

**BETWEEN CHAOS AND CONTROL**  
AN ANALYSIS OF TWO SPACES OF REFUGEES' ARRIVAL  
ORGANIZED BY LOCAL VOLUNTEERS IN VIENNA AND BRUSSELS

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## ABSTRACT

In summer 2015, central urban spaces were transformed upon the arrival of thousands of refugees in European cities. The presence of that many refugees led in many cases to an overstrain of the governmental infrastructure and to moments of interruption where locals felt the need to step in, fill the gaps and started organizing the welcome of the refugees. New civil society organizations emerged spontaneously, organizing space, mobilizing volunteers, cooperating with established NGOs and negotiating with city and state authorities. The involvement of a large number of people at a space pursuing distinct intentions and ideas of how and by whom the space should be organized cultivates a ground of conflict amongst different actors at various levels. These conflicts are power struggles over space and the ordering of it. Consequently, they bear a great potential for the 'political' in the sense of Jacques Rancière, as a mode of interruption and moments when an order is challenged.

This thesis elaborates on two spaces of arrival in August/September 2015: the Park Maximilian in Brussels with the emerged *Plateforme citoyenne de soutien aux réfugiés Bruxelles Parc Maximilien* and the Central Train Station in Vienna with its organization *Train of Hope*. Through semi-structured interviews struggles and conflicts are identified to elaborate on why this interruption can be understood as a political moment.

KEYWORDS: refugees, arrival infrastructure, politicization, political, refugees welcome

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'The utopias of the one, alas, are hardly different from the hypocrisies of the others.'

Rosanvallon, 2007

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The so-called 'refugee crisis' in the Summer of 2015 led to spaces of arrival that were organized by civil society organizations that emerged on site out of the very 'need' of organizing, coordinating and structuring the happenings. These conditions have awakened the potential of the civil society organizations to act in a different way than in the usual institutional procedure, that was temporarily interrupted due to the high number of newcomers. This thesis investigates two spaces of arrival in August/September 2015: The Park Maximilian in Brussels with the emerged *Plateforme Citoyenne de soutien aux Réfugiés Bruxelles Parc Maximilien* and the Central train station in Vienna with its organization *Train of Hope*.

Scholars see the chance of such spaces arising in moments of interruptions, in situations where a given order is challenged, to be *political*. Through semi-structured interviews I identify tensions and conflicts to elaborate on why the interruptions can be understood as *political moments*, but the spaces that have resulted, not. The emerging organizations did in fact establish a structure, which was hierarchic and exclusive. An internal *policing* system has occurred, that controlled the space and reinforced, rather than transfigured, identitarian positions (Swyngedouw; 2007; 2011; Mouffe 2012; Rancière 2001: 2016).

The thesis starts with a discussion of *the political*, as conceptualized by Jacques Rancière, Erik Swyngedouw and Chantal Mouffe. Three scholars who share a conflictual and highly spatial notion of the political: a *political* that is conflictual and includes debate, as opposed to a consensually-established socio-political order - the *post-political-order*, that is foreclosing the political and excluding those outside the consensus. This discussion concludes that the political is a) interrupting, b) transforming, c) conflictual, and is supposed to form d) a space of equality, an inclusive, democratic space. It is however opposed by the *police*, an institutionalized control-system, a *partition of the sensible* (Rancière 2001).

Since this discussion is of rather conceptual, abstract nature, the literature review proceeds with scholars who have applied the theory of the political on empirical grounds, on indignant squares, succeeded by scholars of *Autonomous Migration*.

The lens of Autonomous Migration draws our attention to Migration itself, the movement of people, as well as their arrival and their presence, as a mode of interruption that challenges the post-political mode of governing and dealing with migration - *domopolitics*.

The first part of this thesis concludes with a discussion on migrant protest-movements; the *No-Border Campaign* and the *Refugee Welcome Movement*, and results in a differentiation of Political and Social Movements.

The second part of this thesis is the analysis of two spaces, where local volunteers established infrastructures for refugees' arrival and reception. It compares the Central Train Station (Hauptbahnhof) in Vienna with the Park Maximilian in Brussels. In both cases legal organizations were formed that took the lead, in cooperation and collaboration with established NGOs and city and state authorities. While the Train Station was a point of transit, before the migrants were brought to shelters or continued their journey, the Park Maximilian transformed into an informal refugee camp.

I examine in this thesis, how the interruption of the institutional procedure, due to a high number of migrants, and the occurring civil society organization symbolically and materially transformed space and simultaneously presented conflicts that manifested on various levels. An explanation of the organizational structure is presented and an analysis of external and internal (on site and within the emerged organization) conflicts is given, for a comprehensive understanding of the space and the institutionalization of the new *police order*.

The thesis concludes with an analysis of political processes that have occurred, of moments of de- and re-classification, and poses the question: 'Which potentials have these processes opened up to create a space of equality, of democratic-decision making – a political space, as opposed to the institutional procedures in place?' The research exemplifies the tension between political and social movements, between the claim for universal equality and humanitarian aid, that is foreclosing the political, as it reinforces socio-legal categories, the category of 'the refugees', as defined by the Geneva Convention. This tension materialized with the presence and the claims of undocumented immigrants (*sans-papiers*) in the Park Maximilian and the conflicts that arose around it. Thus, *political sequences* have occurred, *political arguments* were articulated, but I argue that the spaces of analysis are not to be considered as political, since the events in the spaces are to be attributed rather to *Social than to Political Movements*.



## 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

More than one million migrants and refugees came to Europe in 2015 (BBC, 2016). This sparked the so-called 'refugee crisis' as countries struggled to cope with the influx. It evoked great attention not only among politicians, and (pro- and counter-) migrant activists, but also among locals, that had not had much contact with asylum seekers before. Spaces with a high concentration of migrants emerged throughout Europe (and the rest of the world) and thousands of locals gathering at these spaces of arrival with the intention to help, support and provide services to the newcomers under the label *Refugee Welcome*. The arrival of that many refugees led to an overstrain of not only the reception systems, but also of the capacities of acute-care facilities for migrants and refugees. Local people felt the need to step in to fill the gaps.

While most spaces of arrival were organized and controlled by established NGOs in cooperation with city and state-authorities, the two spaces of refugees' arrival analyzed in this thesis were organized by locals. In both case studies legal organizations were formed on site by local volunteers. Both in Brussels and in Vienna these organizations refused to subordinate themselves to established NGOs and city or state authorities. A '*No! We can do this!*'-attitude was observed with representatives of *Train of Hope* and the *Plateforme citoyenne de soutien aux réfugiés*. This thesis therefore, asks the question what an alternative to institutional procedures looks like. How do volunteers (as opposed to 'experts') organize space and when they do, which structures emerge?

The locals that came to the spaces of arrival did not have a common objective, were considered as 'dilettantes' and were likely to be portrayed (by authorities and participants; see interviews) as anarchic, chaotic, horizontally organized and lacking structure. That opens up the potential to be considered as a space of equality, a democratic space, as conceptualized by Jacques Rancière, Erik Swyngedouw and Chantal Mouffe.

A closer look will, however, give insight into a more complex structure. It is hypothesized that the emerging organizations are re-institutionalized, have established their own structure and mode of organization, that come with hierarchies and an internal police- and control-system.

This is leading to following RESEARCH QUESTION:

Why can or can not the spontaneous infrastructures that emerged upon the arrival of the migrants at the Park Maximilian in Brussels and the Hauptbahnhof in Vienna in August/September 2015, be considered as political?

Therefore, it empirically concentrates on internal and external conflicts, that occurred within the organization and with other actors. Explanations of how these spaces were organized and coordinated are presented, further the actors are identified: Who were the people taking decisions, coordinating the space, negotiating with authorities, talking to the media, who was in charge? How were leading positions legitimized? How was the flow of information and how democratic were decision-making processes?

These points are crucial to the understanding of these spaces. Only after an insight of the who and how is given, can political processes be analyzed and the question of the equality asked.

# PART 1

## Literature Review

### ON THE POLITICAL

In this section I will present the underlying theoretical considerations of this thesis. First presenting the concepts of Jacques Rancière, Chantal Mouffe and Erik Swyngedouw on the political, followed by a discussion on the spatiality of these theories, as well as on the terminology of *police*, *politics* and the *political*, that is used (differently) by the hereinafter discussed scholars and conclude with a notion of the political that have resulted from the discussion of the concepts.

Since the first part of the literature review is rather abstract and only to a certain extent applicable for empirical purposes the second part of this chapter is dedicated to scholars that use the political as an analytical tool.

First, an emphasis on political space is given, considering scholars analyzing occupations of public urban squares, political movements that have appeared since 2011 globally, sharing a specific repertoire of actions.

Then, focusing on scholars in the field of migration, more precisely scholars of *Autonomous Migration*, and further looking into pro immigrant protest movements. First, considering the *No Border Camp* as a political space and second, having a glance at the *Refugee Welcome* movement.

Although the objectives of the so-called *Indignant Squares* or the *No Border Camps* are significantly different than the spaces I analyze, still parallels can be drawn, a similar repertoire of organization can be identified, but also and foremost, the academic literature examining specific indignant spaces provides the analytical framework, to empirically analyze a specific space according to the rather abstract considerations, as presented by Mouffe and Rancière.

