxical notion that, in order to fight against the exclusionary dynamics of the nation-state, you also need to be part of or have a stake within it. By contrast, AoM approaches tend to construct a clear-cut distinction between who is included and who is excluded that does not apply to the numerous ways in which migrants are positioned within the dominant social, political, and legal order. This resonates with more general critiques of Hardt and Negri's theoretical approach as being based on an 'overly prescriptive transformative agenda' (McNevin 2011, 96) that homogenises and projects the interests of the social actors in question 'for the sake of a radical politics' (McNevin 2011, 96; see also: Walters 2008, 190).

It should be noted that such criticism does not apply in equal measure to all strands of AoM literature. In recent years, for instance, various contributions have emerged whose analysis of the possibilities and limitations of political autonomy and resistance is more nuanced. For example, there has been a strong focus on documenting and examining how migrants negotiate their various situations actively, thereby emphasising the problems of simply ascribing characterisations of 'victimhood' (Bojadžijev and Karakayalı 2010; Scheel 2013a; Walters 2008, 190). These analyses take a clearer account of the restrictive contexts people find themselves in and rather try to illuminate the 'persistence of moments of autonomy of migration within ever more pervasive regimes of border and migration control' (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015, 85). Nonetheless, these approaches are still based on the assumption that migrant autonomy eventually retains, and they remain rather ignorant towards the question of organised political struggles and alliances within the public sphere.

Overall, then, the main achievement of AoM literature is to turn the attention to migrant subjectivity and political agency – a tendency which, as we have seen in the introduction, has been neglected for decades in 'mainstream' migration research. However, the main problem of this paradigm is that it tends to lose sight of the key insights provided by Arendt: the undeniable force of the nation-state order and its migration control regime, as well as its enduring impact on the form and content, the possibilities, and challenges facing (pro-)Refugee struggles.

Response 3: Rancière and Critical Citizenship Studies

Another major attempt to (re)politicise the figure of the Refugee has been put forward by Jacques Rancière who explicitly criticises both Arendt and Agamben for robbing 'bare life' of any form of agency (Rancière 2004; 2010, 63–67). For Rancière, the idea of democracy does not refer to an institutionalised legal order, but to the power of those without any qualification to rule except for their absolute lack of any qualification – a power which he calls 'the part of those who have no

part' (Rancière 2004, 305). Political subjects are therefore defined through their 'capacity for staging scenes of dissensus' (Rancière 2010, 69), that is, the process in which these subjects question and thereby reconfigure the way in which people are counted as part of the political community. It is the enactment of such moments of dissensus which turns the 'uncounted' subject into a political subject. Against this background, Rancière perceives Refugees not as the dehumanised subject of human rights but contends instead that 'the Rights of Man are the rights of those who have not the rights that they have and have the rights that they have not' (ibid., 67). Hence, these rights are not the rights of those who are 'the mere mockery of all rights' (ibid., 63) as they lack any ability to enact them, but instead the rights of those who can stage dissensus against the denial of these rights and who, in staging this dissensus, truly have these rights as they enact them (ibid., 71). This moment of disruption, for Rancière, is the essence of politics. On the other hand, when the actors of disruption are recognised and integrated into the dominant order as equals, they become part of what he calls 'the police', that is, the opposite of politics: 'Equality turns into the opposite the moment it aspires to a place in the social or state organization' (Rancière 1999, 34). In contrast to Arendt, Rancière thus does not presuppose equality to be a political subject but rather regards the struggle for equality as the truly political action. In other words, it is exactly the deprived situation of Refugees that makes them the true political subject the moment they question the order that dehumanises them, i.e., the moment of dissensus.

This Rancièrian approach has largely become the theoretical basis for research on migrant activism in the field of *Critical Citizenship Studies* (CCS) which focuses on a more activist (re)interpretation of the notion of citizenship through its analysis not only as a formal right, but as a political practice and performative act (Ataç, Rygiel, and Stierl 2016; Della Porta 2018; Fleischmann 2020; Isin 2009; Isin and Nielsen 2008; Monforte and Dufour 2013; Walters 2008). Heavily influenced by Rancière's political philosophy, major CCS-proponent Engin F. Isin has developed the notion of 'acts of citizenship' which refer to 'those deeds by which actors constitute themselves (and others) as subjects of rights' (Isin 2009, 371). Similar to Rancière, Isin positions himself against citizenship in the sense of a legally ascribed status and emphasises instead the performances of 'activist citizens' who, on the basis of their legal exclusion, 'actualize a rupture in the given, [...] enact the unexpected and unpredictable' in 'acts of citizenship' (ibid., 380). According to Isin, '[b]ecoming political is that moment when the naturalness of the dominant virtues is called into question and their arbitrariness revealed' (Isin 2002, 275). It is the moment in which the dominated and the oppressed constitute themselves as political, thus having a creative and transformative impact on the very foundations, norms and values of the political order (Isin and Nielsen 2008, 39). As Nyers and Rygiel put it, CCS thus examine 'how the practice and experience of mobility – even when

restricted – is itself productive of new forms of citizenship and of being political’ (Nyers and Rygiel 2012, 1). Here again, the Refugee is not seen as depoliticised because:

rather than viewing non-citizens as always being, by definition, external to the political community and Other to the citizen subject, this reading instead shows a co-constitutive relationship between noncitizen migrants and citizens. Placing mobility and migrant perspectives in the foreground has the power to disrupt this binary in favor of a more fluid exchange between subject positions. (Nyers and Rygiel 2012, 10)

A particularly important contribution of this body of literature thus lies in its emphasis on the specific ways Refugees collectively organise themselves and make political and legal claims in the public sphere despite their lack of legal citizenship. In so doing, they extend classic notions of citizenship and produce new forms of subjectivity (Ataç, Rygiel, and Stierl 2016, 532; Isin and Turner 2007; Nyers 2006), enacting citizenship ‘from below’ (Nyers and Rygiel 2012, 9). In contrast to Agambian and many AoM¹² views, CCS do not completely dismiss the notion of citizenship but try to regard the processes of citizenship in a more complex manner. Here, citizenship is ‘not only a category of governance, control, and exclusion. It is not exclusively exclusionary or about enacting strict boundaries between self and other. Citizenship can exceed the embrace of the state in ways that can provide deep challenges to the sovereignty-territory-citizenship nexus’ (Nyers 2015, 32). Such a perspective complements Arendt’s notion of the perplexities of rights in a productive manner as it takes the problem of (formal) rightlessness seriously without depoliticising Refugee action. It thus emphasises the ‘ambivalence’ (McNevin 2013, 199) at stake in Refugee struggles insofar as they are permanently confronted with the task of manoeuvring the boundaries of citizenship regimes and using their limited resources to extend these boundaries, both in symbolic and practical ways. As Turner emphasises, a main contribution of CCS lies in recognising how ‘the radical potential of marginalised acts can open up ways of conceptualising existing regime of citizenship and new political constellations which work both *within* and *beyond* citizenship’ (Turner 2016, 151 – original emphasis). This insight is also guiding my analysis throughout this thesis insofar as the ways in which Refugee and their support actors engage with and ‘handle’ this ambivalence is a main point of inquiry. My focus lies specifically on the ambivalent positioning of protest actors vis-à-vis the *symbolic order* of the nation-state.

At the same time, however, CCS (and works following the key assumptions of Rancière in general) are in danger of reproducing two major problems. First, there is a danger of reducing ‘acts of citizenship’ to very specific moments of dissensus. Most notably, in reducing the notion of being political to those subjects who find themselves (de facto) excluded from the legal order, these

¹² This is where AoM and CCS differ most strongly as ‘many proponents of the AoM perspective regard attempts to widen citizenship as ultimately flawed, concerned that they would under-acknowledge its inherently exclusionary dimension’ (Ataç, Rygiel, and Stierl 2016, 533).

approaches fail to recognise the complexity and interwovenness between the legal order and the subjects who ‘have no part’. Such an overemphasis on sudden moments of rupture and contestation fails to take account of what happens both before and after the expression of dissensus, such as the social and political conditions *for* and the nation-state’s reaction *to* these performances. To consider these moments, however, seems to be highly important insofar as they are part of the power structures against which the political subjects act in the first place. Second, there is the tendency to completely discredit forms of established, institutionalised politics (‘police’ in Rancière’s terminology) so that long-term organisation processes and wider solidarity movements from within the nation-state order are either ignored or discredited. As Marchart rightly criticises Rancière: ‘Because much emphasis is given to the moment of *disruption* of a given regime, the moment of *politics*, the other side of such disruptive moment, that is, the form and status of a given regime’s *institution*, remains a constant problem’ (Marchart 2011, 132). This problem also has serious implications for the question of Refugee activism and struggles as it obfuscates the wider social, political, and historical embeddedness of such struggles. This leads to a lack of engagement with the dynamic relationships between self-organised Refugees and their supporters and allies, which are inescapably imbricated with the nation-state as a foil that both oppresses and provides the background resources (material and symbolic) for their political action. Taken together, such tendencies again run the risk of romanticising the struggles to Refugees as ‘new’ (and in some ways ‘better’) forms of citizenship, without actually solving Arendt’s paradox. Instead, struggles under conditions of rightlessness are epitomised as true politics without any change in the precarious situation of the actors in question. This is a sleight of hand insofar as it renames a problem as a solution: rightlessness becomes something positive in that it creates true political subjects. Such a move can be seen, for instance, in Schaap’s conclusion:

From an Arendtian perspective, the struggle of the *sans papiers* for the right to have rights can only be understood as a struggle for liberation that would establish the conditions of possibility for the actualization of freedom. In itself, their struggle lacks the world-disclosing aspect that inheres in political action because it is primarily instrumental: it is concerned with winning the civil rights necessary for them to participate in politics. Rancière, in contrast, enables us to recognize the struggle of the *sans papiers* as exemplary political action precisely because they make something of the right to have rights. This perspective enables us to thematize the constitutive dimension of the action of the *sans papiers* that eludes a consistent Arendtian analysis. By acting as if they have the rights that they lack, the *sans papiers* actualize their political equality. (Schaap 2011, 39)

While it is indeed important to criticise Arendt’s dismissal of the political agency of Refugees and to recognise the many ways in which different political futures are envisaged in Refugees’ claims, their struggles themselves should not be mistaken for the goals which they are seeking to achieve – goals which are oftentimes much less ‘radical’ and ‘subversive’. Even though Refugee struggles are undoubtedly political and under specific circumstances indeed capable of confronting the

regulatory and repressive power of the nation-state, they are simultaneously characterised by a more conventional strategic dimension insofar as the aim remains to create more durable and secure forms of equality and political participation.

1.3 Refugee Protest and Solidarity Within and Against the Nation-State

Concepts like ‘homo sacer’ as well as perspectives of the Autonomy of Migration and Critical Citizenship Studies offer different attempts to (re-)politicise Refugees in spite (and at times because) of their context of rightlessness. They have proven a highly valuable intervention that has opened up an entire field of research on Refugee activism: they convincingly demonstrate that it is important to recognise – against Arendt’s understanding – the deeply political nature of Refugees trying to escape and fight against their precarious living situation in which they are often trapped.

However, in so doing, they run the risk of overlooking Arendt’s most fundamental insight into the paradox of the Refugee condition, which concerns the perplexities of rights: the problem that those who find themselves outside the ‘trinity of people-territory-state’ nonetheless need to claim legal protection and political recognition within that nation-state order that fundamentally denies them this very protection and recognition. Hence, instead of rejecting Arendt’s insights into the problem of rightlessness, it would be more fruitful to bring these insights into dialogue with frameworks centred more explicitly around the moment of political agency and organised struggles. While it is essential to take Refugee subjects seriously as political actors who – despite their lack of citizenship – demonstrate again and again new ways of creating political communities, performing citizenship, and claiming rights as equals against all odds, it is also essential to recognise the fragility of such moments of ‘disruption’, as well as the specific social and political circumstances that either support or prevent these practices. In other words, it is important to recognise the ways in which such protests, such ‘acts of citizenship’, remain embedded in the very structure of the nation-state against whose exclusiveness these acts are directed. Taking Arendt’s paradox seriously thus leads us to a focus on what McNevin terms the ‘ambivalence’ (McNevin 2013) of such struggles that ‘both challenge and reinscribe existing political identities’ (McNevin 2007, 668). As long as the nation-state remains the highest guarantor of rights, Refugees (and those who support them) need to relate back to this nation-state order. As Tyler and Marciniak put it, ‘in order to effect material changes, protestors are compelled to make their demands in the idiom of the regime of citizenship they are contesting’ (Tyler and Marciniak 2013, 146).

Even though Arendt does not offer a more systematic analysis of Refugees as political actors, her analysis of the perplexities of rights in the nation-state order is a valuable starting point if we want to take the dilemmas of Refugee struggles seriously. Going forward, there are two points I want to stress. First, the paradoxical relation between human and civil rights that Arendt locates at the core of contemporary nation-state orders brings to the fore that these struggles always have to engage with the national context in which the protest takes place as well as with the nation-state order as such. More specifically, what can be learned from Arendt's work is that we have to understand Refugees' political actions in their complex relations to the nation-state order – an order which does not simply lose its power or ceases to exist the moment it is contested, but rather influences and even redefines this contestation in various ways. This includes the fight against as well as extension of the specific legal and political categories imposed by a specific nation-state and subsequent material living conditions as well as the (potential) criticism of the nation-state order more broadly. A closely related feature is the importance of the wider public sphere, the dominant cultural tropes and media discourses as a terrain in which oppositional social and political movements need to intervene in order to achieve their goals. Hence, the significance of *public* activities such as organising demonstrations, holding speeches, or publishing leaflets, newsletters and claims of responsibility.¹³ This, however, means that these actors, at least to some degree, must anticipate and allow themselves to be subjected to the routines and rituals constitutive of hegemonic public discourses and established politics to be recognised. For instance, their public performance is usually shaped not only by their own political views, but also by the alleged views and expectations of those who are aimed at as the main addressees of the public performance (e.g., 'the movement', 'the public sphere', 'the population', 'the state', etc.).

Second, Arendt's analysis of rightlessness highlights the condition of vulnerability and dependence which makes the positions and actions of allies extremely important on various levels. Not only are allies relevant as translators in numerous forms – directly regarding different languages but also indirectly regarding the symbolic-cultural context –, but also as providers of material resources and political influence which could be redistributed to the Refugee cause, including provision of legal support, access to media discourses or the ability to exert pressure on state actors. In this sense,

¹³ This is not to say that transformative politics only takes place in the public sphere. On the contrary, as Ataç et al. rightly point out, 'diverse forms of migrant struggles exist that take place in less publicly visible spaces, in the micro-political spectrum of everyday life and the private sphere. *Invisible politics* emerge out of everyday practices in the context of border and integration regimes' (Ataç et al. 2015 – original emphasis). Papadopoulos et al. state that '[i]mperceptible politics changes society without ever intending it' (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos 2008, 75). While I do concur that such invisible politics are political and incredibly relevant for the question of political agency of the individuals who are acting, I do think that structural political transformation are not possible outside the public realm which should therefore not be side-tracked.

Refugee struggles cannot be understood independently of the networks of solidarity that might at times even be a precondition for the political impact of Refugees' collective action. Simultaneously, these often unquestioned privileges have rightly been criticised as manifestations of paternalism that further reproduce the marginalised and dependent position of Refugees. In this sense, these hierarchical relations between Refugees and allies need to be critically examined to understand the main conflict dynamics and political challenges by which (pro-)Refugee movements have been characterised from the beginning. In short, Arendt's observation that for structural reasons Refugees become dependent on 'compassionate others' from within the nation-state order invites us to critically reflect on the hierarchical and conflictual political relationship between Refugees and those who seek to act in solidarity with Refugees. Thus, I argue that it is not enough to look at Refugee protest on its own, but we must take account of the whole setting in which it is embedded, including the institutional terrain, potential for solidarity, and the relationship between Refugees and their supporters. As we will see in the empirical analysis, all these aspects strongly influenced the organisational processes, protest activities and conflict dynamics in the early (pro-)Refugee movement in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The main challenge that remains is to transfer Arendt's main insights into a theoretical framework that is more attentive to the role of political agency and struggle while also considering the significance of the state's material and symbolic power in shaping the conditions of their possibility. In the chapter that follows, I propose a Bourdieusian reformulation of Arendt's main perspectives as a fruitful way of accomplishing this theoretical objective.

2 Theoretical Perspectives II: Bourdieu

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the theoretical basis for analysing (pro-)Refugee protest faces various problems. Having discussed Arendt's seminal work on the vulnerable and desperate situation of Refugees as a result of their negative embeddedness within the nation-state system, I moved on to engage with more contemporary approaches – especially those inspired by the paradigms of 'homo sacer', approaches looking at the 'autonomy of migration' and Critical Citizenship Studies. These contributions rightly criticise Arendt for her lack of reflection on the political agency of Refugees. However, I demonstrated that these approaches show a tendency to side-track and overlook the social, political, and legal conditions of the political agency they focus on. Arendt, by contrast, remained much more attentive to the challenges that result from Refugees' precarious and paradoxical relation to the nation-state system. I thus concluded that the most useful way of dealing with the above-discussed problems of objectification, homogenisation and romanticising was to reformulate Arendt's insights with a stronger agency-oriented and relational perspective to focus more clearly on the ambiguities and ambivalence (McNevin 2013) of (pro-)Refugee protest.

With this chapter, I seek to make use of Bourdieu's critical theory of state power and political struggles to further conceptualise the embeddedness of (pro-)Refugee struggles into the material and symbolic framework of the nation-state. More specifically, the aim is to reformulate core insights developed by Arendt about the structural contradictions of the nation-state and the practical dilemmas of those involved in struggles for Refugee rights and against restrictive citizenship and migration regimes. While Bourdieu's elaborations on the regulatory and classificatory power of the nation-state come close to an Arendtian perspective, Bourdieu also moves beyond it in various regards that allow a bridging with protest-focused approaches on migration. Most importantly, he is much more attentive to the relational character of political power and thus offers us a theoretical framework that is more differentiated than Arendt's tendency to reproduce the depoliticisation of those affected by political exclusion. For that purpose, Bourdieu develops a theory of the political field that puts the state as the 'principle of orthodoxy' at its centre. In order to denote the position of political actors within this wider field, he suggests analysing their material access to different forms of capital that are required in order to participate and gain influence within the field, and their symbolic relation to the nation-state, its official doxa and other actors in the political field. Against this background, Bourdieu suggests situating political actors alongside a gradual continuum of orthodoxy-to-heterodoxy vis-à-vis the

state as its centre. This state- and field-theoretical approach is useful in order to overcome the limitations in contemporary theoretical discussions regarding the political agency of Refugees as it consistently seeks to mediate between structure- and agency-oriented approaches. It also helps us to transfer Arendt's insights about the paradoxes of (non-)citizenship and political (in-)action into a more nuanced relational terrain that is attentive to the complex relation between Refugees, political allies, state institutions and the 'wider public' in a specific national context. Finally, such a framework takes into account the symbolic dimensions of both the nation-state order and the political struggles within and against that order.

The chapter proceeds in three steps. First, I introduce the key ideas of Bourdieu's wider theory of social reproduction to demonstrate that he offers a conceptual toolkit to understand public protest (2.1). Second, situated in this wider theoretical perspective, I look at Bourdieu's understanding of the nation-state as a 'principle of orthodoxy' and 'central bank' of social integration and classification, but also as the terrain and object of social and political struggle (2.2). Third, I draw conclusions on how Bourdieu's perspective and concepts inform and structure my subsequent analysis of (pro-)Refugee struggles in the FRG (2.3).

2.1 Social Reproduction and Protest

Pierre Bourdieu is best known for his elaborate thinking about the intricacies of the social reproduction of inequalities under conditions of formal equality (Bourdieu 1977; 1998a; 2010; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). While some praise him for bridging the gap between subjectivist and objectivist theories of the social world (Swartz 1997; Yang 2014), others criticise him for not leaving enough room for social change, as well as for reproducing a supposedly deterministic causality between structure and agency (Crossley 2002b; King 2000; Boltanski 2011; Celikates 2018). In this section, I largely concur with the former reading showing how Bourdieu's field-theoretical approach offers a useful approach to the constitutive role of political struggle, particularly in the context of his theorisation of moments of crisis in contemporary societies. The main difference from primarily subjectivist or autonomist accounts of struggle, such as those accounts of Refugee activism that I discussed in the previous chapter, is that Bourdieu remains attentive to the constitutive role of the configuration of social structures and institutions. Thus, even though Bourdieu does not offer us a blueprint for understanding social protest, I want to illustrate how his writings offer a rich theoretical and conceptual 'toolkit' for making sense of protest dynamics at the intersection of agency and structure.

The Conundrum of Social Reproduction

Fundamental to Bourdieu's whole work is an astonishment about the everyday reproduction of the social order under conditions of fundamental injustice. Instead of beginning with the question of why people oppose and protest against experiences of injustice and suffering, he seeks to shed light on the conditions that obstruct and prevent such practices from occurring. To that end, he outlines a theory of practice which takes both social structures and individual agency into account and focuses on the problem of the subjective internalisation of objective social relations. While this perspective does recognise that sheer (physical) force exists in modern societies, it points strongly towards the symbolic dimension at work in any form of domination. As Bourdieu states:

It is the prereflexive agreement between the objective structures and the incorporated structures, and not the efficacy of the deliberate propaganda of apparatuses or the free recognition of legitimacy by the citizens, which explains the - ultimately astonishing - ease with which, throughout history and apart from a few crisis situations, the dominant impose their domination. (Bourdieu 2000, 178)

Let us unpack the key ideas here. Bourdieu's most widely known concept to explain the 'agreement' between objective and incorporated structures is the notion of 'habitus', which he introduces to bridge the methodological dualism of the individual and society (Bourdieu 1977, 72–95; see also: 1998b, 8; 2010). It refers to the cognitive and embodied dispositions that structure our behaviour and ways of thinking and feeling, while simultaneously being structured by the context where it is developed. The key point is that the habitus is at the same time what he calls a 'structuring and structured structure', that is, a mediating force that operates within the subject and plays a crucial role in reproducing relations of domination and subordination. In other words, the ways in which we perceive, describe, conceptualise and speak about the world are structured by our objective position within the social world (Bourdieu 2000, 168–172). Simultaneously, they are productive in the sense that they 'establish' the things that are perceived, described and spoken about in the first place, by reproducing the conditions of their incorporation. This directly leads to his main idea of explaining the seemingly 'natural' or 'intuitive' reproduction of social structures: reproduction obtains to the extent that objective social divisions are structurally homologous with mental schemata, that is, when the subjective perception and experience of the objective world replicates the key parameters and principles of that world (Bourdieu 1985, 728; 2010; Müller 2014, 24; Swartz 1997, 65):

The categories of perception of the social world are, as regards their most essential features, the product of the internalization, the incorporation, of the objective structures of social space. Consequently, they incline agents to accept the social world as it is, to take it for granted, rather than to rebel against it, to counterpose to it different, even antagonistic, possibilities. The sense of one's place, as a sense of what one can or cannot 'permit oneself,' implies a tacit acceptance of one's place, a sense of limits ('that's not for the likes of us,' etc.), or, which amounts to the same thing, a sense of distances, to be marked and kept, respected or expected. (Bourdieu 1985, 728)

When this homology between the world and our expectations of it works smoothly, that is, when ‘a quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization’ (Bourdieu 1977, 164) exists, Bourdieu argues that the symbolic internalisation of the objective order becomes the primary force of its reproduction. To analyse this process, he suggests using the concept of ‘doxa’ as well as the cognate concepts of ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘heterodoxy’. The doxa refers to the universe of the undiscussed and undisputed, that which is ‘self-evident’. It is the ‘uncontested acceptance of the daily lifeworld’ which ‘represents the most radical form of acceptance of the world, the most absolute form of conservatism’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1994, 73–74). Coming back to Bourdieu’s main conundrum of why the social order tends to reproduce itself quite smoothly, we can now describe it as the workings of the doxa. Simply put, as long as the objective conditions of the world interlink closely with the dispositions and perceptions individuals apply to the world, the world itself remains unquestioned. In this sense, Bourdieu identifies a close connection between questions of material and symbolic power. He goes as far as to assert that ‘acts of submission, of obedience, *are* acts of knowledge and recognition’ (Bourdieu 2000, 172).¹⁴ According to Bourdieu, then, the doxastic internalisation of social power and domination works through the erasure of the latter from the realm of reflection and discussion. More specifically, Bourdieu argues that the key mechanism at play here is the misrecognition of domination as domination by those who are dominated (and those who dominate as well):

The adherence expressed in the doxic¹⁵ relation to the social world is the absolute form of recognition of legitimacy through misrecognition of arbitrariness, since it is unaware of the very question of legitimacy, which arises from competition for legitimacy, and hence from conflict between groups claiming to possess it. (Bourdieu 1977, 168)

Because domination is accepted as legitimate and/or even naturalised instead of being regarded as an arbitrary imposition, it remains unrecognised as domination. For instance, if domination appears to be natural, it is not being recognised as domination in the first place but rather as an inevitable aspect of human life. In such a state of mind, then, those affected by domination are likely to accept their subjugated social position. Bourdieu refers to this phenomenon as ‘symbolic violence’ (ibid., 192). In most situations, Bourdieu would argue, we barely have a choice but to misrecognise domination as domination because our dispositions of perceiving and judging the world we inhabit are the product of the incorporation and internalisation of the objective

¹⁴ It is important to note that this symbolic aspect is – by definition – inscribed into any form of capital which is why he also talks about symbolic capital as a meta capital which is ‘any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value’ (Bourdieu 1994, 8).

¹⁵ Depending on text and translation, Bourdieu uses both ‘doxic’ and ‘doxastic’. Going forward, I use the more commonly taken ‘doxastic’.

structures of that world. For as long as the social world conforms to our expectations of it, we tend not to question it.

Constant Struggles and Moments of Crisis

If Bourdieu thought that we always had a ‘doxic relation to the social world’, then his potential for grasping protest or even change would indeed be dismal. However, this is not the case. We now turn to the ways in which Bourdieu imagines the world both in terms of reproduction *and* struggle. More specifically, Bourdieu expands his theoretical framework in three ways to incorporate agential and relational perspectives more systematically.

First, even though Bourdieu links the ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ world through the habitus, this link (i.e., the homology between objective and mental structures) is rarely ever complete. Overall, the concept of the habitus does not help us understand change but rather the reasons why social structures remain largely stable. As Mihai points out in this regard, by ‘limiting the range of possible futures we can pursue, *habitus* helps reproduce the very conditions whose product it is. In other words, in internalising the limits that objective structures set for our plans, we help reproduce those very structures. *Habitus* is thus a self-generative force, behind which there is no master puppeteer’ (Mihai 2016, 29 – original emphasis). Simultaneously, however, the conditions in which the habitus is formed and the later conditions in which it is expressed are never identical. The habitus is therefore also a creative force which is able to adapt to (small) changes (Bourdieu 1977, 78). Thus, because Bourdieu does not conceptualise social reproduction as a mechanical but rather dynamic process and moments of (re)production are never exactly the same, the concept of the habitus still leaves some place for change – even if only on a small scale.

Second, Bourdieu does not conceptualise the social world as one homogenous space within which each and every social actor is embedded in the same manner. Instead, he tries to take account of the complex division of labour and distribution of power in modern societies through the notion of ‘fields’ (Bourdieu 1996a; 1998a; 1994; Lahire 2014).¹⁶ His main argument is that societal formations are differentiated into various relatively autonomous microcosms, each of which having its own stakes, logic and rules and is not simply reducible to any other (Bourdieu and

¹⁶ Bourdieu mainly introduced his ideas on fields through empirical work which looked at a wide-ranging array of fields (from the ‘academic field’ (Bourdieu 1996b) to the ‘literary field’ (Bourdieu 1996a), the ‘field of power’ (Bourdieu 1998a), the ‘political field’ (Bourdieu 2009), the ‘juridical field’ (Bourdieu 1987), the ‘bureaucratic field’ (Bourdieu 1994), and several more). It is therefore important to note that Bourdieu himself has not developed encompassing theory of fields. Particularly the relationship between fields as well as the relationship between all fields to ‘the social space’, are not clear-cut. For both detailed reconstruction as well as application and critique of Bourdieu’s concept of fields see for example: (Albright, Hartman, and Widin 2018; Hilgers 2014).

Wacquant 1994, 97). More specifically, Bourdieu conceptualises the manifestation of hierarchical relations between social positions as resulting from the unequal distribution and accumulation of different forms of capital that are at stake in the respective field. It is crucial to emphasise that fields are only relatively autonomous, which means they also relate to each other and at times overlap. The actors operating in a field share what Bourdieu calls an 'illusio'.¹⁷ Although this concept tends to remain vague in Bourdieu's own work, it largely refers to the actors' 'investment in the game' by which the social interactions within that field are characterised (ibid., 98). In this sense, illusio is a particular kind of doxa that urges the different actors to recognise (either consciously or unconsciously) the 'rules of the game' and consider the game worth playing. At the same time, Bourdieu understands fields as strictly relational settings where the official 'rules of the game' become the permanent subject of conflicts and tensions. According to him, a field is a space of objective relations, 'structured according to oppositions linked to specific forms of capital with differing interests' (Bourdieu 2014, 20). In this sense, fields are 'arenas of struggle' (Swartz 2013, 59; Albright, Hartman, and Widin 2018). This characterisation of fields also implies that the reproduction of any given social structure is not an automatic process, but the result of ongoing struggles over the material and symbolic resources available and acknowledged within the particular field. Furthermore, Bourdieu offers conceptual tools to analyse the extent to which and the ways in which the doxastic underpinnings of a given field are challenged and contested. To that end, he develops the analytical distinction between 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' positions within the field (Bourdieu 1977, 159–171). While the former seek to defend the status quo and aim for its unquestioned reproduction by enlarging the realm of doxa, the latter aim for social change by transforming unquestioned assumptions into contested issues. It is important to emphasise that Bourdieu's distinction of orthodox and heterodox positions is not a normative but simply an analytical one. In other words, heterodox positions are not necessarily progressive but can contain various political positions. All these positions remain, however, connected through shared, unquestioned core assumptions, the illusio.

Third, Bourdieu offers more general reflections on the relation between social reproduction and social change. As this brief outline of Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' already demonstrates, Bourdieu 'recognizes a degree of conflict, struggle and [...] change as normal features of processes of reproduction' (Crossley 2003, 44). However, these 'everyday' forms of struggle and change do not necessarily touch upon the fundamental tenets of domination in social

¹⁷ Illusio can be understood as a specific form of the doxa. While illusio refers to the field-specific belief in the value of the 'game played' in a field, the doxa refers to unquestioned assumptions in more general terms. Throughout this thesis, I therefore focus on doxastic assumptions (Fröhlich and Rehbein 2014, 80).

spaces. As outlined above, doxastic relations to the social world obscure domination. Bourdieu therefore sees possibilities for protest and change primarily in moments of crisis:

The critique which brings the undiscussed into discussion, the unformulated into formulation, has as the condition of its possibility objective crisis, which, in breaking the immediate fit between the subjective structures and the objective structures, destroys self-evidence practically. It is when the social world loses its character as a natural phenomenon that the question of the natural or conventional character (*phusei* or *nomos*) of social facts can be raised. It follows that the would-be most radical critique always has the limits that are assigned to it by the objective conditions. Crisis is a necessary condition for a questioning of doxa but is not in itself a sufficient condition for the production of a critical discourse. (Bourdieu 1977, 168–169)

What this notion of objective crisis indicates is that Bourdieu remains sceptical about agential approaches that simply highlight the possibility of contingency and change without reflecting on the complex interplay between these tendencies and their objective conditions of possibility within a given socio-historical context. Thus, similar to his notion of social reproduction, he asserts that there needs to be a certain relation between objective and subjective moments for social change to actually occur. Put differently, moments in which social structures and subjective expectations do not align open up the possibility of challenging the existing configuration of power and domination, as the habitual acceptance of the world becomes impossible.

Responses: Social Movement Studies and the Pragmatic Turn

Bourdieu's approach is appealing as he manages to avoid both simplistic structuralist and voluntarist approaches and instead thinks about the complex interplay between social and political practices on the one hand, and the wider social fields within which they are situated, on the other. For this reason, even though far from being a prevalent point of reference, Bourdieu's theory of practice has been used frequently in the field of social movement studies (Ancelovici 2019; Crossley 2002a; 2002b; 2003; Eder 2015; Ibrahim 2013; 2015; Landy 2015; Samuel 2013; Walter 1990). Crossley proposes, for instance, to 'resituate' the observations made about social movement dynamics in numerous theoretical approaches 'within the context of the theory of practice outlined by Pierre Bourdieu' (Crossley 2002a, 191). Particularly dominant approaches regarding the mobilisation of resources in social movements as well as political opportunity structures¹⁸ could be integrated. Others have attempted to modify and apply some of Bourdieu's key concepts for the empirical analysis of contemporary social movements in different contexts. It is particularly the concept of 'fields' that has been acknowledged as most fruitful in this regard (Ancelovici 2019; Ibrahim 2013; Landy 2015). For instance, Crossley argues that protest dynamics can be understood by framing them in the context of 'protest fields' (Crossley 2002c) or 'fields of contention'

¹⁸ For an overview, see: (Della Porta and Diani 2006; Porta and Diani 2017)

(Crossley 2003) as well as by looking at how protest actors relate to and interact in different fields (Landy 2015). By characterising and analysing heterodox anti-capitalist movements as a distinct social field, for example, Ibrahim aims to ‘explain how the political socialization of activists within anarchist and socialist communities leads to a definite political distinction, which in turn leads to symbolic struggles within the anti-capitalist movement field’ (Ibrahim 2015, 52). In doing so, he is able to make sense of the heterogeneity of these struggles, which simultaneously cooperate and compete with each other. Closely related to and at times overlapping with such employment of ‘fields’ is the usage of ‘habitus.’ Walter, for example, employs the notion of ‘habitus’ to explain practices of Danish red-stockings feminists (Walter 1990) and Crossley introduces the ‘radical habitus’ to describe activism in terms of durable dispositions which are both generated in and generate new practices of protest (Crossley 2003, 50–51).

Nonetheless, this utilization of Bourdieusian perspectives does not come without critique. For instance, Crossley regards Bourdieu’s ‘focus upon short-lived crises’ (Crossley 2003, 61) as an underestimation of the significance and possibility of ongoing political opposition and contention. Instead, he suggests understanding crisis moments as nothing less than the exceptional accumulation and condensation of a much more comprehensive and enduring configuration of struggles: ‘crises are an amplification of undercurrents of protest and critique that are a more or less permanent feature of most contemporary societies’ (Crossley 2003, 49). However, while I find Crossley’s reading of Bourdieu as focusing on crises as event-like moments justified in some of his work, I want to argue that Crossley’s suggestions are already encapsulated within Bourdieu’s own work. The crucial point here is that Bourdieu does not simply speculate on the (im-)possibility of crisis and contention, but rather seeks to shed light on the broader societal conditions necessary for these processes to emerge and gain momentum. As I have tried to show above, Bourdieu therefore introduces different analytical tools (habitus, field, doxa) to think about the possibilities and limitations of protest and change. Furthermore, particularly in his later writings, Bourdieu turns his attention more explicitly to the possibilities and even omnipresence of crisis situations:

There will be no return to those social universes in which the quasi-perfect coincidence between objective tendencies and subjective expectations made the experience of the world a continuous interlocking of confirmed expectations. The lack of a future, previously reserved for the ‘wretched of the earth’, is an increasingly widespread, even modal experience. (Bourdieu 2000, 234)

Another influential critique of Bourdieu’s approach has been formulated by Boltanski who argues that Bourdieu’s notion of critique is informed by a strong hierarchy between everyday and scientific knowledge. This hierarchy is based on the assumption that the former is inseparably enmeshed within and constrained by societal power structures and thus incapable of seeing and going beyond these, whereas the latter is in a privileged outside position that allows to formulate a critique of

these power structures. As Boltanski puts it, Bourdieu tends ‘to explain virtually all of their [the social actors’, TJP] behaviour by the internalization of dominant norms’ (Boltanski 2011, 21) and ‘to increase the asymmetry between deceived actors and a sociologist capable [...] of revealing the truth of their social condition to them’ (ibid.). Instead, Boltanski suggests moving in the direction of a ‘pragmatic sociology of critique’ that turns its attention to the different ways in which actors formulate and enact critique in everyday and other social settings, based on the empirical observation ‘what actors do, the way they interpret the intentions of others, the way they argue their case, and so on’ (ibid., 23). To a certain extent, Boltanski makes useful suggestions to strengthen a relational, agency-focused research paradigm that takes the intellectual practices of social actors seriously. It would indeed be problematic and fruitless to carry out research that seeks to ‘prove’ the already postulated impossibility of critical thought and independent practice in social and political life. However, Boltanski’s critique appears to be based on a simplified, one-sided reading of Bourdieu’s work. Most notably, as I sought to show in this chapter so far, Bourdieu does in fact not ignore moments of agency, critique, and change, but rather seeks to analyse the *mediation* between agency and structure, change and reproduction, conformity, and critique. In this sense, Bourdieu is indeed attentive to the possibility and transformative power of critique. At the same time, however, Bourdieu argues that such an analysis requires the reflection upon the socio-political conditions under which critique becomes possible (or remains impeded).

Even though Bourdieu’s focus on moments of crisis does not imply the omnipresence of critical discourse and practice, it does ‘open up a space of freedom through the more or less voluntarist positing of more or less improbable possibles – utopia, project, programme or plan – which the pure logic of probabilities would lead one to regard as practically excluded’ (Bourdieu 2000, 234). It is in the focus on this ‘margin of freedom’ (ibid.) that Bourdieu can be most directly connected back to the critical perspectives on Refugee struggles outlined in the previous chapter: Refugees have always been part of those who fall outside the more or less smooth reproduction of the doxa – in their case because they fall outside the ‘trinity of nation-state-territory’ – and are therefore the most likely subjects to question that order. Their struggles can therefore disrupt ‘already defined orders, practices and statuses’ (Isin 2009, 384), thereby making alternative worlds possible. However, and this is where he offers us a theoretical perspective that remains open to Arendt’s observations, Bourdieu also stresses that ‘even the most subversive symbolic actions, if they are not to condemn themselves to failure, must reckon with dispositions, and with the limitations these impose on innovative imagination and action’ (Bourdieu 2000, 234–235). In other words, as heterodoxy, such alternatives must however account for and respond to doxastic assumptions and their orthodox defence.

Boltanski, on the other hand, tends to lose sight of the precarious social and political conditions of critique, which leads him to portray most social actors involved in discussions and disputes as ‘frankly critical’ (ibid., 26) actors that ‘made their demands, denounced injustices, produced evidence in support of their complaints, or constructed arguments to justify themselves in the face of the critiques to which they were themselves subjected’ (ibid., 27). However, as we will see in the empirical analysis, such an assumption of the primacy of critique is not helpful for explaining why even those actors involved in the political critique of the nation-state also tend to reproduce, or even explicitly embrace, certain elements of its official discourse. Nonetheless, what makes Boltanski’s research agenda intriguing is its attempt to analyse and systematise different modes of critique – an agenda which has not been developed and pursued in detail by Bourdieu. Thus, while I do not entirely share Boltanski’s theoretical positions, I nevertheless consider his attempt to develop a typology of different modes of critique useful. It is this part of Boltanski’s work which I will make use of during my examination of the different ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors formulated a critique of the German nation-state as presented in chapter 6.

A compelling project of mediating between Bourdieu’s ‘critical sociology’ and Boltanski’s ‘sociology of critique’ has been developed by Celikates (2019). On the one hand, Celikates largely agrees with Boltanski’s critique of Bourdieu insofar as he, too, identifies here a paternalistic approach that fails to take into account the possibility of critique outside of the realm of academic knowledge production (ibid., 19-67). According to Celikates, Bourdieu represents a model that ‘is primarily motivated by the idea of epistemic asymmetry, and correspondingly demands a *break* between the self-understanding of the agent, which is described as pre-reflexive, naïve and/or ideologically blind, and the critical and theoretically informed perspective of the social-scientific observer’, thus eventually leading to ‘an indifference to the participant perspective’ (ibid., 4). On the other hand, he remains critical of Boltanski’s alternative model insofar as it tends to take for granted the ever-present potential for critical thought and practice and fails to take into account ‘the possibility that certain social conditions can hinder the exercise or even the development of reflexive capabilities’ (ibid., 14; see also ibid., 68-116). Against this background, Celikates suggests that both limitations can be overcome in the form of a model of ‘reconstructive critique’ that takes the actors’ practices of critique seriously as an analytical starting point, but also seeks to shed light on their specific conditions of possibility: ‘That this form of critique can be called reconstructive is due to its constitutive reference to the experiences, self-interpretations and practices of agents. Still, these are not accepted simply as they are, as lines in the sand that may not be crossed by critique’ (ibid., 11; see also ibid., 117-190). This model also includes a reflection on those conditions which restrict, contain, and prevent the possibility of critique (ibid., 10). As I have

already discussed so far, it is exactly such a theoretically informed empirical analysis of the social and political embeddedness of oppositional political practices which I seek to develop in this research project. My only point of disagreement is that my reading of Bourdieu has revealed a more nuanced relational approach that does not simply foreclose the possibility of critique and opposition, but in fact offers sophisticated analytical tools to analyse and contextualise such practices. As I will discuss in the next section, it is especially Bourdieu's relational state-theoretical and field-theoretical approach that is very useful in order to carry out a context-oriented analysis of oppositional politics.

Before moving on to the next section, I would like to point to one recently published study by Nicholls that deserves special attention since it deploys a Bourdieusian theoretical perspective to analyse pro-immigrant activism (Nicholls 2019). In his analysis of the recent history of the immigrants' rights movement in the United States, Nicholls observes that this movement has undergone a typical process of 'going mainstream', which was accompanied by the increasing appropriation of nationalist frames of reference: 'Rather than call for the dismantlement of borders or for post-national citizenship, the mainstream immigrants right movement celebrated the nation and wrapped immigrants in the American flag' (ibid., 2). According to Nicholls, the underlying problem was not simply a failure on the side of these (pro-)immigrant actors but the fact that they had to go through a process of 'moving into this political field' (ibid., 13) so as to attract mainstream attention. For, if these actors wanted to become legitimate players in this field, they also had to adapt to the rules, norms, constraints, and taboos that characterised it. They were therefore confronted with a 'pressing dilemma': 'Increasing positioning in the field requires the accumulation of important resources and the use of resonant frames. But, by following these rules, the movement ends up further locked into national citizenship's iron cage' (ibid., 37). These are intriguing observations, which come close to my own research agenda. At the same time, however, there is one aspect in Nicholls' study which appears to move away from a Bourdieusian perspective. For, according to Nicholls, this dilemma only appears at the moment of 'becoming mainstream'. Therefore, he does not explicitly deal with grassroots activists who, in his view, do not seem to be affected by the constraints of the political field (ibid., 8-13). In a way, then, Nicholls still shares similarities with those autonomist approaches in critical migration studies which, as I have sought to demonstrate in the previous chapter, do not take seriously the complex field embeddedness of even the most radical attempts to criticise and oppose the 'national order of things' (Malkki 1995, 512). Nonetheless, his study develops insightful starting points for a critical analysis of the relationship between (pro-)immigrant or (pro-)Refugee activists on the one hand, and the wider political field within which they operate, on the other hand. In order to overcome

its limitations, however, I suggest going back to Bourdieu's work. In his later thinking, Bourdieu focused on how the doxastic reproduction of symbolic power is embedded in the structures of the contemporary nation-state. To understand more clearly how (pro-)Refugee actors relate to such orthodox and doxastic views, I therefore now turn to Bourdieu's theorisation of the nation-state as a terrain of political struggles.

2.2 The Nation-State

Discussing Bourdieu as a state theorist needs some elaboration as he does not offer a comprehensive theory of the state. Nor does he develop a detailed theoretical account of the exclusionary mechanisms of nation-states vis-à-vis those who are officially denied citizenship rights. It is only in his later works that he recognises that in 'modern societies, the State makes a decisive contribution towards the production and reproduction of the instruments of construction of social reality' (Bourdieu 2000, 175; see also: Bourdieu 2014) without offering a clear outline of how this perspective relates to his earlier thinking.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the largely fragmentary remarks that are scattered throughout his oeuvre, as well as his more systematic lectures *On the State*, (Bourdieu 2014) constitute an encompassing archive of critical accounts on the relationship between nation-state practices, social power relations and political struggles.²⁰ In this section, I will therefore show that Bourdieu thinks about questions of political struggle not only in terms of their general societal conditions, but also in terms of their specific orientation towards and organisation by the institutional framework and political culture of the (nation-)state. It is this state-theoretical dimension that makes Bourdieu's work most useful in order to reformulate and specify Arendt's reflections on nation-state power, migration and asylum. He provides a more nuanced theoretical approach that avoids the fallacies of either downplaying and depoliticising, or exaggerating and romanticising, oppositional struggles, such as those for Refugee rights and recognition. Beginning with a reconstruction of Bourdieu's general reflections on the state as a principle of orthodoxy and the political field as the surrounding terrain in which the conflictual relation between orthodox and heterodox positions is organised, I will then move on to outline the implications of the state as *nation-state*. Given the limitations of Bourdieu's own reflections in this regard, I will make use

¹⁹ In his lectures *On the State*, for example, Bourdieu admits: 'After having worked a lot on the state, re-reading today my article 'On symbolic power' makes me see the extent to which I was myself a victim of state thought. I was not aware that I was writing an article on the state; I thought I was writing an article on symbolic power. I see this now as evidence of the extraordinary power of the state and state thought.' (Bourdieu 2014, 161)

²⁰ For attempts to systematise Bourdieu's state-theoretical approach, see: (Hirsch and Voigt 2017; Loyal 2017; Swartz 2013)

of a wider range of academic contributions, especially the work of Abdelmalek Sayad, to develop such a perspective.

The State as a Principle of Orthodoxy

In his late lectures *On the State*, Bourdieu stresses that his aim is to show how ‘a great fetish like the state was con-stituted’ (Bourdieu 2014, 122). Just like any other fetish, he argues, the state is man-made; nonetheless, it has a reality of its own, which can reproduce itself because it is (largely) recognised as legitimate. The foundation of such legitimacy, for Bourdieu, lies in a misrecognition of the arbitrariness and partiality at the heart of the state. Historically, he argues, the state’s monopoly of symbolic and physical violence has emerged from a process of concentration of various forms of capital – such as the capital of physical force (in the form of police and judicial power etc.), economic capital (in the form of taxation etc.), and informational capital (in the form of population statistics etc.) (Bourdieu 2014, 65–67). Moreover, this process was paralleled by a concentration of symbolic capital that is simultaneously its precondition because, as Swartz summarises, the ‘processes of assembling police, military, and economic resources become operative only as they obtain social recognition and hence legitimacy’ (Swartz 2013, 132). Another form of capital emerges as a culminated effect of this concentration, namely ‘state capital’ (Bourdieu 2014, 193) or ‘public capital’ (ibid., 345) – a kind of meta-capital that can be understood as state authority, i.e., the authority to speak on behalf of all those represented by the state. It is the capacity to regulate other capital types such as economic or cultural capital and, even more importantly, their relations with each other, their ratio of exchange (Swartz 2013, 135). In this sense, the state takes the function of a meta-field and can be regarded as the

‘central bank of symbolic capital’, this kind of site where all the fiduciary currency circulating in the social world is produced and guaranteed, as well as all the realities we can designate as fetishes, whether an educational qualification, a legitimate culture, the nation, the notion of state border, or spelling. (Bourdieu 2014: 122)

In other words, through the process of concentration of various forms of capital, the state has become the ultimate point of reference for our categories of the world, including, as Bourdieu highlights here, the territorial architecture and national mythology of the state itself. The state contributes extensively to the construction of social reality due to the large monopolisation of the (re)production of the instruments of this construction. Bourdieu thus argues that one ‘of the most general functions of the state is the production and canonization of social classifications’ (ibid., 9). Hence, the categories implemented by the state tend to be perceived as self-evident because the state contributes to the very same cognitive structures through which these categories are perceived. It is because the state – through its representatives – claims to embody a disinterested

perspective (i.e., the interest of all those represented by the state) and is largely taken as such, that the ‘truth of the dominant becomes the truth of all’ (ibid., 63). Even though Bourdieu has never systematically outlined how fields are shaped by and relate to each other or their overall relation to the state, his framing of the state as the ‘central bank of symbolic capital’ indicates that no field remains untouched by it.

One of the most explicit media used by the state to implement a vision of the world is the law, which Bourdieu describes as an ‘intrinsically powerful discourse coupled with the physical means to impose compliance on others, [which] can be seen as a quintessential instrument of normalization’ (Bourdieu 1987, 848). The fundamental power of the law lies in its ability to produce reality by shaping our categories of perceiving reality – both because it is spoken from an official position and because it can be materially enforced. Ironically, therefore, the law is able to appear as representing the universal, even though it is the misrecognised ‘objectification of the dominant vision recognised as legitimate, or, to put it another way, of the legitimate vision of the world, the ortho-dox, guaranteed by the State’ (Bourdieu 2000, 186). Importantly for this project, this necessarily leads to the irregularisation of those people who do not fit the state’s ‘universal’. As Bourdieu puts it, ‘given that the universalization of requirements thus officially instituted does not come with the universalization of access to the means needed to fulfil them, this fosters both the monopolization of the universal by the few and the dispossession of all others, who are, in a way, thereby mutilated in their humanity’ (Bourdieu 1994, 8).

Even though Bourdieu does at times ascribe ‘quasi-divine’ (Bourdieu 1994, 12) power to the state, he also emphasises that the state’s monopoly over symbolic power – and thus its ability to classify people and determine the doxa – is never complete. On the contrary, the imposition of the legitimate vision of the world is itself a site of struggle and thus exactly what is at stake in politics:

Political struggle is a [...] cognitive struggle for the power to impose the legitimate vision of the social world, or, more precisely, for the recognition, accumulated in the form of a symbolic capital of notoriety and respectability, which gives the authority to impose the legitimate knowledge of the *sense* of the social world, its present meaning and the direction in which it is going and should go. (Bourdieu 2000, 185 - original emphasis)

Thus, for Bourdieu, politics is not an ephemeral by-product, but rather the central mechanism of (re-)constructing ‘legitimate visions of the world’, which are then inscribed into and reproduced through the state’s monopoly of symbolic power. In a transformative sense, ‘[p]olitics begins, strictly speaking, with the denunciation of this tacit contract of adherence to the established order which defines the original doxa’ (Bourdieu 2009, 127). Politics brings doxastic assumptions into the realm of discourse. More generally, what in everyday and public life appears to be ‘normal’, ‘natural’, and self-evident is the outcome of ongoing classification struggles that aim *at* and are centred *within* the state’s institutional framework. However, this emphasis on the moment of

political contestation and transformation does not change his state-critical perspective. On the contrary, Bourdieu maintains that, within the political struggle over ‘legitimate visions of the world’ – a struggle which he conceptualises, as we have seen, in terms of the tension between orthodox and heterodox claims – the state tends to represent the ‘principle of orthodoxy’ (Bourdieu 2014, 6), that is, a conservative force that plays a crucial role not only in creating the doxa, but also in establishing a defensive wall against those who seek to challenge its legitimacy. To do justice to the significance of political struggles, Bourdieu further embeds his state-theoretical elaborations in his wider field theory. Challenging monolithic and deterministic notions of the state, he develops a notion of the political field that goes beyond – but remains centred around – the institutional framework and symbolic power of the state.

The Political Field and ‘the Public’

The political field is the arena where actors struggle for the monopoly of ‘state capital’ and thus for the legitimate vision of the social world (Bourdieu 2014, 347; Bourdieu 2009, 171–202). The political field is not reducible to the state apparatus, but goes beyond it as many practices within it are not directly focused on or contribute to the organisation of state practices and policies.²¹ However, in contrast to approaches that tend to regard political struggles as largely autonomous vis-à-vis the state, such as the paradigm of the Autonomy of Migration critically discussed above, Bourdieu argues that the state remains at the centre of the political field because of its monopoly of legitimate physical and symbolic violence, that is, its ability to organise and sanction social relations based on its regulative and classificatory power. In this sense, the state plays a major role in deciding and authorising which ideas and practices are valuable, acceptable and speakable in the wider political field, and which are not. Due to this intrinsic relation between the state and the political field, the latter plays a key role for the reproduction of the former. In other words, the political field is not simply a space located beyond state power, but also plays an active part in justifying and reproducing those relations of power and domination institutionalised in the form of the state. Thus, ‘the political field in fact produces an effect of censorship by limiting the universe of political discourse, and thereby the universe of what is politically thinkable’ (Bourdieu 2009, 172).

²¹ Swartz rightly emphasises: ‘Like the other master concepts in Bourdieu’s conceptual repertoire, the political field is first and foremost a research tool rather than a concept designating a particular part of a social system. It embodies the meta-principle of relationality that calls for looking at political life relationally’ (Swartz 2013, 70).