### 3. THE POLITICAL

Many scholars have written on *politics* and *the political*, concepts that are defined by their conflictual character, by their mode of dissensus and by the interruption and/or challenge of a prevailing order. Notions of post-political scholars such as Jacques Rancière's notion of politics, as well as Chantal Mouffe's concept and Erik Swyngedouw's thoughts on the *post-political* are going to be examined here.

Jacques Rancière's notion of politics is conflictual. The political conflicts and interrupts the order of things. Politics is therefore, the antithesis, to the post-political notion, that is a consensual one. Consensus is, according to Rancière (2016: 23), the convergence of the positions of the right and the left, with the emergence of a common economic and political doxa. In such a system a minority of people has the power such as political experts and bankers. They dispose power in the name of society as well as in the name of the competence of which they supposedly exert, of which society is expected not to have. Such a consensual system, which Rancière calls the reduction of politics to the *police*, is highly exclusive. It is based on the principal of distribution of space, attributing competences according to identities and restricted to an elite – the proprietor who has the abilities to care of the community (Rancière 2016: 70; 2001: Thesis 10).

Following the conceptualization of Jacques Rancière (2001; 2016), the relationship between police and politics is a complex one. On the one hand, he clearly states: '*Politics is specifically opposed to the police.*' The police is performed by those in power, it's based on distribution. The police institutes '*regimes of sensibility*', hence, it is symbolically and materially defining what makes sense; what is visible, sayable, audible and thinkable (Rancière 2001). Through this practice the police is an exclusive force; it separates the visible and the invisible, the possible and the impossible. Rancière further defines the police as orders of governance, hence it is institutionalized and further it legitimizes forms of domination and hierarchies of places. Hence, the regime of the police constitutes a *partition of the sensible* (Rancière 2001, Thesis 7).

On the other hand, the political is not merely the opposite of police, it is much rather constitutive of it: the political acts as a polemic of givens of police (Dikeç, 2012: 673). The political is disturbing, disrupting the arrangements of the police, it is hence an intervention into the visible and sayable (Rancière, 2001). Although it is political struggle (conflict) that separates police from the political, the political can not be enacted without the police which is sought to be resisted, challenged and/or interrupted. Thus politics are the disruptive episodes in the name of equality (Dikeç 2016: 5).

Policing, hence, is contrary to what Rancière (2016: 72) defines as the true principal of politics: the existence of a power of all, of whoever. Politics exists when there is deviation from this specialization, when there is the power of those who do not have any power or do not ply any specific function in the conventional sense (Rancière 2016: 72).

Rancière (2016: 80) equates politics with democracy<sup>1</sup> and refers to the *New Social Movements*<sup>2</sup> (for more see: Chapter 4) as a reminder of true democracy. These movements remind us of the presence of the excluded, stressing that they also are society and that they want to take part in the lead of the state as well as having a word in global affairs. This opposition is the basics of politics, so Rancière (2016: 79) the antagonism of two logics: the logic of the *police*, in which the assumed competents decide on all forms of circulation, and the reality of the people in this system, who are excluded due to various reasons. These movements, however are manifestations of democracy, opposing the oligarchic systems which call themselves democratic (Rancière 2016: 79).

But he also identifies weaknesses of these movements, such as the lack of the ability to maintain autonomy. He criticizes that the organizations emerging out of these movements did not develop their own goals and agendas, nor their own forms of assembly, action, information and circulation, but much rather acquiesced in state and media agendas. As an example, Rancière (2016: 80) states that *Podemos*<sup>3</sup>, used the frustration of society by the traditional left, as he says, when they founded a party, institutionalized, and ran for elections. Rancière (2016: 80) regards this institutionalization as the loss of the potential of a New Social Movement. He hence advocates a rather anarchic view and disapproves of the integration of new modes of organization into the existing institutional frameworks.

To sum up: Rancière's notion of politics is opposing what he calls the *police*, a system of an elite minority in power of decision-making, ruling in their own interests, excluding those who are not part of the consensus. True politics is the competence of all, of whoever. What he calls *the political* is the conflict of these antagonistic principles: the principal of the police versus the principal of politics. The political is therefore, a momentous consequence that follows this conflict. '*Politics is not the enactment of the principle, the law, or the self of a community [the police], hence: it is anarchical*' (Rancière 1992: 59).

The political theorist Chantal Mouffe has an *agonistic* model of democracy. Her notion of politics is conflictual too. Her point of departure is that antagonism is ineradicable, the dimension of the political is linked to the dimension of conflict that exists in human societies, the ever present antagonism, so Mouffe (2012). She believes that a form of consensus beyond hegemony, beyond sovereignty will always be unavailable. To overcome antagonism Mouffe developed an *agonistic* model: '*The main task of democratic politics is, to put in a nutshell, to transform antagonism into agonism*' (Mouffe 2012: 10). She, as Rancière, takes the view that conflict is crucial to the political, hence, as long as there is a conflict and as long as existing arrangements can be contested there is democracy (she too equates the political with democracy). Whereas antagonism implies a friend-enemy struggle (as elaborated above: police versus politics), agonism indicates a relationship between friendly enemies that have something in common: they share a symbolic space (Mouffe 2012: 10). That means that an agonistic struggle is premised on a conflictual consensus, it is a struggle between different interpretations of shared principles, so there is a consensus on the principles (such as: '*liberty and equality for all*'), but

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<sup>1</sup> '*The beginnings of politics are to be found in democracy*' (Rancière 2016: 25).

<sup>2</sup> Social Movements formed in the last five years, such as Occupy, rebelling against social and economic injustice, or riots in the Arabic World, celebrated as the Arabic Spring, or the 15-M protests in Spain with the Podemos party arising from it. These movements are shaped very differently, but, so Rancière there is something like a common emotion of being victims of an economic system and of being excluded of collective decisions-making. He calls it the Manifestation of those without parts (*sans-parts*) (Rancière, 2016: 77-78).

disagreement about their interpretation (Mouffe 2012: 11). In her notion of agonistic relationships antagonism does not disappear, it is much rather staged in a different way, including those outside of the consensus, allowing to see things differently (Mouffe 2012: 21; 114).

Mouffe clearly distinguishes her concept from communist ideologies, which are supposedly waiting for antagonism and conflict to be overcome (as do other post-Marxist scholars such as Hardt and Negri 2005). She maintains that antagonism will never be overcome. Her notion of the political implies on the contrary, that the idea of a completely harmonious society in which politics and antagonism no longer exist is problematic. '*Such a fully realized democracy would in fact mean the very destruction of democracy*' (Mouffe 2012: 12; 111; 112).

Unlike Rancière, Mouffe is not genuinely against party politics. The opposite is the case: whereas Rancière considers the lack of an own, a separate mode of operation, as a weakness of new social movements, Mouffe (2012: 17) even argues that if '*those movements [...] are not articulated with more traditional forms of politics, they can not go very far.*' She elaborates on the example of the Piqueteros<sup>4</sup>, suggesting that the reason why the movement eventually failed in her eyes, was that at the time of the elections, the time of reestablishment of some kind of order, the Piqueteros were '*absolutely impotent because they had no relay at all with the institutions, or the (political) parties.*' (Mouffe 2012: 17) So, while Rancière calls for the re-invention of the institutional structures and for the establishment of a separate, new way of operating, Mouffe criticizes exactly this distance to existing institutions. Nor is Mouffe genuinely against party politics, which Rancière (2016) calls the '*power of the incompetent*', maintaining that there is nothing such as a political competence. Mouffe, on the other hand, is not reluctant to party-politics, not even to joining a party.<sup>5</sup>

However, we are here looking into a conceptualization of politics that is distant from the state, and not what conventional political science understands as its object of inquiry; the ensemble of practices, processes, discourses and institutions of a specific constituted political order, such as parties, legislative bodies etcetera. It is, in other words different and distinct from institutionalized practices of government (which Rancière would rather define as the police) (Dikeç 2016: 5; Rancière 2001; 2016; Kaika and Karaliotas 2014: 3; Dikeç and Swyngedouw 2016: 4).

Mouffe as well as the scholar Erik Swyngedouw calls the consensus-principal prevailing in today's Western neoliberal societies, *the post-political condition*. Mouffe defines the post-political as the evaporation of the left and the right with a consensus-center which does not allow for an alternative, which is directed to silencing the voices positioned outside of this consensus. Only if conflictual dynamic is re-established, can politics arise (Mouffe 2012: 19-21).

Similarly, Swyngedouw (2007: 59) argues that the post-political arrangement is '*characterized by the rise of a neoliberal governmentality that has replaced debate, disagreement and dissensus with a series of technologies of governing that fuse around consensus, agreement and technocratic arrangement*' which is promoting neoliberal capitalism. Hence, Swyngedouw is in line with Mouffe and Rancière in arguing that the prevailing Western capitalist political formation is actually foreclosing the political, that

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<sup>4</sup> The Piqueteros are unemployed workers in Argentina forming a social movement formed in the late 1990 and became famous in 2001 through major looting and sensational unrests in Buenos Aires. They are celebrated by the alter-globalizationists (such as Hardt and Negri 2005). At first they did not cooperate with traditional political parties. So the elections which took place in 2003 represented a race between two traditional parties, between Carlos Menem and Néstor Kirchner. Kirchner won the elections and eventually tried to coopt the Piqueteros and bring them into his government. However, only a part of the group agreed on cooperating and complying into governmental structures, dividing the movement and weakening the parts which did not comply, excluding them from the consensus.