Like all other fields, the political field is not equally accessible for everyone, but is characterised by an unequal distribution of capital (which is itself at stake in its struggles). For instance, Bourdieu analyses the professionalisation of politics that shapes political struggles in contemporary societies. In this sense, politics is fundamentally shaped by the division between ‘professionals’ and ‘lay people’, which makes it more difficult to change things from ‘the bottom up’ (Bourdieu 2014, 178–182). This ‘concentration of political capital in the hands of a small number of people is something that is prevented with greater difficulty [...] the more completely ordinary individuals are divested of the material and cultural instruments necessary for them to participate actively in politics’ (Bourdieu 2009, 172). However, and this is where it differs most significantly from others, the political field is dependent on broad (potential) mobilisation outside of itself because ‘the public’ plays a crucial role as its most important currency. In Bourdieu’s writings, the concept of ‘the public’ tends to refer not only to those who actively participate in public affairs, such as media discourse, party politics, democratic decision-making and so on, but also and especially to all those who are addressed and claimed to be represented by these actors: the ‘demos’ or the ‘people’. Thus, even though this ‘public’ is not a part of the political field as such, it is the most important reference point for the professional actors in this field: ‘If you are working in this kind of situation, you have to invoke a public opinion’ (Bourdieu 2014, 62). Thus, even though the political field is relatively autonomous with its own ‘rules of the game’, it is largely ‘limited by the fact that the power of a discourse depends less on its intrinsic properties than on the mobilizing power it exercises’ (Bourdieu 2009, 188). In other words, political power is legitimated through reference to all who are represented by it. As we have already seen above, state representatives therefore claim to speak for everyone (in the realm of the state):

The official, therefore, is the public. It is the idea that the group has of itself, and the idea that it wants to give of itself, the representation (in the sense of mental image but also of theatrical performance) that it wants to give of itself when it presents itself as a group. (Bourdieu 2014, 48)

This is why Bourdieu emphasises that ‘[d]isinterestedness is not a secondary virtue, it is *the* political virtue of everyone with a mandate’ (ibid., 64). At the same time, however, Bourdieu highlights that this performance of ‘disinterestedness’ is a symbolic sleight of hand as ‘the ostensible definition in a society with a claim to democracy, that is, that official opinion is the opinion of all, conceals a latent meaning, that public opinion is the opinion of those who deserve to have an opinion’ (ibid., 61). Nonetheless, because representations produced by the state claim objectivity, they cannot simply be ignored:

The functions of the state clearly include the production of legitimate social identity; in other words, even if we do not agree with these identities, we have to put up with them. Certain social behaviours, such as rebellion, may be determined by the very categories that are rebelled against by those who rebel. (Bourdieu 2014, 10)

While this legitimation largely works through (the assumption of) tacit consent through the workings of the doxa, it also leaves room for active contestation, not only by the (more or less) institutionalised heterodoxy within the political field, but also by those outside of the field who are nominally spoken for but do not recognise themselves in the representation. Particularly in societies that have a democratic understanding of themselves, this reference to the public and public opinion is substantial and can include active forms of (dis-)agreement by those who are represented. Bourdieu thus avoids a simple dualism between those who can act politically and those who are entirely excluded from the political order, and instead proposes to situate political actors on (and beyond) a continuous political field with the state at its centre:

A cumulative index could be arrived at, more or less rigorous, of the differential proximity of different social agents to this centre of state-type resources: one could also produce an index of proximity in mental structures. I would tend to substitute, for the simple opposition of state and civil society, the idea of a continuum which is a continuous distribution of access to the collective, public, material or symbolic resources with which the name 'state' is associated. This distribution [...] is the basis of constant struggles and the stake in them, political struggles (majority/opposition) being the most typical form of struggle to change this distribution. (Bourdieu 2014, 37)

For the empirical analysis of (pro-)Refugee movements, such a framing is most useful for two reasons. First, it helps to overcome homogenising notions of such movements and instead suggests analysing them as configurations of different actors and currents positioned within the wider political field in different ways. As we will see in subsequent chapters, (pro-)Refugee struggles in the 1980s were shaped by a variety of different political actors composed of German citizens, non-citizens, and Refugees in particular. Second, Bourdieu's framework urges us to critically reflect upon the limitations of clear-cut dichotomies (such as between 'radical' and 'reformist') which tend to lose sight of the ambivalent symbolic positionings of these different actors. It is such an attentiveness to nuances and ambivalences that my empirical analysis will seek to highlight. For instance, I will demonstrate that many of those actors that explicitly regard themselves as radical opponents to the German state and society also tend to implicitly reproduce some elements of its doxa.

To sum up, in a world organised through states (i.e., where states hold a monopoly of physical and symbolic violence), states are key centres for the production of the legitimate (di)vision of the world. In contemporary democracies, the struggle around this (di)vision is largely institutionalised in the political field, which in contemporary democratic societies is characterised by power relations – such as hierarchical forms of representation and professionalisation. The actors involved in the political field must relate back to 'the public' in order to secure legitimacy for their political interests and agendas. In this sense, the political struggle takes place beyond the

boundaries of institutionalised politics. Simultaneously, this ‘public’ is itself at stake in constant struggles over its definition.

One key aspect that Bourdieu only peripherally reflects upon is that ‘the public’ in nation-states is primarily constructed in national terms. As Spohnholz simply puts it, a ‘nation-state describes a place where people of a nation have their own state’ (Spohnholz 2021, 60). I will now turn to the implications of this coupling of state and nation.

The State as *Nation-State*: Memory and Migration

If we want to understand struggles around migration, we have to focus not only on the question of the state, but of the state as *nation-state*. It is at this point that we most clearly must go beyond Bourdieu. Even though remarks about the idea of the nation and national identity are scattered throughout his lectures *On the State*, they remain limited as they are never systematically reflected upon. As we saw above, for Bourdieu, the ‘state structures the social order itself – timetables, budget periods, calendars, our whole life is structured by the state – and, by the same token, so is our thought’ (Bourdieu 2014, 183–184). Bourdieu often implies that such ‘state thought’ (ibid.) is articulated in nationalist terms. However, he does not elaborate in any detail on the process of constructing and imagining ‘the nation’ or ‘the people’ as the most important symbolic reservoir through which the state’s sovereign power over a given territory and population, as well as the exclusion of those who are considered outsiders, is justified. One reason for this might be that he regards the ideas of state and nation as so intimately linked and dependent upon each other that an analytical differentiation does not seem worthwhile:

To my mind, this distinction [between state and nation] is useful but artificial, and the model of the genesis of the state I want to propose is based on a simple formula. The state in the restricted sense, state 1 (administration, form of government, set of bureaucratic institutions, etc.) is made by making the state in the broad sense, state 2 (national territory, citizens united by relations of recognition, who speak the same language, who fall under the notion of nation). State 1, then, is made by the making of state 2. So much for the simplified formula. (Bourdieu 2014, 123)

In other words, Bourdieu asserts that the connection between statehood and nationhood is so closely intertwined that a clear-cut distinction and one-directional causal explanation becomes insufficient. Rather, Bourdieu suggests conceiving of the relationship between both moments as a reciprocal relation or vicious circle. Nonetheless, there are some productive ideas in his work that can be used as tentative starting points.

First, Bourdieu avoids essentialist notions of ‘the nation’ by highlighting its strictly symbolic character. In this sense, the nation is understood as ‘an imaginary embodiment of the people, a national self-representation, and this self-representation rests on the exhibition of what this people

has in common: language, history, landscape, etc.’ (ibid., 349). Furthermore, Bourdieu observes that the state plays a crucial role in constructing, justifying and authorising the commonality at the core of this national identity, that is, that which distinguishes one imagined ‘people’ from another: ‘All those boundaries of inside and outside that are linked with the national character are largely products of the state, by way of the educational system, literature and all kinds of paths for the transmission and inculcation of these deep and unconscious dispositions bound up with the state’ (ibid., 144). Simultaneously, the nation serves as a key reference point to legitimise the state insofar as it represents the primary part of those who are represented by it. The key operation at stake here is to reverse on the symbolic level the actual process of constructing ‘the nation’ as a symbolic entity. Put differently, even though the nation is the product of the state, the nation is thought of as pre-existing and distinct from the state.²² The implications of this ‘myth’ of the nation founding the state are not further discussed by Bourdieu but can be integrated into and discussed with his conceptual toolkit.

Most notably, through the connection of legitimacy to ‘the public’, Bourdieu’s approach allows us to analyse ‘the nation’ as the most important symbolic point of reference for the creation of doxa and thus for the reproduction of the existing set of social relations of power and domination. In a nation-state system, then, the doxa which is at stake in political struggles manifests itself as a *national* doxa; and the political field within which these struggles take place tends to be represented as a *national* field. Because the state has both a physical and symbolic monopoly and is therefore the principle of orthodoxy in contemporary societies, and because the state (as institutionalised setting) legitimises itself as an expression of ‘a people’ (understood as ‘a nation’), the doxa produces a specific national identity and is reproduced by it. As Sayad puts it, ‘we exist only in this form and only within this framework: the framework and form of the nation’ (Sayad 2004, 281).²³

There are at least two symbolic dimensions relevant for the construction process of any national doxa. First, as many studies of nationalism have shown, the construction of a national identity always entails the construction of a shared history or mythology as well as the enactment of this

²² These remarks are indeed in accordance with key insights in the area of critical nationalism studies, developed, for instance, by (Anderson 2016; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1992; Hobsbawm and Ranger 2012; Smith 2010; Teschke 2003; Yack 2012). For instance, Anderson highlights both these moments of symbolic construction as well as sovereign power and territorial exclusiveness by conceptualizing the nation as an ‘imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign’ (Anderson 2016, 6) .

²³ Balibar even speaks of us as ‘homo nationalis’ – ‘Certainly this is not all we are, but we cannot of our own accord escape this determination, which penetrates our categories of thought and action, in order to adopt an opposite point of view, an “internationalist” or “cosmopolitan” worldview for example (these very terms show just how inescapable the national reference is). We must begin our examination of the limits and particularities of our universal ideas of history, identity, violence, and politics, which, even in our efforts to sketch out alternatives, are still oriented by their relation to the nation.’ (Balibar 2004, 12)

imagined past through practices of commemoration.²⁴ Thus, central to this collective identity is a certain ‘temporal depth’ (Grosby 2005, 8) of the nation, which is invoked as ‘the prepolitical community of shared memory and history’ (Yack 2012, 34). This dimension of constructing a national identity is at least incidentally discussed in Bourdieu’s work. In a comment on Maurice Halbwachs’ notion of ‘collective memory’, Bourdieu notes that: ‘Here is a fine example of the public at the very heart of the private: at the very heart of our memory we find the state, the civic festivals, secular or religious, and we find different categories of specific calendar, the school calendar or the religious calendar’ (Bourdieu 2014: 7). In a more systematic reflection on the relation between national identity and collective memory, Yack highlights the significance of the latter for the creation of a shared feeling of belonging that helps camouflage the fragile and unpredictable character of everyday experiences in modern societies:

In nations we situate ourselves within a shared sequence of predecessors and successors, the affirmation of whom deepens our feelings of mutual concern and loyalty by invoking the memory of past generations and responsibility for future ones. In other words, our shared heritage, our shared connection to a temporal line that transcends our own lifespan, lends a special poignancy to our feelings of social friendship for each other. It is as if we imagine that we share a particular path through time, a named highway on some imagined time map, rather than just the course of years allotted to our own lives. (Yack 2012, 76)

In this sense, the people of a nation are framed as sharing a common cultural inheritance that informs their present (and future) and is itself reproduced and materialised through state institutions (e.g., schools, museums) and rituals (e.g., public holidays). Who does – and who does not – count as part of the national community is thus embedded in politics of memory. In this sense, the forms of exclusion inscribed into the nation-state order, that we touched upon in the previous chapter, are intricately linked to questions of (national) identity. In other words, ‘individual rights and political freedoms depend to a certain extent on the contingencies of shared memory and identity’ (ibid., 37). At the core of struggles around national identity thus lies the question of memory. As Bourdieu points out, in political struggles, ‘the past – with retrospective reconstruction of a past tailored to the needs of the present [...] – and especially the future, with creative forecasting, are endlessly invoked, to determine, delimit, and define the always open meaning of the present’ (Bourdieu 1985, 728).

Second, and linked to the previous point, the construction of ‘the nation’ not only entails a temporal, but also a topological dimension. Here again, various accounts of critical nationalism studies agree that any attempt to construct national identities is based on the construction of groups of people who are considered fundamental outsiders to, or even threats to the integrity and persistence of the national collective. These framings are in turn inscribed into and reproduced by

²⁴ See: (Corney et al. 2003; Huyssen 1995; Olick 2007; Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 2011; Renan 2018)

national memory politics: “Official” political memory is a crucial part of the national common sense or *doxa*. It shapes individuals’ assumptions about the boundaries of the community, historical allies and enemies, objects of national pride and hatred, and the protagonists of the community’s history, for both celebratory and vilifying reasons’ (Mihai 2019, 53–54). A Bourdieusian perspective can therefore help to analyse these symbolic processes of exclusion as well as their inscription in the institutional framework of the state. Such an attempt to use Bourdieu’s state-theoretical insights to reflect on the exclusionary dynamics of contemporary nation-states with regards to immigration is evident in Abdelmalek Sayad’s work. According to Sayad,

immigration constitutes the limit of what constitutes the national state. Immigration is the limit that reveals what it is intrinsically, or its basic truth. It is as though it were in the very nature of the state to discriminate and, in order to do so, to acquire in advance all the necessary criteria of pertinence that are required to make the distinction, without which there can be no national state, between the ‘nationals’ it recognizes as such and in which it therefore recognizes itself, just as they recognize themselves in it (this double mutual recognition-effect is indispensable to the existence and function of the state), and ‘others’ with whom it deals only in ‘material’ or instrumental terms. (Sayad 2004, 279)

He adds that, because the political community becomes equated with nation in the nation-state order, the presence of ‘non-nationals’ on a state’s territory becomes a ‘*displaced* presence in every sense of the term’ (ibid., 283).²⁵

What Sayad offers here is a condensed analysis of the complex processes of inclusion and exclusion that are constitutive of nation-states and their restrictive territorial and citizenship regimes. Most notably, he highlights that immigration does not simply represent an incidental issue manageable through limited forms of state intervention; rather, it is located at the very heart of the state’s self-identity, as well as the collective identity of those whom the state claims to represent. Migration can thus be regarded as the political struggle par excellence in relation to the state’s identity and its institutional materialisation. Furthermore, Sayad also offers some reflections on the conditionality of the lived experiences and political struggles of migrants. More specifically, he argues that migrants are affected both practically and symbolically by the categories and classifications that originate within the state. According to him, the migrant ‘finds himself caught up in social struggles despite himself, because they are of necessity struggles over identity’ (Sayad 2004, 286). In this sense, the struggles of migrants are crucially struggles over identities that are not entirely within their power to shape. At the same time, they need to respond to and engage with these identities insofar as they play a fundamental role in the restrictive citizenship regimes

²⁵ This problem arises with regards to both ethnic and civic nationalism (Brubaker 1992; 2004; Yack 1996). It is important to keep in mind that the construction of the nation in ‘ethnic’ or ‘civic’ terms is only of secondary importance for the fundamental question of exclusion as it only changes the relation to foreign outsiders in formal terms. As Bourdieu poignantly puts it: ‘In practice, French and Germans treat immigrants in more or less the same manner, that is, just as badly, but in law they treat them very differently’ (Bourdieu 2014, 352).

from which they are currently excluded. Thus, as Sayad demonstrates, a Bourdieusian perspective is useful for making sense of the significance of the state as the producer of nationality and of the social and political implications this category has for those not covered by it.

Overall, then, Bourdieu offers an intriguing theoretical framework that is attentive to the specific dynamics of collective struggle in the wider political field, while also taking into account the formative power of the state. In the final part of this chapter, I will discuss how this approach can help us analyse in greater detail the challenges and difficulties experienced by (pro-)Refugee political actors who attempt to make heterodox claims within a political field that strongly gravitates towards and is shaped by the state as the centre of orthodoxy. Most notably, I will discuss how Bourdieu's work can help us enrich Arendt's reflections on the predicament of fighting for the 'right to have rights.'

2.3 A Bourdieusian Take on (Pro-)Refugee Protest

In this section, I demonstrate how a Bourdieusian perspective can help us develop a more complex relational and agential perspective on the Arendtian paradoxical dictum: that those who are trapped in a situation of state-/rightlessness are simultaneously excluded from and dependent on the nation-state: excluded insofar as they represent a threat to the imagined 'Western national trinity of people-territory-state' (Arendt 1973, 232); dependent insofar as the state is the primary institution that is able to grant and guarantee the right to become a recognised member and active participant in a political community. The main argument is that while Arendt tends to reproduce a strict dualism between inclusion and exclusion, agency and passivity, Bourdieu offers a more nuanced approach that looks at different degrees and modes of political agency depending on the field-specific positionality of the actors in question. In this sense, Bourdieu does not simply dismiss the fight for the 'right to have rights' as an impossible endeavour, but instead offers ways to analyse the different ways in which Refugee activists – together with their supporters – seek to carry out this fight despite the practical limitations and dilemmas by which it is characterised. He thus allows for a more nuanced analysis of the structural limitations of the nation-state and its citizenship regime *from a protest-oriented perspective*. In other words, using Bourdieu's concept of the state as a site of struggle allows us to reflect on the precarious and ambivalent positionality of Refugees as political actors, making them neither 'sheer victims' nor 'revolutionary heroes'. In conclusion, I underline three (interrelated and overlapping) objects of reference in the area of (pro-)Refugee politics that follow from the Bourdieusian perspective introduced here and will figure as the key

parameters of my analytical framework introduced in the next chapter and applied during my empirical analysis. In this section, I will demonstrate that the distinction between these three objects of reference is useful to develop a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the complex relationship between (pro-)Refugee actors and the symbolic power of the nation-state order.

The State and Its Politics – Injustice and Oppression

First, *in order to be recognised in the political field, (pro-)Refugee actors have to invoke aspects of state and national identity to make their claims.* Similarly to Arendt's reflections on the nation-state, Bourdieu strongly highlights its centrality in the establishment and normalisation of social positions, hierarchies and classifications. As we have seen in the first chapter, Arendt was aware that the problem of statelessness implies not simply legal exclusion, but the exclusion from a wider political community defined by restrictive principles of sovereignty, territoriality, and nationality. Bourdieu's state theory is especially apposite to analyse this problematic insofar as it highlights both the material and symbolic dimension of state power. According to Bourdieu, the state not only shapes the material position (through acts of repression and regulation) but also the associated social and political identity (through acts of classification) of those who are affected by its power. What is more, these social and political identities are defined in relation to the state's official self-understanding, which is composed of a multiplicity of doxastic assumptions about its purpose and legitimacy. The image of the 'law-abiding, hardworking, decent citizen', for instance, directly expresses and confirms the legal and moral foundations, as well as the territorial boundaries, of an existing state order. It is especially Bourdieu's characterisation of the state as a 'principle of orthodoxy' and a 'central bank' of symbolic capital that enables us to critically examine how the very identity, interpretative and strategic repertoires of different (pro-)Refugee actors are influenced by its classificatory power.

In contrast to Arendt and closer to her critics, however, Bourdieu argues that the state's material and symbolic power is itself mediated by an ongoing process of political struggles that – under specific circumstances – might have a disruptive or transformative impact on that power. For that purpose, Bourdieu develops a field-theoretical approach that leads him to an analytical distinction between the state in the narrow sense and a surrounding political field where different collective actors struggle over the state's material and symbolic resources, its institutional and legal framework, its official norms and values. As regards the political field, Bourdieu argues that social and political actors are not simply in a position of inclusion or exclusion; rather, they are situated on a multidimensional spatial matrix characterised by different degrees of access to various forms

of capital. In this context, Bourdieu highlights the significance of symbolic capital as a condition of recognised and legitimate political action. More specifically, he argues that one of the primary sources of legitimacy both for the state and within the wider political field is the claim to represent the wider ‘public’, which Bourdieu understands as the totality of people whom the state claims to represent. As we have seen in this chapter, the most important aspect of this construction of state and political legitimacy is the usage of national narratives and images, including the construction of a closed identity and shared history.

All these considerations have crucial implications for the analysis of (pro-)Refugee struggles. Most importantly, the fight for the ‘right to have rights’ is never confined to the strictly legal terrain, but always entails the moment of fighting for the symbolic conditions under which such a right can be exercised. In other words, it is essentially a fight for being recognised as a political actor who can make recognised claims. This means that oppositional political actors, especially those in a highly marginalised position, cannot afford to ignore the existing state and its national doxa, but need to engage in one way or another with it to formulate their own perspectives and strategies.²⁶ Thus, one of the main insights that can be gained from this perspective is that, as the nation-state embodies the orthodoxy, (pro-)Refugee struggles have to relate in some ways to its doxastic underpinnings in order to be intelligible and influential in the political field. Overall, this means that dynamics of (pro-)Refugee struggles tend to be more complex than being simply ‘for’ or ‘against’ the set of existing doxa that are inscribed into the political field. Instead, the national doxa can be regarded as both an oppressive and a productive force in the struggle for change. While the doxa is fundamental for the symbolic reproduction of their dominated position in the first place, it also offers the tools to question and subvert this domination. As Michael Saward points out in this regard:

If the aesthetic moment in political representation is unavoidable – representation cannot function without claims, portrayals of self and other, and the performance of the same – then it is the cultural moment which sets the limits or parameters for the aesthetic possibilities. It centres upon cultural codes which carry meanings in characteristic, more-or-less local ways. (Saward 2006: 311)

Bourdieu therefore stresses that ‘[r]esistance can be alienating and submission can be liberating. Such is the paradox of the dominated and there is no way out of it’ (Bourdieu 2004, 155).²⁷

²⁶ As Nicholls puts it, ‘The nation comes to serve as the foundational grammar for how nationals think, talk and feel about rights and citizenship. [...] Articulating rights claims beyond commonsense understandings of the nation places these claims on the margins of legitimate politics’ (Nicholls 2019, 15).

²⁷ These remarks are reminiscent of Arendt’s paradoxical notion of the ‘right to have rights’: while the rejection of the nation-state order and its citizenship regimes correctly points to the structural causes of the plight of Refugees, it fails to make any contribution to bettering their situation. It can thus become politically alienating. And while the call for rights and recognition tends to reproduce the power of these citizenship regimes, it nonetheless helps empower those who are dominated by them: it can become politically liberating.

As we will see in subsequent empirical chapters, (pro-)Refugee actors throughout the 1980s and early 1990s drew heavily upon various aspects of dominant narratives about German identity and history in order to make claims for the legal and political recognition of Refugees. More specifically, they closely engaged with both temporal and spatial elements of the national doxa. While Germany's Nazi legacy was the most important national-historical point of reference, there were also various geopolitical constructions which figured prominently within the discursive texts of (pro-)Refugee activists, most notably the FRG's self-understanding as a Western-European as well as an 'ethno-national' political community (see chapter 4).

Invoking Solidarity among the Public

Second, *the importance of appealing to 'the public' makes the invocation of solidarity with Refugees among 'the public' a key element of (pro-)Refugee politics*. As we have already seen, Arendt argues that a major effect of the exclusionary dynamics of national citizenship regimes is that Refugees, in order to participate socially and act politically, become dependent on the compassion of those who enjoy citizenship rights. However, she does not further elaborate on the consequences this dependency has for the possibilities and limitations of political action and collaboration. If at all, she assumes that this further reinforces the political passivity of those in a situation of rightlessness. Bourdieu's field theory, on the other hand, provides us with a conceptual framework that allows for a more nuanced analysis of these asymmetrical relations. Most notably, this approach makes it possible to regard Refugees not as isolated political actors but instead in their relation to a variety of other actors as part of (pro-)Refugee struggles. For instance, Bourdieu recognises the significance of political alliances as a potential vehicle to address and counter the exclusionary and hierarchal features of political fields, but also as a form of interaction that is informed by these exclusions and hierarchies (Bourdieu 2009, 245). The political significance of support actors is that they can make use of and redirect their economic, social, cultural, legal, and symbolic capital to amplify the claims of Refugee activists in the political field and vis-à-vis the state. In order to convince such actors to show solidarity and engage in support activities, however, it becomes crucial to engage with their political identity and positionality which, as we have seen, relates back to the classificatory power of the nation-state. Thus, symbolic references to the 'public', including its national doxa, are relevant not only for the understanding and critique of the nation-state, but also for the search for potential supporters and sympathisers.

As we will see in the empirical chapters, this can take a wide range of different forms. For instance, various protest actors tried to criticise state institutions and representatives for not actually

speaking for ‘the public’, trying to demonstrate that ‘the public’ disagrees. Other actors expressed a different understanding of who ‘the public’ consists of in the first place. For instance, they agreed with the predominant framing of ‘the public’ in national terms (‘German public’) but disagreed about who actually made up – or should make up – this nation. There were also those actors who disagreed more fundamentally with positive references to the notion of ‘the nation’ altogether. Either way, we will see that most of these actors felt compelled to construct ‘the public’ whom they claimed to represent or address. They also had to specify how their heterodox positions related to narratives about national identity and tradition that underlay official notions of ‘the public’.

Conflicts of Representation

Third, the socio-political embeddedness of pro-Refugee movements means that they need to be analysed as heterogeneous spaces, characterised by asymmetrical power relations and accompanying conflict dynamics. This is why the question of representation is crucial for Bourdieu’s analysis of political struggles. Put differently, *the question of representation is itself a political one which tends to lead to (potential) hierarchies and conflict*. Who speaks how and for whom can thus in itself be seen as a constant struggle among (pro-)Refugee actors, since representation does not only open up spaces of inclusion but also create new forms of exclusion. For instance, if solidarity actors seek to make use of their status as fully recognised German citizens to appeal to other segments of the German ‘public’ in the name of pro-Refugee solidarity, this can nonetheless reproduce a situation where Refugees themselves are excluded from public debates about their own fate. In the empirical analysis of (pro-)Refugee struggles in the FRG, we will see that this politicisation of hierarchical forms of representation between self-organised Refugee groups and solidarity groups primarily composed of German citizens has indeed played a major role. This does not mean that these support actors were necessarily part of or recognised by the political elite. On the contrary, many of those actors involved in the establishment of Refugee solidarity networks and campaigns in (West) Germany were themselves in an oppositional, often very marginal position. Compared to Refugees, however, they were situated in a much more privileged position to invoke aspects of German national identity. Therefore, looking at such (internal) struggles over representation is important so as to make sense of the internal tensions, hierarchies and conflicts by which these (pro-)Refugee struggles have been characterised. We have now seen that a Bourdieusian state- and field-theoretical approach offers rich insights into the complexities of (pro-)Refugee activism that result from the structural contradictions and limitations of the nation-state order identified by Arendt. More specifically, such a perspective enables us to distinguish

between three analytical dimensions that will be crucial in analysing the dynamics of (pro-)Refugee protest: the positionality of (pro-)Refugee actors vis-à-vis a) the state; b) the wider 'public'; and c) each other. As we will see in the next chapters, I will take up and further refine these analytical dimensions in order to outline my methodological framework and structure my empirical analysis.

3 Research Design and Methodological Framework

In this chapter, I present and justify the choices I made in order to translate the theoretical perspectives outlined in the previous two chapters into a more concrete research design for the empirical analysis. More specifically, I identify various methodological approaches that are applicable and allow to further specify the Bourdieusian-Arendtian approach as outlined in chapters 2 and 3. To that end, I proceed in three steps. First, I demonstrate that the paradigms of critical discourse analysis and frame analysis provide useful analytical tools to pursue my overall research objectives. My focus lies on those approaches that explicitly draw on or are compatible with Bourdieusian theoretical perspectives, in particular the Discourse-Historical Approach developed by Wodak and Reisigl (3.1). Second, I discuss the process of data collection that forms the basis of my empirical research. More specifically, this section entails a justification of my primary focus on archival research, an overview of the on-site archives that I visited during my period of data collection, as well as an outline of and reflection on the concrete process of examining, collecting, organising, and selecting the empirical materials during and following my archive visits (3.2). Third, I give an outline of the process of data analysis, with a particular emphasis on developing a framework of analytical tools that allowed me to examine the collected data in a systematic fashion and evaluate it in terms of my overarching research questions. Most notably, I will show how a qualitative discourse- and frame-analytical perspectives can be used in order to examine those three objects of references outlined in the final section of the previous chapter (3.3).

3.1 Methodological Perspectives: Critical Discourse and Frame Analysis

The main aim of this research project is to develop a systematic reconstruction and examination of the heterogeneous and conflictual dynamics of (pro-)Refugee struggles that took place during the 1980s and early 1990s in the Federal Republic of Germany. The specific hypothesis I developed as part of my theoretical reflections is that the practices and views of Refugee activists and pro-Refugee supporters – but also the distinctions and tensions among these actors – can only be sufficiently grasped if the positionality of these actors vis-à-vis the German nation-state is taken into consideration. Furthermore, we have seen in the context of a re-examination of Bourdieu's state- and field-theoretical perspectives that the symbolic dimension, i.e., the realm of representation of social relations, is crucial for making sense of this positionality as it is 'tacitly

laying down the dividing line between the thinkable and the unthinkable' (Bourdieu 1977, 21). In the area of citizenship, migration, and asylum regimes, this is especially important insofar as the very existence of state boundaries is inseparably linked to underlying processes of imagining and constructing national identity and tradition. As I will demonstrate throughout my empirical analysis, oppositional political actors, such as those involved in the struggle for Refugee rights and recognition, do not remain unaffected by the overwhelming symbolic violence exercised by and institutionalised in the form of the nation-state and its political field. Thus, even if they seek to detach themselves from or actively oppose the nation-state order and its migration and border regime, they are forced to relate to what I characterised as the national doxa in some way or another. As Nicholls puts it, 'Social-movement organizations prioritize and amplify the values that they believe will resonate the most with their target audience' (Nicholls 2019, 29). Furthermore, this relatedness is often not simply the result of strategic considerations (such as about the best way of being heard within the mainstream public), but also raises the issue of the internalisation of the national doxa, such as in the form of explicit or implicit references to national identity. I therefore suggest that the most effective way to shed light on this embeddedness is to place a particular emphasis on the symbolic expressions of (pro-)Refugee struggles by focusing on the claims made by the actors involved. Following Koopmans et al., I understand a claim as 'a unit of strategic action in the public sphere that consists of the *purposive and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals, criticisms, or physical attacks, which actually or potentially affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors*' (Koopmans et al. 2005, 24 – original emphasis).

I decided to focus on a qualitative analysis of (written) texts produced by or dealing with the emerging contentious (pro-)Refugee politics in recent (West) German history. This is not to say that I am not interested in the practical and material aspects of political conflicts around migration and national identity. On the contrary, symbolic expressions are always already material insofar as they are practiced and institutionalised. Moreover, they are provoked and informed by social conditions that cannot be reduced to linguistic entities but take material form – such as transnational migration flows or institutionalised regimes of migration control and regulation. Similarly, we will see in the empirical analysis that what (pro-)Refugee actors think, say, and write is closely connected to what they do and aim at. For instance, different forms of understanding and critiquing the nation-state and its migration regime also play a significant role in choosing between and justifying different forms of practical protest, such as lobbying, conferences, demonstrations, occupations, hunger strikes, or even armed conflicts. More specifically, by examining the different ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors symbolically related to the German nation-state and invoked German national identity in order to criticise migration politics and

mobilise solidarity among the wider population, I aim to gain a clearer understanding of the challenges and dilemmas of pro-Refugee protest that all actors are confronted with.

What remains to be discussed is the question what methodological perspectives are useful to further specify and operationalise this research rationale. In the social sciences and humanities, there are numerous different approaches to questions of linguistic communication and meaning production (Boréus and Bergström 2017; Bryman 2012; Berg and Lune 2017). Within this wider field there are two approaches which, as I elaborate in the next sections, are especially useful to analyse the relation between language, meaning and power: ‘frame analysis’ (Goffman 1986; Benford and Snow 2000) and ‘(critical) discourse analysis’ (Angermüller, Maingueneau, and Wodak 2014; Foucault 1981; Wodak 2013; Fairclough 2013; Fairclough and Fairclough 2012; Penman 2017). Both methodological approaches have travelled widely through various disciplines (Gee and Handford 2012; Weiss and Wodak 2003; Boréus and Bergström 2017) and have also gained a considerable significance in the area of social movement studies (Della Porta 2014; Goodwin and Jasper 2014). Emphasising the similarity between these two, Lindekilde points out that ‘the combined interest of discourse and frame analysis is the discursive battles over meaning and definition of reality, which play out within and among social movements, and among their friends and foes, often in the public sphere’ (Lindekilde 2014, 196). In this sense, both approaches tend to overlap in their overall research agenda. Simultaneously, however, they tend to differ in terms of their specific research focus. While critical discourse analysis is primarily interested in analysing the emergence, reproduction and transformation of *overarching* discursive configurations and their relation to societal relations of power and domination (such as the ‘immigration discourse’ within a given nation-state order), frame analysis puts a stronger emphasis on analysing how social and political actors construct and envision specified objects of references within this wider order (such as framings of ‘the state’, ‘the asylum system’ or ‘the spirit of the constitution’). Thus, they offer different research tools which, as I seek to show in this section, can be combined in useful ways to enrich the empirical analysis of symbolic practices against the background of the national doxa. In the following, I will engage with the key assumptions, perspectives, and categories of discourse- and frame-analytical approaches respectively. Furthermore, I will show in which way these approaches are compatible with Bourdieu’s perspective outlined in the previous chapter.

Critical Discourse Analysis

The ‘paradigm’ (Wodak and Meyer 2009) of discourse analysis has established itself as the most influential approach to the qualitative analysis of language in the public sphere. Since its emergence

in the 1960s and 1970s, it has been shaped by a wide range of different approaches, ranging from literary and linguistic theory to various strands of social, political, psychological and anthropological research (Boréus and Bergström 2017, 208–241; Gee and Handford 2012). A common denominator of discourse-analytical approaches is the assumption that linguistic practices are not detached and isolated from each other but amount to larger formations that go beyond these individual practices and exert a distinctive impact on their form and content (Foucault 1981). An important overall development has been the emergence of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a distinct research paradigm since late 1970s and early 1980s (Fairclough 2013; Wodak 2013; Wodak and Meyer 2016). One of its defining features is to highlight the relation between discourse, power, and domination. In contrast to approaches that understand discourse in modern societies as horizontal, transparent, and inclusive, critical discourse analysts are interested in the specific ways in which hierarchies and exclusions are inscribed within and reproduced through discourse. As Wodak and Meyer put it, ‘CDA may be defined as fundamentally concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language’ (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 2).

Another element highlighted in these accounts of language and power is the question of struggle. As Fairclough puts it, ‘discoursal practice is a facet of struggle, which contributes in varying degrees to the reproduction or transformation of the existing order of discourse, and through that of existing social and power relations’ (Fairclough 1995: 77). To analyse these struggles, critical discourse analysts suggest focusing on the analysis of *discursive strategies*. Following Wodak, a strategy can be defined as ‘a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim’ (Wodak 2007, 195). However, this does not mean that critical discourse analysts restrict discursive practices to nothing else than strategic calculations. On the contrary, there is a certain attentiveness to the problem that discursive utterances are often informed by assumptions and ideologies that remain unspoken and unquestioned. For instance, Fairclough calls this the ‘common sense of discourse’, that is, ‘a world which is built entirely upon assumptions and expectations which control both the actions of members of a society and their interpretation of the actions of others’, but which remain ‘implicit, backgrounded, taken for granted, not things that people are consciously aware of, rarely explicitly formulated or examined or questioned’ (Fairclough 2015, 77).

While power relations represent an overarching subject of interest in critical discourse analysis, there are some differences regarding the explanation and localisation of these relations. Some

approaches tend to regard discourse itself as the main source of power.²⁸ Others, however, put a much stronger emphasis on the social, political and economic context in which linguistic communication takes place and symbolic meaning is produced.²⁹ For instance, Fairclough argues that the ‘order of discourse’ should not be understood as a hermetically sealed microcosm, but rather as being woven into a wider configuration of objective, extra-discursive social relations: ‘the order of discourse is the social order in its discursive facet – or, the historical impress of sociocultural practice on discourse. [...] [A]ny discursive event necessarily positions itself in relation to this historical legacy, selectively reproducing or transforming it’ (Fairclough 1995, 10). This does not mean that discourse is simply a passive expression of this wider context. Instead, discourse is a form of social relations that

is shaped by structures, but also contributes to shaping and reshaping them, to reproducing and transforming them. These structures are most immediately of a discursive/ideological nature [...] but they also include in a mediated form political and economic structures, relationships in the market, gender relations, relations within the state and within the institutions of civil society such as education. (Fairclough 2013, 59)

In this sense, the main task of critical discourse analysis is to explore the ‘dialectical relationship between concrete individual events and more abstract (relatively durable and stable) social practices’ (Fairclough 2013, 419).

It is no surprise that we can find in the literature some attempts to combine CDA approaches with a Bourdieusian framework (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; 2007; Myles 2010; Forchtner and Schneickert 2016). As we have seen in the previous chapter, Bourdieu himself put a strong emphasis on the symbolic and discursive construction of social reality without denying the significance of material relations that go beyond the practice of meaning production. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Bourdieu himself reflected on the growing popularity of discourse analysis, but nonetheless remained highly critical of those approaches oblivious to the wider extra-discursive context: ‘Discourse analysis, which studies discourse without studying the social conditions of production of this discourse, does not understand anything’ (Bourdieu 2014, 15). This makes Bourdieu’s approaches especially compatible with ‘context-sensitive’ (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 31) variants of critical discourse analysis. At the same time, Bourdieu highlights the significance of language and discourse as crucial mediating elements in the process of reproducing and transforming social relations of power and domination. This can be illustrated by looking at

²⁸ See for example Foucault’s seminal analysis of the ‘order of discourse’ (Foucault 1981), the Foucauldian ‘Duisburg School’ (Jäger 2015; Jäger and Zimmermann 2010; Jäger 1993; Jäger and Jäger 2007) or Laclau and Mouffe’s post-Marxist political and discourse theory (Laclau and Mouffe 2001; Laclau and Mouffe 1987).

²⁹ See especially Reisigl’s and Wodak’s Discourse-Historical Approach (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Wodak 2015; Reisigl 2018) and Fairclough’s Dialectical-Relational Approach (Fairclough 2013; Fairclough 2018).

the following remark from Bourdieu's lectures on the state, which focuses on the example of power dynamics underpinning and surrounding public commissions:

You discover a space of competing agents who maintain an extremely complex balance of forces with very complex and very different weapons [...]. All these agents enter into an extremely complex balance of forces, both material and symbolic, which for many of them is by way of discourse, and from this very complex balance of forces, which has to be analysed in a very subtle way, a decision results that contributes to strengthening or undermining a certain state of the balance of forces. (Bourdieu 2014, 111)

What Bourdieu suggests here is that the public field is crucially mediated by asymmetrical relations of force between a variety of actors whose power positions are the result of both material and discursive practices. What we can take from this remark in terms of developing a methodological framework is that discursive practice – although they are only one form of social practices – play a crucial role in the process of (re-)articulating and (re-)organising power relations in the political field. In other words, discourse-analytical approaches are useful insofar as they allow for a more systematic analysis of the 'discoursal facet' (Fairclough 1995, 10) of the political and other social fields, that is, the specific role of fields as terrains of discourse production. For my research project, it will be particularly relevant to analyse the political field as a terrain in which discourses about national identity, transnational migration and collective memory are (re-)articulated.

Frame Analysis

In addition to critical discourse analysis, I also draw on frame analysis. While there are various similarities between both methodological approaches, the strengths of frame analysis are especially useful to counter some of the (potential) weaknesses of critical discourse analysis. As we have seen, CDA research is especially oriented towards two research areas: first, the analysis of overall discursive formations, as well as their relation to wider societal relations of power and domination; and second, the analysis of the discursive practices and strategies of actors who are involved in social and political struggles over power and domination. Among CDA scholars, it is common practice to state that these two levels need to be understood as closely intertwined. On a more technical level, this usually leads to various attempts to distinguish between different discursive context levels. For instance, Fairclough suggests distinguishing between the textual, interactional, and contextual level as well as between situational, institutional, and societal context levels (Fairclough 1995, 134; 2015, 25). Similarly, Reisigl and Wodak develop a framework that differentiates between textual, intertextual/interdiscursive, institutional, and socio-political/historical context dimensions (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 40–41; Wodak 2015, 51). To a certain degree, however, these frameworks remain rather schematic: they introduce different context levels as separate entities, but without specifying how exactly they, or providing mediating

categories that offer ways to analyse this intertwinement more systematically. More specifically, there is a lack of analytical categories that focus on the different ways in which actors symbolically refer to – that is, construct, imagine, envision, evaluate – the wider societal context that they (must) engage with as part of their practices, strategies, and struggles.

The concept of *frame* or *framing* is especially useful to analyse these symbolic connections between individual and collective actors on the one hand, and the wider societal context, on the other. Its key idea is that the wider discursive or societal context is not simply external to the actors who are involved in the production of discursive texts. Rather, these actors are usually motivated to make sense of certain objects of reference that go beyond their immediate experiences and thus relate to wider context levels. In this sense, discursive texts can be understood as ‘windows’ which social and political actors open up in order to make sense of certain broader issues and problems that affect them one way or another. What exactly these ‘windows’ reveal, however, depends on how they are shaped and configured. This is where the project of ‘frame analysis’ comes in. It was originally developed by Goffman, as part of his wider theorisation of processes of social practices and identity formation in both everyday and public life. According to Goffman, ‘frames’ (or ‘frameworks’) are collective and individual ‘schemata of interpretation’ that allow us to ‘locate, perceive, identify, and label’ (Goffman 1986, 21) events and occurrences, thereby rendering them meaningful. He further argues that, in every social group, ‘understandings emerge concerning principal classes of schemata, the relations of these classes to one another, and the sum total of forces and agents that these interpretive designs acknowledge to be loose in the world’ (ibid., 27). What is especially relevant for Goffman’s account is that frames are not only the result of intentional decision-making but occupy a much more fundamental and engrained position in the identity of those who use them. More specifically, Goffman argues that frames are the result of deep-seated processes of internalising and habitualising one’s individual and collective position within the social world. Thus, while Goffman acknowledges the possibility of a strategic use of existing frames, he also highlights that the creation of frames is inseparably linked to implicit identity formation processes (Goffman 1986; Persson 2018).

With regards to this thesis’ key objectives, it is important to note that the concept of framing has proven particularly fruitful in the context of social movement studies. From the 1980s onwards, scholars have increasingly discussed the relevance of framing processes for social movements. As Peoples summarises, as ‘movements engage in political action, they need to engage in social framing to identify their issues of interest, how to solve them, and inspire their members’ (Peoples 2019, 31). Put differently, social movement organisations have to offer coherent framings of the problem they criticise (‘diagnostic framing’), of the solutions they propose (‘prognostic framing’)

as well as of the reasons why people should support and take part in the movement ('motivational framing') (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow et al. 1986; H. Beyer and Schnabel 2017, 157–158). Moreover, the frames offered by social movement organisations have to resonate with the everyday frames applied to the world by potential recruits (Goodwin and Jasper 2014, 55). Snow et al. call this process 'frame alignment', which refers to 'the linkage of individual and SMO [social movement organisations] interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary' (Snow et al. 1986, 464). What we can see here is that the concept of frames or framings is especially useful for analysing the relevance of processes of signification for the development of political claims and strategies. Thus, while critical discourse analysis is especially strong in the analysis of discursive texts and practices, on the one hand, and wider discursive formations, on the other, frame analysis offers more sophisticated ways to analyse the imprint of such discursive formations on the specific texts and practices.

Looking at the historical development of frame-analytical research, it is worth highlighting that a growing number of scholars moved away from Goffman's original notion. In contrast to Goffman's emphasis on the implicit, unconscious dimension of framing processes, more recent studies frequently focus on the conscious and deliberate work of signification carried out by actors in the context of social movements (Lindekilde 2014; Snow et al. 1986; Benford and Snow 2000). In these approaches, framing is understood primarily as an intentional process of selecting certain frames to strengthen one's own position within a given social or political setting and is thus reminiscent of the concept of 'discursive strategies' outlined above. In Bourdieu's understanding, such a perspective is limited. As he points out: 'It is because subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know' (Bourdieu 1977, 79). The main limitation of such an emphasis on intentionality is a lack of attentiveness to the objective constraints by which social actors' intentions are shaped. As Ryan and Gamson critically remark: 'If those who aim to reframe political debates are to compete successfully against the carriers of official frames, who have lots of resources and organization behind them, they must recognize power inequalities and find ways to challenge them' (Ryan and Gamson 2006, 18). Such a focus also tends to imply a simplistic model of identity formation. In other words, the (self-)understanding of social actors tends to be analysed as the simple result of their own choices. This, however, would assume they somehow remain unaffected by the wider symbolic and social order within which they are positioned. Furthermore, this perspective is incapable of analysing the unintentional effects of intentional practices and strategies, such as the implicit reproduction of

forms of symbolic violence, even if the actor in question intended to challenge them (Fairclough 2015, 41).

Against this background, I consider frame-analytical approaches that remain closer to Goffman's original conceptualisation, which dovetails more easily with the Bourdieusian perspective, more useful (Benson 2013; Nicholls 2019; Dodd 2020). Rather than restricting framing practices to deliberate decision-making processes, Dodd argues that they are always an amalgam of conscious and unconscious, strategic and habitual, planned and intuitive moments. Against this background, he suggests defining the concept of frame as what Bourdieu calls a 'linguistic habitus' (Bourdieu 2009, 77), that is, a scheme of perception and classification that results from the subjective positioning within and internalisation of the principles and rules of a given field (Dodd 2020, 4–5). Rephrasing the idea that the struggle for power and influence within a given field always requires a certain 'feel for the game', he argues that the effective utilisation of framings also requires a certain 'feel for the frame' (ibid., 2). While this does not fundamentally change our notion of what frames are (different ways of symbolically referring to an object of concern), it significantly changes our notion of what they reveal beyond the respective actors' strategic considerations. They also allow for an analysis of their underlying identity, as well as of the ways in which this identity is informed by the wider social and political context where these actors are positioned. As Dodd puts it, 'a Bourdieusian approach considers how frames are shaped by the structure of fields of social practice and relative location within these fields' (ibid., 3). Understood in this way, my methodological perspective is thus located at the point where critical discourse and frame analysis overlap. As I elaborate in more detail below, I focus on the different ways in which Refugee actors and their supporters framed the issues of (self-)representation, the German state, and the public (analysed in chapters 5-7). Furthermore, this analysis draws on a broader analysis of the dominant discourse regarding German identity in the second half of the 20th century, as well as of the socio-political profile of the different actors who were involved in (pro-)Refugee politics throughout the 1980s and early 1990s (analysed in chapter 4).

Based on this discussion of Bourdieusian perspectives in the area of critical discourse and frame analysis, I now continue with an outline of the research design and procedure that I developed and utilised in order to carry out my empirical analysis.

3.2 Data Collection and Selection: Archival Research

In order to explore the frames used by (pro-)Refugee actors in 1980s and 1990s (West) Germany, I consider the analysis of discursive texts produced and publicly disseminated by these actors most useful. To that end, I conducted original fieldwork in various on-site archives in Germany.

Before providing an overview of this process of data collection and selection, I want to begin with some reflection on the (dis-)advantages of archival research. To begin with, there is the question of alternative and/or additional data generation and collection. Most notably, it can be asked why I did not choose to carry out interviews with activists involved in these struggles. Indeed, this would have been instructive to learn more about the inner perspective of those actors, their own motivations, expectations, and the aspirations underlying their public interventions. For various reasons, however, I concluded that using this approach as the primary form of data generation and collection would have created significant problems. Most notably, I began to realise that the project of finding a sufficient number of interview partners involved in struggles that took place three to four decades ago created many practical difficulties and risks. Furthermore, my suspicion was that, even if I found interview partners, these would likely be those who were still politically active and thus would only represent a particular current of activists – those who had established themselves as dominant players in the movement. For a research project that is interested in the complexities of (pro-)Refugee struggles in the making, I thus considered this approach only partially useful.

Another methodological problem is the ‘reactive effect’ (Bryman 2012, 543) of generating historical data from a contemporary point of view. It is to be expected that interview partners today do not simply report on their past struggles, but – implicitly or explicitly – filter these reports in light of selective memories, subsequent experiences, changed views and more pressing concerns in the present. This poses significant problems for the task of exploring the actual motivations of these actors for their involvement in these struggles. The idea of conducting archival work, on the other hand, turned out to be much more fruitful for addressing my research questions. More specifically, my initial exploration of the landscape of relevant archives in Germany revealed that there was an overwhelming record of activist documents produced by a wide range of actors involved in public protests, campaigns, and discussions. I quickly realised that these documents provided rich and detailed insights into the narratives deployed by those actors in question. Furthermore, because the historical records in question have not been produced specifically for my own research project, a reactive effect does not obtain.

This is not to say that my focus on archival work did not come with difficulties and limitations. There is one major point I would like to emphasise here. As Bosi and Reiter poignantly put it, ‘what researchers can find in archives is not “everything” produced by the state administration, an institution, or an organization in a given time period, but a selection’ (Bosi and Reiter 2014, 120). Even though the archives I visited contain an immeasurable variety of material on (pro-)Refugee struggles that I would not have found in state archives, this material is nonetheless a selection. This is particularly important to keep in mind when looking at the Refugee voices represented. While Refugee solidarity, as well as self-organisation by Refugees, is often recognised as a central aspect of left politics today, this was only rudimentarily the case in the 1980s: as already outlined at the beginning of this thesis, (pro-)Refugee struggles are commonly located *after* the asylum compromise of 1993 (Jakob 2016). As I will point out again below, this is correct insofar as the (pro-)Refugee struggles in the prior phase were not part of one coherent (pro-)Refugee movement, but often subsumed under various other struggles. In this context, Refugee voices could be said to have been excluded through a process of selection because, as long as their framing did not align with more widely recognised struggles, their claims were less likely to be included in archives focusing on such other struggles. Moreover, many of the protest activities in 1980s were spontaneous and short-lived, which also decreases the probability of their documentation. Fortunately, however, these limitations did not prevent me from engaging with my research questions. Indeed, if my main focus had been on exploring and recovering the ‘invisible politics’ (Ataç et al. 2015) of Refugees in detention centres or their irregular ‘escape routes’ (Papadopoulos et al. 2008) to the FRG, the selections in the archives would have weighed more heavily. However, my specific area of interest – the *public activities* of (pro-)Refugee actors – was covered much more extensively. This also included a sufficient number of documents produced by self-identifying Refugee and migrant activists. This availability allowed me to reflect on the symbolic framings of these actors as well as on conflict dynamics over questions of power and representation within the wider (pro-)Refugee movement.

Overview of the Archives

Various factors were relevant for my decision about which archives to visit. Most important in this regard were questions of content, practicability, and logistics. The focus on pro-Refugee struggles outside of established party politics makes archives that specialise on social movements especially important. Generally, there are two types of archives that offer materials relevant for the analysis of social movements in the German context. On the one hand, there are various state-funded archives, some of them located at universities and usually offer a combination of both official and social

movement materials. On the other hand, initiatives to archive social movement history have also emerged from within those movements themselves. In the context of the ‘new social movements’ emerging from the mid-1960s onwards, a plurality of spaces, called ‘free archives’, emerged all over Germany, dedicated to the collection, preservation, distribution and discussion of knowledge produced in these movements.³⁰ In contrast to official or academic archives, these ‘free archives’ are usually considered part of those movements themselves, seeking to offer what could be called – following Bourdieu – a broadly accessible ‘memory for the Left’ (Bourdieu 2000, 186). At the same time, however, these archives experience additional difficulties in terms of financial stability and professional organisation. As Bosi and Reiter point out, in contrast to state-archives and non-state ‘established archives’, many of such ‘movement archives’ find it hard to survive on a long-term basis as they are mostly ‘characterized by a precarious financial situation, relying on voluntary contributions and short-term project funding, and many of them are threatened in their existence. These “free archives” mostly owe their foundation and their continued existence to the dedication of small groups of activists, not trained as archivists’ (Bosi and Reiter 2014, 120; see also: Bacia and Wenzel 2013).

In addition to identifying those archives relevant for my research project, I also had to make various pragmatic decisions. Indeed, the archives I visited are not the only archives that contain material on pro-Refugee struggles in Germany. Here again, the most pressing problems were a limited budget and research period. To a certain extent, this led to me prioritise larger archives with a broader focus on struggles throughout (West) Germany over smaller archives that were primarily focused on their respective local context. Furthermore, I prioritised those archives about which I could find out more in advance, mainly because these offered detailed online information about their materials. In this regard, it is important to note that there is no centralised archive that documents struggles around migration and asylum in the FRG.