<sup>5</sup> 'The problem is that I never found a party that I really wanted to belong to. But I'm still looking for one.' (Mouffe, 2012: 67)

it prevents the politicization of particulars, meaning that it excludes those positioned outside of the consensus (Mouffe 2012, Rancière 2016, Swyngedouw 2007; 2011). Consequently, there is a lack of spaces of disagreement and debate and is therefore antithetical to the political (Swyngedouw, 2007: 65). Swyngedouw (2007: 67) warns that those outside of the consensus are being radically excluded, meaning that they are literally put outside of the law and treated as extremists and terrorists, reinforcing the process of marginalization of certain groups of people.

Migrants are most likely to be treated in such ways, *'being subject to populist strategies of externalization and objectification, being depicted as intruders who have corrupted the system'* (Swyngedouw 2007: 67). So, also Swyngedouw's notion of politics is conflictual. Conflict, difference and struggle, are not only essential for the political but furthermore are constitutive of a democratic order (Swyngedouw 2007: 71).

Unlike Rancière or Mouffe, Swyngedouw conceptually distinguishes between *politics* and the *political*: *'The political refers to a broadly shared public space, a rational idea of living together, and signals the absence of a foundational or essential point ... on which to base a polity or a society.'* It is the *a(nta)gonistic differences on which a society can be founded'* (Swyngedouw 2011: 4). Whereas *politics* defines the power play between political actors, a given institutional configuration managing the public sphere and simultaneously retreating the political (Swyngedouw 2011: 4). Although Swyngedouw (2011) emphasizes the theoretical and conceptual difference between *the political* and *politics*, it seems hardly possible to consistently distinguish these two terms, neither he, nor Dikeç (2001; 2012; 2016), nor Kaika and Karaliotas (2014) (scholars all using Rancière's conceptualizations) nor Rancière (2016) himself consequently differentiate these terms and use them sometimes synonymously.<sup>6</sup>

Swyngedouw's (2011: 5) definition of democracy is that equality and the political arise if equality is staged performatively, which, according to him automatically also makes visible the *'wrong of the given situation'*. Therefore, he sees the potential of the re-assurance of the political in the tension between police and politics, as does Rancière (2001; 2016; Swyngedouw 2007: 71). Hence political is disruption (Rancière 2001, Swyngedouw 2011). It can only arise through conflicting a given order, disapproving of the prevailing, exclusive order and challenging it. Here is the moment when different logics of perception arise from localized demands questioning the post-politically established status quo (Rancière, in Darling 2013: 76).

Mouffe on the other hand, is calling for the political, the agonistic debate to be integrated in the existing institutional framework. This Rancière (2016) clearly opposes, Swyngedouw (2007) sees the potential of new, political forms of urbanity moving into spaces that are in the tension zone between politics and political, or as Rancière would put it; of police and politics. Vacant spaces arise *'within the tensions, inconsistencies and exclusions'* he says (Swyngedouw 2007: 71) It is in these unchecked and unregulated, so called *Thirdspaces*, a concept suggested by Ed Soja (1996), that alternative forms of social and political actions can be experimented (Swyngedouw 2007: 73). Swyngedouw's notion of spaces of re-politicization is necessarily linked to the transformation of space and is to be understood as a lasting transition to a new mode of organizing a society (Swyngedouw 2011: 8), while with Rancière

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<sup>6</sup> This three quotes proof the inconsistencies:

Rancière (1992: 59): 'Politics is not the enactment of the principle, the law, or the self of a community, hence: it is anarchical'

Swyngedouw (2014): 'He [Rancière] understands politics as place of encounter where two heterogeneous processes meet: the process of 'governance' or the 'police', on the one hand and the process of emancipation, or the political on the other.'

Or: Kaika et al (2014) relating to Swyngedouw (2011): 'Politics then, becomes the point where police and the politics meet.'

the concept of the *political* is momentous and it is *politics* that is procedural. The Hauptbahnhof and the Park Maximilian are such vacant spaces, spaces, where the police order was temporarily suspended, where a gap opened up, through an interruption of the institutional order. Material and symbolic transformations have occurred, however, the gap was soon replaced by a new police order that occurred with the emergence of the civil society organizations.

The above discussed terms such as post-political and re-politicization imply a chronology of the political in the past which lead to the current post-political. With the desire to re-claim the political condition through re-politicization. These terms indicate that it's only today, through neoliberal managerial forms of governing, that the essence of the political: the conflict and the debate have been replaced by consensus. But according to these authors, the political is not a mode that has ever existed, it's something to come, something to desire, something to fight for, something to imagine, rather than a relict from the past (Mouffe 2012; Swyngedouw 2007; 2011, Rancière 2016).

### 3.1 A SPATIAL NOTION OF THE POLITICAL

*'Politics [...] unfolds in and through the transformation of space, both materially and symbolically, redefining what constitutes public or private space and its boundaries and re-choreographs socio-spatial relations'* (Swyngedouw 2011).

The here discussed notions of politics all have in common that they are distinct from institutional practices of government and administration, that they propose an understanding of politics as a rupture, opening up spaces for something new. Hence, they are inaugurative and they also share the centrality of conflict, whether it is antagonism, agonism, dissensus or disagreement. But all these conceptualizations are also inherently spatial. Mustafa Dikeç (2012: 670) argues that these scholars use space not only metaphorically, but as a mode of political thinking: *'Politics inaugurates space, and spatialization is central to politics as a constitutive part of it'*.

Thinking politics spatially allows to see that systems of domination impose orders of space, but that this process also reinforces itself as spatial orders become sources of domination and inequality. The notion of rupture in these theories is the means of contesting this order and therefore requires to think space not as given, but dynamically: space as a process (Dikeç 2012; 2016; 2001, Rancière 2001). Following this understanding of space, spatialization is seen as the mode of social production of space and inevitably produces domination and oppression (Dikeç 2001). The political, therefore is, not only resisting this order, but also demonstrating the wrong, the inequality of it (Swyngedouw 2007).

### 3.2 CONCLUSION

Hence, politics is making visible through disrupting - using Rancière's terminology - the police. Scholars argue that cities are most likely to be the place for movements suppressing domination and oppression in and through space (Dikeç 2001: 1788; Nicholls 2008).

However, these concepts are crucial to the following analysis of the two cases, the Park Maximilian in Brussels and the Hauptbahnhof in Vienna. To answer the research question and to ascertain that although political moments have occurred in the spaces of analysis, the spaces are not considered as democratic spaces nor spaces of equality, following characteristics of the political are defined, that have resulted from the antecedent discussion:

THE POLITICAL IS

- a. Interrupting / Challenging an institutional order
- b. Conflictual / A(nta)gonistic / Dissensual – opposing the post-political consensus
- c. Transforming / Inaugurative
- d. Democratic / Space of Equality / Inclusive



## 4. THE POLITICAL AS ANALYTICAL TOOL

The subsequent paragraphs are dealing with the political as analytical tool. An examination on how scholars have applied these rather abstract concepts on empirical ground.

This chapter is dealing with scholars who are analyzing concrete spaces that have been transformed for protest-purposes. The occupation of (urban) spaces as a mode of protest have been recently often observed around the globe. Scholars (Swyngedouw (2014); Swyngedouw and Dikeç (2016); Kaika and Karaliotas (2014), among others) have analyzed these spaces with regard to their political potential. The so-called *Insurgent Squares* are therefore constituting the first part of this chapter.

### 4.1 INSURGENT SQUARES

Maria Kaika and Lazaros Karaliotas (2014) analyze the *Indignant Squares* (their focus of analysis is the Syntagma Square in Athens which was occupied in September 2011, only few days after the Indignados occupied Puerta del Sol in Madrid) through the theoretical framework of the political. They conclude that the gatherings in the lower part of the square,<sup>7</sup> with their daily meetings, the popular assembly, the collective self-organization and the horizontal structure free from entrenched power-structures, were not only effective means of performing and expressing dissent, but also successful in staging a democracy and equality, in imagining and materializing alternative ways of being and saying in common. Instead of leaders, protesters interacted in networked structures (Kaika and Karaliotas 2014: 9,10). This public staging of equality comprises a process of political subjectivation in the making of the square. They further argue that the occurrences in Athens went beyond '*a mere protest against the socio-economic strangulation of the country, and a demand for radical change of Greek political institutions, practices [...]; a demand for emancipation from the existing socio-spatial order*' (Kaika and Karaliotas 2014: 9). The scholars argue that even though a rupture of the existing police order occurred and new political subjects emerged they '*failed to evolve into a broader more compound practice for democratic politics once the protest came to an end*' (Kaika and Karaliotas 2014: 11). While Rancière's notion of the political is momentary, Swyngedouw and Dikeç (2016; Swyngedouw 2014) do share Kaika and Karaliotas' (2014) concerns for the sustainability and the institutional transformations resulting from these protests. Swyngedouw (2014: 124) states that '*an event can [...] only be discerned as political retroactively, when the truth of the new situation has been established.*' He is aware that such events can only be short-lived, and that '*such intense and contracted localized practices can only ever be an event,*' but labels these events as pre-political, that has the potential for, but is not necessarily a political sequence (Swyngedouw 2014:132). In other words, such events can inaugurate a process that aims at universalizing egalitarian presumptions. Hence, the political in Swyngedouws', Dikeç' and Kaikas' perception is procedural rather than momentuous as with Rancière.

But not only the political moment or pre-political event, however we may call it, is necessarily spatial, but also the process of transformation requires the production of (new) forms of spatialization as to

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<sup>7</sup> They distinguish between the 'upper Syntagma Square' that often articulated nationalistic and/or xenophobic discourses and the 'lower Syntagma Square' that evolved more organized efforts to stage a more inclusive politics of solidarity (Kaika and Karaliotas 2014).

materialize the claims of equality (Swyngedouw 2014: 134). In other words, to sustain is to spatialize and embody practice the new ways of being and feeling staged in these events, in times and spaces of everyday life (Dikeç and Swyngedouw 2016: 9).

## 4.2 MIGRATION AND THE POLITICAL

Since the objects of the analysis in this thesis are spaces, that transform through the arrival of immigrants in Vienna and Brussels, this chapter will relate the concept on the political with migration and citizenship studies. In the first part of this chapter scholars of *Autonomy of Migration* will be discussed that offer a new perspective on migrants as political subjects.

The second part of this chapter will present two different forms of migration-movements, that are of relevance for this thesis. First, the No-Border Camp as a political space. The literature on the No-Border Camp by scholars of *Autonomy of Migration*, provides inside in not only refugee camps as political space but also the conflicts and tensions with those in solidarity with the migrants. This is of interest as parallels between the No-Border camp and the refugee camp that has emerged in Brussels can be drawn.

Eventually this literature review concludes with a look at the *Refugee-Welcome Movement*. Since the train station and the Park Maximilian, are associated with the Refugee-Welcome Movement and the activities have taken place under the name of refugee welcome, which was visibly demonstrated with many Refugee-Welcome banners, T-shirts and demonstrations that have been organized in its name.

### 4.2.1 Autonomy of Migration

In September 2015 the institutions concerned with the reception and registration as well as the care-systems for refugees and migrants were overstrained and overridden in Vienna and Brussels (among other places). This led to an interruption of the institutional order or in other words, of the usual procedure. Speaking in Rancière's terms these moments can be interpreted as moments where an order is challenged and where different logics of perception arise from very specific and localized demands (Rancière, in Darling, 2013: 76).

Furthermore, scholars such as Walters (2006), Rygiel (2011; 2012), Işın (2005; 2009), Nyers (2015) and Darling (2013; 2014; 2016) among others address the very potential of migration as a modes of interruption. They take the perspective of *Autonomy of Migration*, an activist-research nexus connecting scholarly and activist worlds (Nyers 2015: 26). This relatively new theoretical approach to migrants and refugees is considered as a reaction and antidote to Giorgio Agamben's (2012) rather pessimistic theory (that is dominating the discourse on refugees and refugee camps) of the *state of exception*, forcing refugees into the bare, naked life. Which in turn has been criticized for ignoring the agonistic account of power-relations, disregarding migrants as political activists (Walters 2004; Nyers 2015: 27). Therefore, the *Autonomy of Migration* approach does not frame migrant experiences and

subjectivities within dominant discourses of security<sup>8</sup> or as victimage (and therefore as objects for humanitarian help), but as political agents rather than solely as objects of exclusion (Nyers 2015, 34). (Nyers 2015, 34). Hence Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2013: 184, in Darling 2016) argue that migration has the capacity to develop its own logics, motivations and trajectories, which are countered by control, rather than the other way around. Such a perspective allows us to see migration as a rupture of a depoliticized mode of governing.

#### 4.2.2 Domopolitics

Following the Autonomy of migration approach, migration disrupts domopolitics, a term William Walters (2004: 241) introduced to describe policy-tendencies to '*refer to the government of the state as a home*' and therefore '*rationalize a series of security measures in the name of a particular conception of home*.' Such acts not only frame asylum and migration as a concern of securitization, but are inherently related to a selective logic of the border as a membrane of the *worthy refugee* and the *illegal immigrant* (Darling 2016: 73). Darling (2013) and Walters (2006) argue that domopolitics and the securitization of migration and asylum are to be understood as part of the neoliberal consensus. Border controls now are '*reaffirmed as necessary and even desirable institutions*' (Walters 2006: 36). Domopolitics is consequently an example of policing, the partition of the sensible and a highly exclusive and hence a depoliticized technocratic response (or *solution*) to migration flows.<sup>9</sup>

Such disruptions '*of normative accounts of forced migration*' are broached by Darling (2013; 2014; 2016: 3), Rygiel (2011; 2012), Işin (2005; 2009) and Walters (2006) who argue that sites of migration are political spaces, spaces of interruption and resistance and spaces that open up the potential for solidarity and agency.

#### 4.2.3 Politics of (Urban) Presence

So, what happens if *suddenly* hundreds of migrants gather in a central urban space? The presence of that many individuals in Brussels and Vienna as in the weeks of summer 2015 was exceptional, and unprecedented. It evoked great attention not only among politicians, the media, (pro- and counter-) migrant activists, but also among locals, that have not had much contact with asylum seekers before.

The urban refugee (as opposed to the refugee in the camp) interrupts the domopolitics through his/her presence in the city. Darling (2016; 2014) emphasizes the *Politics of Presence* and argues that presence is '*a political tool that disrupts normative accounts of forced migration*' (Darling 2016: 3). Hence, presence is simultaneously a claim for mobility and political participation within the city and articulation of membership based on physical presence (rather than citizenship) (Darling 2016: 12-13). Presence is an act of claiming rights to political voice and/or political visibility and it is the cities that provide the

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<sup>8</sup> Ferdi Maier, the general secretary of the (former) Refugee Coordinator of Austria (the position was invented for him in 2015) Christian Konrad, criticized the Austrian Minister of Inner Affairs (among others) for the representation of refugees as a threat to security. For more see Maier and Ortner (2017).

<sup>9</sup> Such terms (also often found: waves of migrants, refugee crisis) are used by politicians illustrate the techniques of representing migrants as threatening external force (see also Massey 2004)

(battle)ground for groups to gain visibility as part of urban life and articulate claims. In other words: *'the city has been used to mobilize ideas, ideals and imaginaries of certain groups who claim their rights to it'* (İşin 2005: 375). Hence, through presence and concomitant visibility, the mode of policing is disrupted and the wrong of a situation has become visible. Thus such acts can be interpreted as emancipatory politics, as *'the refusal to be restricted to the places distributed to them in the police order.'* (Swyngedouw 2011:6)

Jonathan Darling (2013, 2014, 2016) drew attention to the urban character of asylum. The urban refugee is opposing the refugee camp that is constructed as the *proper* place for refugees in many countries, *'as a technology of spatial segregation that enables the containment of those displaced'* (Kibreab 2007, in: Darling 2016: 3). It spatially segregates refugees and therefore prevents integration in the local society. Such strategies are to be seen within the frame of domopolitics. These camps are often placed in rural sites (such as Traiskirchen<sup>10</sup> in Austria), and reflect the perception of refugees as temporary guests, whose integration is therefore not desired. In addition, the containment actively averts the risk of individuals exercising political subjectivity, as they are held in spaces of existential, social, political and legal limbo (İşin and Rygiel 2007: 166-189) and are kept literally far away from political power of decision making, from the [capital] city<sup>11</sup> and distant from the public gaze (Darling 2013). Such an allocation of migrant populations are strategies of policing as *'distribution, the allocation of things and people, the temporal and spatial organization of activities'* (Swyngedouw 2011: 375). The containment in the camp serves to better control refugee populations and to set terms of categorization into *'the productive logics of society by making out of irregular mobility either controllably populations or illegalized people'* (Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2013: 180; in: Darling 2016: 4). Such categorization and illegalization of migrant population, the categorization in the *worthy refugee* and the *illegal migrant* is another feature of contemporary consensus-driven politics and is framed within measures of securitization, producing and maintaining individuals as a threat, a risk or a victim, rather than viewing them as political subjects, actors, participants (Nyers 2010:130; in Darling 2013: 81).

#### 4.2.4 Acts of Citizenship

Rygiel (2011; 2012) and İşin (2005; 2009) have theorized such acts within the framework of *Acts of Citizenship*. The theory of acts of citizenship is pondering on migrants as political subjects. The scholars argue that new acts of citizenship have emerged as a response to the contemporary globalizing world in which more people than ever live outside their countries of birth (OECD 2009, in İşin 2009). This fact is challenging the prevailing notion of the relationship between identity and appearance, belief and representation, hence, the dominant conceptions of stability and citizenship as a membership associated with privileges, rights and duties.