Of the archives that I visited for my research, the majority were largely unfunded grassroots archives based on volunteer work. The only (partly) state-financed archives visited were the *APO Archive*, which is incorporated in the archive of Berlin’s *Freie Universität* and the *Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über die Migration in Deutschland* (DOMiD – Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany) in Cologne. The APO Archive consists of a large collection of materials concerning the history of the German extra-parliamentary opposition (APO is the acronym of the German term ‘außerparlamentarische Opposition’) and specifically the

³⁰ For an overview of still existing ‘free archives’ in Germany, see: (Bacia and Wenzel 2013; Hüttner 2003; Hüttner, Leidinger, and Oy 2011)

student movement until the 1970s. The DOMiD aims to contribute to ‘the dissolution of a monolithic historical narrative of Germany’ by preserving ‘testimonies of migration history(ies)’ (DOMiD.org 2021). It contains the largest archive focused on migration in Germany. The *Archiv für alternatives Schrifttum* (afas – Archive for Alternative Literature) in Duisburg was founded in 1985 and is one of the biggest ‘free archives’ in Germany, collecting material about social movements since 1945 (Bacia 2013). Even though it is a grassroots archive, its state funding allows the employment of a few staff members and a professional structure.

Two other archives visited in Berlin were *Papiertiger* and the *Collective Library and Poster Archive*, both grassroots archives completely based on volunteer work and donations. *Papiertiger* was founded 1984 as an archive and library of and for social movements (Papiertiger-Kollektiv 2013, 109). As a movement archive, the aim is not to neutrally collect data, but to aid remembering and learning from ‘their own history’. Most of the data gathered there consists of leaflets, brochures, and leftist grassroots magazines published for public consumption. For the purpose of this thesis, *Papiertiger* offered the most important selection of materials. However, as only one unsalaried person is practically running the archive, it is usually only open a few hours a week and the organisation of the documents is limited. The *Collective Library and Poster Archive*, which is part of the larger political space *New York at Bethanien* in Berlin-Kreuzberg, includes – among many other materials – the archive of the grassroots organisation *Antirassistische Initiative Berlin* (ARI – Anti-Racist Initiative). The ARI’s archive not only includes the organisation’s own publications, but also various documents such as anti-racist newsletters and protocols from different groups. The archive of the *Informationszentrum 3. Welt* (iz3w – Information Centre Third World) is another independent grassroots archive which is located in Freiburg (Neven-du Mont 2013). Since 1968, the information centre has critically documented North-South relations, primarily by publishing the magazine *Blätter des iz3w*. The iz3w’s archive was not founded as an archive but rather emerged out of the continued documentation of materials used for their magazine, as well as a large collection of both national and international left magazines. Also in Freiburg, the *Archiv Soziale Bewegungen* (Archive Social Movements) collects various publications and grey literature in the context of the New Social Movements since 1983, focusing on regional (Southern German) groups and events.

Procedure for Data Collection and Selection

Having provided an outline of the archives that I visited as part of my research, I will now give an outline of the process of data collection and selection. The documents collected in the archives introduced above and analysed for this research consist of printed written text. I also included

pictures such as photographs but only if they depicted written text in some form.³¹ These sources can be distinguished in many ways. Most data gathered consists of grey literature produced by protest actors for public consumption: leaflets, brochures, demonstration announcements, published reports, and periodicals that can rarely ever be found in established libraries. Moreover, I also gathered a broad selection of newspaper articles concerning (pro-)Refugee protests, primarily articles from the left-wing and left-liberal segment of the German news discourse, such as the daily newspaper *Die Tageszeitung (taz)* and *Frankfurter Rundschau*.³²

The data collection and selection procedure consisted of two main steps. First, I collected and coded empirical data relevant to my research topic. Most notably, I focused on the acquisition of archival data primarily produced by, or dealing with, political actors associated with (pro-)Refugee struggles between the 1970s and 1990s in the FRG. For that purpose, I carried out extensive archival research at a variety of both official and grassroots social movement archives in Germany – detailed above. Although I carried out various archival research visits throughout my research period, the main phase of archival research took place between February and May 2018. During this first step, I kept my search and collection procedure as wide as possible: in thematic terms, I attempted to get access to all archival documents that were loosely dealing with the issue of German migration and asylum policy, the situation of Refugees in Germany, Refugee protests and (pro-)Refugee solidarity organisations and activities in the period between the early 1970s and late 1990s. Furthermore, I looked at a wide range of documents, including leaflets, pamphlets, discussion papers, press releases, independent and official reports, conference reports, or newspaper articles. This procedure was characterised by at least two practical difficulties that made the archival research phase more time consuming than expected. First, although most archives were catalogued, some collections were only semi-structured, thus requiring a thorough study of the overall text corpus to identify the documents relevant to my research topic. Moreover, the catalogues were usually only accessible on site, so that any preselection was largely impossible; second, the overall amount of relevant archival material was, to say the least, overwhelming. Simultaneously, the opening hours of most archives were very limited so that scanning as many documents as possible (before selecting those directly relevant) was the best option. During my visits, I scanned and documented over 6,000 thousand A4 pages. To get an overview of the text

³¹ There is also a broad array of video and photo material which could not be included in this thesis.

³² This acquisition of news articles was also part of my archival work as the documentation of press coverage is a key work area of many archives focusing on public protest activities. In this sense, my selection of newspapers was primarily filtered through the available corpus of documents held by each of the above-mentioned archives. Overall, it is unsurprising that this primarily led me towards these newspapers as their political profile overlapped most explicitly with that of many (pro-)Refugee actors.

corpus, I made use of the electronic data management software Zotero as well as of software for qualitative analysis (NVivo). To that end, I coded the respective discursive text items based on the following criteria: a) (approximate) year (and month) of publication; b) group or organisation that produced the respective text, focusing primarily on their self-given name/title; c) main themes discussed in the text.³³ This process of initial coding was kept as broad as possible in order to take into account the full range of actors and themes relevant to my research project.

Although I managed to finish my archival research without significantly diverting from this ‘broad’ search process, I had to apply relevance filters due to the extraordinary size of the data collected. In a second step, then, I carried out a selection of documents most relevant for my specific research questions and objectives. Finding appropriate criteria for this selection process was difficult insofar as it required a reflection not only on my overarching research rationale, but also on potential ethical and political difficulties and challenges. On the one hand, I was primarily interested in *analyzing and evaluating overarching tendencies and developments* within the emerging configuration of pro-Refugee politics. Indeed, one of the first results of my archival research was that there was only a limited set of framings, critiques, claims and demands which recurred within the discursive texts of (pro-)Refugee actors in the 1980s and early 1990s. I quickly realised, for example, that there was a strong tendency across the spectrum of different (pro-)Refugee actors to make some sort of connection to Germany’s Nazi past in order to formulate a critique of the FRG’s contemporary migration and asylum regime. Another reason why I considered such an emphasis on overarching tendencies useful was that the early phase of (pro-)Refugee politics was itself characterised by attempts to establish some sort of coherence through the formation of umbrella organisations, coalitions, and broad campaigns. On the other hand, I wanted to *avoid a monolithic perspective that reproduces existing power relations* between different (pro-)Refugee actors. Despite a tendency towards institutionalisation, for instance, many actors involved in protests and discussions remained unorganised and took part in a spontaneous manner. Despite their fringe positions, I aimed to include their perspectives too. Furthermore, while most actors focused on a limited set of objects of reference, they nonetheless significantly disagreed over how to make sense of them. For instance, as we will see in the empirical analysis, there was much disagreement as to how – if at all – historical comparisons should be made in order to criticise the contemporary German asylum and migration regime. Overall, then, my aim was to strike a balance between focusing on *dominant*

³³ This does not mean that all themes discussed in a given text were relevant for my research. My particular focus was on all those themes that were directly relevant in order to understand how the respective actors engaged with questions of immigration, asylum, state power and national identity. This, of course, relates to all those themes that can be directly subsumed under these broader thematic areas. But it also encompasses all those themes which were not identical with but directly relevant for these areas, such as the question of collective memory.

areas of concern while doing justice to the *multivocality of perspectives within these areas*. I sought to operationalise this balancing act in the following two steps: first, I sorted the material in terms of recurrent themes, concerns and discussions. As the main criteria for this sorting process, I made use of the distinction between three objects of reference – representation, state, society – drawn from my previous theoretical reflections (see chapter 2.3). In a second step, I sought select a number of texts that represent different perspectives on these respective objects of reference.³⁴ The selection took place in this second step: rather than focusing on all discursive texts that shared a similar perspective, I considered it sufficient to restrict my in-depth analysis to a small sample that justifiably represents the wider corpus of texts with that perspective. Nonetheless, I sought to uphold a certain variety within this sample. Most notably, I sought to make sure that not only larger organisations, coalitions, and campaigns, but also smaller groups were included in the in-depth analysis. Furthermore, I attempted to represent a certain variety in terms of the political-ideological perspectives within the area of (pro-)Refugee politics.³⁵ Overall, this selection process led to a much smaller yet still varied dossier of discursive texts which formed the basis for my in-depth qualitative analysis.

Before moving on to the key parameters of this process of data analysis, it is worth reflecting on one central limitation of my data collection procedure. My primary emphasis on collecting linguistic texts dealing with, or produced within, pro-Refugee struggles poses some limitations or difficulties in terms of the analysis of the material practices and socio-political contexts of that activism. Although these texts provide rich insights into the political and discursive positions and discussions within (pro-)Refugee struggles, they are only partially useful for analysing the actual practices that (pro-)Refugee actors carried out (such as demonstrations and conferences). Furthermore, if the collected texts provide information on these practices, it might be necessary to critically reflect on the validity and accuracy of the information provided. A subject of continuous disagreement, for instance, is the question of the actual size of public demonstrations. While activists display a tendency to overstate the number of participants, mainstream media reporters or government officials (such as the police) are likely to display the opposite tendency. Hence, given that it is now impossible to directly witness these events, it becomes important to make use of the available archival documents in a way that continually reflects on potential inaccuracies.

³⁴ This does not mean that each text was exclusively allocated to one object of reference. On the contrary, most analysed texts entailed references to two or all of these objects at the same time.

³⁵ In the next section, I will discuss the main analytical criteria I used to take into account this political-ideological variety (3.3.1) and go into detail regarding the analysis of the main objects of reference (3.3.2).

To deal with these limitations, I tried to make use of various techniques. First, I reflected on the political orientation of the actors, groups and organisations that produced the collected data. Second, I cross-examined different data sources about relevant events, actors, and activities where these were available (e.g., a call for a demonstration and a newspaper article about the demonstration). Third, I combined my analysis of primary data with an examination of the existing academic literature on the history of the German migration and asylum regime, mainstream political discourse, as well as of the actors involved in the (pro-)Refugee movement.

3.3 Data Analysis: Framings in (Pro-)Refugee Struggles

Based on key tenets of CDA and frame analysis in social movement studies outlined above, I developed a procedure for data analysis consisting of two steps: first, a contextual analysis of state practices and hegemonic discourses about national identity, migration and memory as well as a contextualisation of those actors that had shaped the emergence of (pro-)Refugee protests throughout the 1980s and early 1990s; and second, an in-depth analysis of dominant framings within (pro-)Refugee struggles. In the following, I will give an outline of these two steps and introduce the key analytical categories I used during my empirical analysis.

Contextual Analysis

The key task of this step was to conduct an analysis of the wider discursive and socio-political context within which the configuration of (pro-)Refugee politics in the FRG emerged. Moreover, I also categorised and contextualised the actors involved in (pro-)Refugee protests as an analytic starting point.

First, I attempted to provide a systematic outline of those objective conditions which the different actors involved in (pro-)Refugee struggles referred to as part of their political practices and campaigns (including the socio-political background of these actors themselves). This is of course not a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of the (West) German state and public politics in the historical period in question. Instead, the focus lies on dominant and official narratives around questions of asylum, which, as we shall see in the empirical analysis, are important for understanding the dynamics of (pro-)Refugee activism. This contextual reconstruction contained two aspects. In a first step, I focused on the analysis of institutional and organisational patterns, focusing especially on the state's asylum and migration regime and the landscape of hegemonic actors in the political field. I analysed the wider discourses of national identity in relation to asylum,

to which both state representatives and a wider array of political actors contributed. Following Reisigl and Wodak, discourses can be characterised as ‘a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts that manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens, very often as “texts”, that belong to specific semiotic types, i.e. genres’ (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 36). Thus, one of the main criteria for identifying different discourses is to organise discursive texts in terms of thematic similarities. I focus on three themes in this regard: the framing of West Germany as a *post-Nazi nation*, a *Western European nation*, and an *ethno-nation*. Given that both the post-war narratives of German national identity and the particular expression it took via memory politics and the historical developments and changes of the FRG’s immigration and asylum policies have already been covered widely in the literature, I concentrate on secondary sources in order to develop this part of my analysis.

Second, I contextualised and categorised the actors involved in (pro-)Refugee protests by focusing on the main ways in which they identified themselves as political actors. Three categories proved most relevant in this regard. Some actors primarily identified through reference to the shared lived experience, in particular in terms of migration experience, legal status, ‘national’ and ‘ethnic’ identities. Others primarily identified themselves through reference to a shared thematic focus on asylum in particular and human rights as well as humanitarianism in general. Lastly, various actors came together primarily based on reference to a shared set of political beliefs, norms and values. As these categories of self-identification as political actors provide useful starting points about their positionality, they will be taken up as background information throughout the empirical chapters. Overall, however, I decided against using these analytical distinctions as the primary framework for my empirical analysis. For, while they provide useful starting points about the positionality of the different (pro-)Refugee actors, they cannot replace the critical analysis of this positionality (which requires a reflection on the social and political conditions of these different types of self-identification). For instance, we will see throughout the empirical analysis that the critical framing analysis oftentimes reveals similarities between different actors that regard themselves as fundamentally different from each other, such as between German civil society organisations and German radical left-wing organisations. This indicates that the shared German identity of both organisations is in fact more prevalent in order to make sense of their symbolic practices (even if this is not admitted by either organisation). Put differently, I consider it more fruitful to put the *primary* emphasis on distinguishing between different framing practices, whereas

the practices of self-identification are included as *secondary* elements within the analysis of each framing.³⁶

The contextual analysis of the dominant discourse on ‘German identity’ and the overview of the different protest actors (distinguished in terms of their different practices of self-identification) will be presented in chapter 4.

In-Depth Analysis

In a second step, I conducted an in-depth analysis of the framings found in the primary archival data. Based on my theoretical perspectives on the embeddedness of (pro-)Refugee activism within the institutional and symbolic order of the nation-state, I was especially interested in analysing those types of framings that explicitly or implicitly referred to the context dimensions analysed in the previous step. On a theoretical level, I had already hypothesised that the symbolic embeddedness of (pro-)Refugee actors primarily manifested itself in relation to three overarching objects of reference (see chapter 2.3):

- (pro-)Refugee actors themselves,
- the state,
- the public.

One of the findings of my empirical analysis was that these objects of reference did indeed figure prominently within the discursive texts of the early (pro-)Refugee actors in the FRG. They will thus be used to organise the presentation of my original empirical analysis in the form of three chapters (5, 6 and 7). The main purpose of each chapter, then, is to examine the different ways in which these respective objects of reference were framed, and to evaluate what these framings tell us about the positionality of the different (pro-)Refugee actors within the nation-state order.

To carry out my in-depth qualitative analysis of different framings, I made use of an analytical procedure developed by Wodak et al., which consists of the following three steps (Wodak et al. 2009): the analysis of contents, the analysis of linguistic realisations³⁷, and the analysis of discursive

³⁶ The only exception is the first empirical chapter on problems of (self-)representation where the self-identity of the actors will become a more explicit subject of inquiry.

³⁷ According to Wodak et al., this category refers to the specific ways in which discursive strategies and aims are realised linguistically, that is, to the ‘(linguistic) means designated to help realise these aims’ (Wodak et al. 2009, 34). This definition implies a certain deductive analytical procedure insofar as the discursive strategies and aims need to be identified before their linguistic realisation can be explored. For my own in-depth analysis, I considered an open-ended, inductive analytical process more useful. In the following, I therefore use the more general term linguistic device.

strategies. In line with the Bourdiesian orientation within my process of analysis, I added a fourth step: the analysis of different ways in which these framings relate to and were informed by the national doxa.

1. *Content analysis* – First, I analysed each text in terms of the ‘matrix of thematic contents’ (ibid., 30) that was used to frame the respective objects of reference. More specifically, I coded and organised the respective texts in terms of different ‘discourse topics’ (Reisigl and Wodak 2001): thematically distinct aspects of the social or discursive world based on which a symbolic image of the object of reference was produced. I placed particular emphasis on those themes that explicitly or implicitly referred to the wider discourses about the (West) German nation-state and its hegemonic political culture outlined in the contextual analysis. For instance, the predominant themes that I found during the analysis of those texts that focused on the state were ‘the state’s migration and asylum policy’, ‘the state’s deportation and detention system’, ‘German identity’, ‘Nazism’, ‘(German) imperialism’, ‘the state’s international role’, ‘the Basic Law’, ‘liberal democracy’, among others. Furthermore, I paid attention to ‘intertextual or interdiscursive references’ (Wodak et al. 2009, 10), that is, passages within a particular text that refer to multiple different texts and discourses, thus establishing associative or explanatory links between them. This aspect is especially relevant for my project because it allows me to analyse how questions of migration, asylum and refuge were connected to wider discourses about national identity and collective memory.

2. *Analysis of linguistic devices* – Additionally, I looked at the linguistic mechanisms that social actors drew on in order to approach these topics. Following Wodak et al., this includes an analysis of both overarching patterns and more specific linguistic devices. Most notably, Wodak et al. suggest analysing ‘spatial’ and ‘temporal’ references (ibid., 35) that play a crucial role in the contextualisation of given topics. Furthermore, they look at ‘personal’ references or the ‘linguistic representation of [...] social actors’ (ibid.). On a more concrete level, this can also involve the analysis of ‘lexical units and syntactic devices’ (ibid., 35) such as the deictic expressions ‘us’ and ‘them’. As we shall see in the empirical chapters, the analysed (pro-)Refugee actors I analysed were continuously concerned with questions of categorisation and (self-)representation, as well as with the task of finding appropriate spatial-temporal contexts to make sense of the issues and problems at hand. Furthermore, I explored how these actors tried to substantiate their discursive practices on an argumentative level.

In this respect, a very useful analytical tool is the concept of ‘topos’ or ‘argument scheme’ deployed by Reisigl and Wodak. It can be defined as ‘the content-related warrants or “conclusion rules” that

connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim. As such, they justify the transition from the argument or arguments to the conclusion [...]’ (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 75). These conclusion rules often entail not only interpretative claims (‘x is related to y’), but also normative claims (‘x is wrong because of its relation to y’, ‘x should be done because of y’). One example that will appear recurrently in my empirical analysis is the topos of comparison that can be expressed in the following conclusion rule: ‘If A and B are similar with respect to X, they have to be treated similarly with respect to X’ (Reisigl 2014, 76). Historical comparisons featured especially prominently in the analysed empirical materials. Finally, I also focused on the more indirect ways in which discursive topics were connected, such as implications, allusions, and evocations (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 54–56; Wodak et al. 2009, 35–48). As we shall see in the empirical analysis, such latent linguistic patterns were particularly relevant when it came to the discussion of sensitive topics constrained by taboos in the wider discourse.

3. Analysis of strategies – Overall, the first two steps allowed me to analyse the basic thematic and linguistic elements of each framing. In this third step, I further interpreted these framings in terms of their strategic underpinnings. More specifically, I sought to interpret how the respective actors made use of these framings to achieve a certain goal within the wider political field. As outlined before, I think it is misleading to assume that the development and usage of frames is nothing more than the result of conscious, deliberate choices. This is not to say, however, that strategic considerations are irrelevant. On the contrary, an analysis of the strategic dimension provides us with more detailed insights into the different ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors made use of their framings in the public sphere to criticise state and its political hostilities against Refugees and instead make a case for pro-Refugee solidarity. To analyse this aspect, CDA scholars suggest the category of discursive strategies that can be defined as ‘a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices [...] adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim’ (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 44). To further systematise these strategic positionings, I made use of the analytical distinction introduced earlier between the ‘diagnostic’, ‘prognostic’ and ‘motivational’ dimensions of framings (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow et al. 1986). Indeed, as we will discuss in greater detail in the empirical analysis, any discursive strategy developed by (pro-)Refugee actors usually involved the identification, characterisation, and explanation of a certain problem (diagnosis), proposals of ways to solve or overcome this problem (prognosis), as well as the attempt to convince other actors to get involved in such problem-solving practices (motivation). Here again, it was important to analyse discursive strategies in their normative dimensions, that is, as attempts to make normative claims about the moral, political, or legal rightness/wrongness of (certain aspects of) the respective objects of reference.

4. *Contextual Evaluation* – In a final step, I sought to examine what the respective framings and their strategic implications tell us about the embeddedness of the respective authors within the wider nation-state order and the national doxa. To that end, I made use of the Bourdieusian conceptual triad of doxa, orthodoxy and heterodoxy. In other words, the main task was to evaluate how and the extent to which different actors took for granted (doxastic position), actively or implicitly justified (orthodox position) or challenged (heterodox position) certain aspects of the national doxa that I identified in the contextual analysis. At this point, I sought to avoid simplistic frameworks, such as the clear-cut dualism between ‘heterodox actors’ on the one hand, and ‘orthodox actors’ on the other. Instead, I made use of Bourdieu’s field-theoretical perspective that allows for a positioning of different actors along a continuum of proximity-to-distance to the nation-state. Furthermore, I sought to highlight the ambivalent character of many framings developed by protest actors. My empirical discussion of the framings of (pro-)Refugee actors demonstrated that there was frequently a discrepancy between the self-image of certain actors and the actual framings they developed to substantiate this self-image. Among radical left-wing actors, for instance, there was a tendency to develop framings that reproduced certain elements of the national doxa, although the actors themselves understood themselves as radical opponents of the nation-state. There were also various actors who made use of both orthodox and heterodox framings without considering this a problem. Overall, then, this contextual evaluation was useful for exploring and evaluating the complex ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors were embedded within the very nation-state order they sought to address and challenge as part of their fight for Refugee rights and recognition. Furthermore, this analytical step shed light on the political tensions and conflict dynamics within these struggles. Most notably, the analysis will show that the political conflicts over questions of Refugee (self-)representation cannot be properly understood without heeding to the uneven ways in which Refugees and pro-Refugee support actors were embedded within the nation-state order.

Based on this multi-faceted in-depth analysis, I sought to cluster the analysed texts into a variety of frames characterised by specific thematic and linguistic patterns, strategic orientations, as well as specific relations to the national doxa. One of the results of my empirical analysis was that there was only a limited number of overarching object-related framings towards which the different (pro-)Refugee actors gravitated. In other words, there was a certain coherence between the framing practices of the different (pro-)Refugee actors. More specifically, I found that the vast majority of (pro-)Refugee actors symbolically related to the state as an *object of critique*, the wider public audience as a *reservoir of solidarity*, as well as the wider configuration of (pro-)Refugee actors as an *object and*

terrain of representation. These sets of framings will be further introduced and elaborated at the beginning of chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4 Socio-Historical Context: ‘German Identity’ and Asylum

In order to contextualise the subsequent empirical analysis, this chapter begins with an examination of dominant narratives about migration, asylum, national identity and collective memory that informed the development of the FRG’s asylum regime in the post-war period (4.1). It then continues with a structured analysis of the different political actors who throughout the 1980s and 1990s began to organise protests against this asylum regime, focusing in particular on the different self-understandings of these actors (4.2). Such a contextualisation is necessary in order to shed light on the different ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors symbolically referred to the (West) German nation-state and its official political culture.

4.1 Dominant Narratives in Public Discourse

A more detailed reconstruction of the state’s migration and asylum regime as well as its national doxa is required for understanding the political conditions (pro-)Refugee actors were confronted with during their attempts to raise public awareness and to mobilise political support for Refugee rights and recognition. For this purpose, I focus on orthodox constructions of ‘German identity’ in relation to discussions of asylum from the FRG’s founding period to the de facto abolition of the constitutional right of asylum in 1992/3. More specifically, I examine the interdiscursive entanglements between questions of national identity, memory, migration, and asylum. I demonstrate that these discourses centred around the following three doxastic framings that ‘set the scene’ for the specific developments and conflict dynamics between the late 1970s and early 1990s, which I analyse from a protest perspective in the following chapters: the framing of the ‘German nation’ as a *post-Nazi nation* and as a *European Western nation*, and the *ethno-nationalist understanding* of ‘German identity’. All of these framings were interlinked, and – at least partly – shifted throughout the 1980s. The analysis will also be combined with an outline of key legal and institutional developments of the German asylum regime, including an analysis of the different legal and political categorisations of migrants via which these state practices were codified and justified. In short, I try to bring three key aspects of orthodox narratives of ‘German identity’ into dialogue with legal-political developments in post-war (West) Germany to illustrate and contextualise relevant points of reference in subsequent chapters.

With this reconstruction, I am not attempting to provide a comprehensive overview of prevalent narratives and assumptions about ‘German identity’ at that time; instead, I focus on those articulations that played an important role in relation to debates about immigration and asylum and that were consequently picked up by protest actors.

Germany as a Post-Nazi Nation: Memory Politics and the Constitutional Right to Asylum

The shadows of the German Nazi past and the ‘lessons’ that were supposedly drawn from it have been a central point of discussion with regards to German national identity, and these debates have always affected discussions around asylum. After the Second World War and following the occupation by the allied forces between 1945-1949, the West-German state was re-founded and ‘re-invented’ (Schuster 2003, 182) as a liberal-democratic *Rechtsstaat* (Gibney 2008, 87–89). The core tenets of its legal-political system and national identity were formulated in its founding document: the Basic Law [*Grundgesetz* – GG], which has served as the West German constitution from 1949 until 1990 and the German constitution (i.e., including East Germany) since 1990. One central aspect of this founding of West Germany lay in the attempt to dissociate the FRG both substantially and symbolically from the preceding Nazi state and those constitutional elements of the Weimar Republic that had made it possible. As Schuster puts it, ‘The German Basic Law was an expression of universal liberal norms and values that had been repressed by the Nazi dictatorship. By enshrining these norms in the constitution, it was hoped that they would ensure the preservation of the liberal character of the new Republic’ (Schuster 2003, 185-186). The right to asylum – which was constitutionally guaranteed in the Basic Law – can be regarded as an important symbolic cornerstone in this regard. Although the exact interpretation of this right led to ongoing legal and political disagreement until the late 1980s, the post-war decades did not see any serious political attempts to challenge it as a key element in the normative self-understanding of the FRG. Thus, in the immediate post-war period, not only did the guarantee of asylum become an undeniable right; it also constituted the centrepiece of the canon in the FRG’s official doxa. Therefore, any political attempt to deny this right remained confined to right-wing heterodox forces within the wider political field. What made the 1980s and 1990s particular as a historical period was the fact that the doxastic status of the constitutional right to asylum was increasingly questioned within the hegemonic political landscape. Furthermore, this was also accompanied by and interconnected with new public debates about Germany’s Nazi legacy, as well as its meaning and relevance for the present. As we will see in the following chapters, it was this particular political configuration within which (pro-)Refugee activism emerged and to which it needed to respond in order to make public claims for Refugee rights and pro-Refugee solidarity.

The New Founding of the West-German Nation-State – late 1940s to early 1950s

After heated debates in 1948-49, the Parliamentary Council [Parlamentarischer Rat] opted for a comparatively comprehensive but vague inclusion of a right of asylum in the German Basic Law, where Art. 16 II 2 GG stated that ‘Persons persecuted on political grounds shall have the right of asylum’. Compared to the development of asylum regimes in other (European) nation-states, the guarantee of a right of asylum on a constitutional level was indeed exceptional (Schuster 2003, 183–184; Gibney 2008, 88). As Schuster emphasises, it ‘was introduced under economic, political and social conditions that were far more challenging than those facing Europe today, out of a need to assert not only remorse, but certain ‘liberal’ values that were to be the cornerstones of the new republic – justice and tolerance’ (Schuster 2003, 185). Even though the ratification of the Geneva Convention in July 1951 led to the inscription of such a right into the legal frameworks of numerous countries, the German inclusion in the constitution underlines its symbolic relevance. Due to its (unique) comprehensiveness, many have interpreted this right as ‘the historical answer to the experience of Nazism’ (Bade 1994, 94). Indeed, looking at the parliamentary debates that preceded the Council’s decision, the persecutory and deadly politics of the Nazi regime played a crucial role in the justification of a constitutionally secured right to asylum (Herbert 2001, 264; Schuster 2003, 182–184; Bade 1994, 91–94).³⁸ In this sense, the question of asylum played a crucial role for the (re-)articulation of national identity in the very first years of post-Nazi German history. However, just as the question of how the past ought and should inform the present has been a contentious issue throughout the FRG’s history, so too, the constitutional right to asylum was not a forgone conclusion. The very process of its implementation had been highly contentious and received much resistance both from outside and from within the Parliamentary Council (Münch 1992, 17–21; Schuster 2003, 182–183). On one hand, some politicians argued in favour of establishing the right of political asylum as an unconditional principle. For instance, the Social Democratic politician Carlo Schmid stated that ‘[t]he right of asylum is always a question of generosity, and if one wants to be generous, one has to take the risk of having been mistaken about the person in question’ (cited in: Althoff 1998, 183–184). On the other, other members such as the conservative politician von Brentano stated that ‘if we introduce such a broad notion of the right of asylum, then we create the conditions for all those who are unable to stay in their home country because of their active engagement against the democratic order, to refer to this right of asylum and thus continue to live and work in Germany unpunished’ (ibid., 184). The general but vague formulation of the right to asylum can thus be interpreted as a compromise. On the one

³⁸ For a detailed analysis of these debates and the specific ways in which the legacy of Nazism and the right of asylum was discursively connected, see: (Münch 1992, 17–21; Poutrus 2019, 21–40; Feldkamp 2019).

hand, the open phrasing allowed for a wide applicability. On the other hand, by not clearly defining who ‘persons persecuted on political grounds’ were supposed to be, the law was from the beginning open to a wide spectrum of interpretation. In other words, in spite of its comprehensiveness, the law’s vagueness has made the legislative and executive processes of determining who counts as a refugee fundamentally crucial from the moment of its implementation (Poutrus 2016, 856). That this interpretation did not necessarily have to be generous was demonstrated in the law’s immediate application. Given the massive movement of people in Europe in the immediate post-war context – with nearly 500,000 people coming from Eastern Europe to the newly founded FRG in 1949/50 – politicians were from the very start interested in reducing immigration (Bade 1994, 95). The first regulation to be explicit about the standards for the FRG’s asylum procedure was the Asylum Ordinance from January 1953.³⁹ It directly referred back to the Police Decree on Foreigners [*Ausländer-Polizeiverordnung* – APVO] from August 1938, the highly restrictive principles of which were still seen as applicable (Poutrus 2016, 857). The Asylum Ordinance defined refugees in accordance with the definition of the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* which the FRG signed in 1953 and which, until 1967, only covered European refugees. Thus, even though the German constitutional right to asylum could have been interpreted more broadly due to its vagueness, its application remained within the understanding of the Geneva Convention, thereby foregrounding a restricted understanding of refugees as European persons – as we will see in the next chapter, these were primarily individuals ‘fleeing communism’. The potential conflict between narrow and wide interpretations of the constitutional right to asylum was further exacerbated by another ambiguity – since the law could be interpreted as grounding both a right of the state to grant asylum on its territory and an individual right to receive protection from the state (Bade 1994, 95). The state’s actual responsibilities vis-à-vis those claiming asylum were thus also open to conflicting interpretations. It was these tensions and ambiguities within the German asylum law that eventually made the strong politicisation of the status of Refugees possible.

It is important to keep in mind that these struggles over interpretation were simultaneously struggles over German national identity. As Bade puts it, ‘the discussion around the change of the constitutional right to asylum has always also had an important historic-political dimension with regard to the self-conception of the Germans’ (ibid., 94). Hence, what needs to be highlighted to

³⁹ In addition to the regulation, the Federal Authority for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees [Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge – BAMF] as well as the Central Register of Foreign Nationals (Ausländerzentralregister) were founded that year. Based in Bavaria, the BAMF became the primary institution responsible for asylum procedures, including the accommodation of asylum-seekers on its premises.

make sense of the political discussions over asylum in the course of the following decades is that the right of asylum was a core element of the early FRG's official doxa: it was a constitutional principle and a political symbol to show that the West German state had fundamentally broken with, taken responsibility for, and drawn its lessons from the atrocities of its Nazi predecessor. The struggle was thus not about the question whether the right to asylum was a lesson drawn from the past, but about what that lesson actually required in the present. Because of this entanglement, subsequent discussions about asylum were therefore closely linked to broader interpretations of the Nazi past.

Asylum and Memory Politics – 1950s to early 1990s

The ambiguous relation between the right of asylum and the legacy of Nazism also changed with dominant currents in the interpretation of that legacy. Although it was at the heart of the constitutional implementation of a right of asylum, the official discourse about the significance of dealing with and learning from Germany's Nazi legacy quickly faded away and was replaced by what Assmann describes as a 'consensus of silence' (Assmann 2016, 44; Adorno 1971; see also: Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich 1975; Lübke 2007). In his analysis of official memory in West Germany, Olick argues that in the period from the FRG's founding in 1949 to the late 1960s,

the Nazi past was constructed as a bounded aberration from the true course of German history. The rhetorical style of leaders talking about that period was thus defensive, exculpatory, and repressive. The problem was identified as a faulty constitution and an unstable first German democracy. These problems had been 'solved' with the (albeit provisional) founding of the Federal Republic. (Olick 2017, 63).

Thus, the most striking discursive manifestation was the myth of the 'zero hour' [Stunde Null], a historical moment in which Germany was reborn without any traces of the past. This repression of the past was not only instrumental for the quick reintegration of the FRG into the Western international system, it also played an important role as a first step in the restoration of a positive national self-image that was not burdened by uncomfortable questions about collective involvement in and responsibility for the Nazi regime (Assmann 2016, 45–46; Berger 2004, 176–181; Stapelfeldt 2005, 37–107). Furthermore, it was accompanied by widespread attempts to silence the victims of the Nazi regime, to exonerate active perpetrators of the Nazi crimes, many of whom retained high positions in state, civil society and economic organisations, and to imagine the German population as the true victim of the Second World War (Berger 2004, 172–173; Fulbrook 2018).

To some degree, this 'consensus of silence' was challenged in the late 1960s. Olick distinguishes a briefer second period of official memory in this regard which spans from the late 1960s to the mid

1970s: 'In this period, the Nazi past was seen as an essential feature of German history, one whose structural as well as cultural manifestations had not been totally expurgated' (Olick 2017, 64). Emerging in the context of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials (1963-65), the protests of 1968, and institutionalised throughout Willy Brandt's chancellorship from 1969 to 1974, the myth of a 'zero hour' was increasingly challenged, especially by left-wing, social-democratic and liberal political forces, and the question of German guilt came to the fore. However, the 'coming to terms with the past' practiced in this context has been widely debated and criticised. For example, various authors have argued that those debates were not motivated by the attempt to deal with and overcome the social and political conditions that had made the rise of Nazism, but rather by the wish to project feelings of guilt onto the generation of parents and grandparents. Furthermore, it has been argued that the post-1968 generation, too, was primarily concerned with constructing a positive German identity rather than regarding nationalism as one of the driving forces of historical fascism and Nazism. The only difference was that memory politics became a crucial element of this German identity, rather than something that needed to be repressed and silenced (Jureit and Schneider 2010; Frahm 2004; Benicke 2010; Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich 1975; Assmann 2016, 46–47; Olick 2017, 213–238; Engert 2014).

Olick describes the years from the mid 1970s to German unification as a third period, largely characterised by the framing of West Germany as a 'normal nation'. The political background to this development was the growing influence of the conservative and right-wing political currents that led to the electoral victory of Helmut Kohl in 1982. Under the slogan of a 'spiritual moral turn' [geistig-moralische Wende], the Kohl government put a much stronger emphasis on re-establishing a positive national identity that would not be burdened by questions of collective guilt and historical responsibility. This inevitably led to strong tendencies of relativising and diminishing the significance of the Nazi past. Two notable events that symbolised this conservative re-appropriation of memory politics need emphasising here. First, Helmut Kohl's and Ronald Reagan's visit to the military cemetery in Bitburg in 1985 – an event which led to criticism outside Germany because the commemoration also included members of the Waffen-SS. And, second, the 'historians' dispute' [Historikerstreit] of the late 1980s, which focused on the question of the singularity of the Holocaust and gave rise to attempts to relativise and normalise the German past (Knowlton 1993). As Olick puts it,

the Nazi past was viewed as one historical epoch among many in a long and venerable German history. The rhetorical style of historical discussion was relativizing, normalizing, and revisionist, as it became the vogue to compare Germany's burdens with those of other countries. In this period, the neoconservative leadership worked for changes in historical consciousness as part of a program of cultural reform aimed at enhancing legitimacy through identity. (Olick 2017, 65)

This perspective was especially convenient for those who refused to deal with questions of German perpetration and complicity (Assmann 2016, 65–66). Nonetheless, the late 1970s and early 1980s also saw important countertendencies. Most notably, the broadcasting of the US television series *Holocaust*, which was aired in Germany in 1979, had a significant impact on both public and everyday discussions about Nazism and the Holocaust. According to estimations, the series was entirely or partially watched by around 20 million people, that is, one third of Germany's population (BBC News 2019). Furthermore, it led to heightened public discussions that for the first time put an explicit perspective on the victims of the Holocaust. Overall, the 1980s can be characterised as a period of increasing politicisation and popularisation of questions of 'coming to terms with the past'.

Most strikingly, this discourse about collective memory overlapped with the increasing politicisation of migration and asylum in the 1980s and early 1990s. In the following two sections, I will demonstrate that this period was characterised by the growing influence of political forces with an anti-immigration and anti-asylum stance, justified on the ground of two other framings of Germany: as a Western nation and as an ethno-nation. Overall, these tendencies culminated in the de facto abolition of the constitutional right of asylum in the wake of the so-called 'asylum compromise' in 1993. At this point, I would like to highlight that these debates did not only occur in parallel with but were crucially articulated through public discourses centred around the framing of Germany as a post-Nazi nation. The most important feature of the changing official and hegemonic discourse was to propose a strict limitation, but not the entire erasure of the right to asylum. Thus, what is particularly interesting is that even those actors who proposed a change of the constitutional right of asylum to reduce Refugee immigration did not challenge the framing of that right as a lesson from the Nazi past. Even within the CDU (which agreed upon Refugee immigration as a fundamental problem), the constitutional right as such remained unquestioned. In 1986, for example, Chancellor Helmut Kohl frequently emphasised that the constitutional right of asylum had 'its historical reason' in the 'bitter experience of Nazi barbarism' (*Der Spiegel* 1986a, 24 - transl. by TJP) and that it could not be the philosophy of his government to 'restrict the right to asylum in principle' (*Der Spiegel* 1986b, 98 - transl. by TJP). The claim was, rather, that the only way to do justice to the constitutional right of asylum was to secure its practicability: in order to do so, however, it had to be limited. In this sense, the basic idea of the right of asylum remained unquestioned, while its practical meaning was highly contested. What we can see here is a clear allusion to Germany's Nazi legacy, which is deployed to argue against the right of asylum in its current state. As various authors have argued, this was an influential position in the wider political

discourse about asylum in the 1980s and early 1990s, especially among, but not limited to, the political right (Herbert 2001, 264–268; 2014b; Osterkamp 1993). As Schuster points out:

Much of the debate in the early 1990s focused on the intentions of the drafters of the Basic Law. It was important to prove that an amendment would not represent a break with the values embodied in the Basic Law. In other words, it was essential to show that it was the circumstances, not the values, that had altered. (Schuster 2003, 183)

CDU politician Klaus Hornung made this point clear, for example, by stating that ‘for the third time this century, the Germans can do their part to ruin Europe, this time through their fashionable delusion of building the Social Welfare Office and the hospital for the whole world’ (Hornung 1990, 3 - transl. by TJP). In this sense, the framing of Germany as a post-Nazi nation in relation to asylum questions had become a doxastic aspect of German national identity. Its implications remained, nonetheless, the subject of constant struggles, struggles that peaked in the late 1980s and early 1990s and finally ended with the ‘asylum compromise’ of 1992/93. As we shall see in the next sections, these attempts to make a case for the strict limitation of the right of asylum were based on and connected to other framings developed in the context of official discourses about Germany’s geopolitical role, as well as its position on immigration.

In the subsequent empirical chapters, I will demonstrate that a wide range of protest actors drew heavily on references to the Nazi past and the Basic Law as discursive strategies for making a case for the preservation and expansion of the right of asylum. This demonstrates that the early (pro-)Refugee struggles in (West) Germany in the late 1970s and early 1980s were directly enmeshed within and influenced by these overlapping discourses and controversies about asylum and memory.

Germany as a Western European Nation: Anti-Communism

Linked to the German past and legacy of Nazism was a second aspect of the national identity that was relevant for questions of asylum, namely, the framing of the FRG as a *Western* nation, which implied an anti-communist outlook (Wehler 2008, 245–247). This was particularly relevant due to the parallel founding and continued existence of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), largely regarded as illegitimate. Ironically, as Berger emphasises, this anti-communist orientation can be put in the context of the above-discussed historical (dis-)continuities with Nazism: while it served to reinforce the imagined break with the past and directed attention towards a new political enemy, it can also be seen as a direct continuation of the widespread anti-communist sentiments characteristic of Nazi Germany, thus representing an ‘ideological bridge from the Nazi ideology to the liberal democratic ideals of the FRG’ (Berger 2004, 182).

Until the end of the Cold War, anti-communism was a driving force in asylum politics. This led to the admission of many Refugees, despite the FRG's overall goal of keeping asylum admissions low and its ethno-national self-understanding (further discussed below). As Poutrus puts it, '[t]he concerns formulated early on by German state agencies regarding the internal order of the FRG in case of uncontrolled admission of foreign refugees were repeatedly overshadowed by the concern for external security, particularly its threat by the communist countries of the Eastern bloc' (Poutrus 2016, 879; see also: Marrus 2002). Put differently, the admission of persons 'fleeing Communism' was seen as a symbolic triumph in the struggle against the Eastern bloc and it therefore trumped the otherwise rejectionist attitude towards Refugee immigration.

Throughout the early 1950s, asylum applications were very low and the FRG took in relatively few refugees (ibid., 861-862). This changed with the revolutionary events taking place in Hungary and their violent suppression by the Soviet troops in 1956, an event that led to a sudden increase in asylum-seekers from that region. These asylum-seekers were met with broad public solidarity and they increasingly became framed as allies in the fight against communism (ibid., 874-875). The FRG granted asylum to more than 10,000 Hungarian refugees. A similar response was adopted following the 'Prague Spring' in 1968. However, these instances of admission did not change the general rejection of refugees enshrined in the asylum regulations of 1953. That these cases of admission did not imply a general change can be seen in the case of the Algerian war of independence from France (1954-1962) and in the case of the Croatian refugees in Germany in 1962: both groups were consistently framed as terrorists, and therefore regarded as threats to the internal order of the FRG.

Thus, despite the principally broad understanding of Refugees in legal terms, they were de facto equated with Eastern Europeans fleeing communism from early on. The implementation of a new aliens' act [*Ausländergesetz* – AuslG] in 1965 (replacing the Asylum Ordinance) did not change this dual approach of accepting Eastern-Europeans, while rejecting non-European asylum-seekers. Even though the replacement of the APVO was supposed to 'demonstrate a symbolic dissociation with the hitherto discriminatory legal practice' (Poutrus 2016, 883) and thus a symbolic dissociation from the Nazi regime, the comprehensive practice of granting asylum according to the constitution remained restricted through its executive interpretation. The division was further exacerbated in 1966 when the Conference of the (Länder) Ministers of the Interior decided to grant protection from deportation to Eastern European immigrants fleeing communism, independent of their refugee status.

In 1973, the military coup in Chile that ended the socialist government led to heated discussions around the question of whether people who were persecuted on the grounds of being communist should be granted asylum. Even though the German government decided to admit some of these Chilean refugees, the disagreements made one point clear: the one-time admission of ‘communists’ did not lead to any universal consent about protecting people persecuted on any other political grounds (Poutrus 2016, 886). The exception therefore strengthened the rule of regarding as ‘true’ Refugees only those who fled communist regimes. As we shall see, this interpretation shaped the dominant framings of other asylum-seekers as ‘abusers’ in the late 1970s.

‘Abusive non-Europeans’ – late 1970s to mid-1980s

While asylum application numbers had been on the rise throughout the 1970s, they more than doubled from around 51,000 in 1979 to over 107,000 in 1980. Even more significantly, the groups applying for asylum in the FRG changed dramatically, with more and more people arriving from non-European countries, particularly in the late 1970s (Bade 1994, 54). The overall number of countries of origin increased from 39 in 1966 to 68 in 1970 and 101 in 1980 (Karakayalı 2008, 169). Following a military coup in Turkey in 1980, a large number of Turkish citizens sought asylum in West Germany, making up more than half of the 107,000 asylum applications in that year (Schuster 2003, 194). Other significant areas of origin in that period were Iran, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. It was in this moment of increased asylum applications from the non-European world that asylum became a widely problematised issue. As Poutrus puts it, ‘at the latest in 1980, refugee and asylum politics develop from a topic only experts and legal scholars were concerned with to a crucial object of German domestic politics’ (Poutrus 2016, 890; see also: Green 2001, 89–91). However, as a ‘frontline-state in the Cold War’ (Bade 1994, 95), the FRG remained ideologically committed to the admission of refugees fleeing Communism which excluded most non-European Refugees. In contrast to asylum-seekers from Eastern Europe, their recognition rates remained low.⁴⁰ It is such double standards between ‘deserving’ European and ‘underserving’ non-European Refugees which, as we will see in the empirical analysis, led many (pro-)Refugee actors to accuse the German asylum regime of being shaped by racist exclusions.

In this context, non-Europeans’ applications for asylum were widely framed as ‘abuses’ of the asylum procedure, German law, and society more generally (Münch 1992, 108). The public framing of ‘the problem’ as ‘asylum abuse’ was discursively connected to various terms which served the

⁴⁰ For instance, the 1974 recognition rates for asylum-seekers from Eastern Europe were 78% and from the Americas 93%. In contrast, it was only 1.4% for asylum-seekers from the Middle East (Schuster 2003, 197).

purpose of denying or relativising the authenticity and legitimacy of the urgent needs of Refugees, such as ‘bogus’, ‘economic’ or ‘poverty asylum seekers’ (Mattson 1995, 66–69; Münch 1992, 109). As Schuster points out, these newly coined terms for asylum applicants ‘reflected the assumed motivation of the asylum seekers – that they were economic migrants, cheats fleeing poverty rather than persecution’ (Schuster 2003, 197). Moreover, asylum-seekers were increasingly referred to in terms relating to natural catastrophes, such as ‘floods’, ‘waves’ and ‘avalanches’ (Jäger 1993; Mattson 1995). Finally, non-European asylum seekers were increasingly referred to as ‘Asylanten’ (asylum seekers) – a distinctly pejorative German neologism that had its origins in 1960s legal discussions on asylum law. As Schuster points out, these images were primarily provoked, pushed forward and shaped by the Christian Union Parties, as well as other right-wing forces in public discourse (Schuster 2003), but they soon resonated more widely. Based on these framings and discursive strategies, public debates on asylum were increasingly based on the normative distinction between ‘refugees’ and ‘asylum seekers’, whereby the former were associated with people who had a genuine need for asylum – those fleeing communism in general and Eastern European Refugees in particular – and the latter with non-European Refugees who were not seen as having such a need.

It was in the context of this hostile discourse that the German asylum system became significantly more restrictive. This process already began during the ‘social-liberal’ coalition (SPD/FDP) in government between 1974 and 1982 and was further consolidated by the subsequent Conservative-liberal government (CDU-CSU/FDP) under chancellor Helmut Kohl (1982-1998). In 1978 and 1980, the government passed two laws to expedite asylum procedures (Münch 1992, 80; Poutrus 2016, 890) that also entailed repressive and deterrent measures, such as a one-year prohibition to work, the reduction of welfare benefits, the payment of most of these benefits in kind, and the threat of deportation in case of a negative decision. These legal measures were accompanied by policy measures that aimed to reduce the number of newly arriving asylum-seekers by making their entry to FRG territory more difficult. Visa requirements were introduced for people from non-European countries that had so far been the main countries of origin for asylum-seekers: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Sri Lanka in late March, India, and Bangladesh in July, and Turkey in October 1980 (Münch 1992, 82). To understand the significance of this policy, it is important to keep in mind that visas for asylum had never existed which means a person had to be on German territory to be able to apply for asylum in the first place (the exception being refugees coming through a resettlement programme). The introduction of visa requirements negatively affected the ability to enter German territory for people from these countries *in general*, independent of their potential claims to asylum. Thus, while the policy claimed to address the so-

called abuse of the German asylum procedure, it practically reduced access to it even for those people who would have been granted asylum, had they been able to apply. In short, the legal and political measures taken to combat the problem of ‘asylum abuse’ by non-Europeans consisted of, first, accelerating asylum procedures so that rejected claimants could be deported more swiftly; second, motivating asylum-seekers to leave again; and third, preventing people from entering the asylum procedure in the first place, by denying them access to German territory.

After 1980, the numbers of asylum applications went down drastically to less than 50,000 in 1981. Despite this change, every non-European asylum-seeker remained ‘suspected of being an ‘abuser’ (Poutrus 2016, 891). In December 1982, for instance, the Minister of Interior Friedrich Zimmermann stated in a programmatic speech in Zirndorf:

A vast number of applicants saw in the German asylum procedure an instrument to force Germany to let them stay. An increasingly growing number of asylum seekers makes use of the right of asylum as an ‘Open Sesame’ into the real, or sometimes only alleged, social service paradise [Sozialparadies] Federal Republic of Germany (cited in: Herbert 2001, 267- translated by TJP).

This suspicion became legally inscribed in the asylum procedure act [*Asylverfahrensgesetz* – AsyIVfG] passed in 1982. This new law introduced different classifications of asylum applications, each producing different legal implications, in order to exclude some of the applications early in the process. In a first instance, the responsible Länder-level Immigration Authorities [Ausländerbehörden] started to categorise some asylum applications as ‘inadmissible’ [unbeachtlich] if the applicant had already found protection elsewhere or in a different manner or if the application was a repeat application (Münch 1992, 91). In such ‘inadmissible’ cases, the application was either examined under much stricter conditions or immediately rejected, leading to the threat of deportation. In a second instance, the Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees was able to categorise applications as ‘manifestly unfounded’ [offensichtlich unbegründet]. Reasons for this could be that the person seeking asylum appeared to be lying or made contradictory statements, they were believed to have come to the FRG for economic reasons, or their identity was in question. The categorisation of an application as ‘manifestly unfounded’ again led to an immediate threat of deportation. Only those cases that were categorised as neither ‘inadmissible’ nor ‘manifestly unfounded’ went on to be examined according to regular standards. In addition, the law reduced the possibilities for asylum-seekers to lodge an appeal regarding negative decisions, both by reducing the grounds for appeal and by severely limiting the time frame within which an appeal could be made (ibid., 93). It also introduced a new version of the temporary resident permit [Aufenthaltsgestattung] given to asylum-seekers during their asylum procedure that limited their freedom of movement to the district of the Immigration Authority responsible for their application [Residenzpflicht]. In the context of the passing of the

AsylVfG, asylum-seekers' one-year prohibition to work was extended to two years. Again, however, this prohibition only applied to non-European asylum-seekers, not to Eastern Europeans.

Overall, then, the late 1970s and early 1980s saw a clear upholding of the ideological distinction between 'authentic' Eastern European 'Refugees' who were fleeing communism on the one hand and 'abusive' non-European 'asylum-seekers' on the other (ibid., 94). This distinction enabled the continued construction of Germany's self-image as open to those seeking refuge, thus demonstrating the learnt lesson from the past, while simultaneously denying the right to asylum to an ever-increasing number of people.

'Abusive Asylum-Seekers' 1985-1989

After a brief lull in political attention, the issue of asylum rose back to the top of the party-political agenda in the mid-1980s, after the numbers in asylum applications had risen again. A second phase of high political activity around the issue of asylum therefore began in 1985, when the number of asylum applications rose to 73,000, doubling in comparison to the previous year. Furthermore, the demographics of Refugee migration shifted again during the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the context of major political changes in the Soviet Union, the number of asylum seekers from Eastern Europe rose. While approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of asylum applicants came from non-European countries in the mid-1980s, by 1993 $\frac{3}{4}$ came from Eastern Europe (Karakayalı 2008, 173). In the context of the Yugoslav Wars, the number of asylum application from Eastern Europe peaked again (Herbert 2001, 275–276).