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<sup>10</sup> Traiskirchen is the reception camp in Austria that attracted much (medial) attention in 2015 as Amnesty International labeled it as under unworthy conditions (see Maier 2017; Interview with Jan (2016), Theo, Claudia (2016)). The medial uproar led to public sensibilization about refugee-experiences and eventually to the commitment of many as volunteers later in 2015.

<sup>11</sup> İşin (2005:385) argues that territoriality of the state and its sovereignty are enacted through the city and that no state can come into being without articulating itself through the city via various symbolic and material practices. *'The state is performed and invented through the city, [...] not as an isolated entity but as a machine that concentrates and diffuses relations.'*

*'Being political does not stop at the border'* (Rygiel 2012: 814). The high number of *foreigners*<sup>12</sup> leaves (large groups of) individuals in spaces where they do not hold the formal status of citizenship and the affiliated rights. The very fact of movement causes the loss of rights that are bound to territorial membership. This loss produces new actors that become claimants to citizenship, a membership that they lack through their migration. Hence, new actors become claimants to citizenship due to their lack of it, through movement (İşin: 2009:376). Acts of citizenship are then the very acts where individuals and groups may nonetheless act as citizens, seeking presence in the public sphere through which to make a case for rights (Darling 2014:165). Through this enactment they stage equality and *'assume the very rights they are seen to lack, be that to political voice or political visibility'* (Darling 2014: 165). In this sense acts of citizenship are disrupting the categorization of the police and *'demanding the part of those who have no part'* (Rancière, 2001, Thesis 8) as they are *'transform[ing] themselves (and others) from subjects into citizens as claimants of rights'* (İşin 2009).

These acts of citizenship create new sites of contestation, belonging, identification and struggle. İşin (2009) therefore, conceptualizes citizenship as relational (opposed to traditional forms of citizenship as membership), as an *'institution in flux embedded in current social and political struggles that constitute it.'* Such a notion of citizenship allows us to recognize that the political (and the performance as political subjects) is not bound to a *'constituted territory or it's legal 'subjects': it always exceeds them'* (İşin 2009: 370).

Being in place is therefore not only interrupting the police, but place is furthermore crucial for the *'establishment of political identities'* (Massey 2004: 7). Doreen Massey (2004) draws our attention once more to the interrelation of place and identity. Not only are our beings, our identities constituted in and through engagements and practices of interaction, but also are these processes always concomitant with the making of space, as *'space is a product of practices, trajectories, interrelations'* and therefore produced through interactions (Massey 2004: 5). Place is the ground on which identity is rooted and developed and hence must be a site of (conflictual) negotiation (Massey 2004: 5-7). Hence, place and identity are to be considered as relational and procedural rather than as static or fixed entities.

To sum up: the lens of *Autonomy of Migration* acknowledges a notion of migrants struggles (and migrants) as political (beings), and not merely within the framework of domopolitics or humanitarianism where they can be consequently seen as victims or criminals. It is through acts of citizenship where migrants challenge this dichotomy and claim a part (see Rancière 2001; 2016).

#### 4.2.5 Immigrant Protest Movements

Since there is hardly no literature on the events of 2015 yet, this part of the literature review looks into two pro-immigrant campaigns, that are considered as relevant for the two chosen cases. Since in Brussels a refugee camp emerged, an analysis of the No border camps (NBC) will give useful insights on the camp as a mode of protest but also as a space of migrant solidarity. No-Border activists have, according to the scholars, faced similar challenges in the organization of the camp. A great difference

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<sup>12</sup> Foreigners in the sense of people living in a country that is foreign from their country of birth.

between NBCs and the Park Maximilian however, is that the the first attracts a very specific group of (radical left) activists, whereas in the latter a very broad range of volunteers with different personal motivations, can be found. For many of them the incentive to help the refugees is rather of a humanitarian than of a (radical) activist matter.

#### 4.2.5.1 No Border Camps

A range of scholars (among others Walters 2006; Tyler and Marcinak 2012; Rygiel 2011; 2012; Nyers 2015; Darling 2016; Cantat 2015) have discussed No Border camps as example for a space of solidarity and the political. Arguing that camps, spaces of detention, are simultaneously sites of contestation by migrants and those in solidarity with them (Rygiel 2011: 1). NBCs are moments of solidarity, which call into question the citizen and non-citizen divide (Rygiel 2012:816). While scholars (see Tyler and Marciniak 2013) do frame it as a form of migrant-protest, others refuse this idea, as immigrant protest assumes an identity/status-based struggle, whereas the No Border Camp (so is the *No One Is Illegal Movement*) is made to challenge these categories and abolish borders and migration policies. However, the abolishment of the categories poses a dilemma for activists (see hereinafter).

In her research on the *Jungle*, the refugee camp in Calais, Kim Rygiel (2011: 11) analyses the camp as '*space of solidarity emerging through activism around rights and movement.*' She hereby focuses on the NBC on site in 2009. Walters (2006: 22, 32) defines the protest camp as a powerful instrument for political demonstration and states that it challenges the way in which political questions about citizenship and community are depoliticized and framed as matters of security. The protest camp in Calais was created in solidarity with migrants and organized by a network of activists and migrant support groups. It lasted several days and included a series of workshops and discussions about Calais, border controls, as well as the logic behind the No Borders Movement. The event raised awareness in the media and made therefore the struggles of migrants (and other activists) visible (Rygiel 2009).

Even though the camp as site of protest and solidarity offers a great potential for political acts and political moments, where an order is challenged and a space of equality emerges with a preceding declassification (Rancière 2001; Thesis 3), I do raise doubts that this potential is realized. Rygiel (2011; 2012) and Walters (2006) report of the challenges and conflicts emerging in such protest camps, of the divergences between the different activist groups, and also of the challenge to include the migrants themselves in the organization and participation of the camp. Although it is a stated aim of No Border to interrupt a public discourse that casts migrants as speechless and invisible (Walters 2006: 26). However, activists report of the difficulty to include the migrants in the coordination of the camp. Eventually migrants did take part in the workshops (Rygiel 2011), but there still remains the question of whether the dichotomy of migrants and citizens can ever be completely abolished. It is exactly this question of de (and re-) classification that is of great interest for this thesis. Therefore, the relationship and representation of the actors are emphasized in the analysis. The internal conflicts that arise within movements are often reinforcing (rather than abolishing) existing categories and statuses and therefore, foreclosing the political.

Furthermore, the downside of the increased public (and medial) attention needs to be considered. Rygiel (2011:13) alerts to the ethical challenges of solidarity action by stating that the NBC in Calais also brought about greater police presence, more violence towards migrants and a broad debate of

the camp which, Rygiel argues (2015), eventually led to its deconstruction.<sup>13</sup> Hence, we should be cautious to not get lost in the theoretical debate of visibility as a necessarily positive political act and to not ignore (or even romanticize) migrant realities and experiences, and downplay the *'repression and violence involved in border controls'* (Nyers 2015:30). Therefore, (undocumented) migrant strategies of invisibility to avoid capture and deportation also need to be acknowledged (Tyler and Marciniak 2013: 148).

In other words, No Border Camp does demonstrate and stage another world possible, makes visible the wrong of the situation, questions the binaries of ex-/ and inclusion, but also entails ambivalences and conflicts, while conflicts within the activist groups can be cleared out through such a perspective, as Walters (2006: 31) represents in stating that *'such campaigns [no-border camps] are not primarily oriented to the formulation of a coherent political position, or to the representation of a particular community, but to the demonstration of particular truths'* and therefore considered as successful in that sense. It enacts and dramatizes the border as a site of power (Walters 2006: 35) and simultaneously politicizes border-regimes and domopolitics. On the other hand, the paradox of migrant social movements cannot be easily resolved (or balanced).

Nyers (2015: 31) broaches this dilemma in pointing at citizenship's exclusionary dimensions, i.e. excluding most migrants and therefore withdrawing their political subjectivity. Rights-based politics has strong limits which cause sufferance even to the critical migrant movements, and *'in some way legitimate and reproduce, the exclusionary structures, institutions and practices of the state. [...] They [migrant social movements] contest the discourse of legality and illegality, and then inadvertently reproduce the discourse when and if they gain access to rights and regularizations.'* I will come back to this problem when discussing the sans-papiers struggles and the question of agency in solidarity at the Park Maximilian, where the inconsistencies of such activism became notably apparent.

Although overcoming categorization or in Rancière's (2001: Thesis 3) words *the 'rupture of the 'normal' distribution of position'* is the stated aim of what he considers political, in practice the revocation of categories often involves (or even requires?) their reproduction.

But also another seemingly insoluble dilemma appears for the anarchic and other far left autonomous groups when engaged in migrant struggles. Paradoxically, the fighting of national borders and the exclusion of individuals from the rights bound to a nation state disallows to utterly overrule (or ignore) the nation-state concept.

#### 4.2.5.2 Refugee Welcome, a New Social Movement?

Migrant movements (such as the *Refugee Welcome* movement, the *No One Is Illegal* campaigns or the *No Border* protests) are often framed within the discourse of *New Social Movements*. In the last couple of years, the occupation of space (such as the above discussed No Border camp, but also the insurgent squares, that also comprises the gathering, staying and acting in space) has evolved as a powerful political tool to perform resistance and demonstrations. Burcu Togrul Koca (2016) analyzes the *Refugees Welcome* initiative through the theoretical framework of the New Social Movements literature.

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<sup>13</sup> Rygiel refers to the deconstruction of the camp in September 2009, three months after the no-border camp. But the camp re-emerged soon afterward and was been dismantled again in October 2016.

The *Refugee Welcome* movement, a trans-European label of pro-immigrant and refugee activism, has emerged in 2015 as a response to the influx of Syrian refugees fleeing the civil war in their home-country. Also the places Hauptbahnhof and Park Maximilian were framed under the label *Refugees Welcome*. Koca (2016: 98) argues that the latest *refugee crisis* has mobilized a new form of collective action, that comprises not only of NGOs that were already involved in pro-migrant struggles, but also (and this is the 'new' of the NSM) of individual volunteers, groups of volunteers, as well as of other organizations working in different fields.

NSM are further characterized by multi-class and heterogeneous formation. Differences in value systems, status or ideological orientation do not prevent them from being unified under non-material objectives (Koca 2016: 101, 102).

The extensive use of information and communication technologies (ICT), in particular social media, such as Facebook and Twitter served as platforms for the organization, information and mobilization of/for the acts and events (Walliser 2013: 2; Koca 2016: 102; Kaika and Karaliotas 2014: 5). Another distinctive feature of new social movements is a rather decentralized, segmented, diffuse and informal structure comprising to a great part of volunteers, thus differing from the centralized, hierarchical and formal structures of *old* social movements (Koca 2016: 103).

And finally Koca (2016: 103) argues that NSM transcend national boundaries and form alliances with similar movements and she remarks that even though NSM are to be considered as driven by post-materialist concerns, an underlying materialist focus can not be neglected since these movements evolve as a response to global inequality which in turn produces refugees and immigrants as a response to the migration and border-regimes of the global North (Koca 2016 103-105). She concludes that *Refugee Welcome* meets all characterizing elements of NSM, but whether it led to sustainable transformations remains an open question, as its impact can not really be assessed yet (Koca 2016: 105).

While immigrant protests open up the potential to demand equality and democracy, they also risk to be a rather humanitarian act that does not exceed boundaries and categorization, but rather reinforces them. Again we can find the same dilemma as discussed above: that in identity-based struggles, the fight for rights for a specific marginalized group, these categorizations are always reproduced. Ticktin (2006) points out that humanitarianism reduces people to poor victims and that once one is humanitarially protected, one loses one's political and social rights. She therefore distinguishes between Human Rights and Humanitarianism; the former comprises justice and equality whereas the latter causes a state of exception and views refugees rather as objects of generosity.

Although immigrant protests are often framed as '*acts against the exclusionary technologies of citizenship, which aim to make visible the violence of citizenship as regimes of control*' (Tyler and Marciniak 2014: 146) we need to pay attention to the representation of refugees (even within pro-refugee movements), as they are often portrayed and also reproduced as a group of poor, victimized and/or traumatized persons (see also Pupavac 2008). This is the opposite of what Jacques Rancière determines as the political (Rancière 2016; 1999).



### 4.3 CONCLUSION

Rancière resists identity politics as it aims for a de-classification, a *'theoretical gesture that cancels out the structural singularity of 'the qualification without qualification' and the part of the no-part,' by re-describing democracy as a social phenomenon, of the collective effectuation of the properties of a type of man'* (Rancière 2001, Thesis 9). That means that there are no races<sup>14</sup>, neither in the sense they could be discriminated against, nor in the sense of identity politics, where there is a certain "race" that must be respected and expressed. Hence: *'By presupposing equality in the face of a police order, roles are subverted, not just rearranged'* (Rancière 2006: 81; in: May 2010:11).

Therefore, I see the necessity to differentiate between the discussion of NSM as outlined above (Koca 2016) and the forms of resistance Kaika and Karaliotas (2014), Swyngedouw (2014) and Dikeç with Swyngedouw (2016) are examining. Hence, to distinguish between identity-based struggles (even though they are to be seen as a response to global capitalism and its uneven development), and movements aiming for democracy and equality that strive for transfiguring identitarian positions in the process (rather than reinforcing them) into a commonality and a new common sense (Swyngedouw 2014; Kaika and Karaliotas 2014:9).

Although many parallels can be drawn between the conception of the different scholars and a similar repertoire of resistance and mobilization is applied; again ICT plays a big role in mobilizing and informing (potential) activists. The protesters also form a rather heterogeneous group of individuals (and groups, and organizations and NGOs) and advocate a non-hierarchical, horizontal structure, as this is the alternative they are demanding.

Dikeç and Swyngedouw (2016: 9) propose the distinction between social and political movements (and the recognition of the shift from the first to the latter). The former basing their claims on particular social positionalities and identitarian-positions, and the latter universalizing demands for democracy, freedom and solidarity.

Migrant movements and migrant solidarity-actions have politicizing elements, political tendencies and the potential to be political. While NBC and *No One is Illegal* campaigns claim universal equality and are therefore considered as political movement, the *Refugee Welcome Movement* is not striving for equality but much rather reinforcing (legal) categories of migrants and citizens, and also do not challenge the classification between refugees and undocumented immigrants and us therefore attributed rather to the concept of (New) Social Movements, that are foreclosing the political, since they claim rights for one specific legal group and do not subvert nor challenge these categorizations opposed by the police (Rancière 2001: Thesis 3). The dilemma and paradox of migrant-struggles and migrant movements in the interface of (radical) political activism and humanitarianism as well as the dialectic of conflicts and solidarities has materialized in tensions and fights in the Park Maximilian (İşin 2009).

I attach importance to a shift in perception and in theoretical discourse towards a concept of *Citizenship in Motion* (Rygiel 2011), a citizenship that is demanded through the acts of movement. This view allows us to perceive migrant as political subjects, disrupting the sovereign images of statuses and practices, therefore they are evoking a political moment. The challenging of modes and forms is necessary for an eventual transformation (İşin 2009: 372). But I also acknowledge the exceptionality of migrant

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<sup>14</sup> Race vicariously for discriminated/marginalized identities, could as well be gender, sexuality...

experiences, which becomes visible in my cases, that were not only always thought as temporary, but evolved out of the very need to supply services to starving, injured and exhausted individuals on their very long (often foot-) journey to Europe...

I understand citizenship not as a membership, but as relational, as struggles invoking a notion of politics based on relations 'disrupting the sovereign imaginings' (Işın 2011: 7; Işın 2009: 371) Yet I am also critically aware of the limits of such conception for migrant struggles and the fight for migrant right as it is pounding on the very concept of nationality and citizenship.

In the second part of the thesis I will present the two cases I have chosen as the subjects of my analysis. The Park Maximilian in Brussels as well as the Hauptbahnhof (Central Train Station) in Vienna are typical emerging sites of struggle having the potential to produce new actors '*giving part to those who have no parts*' – '*claiming rights of those who have no rights*' and challenge the dominant figure of citizenship bound to territoriality, territories, law and rights. However, the analysis showed, that the moment of interruption and chaos was transient and that the spaces of inquiry became spaces of humanitarian aid that established its own police order, rather than a space of political struggle. The civil society organizations filled in the emerged institutional gap, not imagining a different instituted order (Dikeç and Swyngedouw 2016: 9).

# PART 2

## EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

### ARRIVING REFUGEES IN EUROPEAN (CAPITAL) CITIES

The second part of this thesis provides an insight of the spaces of analysis and will examine political sequences and processes that have occurred. Therefore, an explanation of the developments in the respective cities is given. In Brussels and Vienna the influx of a high number of refugees in the summer months of 2015 have exhausted the national reception-procedures. This lead to large numbers of refugees in public spaces and triggered actions of solidarity and help.

First, an insight is given on how the data has been collected, followed by a chapter that is focusing on Vienna and on *Train of Hope*, a civil society organization that has emerged at the Central Train Station in Vienna in order to provide care facilities such as food, medical care, legal advice for the arriving and transiting immigrants. The analysis is structured in four parts: Interruption, Conflicts. Transformation and will conclude with the question what alternatives have been enacted and to what extend the Hauptbahnhof can be seen as space of equality.

It is followed by the analysis of the *Plateforme citoyenne de soutien aux réfugiés*, the civil society organization that has emerged in the Park Maximilian and has managed and organized an informal refugee camp. This chapter is organized similar to the chapter on Vienna, however supplemented by a discussion on the *sans-papiers*, the undocumented immigrants, that were present in the camp, enacted equality and have evoked many conflicts and tensions.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

The main insights are gained through semi-structured Interviews. 18 Interviews have been carried out. Ten with actors in Vienna and eight in Brussels.

Most of the interviews have been conversations face-to-face and two via Skype. Except for one interview, all have been recorded. The interviews in Brussels were conducted in English and in Vienna in German and have been (partially) transcribed. The interviewees have been anonymized, to allow for a discussion on sensitive and possibly conflictual issues.