This shift also led to significant changes in the official framing of 'the problem'. While it had been particularly the fear of 'abuse' by non-Europeans that motivated the policies of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the legitimacy of claims to asylum by Eastern European Refugees was also increasingly questioned. As Eastern Europeans had been granted protection from deportation independent of any legal recognition as refugees since 1966, they had the possibility to stay in the FRG without applying for asylum in the first place, thereby escaping the increasingly harsh conditions of the procedure. However, this special treatment was increasingly problematised. In 1985 for example, Berlin's Minister of the Interior, Heinrich Lummer, complained about German asylum politics in the following way: 'the whole Red Army together with the KGB could come here. If they simply say the word "asylum" at our border, we cannot send them back' (cited in: Herbert 2001, 268 - transl. by TJP). What we can see here is that the symbolic framing of Refugees from the Eastern Bloc changed from 'victims of communism' to 'communist agitators'. Furthermore, Lummer took

up already popularised images of ‘abuse’ and denounced what he called ‘welfare tourism’ [Sozialhilfe-Tourismus] from Poland (cited in: Münch 1992, 110 - transl. by TJP). Such new forms of publicly expressed hostility also paved the way for new bureaucratic restrictions. From 1985, Eastern Europeans could only be granted protection from deportation after their asylum application had been denied. They too were thus forced to go through the more stringent asylum-procedure in the hope that those who ‘primarily came for economic reasons’ would be encouraged to leave again. Two years later, in 1987, the Conference of the Ministers of the Interior decided to rescind the right of Polish and Hungarian nationals to stay in the FRG after their applications had been denied. Already in April 1989, during the Conference of the German Ministers of the Interior, the deportation protection that had been in place for Eastern Europeans was entirely abrogated.

In sum, while the context of the Cold War had guaranteed Eastern European Refugees a special standing and recognition, the perspective changed gradually in the mid- and late 1980s. Similar to non-European Refugees in the early 1980s, the mid 1980s saw an increased suspicion towards Eastern Europeans as ‘abusers’ of the FRG’s asylum laws. Put differently, the moment the numbers of Refugees from Eastern Europe actually turned out to be significant, the fundamental rationale of German refugee politics to privilege persons fleeing communism was questioned (Herbert 2001, 274) and finally abandoned. Furthermore, the perception of newly arriving people from Eastern Europe shifted heavily: while they had been regarded as the epitome of refugees for decades, the disintegration of the Soviet bloc and the end of the Cold War that came with it quickly reduced them to ‘abusers’ of the asylum system. In contrast to previous years, the focus shifted more and more towards questioning the admittance of refugees and the granting of asylum as such (Münch 1992, 105–106). In order to grasp this general unwillingness, a third aspect of orthodox German national identity constructions has to be taken into account, namely, the framing of German as an ethno-nation.

Germany’s Ethno-Nationalism: Immigration

A third framing of German national identity most relevant for asylum politics in particular and immigration politics more generally was the idea of an ethno-nation. There is wide agreement that the specificity of German nationalism in both historical and contemporary guises is its strong emphasis on ethnic and cultural notions of national belonging (Brubaker 1992; Yack 1996; 2012). The most significant official manifestation is Germany’s citizenship law, which has long been informed by the principle of *jus sanguinis*, that is, the restriction of citizenship rights to those born

to parents who are German citizens.⁴¹ In his comparative examination of the historical development of German and French nationalism, Brubaker poignantly summarises:

Since national feeling developed before the nation-state, the German idea of the nation was not originally political, nor was it linked to the abstract idea of citizenship. This prepolitical German nation, this nation in search of a state, was conceived not as the bearer of universal political values, but as an organic cultural, linguistic, or racial community – as an irreducibly particular *Volksgemeinschaft*. On this understanding, nationhood is an ethnocultural, not a political fact. (Brubaker 1992, 1)

This framing of the German nation in primarily ethno-racial terms has had several implications for the immigration politics of the FRG, which proved most significant throughout the 1980s. On the one hand, even though West Germany never consisted of a homogenous population and has always been dependent on migrant labour, the official standpoint that ‘Germany is not a country of immigration’ [Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland] remained dominant until the end of the 20th century. On the other hand, the immigration at the centre of this negation was always a racialised one, focused on ‘non-German’ and particularly ‘non-Western’ (i.e., ‘non-foreign’) immigrants, because the FRG was simultaneously framed as what Joppke calls an ‘incomplete nation-state’ (Joppke 1999, 201) or a ‘German homeland’ (Klusmeyer and Papadēmētriu 2013). Not only were East-German citizens also regarded as part of the same German population, but a large number of people living in Eastern Europe – so called ‘(Spät-)Aussiedler’ – were also regarded as either German citizens or people officially recognised as ‘ethnically German’ [deutsche Volkszugehörige]. The underlying assumption was that those people who settled during or before the Nazi period in Eastern European regions that were then appropriated as ‘Greater German’ territory should enjoy unconditional citizenship rights. Until the end of the Cold War and German unification, then, immigrants of both groups – East-Germans and Eastern European ‘ethnic Germans’ – had a quasi-automatic claim to West-German citizenship due to the *jus sanguinis* basis for the granting of citizenship. It was especially in the context of the heightened debates about asylum in the 1980s and early 1990s that this ethno-nationalist foundation of the FRG proved most relevant. In the following chapters, we will see that this ethno-nationalist resurgence during the 1980s and especially the early 1990s became one of the key objects of discussion and criticism within the field of (pro-)Refugee struggles, but also led to increasing debates about the problem of racism and paternalism among German support actors.

⁴¹ This was partly changed in the ‘asylum compromise’ of 1993 and later legislation.

'Germany is not a Country of Immigration' – mid to late 1980s

The 1950s and '60s were described by Eric Hobsbawm as the 'golden age' of consumerist capitalism and welfare statism which, despite ongoing inequalities, saw an average increase in living standards (Hobsbawm 2011, 257–286). In German public debates, these developments were framed as an 'economic miracle' [Wirtschaftswunder], suggesting that booming economic development was primarily due to the efforts and discipline of the German working population (Berger 2004, 181–182; Stapelfeldt 2005, 66–67). However, a significant degree of the economic upsurge was due to migrant labour. Between 1953 and 1973, the FRG actively recruited so-called 'guest workers' from Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia (Bade 1994, 53; Brubaker 1992, 171–172). This 'guest worker regime' (Karakayalı 2008, 100–106) was not only crucial for the revival of the German economy, but was also used within government circles and in hegemonic discourse to reinforce the restrictive stance on immigration. As the commonly used term 'guest worker' already implies, these immigrants were supposed to leave again once they stopped being useful to the German economy. It was thus unsurprising that the positive stance on labour migration was quickly abolished after the lack of labour force was overcome: the recruitment stop [Anwerbestop] that followed in 1973 introduced a period of 'limiting immigration, promoting returnees as well as introducing concepts for the temporary social integration for those foreign workers who stayed' (Bade 1994, 53 - transl. by TJP). Put differently, the main paradigm regarding immigration politics was the already mentioned conviction that Germany was not a country of immigration (Karakayalı 2008, 100–106; Schuster 2003, 188).⁴² The main group that was targeted in this regard were (former) 'guest workers' from Turkey. Relatedly, a popular racist fear articulated in public debates was the so-called fear of 'Überfremdung' – i.e., the imagined dilution of the indigenous culture through the presence of 'too many foreigners' (Green 2001, 90; Osterkamp 1993; Münch 1992, 204; Wagner 2010).

Beyond the question of European labour migration, such fears also significantly influenced the political discussions around the extent to which asylum should be granted. As mentioned above, while Eastern Europeans were increasingly included in the group of Refugees (allegedly) abusing the FRG's asylum system in the late 1980s, the immigration of non-European asylum-seekers had been regarded as problematic throughout the 1980s. Similarly to the early 1980s, measures were hence taken in the late 1980s to stop them from entering German territory. The first group affected

⁴² Ironically, instead of reducing the presence of foreign nationals in the FRG, the effect of the recruitment stop was first of all 'to turn seasonal workers into permanent residents. Since re-entry was going to be more difficult and the countries of origin of the guestworkers were also affected by the world recession, the Gastarbeiter had little incentive to return home, preferring instead to send for their families to join them' (Schuster 2003, 191).

was Sri Lankan Tamils – the largest group of incoming asylum-seekers in the first half of 1985. The then Bavarian Minister President and leader of the CSU Franz Joseph Strauß commented in racist terms: ‘The Tamils are flooding in by the thousands, and if the situation in New Caledonia intensifies, then we will soon have the Kanaken [a racist German term for people of colour] in the country’ (cited in: Herbert 2001, 267–268 - transl. by TJP). The central point of entry to FRG territory had been the crossing of the border from East to West Berlin. In July 1985, the GDR agreed not to let Tamils without entry visas cross the border to the FRG. Simultaneously, the interpretation of Art. 16 GG was tightened so that the number of legally recognised refugees in the FRG steadily declined. It is important to keep in mind that a decision not to grant refugee status according to Art 16 GG seldomly led to the person in question actually leaving the FRG again. On the contrary, due to international law – notably the *European Convention on Human Rights* and the *1951 Geneva Refugee Convention* – many of those denied asylum in the strict sense remained *de facto* refugees as they were granted protection according to other legal categories (e.g., ‘Convention refugees’ or subsidiary protection). Due to their protection status, these groups were not deportable and remained in the FRG. Ironically, they were increasingly framed as ‘abusers’ since their asylum applications had been – formally speaking (i.e., according to Art. 16 GG) – denied.

Given this side-effect of the asylum system, increasing numbers of people appeared to ‘abuse’ the German asylum system and the ‘need’ for reform appeared ever more pressing. In order to reduce the number of asylum-seekers coming to the FRG in the first place, an attempt was made a year later, in October 1986, to ‘close the Berlin hole’ completely (Münch 1992, 84). At the initiative of German Social Democratic politicians, the GDR started applying the rule not to let asylum-seekers without entry visas cross the border to West-Berlin – which so far had only applied to Tamils – to *all* asylum-seekers. Whereas more than 39,000 people had come through East-Berlin to the FRG to apply for asylum in the first eight months of 1986, the number was reduced to under 500 over the following months (Wolken 1988). In December of the same year, transit visa requirements were universally introduced for several countries that had high numbers of asylum applicants at that time: Bangladesh, Ghana, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, Sri Lanka, and Iran. In 1988 and 1989, many more countries were included on this list, such as South Africa, Cameroon, Rwanda, Namibia, Uganda, Barbados, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines (Karakayalı 2008, 172).

It was in this context that restrictions to the constitutional right of asylum were first discussed. In January 1987, changes were made to the *AsylVG* to further legally tighten several of the policies already in effect, such as the restriction of the criteria for granting asylum and the prolongation of

the prohibition to work. Furthermore, the law also introduced carrier sanctions for flight companies transporting individuals to the FRG who did not have the required visas (Münch 1992). Given that these policies focused increasingly on *access* to asylum in the FRG as such, they can be seen as the result of an overarching development in the problematisation of Refugee migration, which Poutrus calls a shift from the stigma of ‘abuse’ to that of ‘overload’ (Poutrus 2019, 98). Put differently, while the early 1980s were characterised by a clear distinction between ‘good’, ‘deserving’ and ‘bad’, ‘undeserving’ Refugees (i.e., ‘asylum-seekers’), it was in the second half of the 1980s that Refugees as such were increasingly regarded as problematic. The reason why these groups of asylum seekers were regarded as problematic per se can be found in the German understanding as an ethno-nation: they were framed as ‘foreign’ – just like ‘Turkish and other ‘guest workers’ – and could not even be imagined as prospective residents, let alone citizens, of the German nation.

That not all migrant and Refugee groups were affected by these hostilities and exclusions can be illustrated by looking at the official discourse about ‘ethnic German’ immigrants from Eastern Europe. After the Second World War, they returned and sought refuge in the FRG and GDR where they were largely seen as ‘homeland expellees’ [Heimatvertriebene] (Thränhardt 2002; Bade 1994; Takle 2011). By 1960, their number amounted to 9.8 million people – almost a quarter of the FRG’s overall population (Herbert 2001, 194). Despite some early administrative and political reluctance, these groups were quickly naturalised and integrated into the FRG (Herbert 2001, 192–201). Von Koppenfels describes the notion of ‘Aussiedler’ as an ‘ideologically defined category’ (von Koppenfels 2001): the political treatment of these groups clearly indicated the racialised notions of ‘Germanness’ that have dominated German immigration politics (Schuster 2003, 186–190; Berger 2004, 173–174). Their immigration was politically promoted and accounted for more than double the number of immigrants of those who came through the asylum system (Poutrus 2019, 99). In this sense, the paradigm of regarding Germany as ‘not a country of immigration’ appears to be largely absurd. However, as Brubaker rightly stresses, the

claim articulates not a social or demographic fact but a political-cultural norm, an element of national self-understanding. The undeniable fact of immigrant settlement does not make Germany—according to its own self-understanding—a country of immigration. Nor has the massive influx of ethnic Germans, who are indeed acknowledged as settlers and citizens, altered that self-understanding. For the implicit meaning of the *kein Einwanderungsland* formula is that Germany is not a country of non-German immigration. Ethnic German immigration is something else altogether. (Brubaker 1992, 174)

It should be pointed out, however, that the official recognition of ‘Aussiedler’ – as well as of East Germans – as German citizens, rarely translated into social equality. As Klusmeyer states, for example, already in the 1950 they often appeared to be ‘dangerously “foreign” in the eyes of many native inhabitants, who routinely criticised their unwillingness to work, their general uncleanness,

their proneness to criminality, and their lack of gratitude' (Klusmeyer 2001, 527). It is therefore hardly surprising that when the numbers of arrivals of these 'ethnically German' groups peaked in the late 1980s and particularly the early 1990s, they also became increasingly part of the discourse on 'Überfremdung'.

The (de facto) Abolition of Asylum as a Constitutional Right – 1989-1993

From the end of the 1980s to the early 1990s, that is, in the context of the disintegration of the Soviet bloc and of the German unification, the demographics of (Refugee) immigration to (West) Germany shifted again. Increasing opportunities to travel in Eastern Europe led to a peak of both 'Aussiedler' immigration and applications for asylum from Eastern Europeans. The numbers of asylum applications reached a new peak of more than 400,000 in 1992. The increasing politicisation of the situation of Refugees and asylum-seekers throughout the 1980s paved the way for a historical transformation of the German asylum regime in the early 1990s. Whereas the proposal to restrict the constitutional right of asylum had so far largely been rejected, it now found increasing numbers of proponents, culminating in the constitutional change of 1992/93. It is important to stress, however, that it was not only asylum immigration that was increasingly problematised at that point, but all people framed by the German majority society as 'foreign' – both already present (often even grown up in Germany) and newly arriving – were increasingly targeted. Münch remarks in this regard that 'both politicians and the public are increasingly questioning whether the Federal Republic still has any capacity to take any new foreign migrants at all' (Münch 1992, 9 - transl. by TJP).

As Gibney points out, in this context, the 'anti-immigration ethos of the national community' became evident (Gibney 2008, 97). Strikingly, this hostile discourse increasingly included the so-called 'Aussiedler' (Takle 2011; Panagiotidis 2014).⁴³ In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the growing calls in support of changing the constitutional right of asylum penetrated party-political discussions widely. In order to enforce any constitutional changes, a majority of two thirds in favour in both the Bundestag and Bundesrat was required, but the CDU/CSU – the only party in favour of constitutional changes at that point – did not enjoy such a majority. On the 12th September 1991, the general party secretary of the CDU, Volker Rühe, publicly called upon all CDU factions in the

⁴³ Joppke summarises the situation: 'As a third generation of immigrants, born to foreign parents who had themselves been born or grown up in Germany, was growing up without citizenship, the prospect of a self-perpetuating minority forever locked out of majority society appeared ever more threatening. Furthermore, the limits of postnational immigrant integration became openly visible with the massive arrival, since the late 1980s, of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Now you had the grotesque dissonance of de facto foreigners automatically classified as Germans and of de facto Germans still classified as foreigners' (Joppke 1999, 200).

various political institutions in the *Länder* ‘to broach the issue of asylum politics and to challenge the SPD’, whose agreement was required in order to bring about constitutional change (Bade 1994, 114).

It was in this political climate of anti-asylum hostility, as well as in the wider context of German unification that racist and xenophobic violent attacks massively increased throughout Germany – a development which Schuster characterises as ‘a nightmarish orgy of racism and violence’ (Schuster 2003, 206). From the 17th to 23rd September 1991, for instance, right-wing groups continuously attacked Vietnamese and Mozambican contract workers as well as a hostel and an apartment block housing contract workers and asylum-seekers in Hoyerswerda in Saxony. Supported by police forces who had remained largely inactive for several days, both contract-workers and asylum-seekers were evacuated from the city after several days of attack. More racist attacks followed throughout 1992. Most prominent among them were the attacks in August 1992 in Rostock-Lichtenhagen (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern): for three days, several hundred neo-Nazis and ordinary racists continuously attacked the central shelter for asylum-seekers [Zentrale Aufnahmestelle für Asylbewerber – ZASt] for the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, applauded by around 3,000 ‘onlookers’. In November 1992, two residential buildings inhabited by Turkish families in Mölln (Schleswig-Holstein) were attacked by right-wing arsonists. Three people died in the fire.

It is important to emphasise that these (and many more) attacks had a complex connection to official and mainstream media discussions on asylum and migration. On one hand, they could be regarded as attempts to translate the often openly racist rhetoric vis-à-vis ‘asylum-seekers’ throughout the 1980s and early 1990s into action. Thus, it has been argued that polemic party-political discussions and media coverage incited the violence more or less explicitly (Herbert 2014b, 94; Schuster 2003, 205–213). In a discussion between politicians Edmund Stoiber (CSU) and Burkhard Hirsch (FDP) in November 1990, for example, Stoiber stated that constitutional change was only possible if voters ‘would light a fire under’ the still oppositional SPD and FDP [‘einmal das Feuer unterm Hintern von ihren eigenen Leuten angezündet’] (Der Spiegel 1990, 44). On the other hand, the racist violence was used to legitimise the political position to change the constitutional right of asylum, since the violence was at times framed as ‘understandable discontent’ among the population (Herbert 2014b, 94; Schuster 2003; Osterkamp 1993; Althoetmar, Jäger, and Duisburger Institut für Sprach- und Sozialforschung 1993). In 1991, for instance, the right-wing populist tabloid newspaper *Bild* wrote that ‘Germans are neither xenophobic nor are they right-wing extremists. But if the uninhibited influx of asylum-seekers

grows further, then the violence against them will also increase' (Bild, 30.07.1991 as cited in: (Herbert 2014b, 94)).

In October 1991, in reaction to the 'public pressure' and in fear of more violent outbursts, the governing parties CDU/CSU and FDP came together with the largest opposition party SPD to agree upon a compromise that consisted of further expedited asylum procedures, which were supposed to be reduced to a duration of six weeks. Following the passing of a new asylum procedure acceleration law [*Asylbeschleunigungsgesetz*] in June 1992 (Bade 1994, 115–116) and Kohl's threat to declare a state of emergency, the governing coalition (CDU/CSU and FDP) entered into discussions with the opposition SPD, eventually agreeing upon the basic principles for a 'compromise' to change the constitutional right of asylum on the 6th November 1992 (Bade 1994, 122; Schuster 2003, 210). The Bundestag and Bundesrat approved the constitutional amendment in May 1993. The core idea of the asylum compromise was to restrict the right to asylum by denying asylum-seekers who were either from a 'safe country of origin' or travelled through a 'safe third country' access to the German asylum procedure. These safe countries included the member states of the European Community as well as non-EC states where the application of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was assured. These countries were legally specified by the Bundestag and Bundesrat (Art. 16a GG, paragraph 2). The compromise also included points on naturalisation, citizenship, and '(Spät-)Aussiedler'-immigration, thus going beyond the question of asylum and restricting immigration as such (Bade 1994, 123). During the night of the 28th May 1993, another residential building inhabited by a Turkish family in Solingen (North Rhine-Westphalia) was set on fire by far-right terrorists, causing to the death of five people and leaving 14 injured. Two days later, on the 1 June 1993, the amendment to the Basic Law came into effect. As Bade points out, 'the radically xenophobic and violent minority, who regarded itself as the spokesperson of a silent majority, even believed the change of the right of asylum to be the achievement of their actions' (Bade 1994, 125 - transl. by TJP).

It was especially in the context of the political developments leading to the 'asylum compromise' that pro-migration and pro-asylum protests became increasingly visible. Thus, even though the 1980s and early 1990s were characterised by the dominance of the ethno-nationalist framing of Germany, it was also a moment of increasing political influence by pro-migration and pro-asylum voices. The peak in racist violence in the first years after unification was paralleled by a peak in large public demonstrations of solidarity against racism and xenophobia. Furthermore, taking into account the wider political landscape, there was also strong criticism from some oppositional parliamentary and civil society forces – particularly by *The Greens* and various pro-migrant NGOs.

In these discussions, the specific legacy of Nazism played an important symbolic role. According to Poutrus, these discussions primarily took place in between two fronts:

For some, an open refugee and asylum politics represented a guarantee that the FRG had fundamentally turned away from a racist past, particularly Nazism. For others, such a position was unthinkable because it would have meant breaking with the paradigm of not being a country of immigration which was understood as a turn away from the historical, cultural, and ethnic identity of the Germans (Poutrus 2016, 893).

These fronts were of course neither new, nor were they the only ones to shape the debate. In contemporary academic accounts of the longstanding history of the politics of asylum in the FRG, there is a strong tendency to restrict this discussion of opposition and conflict to the post-1990 period. However, as we saw in the introductory chapter, there is a much longer trajectory that tends to be neglected, but which needs to be taken into consideration in order to understand these widespread protest dynamics in the early 1990s. It is to this longer history of (pro-)asylum protest in German post-war history to which I will now turn.

4.2 The Emerging Configuration of (Pro-)Refugee Actors

As we will see throughout the following chapters, the dominant narratives about German identity and history analysed in this chapter were picked up in various ways in Refugee and pro-Refugee protests throughout the 1980s. As we will see in the next chapters, two of the contextual developments analysed in the previous section were particularly relevant for the emergence of such a type of oppositional political action. First, the growing number of Refugees arriving and living in the FRG was a crucial development insofar as it was Refugees themselves that played a significant role in early protests (despite being confronted with dynamics of marginalisation both in relation to other (pro-)Refugee actors and the wider political field). Second, most actors who began to become involved in (pro-)Refugee struggles expressed concern at the dramatic erosion of the right to asylum and the intensification of hostile public discourses throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Thus, while hegemonic political actors, in particular on the political right, interpreted the growing numbers of arriving Refugees since the late 1970s as a threat to the post-war doctrine that 'Germany is not a country of immigration', those oppositional actors interpreted the situation as a significant crisis moment for those seeking refuge. It was this crisis experience, combined with a notion of urgency and the call for immediate political responses, which motivated most actors to engage in (pro-)Refugee struggles in that particular period.

In reaction to these policy changes and socio-political developments, the 1980s saw the emergence and increasing institutionalisation of groups and non-governmental organisations mainly focused

on issues around asylum, Refugee protection and care. Many actors involved in pro-Refugee struggles throughout the decade, however, were part of already established groups and organisations which previously had focused and worked on broader or other issues – such as ‘human rights’ or ‘immigrant rights’. Put differently, many solidarity actors did not identify themselves primarily in terms of this political cause but came together as political actors and groups based on a much broader set of categories of identification. Thus, before moving on to the in-depth empirical analysis, some contextualisation of the actors involved in these protests is needed. In the methodology chapter, I indicated that my empirical analysis will be primarily organised around the different framing practices developed by these different actors. My main argument was that this research focus offers more analytical returns insofar as it helps to critically evaluate the symbolic positionality of different (pro-)Refugee actors more explicitly. Nonetheless, I also argued that it is crucial to take the actors’ self-understanding as a starting point for my analysis of the respective framing practices. Key for the analytical distinctions proposed in this section is the self-understanding of the different (pro-)Refugee actors. I consider this approach useful for three reasons. First, it is a crucial to provide an empirical analysis that seeks do justice to the different (pro-)Refugee actors’ own voices, thus taking their intellectual practices and debates seriously. Second, it is very helpful to take the diversity of actors involved in (pro-)Refugee struggles into account, thus avoiding a homogenising perspective. Third, it offers first insights into how these actors situated themselves within political debates about migration, asylum, national identity and collective memory in post-war (West) Germany, which political and intellectual traditions they drew on, and how they reflected upon their positionality within the (pro-)Refugee movement as well as the wider political field. The key aim of this section, then, is to provide an outline of the variety of (pro-)Refugee actors’ self-understandings prevalent in the analysed archival material.

As already indicated before, my archival research revealed that most (pro-)Refugee actors made use of three broad categories of collective self-identification. First, many actors presented themselves primarily in terms of a shared lived experience, especially connected to questions of legal status, migration experience, ‘national’ or ‘ethnic’ identity. This practice of self-identification was primarily used by those who, in terms of these categories, found themselves in a minority position in the FRG. This also included self-organised Refugee groups. Second, there was a distinct category of groups and organizations that primarily defined themselves through their thematic focus on human rights and humanitarianism. The most important actors who made use of this type of self-identification were civil society organisations that did not explicitly position themselves politically but strongly appealed to liberal-democratic values. Third, many actors identified

themselves primarily according to their political-ideological orientation. The most important tendency in this category was the self-positioning as being part of the political left.

These types of self-identification are only based on those aspects *publicly thematised* by the actors themselves through their chosen group names and statements of self-description. Before looking into these three categories in more detail, it is therefore important to note two points. First, I do not attempt to infer the individuals' identity from the 'public image' put forward by these groups. Second, these three categories are not neatly distinct from each other but overlap in many instances. While many actors primarily made use of one of these categories, they also tended to make more or less explicit references to the other categories as well. In this sense, these categories serve as ideal types that are useful to guide and organise the analysis rather than offering a clear-cut analysis of the profile of each and every actor. Overall, I think that such an analytical distinction is useful to get a better understanding of overarching tendencies while remaining attentive to the diversity and complexity of (pro-)Refugee actors.

Lived Experience: Self-Organized Minority Actors

The first 'category' of actors that can be distinguished were those who primarily identified themselves through a shared lived experience as a group. Most important for the analysis here were those actors that primarily identified as members of a 'national' or 'ethnic' group, or as holders of a certain legal status within the nation-state order. An interesting result of my archival research was that this type of identification was barely used by those actors who were recognised as full members of the German nation-state (in accordance with the wider public discourse analysed in the previous section). For most of these actors, it seems, it was not necessary to publicly express and reflect upon their specific positionality as white, German citizens. There were only some organisations that engaged in that type of identity politics. For example, the *Interest Group of German Women Married to Foreigners* (Interessengemeinschaft der mit Ausländern verheirateten Frauen e.V. 1990) explicitly presented themselves as a group of German women who engaged in pro-migrant and pro-Refugee politics because of their direct concerns about the wellbeing of their non-German husbands. Among those actors with a migrant or minority experience, on the other hand, there was a strong tendency to make use of that type of self-identification. Two types of groups were prevalent within the analysed archival material: those groups that primarily identified as members of 'national' or 'ethnic' minorities in general, and – to a much smaller degree – those groups that primarily identified as 'Refugees' and 'asylum-seekers' in particular. What these actors

had in common was a strong emphasis on the importance of self-representation in struggles around asylum and immigration.

The organisation of groups as ‘national’ or ‘ethnic’ minorities had of course already a longer history in post-war (West) Germany. As Manuela Bojadžijev (2008) has shown in detail, for example, the first generation of ‘guest workers’ was particularly involved in labour protests and international solidarity. Moreover, various groups were already active that represented the interests of specific minorities which were most often organised along national or ethnic lines such as the *Association of Kurdistan Students Abroad* (AKSA – Association of Kurdistan Students Abroad 1980a) or Sinti and Roma associations such *Rom* or the *Regional Association of German Sinti and Roma Düsseldorf* (Rom e.V. Köln et al. 1989; see also: Rucht and Wilhelm Heitmeyer 2008; Jakob 2016). Given that these groups represented the interests of specific minority groups whose members often came to Germany as Refugees and/or were affected by the threat of deportation, many of them became active participants in pro-Refugee protests. The protests of Sinti and Roma activists against the threat of deportation is a most poignant example in this regard (Hamburger Initiative ‚Bleiberecht für Roma‘ 1989; Initiative Bleiberecht für Roma und Cinti 1989; see also: Herold 2009). However, most of these groups did not ‘specialise’ on the particular issues faced by Refugees and asylum-seekers in general.

Most relevant for the emergence of pro-Refugee protests were Refugees themselves. It was their own attempts to raise their voice in public and fight against discrimination and marginalisation experienced both within the asylum system and German society more broadly which played a significant role as a driving force for wider protest dynamics. In the cases where Refugees established groups and associations, questions of national and/or ethnic identity remained central. In 1981, for example, the *Committee of Asylum-Seekers* explicitly identified themselves in these terms: ‘We are asylum-seekers who were persecuted by the state during the military junta in Turkey and Kurdistan and we came to the FRG and West Berlin to find protection’ (Komitee von Asylbewerbern 1981). Similarly, the *Association of Iranian Refugees in West-Berlin* emphasised both their identity as Iranian and as Refugees (Verein iranischer Flüchtlinge in Westberlin e.V 1986).

What all of these examples demonstrate is the complexity of Refugee self-organisation throughout the 1980s which always intersected with other forms of identification and group understandings. A crucial aspect of their lived experience in the FRG was the legal, institutional and discursive exclusion from or marginalisation within the wider political field. Given the accommodation, detention, and deportation practices in the asylum system, Refugees were confronted with extremely difficult conditions for the organisation of collective action. They were systematically

put into situations of isolation, immobility, vulnerability and enhanced bureaucratic control. Thus, compared to support actors with a higher stake in the German nation-state order and its political field, their protest activities were least institutionalised and took place in an often spontaneous and sporadic manner. For instance, a recurrent protest activity throughout the 1980s and early 1990s were small-scale hunger strikes against inhumane living conditions in detention and deportation institutions. As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5, this made the questions of alliance-building and the problem of hierarchical representation most important in this early phase of (pro-)Refugee struggles. To a certain extent this problem was also inscribed into the archives: many Refugee protests were only indirectly documented through statements and references by other groups and organisations (Sonkosi 1983; AStA TU Berlin 1991; Plenum gegen Sammellager 1993). This position of marginality is also relevant from a symbolic point of view: While actors with a longer history of socialization and politicization in the FRG had been exposed more extensively by its hegemonic political culture, it was especially Refugees that had only recently entered the nation-state order and thus oftentimes started from a position of distance.

Finally, it is important to highlight that this category of ‘self-organised minority actors’ does not mean that persons identifying as ‘Refugees’, ‘asylum-seekers’, ‘immigrants’ or ‘non-German’ in general terms were only part of groups who primarily identified themselves in these terms. On the contrary, people self-identifying in any of these terms were also active in many of the groups described in the next sections. In these cases, however, the specific lived experience associated with this identity was not the primary identifier for the group as a whole.

Thematic Focus on Human Rights and Humanitarianism

A second way in which the political actors primarily identified themselves was through a shared thematic focus on humanitarian and human-rights issues. Such a thematic focus was also often shared by self-organised minority groups introduced above. Moreover, many human-rights based organisations also included members who identified themselves as ethnic or national minorities or as Refugees and asylum-seekers. However, in these cases, such self-identification did not serve as the primary form of self-identification for the group. The actors grouped in this category were very diverse in political terms and ranged from well-established human rights organisations such as *Amnesty International* and the *International League for Human Rights* (Internationale Liga für Menschenrechte et al. 1983) to unions such as the *German Trade Union Confederation* (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, Landesbezirk Berlin 1989) as well as groups focusing on basic rights in the FRG such as the *Gustav Heinemann Initiative*, the *Frankfurt Legal Aid Committee for Foreigners*, or the

Initiative Committee Foreign Fellow Citizens in Hesse (Gustav Heinemann-Initiative et al. 1983; Frankfurter Rechtshilfekomitee für Ausländer, Initiativausschuss ‚Ausländische Mitbürger in Hessen‘, and Interessengemeinschaft der mit Ausländern verheirateten deutschen Frauen e.V. 1981). Despite political differences and tensions between these different actors, they share as a common denominator a strong belief in the founding principles of the FRG, centred around the constitutional guarantee of human and civil rights in general and the right of asylum in particular. As we will see in subsequent chapters, it is against this benchmark that the German asylum and migration regime is evaluated and criticized, but also the possibility of institutional reform considered and emphasised.

In addition, Christian churches and religious organisations and groups also played an important role throughout the 1980s as they were among the first to offer practical support for Refugees and to draw public attention to the growing anti-immigrant hostility in 1970s and 1980s West Germany. While these organisations were undoubtedly informed by religious values, they nonetheless sought to translate these into notions of human dignity and compassion that were compatible with secular humanitarian and human-rights discourse. As early as 1979, for example, the Berlin branch of *Diaconia*, the charitable organisation of the Protestant Church in Germany, established in cooperation with the Berlin Senate the project ‘Al-Muntada’, a centre for psycho-social counselling and care for young, unaccompanied Arab Refugees in West-Berlin. As this example demonstrated, charitable church organisations were indeed willing to directly cooperate with state institutions to provide welfare services for asylum-seekers and Refugees. Simultaneously, however, Christian organisations at times took a more critical stance as well. The tradition of sanctuary or church asylum [Kirchenasyl], which under German law is illegal, is a particular case in point. While church asylum had not been practiced in the first post-war decades in the FRG, the increasing attacks at the right of asylum from the 1970s onwards brought it back to the practical agenda of church organisations. 1983 can be regarded as the beginning of the post-war sanctuary movement: the Protestant *Congregation ‘Holy Cross’* in Berlin was approached by three Palestinian Refugees who had been in danger of being deported to Lebanon and the church offered them sanctuary and support. The congregation accepted this request and in subsequent negotiations with the authorities, the Refugees were eventually allowed to stay in the FRG. It should also be noted that the *Congregation ‘Holy Cross’* had already participated in the protest activities in support of and following the suicide of Cemal Altun (Babo 2003, 242–243; Morgenstern 2003, 118).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Altun was a Turkish asylum-seeker who arrived in West-Berlin in 1981 and fought a legal struggle against his extradition to Turkey. After his asylum application was positively decided, the Federal Commissioner for Asylum

Although Christian churches were an official part of the German civic and political culture, the attempt to reinstate the principle of sanctuary had also led to severe tensions and conflicts with state authorities who were reluctant to tolerate this intervention into such a fundamental area of sovereign power (Morgenstern 2003, 82). As a result, church asylum largely remained a form of pressure activity that, in the best-case scenario, would lead to further negotiations between church and state representatives (Babo 2003, 241–258). At the same time, it also raised questions of civil disobedience and illegal support activities which were rather uncommon for reform-oriented organisations.

The 1980s also saw the institutionalisation of various groups focusing specifically on issues of asylum – including both political lobbying and counselling activities. Here again, already existing human rights organisations and religious institutions often played an important role. For instance, the *Refugee Council Berlin* had been founded by various Christian organisations⁴⁵ in 1981 as one of

Matters took legal action against the federal office's decision, aiming for a retraction of the refugee-status, and the federal government confirmed that they intended to extradite Altun. In late August 1983, after Altun had already been in custody awaiting to be extradited for more than 13 months, the trial about his legal status as a refugee began in Berlin. In the beginning of the second day of the trial, 30th August 1983, Altun jumped out of a window of the sixth floor of the administrative court, thereby ending his life. He died aged 23. The Altun case immediately triggered a wave of street protests and more organised forms of campaigning. This included immediate protests by Refugees who were caught in a similar predicament or attempted to express solidarity. Shortly after Altun's suicide, for example, a total of six Turkish asylum-seekers at risk of extradition (among them Zeynal Aydindag and Cemal Yüksel) went on hunger-strike in early September 1983 in Düsseldorf and in Lübeck (*taz*, 08.09.1983). In late September, Zeynel Aydindag was released from detention (*taz*, 29.09.1983). Furthermore, in a prison in Remscheid, a city in North Rhine-Westphalia, 90 'foreign prisoners' went on hunger strike in order to protest against the FRG's extradition and deportation practices (*Die Wahrheit*, 12.03.1983). In Berlin, the *Initiative for C.K. Altun's Freedom* and the *Committee for the Release of Cemal Kemal Altun* were founded, the latter of which sending a delegation to the Ministry of Justice in Bonn in mid-1983 which eventually remained unsuccessful. One member of the *Committee*, together with public figures Petra Kelly, Wolf Biermann, and Lukas Beckmann, attempted to scandalise Altun's situation by putting themselves in a metal cage locked to Federal Chancellery's fence – a protest which was even reported in the public – and most watched – television news programme *Tagesschau*. Other political currents that participated in the protest activities were the radical and parliamentary left, civil and human rights as well as migrant organisations. Eleven parliamentarians of the *The Greens* protested in front of the Turkish consulate in Frankfurt (Main) where they hung up a poster saying 'This deportation is murder' before the German police ended the protest (*ibid.*, 36). *The Greens* and the *Alternative List* also tried to put pressure on the French government in order to intervene as it had already confirmed that it might be willing to grant Altun asylum as Altun's brother who had already been living in Paris (*taz*, 22.08.1983). Furthermore, protest demonstrations were organised by a wide range of other groups including *Amnesty International*, the *International League of Human Rights*, the left-wing *Committee for political Asylum Seekers*, as well as a group of people formerly persecuted by the Nazi regime (Liga für Menschenrechte et al. 1983; Komitee für politische Asylanten 1983; Regensburger 1983, 67; Kantemir and Boehncke 1983, 40). In mid-August, the German section of *Amnesty International* as well as the German civil and human rights organisations *Humanist Union*, and the *League for Human Rights* brought the charge of 'preparing Altun's abduction' [Vorbereitung der Verschleppung] against federal minister of justice, Hans Engelhard (FDP), in Bonn (*taz*, 22.08.1983 – transl. by TJP). While Altun's case had gained public attention and critique throughout all of 1983, it was only after his suicide that he received attention 'beyond the liberal press' (Regensburger 1983, 62) and the protest activities massively expanded. The *taz* cover from the day after Altun's death was black with a picture of Altun and the simple message: 'Cemal Kemal Altun is dead' (*taz*, 31.08.1983 – transl. by TJP). Spontaneous demonstrations happened in several cities such as Hamburg (approx. 3000 people), Frankfurt (Main) (approx. 250 people), Hannover, and Dortmund (each approx. 300 people). The widest mobilisation, however, occurred in Berlin where approximately 10,000 people marched mourning Altun a day after his death (*taz*, 01.09.1983; *taz*, 02.09.1983). According to the *taz*, 6,000 people took part in his funeral march a few days later.

⁴⁵ *Berliner Missionswerk*, the *Grossner Mission*, and the *Evangelical Church in Berlin*

the first organisations to focus explicitly on issues of Refugees in Germany. While the first *Refugee Council* was limited to Berlin, this form of organisation was replicated in many other federal states throughout the 1980s. Apart from lobbying against particular policies in West Berlin and the FRG more generally, such as the prohibition to work introduced for asylum-seekers in 1962, it also made efforts to scandalise West-Berlin's policies on a more public level (Flüchtlingsrat Berlin 2011). Similarly, in 1986, the organisation *PRO ASYLUM* was founded by members of 'refugee councils, churches, trade unions, welfare and human rights organisations' (PRO ASYL 2021). In addition, several smaller groups and organisations were founded focusing on specific regional contexts (Hamburger Arbeitskreis ASYL 1983; Koordination Flüchtlinge in Hamburg 1986) or on specific issues such as the Altun case (Initiative für die Freiheit von C.K. Altun in Lübeck 1983; Komitee für die Freilassung Cemal Kemal Altuns 1983).

Given their direct appeal to the FRG's liberal-democratic, humanitarian, and Christian values, these organisations enjoyed a higher degree of respectability in mainstream public debates and influence on policy-making procedures. Compared to the other (pro-)Refugee actors, they had considerably more access to the social, cultural, and economic capital required to enter the mainstream political field. As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5, such field-related asymmetries and hierarchies were at the heart of internal political debates and conflicts over questions of representation.

Political Orientation: the (German) Left

A third way of self-identification of pro-Refugee actors related to the shared political norms, values, and outlooks of the groups in question. This was primarily expressed by a self-understanding of being 'left-wing' and 'progressive'. Both the newly found party *The Greens* (Die Grünen) and a number of non-parliamentary left-wing groups and organisations were part of this category.

Various groups that identified themselves as radical and that did not seek party-political representation were also outspoken in pro-Refugee protests. These groups were still strongly informed by the political-ideological discussions of the so-called *K-Groups* of the 1970s (Langguth 1983; Benicke 2019). This strand of left-wing radicalism has its historical origins in the 'New Left' of the late 1950s and early 1960s as well as the left-wing student movement of the mid- to late 1960s which was characterised by various perspectives and campaigns, including the critique of the legacy and continuities of German Nazism (such as in the form of personal continuities), protests against the Vietnam war and solidarity campaigns with anti-colonial struggles, protests

against the 1965 ‘Foreigner Act’ [Ausländergesetz] or the 1968 Emergency Acts [Notstandsgesetzgebung] (Fichter and Lönnendonker 2007, 115–208).⁴⁶ Just as in the case of human rights groups introduced above, the radical left also included members who identified as national or ethnic minorities. There were also occasional overlaps between self-organised and radical left groups as in the case of the migrant-led anti-fascist organisation *Antifa Gençlik* (AK Wantok 2014). However, as we will see in the next chapter, such examples remained exceptional in the 1980s and early 1990s and the problem of German, white paternalism among both human rights and radical left groups became an issue of conflict in the late 1980s. Thus, while these actors were diverse in their positions, I want to emphasise a common aspect that will be relevant for the analysis in subsequent chapters: an anti-imperialist world view which understood the contemporary world as a global system of capitalist oppression dominated by powerful Western nation-states – above all the United States⁴⁷ – that were involved in (neo-)colonial forms of expansion and subjugation. In many anti-imperialist approaches, however, the driving forces of imperialism were not these nation-states themselves, but the capitalist class which was imagined as a globally powerful and unified political force that controls the system of state apparatuses in order to secure their power position. The primary object and victim of this system, then, was the global working class (i.e., the proletariat) in general and working-class segments in the (formerly) colonised non-Western world in particular.

Apart from the self-identified radical left, the newly funded party *The Greens* also presented itself as an important pro-Refugee actor. The *Alternative Liste (AL)* was a party founded in West Berlin in 1978 and became the West Berlin branch of the newly founded party *The Greens* in 1980. Both had developed out of the extra-parliamentary left and the student movement of the 1970s on the one hand, and the context of new social movements in the areas of feminism, environmentalism and pacifism on the other (Benicke 2010; Frankland 1989, 185; Mende 2015, 73; Roth and Rucht 2008; Gassert 2018). Despite a (radical) left-wing self-understanding, they differed from previous attempts to form communist parties in the 1970s and early 1980s insofar as there was a reorientation towards parliamentary politics. At the same time, however, it should be noted that with the decline of the K-Groups in the early 1980s, some of these groups began to move in the direction of *The Greens*. In this sense, the newly established party, while strengthening reform-oriented approaches, still remained an organisational base for radical left-wing activism and extra-

⁴⁶ For an overview and discussion of the post-war history of radical left groups and activities, see: (Langguth 1983; AG Grauwacke 2003; Postone 2005; Benicke 2010; Ullrich 2014; Langer 2015).

⁴⁷ This construction often also included Israel and in subsequent debates from the late 1980s led to discussions about the relation between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. For a discussion of the German left’s relation to anti-Zionism and antisemitism, see: (Ullrich 2008; 2014; Nowak 2013; C. Beyer and AG Antifa/Antira im StuRa der Uni Halle 2004)

parliamentary protest (Benicke 2010; Frankland 1989, 185; Mende 2015, 73).⁴⁸ Among political parties, the *AL* and *The Greens* were most consistently outspoken in pro-Refugee struggles throughout the 1980s.

To understand the complex ways in which all of these actors produced alternative framings that both went against and reinscribed the logics of national identity, I now turn to the (pro-)Refugee struggles of the 1980s and early 1990s that had always existed even if there were not always widely visible. I will take a closer look at the symbolic and discursive aspects of (pro-)Refugee activism in post-war Germany. This analysis will help show that the political practices and strategic discussions within the (pro-)Refugee movement were significantly informed by the respective actors' symbolic positionality vis-à-vis three objects of reference: 1) the configuration of (pro-)Refugee actors itself; 2) the (West) German nation-state as well as 3) German society. To that end, I systematise the collected and selected empirical material in terms of different symbolic framings of these objects of reference and explore their relation to the existing regime of German national orthodoxy.

Finally, it should be highlighted that, for the sake of analytical clarity, I made the decision to avoid a strictly chronological or actor-focused presentation of empirical material. To a certain extent, however, this makes it necessary to separate thematic areas and discursive strategies that, in the actual source texts, are often closely related. It is therefore important to stress that all three chapters (including their respective sections and sub-sections) are interlinked and build upon each other to make an overall argument. I will seek to highlight these overarching links in the concluding chapter.

⁴⁸ For the later political domestication of the Green party throughout the 1980s and 1990s, see: (O'Neill 2000).

5 (Self-)Representation: Framings of (pro-)Refugee Actors

As in all cases of collective mobilisation, ‘Refugees’ are not a naturally given group but have to be regarded as a symbolic construct dependent on the socio-political as well as legal-institutional context in – and against – which the mobilisation takes place. So far, this has implied both a degree of unclarity and variety in the meaning of ‘Refugee’ as a reference point. Most notably, as we shall see in-depth in subsequent chapters, the concept of ‘Refugee’, when used as a symbolic reference point for collective mobilisation, tends to go beyond official legal classifications and invokes questions of human suffering and political subjectivity. At the same time, the material and symbolic force of the nation-state does not leave these forms of subjectivity untouched: as Arendt highlighted, the contemporary historical period is characterised by the paradox that the guarantee of the basic rights of those who are excluded from the nation-state system is primarily organised by the nation-state, that is, the very institution which represents and reproduces this exclusionary dynamic. To a certain extent, therefore, political struggles for Refugee rights are forced to accept and work with the official classifications of the nation-state – even if they realise that it is these classifications which put Refugees in a precarious and vulnerable position in the first place. In this sense, (pro-)Refugee activism tends to enter into a complex relationship with the legal and the political, the official and the oppositional.

The concept of ‘Refugee’ also raises questions about who is included – and how those who are included are addressed or identify themselves. Moreover, the question of representation becomes even more complex when we consider the variety of actors involved in (pro-)Refugee struggles (see. 4.2). In other words, not all (pro-)Refugee actors identify themselves as ‘Refugees’, nor are all (pro-)Refugee actors affected to the same degree by the changes they try to fight for. Thus, if we turn to activist notions of ‘Refugees’, this directly leads us to questions of internal power and conflict dynamics around processes of identification and representation. I shall return to these issues in the following two chapters but will now elaborate and reflect on them in a more systematic manner. The main reason I devoted an entire chapter to this theme is that it can help us to make sense of how the complex – and oftentimes conflictual – relations between these different (pro-)Refugee actors is shaped by their symbolic positionality vis-à-vis the German nation-state and the wider German society. Thus, rather than seeing (pro-)Refugee activism as a strictly autonomous space, I propose to analyse it in its complex relationships to the German nation-state, its hegemonic political culture and the doxa by which the latter is characterised. In subsequent chapters, I analyse the different ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors sought to make

sense of these wider objects of reference and discuss what these different framings tell us about the symbolic embeddedness of these actors within the nation-state order. In this chapter, I substantiate this discussion by looking at how this embeddedness influenced the ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors reflected upon their own field positionality as well as their relationship to other (pro-)Refugee actors.

Before I move on to the presentation of empirical results, I consider it useful to begin with a short reflection on the theoretical and methodological challenges of such an analysis. While I sought to situate the first two empirical chapters within academic debates about the concepts of critique and solidarity, this chapter will offer insights into the complexities and dilemmas of political (self-)representation within the nation-state order and its political field. It is therefore useful to begin with some clarifications about the concept and analysis of political (self-)representation, including an outline of the specific contribution of Arendtian and Bourdieusian approaches in this area. There is a long tradition of intellectual debates around the form, content, and variety of political representation in modern societies. A dominant current within this field of inquiry is the attempt to provide a theoretical foundation and normative justification of representative types of democratic decision-making and public claim-making – an endeavour which dates back to early liberal contract theories (see: Urbinati 2006), and has been taken up over the past decades in the context of debates about elitist, pluralist or deliberative models of democratic representation (Habermas 2015; Pitkin 1967; Schumpeter 2018). Furthermore, there is an influential tendency within Marxist and social-democratic thought which, taking up the Marxian dictum ‘They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented’ (Marx 2009, 187), seeks to make a case for the necessity of leadership-centred forms of political organisation (Dean 2016; Lukács 1971; Poulantzas 2014; Žižek 2018).

Recent decades, however, have also seen a growing body of literature that challenges the validity and justifiability, not necessarily of the very principle of political representation, but of certain hierarchical, exclusionary forms in which this principle is formulated and practiced. In particular, scholars with an interest in feminist, migrant and anti-racist theoretical and activists perspectives (Isin and Saward 2013; Laycock 2004; Butler 2006; Hall, Evans, and Nixon 2013) as well as in social and political movements more generally (Disch 2017; Disch, Sande, and Urbinati 2019; Saward 2006; 2010; Tormey 2015) have sought to develop a more critical, reflexive notion of the relationship between political agency, participation and representation. Furthermore, similar perspectives were developed and anticipated by Arendt in her evaluation of the principle of representative democracy (Arendt 1963), as well as by Bourdieu in his field-theoretical approach

to state power and public politics (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2009). For the purposes of this chapter, two critiques are particularly relevant.

First, conventional accounts of representation have been criticised for adhering to what Saward calls a “transmission belt” model of representation’ (Saward 2010, 29), that is, representation understood as an unmediated bottom-up process expressing and amplifying an already-existing set of political needs, concerns and demands.⁴⁹ Such a notion not only serves to conceal actually existing power relations between those who represent and those who are represented, but also fails to take into account that the object of representation (e.g., ‘Refugees’) is as much created by the former (those who claim to speak for ‘Refugees’) as it is by the latter (those who self-identify as ‘Refugees’). The key insight of constructivist accounts of representation is, on the contrary, that those who claim to represent others do not simply respond to an already-existing collective identity, defined by a predetermined set of needs, demands and visions, but they play an active role in ‘providing a *representation*’ (Bourdieu 2009, 182 – original emphasis) or in ‘the active making of symbols or images of what is to be represented’ (Saward 2010, 15). In this sense, the object of representation (e.g., ‘Refugees’) is not simply an empirical object, but also the product of the act of representation itself (e.g., claiming to speak on behalf of ‘Refugees’).

For my analysis of the internal dynamics of the early (pro-)Refugee movement in (West) Germany, this insight is crucial insofar as it points to the complex and shifting process of construction and signification which underlies concepts such as ‘Refugees’, ‘asylum seekers’, ‘citizens’, ‘non-citizens’, ‘Germans’, or ‘foreigners’. However, I would also like to highlight one aspect which tends to be underestimated in some parts of the critical debates referred to here: political representation cannot be restricted to the immediate relationship between those who represent and those who are represented, but also needs to explore the social and political origin of the signifiers that are used within the process of representation as well as the social and political conditions of those who carry out these acts of representation.⁵⁰ For instance, as will be discussed further below, the legal status of (pro-)Refugee actors tends to have a crucial impact on the ways in which these actors relate to themselves and others within the (pro-)Refugee movement. As we have seen in chapter 2, Bourdieu’s approach is especially apposite when connecting the analysis of representative claims

⁴⁹ As Hall puts it, ‘[t]he conventional view used to be that “things” exist in the material and natural world; that their material or natural characteristics are what determines or constitutes them; and that they have a perfectly clear meaning, outside how they are represented.’ (Hall, Evans, and Nixon 2013, xxi).

⁵⁰ In Saward’s work, the concepts of ‘audiences’ (Saward 2010, 48–56) and ‘resources’ (ibid., 70–73) as well as the distinction between ‘political representation’, ‘societal democratic representation’ and ‘state-based “representative democracy”’ (ibid., 141–142), provide some starting points, but nonetheless stop short of elaborating on the specificity of the wider political culture of the nation-state order which, as we have seen in the previous chapters, is crucial in order to understand the relationship between public claim-makers and audiences.

within an analysis of the objective social and political conditions which inform both form and content of these claims. For, as we have seen, Bourdieu considers it impossible to make sense of the relations between political actors without taking into account the rules and mechanism that define the asymmetrical power relations of the wider field to which these actors belong. As he emphasises, ‘it is the structure of the political field which, being subjectively inseparable from the direct – and always declared – relation to those who are represented, determines the stances taken, through the intermediary of the constraints and interests associated with a given position in this field’ (Bourdieu 2009, 184).⁵¹ Similarly, Arendt argues that the ability of people to actively participate in political matters depends on material conditions such as a certain degree of security, wealth and leisure and legal status. The absence of such conditions, she argues, ‘automatically exclude[s] them from active participation in government – though, of course, not from being represented and from choosing their representatives’ (Arendt 1963, 69). For Refugees, then, the question of political action is not simply a matter of decision, but also of ‘thinking about *how to become able* to fight back’ (Arendt 2009, 266 - emphasis added) within a nation-state order that denies them the material, legal and symbolic resources that fully recognised members of the nation-state enjoy.