The length of the interviews varied, depending on the interviewees' role on site, how involved they are/were and to what extent they were available for interviews. Eventually, this thesis draws on 23 hours of (recorded) interview time and 280 A4 pages of interview-transcripts.

To reach my interview partners I used my own networks and relied on a snowball sample as well as an extensive internet research to get to further interview partners which might be able to show different perspectives and fill in the gaps. I approached prospective interviewees via e-mail, telephone and/or Facebook, not seldom on various channels and over and over again.

Despite all efforts, it was impossible to reach all desired interlocutors and I was also confronted with some rejections.

The people that have been interviewed held different positions in the spaces of analysis i.e. persons who were in the inner core of the civil-society organizations and in the decision-making processes that took over PR communication and negotiated with politicians, as well as volunteers who *just came to help*, to stay a couple of hours fulfilling tasks and leave again to maybe come back. To get a comprehensive understanding of the structure and organization of the space, I have also talked to representatives of NGOs and researchers. Unfortunately, this thesis is lacking the perspective of public authorities.

Another limit of this research is that neither refugees nor undocumented immigrants have been interviewed. The inclusion of the refugees' perspective would have exceeded the scope of this thesis. However, this thesis focuses on the *receiving* end of the society, the locals of Vienna and Brussels and how they organized infrastructures for the arrival of the newcomers.

The undocumented immigrants, albeit not registered and without papers, are part of the local society and an interview with a *sans-papiers* has therefore been intended. However, it did not come to an interview, due to different reasons. First, although I had three research stays in Brussels, it was very difficult to organize an interview from abroad or at short notice during the stay. Second, many e-mails and messaged stayed un-replied. Eventually, I got an interview-appointment with a representative of the CollectActif (a collective of *sans-papiers*). However, it was Chiara, an Italian political scientist – with papers, who is active in the CollectActif, who met me for the interview. Therefore, the perspective of the *sans-papiers* especially the CollectActif is of secondary sources: Chiara and Anika, a researcher who spent a lot of time doing participatory observation in the Park Maximilian to research solidarity practices examined on the basis of the activities of the CollectActif on site.

A limitation as well as a chance for my research is the fact that I look at my cases in retrospective. Therefore, I need to be cautious of romanticizing, which I am concerned about, especially considering

the fact that an ideological political turn took place after the summer of 2015. The method of participant observation, would have possibly evaded this risk. On the other side the fact that nearly a year has passed, between the events and the start of this research, also bears the chance to first talk to the responsables, who have been too busy at the time of the happenings, but also enables me to draw conclusions on the further development of the organization after leaving the space as well as institutional transformation since.

INTERVIEWED PERSONS, VIENNA			
Name	Role at Hauptbahnhof (HBF), professional background	Date of arrival at HBF	Interview
Jan	Former board member of TOH and spokesperson, event manager	September, 1 <sup>st</sup>	Face-to-Face in a Café in Vienna 1050, on 10.11.2016, recorded
Claudia	Student to become a religion teacher, member of Muslim Youth Organization, Board member of TOH responsible for Translation and Transport	September, 1 <sup>st</sup>	Face-to-Face in a Café in Vienna 1040, on 11.11.2016, recorded
Simone*	Identified as main responsible and board member Train of Hope		Face-to-Face in a Hotel-Lobby next to Hauptbahnhof, 20.03. 2017, notes
Christian	Coordinator of medical station, male nurse, former event manager.	September, 5 <sup>th</sup>	Face-to-Face in a Café in Vienna 1070, 20.03.2017, recorded
Jonas	Student volunteer	around September, 10 <sup>th</sup>	Face-to-Face in Madrid (at UCM), 25.04.2017, recorded
Theo	Student volunteer	Mid September	Face-to-Face in a Café in Vienna 1040, 11.11.2016, recorded
E. Frankus	Head of research group about actors engaged in refugee's acute care in summer 2015 at Institute of Advanced Studies, Austria.	was not present	Face-to-Face in her office in Vienna 1080, 17.03.2017, notes
Sabine	PR at Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB), a socialist ambulance organization. The NGO runs emergency shelters in Vienna and gets therefore funding by the government.	was not present	Face-to-Face in her office in Vienna 1150, 19.06.2017, recorded
T. Scheubl	Board member of ASB, member of crisis committee of the City of Vienna. The ASB parked an operation-bus in front of the train station and dealt as communication interface between the city's crisis committee and Train of Hope. Daily operation meetings were held in the Bus between the police, the ÖBB (national railway) and TOH.	around September, 15 <sup>th</sup>	Face-to-Face in his office in Vienna 1020, 04.07.2017, recorded
Caritas	Caritas, catholic charity NGO. The Caritas organized the reception infrastructure and care facilities at the Westbahnhof and managed emergency-beds in a bike-garage at the Hauptbahnhof. Many tensions between the Caritas and Train of Hope arose.	Mid September	Written, via E-Mail, April 2017
Hannah	Board Member Train of Hope. Studied in Copenhagen and came to Vienna for a seminar. When she arrived at Hauptbahnhof and saw the emerging infrastructure of TOH and the arriving refugees, she decided to stay in Vienna and engage in Train of Hope. Today she works for Fonds Soziales Wien (Social Services of the city of Vienna).	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of September	Face-to-Face in a Hotel-Lobby next to Hauptbahnhof, 20.03. 2017, recorded

\*Simone did not approve to give an interview, however she picked Hannah up after our interview and we talked for another 40 minutes about her perspective of Train of Hope and her role in the organization.

INTERVIEWED PERSONS, BRUSSELS			
Name	Role at Park Maximilian, professional background	Date of arrival at Park Maximilian	Interview
Sofia	Former member of platform and its spokesperson, activist in migrant struggles, Worked as student syndicate in time of the park; now for Médecins sans frontières (MSF).	End of August (very beginnings)	Face-to-Face her office in Brussels, 20. 10. 2016, recorded
Lukas	Radical left activist, only at the park for the first four days, left because of ideological discrepancies Studied law and worked for human rights league	End of August (very beginnings)	Face-to-Face in a Café in Brussels, 19. 06. 2016, notes
Chiara	CollectActif, Italian Political Scientist working for Samu Social	End of August (very beginnings)	Face-to-Face in a Café in Brussels, 14. 03. 2017, recorded
Anika	PhD researcher on solidarity practices, University of Antwerp, participant observation with the CollectActif in the Park Maximilian	September, 10 <sup>th</sup>	Face-to-Face her office in Antwerp, 10. 01. 2017, recorded
Lisa	Worked for Vluchtelingenwerk, gives legal advice and information to asylum seekers. Therefore employees of Vluchtelingenwerk together with volunteers came daily to the Foreigners office to talk to the asylum seekers getting registered.	before establishment of camp	Face-to-Face in a Café in Brussels, 14. 03. 2017, recorded
Sahar	Libanese student in Brussels, volunteer	End of August	Via Skype, 24.04.2017, recorded
Rebecca	Nurse, coordinator for Mediciens du Monde (MdM)	around September, 5 <sup>th</sup>	Via Skype, 18.07.2017, recorded
Mourad	Current Platform, worked for Samsung came to the Park to donate company-tents	August, 29 <sup>th</sup>	Via Skype, 17.07.2017, recorded

## 6. TRAIN OF HOPE AT THE CENTRAL TRAIN STATION OF VIENNA (HAUPTBAHNHOF, HBF)



Hauptbahnhof Wien, by Laura Martinez

### 6.1 INTERRUPTION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ORDER

#### 6.1.1 Asylum Procedure in Austria

In July 2015 the national procedure was interrupted, due to a high number of arriving immigrants and the exhaustion of the existing reception infrastructures: Austria had only two large reception centers. One in Thalham (Upper Austria) and the other one in Traiskirchen (Lower Austria, close to Vienna). Once an asylum seeker has applied for asylum he/she is sent in a reception center. The asylum application procedure is supposed to take maximum 48 hours and consists of the registration, a first inquiry (through a translator) and the taking of fingerprints. The *Department for Foreigners and Asylum* (*Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl*) furthermore checks the responsibility of the Austrian State and organizes the medical examination of the applicants. Adults are assigned to one distribution center and further enter the Basic Supply Provision (*Grundversorgung*), where they are allocated in regional accommodations until the decision on the application is made (asyl.at 2017; for more see graph in Appendix).

#### 6.1.2 What happened in 2015?

The reception center in Traiskirchen, hit the headlines in the summer months of 2015, as the degrading conditions for the refugees in the overcrowded camp became public. A reception stop was enacted (ORF.at NÖ 2015) on August 4<sup>th</sup> after UNHCR (on July 29<sup>th</sup>; see: UNHCR 2015) and Amnesty International protested against the unworthy conditions in the center, due to its overpopulation and the resulted scarcity of care provision (there were 4 000 refugees, while the camp was intended to accommodate maximum 2 000 persons). Amnesty attested not only inadequate medical and social care, they further attested '*intolerable mass-homelessness*' of more than 1 500 refugees in the terrain

of the center. People were sleeping outside in the mud, without proper sleeping bags or blankets and the queues to get food were tremendously long, so that it took up to two hours to eventually receive a meal. (Amnesty International 2015).