Second, it has been argued that conventional accounts of political representation fail to reflect on the problem that the interaction between those who represent and those who are represented ‘is never between equals’ (Arendt 1963, 277) and tends to play an active role in further reproducing and perpetuating these inequalities, rather than ameliorating and overcoming them. Such reflections are especially prominent among scholars who think about representation, not in terms of established institutional settings such as political parties and parliaments, but with regard to alternative forms of political decision-making and will formation, such as in the context of social and political movements (Disch 2017; Disch, Sande, and Urbinati 2019; Isin and Saward 2013; Saward 2010). As we have already seen in chapter 1, this critique can also be found in many approaches to critical migration and citizenship studies that seek to problematise the depoliticising and paternalistic tendencies within state-centric accounts of Refugee movements, but also other critical approaches – such as the works of Agamben. Scholars taking an ‘autonomy of migration’ perspective as well as those in critical citizenship studies emphasise that Refugees and migrants need to be recognised and addressed as active agents in shaping their social life and fighting against political exclusion. While authors associated with the notion of ‘autonomy of migration’ have

⁵¹ In this regard, I disagree with attempts to portray Bourdieu’s notion of political representation as being informed by a ‘radical linguistic constructivism’ (Disch, van de Sande, and Urbinati 2019, 7) that lacks a notion of extra-linguistic social objectivity.

provided intriguing insights into the ‘non-mediated’ (Tormey 2015, 2) or ‘subterranean politics’ (ibid., 6) of irregularised border crossing and everyday struggles in border zones, the field of critical citizenship studies is more interested in the capability of Refugees and non-citizens to actively claim a position within the political community from which they are excluded through performative ‘acts of citizenship’ (Isin and Nielsen 2008). In both cases, there is a strong emphasis on the centrality of self-organisation and self-representation.

In my elaboration on these debates in the first half of the thesis, I sought to highlight the significance of such attempts to do justice to the particular role of Refugees as political actors. At the same time, I sought to point to the limitations of the strongly autonomist perspective that underlies these research paradigms. Most notably, there is a certain tendency to overstate the political autonomy of Refugees and to lose sight of a crucial historical and political experience of collective struggles by and for Refugees: namely that Refugees, as a result of their political and legal exclusion from the nation-state, tend to uphold complex, potentially conflictual, relations with political supporters who enjoy a more fully recognised standing in the nation-state’s legal framework and public terrain. Against this background, I consider it more useful to analyse the political agency of Refugees, not as an entirely self-referential practice, but rather as embedded within a wider ‘web of relationships’ (Arendt 1998, 181), which includes a variety of support actors who occupy different power positions within the wider public field of the German nation-state. As we shall see in the following sections, this raises questions of representational hierarchies which in the early (pro-)Refugee movement in Germany had become a significant subject of controversy by the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Overall, then, critical debates about the tension between political agency and representation within a strongly exclusionary political field are useful for analysing how unequal power relations between different (pro-)Refugee actors were expressed and reflected on the symbolic level as well. To that end, this chapter will examine different discursive strategies through which those who had fled to Germany were addressed or addressed themselves – and what this can tell us about the underlying positionality of these different actors, as well as the relations between them. More precisely, I will proceed in two steps. First, I will begin with a systematic analysis of different framings of the key object of representation, that is, those for whom the struggles analysed here were carried out. (5.1). Second, I will continue with a discussion of how these different forms of representation are underpinned by power imbalances, and how in the German context the latter became an increasing subject of debate and conflict at the turn of the decade (5.2). As in the previous chapter, this analysis will distinguish between different framings based on an analysis of their respective thematic and linguistic patterns, as well as their underlying strategic dimension. At the end of each

subsection, I will also offer a critical evaluation of how these framings were related to the national doxa discussed in chapter 4.

5.1 ‘Refugees’ and Other Objects of (Self-)Representation

A crucial aspect of (pro-)Refugee struggles in the 1980s and early 1990s (West) Germany was to engage with, appropriate, reformulate, criticise, or even reject the concept of ‘Refugee’. This resulted in a wide range of different forms of (self-)representation which will be systematised and evaluated in this section. This multiplicity of representational frames should not be misunderstood as a lack of conceptual clarity or political sophistication. Rather, I suggest regarding it as an expression of the different socio-political perspectives and positionalities of those involved in (pro-)Refugee struggles. Thus, an analysis of these different framing practices provides further insights into the relation of the different (pro-)Refugee actors vis-à-vis the nation-state and its official political culture. Most of the chosen frames of representation had not been invented within the (pro-)Refugee movement but were taken up from other areas and institutions of the wider political field, most notably the state as the monopolist of symbolic power. Second, and closely related, examining the different ways in which actors use concepts such as ‘Refugees’, ‘asylum-seekers’, ‘migrants’, ‘foreigners’ etc. is also useful in order to explore how these actors understood themselves as well as their position both within the (pro-)Refugee movement and within and the wider nation-state.

In the following section, I distinguish between two frames of (self-)representation by which (pro-)Refugee activism in the FRG in the 1980s and early 1990s was characterised. Both frames can be characterised as symbolic expressions of different ways of contextualisation, i.e., different attempts to connect the particular phenomenon of seeking refuge to a wider socio-political context within which this phenomenon is located, explained, evaluated and addressed (Richardson and Wodak 2009). This contextualisation not only serves the purpose of categorisation, but also of social and political explanation, as well as normative evaluation. Thus, the question at stake here is not only who is included in the group of people affected by the problem of ‘forced migration’, but also what the causes of this problem are, how it should be dealt with, which steps are necessary to overcome it, and which demands are justified in order to achieve this goal.

First, many actors used the categories of ‘Refugee’ or ‘asylum-seeker’ to highlight the specific situation of those affected by the nation-state’s asylum regime (as opposed to other categories such as ‘migrant’). Within this framing, there was a strong tendency to choose the existing legal and

constitutional framework codified in the Basic Law and international human rights conventions as the main diagnostic and normative context. What is more, this legal orientation was oftentimes characterised by a close proximity to the nation-state's political culture, particularly its liberal-democratic self-understanding. Thus, rather than rejecting the state's legal classifications and normative values, these actors partially or entirely drew upon these as resources to formulate their claims. Second, there were also attempts to go beyond the strictly legal dimension and bring in broader forms of collective identification, such as 'proletariat', 'foreigners', 'migrants' or specific nationalities. In these cases, the explanatory and normative base on which claims, demands, and expectations were formulated was broadened. For instance, while legal frames are usually based on the expectation that the problem in question can be solved within an existing or potential legal framework, these broader frames tend to bring in a wider set of social and political circumstances in need of transformation. Furthermore, they tend to be motivated by the attempt to construct similarities and forge alliances across legal boundaries, such as between citizens, labour migrants and asylum seekers. However, this goes hand in hand with a lack of emphasis on the particularities of forced migration and asylum.

The Emergence of Refugees as a Distinct Group

The early 1980s saw the emergence of various groups and organisations that explicitly focused on the issue of Refugees and asylum seekers in the FRG such as *Asylum* and the *Refugee Council Berlin*. For such actors, the main object of their political work was to improve either specific legal and bureaucratic issues or the overall living conditions of this group. These actors usually started out by focusing on smaller groups defined along nationality lines. The civil society organisation *Asylum*, for instance, was explicitly founded to support Palestinian Refugees in danger of being deported to Lebanon in the early 1980s, but quickly developed into a contact and counselling centre for asylum-seekers more generally. One important reason for this broadening of the representational frame was to counteract the divisive character of the FRG's asylum system which, as we have seen in chapter 4, was strongly influenced by the wider (geo-)political climate of the post-war decades, which led to the *de facto* hierarchisation and stratification of the authorities' decision-making processes. As a result, the claims of some asylum-seekers were prioritised over those of others, not because of their actual needs, but because of their political usefulness – for example to symbolise the FRG's anti-communist or ethno-nationalist self-understanding. In a statement from 1984, *Asylum* highlighted that such a divisive logic of classification has negative impacts on both individual Refugees and the group of Refugee as a whole:

In this city, Refugees compete with each other with regard to their reasons for asylum. Different treatment of the Refugees – depending on the relations between the FRG and the respective governments of the countries of origin – incites mistrust among the Refugees and thus foments competition. For this reason, there are often ominous divisions along nationality lines in the camps. (Asyl e.V. (Berlin) 1984, 10 - transl. by TJP)

The organisation tried to work against this ‘method of division’ (ibid.) by establishing a multi-national committee that would contact Refugees in different camps throughout Berlin to bring together and represent their common interests vis-à-vis the camp management. In other words, even if Refugee support organisations started out with a focus on specific nationalities, they soon recognised that many issues were relevant not because of nationality but because of the conditions common to all people who went through the German asylum procedures. As we will see later in this chapter, however, such a shift in the representational frame alone was not always sufficient to overcome the potential for divisions and hierarchies within the group of Refugees, as well as the wider configuration of (pro-)Refugee actors. Most notably, it was the very act of ‘providing a *representation*’ (Bourdieu 2009, 182 – original emphasis) which was increasingly criticised as a heteronomous, paternalistic form of support.

In addition to overcoming the nationalised fragmentation between Refugees, there was also a second reason why some groups and organisations began to highlight the significance of ‘Refugee’ as a distinct category. As we have seen in the historical reconstruction, the early (pro-)Refugee struggles were generally already been integrated into and/or took place parallel to other political struggles of immigrants in (West) Germany – most prominent among them by (former) ‘guestworkers’. As we shall see in the following sections, drawing connections between Refugees and other groups of migrants and non-citizens, even subsuming the latter under the former, was a widespread discursive strategy among (pro-)Refugee actors. However, there were also many groups and organisations that sought to make a case for maintaining a distinction between the experiences of those migrants who (intended to) seek refuge and asylum and those who did not. The underlying reason was that both the legal and material position of Refugees was recognised as different from migrants with a certain residence status. For example, in a ‘memorandum on Immigration Policies in the FRG’ published in 1983, the authors emphasised the need not to equate the legal and moral issues at stake in the debates as they were quite different. They emphasised that ‘the conclusion must finally be drawn from the fact that the Federal Republic, on the basis of its own initiatives during the fifties, sixties and seventies, has become a de facto country of immigration’ (Gustav Heinemann-Initiative et al. 1983, 49–50 - transl. by TJP). Such a distinction between ‘Refugees’ and ‘foreigners’ was also emphasised through hierarchising the problems each group had to face. In 1990, for instance, the *Society for Threatened Peoples* emphasised that ‘Refugees are strangers of the third class’ (*Vierte Welt Aktuell* 1990 - transl. by TJP) and

therefore found themselves in worse situations than other groups of immigrants. The very concept of 'Refugee' had become an important symbolic medium through which political problems regarding divisions and hierarchies among those immigrating were addressed and discussed. More specifically, these symbolic references already pointed to a certain tension between specific and general categorisations. On the one hand, the concept of 'Refugee' was used to overcome national distinctions and express a specific experience shared by all those who sought refuge in the FRG and who had had to go through its asylum procedure. On the other hand, it was used to do justice to the particularity of Refugees' experiences, which tended to get lost if it was subsumed under more general categories such as 'foreigner' or 'immigrant'.

What both these attempts to give an expression to the particular experience of Refugees had in common was their close engagement with and deployment of constitutional and legal classifications. The underlying strategic motivation was clear: given that a key goal of Refugees is to achieve a legal status that enables them to stay in Germany and protects them from the danger of being deported, many political (support) actors prioritised this goal both in their practices and campaigns and in their symbolic relation to the German nation-state. In other words, (pro-)Refugee actors had good pragmatic reasons to focus on these categories insofar as they represented the symbolic entry points to the rights and guarantees provided within the FRG's asylum law. To a certain extent, then, the reproduction of official distinctions between Refugees and other non-citizens was considered necessary in order to be able to 'play the game', that is, to adapt to the rules and procedures of the asylum system. In addition to these pragmatic considerations, however, there was also a strong tendency to appeal to the normative claims and expectations associated with these official classifications. This again raises the question of the power of the nation-state order to shape the framings and visions of even those actors who position themselves against its exclusionary logic. More specifically, I identified three related ways in which the legal categories of 'Refugee' and 'asylum-seeker' were connected to official norms and ideals.

First, various actors sought to adhere to an official definition of Refugees as covering those facing persecution or an existential threat in their countries or regions of origin. In 1983, for instance, the left-wing party *Alternative List/The Greens*, began a brochure about deportations of asylum-seekers with an affirmative quotation of the German law: 'A foreigner may not be deported to a state where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. (§ 14 Ausländergesetz)' (AG Asyl in der Alternativen Liste 1983 - transl. by TJP). This intertextual link introduced the clause as a legal and normative criterion that would inform the critique of the German migration and asylum

regime formulated during the brochure. We will see in chapter 6 that such a notion of ‘Refugee’ or ‘asylum-seeker’ was informed by a particular style of symbolically relating to the state and its official doxa which can be characterised as an immanent critique. The state’s own legal guarantees and normative promises were not rejected, but instead affirmed and mobilised against the state’s failure to fulfil these guarantees and promises. The moral and political driving force of this type of critique was, then, the discrepancy between ideal and reality. Its key demand was that all Refugees should *de facto* have those rights to which they were entitled *de jure*, and that the FRG live up to its own moral, political and legal standards.

It should be noted, however, that this framing was not simply a call for the preservation of a given set of official ideals. For, as we saw in the historical reconstruction of official and hegemonic migration-related discourses, orthodox assumptions changed considerably over the course of the post-war decades and especially during the 1980s and in the run-up to the ‘asylum compromise’ in 1993. So, what these groups sought to achieve was to preserve and defend those norms and values associated with the Basic Law and its right of asylum against the growing influence of restrictive positions. This point was exemplified in 1981 when a coalition of three civil society organisations working in the area of immigrant support in South Germany published a report which groups criticised in a report the fact that ‘[d]ouble standards are applied in the treatment of asylum seekers. A distinction is made between politically acceptable and less acceptable asylum-seekers. The right of asylum is bent to political interests’ (Frankfurter Rechtshilfekomitee für Ausländer, Initiativausschuss ‚Ausländische Mitbürger in Hessen‘, and Interessengemeinschaft der mit Ausländern verheirateten deutschen Frauen e.V. 1981, 2 - transl. by TJP) The organisation also connected this separation between legal guarantees and political interventions to a plea for remembering the founding of the German asylum law after the Nazi experience. Quoting Reinhard Marx, asylum lawyer and spokesperson for the German section of *Amnesty International*, who stated that ‘The right of asylum embodies tolerance and hope as a conscious reaction to the barbarism of German fascism’ (Reinhard Marx, amnesty international)’ (ibid.), the authors highlighted the value of ‘human generosity’ (ibid.: 5) as an essential lesson from this historical legacy. It was Carlo Schmid, one of the co-authors of the Basic Law, who had introduced and stressed this value in the immediate post-war debate about asylum.

Another example from North Germany is a statement by the civil society organisation *Working Group ASYLUM in Hamburg* that criticised the growing tendency in public discourse to deny the specific experiences and claims of Refugees:

We are outraged by the mercilessness with which Refugees are defamed as economic or bogus asylum-seekers. We are outraged that the link between the misery and politics is being overlooked so that all Refugees can be

attacked. None of the fundamental rights of our Constitution is as directly linked to the experiences of fascism as the right to asylum. We object to the planned erosion of this fundamental right. The aim of our work is to ensure that Article 16 of the Basic Law 'Politically persecuted persons enjoy asylum' becomes fully effective again in its original sense. (Hamburger Arbeitskreis ASYL 1983 - transl. by TJP)

What is interesting about this statement is that the authors explicitly appealed to and identified with the historical significance and normative potential of 'our Constitution'. Against this background, the notion of Refugee was primarily identified as a constitutional achievement that needed to be preserved and protected 'in its original sense' against political attacks. It should be noted, however, that some of those authors who explicitly affirmed the Basic Law as the key source of categorisation also made some attempts to expand and transgress its official interpretation. In 1986, for instance, the *Alternative List* demanded in a public statement that 'All Refugees who cannot be recognised as politically persecuted but have fled crisis and emergency areas for fear of life and health should be given the right to stay!' (Alternative Liste (AL-Fraktion im Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin) 1986, 3). Thus, rather than simply accepting the official definition centred around political persecution, the authors suggested a notion of Refugee that entailed all life-threatening conditions. This shows that some (pro-)Refugee actors oscillated between affirming and transgressing already-existing legal and constitutional classifications.

Second, parallel to such an understanding of 'Refugees' as all those non-citizens who faced danger when deported, there was also a wide usage of the term for every person going through the German (or European) asylum-procedure. In these cases, 'Refugees' were not defined by the potential suffering caused by deportation but by the suffering caused by the asylum procedure itself. For this form of categorisation, it was rather unimportant if the person in question had actually experienced political persecution or any other kind of danger. Instead, it was the very fact that the person was subjected to the asylum procedure as well as related state practices such as detention which was used as the main criterion for organising legal and political support. As the above mentioned coalition of civil society organisations put it, 'it should be taken into consideration that asylum-seekers are human beings who are forced to live in a state of fear and insecurity about their future and, consequently, are affected by severe mental strain' (Frankfurter Rechtshilfekomitee für Ausländer, Initiativausschuss 'Ausländische Mitbürger in Hessen', and Interessengemeinschaft der mit Ausländern verheirateten deutschen Frauen e.V. 1981, 15 - transl. by TJP). This categorial shift was also relevant for the critique of the German asylum regime. For the suffering of Refugees was not only identified with the period before the asylum procedure (the experience of forced migration) and after the asylum procedure (the risk of deportation), but also with the asylum procedure itself which was characterised as a system of 'incapacitation and humiliation' (ibid., 20). Thus, the demand to establish a decision-making process in accordance

with the rule of law was accompanied by the demand to establish a surrounding bureaucratic procedure that complied with humane standards. Moreover, this conceptual shift towards a focus on the asylum procedure broadened the scope of those (potentially) represented in pro-Refugee claims.

What these examples demonstrate is that the emergence of a (pro-)Refugee movement in the FRG did not begin with the simple ‘discovery’ of a new problem but involved a much more complex public discussion around questions of categorisation and representation. Although the emergence of a broader (pro-)Refugee movement occurred in the context of a shift from a ‘guestworker regime’ to an ‘asylum regime’ (Karakayalı 2008) accompanied by a growing number of Refugees arriving in the FRG from the late 1970s, it would be wrong to assume that this politicisation of questions of refuge and asylum was nothing more than a passive response to these changing circumstances. On the contrary, we have seen that those actors analysed in this section needed to construct notions of ‘Refugees’ or ‘asylum-seekers’, before they were able to speak as or on behalf of this group. However, this was not only a question of identifying and defining this group, but always a question of making sense of the wider social, political, and legal circumstances that created this group in the first place. In a way, then, these (pro-)Refugee actors were aware that their own acts of construction and representation were not detached from the symbolic violence of the state and the wider political field.

For instance, those actors who highlighted the necessity of distinguishing between ‘Refugees’ and ‘immigrants’ claimed that these groups were in fact treated differently by the state authorities. Similarly, those actors who highlighted the necessity of overcoming national distinctions within the group of Refugees claimed that this was necessary to reveal their similar experiences and entitlements. Against this background, it is unsurprising that those actors who were strongly oriented towards the state’s classificatory power also showed certain tendencies to appropriate these classifications – for pragmatic reasons, but also because of their symbolic embeddedness in the nation-state order. The most prevalent notions of the category of ‘Refugee’ thus remained those that were codified in the Basic Law and international human rights conventions ratified by the FRG. This framing was closely related to the discursive strategy of immanent critique: what was criticised was the state’s failure to live up to its own norms and values and its failure to comply with its own legal obligations to guarantee Refugees protection, independently of political intervention. But even those actors with a proximity to the state’s official classifications occasionally attempted to expand and transgress these, for example by demanding that any kind of life-threatening situation should be recognised as a legitimate reason to seek asylum.

The Subsumption of Refugees under Broader Categories

In addition to this construction and representation of ‘Refugees’ as a distinct group, there were also attempts to subsume and dissolve them within broader socio-political categories. More specifically, this broadening of the frame of reference was articulated in two ways: first, through the already mentioned notion of a ‘global proletariat’ – characterised by the shared experience of and resistance to capitalist oppression; and second, through the notion of ‘foreigners’ or ‘migrants’ characterised by the shared experience of and resistance to racist and xenophobic hostility. It was especially those actors with a radical left-wing political orientation who advocated such forms of contextualisation.

Their underlying motivation was to criticise the limited scope of state-centric approaches and to search for categories of identification which allowed for a common struggle against the state in general and the hostile political climate in Germany in particular. While these groups acknowledged the pragmatic reasons behind such state-centric, legalistic approaches, they nonetheless rejected them as dangerous misrepresentations of the scale and scope of the problem in question. For instance, the *Antifascist Working Group in Duisburg* and others stated that

[...] opposition to the prevailing practice of asylum may not be content with the demand for the ‘defense of the fundamental right to political asylum’. This demand is not wrong, but it falls short, since the current asylum practice already implies the ‘renunciation of the right to asylum in general’ without any change of the Basic Law. (Antifaschister Arbeitskreis Duisburg et al. 1987, 43 - transl. by TJP)

Similarly, an alliance of *Antifascist Groups* reflected on the limitations of what they called an ‘immanent criticism’ that only focused on the state’s violent excesses while losing site of the political logic that made such excesses possible in the first place:

Although we realised that the attack on refugees and migrant workers is also an attack on us, we (like many radical leftists) have taken on much of the immanent criticism of the part of the left, which only dealt with the ‘inhumane practices’ of the state apparatus concerning the ‘waiting for asylum’ or deportations. (Antifaschistische Gruppen 1986, 3 - transl. by TJP)

Trying to go beyond such a contained approach, some actors framed Refugees as part of broader political struggles. As we shall see in the following chapters, this approach was closely connected to the strategy of invoking a subsuming type of solidarity particularly prevalent among radical left actors: the attempt to convince German citizens, especially their working-class segments, that they share similar experiences of oppression with Refugees and migrants in a global order of capitalist and imperialist domination. The precondition for such an image of global working-class solidarity was to characterise Refugees as working-class subjects (rather than holders of human rights). In 1983, for example, the *Committee for Political Asylum-Seekers* organised a demonstration in support of the ‘60 antifascists and revolutionaries from Turkey and Turkey-Kurdistan who are imprisoned

awaiting extradition' (Komitee für politische Asylanten 1983). In their call for the demonstration, they argued for 'international solidarity' based on the shared experiences of asylum-seekers, foreigners in general, and Germans:

We want to reiterate that the struggle of the Turkish and Kurdish opposition directly concerns us here as well. Just like we're resisting this state and its policies [...] because we're directly and personally threatened and because our living conditions are destructed, and because we can develop perspectives for the radical destruction of the global capitalist system in these struggles, we have to fight in the same way, together with our foreign comrades, against measures that threaten them [...] because only in this way, together, are we able to achieve something and force it through. (Komitee für politische Asylanten 1983 - transl. by TJP)

Similarly, the Berlin-based radical left-wing group *Agency for the Self-Abolishment of the Proletariat* called to 'defend' Refugees against the 'class of power', thus assuming that Refugees, too, are primarily victims of capitalist class domination (Agentur für die Selbstaufhebung des Proletariats 1983 - transl. by TJP). Against this background, the authors concluded that there was a need for 'the revolutionary method which aims to draw the entirety of the proletariat into a collective fight against class society and for the human community (communism). This is the only perspective for which the fight is worth it, the only possibility to end discrimination forever' (ibid.). As we can see in texts like these, radical left-wing groups did not consider the struggle of Refugees as a struggle in its own right. Rather than taking into consideration the complexity of power relations between different actors positioned within and outside of the German national order and public sphere, these actors drew on a generalised dichotomy between a global system of capitalist and imperialist oppression orchestrated by Germany and other Western nation-states, on the one hand, and a homogenous group of oppressed working-class people, on the other. It is therefore unsurprising that any differentiation between 'Refugees', other 'foreigners', 'immigrants' as well as 'German workers' was set aside because solidarity was largely based on their subsumption in the broader category of the working class. While this framing undoubtedly arose from the attempt to create attitudes and practices of solidarity between German workers, labour migrants and Refugees, it nonetheless had the effect of obscuring the existing social and political differences and hierarchies between these groups. In other words, it tended to silence the specific living conditions and concerns of Refugees.

Such a framing was also used by migrant groups with a left-wing political orientation. In December 1980, for instance, the *Association of Kurdistan Students Abroad* (AKSA) organised a 'week of the Refugees in West-Berlin' (AKSA – Association of Kurdistan Students Abroad 1980b)(AKSA – Association of Kurdistan Students Abroad 1980b). In their call for that week, they refer to the specific situation of the Kurdish people and end by stating: 'Long live the just resistance of the Kurdish people. The right to self-determination for all oppressed peoples. Long live the international solidarity' (AKSA – Association of Kurdistan Students Abroad 1980a - transl. by

TJP). Similarly, the *Foreigners Department of the General Students' Committee and Foreigner Committee* a university body representing migrant students at the University of Kassel, published a brochure in 1980 which included a letter to 'our German hosts' which concluded with a plea for 'INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY' (Ausländerreferat im AStA und dem Ausländerkomitee (Kassel) 1980 - transl. by TJP). The authors emphasised the different contexts from which they came from and stressed the need for a political strategy of working-class solidarity:

Foreign workers are part of the working class in the Federal Republic of Germany, their social situation is inextricably linked to that of the whole class. We have common problems; only together can we solve them. If the German working class wants to improve its situation, exercise its rights, and assert its interests, it must act in a spirit of solidarity and uniformity. It must not allow foreign counterparts to be pitted against local colleagues! In this sense: AGAINST XENOPHOBIA, FOR PEACE, FRIENDSHIP AND SOLIDARITY! (ibid.)

In addition to such groups that identified themselves as migrant or 'foreign' national, there were also radical left groups that distinctly self-identified as Refugee groups that nonetheless advocated the formation of broader class-based alliances. For instance, the *Coordination Group of Autonomous Refugee Groups in Rhein/Ruhr* published a brochure in 1986 which interpreted transnational (forced) migration as the direct result and expression of global capitalist and imperialist oppression: 'International migration expresses imperialism's class conflicts better than anything else. It is the product of displacement and the destruction of life resources in the countries of origin. It is an expression of the international income gap and, at the same time, of the claim to survival, future and income' (Koordinationskreis Rhein/Ruhr autonomer Flüchtlingsgruppen 1986, 25 - transl. by TJP). Although the authors acknowledged the complexity of different Refugee experiences, they nonetheless problematised the reproduction of legally constructed differences between refugees and other migrants insofar as these concealed the underlying logic of oppression: 'While taking into account the fact that there are various reasons for fleeing, we see the refugee movements as an expression of class struggles. Any categorization of refugees into political refugees and "others" serves to obscure the focus on imperialist population politics' (ibid., 4). Compared to German radical left-wing groups, these groups demonstrated a greater awareness of differences between categorisations such as 'Refugee', 'migrant', 'foreigner' or 'citizen'. Overall, however, these groups only acknowledged these differences as starting points that needed to be overcome in the direction of a relatively homogenous working-class experience across nation-state boundaries.

In addition to the class-based subsumption of the category of Refugee, there was also a tendency to use broader categories of 'foreigner' or 'immigrant' as the predominant frames of reference. These categories, too, were core elements of the state's official doxa (codified, for instance, in immigration policies) as well as the wider national doxa (institutionalised and ritualised in the form of hegemonic discourses about 'immigration', 'citizenship' and 'national identity'). What is

interesting, however, is that most (pro-)Refugee actors who made use of these categories explicitly deviated from these official and hegemonic notions insofar as they defined them through a shared experience of racist and anti-immigrant hostility.

In 1983, for example, a working group concerned with deportations of foreigners in Hamburg stressed that the threat of being deported concerns potentially all non-citizens in the FRG and could not be reduced to any particular category of ‘forced’ migration:

But despite growing xenophobia, despite forced family segregation through state support and prevention of family reunification, despite social discrimination, political lawlessness and a wide range of official harassment, the numbers of ‘return-ready’ foreigners targeted by Zimmer & Co. will not be able to be reached without direct coercive measures. Too many of the foreign citizens living here, even under the conditions described above, have no alternative to staying in the Federal Republic – because they cannot find a livelihood in their home countries – because they are politically persecuted there – or because they grew up in this country and therefore want to stay. (Arbeitsgruppe zur Einrichtung eines Informationsbüros zum Schutz ausländischer Mitbürger vor Auslieferung, Abschiebung und Ausweisung im Deutsch-Ausländischen Aktionsbündnis Hamburg 1983, 3 - transl. by TJP)

According to this perspective, the main reference point was the question of what De Genova terms ‘deportability’ (De Genova 2007) of those who in the 1980s were increasingly targeted and stigmatised by the state and anti-immigrant political forces as ‘undesirable’ and ‘unwelcome’. A similar logic was at play when the focus lay more explicitly on racism than deportability. At the 5th *nationwide meeting of Refugee and immigrant initiatives* in 1987, this problem of deportability was contextualised in a wider political climate of racist and far right violence: ‘Also characteristic for the situation is the threatening appearance of far-right, fascist groups and lists whose stated aim is to expel “foreigners” – whether immigrants or refugees – from the FRG and to put pressure on existing parties’ (Arbeitskreis gegen Rassismus 1987 - transl. by TJP).

Another campaign of Refugee and migrant groups from 1986, which accused the West Berlin authorities of using racial profiling tactics on the pretence of preventing terrorist attacks, explicitly used the self-categorisation ‘We, the people affected’ to draw connections between different Refugee and broader migrant and racialised minority experiences: ‘We, the people affected, are protesting against this discrimination. We have no more to do with terrorist attacks than the German population’ (ESG-Ausländerzentrum 1986 - transl. by TJP). The focus on racism as the main point of (self-)representation is reminiscent of Hannah Arendt’s dictum ‘If one is attacked as a Jew, one must defend oneself as a Jew’ (Arendt 2013) and it became especially prevalent in the context of the wave of racist violence in the FRG at the turn of the decade. In 1990, the need to focus on anti-racism was further stressed on the 10th *Federal Congress of the Movement of Emigrants and Refugees*:

In the light of this situation, the West German migrant movement has two tasks: on the one hand, developing practical anti-racist strategies and concepts and, on the other hand, fighting against the long-standing disinterestedness of the left and the enlightened public regarding the migrant- and refugee movement which

has worsened in the context of the German-German problem. (Internationales Referat der C.v.O.-Universität Oldenburg 1989 - transl. by TJP)

This two-fold political agenda clearly indicated how questions of self-identification, in this case as ‘the West German migrant movement’ went hand in hand with a critique of racism within the wider German society – including the left-wing and left-liberal segments of the public sphere. The practical consequence for these groups and organisations was that, despite the significance of acknowledging differences, a broader notion of ‘migrants’, ‘foreigners’ or ‘non-citizens’ was necessary to express the common experience of being at risk of racist attacks and potential deportation.

While these debates around racism were initiated by migrant initiatives, they became more widespread within the wider (pro-)Refugee movement during the early 1990s. Most notably, in reaction to the violent excesses, the winter of 1992/93 was particularly characterised by various campaigns of public solidarity with Refugees and ‘foreigners’ more generally. According to Schuster, this symbolic re-orientation among (pro-)Refugee actors at the turn of the decade also manifested itself in a mainstream media representation of their protest activities. In her analysis of the media coverage of the demonstrations and candle-lit marches that took place in response to racist attacks on Refugees, she concludes that ‘they were consistently presented as anti-racist rather than pro-asylum’ (Schuster 2003, 202). Like the invocation of a proletarian identity, this form of (self-)representation was based on a subsuming logic that prioritised broader alliances over group-specific particularities. On the other hand, it was still based on an explicit critique of and detachment from wider German society – something which, as we have seen, many German radical left-wing groups failed to do because of their underestimation of racism and nationalism as a wider societal problem. In this sense, it was closer to the negative type of solidarity which will be discussed in chapter 7: the notion of intuitive political alliances between German (working-class) citizens, migrants and Refugees was rejected. What was proposed instead was the creation of political alliances based on a shared anti-racist commitment, that is, a collective identity defined by its *opposition* to the climate of racism reproduced by the German political elite and majority population.

In summary, I have analysed different forms of (self-)categorisation and (self-)representation around questions of refuge, asylum and migration which have characterised the early phase of (pro-)Refugee activism in the FRG throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Rather than taking ‘Refugees’ and cognate categories for granted, I sought to show that these categories emerged and changed in a complex process of negotiation about questions of political identity, strategy and critique. Furthermore, I sought to illuminate how the different (pro-)Refugee actors positioned

themselves and related to the wider context of the German nation-state and majority society, its official classifications, and hegemonic values. More specifically, I identified two overarching strategic approaches which, to a certain extent, echoed the different symbolic positionalities vis-à-vis the nation-state and wider society I will analyse in the next two chapters. The first approach was to make use of a legal notion of ‘Refugee’ grounded in, but also going beyond, the FRG’s constitutional right of asylum. It was especially prevalent among those actors that sought to develop an immanent critique of the nation-state, and to evoke self-interested or compassionate forms of solidarity based on the idea of the FRG as a liberal-democratic society that has learned from its totalitarian past. The second approach was to subsume the particular experience of Refugees under broader socio-political categories. This was articulated in two ways. On the one hand, there was an attempt to broaden the frame of representation by way of an anti-imperialist, class-political world view. The most important advocates were radical left-wing groups and organisations who strongly distanced themselves from any state influence, both practically and symbolically, and instead sought to create wider solidarity by absorbing both German citizens, immigrants, and Refugees into the generalised concept of ‘the proletariat’. On the other hand, there was an attempt to use the categories of ‘migrant’ and ‘foreigner’ as signifiers of a common experience of racist hostility and violence. Its underlying notion of critique and solidarity was different from the proletarian type of (self-)representation insofar as it was not restricted to a critique of the state and its political elites but was rather informed by a wider critique of racism within German society, including its working-class segments.

Overall, then, the (pro-)Refugee actors discussed in this section were engaged in complex discussions around questions of representation, which led to quite different results. Given the politically sensitive nature of these representational acts – as we have seen, they were directly connected to questions of critique and solidarity –, it can be suspected that they were accompanied by more direct forms of tension and conflict among (pro-)Refugee actors. This would further demonstrate how these questions of (self-)representation were directly informed by the embeddedness of (pro-)Refugee actors within the nation-state order. It is to this problematic that I now turn.

5.2 Who Speaks for Refugees? Subjects of Representation

Having analysed the different ways in which both Refugees and their supporters made use of the term ‘Refugee’ as well as associated or alternative forms of identification, I now move on to discuss

how the different political actors in questions related to *each other* on a symbolic level. A particular focus lies in examining which role these relational acts played in the display and reproduction of asymmetrical power relations within the early (pro-)Refugee movement in the FRG, and to what extent these asymmetrical power relations became the subject of critical debates and political conflicts.

In terms of political representation, these questions are of the utmost importance for two reasons. First, this analytical lens is useful to demonstrate that the internal politics of the early (pro-)Refugee movement were indeed characterised by the conventional problems of hierarchical representation, including its depoliticising and paternalistic effects. It would be too simple, however, to locate this problem exclusively on the level of the intentions and interests of the pro-Refugee supporters. Rather, it needs to be embedded within the materialised and routinised hierarchies and exclusions by which the German public sphere was – and is – structured and organised. In this sense, the problem was that pro-Refugee supporters tended to adapt to – or failed to develop ways to subvert – these hierarchical and exclusionary forms of public debate and political representation.

Second, this perspective is useful to shed light on the growing conflict dynamics over problems of representation among (pro-)Refugee actors as well as the emergence of Refugee self-organisation and self-representation as a political project. Although there were signs of Refugee activism in the period between the early to mid-1980s, the question of Refugee self-organisation and self-representations remained marginalised in the discursive texts and public interventions of pro-Refugee support actors. Particularly in the early 1980s, the protest activities of Refugees themselves were crucial ‘flashpoints’ (Waddington, Jones, and Critcher 1989) as many other actors were largely responsive to these first signs of Refugee protest. However, as numerous as these activities might have been⁵², they also remained largely invisible to a broad public as they often took place in and around accommodation facilities for asylum-seekers.

For example, in the archival sources I found evidence of at least 125-150 Refugees participating in hunger strikes against the living conditions in respective accommodation facilities between 1980 and 1985. These are, however, only those who made it into the media (and often only left-wing fringe publications) and the actual number is likely to be much higher. The information about these protests is accordingly minimal. In March 1981, for example, the moderate left-wing daily

⁵² Of course, this does not necessarily mean that they did not exist but might rather indicate documentary selections in the archives, which, in turn, might reflect a bias inscribed in left-wing and social movement activism of the 1980s. Moreover, it is also unsurprising that the question of Refugees’ self-representation was not a clear issue for the anti-imperialist radical left for a long time. As we will see throughout the next two chapters, differences between Refugees and the ‘self’ were often conflated or blurred in the category of the working class/proletariat. Thus, any attentiveness to processes of self-identification as ‘Refugee’ were considered less meaningful and politically relevant.

newspaper *die tageszeitung* (*taz*) reported that approximately 100 asylum-seekers had come together to protest in front of the Department of Labour and Social Affairs against the ‘inhuman conditions’ of asylum-seekers’ accommodation facilities (*taz*, 30.03.1981). News stories like these can be found repeatedly throughout the 1980s. Thus, while traces of self-organisation were scattered throughout the documents of the early 1980s, explicit Refugee voices were a rare find and tended to be mediated by other groups taking up their cause.

The turn of the decade, however, witnessed a certain shift in the wider political debate among (pro-)Refugee actors, initiated by (newly formed) Refugee groups who had become frustrated with the political dominance of other groups. In the following, I analyse two overarching tendencies by which the symbolic interrelations within the early (pro-)Refugee movement in the FRG were characterised. First, I examine frames of representation developed by support actors that were centred around the idea to mobilise *for* and *with* Refugees. This tendency dominated the first years of the (pro-)Refugee movement until the late 1980s. Particularly interesting here is the question to what extent these actors demonstrated – or failed to demonstrate – an awareness of the existing power imbalances between them and Refugees. Second, I move on to frames of representation developed *by* actors identifying as Refugees themselves. Compared to the first tendency, these frames were directly accompanied by strategies of criticising hierarchies within the wider Refugee solidarity movement, and strategies of refusing to be represented by solidarity groups and organisations.

Mobilisation for and with Refugees

Throughout the 1980s, most (pro-)Refugee actors did not publicly discuss issues of self-representation. Put differently, the legitimacy and potential pitfalls of speaking for the concerns of Refugees was not publicly questioned and interrogated. It is important to emphasise that this did not necessarily imply that none of these actors identified themselves as ‘Refugees’, ‘asylum-seekers’ or ‘foreigners’, but simply that this potential identification was not presented as relevant for the claims made by the groups in question. In this sense, one might argue that the first years of the emerging (pro-)Refugee movement in the FRG remained characterised by an implicit acceptance of internal asymmetrical power relations. Against this background, it is unsurprising that the predominant form of symbolic representation was to speak and mobilise *for* and *with* Refugees. In other words, the main questions were how German citizens and other non-Refugees could be convinced to show solidarity, and what these actors should do to support Refugees in their

everyday and political struggles. What was less relevant within these forms of representation was the voice of Refugees themselves.

One interesting way in which the question of representation came up in (pro-)Refugee struggles from the late 1980s onwards was the explicit appeal to ‘Germans’ as main actors in pro-Refugee struggles. Rather than questioning and challenging the power position of those with German citizenship and (self-)identity, it was common to accept this power position and rearticulate it as a moral and political responsibility to show solidarity. This took different forms which echo the different ways in which the respective actors positioned themselves within wider German society.

First, the appeal to taking on responsibility in support of Refugees was prevalent among solidarity groups that identified themselves as part of a democratic and compassionate German public. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, there was a widespread tendency among (pro-)Refugee actors to publicly evoke solidarity by focusing on the reasons why ‘Germans’ themselves should feel affected by asylum issues too since they concerned the foundational ideas of German society. Closely connected to such self-interested solidarity, narratives of ‘Germans’ as key actors in pro-Refugee struggles existed. The nation-wide civil rights organisation *Committee for Basic Rights and Democracy*, for example, published a brochure in 1991 about ‘Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, the FRG and Us: Theses on an almost insoluble but daily solution-demanding problem’ (Komitee für Grundrechte und Demokratie and Wolf-Dieter Narr 1991 - transl. by TJP) which sought to communicate reasons why ‘Germans’ needed to show solidarity and what they should do. The authors concluded that ‘in addition to the indispensable support, solidarity, cooperation and practical help for and with “foreigners”, an understanding among “us Germans” is needed, which at a “round table” allows mutually direct perception and dense communicative concentration’ (ibid., 5). Here, the explicit self-identification as ‘German’ served to indicate a certain position of power that should be recognised and embraced to provide ‘help for and with’ those affected by the German migration and asylum system, such as during ‘round tables’ with other political actors, stakeholders and decision-makers. A second example which illustrates how support actors made use of hierarchical representational distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ was the campaign ‘I too want to protect a refugee’ introduced by the organisation *Coordination Refugees in Hamburg* in the late 1980s:

I too want to protect a refugee’ is therefore our call to all to declare themselves ready to protect a refugee from forced redistribution, camp life or deportation, if necessary, to take in a refugee into their home and to support actions in the sense of this call in every respect. ‘I too want to protect a refugee’ is our appeal to all who want to fight with us so that the fundamental right ‘Politically persecuted persons enjoy the right of asylum’ remains a fundamental right. ‘I too want to protect a refugee’ is our appeal to all those who join us in accusing this country of violating the human rights of refugees every day. (Koordination Flüchtlinge in Hamburg 1986, 101 - transl. by TJP)

Here again, we can see how questions of identity were evoked to strengthen Refugee solidarity. By using the phrase ‘I too want to’, the authors appealed to a genuine attitude of solidarity and democratic spirit among the wider public audience. Furthermore, the authors drew connections between acts of practical support and the wider issue of defending basic human rights, as well as the constitutional guarantees of the FRG against the violation of these rights by the contemporary state authorities. The underlying argumentative scheme can be formulated in the following way: every citizen who attaches great value to the liberal-democratic foundations of German society needs to stand up to the erosion of these foundations. Given that the attacks at the right of asylum and the plight of Refugees is the most striking manifestation of such an erosion, supporting the struggle of Refugees becomes a moral and political duty. As we will see in subsequent chapters, this ‘agreement’ with the declared German values did not mean inaction. On the contrary, this appeal also included the unlawful practice of ‘taking in a refugee into their home’. Reminiscent of Arendt’s distinction between citizens and the stateless (Arendt 1973), it was suggested that citizens, because of their secure legal status, were in a position that allowed them to engage in acts of civil disobedience to show practical solidarity and re-establish an increasingly endangered system of political values and legal guarantees. This reveals a rather ambivalent relation between representation and power. On the one hand, the authors not only affirmed the existing power position of German citizens to speak and take on this specific responsibility. On the other hand, the campaign slogan still revealed a strongly hierarchical relation with those supposed to be supported.⁵³ The authors thus drew on what Reisigl and Wodak call a strategy of ‘backgrounding’ and ‘passivation’ (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 47): Refugees appear as in need of the compassion, support, protection and representation of others, but not as political subjects and public voices in their own right.

Such an emphasis on the specific role of German supporters was also brought forward by radical left-wing groups. However, in contrast to the distinction between ‘Germans’ and ‘non-Germans’, these actors situated their own positionality within broader framings I will discuss in depth in the following chapters. First, various German radical left-wing actors made use of their anti-imperialist

⁵³ This point resonates strongly with contemporary critiques of framing Refugee issues primarily in humanitarian terms: using the *Sans-Papiers* in France as an example, Ticktin traces how people get access to protection and rights only on the basis of their suffering, which can necessarily only lead to ‘second class’ rights: ‘Those undocumented immigrants who do get papers have inequality literally inscribed on their bodies, since their bodies are what they use to barter for their papers; they are forever marked as sick, as disabled, as violated. Their main value is their suffering, insofar as practices of care that respond to suffering mark the French as benevolent, as civilized, as humane. But finally, the politics of care maintains a racialized postcolonial nation-state, rendering immigrants visible in French society primarily in the form of gendered and racialized victims – they can never be equal’ (Ticktin 2011, 24). For this reason, Nyers contends that the refugee ‘is in need of liberation from the ‘humanity’ that declares her speechless, fearful, inauthentic, and animal’ (Nyers 2006, 95).

critique of the state to reflect on ‘their own’ tasks and responsibilities in pro-Refugee struggles. In a leaflet published in 1981 by the German anti-imperialist organisation *International Communist Party*, for instance, there is a clear awareness of the power differential between German citizens and Refugees: ‘We have to support them in this struggle; it is exactly our task in the FRG [...] to attack “our” state and to weaken it by defending together our living and fighting conditions regardless of “national interests”’ (Internationale Kommunistische Partei 1981a - transl. by TJP). What was implied here was that ‘they’ needed to be supported because they were in a vulnerable and marginalised position and that ‘we’ needed to take the lead in the fight against the state because of ‘our’ particular position as German citizens.

Second, there were also various German radical left-wing actors that situated such notions of heightened responsibility more explicitly in an anti-racist critique of both state and wider society. In the first issue of the antiracist magazine *ZAG*⁵⁴ in November 1991, for example, the editors explicitly identified themselves as ‘white’ to justify a particular role in the struggle against racism that affected Refugees and other immigrant and minority groups: ‘As a predominantly white group, we want to take responsibility for racism and fight against it. [...] We want to provide political and individual support to those affected by racism’ (*ZAG (Zeitungsprojekt Antirassistischer Und Antifaschistischer Gruppen)*. Vol. 1 1991 - transl. by TJP). Thus, the plea for solidarity was not grounded in a positive German identity or the defence of a certain vision of German society, but rather in the idea that all those who were not affected by racist discrimination and exclusion had more practical capabilities to act politically and thus a heightened responsibility to fight against racism and support those affected. What was missing in both examples, however, was an explicit awareness and discussion of the active role of Refugees in these struggles. Although the *International Communist Party* pointed to the problem that Refugee struggles had mainly ‘taken place in extreme isolation’ (Internationale Kommunistische Partei 1981b - transl. by TJP), this did not lead to more serious efforts to counterbalance or even try to reverse the power relation between Refugees and supporters.

Towards the late 1980s, however, there was a growing number of support actors that sought to foreground the significance of Refugee struggles as the starting point for their own political practices. Although these public interventions were still based on a clear distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’, they nonetheless placed a stronger focus on ‘their’ struggles and what ‘we’ can do to strengthen and amplify these already-existing struggles. In 1989, for instance, the civil society

⁵⁴ In subsequent years, this magazine has established itself as a leading discussion platform of anti-racist left-wing groups and organisations in Germany. The final issue was published in 2019 (“ZAG Antirassistische Zeitschrift” 2018).

organisation *Asylum*, together with the *Refuge* campaign published a leaflet intended to raise public awareness to an ongoing Refugee hunger strike. Rather than formulating demands for Refugees, the authors referred to demands made by those Refugee activists themselves:

Their protest is directed against the conditions of detention, the long detention period and the daily threat of deportation. It is directed against the persecution of the Kurds in Turkey, in Lebanon against the persecution of refugees in their countries of origin. Hardly any news about the situation in detention awaiting deportation reach the public. [...] We support the prisoners' demands for immediate release. We demand the discontinuation of all deportations and the dissolution of deportation prisons. We demand the abolition of racist asylum and foreigner legislation. We demand the opening of the borders. We demand the discontinuation of all economic and military support for dictatorships and persecuting states. (Asyl e.V. and Fluchtbürg 1989 - transl. by TJP)⁵⁵

There is also some evidence to suggest that the late 1980s and early 1990s saw an increasing interest in developing political projects and campaigns in direct cooperation with Refugees. In 1990, for instance, the South German civil society organisations *Refugee Council Freiburg* and the *Political and Cultural Group Waldkirch* were involved in founding a 'Café of International Solidarity' which was developed 'together with Refugees' and was intended to offer a space of discussion about 'themes which meet the political needs of Refugees' (Politik- und Kulturgruppe Waldkirch, Flüchtlingsrat Freiburg, and Flüchtlinge verschiedener Länder 1990, 12 - transl. by TJP). Another example is the *10th Federal Congress of the Movement of Emigrants and Refugees* (1990) whose organisers highlighted in a press statement that the 'preparation group was composed equally of foreigners and nationals' (Internationales Referat der C.v.O.-Universität Oldenburg 1989 - transl. by TJP). As I shall discuss in the next section, however, this shift in representational dynamics did not occur intuitively, but was the result of growing conflict dynamics within the (pro-)Refugee movement.

Mobilisation by Refugees

The late 1980s and early 1990s were an important moment in the overall history of (pro-)Refugee activism in the FRG insofar as it was characterised by the growing critique of those hierarchical and disempowering forms of representation discussed in the previous section. Unsurprisingly, it was Refugee activists in particular who began to raise this problem of paternalism and developed alternative representational practices to challenge and overcome this problem. Most notably, these actors highlighted the significance of *self-representation*, that is, the process by which those who represent are or become identical with those who are represented. However, what these authors did not intend was to simply add self-representation to the other modes of representation circulating within the wider (pro-)Refugee movement. Instead, they actively *challenged* and *refused to*

⁵⁵ The limitations of my archival material did not allow to verify whether these demands were formulated by those on hunger strike.

accept the latter. In this context, they also called into question the often self-proclaimed radical or critical self-understanding of many support actors and accused them of a form of complicity in the marginalisation and victimisation of Refugees.

One moment that exemplified many of the points made in the context of the shift towards self-organisation and self-representation was the *8th Nationwide Congress of Immigrant- and Refugee Initiatives* which took place in 1988 and was dedicated to the overarching topic ‘minorities demand equality’ (Immigrantenpolitisches Forum (IPF) 1989). In the congress report, the authors pointed out that the congress was ‘special in that it is the first to be organised essentially by the foreign groups themselves so as to implement constructively the criticism that has been expressed in the last Congresses, of a German organisation and planning for, and less with, foreign minorities’ (ibid.). This remark shows that, by 1988, ‘foreign minorities’ – most likely including Refugees given the actors who met at the congress – had been voicing concerns about their positions in political struggles. This concern was also shown in the main discussions at the conference which revolved around racism, the self-organisation of minorities affected by racism, and possible actions of solidarity by allies. The focus lay on the ubiquity of racism, even among leftists: ‘The everyday concern of xenophobic behaviour, advertising, and laws was expressed just as much as the existential threat of deportation practices or neo-Nazi attacks, as well as the racist arrogance of many leftists’ (Immigrantenpolitisches Forum (IPF) 1989 - transl. by TJP). The congress resolution also underlined this tension among (pro-)Refugee actors as it included a clearly worded statement by the working group concerned with the self-organisation of minorities affected by racism: ‘We also object to the patronisation of left-alternative groups who try to occupy and exploit us and our demands’ (ibid.). As the report also illustrated, this specific working group only consisted of people who were ‘themselves affected by racism’ (ibid.) and its participants expressed the wish to continue with such a format. The statement implicitly points to central discussions of previous congresses in particular, and wider struggles in general: because German support actors primarily spoke *for* and failed to cooperate *with* Refugees and migrants, these actors considered it necessary to start speaking *by* and *for themselves*. Thus, they attempted to overcome this dependency on German support actors altogether through the creation of relatively autonomous spaces of organisation and discussion. Furthermore, the authors portrayed German left-wing and other support actors not only as existing or potential allies, but also as part of the problem – at least if these actors failed to reflect on and tried to overcome their complicity in reproducing racist exclusion and paternalism. Moreover, the congress tabled a controversial discussion around the question of whether they should work together with German groups in the first place. This is very interesting insofar as it demonstrates that the refusal to be represented by support groups did not remain a

symbolic question but had direct implications for political practice and cooperation. Eventually, a stance of non-cooperation was rejected, and the report acknowledged that '[m]any of the German congress participants felt that their solidarity work was misunderstood, not recognised' (ibid.). As Yaron Matras pointed out in a brochure in 1989 in this regard: 'even in this country, the excluded minorities about whose interests people talk, begin to learn not to wait for the "critical currents" of the majority but to organise themselves' (Matras 1989, 48 - transl. by TJP).

Furthermore, German radical left-wing actors made some attempts to bring in political perspectives that were closer to the subsuming logic introduced above and in the previous chapter. For instance, there was a declaration of solidarity with all political prisoners (and not only those in detention awaiting deportation) which was only adopted by several German 'autonomous groups' (Immigrantenpolitisches Forum (IPF) 1989 - transl. by TJP). This declaration included conventional anti-imperialist framings and demands: 'against imperialist refugee politics – for a general right to stay – for a free, multinational society (without prisons)' (ibid.). However, the fact that Refugee and migrant actors refused to support this declaration can be interpreted as an open conflict situation. The main reason why those actors refused to adopt this declaration was probably not the question of political prisoners as such, but rather the underlying framing of this declaration, which failed to acknowledge the specific difference between citizens and non-citizens. Thus, the above-described tendency among radical left-wing actors to regard 'Refugees' and 'foreigners' primarily as parts of the globally oppressed proletariat was put in question. Faced with such tensions among the participants of the congress, anti-imperialist leftist groups concluded that they had to answer fundamental questions: 'We have to ask ourselves the question of our position, what is the "national question" for us, what internationalism, what do we refer to?' (ibid.). This suggests that the Refugee and migrant actors were successful – at least in this first step – not only in raising the issue of (self-)representation, but also in provoking other actors to reconsider their frames of reference as well as their positionality within the wider (pro-)Refugee movement.

At the turn of the decade questions about the (il-)legitimacy of speaking and acting for others became an increasingly important subject of contention and tension among (pro-)Refugee actors. As we have seen throughout this chapter, these conflict dynamics had not appeared out of nowhere but were the manifestation of and response to established patterns of mobilisation and representation dominated by those groups and organisations with a more influential and powerful position within the public sphere and political culture of the German nation-state. Coming back to the theoretical perspectives on the dynamics of self-representation outlined at the beginning of this chapter, it can be argued that the early (pro-)Refugee movement was characterised by a certain tendency to move from what Saward has criticised as a conventional "transmission belt" model

of representation' (Saward 2010, 29) to a more complex dynamic, where the act of 'providing a *representation*' (Bourdieu 2009, 182 – original emphasis) itself became the subject of political debate and conflict.

It was especially Refugee and migrant actors who pointed to the problem that many support actors simply took for granted their own power position within the wider political field and thus remained complicit in the marginalisation and disempowerment of those whom they claimed to support. This was accompanied by the dismantling of the positive self-understanding of German support actors. Most interestingly, even those support actors who explicitly distanced themselves from a German identity were accused of implicitly reproducing this identity by way of their paternalistic representational practices.

As a result of these conflict dynamics, two interrelated representational practices entered the terrain of (pro-)Refugee activism. First, the practice of *self-representation* which led to the formation of independent Refugee organisations and spaces of discussion created by these organisations; and second, the practice of *refusing to be represented* which was accompanied by the refusal to practically cooperate on unequal terms. What this demonstrates is that the 'transmission belt' model of representation only worked if those represented accepted the representations provided for them. As this was – at times – not the case, those represented began to develop their own alternatives.

It should not be stressed, however, that political conflicts over (self-)representation are not detached from the wider political field within which they take place. Given that Refugee actors usually find themselves in a position of marginalisation and vulnerability, it in fact becomes a highly challenging endeavour to establish independent forms of political organisation and successfully change or reverse the political hierarchies within the (pro-)Refugee movement. To a considerable degree, then, such a development depends on the willingness of support actors to acknowledge their own failure and help to pave the way for new types of representation and cooperation. Looking at the period until the early 1990s, I did not find any evidence of such a substantial transformation of (pro-)Refugee politics in the FRG. Instead, the conflicts of representation remained a marginalised yet growing aspect of (pro-)Refugee activism. Although the more recent history of the (pro-)Refugee movement since the early to mid-1990s goes beyond the scope of my research project, it is noteworthy that the public discussions and political conflicts have not significantly changed the overarching patterns which I analysed in this chapter. I provide some thoughts on these long-term historical trajectories of (pro-)Refugee activism in the FRG in the concluding chapter.

6 Critique: Framings of the German State

This chapter examines the different ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors positioned themselves vis-à-vis the German nation-state throughout the 1980s until the asylum compromise in 1993. As we will see throughout the chapter, most actors expressed this relation in the form of a *critique*. A key object of inquiry in this chapter is therefore to examine how the different framings of the state were used strategically in order to criticise the state. Furthermore, I will also explore what these strategies of critique can tell us about the positionality of these actors vis-à-vis their object of critique. Overall, I identified two strategies of critique that were expressed through various framings. To specify these, some conceptual reflections developed by Boltanski in the context of his sociology of critique proved useful starting points.⁵⁶ On the one hand, many actors developed a strategy of *internal or immanent critique* which sought to criticise its object in light of its own norms, values and ideals. Thus, what was put into question was not the legitimacy of the state as such, but rather certain state developments which were interpreted as a diversion from its normative self-understanding. The key demand, then, is that the state re-establish its own values, norms, and ideals by addressing and overcoming the identified problem. As Boltanski puts it, this strategy of critique

consists in extracting the normative position serving as a basis for the critique to which a certain social order is subjected from the description of that order itself [...]. It will then be shown that the ideal this order lays claim to does not correspond to its actual outcomes and, consequently, to the real condition of its members or some of them. Critique then takes as its main target the fact that the order in question does not in fact conform to the values it assigns itself in principle. (Boltanski 2011, 11)

In this sense, immanent critique is in an ambivalent position, simultaneously rejecting and affirming its object of critique. As we shall see in this section, there are different ways in which this mode of critique can be expressed discursively, such as appeals, reminders, warnings, or more indignant forms. However, its underlying hope is that its object of critique still has resources and capacities to reform and redeem itself. However, this does not mean that these actors do not leave the terrain of officially sanctioned political action. Various actors considered the transgression of taboos and the non-compliance with the law as necessary preconditions for triggering such reform processes.

Other actors, especially those with a left-wing political orientation, developed a strategy of *denunciatory critique* which sought to put into question the legitimacy of its object of critique as a

⁵⁶ While I do have some reservations about Boltanski's overarching theoretical approach, I nonetheless consider his empirical-analytical research useful (see section 2.1.3).

whole. In his analysis of various modes of public responses to the experience of suffering, Boltanski ascribes two elements to the practice of denunciation. First, denunciation involves the ‘identification of the persecutor’ (Boltanski 1999, 58) that is made responsible for the suffering in question. This can be both individuals and ‘de-individualised entities such as *systems* or *structures*’ (Boltanski 1999, 73 – original emphasis). In contrast to immanent critique, however, the relation between persecutor and victim is identified not as incidental or contingent, but as mutually constitutive: ‘the persecutor’s good fortune is the result of the unfortunate’s suffering’ (ibid., 62). Against this background, the self-reforming capacities of the object of critique are denied or at least considered minimal. Second, denunciation often takes the form of an ‘unmasking of a truth hidden beneath illusory appearances’ (ibid., 66). Thus, similar to immanent critique, this type of critique identifies a discrepancy between a normative ideal and a reality which contradicts this idea. However, this reality is not understood as an aberration of the ideal, but rather as the true essence of the object under scrutiny. In this chapter, I discuss examples of critique which seek to point to the suffering of Refugees in order to put the very legitimacy of the state in question. The underlying assumption in these cases is that these experiences of suffering are much more than exceptional problems within an otherwise functioning system but rather, they reveal the logic of persecution constitutive of state power as such. Nevertheless, a closer look at various examples of this type of critique will demonstrate that it is quite possible to explicitly attack the legitimacy of the state while implicitly reproducing some of its doxastic underpinnings. This chapter will also discuss combinations of both forms of critique, thus adding further complexity to the symbolic repertoire of (pro-)Refugee activism. Overall, then, my analysis of different framings of the state as an object of critique also seeks to remain attentive to the ‘dialogical relation’ (Boltanski 2011, 62) between critique and confirmation.

As I demonstrate throughout the chapter, all actors tapped into contemporary doxastic resources in various attempts to formulate their critique of the state’s asylum and migration regime, as well as the role of state and hegemonic political actors in shaping hostile political discourse about migration and asylum. Thus, what is noticeable is that, irrespective of variations and differences within their political outlooks, all these actors made use of similar symbolic repertoires – that is, a limited set of themes, images, and linguistic devices – to frame and express criticism of the state. In the following, I focus on two major dimensions of symbolic framing used throughout the 1980s and early 1990s: the *German state’s relation to its Nazi predecessor* (6.1) and the *German state’s role in an international system of political-economic inequality and oppression* (6.2). However, while all actors referred to these two dimensions, there were considerable differences in the ways they were invoked.

6.1 Germany's Nazi Legacy

From the 1980s until today, criticism of migration and asylum state policies and practices has been closely linked to German Nazism and the Holocaust. As we will see in this section, this fusion of pro-Refugee and memory politics was prominent among (pro-)Refugee actors aiming to criticise the state's official self-understanding and provoke moral and political indignation at its treatment of Refugees. The main purpose of this section is to explore the complex ways in which the critique of the state and its migration and asylum regime is at the same time oriented towards and informed by its regime of doxastic assumptions. The underlying hypothesis, developed in the context of an engagement with Bourdieusian theoretical perspectives, is that the particular interdiscursive connection between migration, asylum, memory and national identity needs to be understood as a symbolic manifestation of the field-embeddedness of oppositional political actors. In this sense, I will make a contribution to demonstrating that, as Mihai puts it, '[o]fficially sanctioned memory serves both as a source and a constraint on the exercise of political imagination, which never functions *ex nihilo*: national mythologies inevitably shape its scope and content' (Mihai 2019, 54).

The overall argumentative scheme these actors drew on can be defined through what Reisigl and Wodak call the 'topos of history as teacher': 'because history teaches that specific actions have specific consequences, one should perform or omit a specific action in a specific situation (allegedly) comparable with the historical example referred to' (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 80). This scheme involves and connects two types of judgment: it not only puts forward the argument that two historical situations are comparable, but also requires that we act in accordance with the moral-political implications of this comparison. In the specific German context, this takes the form of an imperative to avoid the recurrence of or fight against the persistence of a morally and politically questionable past in the present (Forchtner 2014). However, looking at the specific ways in which this connection between the German state's present and past was imagined, there were significant differences, which can be placed on a spectrum between continuity and discontinuity.

At one extreme we find a clear break between past and present, proposing that the only way in which the Nazi regime remains – or should remain – alive today is as a historical lesson or 'negative founding myth' (6.1.1). At the other extreme we find an equation between present and past, assuming that the social and political order of the Nazi regime had survived the end of the Second World War and continued to exist in the form of the FRG (6.1.2). As we will see in this section, these two tendencies did not simply co-exist within the (pro-)Refugee movement but recurrently became the subject of controversial discussions, which also changed their relative influence. Most notably, the late 1980s were characterised by the increasing influence of frames of continuity, with

the evocation of a possible relapse into fascism becoming a dominant theme within the discursive texts of a broad spectrum of (pro-)Refugee actors. During this period, I also identified a third tendency – especially within left-wing circles – that increasingly expressed criticism of the use of analogies between Nazism and the contemporary German migration and asylum system, suggesting instead the need to criticise both in their historical specificity (6.1.3).

The Past as Reminder and Warning: the FRG as a post-Nazi democracy

Throughout the 1980s, the vast majority of Refugee activists and their supporters framed the West-German state and its institutions as fundamentally in line with its orthodox self-representations. This tendency was prevalent among both Refugee and support groups and organisations not associated with the radical left. The main framing which these actors drew on was Germany as a liberal-democratic state which, through a collective learning process, had been able to erect a wall of separation from its Nazi predecessor. There was thus the assumption of a clear break after the Second World War that had been achieved by learning the moral, political and constitutional lessons of history. In particular, the Basic Law and its constitutional right of asylum – which, as we have seen, had figured prominently within hegemonic public debates about post-war national identity – was taken to represent a lesson learnt from history and was regarded as a minimal standard that state policy should not fail to meet. In the particular context of the asylum and migration debates of the 1980s, however, these actors expressed concerns about the potential or actual erosion of this minimal standard that had played such a fundamental role for the FRG's official self-image. In other words, they positioned themselves in close proximity to the *official ideal* of the FRG, but distanced themselves from its *actual reality*, which was criticised in terms of this official ideal, thereby offering an immanent critique. As will be discussed further below, the Nazi past and the constitutive break with it were invoked in two different but related ways.

First, it served as a *reminder* of the moral obligations and specific responsibilities of the FRG vis-à-vis people who faced persecution and sought refuge. Here, the FRG was framed as a state whose liberal-democratic foundations were largely intact but increasingly eroded in the area of migration and asylum policy, thus endangering those achievements associated with the immediate post-war moment. Second, other actors went a step further and formulated an explicit *warning* that the German authorities' treatment of Refugees signalled the potential return of Nazi methods. Here, the FRG was framed as under threat of an actual relapse into an antidemocratic, fascist political system. The common denominator of both perspectives, however, was the attempt to protect and conserve the liberal-democratic foundations of the FRG. Memory politics was thus used to

scandalise contemporary asylum practices: they were used to produce public outrage about the violation of norms in order to reinscribe and strengthen orthodox notions of German state identity as liberal, democratic and generous in the face of ongoing persecution throughout the world.

The invocation of the past as a reminder and teacher for the present can be most clearly exemplified in the various public hearings and ‘court cases’ staged by different actors throughout the 1980s. Through a replication and enactment of an official judicial procedure, these public events served the purpose of demonstrating – in various ways – how the German state was violating its own core constitutional values and responsibilities. The critique of the German state thus took the form of a *charge*, that is, the accusation of a criminal offense within a legal order codified within and centred around the Basic Law, which, in turn, was defined *ex negativo* by its relation to the Nazi past. In 1984, for instance, the *Refugee Council Berlin* organised and staged a ‘hearing on the practice of asylum in Berlin’ in January 1984 (*taž*, 23.01.1984 – transl. by TJP). In the course of the ‘hearing’ in 1984, an international jury listened to various reports and evaluated different steps and institutions of the asylum procedure in West-Berlin, such as the Immigration Authority [Ausländerbehörde], the Central Welfare Authority for Asylum-seekers [Zentrale Sozialhilfestelle für Asylbewerber] and various accommodation facilities. In their final report, the jury defined the scope of their undertaking as follows: ‘The jury asked how far the legal provisions and administrative regulations regarding the asylum procedure agreed with the constitutional right to asylum and the above mentioned legal instruments [1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol; 1950 ECHR]’ (Hofmann, Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker, and Flüchtlingsrat Berlin 1984, 179 - transl. by TJP). Put differently, their measure of criticising the FRG’s migration and asylum regime was the question of whether it met – or failed to meet – the existing legal guarantees enshrined in the Basic Law in particular, and by the ‘international community’ in general. The relevance of asylum and the critique of state practices in this regard were expressed through an association with memory politics:

In this context, the jury insistently refers to the ‘spirit’ of the FRG’s right to asylum about which Carlo Schmid – one of the ‘fathers’ of the Basic Law – once said that it had to follow the ‘basic principle of generosity’. In general, the administration responsible for the asylum procedure should call to mind the experiences made not only with Refugees but also with ethnic minorities in recent German history. (ibid., 184-185)

We can see here that these references to Nazism primarily served as reminders of the reasons why the FRG, in its founding moment, introduced specific laws and policies, embedded in a political culture of ‘generosity’, to protect those who experienced political persecution. By emphasising that such minimal standards for asylum-seekers ought to be taken for granted in a ‘democratic community’ (ibid., 185) and in a ‘constitutional state like the FRG’ (ibid., 189), the authors stressed the core value of the Basic Law and sought to foreground what it meant for the FRG to learn

from its past. Here, German atrocities in the past were not conjured up to draw parallels to contemporary practices, but to appeal to German state representatives as the successors of the ‘fathers of the Basic Law’. The FRG was not only criticised as a perpetrator of human rights violations but was approached as the main political institution responsible for Refugee protection and support. Put differently, due to its own history, Germany was seen as having a special political responsibility to protect Refugees. Therefore, this evocation of a moral and political responsibility was also connected to the historical failure of other nation-state responses to the forced migration movements triggered by the Nazi regime.

One such example can be found during the height of the campaign for the release and non-extradition of Cemal Kemal Altun in 1983. A group of people formerly persecuted by the Nazi regime rallied in front of the prison where Altun was held awaiting his extradition. A speaker of the group announced:

We are a group of people who have themselves been persecuted, have suffered, and whose political persecution was not believed. The Nazis too, tried to achieve our extradition by claiming we had committed criminal offences. Many politically persecuted people were therefore rejected and extradited by countries where they thought to have found safety. (Kantemir and Boehncke 1983, 40 - transl. by TJP)

Within this statement, the German authorities’ treatment of the Altun case was not directly compared to the persecutory practices of the Nazi regime but rather to the failure of other nation-states to protect those Refugees who fled from the reach of the regime. Thus, the main lesson the FRG was supposed to draw from its historical legacy was not to repeat inappropriate state responses to the kind of political persecution that had been dominant during the Second World War. Not only was this a call against discriminatory state practices, but also for developing a pro-active stance, implying that contemporary Germany needed to adopt an exemplary role in the fight against political persecution as well as in the protection of people confronted by a fate similar to those who had fled Nazism. Another remarkable feature that can be identified here is the moral weight added through performative acts of testimony: these actors spoke not only as public supporters of Refugees but also as people who had personally witnessed and endured the deadly consequences of the failure of asylum regimes.

As all these examples demonstrate, the past served as teaching a lesson, setting the standard which the present should meet. Through the prism of memory politics, orthodox constructions of German national identity thus served as a basis for formulating and communicating pro-Refugee claims. While a clear distinction was made between past and present, the past was drawn upon to articulate a specific moral and political responsibility. In this sense, the legacy of German Nazism was not seen as an ongoing political reality, but rather as a reminder that liberal-democratic nation-states, especially those with a fascist history, needed to provide refuge for those who had to flee

from political persecution. The framing and critique of the state was thus explicitly informed by the mnemonic elements of the national doxa established and institutionalised in the immediate post-war moment.

Many pro-Refugee groups and organisations went a step further by focusing on the German state both as *protector of* and potential *perpetrator against* Refugee rights. They, too, emphasised the importance of the constitutional guarantee of a right to asylum, but were more alarmist in their evaluation of the contemporary moment. Here, the main problem identified was not so much an ongoing historical continuity but rather, the potential return of antidemocratic, fascist state practices in the near future. The way in which the German authorities came to treat Refugees and migrants from the late 1970s onwards was seen as the starting point of such a development. Thus, while the FRG was framed as having broken with its predecessor, a return to past atrocities was regarded as a tangible potential threat looming in the present. The past thus formed the basis for a strategy of *warning* which, compared to the strategy of *reminding*, was more explicitly future-oriented.

Most widely criticised in this regard were the accommodation system for asylum-seekers in general and the detention system for those awaiting deportation in particular. There was a nearly omnipresent allusion to the Nazi past throughout the 1980s through the recurrent usage of the term ‘camp’ [Lager] to describe various forms of accommodation facilities for asylum-seekers and refugees (Hamburger Arbeitskreis ASYL 1983; Pieper 2008; Bispinck and Hochmuth 2014; Poutrus 2014). In January 1981, for example, the already discussed cooperation of civil society organisations published a brochure titled ‘From Persecution into the Camp’ [Von der Verfolgung ins Sammellager] that provided criticisms of and counterarguments to contemporary German asylum policies (Frankfurter Rechtshilfekomitee für Ausländer, Initiativausschuss ‚Ausländische Mitbürger in Hessen‘, and Interessengemeinschaft der mit Ausländern verheirateten deutschen Frauen e.V. 1981 - transl. by TJP). While the connotative horizon of the term ‘camp’ can include a variety of meanings, the reference to ‘persecution’ can be considered an attempt to allude to the imagery of Nazi camps as well as internment camps in the wider Second World War context. In contrast to explicit references to ‘concentration camps’ which will be discussed in the next section, this connection was less direct and explicit insofar as the history of establishing camps [Sammellager⁵⁷] went beyond the specific case of Nazi Germany. More specifically, whereas the

⁵⁷ The German term ‘Sammellager’ (literally, ‘collection camp’) is ambiguous in its meaning. On the one hand, the term was used to describe transit camps established by the Nazis to ‘gather’ Jews and other minorities before deportation to concentration and death camps. On the other hand, the term has been used in a broader sense to describe any place where people or things are gathered such as a depot. Accommodation centres for asylum-seekers

references to ‘concentration camps’ were unambiguously associated with a murderous and genocidal agenda, the term ‘camp’ goes beyond such a connotation, focusing more generally on the experience of enforced detention and isolation. The historical connection was thus drawn in a rather implicit way as the specific Nazi past was alluded to through association.

The criticism of the conditions of Refugees’ detention awaiting deportation became a widely discussed issue in early 1984 after six people died in a fire at a detention facility in Berlin.⁵⁸ On 28th January 1984, people in West Berlin demonstrated against the ways in which the Berlin senate was dealing with the events. In their call for the demonstration, the local support and counselling group *Therapeutic Working Group Kreuzberg* made the following statement:

On 31st December 1983, it was proven, how little West-Berlin’s state power values human life. The events completely reveal the character of the senate’s foreigner policies [Ausländerpolitik]: the disregard of human rights which goes as far as the extermination of human beings. We demand: the resignation of West-Berlin’s minister of the interior Heinrich Lummer who is politically responsible for the gruesome killing of the detained; the establishment of an international commission of inquiry by independent democratic persons; the categorical prohibition of deportations to war zones, to fascist regimes, and to regimes that persecute minorities. (Therapeutisches Arbeitskollektiv Kreuzberg e.V. 1984 - transl. by TJP)

Even though a more direct link was made between contemporary practice of detention and the past of ‘extermination’, the demands remained within the proclaimed values of the FRG itself.

Much more explicit connections between contemporary and past German state practices were drawn by several church organisations and charitable groups. This was particularly clear during the anti-voucher campaign of the early 1980s. Apart from introducing a prohibition to work for asylum-seekers and reducing their financial support (which necessarily had become essential due to the prohibition), new federal regulations in 1980 had prescribed that financial support for asylum-seekers should, if possible, not be paid in monetary form but in kind. The degree to which this provision was in fact implemented varied heavily depending on both state and municipal context. In Berlin, the administrative authorities started to provide vouchers [Wertgutscheine] instead of money so that asylum-seekers were reduced in their choice of where to do their grocery shopping and what to buy (various things such as alcohol and cigarettes could not be bought with vouchers). Already in May 1982, the *Refugee Council Berlin* criticised the vouchers for being

in the FRG have at times even been officially called ‘Sammellager’ (Poutrus 2021). It is exactly this ambiguity – non-existent in terms such as ‘concentration camp’ – which needs to be emphasised in examples like the one mentioned here.

⁵⁸ The Augustaplatz-Berlin detention facility had already seen several protests by inmates. In October 1982, Palestinians awaiting deportation had threatened to collectively kill themselves and in October 1983, 36 inmates went on hunger strike for 25 days (*Zeit*, 23.01.1984). Moreover, in June 1983, the police union had pointed out the poor conditions – both for inmates and police staff – at the facility to Berlin’s minister of the interior Heinrich Lummer, without any effects. In the late evening of December 31, 1983, Refugees awaiting deportation set fire to their mattresses in one of the cells to protest against their detention conditions. To prevent inmates from escaping, one of the police guards locked the cell door. When the fire brigade arrived, they recovered six bodies.

uneconomical, discriminating, and creating a black market (*Die Wahrheit*, 28.05.1982 in: Koordinationsbüro 'Frankfurter Appell' 1984b). In November 1983, a Protestant church congregation in Berlin-Dahlem attracted public attention when they started to exchange vouchers for cash for asylum-seekers in a local accommodation facility. Under the heading 'Not yet a Jewish badge' [noch kein Judenstern] they made their actions public in their congregation magazine (*taž*, 21.11.1983 – transl. by TJP). Berlin's senator of social affairs, Ulf Fink, responded to this statement with a public letter in which he expressed indignation at this choice of words, calling it 'irresponsible to depict constitutional administrative actions as having even the slightest resemblance with the persecution measures taken against Jews in the Nazi period' and told the congregation that such actions were illegal (*ibid.*). A lawyer representing the congregation answered in another public letter that, even though the congregation was endeavouring to follow the law, they would also continue to 'mitigate the hardships of the German policies for foreigners' and to follow the principle 'We have to do the orders of God, not of man' (*taž*, 21.11.1983 – transl. by TJP; see also: Viereck 1984). Read in conjunction, these statements can be understood as a direct reference to the tradition of church resistance to the Nazi regime, based on the primacy of Christian moral values over the existing political norms and rules (Babo 2003; Diakonisches Werk der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland 1986; Initiative für die Freiheit von C.K. Altun in Lübeck 1983). Thus, making historical comparisons was justified as a religious and moral duty to prevent the resurgence of Nazi policies.

Despite the public dismay articulated by senator Fink, other organisations agreed with this perspective. For example, in a public call for a demonstration in 1984, the charitable associations '*Asylum*' in the Congregation 'To the Holy Cross' and *Self-help for Foreigners* claimed that the vouchers were 'reminiscent of the mixed-breed identity cards [Mischlingsmarken] in the 'Third Reich' and that they would 'have exactly that meaning for the asylum-seekers they are given to' ('"Asyl" in der Gemeinde "Zum hl. Kreuz" and Ausländerselbsthilfe e.V. 1984 - transl. by TJP). They continued: 'They're also arrested openly on the street, in subway stations, and when they go to the authorities and they are put into detention, awaiting deportation. In general, one reason for the arrest suffices: not being German' (*ibid.*). By mid-1984, the campaign 'voucher action' was in full swing in West-Berlin. In May, the Union for Trade, Banks, and Insurances agreed unanimously on a resolution against the voucher system (*taž*, 15.05.1984) and numerous Protestant congregations, the *Alternative List* as well as various other groups and individuals changed vouchers for cash so that German citizens themselves would use the vouchers. The *Alternative List* alone purchased asylum-seekers' vouchers at nine points throughout West-Berlin for 15,000 Deutsche Mark per week (*taž*, 23.05.1984). Senator Fink was not impressed by these actions and introduced a special identity

card for asylum-seekers in June 1984, which had to be presented to the cashier when using a voucher so that only asylum-seekers were able to use them. Despite the introduction of new identity cards, the anti-voucher campaign did not halt. Deploying to the mottos, ‘Cashiers are not auxiliary police!’ and ‘Special identity cards for everyone’ [Sonderausweise für alle], leaflets were handed out that included a do-it-yourself version of the new identity cards (*Kassiererinnen Sind Doch Keine Hilfspolizisten!* 1984 - transl. by TJP; *taz*, 02.07.1984). *Asyl e.V.* and other organisations published and distributed leaflets that also emphasised the parallel between vouchers and special identity cards on the one hand, and ‘Hitler-fascism’, on the other: ‘For Jews, too, special money and yellow stars were introduced as identifying marks...!!!’ (*Asyl e.V. (Berlin)* 1984, 15). Put differently, they were perceived as a ‘modern Jewish badge’ (*taz*, 06.06.1984; *taz*, 25.06.1984 – transl. by TJP).

The voucher system was thus rejected as an inhumane form of stigmatisation that had to be abolished if West-Germany wanted to be true to its own standards. Invoking the past also served to legitimise civil disobedience practiced in the present. By highlighting that the voucher practice was reminiscent of, if not identical to, Nazi state practices, a need for uncompromising resistance was created. As the legacy of Nazism was framed as re-emerging on the horizon, urgent action was necessary to prevent its resurgence. Although these latter examples are still based on the future-oriented strategy of warning, they already move in the direction of constructing an already-existing resemblance and even continuity between past and present – which I will further discuss in the next section.

Another way in which an imminent threat of a relapse was articulated was by drawing connections between state action and neo-Nazi activism. As we have seen in the previous chapter, throughout the 1980s and especially in the post-unification period of the early 1990s, hostile public discourse about immigration and asylum was closely linked to the rise of racist violence. This link was emphasised in the texts of (pro-)Refugee actors. More specifically, it was used to attack the German state’s liberal-democratic and anti-discriminatory self-understanding. In 1980, for example, violent racist attacks against Refugees were described by the newly-founded *Initiative Committee ‘Foreign Fellow Citizens in Hesse’*, an umbrella organisation of various churches, charitable and migrant associations in the federal state Hesse (“Herbert Leuninger Archiv - Asyl” 2018), as the government’s responsibility: ‘In the context of anti-asylum-seeker mobilisation of this sort, it is hardly astonishing that right-wing extremists now also feel encouraged to carry out bomb and arson attacks on asylum-seekers’ accommodation facilities’ (Initiativausschuss “Ausländische Mitbürger in Hessen” 1980a, 4 - transl. by TJP). Racism in this case was regarded as an important element of a system of ‘measures of deterrence’ (ibid.) created by the government. The

publications of the *Frankfurt Appeal* from 1984/85 also clearly located ‘the problem’ as being on the side of state institutions. The appeal was a collectively formulated and widely supported public statement that invoked five main criticisms of contemporary German foreigner politics: first, the appeal was concerned about the political practices as ‘human rights abuses’ which, second, produced xenophobia and racism. Policies for ‘foreigners’ were interpreted, third, as an instrument to divide the workforce [Arbeitnehmerschaft]: were, fourth, part of a general trend to cut social services; and, fifth, served as forms of political disciplining and were therefore a step towards the police state [Überwachungsstaat] (Koordinationsbüro “Frankfurter Appell” 1984b).⁵⁹ This ‘state-funded racism’ (ibid.) was regarded as a betrayal of the lessons learnt from the German Nazi-legacy:

It is appalling that, in spite of the horrifying events that millions of people have suffered during the ‘Nazi-time’ and in spite of the millions of deaths by fascist mass murder, today, in this country, only 50 years “afterwards”, racist policies can be practiced again. [...] Such policy encourages extreme right-wing groups who practice their ‘immigration politics’ [‘Ausländerpolitik’] through murder, arson, and terror. Today, hostility towards foreigners is government program!’ (ibid.)

The underlying assumption of these statements was that current migration policies had become a key element of racist discrimination in contemporary (West) Germany. Furthermore, in contrast to its own self-understanding, the state’s migration and asylum policies were identified with the political agenda of neo-Nazis, with these policies characterised as an important facilitator and amplifier of the mainstream influence of such extremist movements.

In sum, the actors discussed in this section widely drew on the framing of the FRG as a liberal-democratic state that had learned from its Nazi legacy in the immediate post-war period and should continue to do so today. Although there were certain differences in the specific articulation of this framing, all these actors made use of the discursive strategy of *immanent critique*. The critique of the

⁵⁹ From the very beginning, the appeal was not only supported by a broad spectrum of public individuals such as Heinrich Böll (and family), Wolf Biermann, Erich Fried, Günther Grass, Otto Schilly, and Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul but also by various groups from Catholic and Protestant church organisations and *Terre des Hommes* to the *Turkish and Kurdish Federation of Democratic Workers’ Associations*, *The Greens* and *Alternative List*, the *Association of Persecutees of the Nazi Regime/Federation of Anti-Fascists* as well as various radical left-wing groups such as the *Socialist Office*, *Group of International Marxists* or *Popular Front*. From early on in 1984, the appeal ‘against hostility towards foreigners – against the hostile policies of the federal government towards foreigners’ was disseminated throughout the FRG and in West Berlin. Its signatories – 25,000 people by September 1984 – demanded the equality in all spheres of life for all foreigners living in the FRG (Koordinationsbüro “Frankfurter Appell” 1984c - transl. by TJP). In the context of the Frankfurt Appeal, several public events took place in 1984 all over the FRG. From the 10th to 17th March, for instance, the coordination office ‘Frankfurt appeal’ organised a nationwide ‘action week against hostility towards foreigners [Ausländerfeindlichkeit]’ (ibid.). More local events were organised in several cities all over the FRG. In the fall of 1984, the coordination office ‘Frankfurt appeal’ organised a second nationwide event: the ‘march against racism and hostile policies towards foreigners’ (Koordinationsbüro “Frankfurter Appell” 1984a - transl. by TJP) which started in late September from Hamburg and Munich and finished on the 13th October in Cologne with a closing event. In order to make ‘foreigners’ deprivation of rights’ in West-Germany public, the two groups, consisting of ‘persons directly affected, members of different initiatives, ‘celebrities’, and accompanying people in art and culture’ (Koordinationsbüro “Frankfurter Appell” 1984c - transl. by TJP), visited numerous cities in the FRG.

contemporary migration and asylum regime was formulated not only in terms of a concern for the plight of Refugees, but also in terms of a concern for the restoration of the moral-political integrity of the German state – defined as the overcoming of its historical legacy. While Germany's Nazi past served as a dominant point of reference, the horrors of Nazism were rather invoked as arguments *for and in defence of* the FRG's political and legal system. Furthermore, this immanent critique was expressed discursively in the form of an *appeal*, that is, an attempt to convince the state and its representatives that a change of direction of its migration and asylum policy was demanded by its own values and principles.

Although my archival material does not offer direct insights into the underlying motivations of the actors in question, it is useful to situate their discursive practices within the context of mainstream discourses in the 1980s and early 1990s. As we saw in the previous chapter, it was in this period that the mnemonic elements of the national doxa, after decades of a 'consensus of silence' (Assmann 2016, 44), became the subject of heightened public discussions and controversies and also reverberated in the areas of popular and everyday culture following the broadcasting of the TV series 'Holocaust' in 1979. Thus, it can be surmised that (pro-)Refugee actors were aware of these debates and sought to strengthen their own political agenda through the construction of interdiscursive links. What is more, the chosen symbolic frames and discursive strategies reveal an ambivalent self-positioning within these debates. On the one hand, the actors' evocation of the mnemonic elements of the national doxa helped to justify their claims and positions in widely accepted moral and political terms. Thus, the actors could indeed expect that their public interventions might effectively scandalise the state's migration and asylum regime, that is, 'elicit unanimous indignation' (Boltanski 2011, 26) at its inhumane features. As the public denunciation of the church congregation by senator Fink demonstrated, the break with its predecessor has been foundational for the FRG's self-depiction, any association was regarded as highly critical. On the other hand, the actors explicitly positioned themselves against the growing attempts by the political right to re-interpret the doxa in favour of a more restrictive migration and asylum policy. Instead, they made the case for an even more 'generous' asylum and migration system in the face of ongoing persecution and desperation throughout the world. Overall, however, their normative point of reference remained the 'spirit of the Basic Law'.

The Past as Discrediting and Incriminating the Present: Continuities between the FRG and its Nazi Past

At the other end of the spectrum, we find perspectives that evoke a clear continuity between the state institutions of the Nazi regime and of the FRG to express indignation at the contemporary (West) German asylum and migration regime.⁶⁰ Here, the past is not only invoked as a warning for the present but directly equated with it. These oftentimes very explicit statements and comparisons were largely made by actors identifying as part of the radical left throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. In the previous chapter, we already saw that it was a particular feature of the German radical left to formulate an uncompromising critique of the very foundations of state power. In this section, we shall see that this critique was articulated in terms of an engagement with German memory politics.

The assumption underlying this critique was that the state's violent and repressive response to immigrants, non-citizens and Refugees in particular was not an aberration, but rather revealed the totalitarian nature of the German state. Moreover, in contrast to the examples introduced above, the repression through state practices was framed in much more violent terms. In this sense, the FRG's Nazi past served as a rhetorical device used to *discredit* the present status quo, thus rejecting the possibility of institutional reform and putting the state's very legitimacy into question. In addition to the German radical left, the topos of continuity was also used by Refugee activists, especially Sinti and Roma people in danger of deportation to Eastern Europe. In these cases, however, the critique of the state was less uncompromising, insofar as they also appealed to its historical responsibility, demanding compensation in the present for unexpiated injustices in the past. In this sense, their symbolic framing of the state was underpinned by an *incriminating* impetus.

The most prominent linguistic device of the discrediting strategy was the usage of images such as 'camps' and 'pogroms.' As the examples above have already demonstrated, the term 'camp' was widely used when criticising asylum practices. Characteristic of radical left-wing groups and organisations, however, was the tendency to explicitly invoke the image of *concentration* camps

⁶⁰ It is important to stress that before German unification in 1990, a clear distinction was made – or at least proclaimed – between the FRG and GDR. In an article from 1986, for example, the *Revolutionary Socialists* criticise Berlin's GDR government for helping the FRG to prevent people from Sri Lanka from arriving on its territory. The authors emphasise the need to protect the GDR's 'social achievements' against such 'anti-communist politics in East Berlin' (Revolutionäre Sozialisten 1986 - transl. by TJP). West Germany, on the other hand, was described in a completely different light: 'The FRG regards itself as the legal successor of the "German Reich". It is therefore no wonder that West German authorities show understanding for the necessity of genocide [of the Tamil population in Sri Lanka]' (ibid.). What this description indicates is a double standard regarding the two German states. While current policy decisions of the GDR were criticised, a return to the GDR's founding values was regarded as a remedy. By contrast, the FRG was more or less seen as a lost case because a clear break and thus distinction to its predecessor state was regarded as non-existent.

associated with forced labour, mass murder and extermination. For example, in late November 1981, the *International Communist Party* organised a demonstration in Berlin-Kreuzberg to show solidarity with Berlin-based Kurdish and Turkish asylum-seekers who had gone on hunger strike. In their call for the demonstration, the inhumane living conditions of detained Refugees were strongly emphasised to explain why several Refugees had resorted to the drastic practice of hunger strikes. The struggle of the Refugees, it was stated, was directed against their ‘animal-like treatment in “residential homes” [Wohnheime] and “camps” [Sammellager] similar to concentration camps [Konzentrationslager]’ (Internationale Kommunistische Partei 1981b - transl. by TJP). As this example shows, the authors questioned the terminology used not only by the authorities but also by certain civil society (pro-)Refugee actors, and instead compared the treatment of Refugees both in accommodation and detention facilities to Nazi methods. An even more explicit link to extermination and genocide was formulated in the early 1980s by the above-mentioned radical left-wing *Agency for the Self-Abolishment of the Proletariat*, who published a leaflet with the heading ‘The state plans the final solution of the question of asylum-seekers [Endlösung der Asylantenfrage]: the imperative for a radical answer by the proletariat’ (Agentur für die Selbstaufhebung des Proletariats 1983 - transl. by TJP).⁶¹ Through the term ‘final solution’, the FRG’s asylum regime was equated not only with the Nazi regime’s overall oppressive nature, but its systematic persecution and elimination of the European Jews. The group claimed that the West-German authorities’ treatment of Refugees was fundamentally driven by genocidal motives.

Such a claim was further strengthened through references to other Nazi institutions central to the Holocaust as well. In mid-December 1981, an anonymous call for a demonstration against ‘camps’ [Lager] established a clear connection and continuation between the German Nazi-past and the post-Nazi present (“Demonstrationsaufruf Gegen Lager” 1981). Here, the German term for racism (‘Rassismus’) was written with the stylised form ‘47’ (ibid.), thereby modifying its semiotic structure to make an allusion to the *NSDAP*’s paramilitary organisation *Schutzstaffel* (SS), which played a fundamental role in the organisation and perpetration of the Holocaust. Similarly, in an anonymous flyer titled ‘The right to stay and live for Refugees!’ from 1983, clear connections were drawn between the present and the past by emphasising how Palestinian and Lebanese Refugees were picked up ‘with Gestapo-methods, are dragged to the airport and deported without prior knowledge or are interned in deportation prisons, which quickly turn into incineration plants, and, sedated with psychotropic drugs, are prepared for a speedy deportation’ (“Bleibe Und Lebensrecht Für Flüchtlinge” 1983 - transl. by TJP). The authors concluded that the conditions of internment

⁶¹ I come back to the term ‘proletariat’ as the key frame of positive self-identification in the next chapter.

and deportation of Refugees ‘reveal the cruel continuity of the state’s administration of human life’ (ibid.). Here again, the reference to the Gestapo suggested that contemporary German border police officers made use of torture and murder to enforce the detention and deportation of Refugees.

In the early 1990s, such references still figured prominently as an interpretative frame. In the first issue of the antiracist magazine *Dawn* (published from 1991-2003), for instance, the authors used references to the Gestapo, as well as to the so-called *Nacht und Nebel* directive – a systematic campaign by the Nazi regime in 1941 to persecute and execute (alleged) political opponents – in order to justify the founding of their magazine in 1990s Germany:

We are in need of people who are not penitently subdued and who call German reality by its name. Again, people are deported stealthily [bei Nacht und Nebel] and racism exists day and night. Again already, it is forbidden to compare these actions at the brink of dawn with Gestapo methods. All this has become daily life in Germany. *Morgengrauen* wants to contribute to the saying and writing of all of these things so that both detail work and great deeds will follow: against racism and for solidarity. (morgengrauen - Antirassistische Zeitung 1991, 1 - transl. by TJP)

Such equations between contemporary and past practices were often accompanied by the critique that government practice was encouraging and even supporting Neo-Nazi activities. In the flyer mentioned above, for example, the authors argued that Refugees arriving in West Germany were used by those who rule ‘as an object to activate popular hate against foreigners and strangers already experienced several times in German history’, thereby encouraging ‘pogroms’ (“Bleibe Und Lebensrecht Für Flüchtlinge” 1983 - transl. by TJP). Similarly, a leaflet produced in 1986 by the *West Berlin Communist*, the magazine of a Berlin-based radical left-wing K-group, emphasised how the overt racism of political elites was intended to motivate ‘neo-Nazi propagandists’ to use violence against Refugees and immigrants (Westberliner Kommunist: Organ für den Aufbau der marxistisch-leninistischen Partei Westberlins 1986 - trans. by TJP). As we saw in the previous section, such claims about the collaboration between the state and neo-Nazis were also used by those actors who make use of frames of discontinuity. However, while those actors sought to express a concern with a potential resurgence of Nazi state practices, the examples discussed here rather serve the purpose of revealing the state’s totalitarian character, which had supposedly never actually disappeared after the end of the Second World War.⁶²

⁶² As Benicke points out, there was a strong tendency among radical left groups to make use of memory politics, in particular with regard to European fascism and German Nazism, in order to formulate a critique of contemporary forms of (global) oppression. Here again, this orientation can be regarded as a remnant of the student movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s which explicitly dealt with the legacy of German Nazism. In the 1970s and 1980s, however, these groups strongly moved in the direction of a what Benicke calls a ‘generalising theory of fascism’ (2010: 78 – transl. by TJP) which led to a practice of ‘inflationary’ (ibid.: 107 – transl. by TJP) NS-comparisons in order to criticise and denounce a wide range of political enemies, including the United States, Israel, the Soviet Union, Turkey,

While the topos of continuity was predominantly put forward by actors from the German radical left, it was also occasionally used more broadly by (pro-)Refugee actors. In these cases, however, the strategy of critique was not to discredit, but to *incriminate* the state: while the former was based on the refusal to accept the state as a political addressee, the latter served the purpose of justifying certain demands directed at the state. More precisely, the state was accused of wrongdoing in order to make a case for its responsibility to compensate for this wrongdoing.

One particularly telling episode were the activities of self-organised Roma and Sinti groups who fought against the threat of deportation to Eastern European states in the late 1980s and early 1990s.⁶³ In 1989, for example, the former concentration camp Neuengamme near Hamburg in Northern Germany was chosen several times as the main stage for their protest campaign. In February, 20 Roma went on hunger strike on its premises to protest against German deportation and displacement policies. A few months later, in late August 1989, 50 Roma and Sinti (who were a few days later joined by several hundreds more) began an occupation to protest against their impending deportations. This occupation led to some public attention and partial success. Even though Hamburg's Minister for Culture, Ingo von Münch, criticised the occupation and stressed that contemporary problems of Roma and Sinti should not be mixed with the commemoration of the many European victims at the concentration camp site, a halt on deportations for this group was extended until October of that year (*Zeit* Nr. 38, 15.09.89). Emphasising the continuity of injustice, the *Hamburg Initiative 'Right to Stay for Roma'* published the following appeal to German politicians:

Very few survived the Holocaust. The genocide of Roma and Sinti is a fact that must not be repressed. Even after 1945, materials from Nazi times denouncing Roma and Sinti were used for decades. [...] Today, many are still fighting for their recognition as victims of the Nazi reign and for compensation. People often say that the crimes of the Nazi regime 'cannot be remedied' ['wieder gut gemacht' werden]. This is true. However, such words are cynical if help is denied even where something can be done so that the often-quoted sentence rather has the meaning of 'not wanting to remedy'. We are no longer willing to accept this. (Hamburger Initiative ‚Bleiberecht für Roma‘ 1989 - transl. by TJP)

A similar campaign started in May 1993 at the site of the former concentration camp Dachau in Bavaria, near Munich. The *Church of Reconciliation* located on the concentration camp's premises was declared to be a *Refuge*. On the cover of a brochure documenting the first 30 days of the occupation, a photograph shows several protestors holding a banner reading 'Gassed in the past – deported today' [Früher vergast – Heute abgeschoben] ('Roma-Fluchtbürg in Dachau: Eine

as well as the SPD, CDU, FDP and other actors associated with the political establishment in Germany (ibid.: 153-185). By the late 1980s, this political-ideological approach also led to internal conflicts and the emergence of new forms of left-wing radicalism that focused more explicitly on the specificity of German Nazism in the past as well as German nationalism and racism in the present.

⁶³ For more detail on these specific protests, see: (Herold 2009)

Dokumentation Der Ersten 30 Tage” 1993). The continuity between past and present was further elaborated on:

The injustice perpetrated by Nazi Germany on Roma people, is today perpetuated by the Federal German government in a different, ‘modern’ way: Roma are hunted down with infrared cameras at the Eastern border by special units of the border troops, imprisoned in camps and deported [deportiert] on a massive scale (“Roma-Fluchtbürg in Dachau: Eine Dokumentation Der Ersten 30 Tage” 1993, 17 - transl. by TJP).

Furthermore, this continuity was evoked to make a case for the FRG’s historical responsibility to provide asylum. In their brochure ‘The living ones have to be defended’, the *Initiative Right to Stay for Roma and Sinti* emphasised in this regard:

Just like all other ‘rich countries’, the FRG has contributed her part to the problems in this world. However, we are not simply interested in Roma receiving refuge here because they are persecuted in other countries (which they are!) but because one generation ago, our society did everything it could to eradicate [vertilgen] this people in Europe [...]. It is because of this fact that the demand for a right to stay is not a reflex to conditions in other countries but a tribute to our own history, an end of the displacement, an end of the logic that only those are rightfully here who are of German blood. (Initiative Bleiberecht für Roma und Cinti 1989, 3 - transl. by TJP)

What is interesting about these campaigns is that their focus lies on a group that had directly suffered from Nazi atrocities but had been largely ignored in official German memory politics. Against this background, the state’s failure to act was seen as an indication of its unwillingness to break with its historical tradition of injustice inflicted upon Sinti and Roma communities. At the same time, however, the explicit connections made between the Nazi persecution of these groups and their contemporary exclusion, particularly by using the premises of former concentration camp sites, was used in order to make a case for the FRG’s moral, political and legal responsibility to guarantee Sinti and Roma asylum which functioned as a ‘form of reparation for past injustice’ (Souter 2014, 326).

Overall, the strategies of both the German radical left-wing and Sinti and Roma groups differed from those discussed in the previous section insofar as they drew on the topos of historical continuity rather than discontinuity. Given the wider public discourses about national identity and collective memory in post-war (West) Germany – that, in their different manifestations of either denying or renouncing the Nazi legacy, were based on the topos of a clear historical break between past and present –, this emphasis on continuity can be considered the strongest possible attack on the FRG’s self-image and affront to those who identified with it. Thus, if we put these symbolic framings and critiques of the state into the context of the wider political field within which they were expressed, they can be characterised as examples of a *denunciatory critique*, that is, as attempts to publicly attack and dismantle core elements of the existing national orthodoxy – in this case the assumption that the FRG was separated from its Nazi past through a clear historical break. At the same time, however, the specific role of these acts of denunciation differed between these two

currents. The radical-left wing critique was indeed oriented towards attacking the very normative foundation of the state. For these authors, the FRG's treatment of migrants and Refugees was proof of its underlying totalitarian character. Against this background, any cooperation with the state had to be rejected as complicity and any militant action against the state was justified as resistance. The critique of Sinti and Roma activists, on the other hand, can be characterised as a combination of *denunciatory* and *pleading* strategies. While these actors strongly attacked the mnemonic elements of the national doxa, they nonetheless articulated a distant hope that 'something could be done', that is, that the FRG could indeed change the direction of its migration and asylum policies in order to fulfil its historical responsibilities towards Sinti and Roma communities. In this sense, these actors still accepted the state as a political addressee whose legitimacy in the present depended on how it dealt with and compensated for its past wrongdoings.

At this point, it needs to be highlighted that these more fundamental critiques of the state did not necessarily amount to a critique of all elements of the national doxa. Most strikingly, while the actors discussed in this section developed a strong attack on the state, this critique was not necessarily embedded within a critique of German society as a whole. In other words, racism was not primarily regarded as a widespread problem within German society but rather introduced, reproduced and orchestrated by the state. The only non-state actors mentioned as perpetrators of anti-Refugee violence were neo-Nazi groups. However, no connection between these acts of racist violence and wider racist discourses and sentiments within the German civil society and majority population was developed, and this connection remained reduced to state practices. Moreover, in accordance with the overarching anti-imperialist framework of the 1980s, groups on the radical left largely described racism in functionalist terms as being 'introduced' by the state to divide the working-class population ("Demonstrationsaufruf Gegen Lager" 1981). According to most of these authors, the reason behind such racism was clear: its specific social and political function was that foreigners in general and asylum-seekers in particular could be 'made responsible for unemployment and crisis' (Erwerbslosen- und Jobberinitiative Bergedorf (Hamburg) 1986 - transl. by TJP). In short, the dominant rhetoric throughout the 1980s by the radical left was that government policies 'create xenophobia [Ausländerfeindlichkeit]' (Symp. der Guerilla Organisation der Volksfeday Iran in BRD und West-Berlin et al. 1986 - transl. by TJP) in the first place. I will come back to this problematic in the next chapter that will explore different framings of the German public and wider society.

Discrediting the Present in its Historical Specificity: Beyond Analogies between the FRG and its Nazi past

As I have shown in the previous two sections, comparisons with and references to the Nazi regime were dominant throughout the 1980s. Towards the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, such framings of the FRG in terms of its Nazi legacy were increasingly accompanied by and confronted with growing currents of (pro-)Refugee actors that were sceptical of the validity and appropriateness of such historical analogies. These changed patterns of critique need to be situated within the wider context of hegemonic public discourses of the time. Two tendencies should be highlighted here.

First, as we have seen in previous chapters, the late 1980s and early 1990s had seen a significant intensification of anti-immigrant, racist public discourses in conjunction with a dramatic increase in racist violence. It was against this background that (pro-)Refugee actors became increasingly aware that anti-immigrant and racist resentment was an endemic problem within wider German society, which could not be reduced to the state. In the context of increasing right-wing attacks on Refugees and people perceived as ‘foreign’ more broadly, the tightening of asylum policies appeared for many to be a reaction to ‘public outrage’ (Herbert 2014a, 95–96). Among (pro-)Refugee activists, these wider political shifts were debated in great detail, as they were considered a significant turning point in the development of anti-Refugee hostility in the now ‘reunified’ German society (Jakob 2016, 178; Peters 2014, 152–159). Given that the previous framings of the FRG were strongly informed by a notion of Nazism as a totalitarian state regime, many (pro-)Refugee actors had become increasingly dissatisfied with this topos of continuity as a symbolic resource for critiquing the rise in political hostility towards Refugees.

Second, the 1980s saw certain shifts in the hegemonic discourse about memory politics, which centred around the question of the historical specificity of Nazism and the Holocaust. Most notably, it was in the context of the ‘historians’ dispute’ of the late 1980s that the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas developed the notion of the ‘singularity’ of the Holocaust (Habermas 1986), which was an attempt to characterise the destruction of the European Jews as historically unprecedented. This emphasis on the historical specificity of the Holocaust became increasingly influential among German radical left-wing groups who started to critically engage with the limitations of their previous analyses, such as the failure to take into account the specificity of antisemitism in particular and the historical transformation of racism in general.⁶⁴ While these

⁶⁴ For a detailed analysis of this shift, see: (Gerber 2010). For detailed reconstructions and discussions of the ‘historians’ dispute’, see: (Knowlton 1993; Maier 1997; Sabrow, Jessen, and Kracht 2003).

discussions took place on the whole spectrum of (pro-)Refugee actors, it was within the German radical left that they provoked the strongest contestation. This is unsurprising because, as we have seen, it was here that comparisons and equations between the Nazi regime and the FRG were formulated most explicitly. For those who made use of the topos of historical discontinuity, on the other hand, this debate appeared less relevant.

While the late 1980s saw an increasing focus on the role of the wider German society in creating a climate of racist hostility, it was especially in the early 1990s that racism was understood and criticised as a pervasive societal problem. A first indication of this shift can be seen at a conference against racism, fascism, and sexism organised by anti-fascist groups that took place in Nuremberg in March 1989. On the one hand, the conference's anti-racist working group still claimed that 'racism is introduced into the population through legal measures and organised agitation' (Erste bayerische Aktionskonferenz gegen Rassismus, Faschismus und Sexismus in Nürnberg 1989 - transl. by TJP). Even though a broader understanding of racism was articulated during the conference – one that pointed out that there might be other social origins of racism – these remained unelaborated (ibid.). On the other hand, the working group concluded that 'it is clear that we have totally failed in our antiracist work and therefore have to find new ways and approaches' (ibid.). One of the results of this admission of failure was that the state was no longer framed as the only racist force, but rather, as an amplifier and facilitator of a wider culture of racism within German society.

This shift also implied a different relation to the past. In early 1990, for instance, a radical left group in Bremen published a brochure outlining 'preliminary hypotheses for an anti-racist movement in Germany' in which they pointed out that 'the mainly male authors are aware of the problem of historical comparisons' (das Referat 1990, 1). However, they still concluded that there were various parallels between past and present (ibid., 15), and tried to integrate the critique of racism and capitalism within the historical context of Nazism, by subsuming all these points under their interpretation of imperialism. Simultaneously, they tried to broaden their analysis of racism by including both a state-level 'racism from above' and a 'racism from below', whose 'most consequent representatives are extreme right-wingers and fascists' (ibid., 2). A more forceful critique of historical comparisons was expressed by the *Alternative List* in 1991:

We have our doubts regarding the sustainability of a 'traditional' antifascism which misjudges the comprehensiveness of the threat through wrong analogies to the German past. At the most, racism is understood as a specifically German lack of modernity [spezifisch deutschen Modernitätsrückstand]. (Alternative Liste 1991 - transl. by TJP)

With such statements, the authors expressed concern that the strong emphasis on the Nazi legacy tended to lose sight of the specificity of contemporary racism. What was suggested here was that

earlier accounts not only downplayed the Nazi regime as some sort of German backward-looking historical aberration, but also misunderstood contemporary racism as nothing more than a remnant of this anachronistic historical tradition. Against this background, organisations such as the *Alternative List* called for developing an extended notion and critique of racism that did not simply dwell in the past but was also capable of analysing the emergence of rearticulated and new forms of racism in the present.

We will come back to the relationship between the state and wider society in general and the relationship between state and popular racism in particular in the next chapter. At this point, it suffices to highlight that this emerging controversy shows that the overall debates and tensions within the field of (pro-)Refugee activism had not been entirely autonomous, but were closely connected to wider transformations of the German nation-state as well as the wider German political culture at the turn of the decade. This observation is further reinforced by the fact that it was precisely those left-wing groups with a state-critical orientation that were influenced by these wider state and political transformations. If we interpret the framing discussed in this section in terms of its relation to the wider political field within which it was embedded, it can be characterised as a rearticulated form of *discrediting* the state. In contrast to the framings discussed in the first section, its main strategic impetus was still the fundamental critique of the state as an important political force in the reproduction, dissemination, and perpetration of racism. What is more, this framing was not used to directly address and appeal to the state. In this sense, the doxastic self-image of the FRG as a liberal-democratic state that guarantees protection against, rather than being complicit in, racist discrimination was directly put into question. At the same time, however, the framings discussed above were problematised as insufficient ways of making sense of the specificity of contemporary forms of anti-immigrant and racist hostility. Interestingly, however, this emphasis on the historical specificity of both the FRG and the Nazi regime did not significantly divert from the official doxa that drew a clear line of separation between past and present. Thus, although these actors openly attacked the FRG's liberal-democratic self-understanding, they also drew on certain mnemonic elements of the national doxa. The only difference is that they did not draw the same conclusions from the 'lessons from history'. While left-liberal voices such as Habermas used the notion of the 'singularity of Auschwitz' to pave the way for a new type of civic nationalism, these actors stressed the significance of historical specificity and evolution because they sought to develop a more appropriate *critique* of contemporary German nationalism, including its anti-immigrant and racist ramifications.

6.2 Germany's Role in Global Power Relations

Having analysed the temporal dimension of the different symbolic framings of the (West) German state within the early (pro-)Refugee movement, I now move on to look at their geopolitical dimensions, focusing on the FRG's political and economic power in the contemporary world-system. As I will demonstrate in this section, the (pro-)Refugee actors I analysed formulated a critique of the FRG's asylum regime that is inseparably linked to a critique of its geopolitical and world-economic power position, both in the present and the past. Here again, the key argument which I seek to develop is that none of the different ways in which these actors discursively referred to the state can be properly understood unless they are related to its own reservoir of doxastic assumptions, including the specific changes to the national doxa occurring throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Most notably, these actors engaged with two main global elements of the national doxa, both explicitly and implicitly. The first of these elements was the positive self-imagination of the FRG as being part of a 'Western' and 'European' political and cultural space, held together by the commitment to certain values, such as liberal democracy and market economy, and surrounded and threatened by a distinct outside space associated with the Southern and Eastern hemisphere (the 'Third World' and the 'Communist bloc'). The second was the positive self-image of the FRG as an 'ethno-national' political community that became increasingly significant in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the unification of FRG and GDR and that was accompanied by an intensification of racist and xenophobic hostility and violence in the early 1990s. What both these narratives have in common is the attempt to draw clear lines of separation between what is considered within and outside of these German, European and Western symbolic boundaries.

Most notably, these lines of separation were underpinned by an antagonistic logic. The space beyond these boundaries was imagined as a threat, and the only appropriate form of encountering this threat was to neutralise it, keep it at bay, or at least prevent it from penetrating the boundaries. However, what was explicitly or implicitly denied within this geopolitical imaginary was any active role which the FRG or its historical predecessors might have played in the creation and reproduction of a global system of oppression, inequality, and poverty, by which this 'outside' world had been and still was affected. It is especially these officially unacknowledged or euphemised global entanglements that were at the heart of the (pro-)Refugee actors' different public claims and interventions. At the same time, however, a closer look at the specific ways in which these entanglements were invoked also revealed certain differences. More specifically, I identified two framings and corresponding discursive strategies: first, a critique that emphasised

the FRG's role as a key beneficiary (but not necessarily as a main perpetrator) of global inequality. The underlying goal of this type of critique, which was expressed by moderate left-wing and civil society organisations, was to remind the German government of its political and moral responsibility for those people who had to flee from nation-states and world-regions affected by war, poverty, and despair. Here again, we see a close connection to references to the German Nazi past, which also served primarily as a reminder for specifically German obligations and responsibilities. Second, the attempt to highlight the German nation-state's position within a global system of imperialist rule. This position was closely connected to the above-discussed topos of continuity and was often used to justify the strong rejection of (any kind of cooperation with) German state authorities. It figured prominently within the radical left – including both German citizens and migrant groups.

‘An unjust world market system dictated by the rich countries’ – German Responsibility

The first type of framing bears some resemblance with, and tends to be discursively connected to, the attempt to invoke Germany's past to make a case for its responsibility in the present. It is therefore unsurprising that it was especially prevalent among the same currents of the (pro-) Refugee movement, that is, moderate civil society, religious and party-political organisations. The main assumption of this framing was that the FRG was obliged to offer protection to those who had fled from poverty, war and persecution because it had been an active player and leading force in the creation and perpetuation of the socio-economic and political conditions of transnational forced migration. Its argumentative logic can be expressed in the following scheme: if a nation-state exerts power and influence over world regions located beyond its sovereign territory, it bears responsibility for these regions, especially if people from these regions actively seek help and refuge. Here again, the actors sought to politically address the state by *appealing* to its own liberal-democratic values, and by *reminding* it of a certain responsibility to act in accordance with these values – which also included the demand to offer compensation for its own involvement in the violation of these values.

A discussion of two influential campaigns of the 1980s offer good examples of this type of framing in greater detail. In September 1980, the *Initiative Committee Foreign Fellow Citizens in Hesse* published a statement regarding the ‘problem of asylum’ in the FRG in general and responding to several attacks on accommodation facilities for asylum-seekers, which had led to the death of two Vietnamese Refugees (Initiativausschuss “Ausländische Mitbürger in Hessen” 1980a). In this

statement, the authors highlighted the FRG's increasingly powerful position in the world economy so as to make a case for its responsibility towards arriving asylum-seekers:

We have to recollect again and again that we, as members of the rich industrial nations, have won our affluence to a large degree at the expense of those countries where the asylum-seekers are coming from. The poverty in Africa, Asia and Latin America is partly the product of the unjust world market system dictated by the rich countries. (ibid., 4-5)

The image developed here was one that acknowledged the active role of 'the rich industrial nations' in establishing a global order considered 'unjust' insofar as the 'affluence' of its members was directly linked to the 'poverty' of those in the rest of the world. The declarative speech act 'we have to recollect again and again' further suggests that these global entanglements tended to be forgotten or ignored within hegemonic public discourses, which is why the collective recollection of these entanglements was considered a crucial component of the public fight for Refugee rights and recognition. Another interesting aspect of their analysis was the characterisation of the state's treatment of Refugees as both psychological and material 'warfare' against asylum-seekers (ibid.). On a psychological level, asylum seekers were being publicly disparaged by politicians, thereby producing a negative public perception of them. On a material level, such stereotyping was in turn used to legitimise tough measures in the form of legal and social sanctions supposed to have a deterrent effect. In this context, it is also interesting that the authors raised awareness about a certain 'double-standard' depending on the state's 'political interests' (ibid., 3): whereas Refugees 'fleeing Communism' were welcomed to West Germany, all others were warded off (ibid.).

Similar framings were used in the context of the *Refuge* movement, a broad alliance of civil society organisations that, inspired by the sanctuary cities movement in the USA and triggered by the resumption of deportations to Lebanon, started to campaign for the illegal hiding of Refugees in late 1986. In an information leaflet regarding the *Refuge Berlin* from 1988, the authors argued:

Wherever deportations become a right, resistance becomes a duty [...] After the Berlin Wall had been closed in German-German cooperation in autumn 1986, only 2200 Refugees were able to make an asylum application in West-Berlin in 1987. The fact that 1200 of them came from Poland and nearly no one from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh or African states, further demonstrates that they are chosen according to skin colour and political 'usability'. (Fluchtburg Berlin 1988)

Such examples demonstrate that, throughout the 1980s, not only the radical left but also the wider (pro-)Refugee movement developed an explicit critique of global socio-economic inequalities as one of the main causes of forced migration. What is more, this problem was not only seen as the result of structural socio-economic mechanisms: the FRG and other Western governments were seen as active political players that sought to secure their own interests at the expense of the non-Western/non-European nation-states and world-regions.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw an increasing embedding of this criticism in the European context. To give one example, in 1990, the *Interest Group of German Women Married to Foreigners* criticised contemporary Europeanisation for ignoring the colonial past and subsequent responsibilities:

The Schengen Agreement is clearly aimed at already repelling refugees and migrants from the so-called Third World at Europe's external borders. It is to be feared that unprotected data exchange within Europe and increased checks on persons will also affect anyone who is here as an asylum seeker and/or has a dark skin colour and is therefore noticeable on the street. Concretely, this will mean that all non-whites, even if they are for example naturalised or children from bi-national marriages, must expect to be frequently caught in police checks. This runs counter not only to the understanding of a democratic constitutional state in which citizens can live without constant police surveillance, but to all anti-racist efforts as well. [...] Europe cannot say goodbye to world history and must finally face up to its responsibility for the colonial past.⁶⁵ It should also be remembered that the existing prosperity in the northern European countries would be unthinkable without the profit from the Third World. (Interessengemeinschaft der mit Ausländern verheirateten Frauen e.V. 1990)

This active role was also stressed in relation to the plight of Refugees who had arrived on German territory: the state's treatment of Refugees was not simply characterised as indifferent or ignorant, but instead as a full-fledged, organised political attack. In contrast to the FRG's official self-understanding as a force of peace, liberty and the rule of law, terms such as 'warfare' invoked the image of a concerted campaign of military confrontation and political persecution, which is officially located outside of the 'Western', 'European' or 'German' political space. Furthermore, the existence of double standards in the recognition of Refugees was highlighted to demonstrate that the FRG's asylum policies were primarily informed by racist hostilities and geopolitical interests – rather than constitutional obligations or humanitarian commitments.

At the same time, such narratives entailed implicit critiques of the constitutional right of asylum, insofar as poverty was acknowledged as a legitimate criterion for receiving refugee status. The discursive connection made between socio-economic inequalities and refuge was thus put in a broader context that went beyond the official definition of refugees found in both international law and the Basic Law. In this sense, these actors clearly attempted to put various geopolitical elements of the national orthodoxy into question. At the same time, however, this critique did not lead to a more fundamental rejection of the state. Instead, the main discursive strategy used here was similar to the 'historical discontinuity' approaches discussed above: the FRG's dominant geopolitical and world economic power position was evoked in order to remind the state of its moral responsibility for those people who were forced to flee from poverty and desperation. This appeal

⁶⁵ It is important to emphasise that in the archival data examined here, colonialism was a point of reference in two ways. First, it was often used synonymously with the term 'imperialism' by radical left groups to stress expansionist politics of capitalist exploitation in broad terms. Second, as in this example, it was used more concretely to criticise European colonialism. Interestingly, however, I did not find any reference to the specific history of German colonialism.

was also connected to the attempt to defend the ‘spirit of the Basic Law’ against political attempts to undermine it through the implementation of double standards between ‘deserving’ Eastern-European and ‘undeserving’ non-European Refugees. In this sense, the framing discussed in this section can be characterised as another example of *immanent critique*: while certain elements of the state’s official self-understanding were rejected, other elements were appropriated as symbolic resources for the critique of its migration and asylum regime. Thus, as in the cases described above, the state not only appeared as an object of criticism, but also as the main vehicle of change.

The ‘imperialist offensive’ – Western Imperialism

As noted above, radical left-wing groups and organisations made the most explicit usage of Nazi references to criticise contemporary asylum and migration policies. However, these interpretations were often part of a larger anti-imperialist worldview that interpreted both the eliminatory programme of the Nazi regime and the FRG’s treatment of non-citizens and Refugees as different expressions of the same system of imperialism, which was primarily understood as a class-based system of exploitation and oppression orchestrated by the most powerful Western nation-states (Koordinationskreis Rhein/Ruhr autonomer Flüchtlingsgruppen 1986). The end of the Second World War and the founding of the FRG was hence seen not as a historical break, but rather as the metamorphosis from one imperialist regime into another, and the plight of Refugees now and then was read as the most striking example of this ongoing reality of imperialist oppression. For many actors of the radical left, these references were especially important for bringing in the global, internationalist dimension, that is, for drawing connections between the plight of Refugees within and at the borders of (West) Germany and Europe on the one hand, and their plight within the world-regions from which they had to flee, on the other. Compared to the invocation of historical continuities, this framing had similar strategic implications: radical left-wing actors sought to *discredit* the legitimacy of the FRG alongside other Western and European nation-states by revealing that their liberal-democratic self-understanding was nothing more than an ideological façade, concealing an underlying agenda of imperialist expansion and oppression.

Let us begin with an analysis of the general intertwinement between an anti-fascist and anti-imperialist framing of the state. An instructive articulation can be found in the already mentioned leaflet ‘The state plans the final solution of the question of asylum-seekers: the imperative for a radical answer by the proletariat’ (Agentur für die Selbstaufhebung des Proletariats 1983). While the usage of the term ‘final solution’ directly accused the FRG of continuing the Nazi programme of persecution and extermination, other parts of that leaflet shifted the frame of reference away

from specific history of political and state violence in Germany. What these passages revealed was an understanding of the specific history of German Nazism as nothing more than a particular manifestation of a more general, global ‘imperialist offensive’ (ibid.). The German state, it was assumed, operated on behalf of ‘the class of power’, which was understood as the economically ruling class, ready to resort to extreme forms of physical violence to secure its regime of exploitation. Within this framing, Refugees were seen as part of a global proletariat exploited and oppressed by the ‘class of power’ (ibid.). What is more, they were portrayed as a particular segment of that proletariat, whose life was at risk because it was deemed unproductive and thus useless: ‘there are too many labourers, too much human flesh. Without any doubt, different measures can be taken to get rid of this sort of superfluity of which some, as history shows, are very brutal’ (ibid.). Although it was admitted that the German state did not need to be as brutal as it had been in the past, it was nonetheless assumed that the logic of imperialist oppression constantly resulted in such efforts to ‘get rid of superfluity’ by way of violence and death. In a call against the ‘foreigner decree’ of November 1981, too, state violence against Refugees and other non-citizens was primarily framed as an attempt to eradicate those ‘foreign’ labour forces unable to be subjected to an excessive regime of exploitation within the nation-state’s territory:

The interest which showed itself cynically openly during the Nazi fascism when Jews and communists in the concentration camps were exploited as cheap labour for the German industry until they were blue in the face [bis zum Geht-Nicht-Mehr], only to then utilise [verwerten] their physical components as raw material, is the same interest which causes the expulsion of unemployed foreigners today. (Internationale Kommunisten (West-Berlin) 1981 - transl. by TJP)

Here again, the authors drew on historical comparisons with the Nazi regime to make sense of the treatment of Refugees and labour migrants in the present. What is noteworthy, however, is that this historical comparison was based on a notion of Nazi concentration camps that suited the authors’ anti-imperialist worldview: these camps were primarily understood as spaces of forced labour, assuming that they primarily served the purpose of capitalist exploitation.

This interpretation excluded, however, notions of concentration camps as spaces of political terror and physical extermination, that go beyond questions of class-based domination (Postone 2005, 109–118). As discussed above, equations between past and present were increasingly criticised from the late 1980s onwards. To some degree, this also showed in the problematisation of imperialism:

This is not a question of comparing the FRG’s immigration policy with that of the Nazi regime. The few examples of German reality demonstrate, however, that imperialism – independent of the specific guise of domination – always uses foreign labour as a market-oriented factor of regulation. The conditions of exploitation and living are particularly severe for immigrants. Sophisticated Nazi systems have been modified, improved or adapted to the so-called modern conditions. The ideological weapon of racism, coupled with sexism, continues to assume regulatory functions. (Koordinationskreis Rhein/Ruhr autonomer Flüchtlingsgruppen 1986, 22 - transl. by TJP)

The connection established between Nazism and the imperialist present in these texts was particularly telling when read within a second major anti-imperialist narrative, namely, one about the subsumption of the German state under a wider geopolitical context. More specifically, various actors interpreted the German state not as an imperialist political force in its own right, but rather as a subordinate element within a wider system of Western imperialism dominated by other nation-states, particularly the United States (Postone 2005, 86–96). Reacting to the Berlin Senate's decision to resume deportations to Lebanon in 1983, for example, various publications embedded this policy in the broader context of imperialism by stating that the Berlin senate acted as 'forerunner' against asylum-seekers, 'directed by the allies' ("Bleibe Und Lebensrecht Für Flüchtlinge" 1983 - transl. by TJP). Interesting here was the framing of German authorities as the executors, but not as the architects of anti-Refugee hostility. The latter role was primarily attributed to 'the allies', that is, those nation-states which had defeated the Nazi regime. The primary object of critique, then, was not the FRG in itself, but rather its role in the execution of a higher agenda of Western imperialism. In other words, the specificity of the West-German context was relativised by situating it within a global regime of 'colonial and imperialist politics of hunger/war/crisis' orchestrated by 'those who are in power in the industrial metropolises' (ibid.).

Such interpretations of the German asylum regime as an expression of Western imperialist politics were particularly relevant for those parts of the radical left that started to engage in militant action against state authorities and representatives throughout the 1980s. The underlying argument was that, in light of a murderous geo-political and world-economic system, it was morally justified and politically necessary to resort, in turn, to physical – or even lethal – violence in order to disrupt this system. Already in late 1982, the authors of an anonymous open letter titled 'solidarity means resistance' legitimised the use of violence against state authorities by claiming that politics of genocide and annihilation have not ceased to exist in the post-Holocaust world. In the letter justifying an arson attack at an administrative court in Lower Saxony, the authors stated:

For these pigs, humans are reduced to commodities and as soon as the need (for human labour) is reduced, humans are reduced as well. In this system, annihilation comes first for those who resist. The spaces of annihilation are manifold: Palestinians' camps in Lebanon, villages in Kurdistan, prisons and extermination camps in Chile, El Salvador, South Africa, Ireland, Italy and here in the FRG. (*Anonymous Letter of Confession* 1982)

In similar vein, from 1986 to 1989, the left-wing terrorist group *Revolutionary Cells* emphasised the continuities between the German Nazi past, imperialist politics, and contemporary asylum and migration policies most explicitly in their public letters claiming several violent attacks, aimed both at institutions and people representing the West-German asylum regime. In August and September 1986, they committed several bomb attacks in various German cities targeting institutions such as

courts, the foreigner police, the *German Red Cross*, the airline *Lufthansa*, and the Central Register of Foreign Nationals (AZR) in Cologne. In a subsequent open letter, they called upon the reader to:

Fight for the free right to stay for all refugees and immigrants! [...] The refugee question is not a humanitarian or juridical question and does not only concern the question of “political asylum”. It is part of a global class struggle and expresses a contradiction which is set by the imperialist world system and which creates a new type of proletariat: the mobilised, displaced, uprooted masses of the 3rd World. (Revolutionäre Zellen 1986 - trtansl. by TJP)

What we see here is exactly this combination of creating historical continuity between past and present, and situating this continuity within the larger framework of global capitalism and imperialism. In this understanding, the German nation-state was reduced to an instrument of a global ruling capitalist class, which used its powers to suppress resistance by the global proletariat – of which Refugees were seen as its latest manifestation. Overall, then, the radical left-wing critique of the FRG’ and its asylum and migration regime were articulated through an anti-imperialist lens, according to which the FRG was part of a Western system of capitalist exploitation and imperialist expansion with strongly lethal tendencies. The treatment of Refugees and asylum seekers was denounced as the unbroken continuation of fascist techniques. At the same time, this equation of past and present was only possible because the Nazi regime in general and the Holocaust in particular, were not discussed as historically specific, but instead subsumed under a general logic of capitalist domination and imperialist expansion.

It is important to note that this perspective was also contested. Particularly from the late 1980s onwards, a slight shift could be seen towards a stronger focus on the specificity of German history. In 1986, for example, the *West Berlin Communist* criticised such a focus on ‘the allies’: ‘The Berlin senate pursues these racist policies because of its vested interests. The claims that the senate is simply an “executive body” and so-called “recipient of orders” by the three Western allies, just serve to obscure these vested interests and the specific responsibility of the West-German imperialism’ (Westberliner Kommunist: Organ für den Aufbau der marxistisch-leninistischen Partei Westberlins 1986 - transl. by TJP). Especially in the context of German unification, voices that focused on the critique of a specifically German imperialism started to dominate debates. ‘Never again fascism! No 4th Reich!’ (Antifaschistisches Bündnis aus Ost- und West-Berlin 1990) became a major slogan. Thus, while some authors saw the FRG as an auxiliary force within an international system dominated by the United States, others highlighted the distinct tradition of German expansionism and imperialism.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ It is against this background that a fundamental break among German radical left groups took place in the 1990s which is relevant to this day. Particularly relevant for this break was the question of antisemitism among the German left. For more detail, see: (Ullrich 2014; 2008; Nowak 2013; Kloke 1994; Postone 2005; Hanloser 2004; Hanloser 2004; Peters 2014).

Although these actors understood themselves as a revolutionary alternative to the state, they nonetheless attempted to express their critique of the state in relation to its own orthodox self-image. Similarly to and in conjunction with the above-discussed framing of the FRG as a fascist state, the actors sought to formulate a *denunciatory critique* of the geopolitical elements of the state's official doxa. While the official self-image was centred around the image of the FRG as a nation-state enclosed within the Western and European geopolitical space, radical left-wing actors asserted that it was the longstanding tradition of Western and European imperialism that had brought war, poverty, misery to those world regions people had to flee. Furthermore, there was a strong tendency towards interdiscursive connections between memory, migration and geopolitics: the specific legacy of German Nazism and the Holocaust was recurrently evoked in order to emphasise violent aspects of the FRG's migration and asylum regime and to attack its official founding myth, the assumption of a clear break between past and present. To a certain degree, this close engagement with the state's official doxa was similar to the framing discussed in the previous section. I suspect these radical left-wing actors, too, were hoping to hit a nerve in the wider political field by framing the state's migration and asylum regime in terms that put its own liberal-democratic self-image into question. However, the main difference was that these actors did not openly appeal to the state. Rather, they sought to reveal that the state's true essence was the exact opposite of its positive self-image and that any hope of institutional reform was illusionary at best – an assumption especially relevant for those groups who sought to justify acts of violence against state institutions and representatives.

At the same time, however, I want to suggest that some aspects of the radical left-wing critique of the state were also compatible with certain orthodox assumptions. For instance, the subsumption of German under Western imperialism entails elements of a 'shift of blame and responsibility' (Wodak et al. 2009: 36) insofar as it diminished the significance of the FRG as an active player in the victimisation of Refugees, as well as in the (re-)production of those geopolitical and world-economic circumstances that had led to forced migration in the first place. Furthermore, the strictly class-based understanding of imperialism tended to be oblivious to the problems of a wider political culture of German nationalism and racism as an underlying factor of state violence. Thus, while politically moderate actors openly appealed to questions of national identity, radical left-wing actors tended to ignore these. This raises questions about the symbolic relation between these protest actors and the wider German public and society. It is to these questions that I will turn in the following chapter.

As we saw in this chapter, the (West) German state was a key object of critique among (pro-)Refugee actors throughout the 1980s until the beginning of the 1990s. What is more, all of the

actors in question made explicit use of the state's doxastic self-image to justify and communicate their claims in public. While some actors openly appealed to the re-establishment or fulfilment of certain aspects of the official doxa, others sought to dismantle and discredit it as an ideological façade that only served to disguise the state's underlying regime of violence. There were three particular elements that these actors focused on: first, the self-understanding of the FRG as a liberal-democratic political order that not only protected the rights of its citizens but was also committed to safeguarding basic human rights and protecting those non-citizens who sought protection from political persecution; second, the extension of this positive self-understanding to a Western and European geopolitical space defined by its separation from and antagonism towards the space beyond its imagined boundaries; third, the notion that these values of democracy, rule of law and human rights were strong in the FRG because of the lessons it had learnt from its undemocratic past, particularly Nazism. Through the examination of the ambivalent ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors framed and critiqued the state based on an engagement with these orthodox elements, we have already seen that this critique of the state oftentimes included implicit assumptions about the wider political field within which it was expressed. More specifically, it can be argued that the main purpose of these symbolic practices was not so much, or not only, to stage a direct battle with the state, but rather to seek support for Refugees within the wider public sphere. Thus, there is another object of reference which needs to be examined in conjunction with the state to make sense of the positionality of the analysed (pro-)Refugee actors: the wider public audience.

7 Solidarity: Framings of the (German) Public and Society

This chapter explores the specific ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors in the 1980s and early 1990s framed the public audience, with a particular emphasis on different collective identities which were constructed and invoked to make a case for the support of Refugees. The specific attempts to appeal to ‘the public’ and elicit attitudes of solidarity within it showed significant differences. This raises the question of appropriate ways of analysing and evaluating these different framings of a ‘solidary public’. Interestingly, the past years have seen a rapidly growing interest in questions of solidarity in the area of critical migration studies, especially in the wake of the ‘long summer of migration’ in 2015 (Rygiel 2011; Johnson 2015; Kelz 2015; King 2016; Ataç 2016; Della Porta 2018; Agustín and Jørgensen 2019; Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020a; Kirchhoff 2020; Bauder and Juffs 2020). Within these discussions, however, there is a tendency to use the concept without defining and elaborating it in a more systematic fashion. In an extensive review article on the different usages of the solidarity concept in current migration and Refugee research, for instance, Bauder and Juffs found ‘that a considerable share of the migration and refugee literature applies the concept of solidarity in a rather blasé manner’ (Bauder and Juffs 2020, 57). They further highlight that this lack of conceptual clarity frequently leads to differing analytical and normative understandings depending on the specific research context (ibid., 58). Schwiertz and Schwenken add that concepts such as solidarity ‘comprise a descriptive and a normative dimension, but these two dimensions are not sufficiently differentiated and considered in most cases’ (Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020a, 496). Indeed, there are many approaches which, for instance, work with a strongly normative distinction between solidarity as a political, egalitarian, inclusive and resistant practice on the one hand, and humanitarian aid as an unpolitical, paternalistic, exclusive, and complicit one (Mohanty 2003; Ticktin 2011; N. King 2016; Oikonomakis 2018; Çelik 2018). Other authors have pointed to the problem that such a strict distinction tends to lose sight of the complicated ways in which different support practices overlap, which also means that it would be misleading in many real-life scenarios to assume that pro-Refugee solidarity campaigns are *either* inclusionary *or* exclusionary, *either* hierarchical *or* horizontal, etc. (Kirchhoff 2020; Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020b).⁶⁷

⁶⁷ For example, Schwiertz and Schwenken suggest to regard humanitarian aid and political solidarity as ‘ideal types’ (Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020b, 497) that can shift and overlap. For instance, they discuss contemporary support campaigns with a strong humanitarian focus which in a context of increasing political repression and criminalisation shifted towards more state-critical and Refugee-oriented forms of support (ibid., 504).

What makes these multidimensional approaches more useful is their attempt to find more nuanced frameworks for the analysis of solidarity practices. For instance, some suggest that solidarity practices should be analysed in terms of their bounded character – i.e., whether or not they are ‘grounded in the spatial boundedness of territorial states’ – (Oosterlynck et al. 2016), their inclusionary or exclusionary effects (Kirchhoff 2020) or their practical location within either autonomous, civic or institutional social terrains (Agustín/Jørgensen 2019). However, the evaluative potential of these typologies, too, remains limited, insofar as they primarily focus on *practices* of solidarity (such as the organisation of a demonstration) without linking this back to an analysis of *symbolic constructions* of solidarity (such as the call for ‘international solidarity’ during this demonstration). Some recent contributions have focused more explicitly on these conceptual and symbolic dimensions. The typology developed by Bauder and Juffs (2020) introduces useful distinctions between different notions of solidarity in the area of migration and asylum. I take their categories as the starting point for further reflection regarding the mobilisation of solidarity throughout the 1980s. They distinguish, inter alia, forms of ‘self-centred’, ‘emotional reflexive’, ‘rational reflexive’, and ‘recognitive’ solidarity (ibid., 48) which will be introduced at relevant points throughout the chapter.

Overall, my empirical analysis revealed two different ways in which the wider public audience was framed. First, throughout the 1980s there was a strong tendency to draw a clear normative distinction between German state institutions and the wider German society (7.1). While the former figured not only as a political addressee but also as an object of critique, the latter was primarily referred to in positive terms. Thus, many actors sought to *appeal* to the wider German public and society through allusions and references to its assumed liberal-democratic, tolerant, and compassionate values in order to unite German citizens, immigrants and Refugees against state policies. In this sense, anti-Refugee and anti-immigration perspectives were understood as being imposed by the state only, thus coming ‘from above’. Put in Bourdieusian terms, these actors thus saw the state in its institutionalised form and the realm of official politics as betraying ideals central to the national doxa without inculcating the public – which was thus exculpated as standing for the idea of a tolerant and open German society. The significance of references to the legacy of German Nazism again testify to this symbolic embeddedness of many (pro-)Refugee actors within the national doxa. However, in contrast to the examples above – where these references served to discredit state policies – they now seemed to be used in order to create a sense of common enemy and/or shared suffering, that was thought to catalyse the unity of German society around the doxa and had thus – though largely inadvertently – a conservative effect. Second, there were also

attempts to go beyond and against the notion of German society as a reservoir of (potential) solidarity – attempts that were usually developed by radical left-wing actors (7.2).

7.1 Mobilising the German Public

The scandalisation and denunciation of state policies and the omnipresent historical comparison to the Nazi regime described in the previous chapter were simultaneously used by many groups to mobilise solidarity with Refugees and (pro-)Refugee struggles. For most actors in the 1980s, the ‘German public’ was the main addressee in this regard. The underlying assumption of these public interventions was that, in contrast to the political elites occupying the state terrain and the state officials ‘managing’ the migration and asylum regime, there was still a considerable potential within German civil society to participate in acts of solidarity with Refugees and against the German government and state apparatus. In other words, a clear distinction was made between the German state and German civil society, both with regards to their respective histories and entanglements with Nazism, and their roles in support of Refugees. The strong criticism and implication with Nazism ascribed to state institutions was countered by a focus on the German population as victims in the past and – to some degree – in the present. This victimisation narrative subsequently served the framing of (post-war) German society as fundamentally democratic. To evoke solidarity among the German population, two main strategies emerged from this framing. On the one hand, (pro-)Refugee actors tried to appeal to a *compassionate solidarity* by informing the public about the suffering of Refugees in Germany. On the other hand, they also advocated a *self-interested solidarity* by emphasising that it was in the self-interest of German citizens to support (pro-)Refugee struggles, thereby making a ‘slippery slope’ argument.

The Shadow of Nazism and German Victimhood

Just as Nazism served as a reference point for critiquing state practices, it also served as a reference point to construct the liberal and tolerant German society in the present. As one civil society campaign put it, (West) German post-war society had emerged out of the specific historical responsibility to ‘resist master race thinking [Herrenmenschen denken]’ (Deutsch-Ausländisches Aktionsbündnis (DAAB) 1983 - transl. by TJP). As we will see throughout this chapter, however, such references to the past as a lesson for the present often took the form of victimising primarily the German population, while the question of complicity with or support of the Nazi regime was largely disregarded. This narrative was an effective way of creating a normative distinction between

state and society, with the latter being portrayed as the progressive antithesis to the former. Although my evaluation of archival documents did not allow for a direct exploration of the motivations of the (pro-)Refugee actors in question, we might assume that these actors were aware that such images of ‘the common German’ as either an innocent bystander, active opponent, or direct victim of the Nazi regime, reflected widespread assumptions within German popular and political culture in the post-war decades (Schmitz 2007; Jureit and Schneider 2010). Furthermore, such assumptions also figured prominently within the (post-)1968 left-wing and left-liberal political milieus within which, as we have already seen in chapter 4, many of the German (pro-)Refugee actors had been politicised (Benicke 2010; Seibert 2008).

This framing of Germans as victims of the Nazi state and Refugees in the past served a double purpose. On the one hand, it was an attempt to invoke *responsibility* for and *compassion* with current Refugees based on a shared experience of victimhood. On the other hand, given the failure to demonstrate such compassion, it also allowed for an indirect indictment of contemporary German society through indirect *shaming*. Both points could already be seen in 1980 when the *Initiative Committee Foreign Fellow Citizens in Hesse* attempted to appeal to sympathy and understanding among the German population by referring to the plight of German citizens who had to flee from the Nazi regime and found refuge in other nation-states. They also referred to the ‘democratic spirit’ as a positive national identity informed by the experiences of Germany’s past: ‘It should be even easier to feel sympathy for these asylum-seekers if we think about the time of Nazi rule, when hundreds of thousands of Germans could only save their lives thanks to other countries’ readiness to help and admit them’ (Initiativausschuss “Ausländische Mitbürger in Hessen” 1980b, 4). Similarly, the *Initiative for C.K. Altun’s Freedom in Lübeck* published an open letter during an occupation of a church in Lübeck in which the reader was reminded that ‘many Germans would not be alive today, if our neighbouring countries had acted in the years 1933-1945 in the same way the FRG government does today regarding foreigners’ (Initiative für die Freiheit von C.K. Altun in Lübeck 1983 - transl. by TJP).⁶⁸ In West Berlin, another example was a broad alliance of political groups who organised a demonstration against Altun’s extradition in 1983. Their call for the

⁶⁸ An interesting dynamic emerged around Christian church organisations as these became more directly associated with (or became more direct addressees of) more confrontational protests. In March 1983, for instance, 20 people from different nationalities went on hunger strike in the church *Holy Cross* in Berlin-Kreuzberg to protest against the extradition of Altun and others to Turkey. They only broke off the hunger strike in April after it was made public that Altun’s extradition was to be suspended until early May. In addition, the *Initiative for C.K. Altun’s Freedom* occupied a church in the Northern German city of Lübeck, trying to prompt the church to stand up unambiguously for Altun and others in a similar situation. For two days over the Easter weekend in April, a solemn vigil was held in front of Berlin’s memorial-church (Kantemir and Boehncke 1983, 37). Here we can see that these internal protest dynamics played a crucial role in order to trigger a more active role on the side of Christian church congregations and charitable associations.

demonstration attempted to reach a wider German public by calling to mind the historical experience of German citizens who had to flee the Nazi regime: ‘Immigration policies [Ausländerpolitik] and the right to asylum concern all of us! The older people among us know that!’ (Liga für Menschenrechte et al. 1983 - transl. by TJP). In contrast to the German state, which was framed as perpetrator throughout, these references to the Nazi past addressed ‘Germans’ and German society primarily as victims of that state. Deliberately or not, such a framing spoke directly to the discourse of German victimhood characteristic of German memory politics throughout the post-war period. As many historical and socio-psychological studies have shown, a strong focus on the victimhood of Germans has been an integral part of German mnemonic doxa in general and even dominated more private forms of remembrance (Fulbrook 2018; Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich 1975; Salzborn 2020).

We saw in the previous chapter that the majority of (pro-)Refugee actors focused their criticism on state institutions and their representatives. One major aspect of this criticism was the charge of producing racism and xenophobia as a means of division. According to this perspective, racism was the product of government policies and it emanated from the state level. If social actors beyond (political) elites were considered as part of the problem, the focus tended to lie on (extreme) right-wing activists. Put differently, while right-wing political actors might be the primary enactors of racist attacks, even ‘their’ racist ideology was seen as originating in state institutions. In 1984/85, for example, the *Frankfurt Appeal* prominently followed such a logic. The authors described contemporary asylum politics as ‘state-funded racism’, which they regarded as a betrayal of Germany’s past:

During the “Third Reich”, 1.5 million Germans had to leave and request asylum in other countries. It is against this background that the right to asylum was created in the FRG. This right to asylum only remains as paper waste! [...] It is appalling that, despite the horrifying events that millions of people have suffered during the ‘Nazi-time’ and despite the millions of deaths by fascist mass murder, today, in this country, only 50 years ‘afterwards’, racist policies can be practiced again. [...] That is racism! Such policy encourages extreme right-wing groups who practice their “foreigner policies” through murder, arson, and terror. Today, hostility towards foreigners is government programme!’ (Koordinationsbüro “Frankfurter Appell” 1984b - transl. by TJP)

Thus, the main assumption was that not only had Germans suffered in the past, but they were made the puppets of racist German state policies in the present as well. In other words, racism was not primarily regarded as a widespread problem within German society but rather introduced, reproduced, and orchestrated by the state. What is interesting about this and other examples is that the origin of the ‘re-emergence’ of Nazi-ideology was to some degree externalised, by reducing it to bourgeois elites and Neo-Nazis. Instead of connecting racist violence to discourses and sentiments within the German civil society and majority population, such violence was seen as originating in the state.

However, this framing of German society as largely innocent (both in past and present) went hand in hand with an appeal for responsibility in the present. The call of the *Frankfurt Appeal*, for instance, emphasised the need to learn from history: ‘We should be able to expect very different things from a country that ought to remember well the thousands of Germans who were wandering around in the world as political refugees due to Hitler-fascism!’ (Koordinationsbüro “Frankfurter Appell” 1984a - transl. by TJP). Similarly, in October 1985, various political organisations and activist groups called for ten days of solidarity with Refugees in Berlin, using the campaign slogan: ‘Berlin greets its guests – friendship feels good’ (Koordinationsbüro “Berlin grüsst seine Gäste” 1985 - transl. by TJP). Here again, the authors criticised state authorities’ non-admission of asylum-seekers in Berlin, which ignored the experience of the many Germans who, during Nazism, endured the experience of emigration themselves. In addition to the more human rights-based approach used by other organisations, this campaign put a stronger emphasis on cultural values of tolerance, respect, and openness. What was conveyed in such appeals to democratic community values was that, if you understood yourself as a true democrat, you could not tolerate the increasing erosion of the right of asylum enshrined in the German constitution. In similar vein, various evangelic church representatives and congregations all over the FRG emphasised the importance of offering Refugees ‘solidarity, protection, and help’ to demonstrate that the public disagreed with the exclusionary state politics (*taz*, 28.11.1986 – transl. by TJP). In support of a group of Refugees who started occupying a church in Berlin-Kreuzberg in November 1988 in protest of their threatened deportations, several groups stated that the ‘Senate interprets your silence as a will of the people. Authorities are again eagerly doing their duty. We call on you to show active solidarity with the refugees in order to deprive the Senate of legitimacy for its policies’ (Asyl e.V. et al. 1988 - transl. by TJP). While this reference to Germany’s Nazi history focused on the Germans as victims, the authors did not see it as evident that the German public had actually learnt from that experience and that they were therefore ashamed of it. In most cases, however, this difference between narratives of how German society *ought to be*, and how it *actually was*, was not as clear-cut. On the contrary, most actors seemed to appeal to the public by implying that because Germans had suffered their own specific experiences of victimhood, their society had actually been transformed into a particularly democratic, responsible, and compassionate political order in the present. In other words, most (pro-)Refugee actors appealed ‘To the Democratic Public!’ (Komitee von Asylbewerber*innen 1981 transl. by TJP) by invoking a contemporary German political culture that was the result of a substantial historical learning process. In late 1986, for example, various ‘Iranian revolutionary groups in West-Berlin’ came together to publish an open letter criticising contemporary asylum policies with reference to the experience of Germans: ‘It is

true that humanity as such and the people of the FRG in particular are already familiar with the suffering of alienation and indignity due to their own terrible experiences. [...] We are convinced that the freedom-loving people of the FRG stand in solidarity with all political Refugees and that they will help them overcome this life crisis which is probably the hardest of all' (Symp. der Guerilla Organisation der Volksfeday Iran in BRD und West-Berlin et al. 1986 - transl. by TJP). They thus explicitly appealed to the (majority of the) German public by assuming a potential empathy to the plight of Refugees due to the German historical experience.

Compassionate and self-interested solidarity

The framing of the democratic and tolerant German society and its accompanying narrative of Germans as victims of the state led to two main ways of attempting to evoke solidarity. On the one hand, (pro-)Refugee actors attempted to appeal to feelings of compassion with Refugees and connect these feelings with a positive self-image of the Germany as a liberal-democratic society. Thus, they sought to appeal to the moral conscience and emotional sentiments of those identified with the FRG's liberal-democratic, human-rights-oriented principles. In Bauder and Juffs' typology, this notion of solidarity does not appear as a distinct category, but rather as the combination of what they call 'emotional reflexive' and 'rational reflexive' solidarity (Bauder and Juffs 2020, 50). While the former is defined as being based the feelings of 'sympathy, compassion, and friendship', the latter results from a commitment to the political values of 'human dignity and equality' (Kerwin, cited in: Bauder and Juffs 2020, 56). The examples that I discuss, however, explicitly connect these two moments. For these actors, compassion is not simply 'a private matter derived from personal motivations' (Bauder and Juffs 2020, 50), but rather a civic duty for all those who want to defend the FRG's liberal-democratic values. I therefore suggest analysing these cases as a form of *compassionate solidarity*. On the other hand, there were actors who drew on what Bauder and Juffs call '*self-centred solidarity*', that is, a notion of solidarity that 'is based on practical motivations and calculated interest in improving or preserving one's own situation' (ibid.). While Bauder and Juffs found that within the academic literature this notion of solidarity primarily appears in discussions of state politics and international cooperation, I show that (pro-)Refugee actors, too, developed such a notion of solidarity to justify and amplify their claims.

As already indicated, most common and constant throughout the 1980s and early 1990s were evocations of compassion based on both a liberal-democratic and tolerant self-understanding among the German public and the assumed experience of shared of suffering. Put differently, the framing of Germans as victims in the past introduced above was often used as a basis for

(assuming) compassion with Refugees' suffering in the present. By focusing the critique of anti-immigrant and anti-Refugee hostility exclusively on the state and a small minority of far-right groups, most of the German civil society was – by implication – not part of the problem. Such an appeal to the seemingly evident majoritarian compassion was used by all (pro-)Refugee actors apart from radical left groups, that is, civil society and church organisations, left-wing parliamentary parties, as well as some parts of Refugee groups and organisations. Embracing this positive view of German society, the actors focused on public ignorance as a widespread problem that needed to be tackled by drawing public attention to the terrible situation in which Refugees in Germany found themselves. In other words, as the German public was already assumed to be basically compassionate with Refugees (at least in theory), the practical lack of solidarity was regarded as resulting from a lack of knowledge. Therefore, simply describing the situation of Refugees was an important strategy for activating the latent compassionate solidarity. After describing and condemning the political situation in Turkey, for example, the *Committee of Asylum-Seekers* called attention to its members' current situation in the FRG in an open letter to the German public:

We were forced to apply for asylum in the FRG and West-Berlin to escape the political repression in Turkey and Kurdistan. Apart from our already existing existential difficulties, we also have significant problems here, in the FRG and West-Berlin, which are primarily caused by the legal regulations and their application by the authorities. For example, financial support and adequate assistance in finding accommodation are lacking. For that reason, a large proportion of asylum-seekers here in West-Berlin suffers from mental disorders. Many are threatened to be deported which would mean their death sentence. (Komitee von Asylbewerbern 1981 - transl. by TJP)

Such basic and at times emotional depictions of the plight of asylum-seekers and Refugees in Germany as well as descriptions of their flight and its causes dominated many texts throughout the 1980s. Informing the public and seeking attention were thus major goals for (pro-)Refugee protests, and information campaigns were at the heart of much pro-Refugee activism. For instance, in a public statement on his death, the *Committee for the Release of Cemal Kemal Altun* emphasised the need for three points, and their aim to fulfil them: the increased support for other people in danger of being extradited to Turkey, legal changes to make such extraditions impossible, and the documentation of Altun's case in order to further inform the public (Komitee für die Freilassung Cemal Kemal Altuns 1983). They tried to achieve this third goal by publishing a book later in the same year on Cemal Altun and other cases of extradition (Arendt-Rojahn 1983). Here again, the (assumed) ignorance of the public was largely exculpated by seeing the state as largely responsible for keeping the information from the public. In late 1983, the *German-Foreign Action Alliance* in Hamburg expressed their intention of founding a new group so as to make protest against extraditions and deportations more efficient:

So far, it was only possible in very few cases to call attention to, prevent, and stop planned extraditions and deportations through broad public protest. In many cases, though, such measures are taken without the public

knowing about it in time to be able to plan actions and protest against them accordingly. We don't want to only react again after another foreigner found his situation unbearable. (Arbeitsgruppe zur Einrichtung eines Informationsbüros zum Schutz ausländischer Mitbürger vor Auslieferung, Abschiebung und Ausweisung im Deutsch-Ausländischen Aktionsbündnis Hamburg 1983 - transl. by TJP)

Thus, the claim seems to be that the public would act if they only knew about it. As a working group, they therefore proposed the institutionalisation of a group that focused especially on acquiring and publicising information on deportations. The founding of such a group was made public in late February 1984 in Hamburg with the *Information Office for the Protection of Foreign Fellow Citizens against Extraditions, Deportations, and Expulsions* (Deutsch-Ausländisches Aktionsbündnis (DAAB) 1984). As this example already indicates, the hope behind such information campaign was that the wider public would feel responsible and start supporting Refugees even if this meant defying state practices. In this sense, knowledge also implied responsibility to act. In this vein, the *Committee against Executions in Turkey* in Hamburg published a statement in remembrance of Cemal Altun's death in 1984 where they emphasised the public's responsibility to scrutinise state practices. Regarding the practice of deportation, they argued, the public should always take a close look and, if necessary, protect people from being extradited or deported by granting them asylum against the state's will (*taz*, 05.09.1984). What most of these actors had in common throughout the 1980s, then, was a conviction that German society was a (potential) force of the good against the state. Clear criticism of 'the public' remained a fringe position and was only expressed indirectly, if at all.

However, there were some indications that the German public was at times regarded as wilfully ignorant as well. According to the first activity report of the civil society organisation *Asylum* in 1984, their main aims were to re-establish the halt to deportation to Lebanon and 'to force the public to engage with the destructive asylum policies; subsequently, no one should be able to say they "knew nothing about it"...' (Asyl e.V. (Berlin) 1984, 2 - transl. by TJP). In contrast to most of the other references, this critique was clearly directed at civil society, not state institutions, thereby questioning whether the 'democratic public' had actually learnt from the past. By using the phrase 'knew nothing about it' the authors established a clear link to the German Nazi past and particularly the social unwillingness to take responsibility for its horrors afterwards. As we will see in the final section of this chapter - that focuses on the relation between restrictive asylum policies and racism in German society - this became a more pronounced subject of debate and critique after the summer of 1986.

Not all (pro-)Refugee actors seemed to share the assumption that emphasising core democratic values and informing the public about suffering to motivate solidarity would be enough. On the contrary, many added or even focused completely on a rather different approach: giving reasons why it might be in people's best interest to support (pro-)Refugee struggles. They thus appealed

to a form of ‘self-centred solidarity’ (Bauder and Juffs 2020, 55) by making a ‘slippery slope’ argument.⁶⁹ In these cases, solidarity was not directly justified based on the value of compassion and support for people in need, but rather by way of reference to potentially threatening consequences for German citizens. The underlying assumption here was that there would only be widespread solidarity among the German population if a connection between Germanness and potential victimhood in the present was constructed; that is, if German citizens realised that their own socio-economic, political and legal status was potentially at risk of being diminished by the state as well. As in all the other cases, this perspective was often expressed through references to the past which, like the ones described above, focused on Germans as victims. Here again, it was both civil society, party political and self-organised Refugee actors that drew on this type of solidarity. Particularly in the context of the *Frankfurt Appeal* and the anti-voucher campaign in 1984/85, strong emphasis was placed on the potential threats to German citizens by pointing to a gradual erosion of everyone’s rights (and not just Refugees’). For example, by frequently posing the question ‘vouchers soon for Germans too?’ (Alternative Liste 1985 - transl. by TJP), the *Alternative List* tried to embed the anti-voucher campaign into struggles against social disciplining per se. During their ‘action week’ in March 1984, the organisers of the *Frankfurt Appeal* evoked a similar ‘slippery slope’ scenario: ‘Whoever eradicates the rights of foreign minorities today, won’t shy away from removing the democratic liberties of other sections of the population tomorrow. The state’s policies for foreigners [Ausländerpolitik] concern *all* of us!’ (Koordinationsbüro “Frankfurter Appell” 1984c, 1 - transl. by TJP). The call for a nation-wide protest march from Hamburg to Munich in late 1984 further connected this warning that ‘ALL OF US ARE AFFECTED!’ with some reflections on the escalating logic of authoritarian state politics in moments of social crisis. Furthermore, the call for the nation-wide protest march from Hamburg to Munich in late 1984 emphasised that ‘ALL OF US ARE AFFECTED!’, and it was argued that, if immigrants became deprived of their rights, ‘our’ rights might be next. For example, policies for ‘foreigners’ were interpreted as an instrument to divide the workforce and seen as part of a general trend to cut social services. Moreover, they were regarded as forms of political disciplining and were therefore a step towards the police state. This claim was further embedded in a more general critique of an inhuman form of socio-economic crisis management based on the constructed distinction between those who are ‘productive’ and ‘deserving’ and those who are not:

It’s cheap and convenient to lay the blame for the crisis on a scapegoat. However, the ones who do that want to distract us from the true causes of the crisis. They don’t want to pay for the costs of the crisis themselves

⁶⁹ In contemporary debates, there is some critical engagement with self-interested forms of solidarity, but these are usually located at the level of state action and international cooperation in the area of migration management (Kapeller and Wolkenstein 2013; Bauder and Juffs 2020).

but rather put the burden on those least able to defend themselves: first foreigners, women, the unemployed, trainees, pensioners; afterwards come those who are unable to keep up the pace of work, unable to keep up with computers, unable to pay the rent. [...] We must not be divided by them! Only if Germans and foreigners resist the liquidation of jobs and social cuts together, is there any hope that we can avert this existential threat. (Koordinationsbüro "Frankfurter Appell" 1984c, 2 - transl. by TJP)

Even though the authors of the *Frankfurt Appeal* made clear distinctions between 'Germans and foreigners', they tried to frame the particular problems of Refugees and immigrants in Germany as common problem concerning the interests of everyone. This evocation of a self-interested solidarity was not limited to support groups that explicitly or implicitly understood themselves as German but was also brought up by self-organised Refugee groups. For instance, the already mentioned 'Appeal to reason' by Iranian Refugees explicitly tried to portray the restriction of the right of asylum not only as a 'minority problem' but as an attack on democracy as such:

We are of the opinion that the strategy of the federal government and some other circles in the FRG to change §16 of the Basic Law goes beyond the suppression of the right to asylum because it cuts down a law which hits democracy, democratic rights and freedoms in this country. Whether the right to demonstrate, the right to go on strike or the right to asylum are in danger does not make a difference. The only difference is that different people in the FRG will be victims of such politics. (Symp. der Guerilla Organisation der Volksfeday Iran in BRD und West-Berlin et al. 1986 - transl. by TJP)

Some actors went a step further by stressing that support for Refugees was fundamentally about German identity. In 1985, for example, a brochure on detention by self-identified German support actors argued the following:

'Because this is about more than food. First and foremost, this isn't even about the camp residents even if it should be taken for granted that another life is made possible for them in our country. This is about us ourselves, about our country, about our future. Because we learnt once before how true it is: "A people that does not protect its strangers, will soon perish." (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)' (Hennecke 1985, 9 - transl. by TJP)

In contrast to the aforementioned focus on the suffering of Refugees, here, the focus lay on the potential future suffering of Germans themselves, which was seen as interlinked with that of Refugees. However, in both cases the actors drew upon an understanding of German society as democratic and tolerant due its past experiences. By constructing a collective history and experience of German victimhood as the precondition for solidarity with Refugees, the critical and transformative potential of the latter remained limited. While those actors who made use of that framing sought to overcome those strictly exclusivist, inward-looking notions of German identity that gained influence in the context of the rise of ethno-nationalist discourses in the 1980s and early 1990s, they nonetheless reproduced a dichotomous, hierarchical relation between in-group and out-group. For it was assumed that the suffering of Refugees would only become communicable in the wider political field if and when it was related back to nationalist narratives about German suffering. Another crucial way in which this emphasis on German victimhood reproduced orthodox assumptions was its failure to engage with questions of German society's

complicity, both in the past and present. All these examples, then, attest to what Nicholls calls the ‘sticking power of national citizenship’ (Nicholls 2019, 16). We shall see in the following section that such attempts to explicitly draw on orthodox notions of German history and identity did not remain unchallenged.

7.2 Beyond and Against the German Public

Not all (pro-)Refugee actors made positive or sympathetic references to German identity in order to activate attitudes of solidarity among the wider public audience. On the contrary, various actors tried to go beyond this point of reference by addressing (and thereby constructing) alternative collective identities considered suitable for fostering solidarity with Refugees. In this section, I provide a systematic analysis of the different ways in which (pro-)Refugee actors sought to distance themselves from national frames of reference, and critically evaluate to what extent these attempts went beyond or remained bound to the national doxa which structured the symbolic order of the political field where these actors operated. This discussion raises the question of the *implicit* embeddedness within and reproduction of the national doxa. As we saw in the first two chapters, both Arendt and Bourdieu hypothesised that the structuring force of the nation-state order puts all political actors in a position of dependence on the material and symbolic resources which this order provides. In particular, Bourdieu suggests that this affected even those actors who considered themselves radically opposed to this order, that is, who made determined efforts to refuse or deny this dependency. In this section, I will demonstrate that this problem identified by Arendt and Bourdieu was prevalent among those (pro-)Refugee actors who sought to develop alternatives to the explicit reproduction of national myths among other parts of the (pro-)Refugee movement. More specifically, I discuss how this embeddedness oftentimes led to an ambivalent relation to – and not necessarily to a clear-cut refusal of – the national doxa.

Attempts to go against and beyond framings of the public in national terms can be categorised in three ways. First, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, in the context of the ongoing process of European integration in the 1970s and 1980s German society became at times subsumed under a broader notion of European identity and cooperation. In these cases, however, the appeal to German identity was not eliminated altogether, but rather articulated with other national identities in a European context. The core argument in these cases was that anti-Refugee action was not coordinated on the national level alone, but based on international, European-wide coordination which should be paralleled and countered by international solidarity with Refugees.

For example, the civil society organisation *Asylum* had, at least rhetorically, a clear European-wide focus when they emphasised that not only the German, but all European populations had to understand that ‘their governments are substantially involved in the wars in the Refugees’ countries of origin who seek protection here and thus take part in causing the reasons for their flight’ (Asyl e.V. (Berlin) 1984, 14 - transl. by TJP). Thus, in accordance with the critique of global socio-economic inequalities outlined in the previous chapter, many (pro-)Refugee actors proclaimed the need for an international resistance to the unequal world system as well. This focus on the European level intensified in the late 1980s and particularly the early 1990s around discussions of the Europeanisation of immigration and asylum politics. In 1988, for instance, *Refuge Berlin* pointed out their intention to ‘oppose the “harmonisation of asylum laws in Europe” with resistance which is coordinated all over Europe’ (Fluchtburg Berlin 1988 - transl. by TJP). However, while international cooperation was added to the picture in these instances, the framing of the public being addressed in national terms was itself rarely questioned. In this sense, such European perspectives largely followed the same logics as the ones described in the previous section, which is why I will not focus on them further in the following.

Second, there were various actors that either moved beyond criticising a national or European frame of reference. The clearest form of an alternative construction was articulated by those radical left groups who focused on the notion of a global proletariat. Many radical left-wing actors with a traditional class-political and anti-imperialist orientation did not attempt to appeal directly to German identity, but rather to the working-class population within Germany (and beyond). The underlying assumption was that solidarity between the German working-class and Refugees should be expected because both shared the same experience of being part of a global proletariat. This showed some similarities to what Bauder and Juffs call ‘recognitive solidarity’ (Bauder and Juffs 2020, 51), that is, a notion of solidarity based on the shared experience of and fight against broader relations of domination. However, these actors suggested a very specific form of mutual recognition. Rather than trying to evoke empathy among the German population with Refugee as ‘others’, they aimed to integrate them into the broader ‘in-group’ of the oppressed in capitalist times. Different actors’ experiences of oppression were not acknowledged as such, but only as particular manifestations of an overarching system of capitalist/imperialist oppression. I therefore suggest referring to this as a *subsuming type of solidarity*. On an explicit level, these actors purported to be opposed to both the German state and liberal-democratic civil society. Implicitly, however, this approach was still based on the assumption that there was a widespread potential for pro-Refugee solidarity within the German (working class) population, which is why these actors, too, primarily related to this object of reference in the form of an *appeal*.

Third, a shift took place among most groups described here in the context of the public racist excesses of the late 1980s and particularly the early 1990s: whereas the vast majority of (pro-)Refugee actors had focused on criticising the state apparatus and/or specified groups of people such as ‘the elites’ and/or (neo-)Nazis, a growing number of (pro-)Refugee actors turned towards a *critique* of nationalism and racism as a wider social problem. In these instances, the German society and majority population itself became the main object of criticism. Crucially, then, these actors sought to develop a denunciatory critique not only of the (West) German state but also its surrounding political field and wider society. This also involved a (self-)critical stance towards positive references to German society which were increasingly seen as reproducing orthodox notions of ‘Germanness’ with problematic implications for the political fight against the suffering of Refugees. Insofar as this approach sought to create pro-Refugee support through an explicit critique of German identity, I suggest characterising it as a form of *negative solidarity*. What both frames nonetheless show is that even the attempts to go beyond and against the German public remain implicitly (in the case of *subsuming solidarity*) or explicitly (for *negative solidarity*) related to the doxastic propositions through which this public tends to present itself.

Subsuming Solidarity: Global Proletariat

Not all actors had confidence in the positive potential of the German democratic public as allies in (pro-)Refugee struggles. In particular, radical left-wing groups did not appeal to a public German identity as such but tried to integrate pro-Refugee solidarity into the political struggles of the proletariat. This category was seen as a collective identity that characteristically went beyond and cut across national identities. In this sense, solidarity was seen as the result of the subsumption of various experiences and struggles under a unitary principle of domination and resistance. As Featherstone puts it, this notion of solidarity assumes the existence ‘of a singular “community of us all” rather than bearing on fractured and contested political struggles and communities’ (Featherstone 2012, 37–38). More specifically, many tried to explicitly distance themselves from the above depicted notion of a ‘democratic public’, that is, a space of public communication and political decision-making that valued basic human rights and criticised arbitrary state practices. This framing of the public audience was especially prevalent within those sections of the post-1968 radical left that, as we have seen in the previous chapter, developed a strongly Manichaean anti-imperialist, class-political perspective which primarily understood nationalism and racism as ideological mechanisms deployed by the ruling class to secure the status quo.

An early example can be found in a 1981 leaflet by the *International Communist Party* concerning ongoing hunger strikes by asylum-seekers throughout West Germany. Formulated in a mocking tone, the authors raised the question ‘what about the “democratic and progressive” public’ (Internationale Kommunistische Partei 1981a - transl. by TJP) which they implied to be non-existent or even complicit in the oppression of Refugees. Furthermore, they criticised charitable and human rights organisations such as *Amnesty International* and *Caritas* for offering help and charity without putting into question the conditions that made such initiatives necessary in the first place. More specifically, the accusation of the state’s ‘unlawfulness’ was rejected as a futile moral appeal which was based on the ‘illusion that the bourgeoisie could be moved to change its politics on the basis of appeals to humanity’ (ibid.). Against this background, any attempt to gain public attention and to improve the conditions under which asylum-seekers lived in the FRG by appealing to those actors and institutions that were seen as responsible for or complicit in creating and upholding these conditions were regarded as futile. In contrast to such ‘reform-oriented approaches’, the *International Communist Party* concluded with a strong plea for an international ‘fighting solidarity’ [kämpferische Solidarität] (ibid.) based on the notion of working-class oppression as the material foundation of solidarity between citizens and non-citizens:

We have to support them in this struggle; it is exactly our task in the FRG [...] to attack ‘our’ state and to weaken it by defending together our living and fighting conditions regardless of ‘national interests’. [...] If we let ourselves be played out against each other, the bourgeoisie can achieve targeted attacks against single groups and social classes, Germans as well as foreigners, and thereby aggravate the conditions of living of the whole proletariat! (Internationale Kommunistische Partei 1981a - transl. by TJP)

In 1986, the *Coordination Group of Autonomous Refugee Groups in Rhein/Ruhr* declared in a similar way that they saw ‘international refugee movements as an expression and part of the international class struggle’ which was deliberately obscured by the capitalist classes: ‘Race antagonism against class antagonism to create a social consensus is the goal’ (Koordinationskreis Rhein/Ruhr autonomer Flüchtlingsgruppen 1986 - transl. by TJP). They concluded:

[...] refugee work is only part of possible and necessary social-revolutionary politics in the Federal Republic of Germany. It is inseparable from national and international struggles and class disputes. Refugee work cannot be a campaign-oriented sub-sector work, it must be an expression and an approach to social revolution against imperialism and its programmes as a whole. (ibid.)

Here we see how radical left-wing groups combined the state-centric critique of the suffering of Refugees with an embedding of their specific situation within the general framework of a global antagonism between the working-class on the one hand, and the capitalist class and their political elites which are represented by the state, on the other. In contrast to the two strategies of evoking a compassionate and self-interested solidarity, these actors sought to create solidarity through the subsumption of categories such as ‘German’, ‘migrant’ and ‘Refugee’ under the generalised frame of an antagonism between a global proletariat and a Western/European capitalist class.

Interestingly, however, even these attempts to subsume the situation of Refugees under the broader framework of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism did not lead to the complete ignorance of the specificity of the (West) German context. On the contrary, themes which figured prominently in public debates about national identity in 1980s West Germany (see chapter 4) remained a major point of reference throughout.⁷⁰ Here again, the most striking aspect of this strong preoccupation with Germany's official doxa even within radical left-wing milieus was the question of memory politics. Like the other actors described above, radical left-wing groups made explicit references to the German Nazi legacy to make a case for solidarity with Refugees. For example, in 1983, the Trotskyite *Group of International Marxists* emphasised the relevance of Altun's case for everyone in West Germany by pointing out that 'just as it is practised by Neo-Nazis: scape goats are needed again. Yesterday the Jews – today the Turks,' and demanding solidarity among the labouring population: 'Instead of smear campaigns against foreigners, fight together for jobs!' (Gruppe Internationaler Marxisten - Vierte Internationale (Ortsgruppe Aachen) 1983 - transl. by TJP). Thus, while the emphasis was laid on forms of identity and solidarity across national boundaries, the authors nonetheless seemed to assume that the normative parameters of the proletariat were still informed by the specific history of the respective nation-state context.

In addition to explicit references to Germany's past, there were also more implicit ways in which radical left-wing actors related to – and, in fact, tended to reproduce – doxastic assumptions about German identity. Despite their generally more pessimistic outlook regarding solidarity with Refugees among the German citizenry, they also reproduced the conception of racism as a top-down strategy to prevent solidarity between Germans and non-Germans. After an arson attack on the Dortmund branch of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in September 1987, the *Revolutionary Cells* published an open letter of confession in which they underlined state institutions' role as producers of racism:

Special treatment of minorities with the aim of control and selection, with the intention of creating racially mediated class division and the tacit acceptance of extortion in unguaranteed employment relationships. In those places where the flood of asylum-seekers living in tent cities and overflowing camps threatened to wash away the secure native soil [Heimatboden] of loyal voters and where the popular mood was mobilised to sow xenophobia in the old tradition, the isolation of the remaining Refugees is organised today. (Revolutionäre Zellen 1989 - transl. by TJP)

Situating this framing in the wider public discourse about national identity helps us to critically evaluate the extent to which these actors managed to overcome the national doxa. On an explicit

⁷⁰ This solidarity was not only seen as essential in the West-German context but encompassed East-Germany as well. For example, after the GDR supported the FRG in stopping Sri Lankan Refugees from entering FRG territory (see historical embedding chapter 4), the West-German Revolutionary Socialists prompted the GDR population 'to confront the comrades [Genossinnen und Genossen] with regard to East-Berlin's anti-communist politics' (Revolutionäre Sozialisten 1986 - transl. by TJP).

level, they undoubtedly avoided a positive identification with and explicit appeal to German identity. In this sense, they strongly diverted from the hegemonic tendencies both within mainstream public discourse and the wider (pro-)Refugee movement. Instead, categories of national identification were rejected as symbolic mechanisms of division between different proletarian segments. Implicitly, however, this framing was still applicable to certain orthodox assumptions. The appeal to attitudes of working-class solidarity was still based on the assumption that problems of nationalism and racism were irrelevant within large parts of the German population. There was indeed an explicit criticism of other parts of the (pro-)Refugee movement as well as the wider public. However, this critique primarily focused on questions of reformism, but not on questions of national identity. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, there was a strong tendency to characterise racism and xenophobia as an ideological mechanism of domination designed and used by state and elite actors, but not as a wider societal problem. It was only against this background of reducing racism to a state and elite problem that the subsuming notion of solidarity could be developed. In other words, there was a strong tendency among radical left-wing (pro-)Refugee groups to construct the wider population in Germany as a potentially progressive force of global working-class struggles rather than criticising nationalist and racist tendencies within it. Put differently, the performative act of appealing to a 'proletariat' went hand in hand with an idealisation of that group. Thus, although radical left-wing groups did not make use of positive notions of German identity, they did not consider it necessary to engage with problems of hostility, complicity, and perpetration among the wider German population either. In this sense, these groups tended to reproduce certain assumptions about the potentially progressive potential within the German society, without explicitly making use of nationalist categories of identification.

Furthermore, this framing also had the effect of concealing existing power relations among the various (pro-)Refugee actors. For the notion of a revolutionary proletariat unmoved by nationalism and racism created the image of a horizontal cooperation between different segments, understood as equally affected by the system of capitalist oppression. That many radical left-wing actors in fact held a privileged position within the political field because they enjoyed full citizenship rights and symbolic recognition as German nationals was thus ignored or downplayed. As demonstrated in chapter 5, this silence was increasingly problematised by self-identified Refugees from the late 1980s onwards. Even though these actors tried to provide clear alternative sources of identification to the nation, they nonetheless tended to reproduce forms of racism, xenophobia, and nationalism through silence about them. Against this background, some actors tried to elicit another form of

solidarity in an attempt to avoid both framing the public in national terms and applying a subsumptive logic.

Negative Solidarity: From ‘Top-Down Racism’ to Its Social Roots

The explicit and implicit assumptions about the existence of widespread pro-Refugee solidarity within German society (spoken to either as Germans or proletarians) became the subject of criticism among a growing number of (pro-)Refugee actors in the second half of the 1980s and especially during the early 1990s. The most important form in which this growing scepticism was expressed was to locate the problem of racism and xenophobia not only within state institutions and representatives but also within the German society more broadly. This shift occurred in a historical moment which was characterised by intensification of anti-Refugee hostilities in media discourse and organised politics, as well as by an unprecedented wave of violent attacks directed against Refugees and other people imagined as ‘non-German’ (Blanke 1993; Herbert 2014b). It is therefore unsurprising that the previous attempts to appeal to wider segments of the (West) German society were regarded by a growing number of (pro-)Refugee actors as problematic insofar as they tended to relativise the extent to which racist and xenophobic attitudes were present in both everyday life and political life. Thus, what made this perspective distinct is that the actors developed a *denunciatory critique* not only of the state but also the wider public and society. This does not mean that these actors simply gave up the endeavour of searching for potential supporters. On the contrary, many of their political practices were still focused on strengthening attitudes of solidarity among a wider public audience. What changed, however, was their idea of what it meant to show solidarity. Given that German identity was considered to be part of the problem, it could no longer play the role of a symbolic reservoir of such solidarity. In this sense, the notion of solidarity that was promoted here was a *negative* one: only through the critique of German identity as a driving force of anti-immigrant racism could one truly become supportive of Refugees.

One example that illustrates this shift towards a greater symbolic distance towards the German public and society can be found in an open letter to the ‘Berlin public’ published by the *Association of Iranian Refugees in West-Berlin* in July 1986 (Verein iranischer Flüchtlinge in Westberlin e.V 1986 - transl. by TJP). This open letter was still based on the premise that there existed a public audience who might show solidarity once it had been informed about the specific situation of Iranian and other Refugees arriving and living in the FRG:

Surely you too know that no one voluntarily leaves his family, friends, his possessions, the familiar landscape, the habits and customs that have become beloved, his own culture, in short, everything that constitutes a person's life and personality. No one would give up their home and work without coercion in order to enter a country where they would have to live as strangers, in difficult social conditions, facing humiliations and insults. If we do so, there have to be serious reasons for it. (ibid.)

Furthermore, in line with the above-discussed notions of compassionate and self-interested solidarity, the authors attempted to persuade German addressees to show solidarity with Refugees by reminding them of the experiences of German citizens who were forced to flee from the terror of the Nazi regime:

You may have forgotten it or don't want to be reminded of it but there have also been times in the history of your country when hundreds of thousands of your compatriots have been forced to leave their homes. The threat to their lives through gas chambers, concentration camps and the everyday terror of an anti-human regime drove them to flee abroad. We Iranians, too, are in a similar situation today. (ibid.)

What is interesting about this reminder, however, is that it also entailed a negative portrayal of those who are supposed to be reminded. For the appellative speech act 'you may have forgotten it or don't want to be reminded' suggests that the key characteristics of the 'Berlin public' were not compassion with but instead indifference towards the victims of (German) persecution. The authors even continued with a direct critique of its addressee:

'What does this all matter to us,' you might ask. Our answer is that you are not entirely innocent of our misery. Despite its crimes, your government maintains the best relations with the Khomeini regime. [...] If you want to help us or get rid of us quickly, please call on the responsible politicians in your country, instead of setting up a pogrom against refugees and restricting the Basic Law, not to continue to foment the fire of war and to support Khomeini and his regime. (ibid.)

Here the authors drew a picture of German citizens as not only ignorant or indifferent but also openly hostile to Iranian refugees. What is more, they explicitly accused the 'Berlin public' of complicity with state violence and persecution, as well as of direct involvement in the perpetration of racist violence. This balancing act between soliciting solidarity, on the one hand, and denouncing the German public, on the other, became a key characteristic of many (pro-)Refugee claims in the early 1990s. In 1991, for instance, the *Anti-Racist Initiative (ARI)* in Berlin started publishing an anti-racist magazine – *ZAG* – in response to the growing hostilities against Refugees and immigrants in the wake of 'German unification'. In the first issue, the authors explained the main agenda of this magazine which again can be characterised as a combination of informing a potentially sympathetic public and denouncing the indifferent, complicit, and hostile tendencies within that public:

We still believe that our original idea of publishing reports of racist and fascist attacks and discrimination (which we have done so far in the form of leaflets) makes sense in order to counter the argument 'we knew nothing about this.' However, it needs to be expanded. In recent weeks and months, even the bourgeois media have been forced to address the growing racism. There would be a lot to say about the racism in that coverage elsewhere. Only so much: the tendency is to describe racism and fascism mainly as a 'youth problem'. This ignores the broad support among the population. The 'quite normal' citizens are not recognised as

‘perpetrators’. Despite the patchy and often distorted media coverage, it has become very difficult to ‘know nothing’. (ZAG (*Zeitungsjournal Antirassistischer Und Antifaschistischer Gruppen*). Vol. 1 1991, 1 - transl. by TJJP)

These remarks indicated a growing awareness that the fight against the plight of Refugees could not be reduced to the state. Instead, the fact that this state’s representatives were democratically elected and thus enjoyed wider popular support also needed to be addressed. Furthermore, this change in perspective also altered the relation towards the main addressees of political mobilisation. Thus, it was implied that the public audience contained not only genuine supporters of Refugee rights and recognition, but also potential sympathisers and collaborators with the FRG’s inhumane migration and asylum regime.

Another case that illustrates this close relation between searching for potential supporters and criticising the endemic culture of racism and neo-fascism in Germany is a leaflet published by a group of Refugees and supporters who occupied parts of the Technical University Berlin in 1992 in order to protest against their forced relocation to another accommodation facility:

Through the ‘asylum debate’, politicians in this country added fuel to the already burning fire of racism. This is one of the reasons why racist attacks are turning more brutal and more numerous. [...] We appeal to all Refugees and all democratically thinking persons to join our struggle against the fascist potential and for our human rights and recognition as refugees. We Refugees are the weakest members of this society. We are nonetheless convinced that we have a right to be treated as equals. In future, the treatment of Refugees and minorities will prove whether this society has learnt from its past or not.’ (Antirassistisches Zentrum (ASTA TU Berlin) 1992, 31–32 - transl. by TJJP)

Similarly, the *Antifascist Working Group Duisburg* interpreted the broad political anti-asylum campaigns of 1986 as an indication that the ‘democratic consciousness of many German citizens is frighteningly fragile. Hidden behind the façade are xenophobia, racism and even the willingness to violence, to terror against strangers’ (Antifaschister Arbeitskreis Duisburg et al. 1987, 5). Against this background, the authors moved on to challenge the key elements of this positive notion of a democratic, compassionate German society:

Far-right ideology should come across as a democratic idea, so that no one comes up with the idea of drawing undesirable parallels. Racism no longer exists, and the Federal Republic is and remains a foreigner-friendly community. [...] Everyone also insists on the right to asylum. Even those who want to abolish it. As a phrase, it should remain even after a change in the Basic Law. We are and will remain world champions in granting asylum — even without asylum seekers! (ibid., 37)

This is a very instructive example in that it demonstrates how the expression of pro-Refugee support was closely connected to the critique of the national doxa. Through the rhetorical devices of irony and ridicule, the authors sought to reveal the hypocrisy of those positive notions of German post-war identity that circulated in hegemonic public discourse but were also reproduced by other (pro-)Refugee actors.

Moreover, the more encompassing critique of the wider German public also led to different perspectives on the question of responsibility and complicity in the historical context of Nazism.

As we have already seen in the previous sections, there was a strong tendency in the first years of the emerging (pro-)Refugee movement to primarily refer to German citizens as bystanders and even the victims of the Nazi regime. Now, there was also a growing number of (pro-)Refugee actors that challenged such assumptions and accused wider segments of the German population of various degrees of complicity with the Nazi regime, ranging from inactivity and indifference to active political support. In a leaflet from 1986, for instance, the already discussed magazine *West-Berlin Communist* stated:

In the past, the vast majority of Germans stood idly by or agreed to how millions of Jews were singled out and driven into death factories. Anyone who today stands idly by or even agrees with how foreign colleagues and refugees are being singled out, how refugees are being sent back en masse to countries where they are threatened with torture and death is complicit in chauvinistic incitement and racist crimes that are getting worse and worse. Today's silence or agreement is the 'Hurray!' patriotism of tomorrow, with which future war adventures of West German imperialism are cheered. International solidarity and resistance must be continued and strengthened! (Westberliner Kommunist: Organ für den Aufbau der marxistisch-leninistischen Partei Westberlins 1986 - transl. by TJP)

Among various (pro-)Refugee groups this growing distance towards the wider German society was articulated in the form of a changed perspective on the question of racism. As already indicated in the previous chapter, many (pro-)Refugee actors started focusing on broader anti-racist approaches and more actors emerged to take up the issue. It was especially in the field of left-wing politics that there was an increasing focus on 'bottom-up racism' as one of the major problems that caused the exclusion and victimisation of Refugees. It is therefore unsurprising that the historical emergence of an 'anti-racist movement' in German history has been located in the early 1990s (Hess and Linder 1997; Jakob 2016). In 1990, for instance, the antiracist initiative *the department* published 'preliminary hypotheses for an anti-racist movement in Germany' offering a broader perspective by including both a state-level 'racism from above' and a 'racism from below':

The concept of racism is not widespread in the political discussion because the topic seemed to have been settled for the FRG after the Nazi era. Nevertheless, we must 'conquer' it again for us, against the rampant 'anti-fascism'. [...] The systematic devaluation, reduction and disadvantage of a group, e.g., because of the colour of the skin, nationality or other language, is carried out by means of state-capitalist policy, that would be racism from above – foreign policy as a means of population and labour market policy. Or it starts from parts of the population. This is racism from below, the most consistent of which are the right-wing radicals and fascists (das Referat 1990, 2 - transl. by TJP).

It is also noteworthy that this change in political self-understanding also led some groups and organisations to critically reflect on the limitations of previous approaches. In March 1989, for instance, the anti-racist working group of the Bavarian conference against racism, fascism, and sexism organised by Antifa-groups in March 1989 concluded that the conventional notion of racism as 'introduced into the population through legal measures and organised agitation' which the participating groups had advocated earlier was not enough (Erste bayerische Aktionskonferenz gegen Rassismus, Faschismus und Sexismus in Nürnberg 1989 - transl. by TJP).

In sum, this strategy of creating solidarity differed from those discussed in the previous sections in various ways. First, the normative distinction between state and society was transformed into a critique of both state and society, with the latter playing an equally significant role in the exclusion and victimisation of Refugees. Second, this shift was accompanied by a growing attentiveness to racism as an underlying problem. While racism had usually been described as a top-down phenomenon, perpetrated mainly by the state and political elite, it was now acknowledged as a widespread problem within German society that cut across class, regional and age differences. Third, this also led to a changed relation to the mnemonic elements of the national doxa. References to the Nazi legacy were still prevalent, but these did not serve to confirm a positive national or class identity in the present. Rather, they were used to point to the dangers of German nationalism both in the past and present. Thus, what these actors implicitly and explicitly demanded of potential supporters was to develop a critical awareness of problems of German perpetration and complicity and develop a *negative* political identity, that is, one primarily defined by its opposition to nationalism and racism. This does not mean that these actors simply rejected all elements of the doxa. The ironic references to the FRG's liberal-democratic, human rights values in particular reveal that these actors still sought to make use of these values as normative criteria for their own critique. Furthermore, the recurrent use of references to the Nazi legacy suggests that these authors, too, sought to capitalise on the growing public and popular interest in questions of memory since the 1980s. What distinguished these authors, however, was that they were critical of attempts to use these values and lessons for the purposes of national mythmaking. Furthermore, they did not assume that these values and lessons had actually been realised and learnt yet. As demonstrated in this chapter, appeals to compassionate and self-centred solidarity focused on positive notions of German national identity while invocations of a subsuming solidarity tried to ignore questions of national identity by focusing on the shared oppression through capitalism. Appeals to negative solidarity, on the other hand, recognised the relevance of national identity in the present but focused on it as an object of critique to be overcome in the future. While in the cast of other framings the past seemed to have served as a guarantor or reminder of a better present, it was now used to set a standard for a better future that still had to be reached.

Conclusion

In this research project, I developed a socio-historically situated and theoretically oriented examination and evaluation of the historical emergence of (pro-)Refugee activism in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1980s and early 1990s. The overarching objective of my inquiry was to explore the extent to which these (pro-)Refugee struggles were related to and embedded within the (West) German nation-state order and its political field. The underlying assumption was that such an attentiveness to the field embeddedness of oppositional political actors is necessary to make sense of their perspectives, aspirations, challenges, and dilemmas.

By choosing this particular research focus, I hoped to contribute to the small yet growing field of critical research on the politicisation of migration, asylum and border control regimes from the perspective of those affected by these regimes, as well as those who seek to voice solidarity and offer support. As we saw at the beginning of this thesis, the past two decades – and especially the period after the so-called European ‘refugee crisis’ in 2014/15 – have seen a growing interest in questions of migrant and Refugee activism. This has led to a variety of theoretical and empirical studies dedicated to the critical analysis of contemporary migration and asylum regimes through the prism of the political agency of Refugees. In this thesis, I focused especially on the paradigms of Autonomy of Migration (Hardt and Negri 2003; Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos 2008) and Critical Citizenship Studies (Isin and Nielsen 2008; McNevin 2013). One of the key achievements of these paradigms has been to challenge the longstanding (and ongoing) dominance of state-centric approaches that tend to reproduce those objectifying, marginalising, and disempowering images of Refugees that are integral elements of the official procedures and unofficial routines of contemporary European (as well as global) migration and asylum systems. The research agenda of these approaches can therefore be characterised as critical in three regards: first, they distance themselves from the logic of state regulation and border control through an examination of its violent underpinnings; second, they demonstrate that this violence can only be fully grasped through an engagement with the perspectives of those affected; third, they highlight that these perspectives cannot be reduced to endurance of, but also entail resistance to, this violence. Despite clear differences between the approaches, both take the critique formulated and enacted by Refugees as the primary reference point and source of critical thinking.

Through a close engagement with this body of literature, however, I also identified various limitations of both a theoretical and empirical nature which need to be addressed. There are two

tendencies worth highlighting. First, there is a strong tendency to focus on the contemporary significance of migrant and Refugee activism, while its medium-/long-term trajectories are largely ignored. One reason for such a strong fixation with the present might be that the overwhelming developments of the post-2014/15 period have created a certain feeling of urgency accompanied by the wish to provide academic knowledge that directly speaks to and is immediately applicable to current intellectual and political debates about migration, asylum, and borders. However, if this analysis of the present moment remains detached from its historical trajectories, it runs the risk of drawing a misleading picture of contemporary protests as relatively new and short-lived phenomena devoid of historical trajectories and experiences. Second, there is a strong tendency to detach the moment of agency from the socio-political conditions of such agency. As a result, some approaches, in their attempts to overcome the depoliticising tendencies in mainstream migration research, tend to overemphasise the moment of political agency which is understood only in terms of resistance of a certain kind. This not only leads to problems of empirical-analytical accuracy, but it also runs the risk of romanticising and homogenising those actors in question. Most notably, the well-intentioned focus on agency and autonomy becomes problematic if it tends to lose sight of the actual problems, challenges, and dilemmas which Refugees, who seek to organise themselves and raise their voice in a strongly exclusionary juridical-political order, are confronted with. Against this background, I suspected that the dynamics of Refugee activism were much more complex and ambivalent and could not be analysed in isolation from supporting actors and the wider political field within which they took place. I considered it important to place a much stronger emphasis on the complex relations between Refugees and various support actors (including German citizens and other non-citizens). The key objective of my research project, then, was to develop a different theoretical and analytical framework and demonstrate its usefulness for a more nuanced empirical analysis of the dynamics and challenges of (pro-)Refugee activism.

For this purpose, I began with a recapitulation and reconsideration of theoretical controversies (*chapter 1*). To overcome the limitations and pitfalls outlined above, I suggested drawing on both Arendt's and Bourdieu's thinking for an approach centred around two overarching ideas. First, Arendt offers a sophisticated reflection on the political dilemmas that result from the contradictory relationship between the logics of human rights and civil rights within a nation-state context. More specifically, she identified the emergence of Refugee mass movement in the early 20th century as the moment where these contradictions became politically manifest. Against this background, she identified the problem that the exclusionary dynamics of national citizenship regimes oftentimes lead to a situation where Refugees need to engage in political struggles for legal recognition and

better living conditions in a socio-political context that denies them the very conditions to act politically.

While Arendt does not go beyond posing this structural problematic, I suggested bringing in Bourdieu's state and field-theoretical approach to make sense of the practical dilemmas that result from it (*chapter 2*). According to his approach, all actors are located at different positions within a wider political field which is centred around the state as the monopolist of (legitimate) physical and symbolic violence, and which is surrounded by a complex network of institutions and actors that make up the public sphere. Furthermore, this political field is characterised by the hierarchical and exclusionary distribution of material and symbolic resources which underlie the ability to act politically and speak in public. Thus, from a Bourdieusian perspective, the Arendtian dilemma can be reformulated in the following way: Refugee actors are confronted with the challenge of fighting for a legally guaranteed and symbolically recognised position within the wider political field, while remaining in an excluded and marginalised position which makes it difficult to carry out this fight in the first place. One of the main forms in which this dilemma addressed was through the formation of alliances between Refugees and various pro-Refugee supporters with a higher position and stake within the political field. Bourdieu's key insight is that the reproduction of power dynamics within field constellations operates not only on a material but also a symbolic level. What is more, he argues that this symbolic level is especially relevant for a critical analysis of the ambivalent relation which actors uphold to the political order within which they are positioned – even if they intend to challenge, subvert, attack, or overcome this order. I therefore decided to dedicate the empirical analysis to the symbolic practices of (pro-)Refugee actors in relation to the national doxa circulating in wider public discourses. To that end, I drew on the methodological paradigms of critical discourse and frame analysis which offer useful analytical tools for the analysis of such symbolic practices (*chapter 3*).

Based on this theoretical and methodological framework, then, I was able to embark on my exploration of the making of a configuration of (pro-)Refugee struggles in light of the changing patterns of the FRG's migration and asylum regime as well as the surrounding public discourses about national identity, collective memory, migration and asylum during the 1980s and early 1990s. This involved, first, an analysis of the changing patterns of these official and hegemonic political responses to migration and asylum in the post-war decades (*chapter 4*). In this context, I identified an overarching tension between two tendencies. The first was the acknowledgement of the right of asylum as an indispensable element of the FRG's liberal-democratic self-understanding; the second, the refusal to accept immigration as part of German identity which was often accompanied by attempts to restrict the scope of legitimate reasons for seeking asylum. Both these tendencies

were closely connected to other elements of orthodox understandings of German identity. The constitutional right of asylum was directly informed by the need to establish a line of demarcation to the legacy of German Nazism and its practices of persecution, displacement, and genocide. More specifically, official and public discourses were centred around constructing the FRG, first, as a post-Nazi nation; second, as a Western-European nation defined by its opposition to the ‘Eastern Bloc’; and third, as an ‘ethno-national’ order rooted in hereditarian notions of German identity and codified in the German *jus sanguinis*. One overarching development between the late 1970s and early 1990s was the growing influence of ethno-nationalist, restrictionism and isolationist political positions which led to the growing erosion and *de facto* abolishment of the constitutional right of asylum in 1992/93. Thus, the specific context during which (pro-)Refugee struggles emerged can be characterised as a historical moment at which one constitutive element of the FRG’s official doxa was increasingly pushed in a heterodox position. Another important background to this emergence of a larger (pro-)Refugee movement was undoubtedly the significantly growing number of Refugees arriving in the FRG between the late 1970s and early 1990s. However, this emergence of a (pro-)Refugee movement during the late 1970s and early 1980s was by no means a quasi-automatic process that simply ‘responded’ to external factors. Instead, it was the result of complex dynamics of politicisation and mobilisation to which both Refugee themselves and various categories of support actors contributed. My examination of the symbolic repertoires of the different (pro-)Refugee actors furthered this impression of complexity: (pro-)Refugee activism in the FRG neither emerged as a homogeneous, unified political movement, nor were its internal tensions reducible to the dichotomy between ‘reformists’ and ‘radicals’. While both existed as symbolic orientations, which some of the actors I analysed used to position themselves towards other actors and within the wider political field, a closer examination of their symbolic repertoires showed that their political orientation and positionality vis-à-vis the nation-state order was much more ambivalent. In order to systematise these observations, I concentrated my analysis on the different actor’s framings of three objects of reference: the issue of representation, the state, and the public audience.

My analysis of the first object of reference – representation (*chapter 5*) – revealed most clearly the political implications of these varying and oftentimes conflicting framings of the state and the public. Looking at these practices of (self-)categorisation and (self-)representation from a constructivist and contextual perspective, I demonstrated that those actors who shaped early (pro-)Refugee struggles in the FRG did not simply turn their attention to an already existing object of reference but were involved in complex processes of creating this object of reference in the first place. This discursive construction process was inseparably linked to and shaped by the different

framings of the previous two objects of reference. This is important in order to understand what was at stake during these acts of (self-)categorisation and (self-)representation: it was not only a question of finding accurate group definitions, but also of reflecting upon the wider relations of power and domination related to such definitions. In this sense, practices of categorisations and representation were simultaneously practices of contextualisation and constitution. Overall, there was a tendency either to emphasise the specificity of the category of Refugee which was frequently accompanied by references to the Basic Law and other legal documents, or to situate the experiences of those seeking refuge in broader socio-political categories such as ‘the global proletariat’ (defined by its experience of and resistance to capitalist and imperialist oppression), ‘migrants’, or ‘foreigners’ (defined by their experience of and resistance to racist and xenophobic oppression). These different framings did co-exist in harmony, but created tensions, controversies, and conflicts – especially in response to changed political circumstances in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Refugee and migrant activists began to accuse German support actors of taking advantage of their power position in the wider political field, and of failing to reflect upon their own role in the wider culture of racist exclusion and marginalisation. The most important form in which this critique was expressed was the refusal to accept the representations provided by these support actors and the attempt to create self-representations.

Similarly, the question of who comprised the subject and object of representation also shaped many discussions in the *Refugee Movement* in the 2010s. This umbrella term refers to numerous, largely self-organised groups with different self-conceptions that broadly overlapped with their legal statuses (e.g., ‘asylum seekers’ or ‘refugees’). Some of them designated themselves as ‘non-citizens’ or ‘asylum-seekers’, thereby distinguishing themselves from protesters who had already obtained some form of legal status and whom they considered to be ‘citizens’ (albeit of a ‘second class’) (refugeetentaction.net, 03/2013). Other actors self-identified as ‘Refugees’ in more general terms and emphasised the shared position of oppression on the basis of racism, connecting all of them beyond differences in legal status. Criticising such a perspective, some ‘non-citizen’-groups pointed out that the struggle of asylum-seekers should be independent insofar as it went beyond the struggle against racism. Instead they referred to the (re-)production of the citizen/non-citizen dichotomy as such:

All the [...] discriminatory laws also apply to asylum-seekers from Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Iraq, Equador, Kurdistan, Iran, Peru, etc., but they do not apply to asylum-seekers who have already received their asylum status, the foreign students and third generation immigrants for instance, who are all suffering from being ‘not from here’ and racial discrimination. The main difference between these groups is the ‘citizen’/‘non-citizen’ dichotomy. These legislations do not apply to some because of their race or nationality, but when people are in ‘non-citizen’ positions, these laws apply to them ‘naturally’. [...] Despite the value and importance of these efforts, at the level of a political perspective (which goes beyond helpful and humanitarian aid), any change

that does not interrupt the ‘citizen’/‘non-citizen’ dichotomy is not a radical perspective for the asylum-seeker movement and can at most only transfer the inequality from the old legislation texts to new ones (ibid.).

Such conflict shows that ‘the Refugee’ as the subject of representation is not already given but must be constituted through collective narratives and framings that focus on similarities (among group members) and differences (with regards to non-members). Accordingly, the claims and demands made by the protesters were never homogeneous and addressed problems on the micro-level (such as the bad living conditions in German refugee camps) in the same instance that they denounced the practice of deportation, border controls and the nation state altogether. This simultaneous denunciation of the nation-state and demand for humanitarian improvements of the state opposes any clear-cut distinctions.

The second object of reference – the state – also turned out to be the main object of critique (*chapter 6*). All of the actors looked at for the empirical analysis considered the state and its policies, institutions and representatives as the primary driving force behind the plight of Refugees. Interestingly, however, none of these actors simply turned their back to the state’s official doxa and orthodox notions of German identity. Instead, they explicitly referred to and utilised these as moral and political resources to formulate and communicate their critique of the state. The starting point was the experience that the official treatment of Refugees strongly contradicted those narratives the state tells about itself (or rather, those actors who occupy state positions and represent state functions). For many actors, it was in particular the narrative of the FRG as having essentially broken with and learnt from its Nazi legacy that was put into question by the situation of Refugees in Germany. Thus, there was an overarching attempt among all (pro-)Refugee actors to tackle (some aspects of) the FRG’s orthodox self-understanding to make their claims in public. The exact form and content of that critique, however, differed starkly among the actors. On the one hand, various actors made use of an immanent critique which accused the state of failing to live up to its own moral, political, and legal standards. This included not only its liberal-democratic values, but also its narrative of ‘having learned from the past’. This critique sought to preserve and defend one aspect of the official doxa (that the FRG as a liberal-democratic state needs to guarantee the right of asylum) against another (that Germany is not a ‘country of immigration’). In this sense, these actors believed that structural contradiction between national citizenship rights and universal human rights (as identified by Arendt) could actually be resolved on the ground of the nation-state order – if only the nation-state would fully embrace its liberal-democratic roots. Thus, these actors did not reject the legitimacy of the state, but instead directly appealed to its positive self-image to make a case for the protection of Refugees. On the other hand, there were various actors who developed a denunciatory critique of the state. In this case, the key assumption

was that the state's liberal-democratic narratives were nothing more than an ideological façade in order to conceal and euphemise its inhumane asylum and migration system. This mode of critique was also directed at the mnemonic and geopolitical elements of the doxa: the FRG was framed as a state that directly continued the tradition of its fascist predecessor and that was directly enmeshed in a system of imperialist oppression. The underlying strategic impetus was to dismantle the very legitimacy of the FRG in general and its migration and asylum system in particular. However, these actors remained strongly fixated on the state and its official political culture. The fact that these actors did not simply neglect but constantly referred to the doxa, suggests that they considered it a useful reservoir for provoking moral and political outrage in the public sphere – or were themselves genuinely outraged by their own revelations. What is more, I demonstrated that some of the actors' self-proclaimed radicalism was not necessarily accompanied by a radical critique of the doxa as such. For instance, there was a certain tendency among the radical left to diminish the role of the FRG as a distinct global player by subsuming it under a broader regime of Western imperialism dominated by other nation-states. There was also considerable disagreement among these actors as to the very meaning of a radical critique of the state. It was especially during the late 1980s and early 1990s that a growing number of radical left-wing actors put into question the appropriateness of making direct connections between the plight of contemporary Refugees and those of the victims of the Nazi regime. Other actors, on the other hand, continued to make use of this topos of historical continuity, but moved more explicitly in the direction of an appeal to the state's responsibilities towards the victims of the Nazi regime and their descendants. Protest activities by Sinti and Roma Refugees in the late 1980s and early 1990s fell under this category of combining immanent and denunciatory forms of critique.

The third object of reference – the public audience – was even more instructive for exploring the complex symbolic positionality of (pro-)Refugee actors vis-à-vis the national doxa. The most important result of my empirical analysis was that the majority of (pro-)Refugee actors restricted their critical attitude to the state. The wider public audience, on the other hand, was rather seen as a reservoir of solidarity, compassion, and support that only needed to be activated and mobilised through practices of awareness raising. This overly positive framing of the wider public was articulated in two ways. On the one hand, there were many actors who primarily characterised the wider public audience in terms of positive and sympathetic notions of German identity. To convince this 'German public' to show solidarity with Refugees, these actors either tried to remind it of the centrality of compassion within its own set of values and ideals (compassionate solidarity), or they tried to show that it was in its own interest to do so (self-interested solidarity). Both of these discursive strategies were directly informed by wider public debates about national identity

in post-war (West) Germany. A more critical orientation towards these debates was missing. Those actors who understood themselves as radical left-wing opponents to the FRG, on the other hand, tended to make use of broader forms of categorisation. The most influential framing practice between the late 1970s and late 1980s was to create a global working-class identity as a source of solidarity between German citizens, labour migrants and Refugees (subsuming solidarity). This framing was undoubtedly an attempt to overcome nationalist divisions and instead strengthen internationalist perspectives. In this sense, it differed significantly from those direct appeals to German identity. On an implicit level, however, this framing also reproduced certain aspects of the national doxa. For the underlying assumption was that this transnational, revolutionary proletarian identity already existed within the wider working-class population in Germany. Against this background, German racism was not seen as major societal problem – an assumption which also circulated within hegemonic public discourses. It is these uncritical framings of the public audience which became the subject of criticism by the late 1980s and early 1990s. By this time, there was a distinct current of both German, migrant and Refugee groups that highlighted the pervasiveness of racism and xenophobia in (West) German society. Against this background, they argued that those who wanted to show solidarity with Refugees should actively criticise German nationalism and racism and, as a result, distance themselves from the German majority population including their public representatives (negative solidarity). Although this framing was still closely oriented towards the national doxa, it can indeed be considered the most comprehensive attempt to dismantle it as a whole. It should be highlighted, however, that this current did not simply exist within the wider configuration of (pro-)Refugee struggles but emerged from a process of critical reflection on past mistakes and failures.

Similar frames and positions re-emerged in the context of the European ‘refugee crisis’ in 2015 and the subsequent emergence of a ‘welcome culture’ (sometimes also ‘culture of welcome’ as a translation for the German term ‘Willkommenskultur’) in Germany where unprecedented numbers of people started supporting newly arriving Refugees in numerous ways (Hamann and Karakayalı 2016; Funk 2016; Jäckle and König 2017). Here, too, many actors were confronted with the same tensions between individuals and groups who attempted primarily to fulfil basic humanitarian needs and those who aimed for more radical change. As in the 1980s, however, these positions were also ambiguous. Rex Osa, one of the refugee activists of *The Voice Refugee Forum* as well as the network *Refugees for Refugees*, for example, points out that ‘Refugees are pressed into a victim position and volunteer work deals with individual solutions rather than recognising the collective confrontation of state repression as necessary’ (Osa 2016, 27 - transl. by TJP). Simultaneously, Mbolela emphasises: ‘Of course the goal is to change things. But how shall those

affected live until things change?’ (Mbolela 2016, 21 - transl. by TJP). Put differently, just as in the 1980s, activists in the 21st century also have to navigate the tension between broad political aims and lived experiences (Ünsal 2015).

The overall objective of my thesis, then, was to overcome simplified, homogenising and romanticising accounts of (pro-)Refugee activism and to make a contribution to the development of alternative theoretical perspectives and empirical insights that do justice to the challenges, dilemmas and ambivalences by which those involved in (pro-)Refugee activism are confronted. Moreover, by focusing on protests taking place throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, I tried to point to the significance of this almost forgotten early protest cycle which was crucial for the establishment and development of (pro-)Refugee politics in the following decades. Given that the status of many existing social movement archives is precarious, I think that such a task of preserving knowledge about past struggles is both important and urgent. In this sense, I hope that my research not only provides illuminating insights into the relation between migration and memory politics, but also makes an active contribution to the project of commemorating the legacy of these struggles. There are many more tasks that lie ahead to further develop and refine such a research agenda. These include an ongoing debate about appropriate theoretical and methodological perspectives attentive to the embedded of oppositional actors within the socio-political order they seek to oppose. Furthermore, more empirical research on the long-term historical trajectories of (pro-)Refugee struggles that connects past and present experiences would be useful to explore to what extent and which ways their symbolic practices, tensions and conflict dynamics have changed or not. Only by knowing past protests, can we learn from them. I hope that this research contributes to such an agenda.

Literature

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Appendix

List of named Groups and Magazines (English – German)

English Translation	German Original
Agency for the Self-Abolishment of the Proletariat	Agentur für die Selbstaufhebung des Proletariats
Alternative List (AL) (full name: alternative list for democracy and environmental protection)	Alternative Liste (Alternative Liste für Demokratie und Umweltschutz)
Antifascist Alliance from East and West Berlin	Antifaschistisches Bündnis aus Ost- und West-Berlin
Antifascist Groups	Antifaschistische Gruppen
Antifascist Working Group in Duisburg	Antifaschister Arbeitskreis Duisburg
Antiracist Centre (General Students' Committee Technical University Berlin)	Antirassistisches Zentrum (AStA TU Berlin)
Antiracist Initiative	Antirassistische Initiative e.V. ⁷¹ (ARI)
Association of Iranian Refugees in West-Berlin	Verein iranischer Flüchtlinge in Westberlin e.V.
Association of Kurdistan Students Abroad (AKSA)	Association of Kurdistan Students Abroad (AKSA)
Asylum	Asyl e.V.
'Asylum' in the Congregation 'To the Holy Cross'	"Asyl" in der Gemeinde "Zum hlg Kreuz"
Church of Reconciliation	Versöhnungskirche (Dachau)
Committee for Basic Rights and Democracy	Komitee für Grundrechte und Demokratie
Committee for Political Asylum-Seekers	Komitee für politische Asylanten
Committee for the Release of Cemal Kemal Altun	Komitee für die Freilassung Kemal Altuns
Committee of Asylum-Seekers	Komitee von Asylbewerbern
Congregation 'Holy Cross'	Gemeinde zum Heiligen Kreuz
Coordination Group of Autonomous Refugee Groups in Rhein/Ruhr	Koordinationskreis Rhein/Ruhr autonomer Flüchtlingsgruppen
Coordination Office 'Berlin greets its guests'	Koordinationsbüro "Berlin grüsst seine Gäste"

⁷¹ 'e.V.' is an abbreviation for the German term for a registered or incorporated association (eingetragener Verein).

Coordination Office 'Frankfurt Appeal'	Koordinationsbüro Frankfurter Appell
Coordination Refugees in Hamburg	Koordination Flüchtlinge in Hamburg
Dawn	Morgengrauen. Antirassistische Zeitschrift
Diaconal Works of the Evangelical Church in Rhineland	Diakonisches Werk der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland
Diaconia	Diakonie
Federal Congress of the Movement of Emigrants and Refugees	Bundeskongress der Emigrantinnen- und Flüchtlingsbewegung
First Bavarian Action Conference against racism, fascism, and sexism in Nuremberg	Erste bayerische Aktionskonferenz gegen Rassismus, Faschismus und Sexismus in Nürnberg
Foreigners Department of the General Students' Committee and Foreigner Committee Kassel	Ausländerreferat im AstA und Ausländerkomitee Kassel
Forum for Immigrant Politics	Immigrantenpolitisches Forum (IPF)
Frankfurt Appeal	Frankfurter Appell
Frankfurt Legal Aid Committee for Foreigners	Frankfurter Rechtshilfekomitee für Ausländer
German-Foreign Action Alliance	Deutsch-Ausländisches Aktionsbündnis (DAAB)
German Trade Union Confederation	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund
Group of International Marxists	Gruppe internationaler Marxisten – Vierte Internationale (Ortsgruppe Aachen)
Gustav Heinemann Initiative	Gustav Heinemann-Initiative
Hamburg Initiative 'Right to Stay for Roma'	Hamburger Initiative ‚Bleiberecht für Roma‘
Humanist Union	Humanistische Union
Information Office for the Protection of Foreign Fellow Citizens against Extraditions, Deportations, and Expulsions	Informationsbüro zum Schutz ausländischer Mitbürger vor Auslieferung, Abschiebung und Ausweisung
Initiative Committee 'Foreign Fellow Citizens in Hesse'	Initiativausschuss ‚Ausländische Mitbürger in Hessen‘
Initiative for the Freedom of C.K. Altun in Lübeck	Initiative für die Freiheit von C.K. Altun in Lübeck
Initiative of the Unemployed and Jobbers Bergedorf (Hamburg)	Erwerbslosen- und Jobberinitiative Bergedorf (Hamburg)
Initiative Right to Stay for Roma and Sinti	Initiative Bleiberecht für Roma und Cinti
Interest Group of German Women Married to Foreigners	Interessengemeinschaft der mit Ausländern verheirateten deutschen Frauen e.V.

International Communist Party	Internationale Kommunistische Partei
International Communists (West Berlin)	Internationale Kommunisten (West-Berlin)
International League for Human Rights	Intrenationale Liga für Menschenrechte
League for Human Rights	Liga für Menschenrechte
Nationwide Congress of Immigrant- and Refugee Initiatives	Bundesweiter Kongreß der Einwanderinnen- und Flüchtlingsinitiativen
Nationwide meeting of Refugee and immigrant initiatives	Bundesweites Treffen Der Flüchtlings- und Immigranteninitiativen
Political and Cultural Group Waldkirch	Politik- und Kulturgruppe Waldkirch
PRO ASYLUM	Pro Asyl
Refuge	Fluchtborg
Refuge Berlin	Fluchtborg Berlin
Refugee Council Berlin	Flüchtlingsrat Berlin
Refugee Council Freiburg	Flüchtlingsrat Freiburg
Regional Association of German Sinti and Roma Düsseldorf	Landesverband Deutscher Sinti und Roma Düsseldorf
Revolutionary Cells	Revolutionäre Zellen
Revolutionary Socialists	Revolutionäre Sozialisten
Self-help for Foreigners	Ausländerselbsthilfe e.V.
Society for Threatened Peoples	Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker
Sympathisers in the FRG and West Berlin of the Iranian People's Fedai Guerillas	Symp. der Guerilla Organisation der Volksfedai Iran in BRD und West-Berlin
The Greens	Die Grünen
Therapeutic Working Group Kreuzberg	Therapeutisches Arbeitskollektiv Kreuzberg, e.V.
the department	das Referat
West Berlin Communist	Westberliner Kommunist: Organ für den Aufbau der marxistisch-leninistischen Partei Westberlins
Working Group ASYLUM in Hamburg	Hamburger Arbeitskreis ASYL
Working Group in the German-Foreign Action Alliance Hamburg for the Establishment of an Information Office for the Protection of Foreign Fellow Citizens from Extraditions, Deportations, and Expulsions	Arbeitsgruppe zur Einrichtung eines Informationsbüros zum Schutz ausländischer Mitbürger vor Auslieferung, Abschiebung und Ausweisung im Deutsch-Ausländischen Aktionsbündnis Hamburg
ZAG	– Zeitschrift antirassistischer Gruppen/Antirassistische Zeitschrift