It was only after the failure of the center in Traiskirchen and the reception stop there, that a greater public awareness occurred. Through great media attention many volunteers in Austria were mobilized, and refugees and their condition became subject of a broad public discourse. Politicians needed to act. On August 25<sup>th</sup>, the Government announced Christian Konrad as Refugee Coordinator (Flüchtlingskoordinator)<sup>15</sup>, whose task was mainly to resolve the scarcity of refugee accommodation (derstandard.at 2015). Two days later another refugee-related headline dominated the Austrian mediascape: a transporter with 71 dead refugees was found in Parndorf, approximately 50 kilometers east of Vienna (derstandard.at 2016). With this terrible news, an awareness of the *refugee crisis* made its way into the public political and medial discourse. Then one happening followed the other. On September 2nd, the image of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian refugee, who drowned on the passage from Turkey to Greece, went around the world and became the symbol for the jeopardy and suffer individuals take on to reach Europe (Smith 2015). It was also these very images that were identified by my interviewees (see: Jan 2016, Lukas 2016, Sofia 2016; but also Maier 2017: 13) as trigger for the great willingness (or even enthusiasm) of people to help the refugees, to volunteer at key-passages of the refugees' journey and destination, where many gathered, and/or generously donated money and/or goods.

Since September 5<sup>th</sup> 2015, the borders between Austria and Germany have been opened and the Dublin Regulation (temporarily) overruled. 5 000 to 10 000 individuals coming from Hungary or Slovenia, reached Austria as transit migrants on their way to Germany per day (Maier and Ortner 2017:19). According to Maier and Ortner (2017: 19) in September around 160 000 refugees arrived in (and most of them transited) Austria only, via Hungary. The responsible authorities were, according to Maier (in Maier and Ortner 2017: 21), completely exhausted and overstrained.

The overstrain led to an interruption of the institutional order, in other words of the usual procedure. Speaking in Rancière's terms it is a moment where an order is challenged and questioned and where different logics of perceptions arise from very specific demands (Rancière, in Darling 2013: 76).

Local residents identified the lack of care provision and a clear demand that occurred was to fill the emerged gaps in the reception infrastructure for the arriving and mostly transiting migrants. Volunteers gathered at hot spots such as at checkpoints in Spielberg (on the border with Slovenia) or Nickelsdorf (on the border with Hungary) and/or train stations, here notably in Salzburg, as it is close to the German border, and in Vienna, as transfer point of the train connections to Germany, in the spirit and under the banners of *Refugees. Welcome*. Maier and Ortner (2017) emphasize multiple times throughout the book, *Welcome in/to Austria?*, that the care system would have completely collapsed if thousands of private volunteers had not taken over, the acute provision of the incoming asylum seekers, together with NGOs (such as Caritas, Red Cross, Deaconry, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund [ASB], Hilfswerk, Volkshilfe, Malteser...).

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<sup>15</sup> Christian Konrad lasted as refugee coordinator for one year, until the End of September 2016. His position has not been re-filled.



This *Refugee Welcome* attitude conflicted with governmental position towards migration. In Austria the minister of inner affairs was responsible for the supply for refugees. It is therefore hardly surprising that migration is largely reduced to a matter of security and hence as undesirably and aimed to be prevented. The government advocates domopolitics, the post-political consensual discourse that no alternative to strict border controls was possible, that it is a 'desirable institution' (Walters 2006: 36). Maier and Ortner (2017) reported of many attempts and recommendations how to deal with the influx of refugees of experts and NGOs have been dismissed by the minister as pull-factors, and therefore against the prevailing alignment.

The great willingness to help of the civil society, therefore interrupted and conflicted domopolitics. However, it shall be noted that Train of Hope and the other NGOs involved in the care provision for refugees, received funding from the government for their activities.

### 6.1.3 'The authorities are not doing their job.' – Reality Check of a Narrative

While the *Caritas* (a catholic charity organization) organized and coordinated arrival-infrastructures in cooperation with the town authorities and the help of many volunteers at the Westbahnhof, a group of thousands of civil society volunteers organized and coordinated welcoming-infrastructures at the Hauptbahnhof<sup>16</sup> under the label *the Train of Hope (TOH)*.

The coordinators<sup>17</sup> and volunteers of the Train of Hope (publicly) claimed to step in for state-responsibilities, but paradoxically consequently refused to hand-over the space to authorities or established NGOs (Kocina 2015).

The question hence arises, whether the *refugee crisis* could have been tackled without the engagement of the civil society? The responses vary.

While Maier and Ortner (2017: 46) are firm that *'the system would have collapsed, if there weren't the volunteers'* and the FSW<sup>18</sup> taking on the task of welcoming refugees. Initially the City and the ÖBB intended to pool reception facilities and acute services provided by NGOs with the help of volunteers at Westbahnhof<sup>19</sup>.

*'To be honest, whether they got out of the train at Westbahnhof or Hauptbahnhof is irrelevant. People then would have told them, through translators, 'don't get off here, the train continues'. And done. The people would have stayed in the trains and then everything would have happened at the Westbahnhof.'* (T. Scheubl 2017)

But it shall be noted that no train connection between these two train stations (that are 5km apart) does exist, a tram or metro is needed to get from one to the other. T. Scheubl 2017 proceeds, the engagement of the civil society (especially as volunteers for the operating NGOs) has been well appreciated by the cities' crisis committee. But he adds:

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<sup>16</sup> The Hauptbahnhof (Central Train Station) was brand new at the time, having been inaugurated in October 2014 (ÖBB 2014).

<sup>17</sup> The organizational structure of Train of Hope will be subject of discussion and critical analysis later.

<sup>18</sup> Christian Konrad, the refugee coordinator of Austria stated in an Interview: *'Without the Fonds Soziales we would have gone under'* (Konrad, in Maier and Ortner 2017: 107).

<sup>19</sup> The Westbahnhof will be further issue of discussion, as tensions and rivalries between these two spaces of arrival and the actors engaging there, have occurred and effected the organizational mode of Train of Hope.

*'Something we have also learnt, especially the City of Vienna and the State, when there is a development as at the Hauptbahnhof, that you shouldn't ignore it for too long and say: No idea, there's a bunch of lunatics there. The time that passed until they were taken seriously, was time that lacked us. Because, I frankly say: some things could have been done better. [...] Then we could have organized properly and it would not have been such a hullabaloo.'* (T. Scheubl 2017)

Theo, a student volunteer, was convinced that Train of Hope was necessary:

*'It was cool to see that there are people that are committed and are doing this because it is really needed. Because the state has done nothing. I don't know what was going on there – it was really like this. People are lying all over the train station and nothing is done. So there it was cool that such a great infrastructure developed in such a short time.'* (Theo 2016)

Whether the infrastructure at Hauptbahnhof was necessary, in filling up gaps in the emergency-supply remains an open question. However, it can be concluded that while the responsible authorities of the ministry of inner affairs did not act fast enough in order to improve the situation for the newcomers. The city of Vienna and the responsible department FSW took charge of the (temporary) accommodation of thousands of (transit) migrants (Maier and Ortner 2017). Therefore, a temporary down-scaling of responsibilities has occurred in order to maintain (or at least support) the provision of a minimum of standards for the arriving individuals. Through the very quick acting of the FSW, many NGOs and civil society volunteers and the swiftly generating of emergency shelters, every refugee, even transiting migrants, was given shelter in Vienna (whereas this was not the case in Brussels).

## 6.2 TRANSFORMATION HAUPTBAHNHOF WIEN AND TRAIN OF HOPE

The political emerges through occupation and restructuring of space (Swyngedouw 2014:129). Locals have come to the Hauptbahnhof and have transformed the space in order to establish infrastructures and care-provision. On site they founded an association and established an organizational and spatial structure.

What happens if the civil society takes over the provision of refugees' care and self-organizes? How is it different to established NGOs, and/or city authorities? Following paragraphs are first explaining how Train of Hope developed at the Hauptbahnhof, how its establishment has transformed the space (materially and symbolically). Then the structure of Train of Hope is portrayed, how it was organized, who was in charge, how information passed on and to whom, how decisions were made in order to analyze the space and its political processes. The understanding of the position of Train of Hope at the Hauptbahnhof and the internal structure is crucial comprehend how the internal police system institutionalized.

### 6.2.1 The very Beginnings

Jan and Claudia were the first of my interviewees to be in the Hauptbahnhof. They both first went there on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, the day after a solidarity demonstration in Vienna which about 25 000 pro-refugee supporters attended (diepresse 2015). The media reported in these days about hundreds of Syrian refugees arriving at the Westbahnhof and the spontaneous infrastructure emerging there,

consisting of activists, volunteers and NGOs and the *Fonds Soziales Wien* (FSW) for the City of Vienna. Caritas provided for food and Arbeitersamariterbund for medical care. Eventually Caritas took the lead. So, after the demonstration Jan decided to go to the Westbahnhof in the next morning to support the arriving asylum seekers, but he learned via Facebook that refugees were now also arriving at the Hauptbahnhof.

Claudia had been translating (Bengali-German) at the Westbahnhof and decided to leave after Caritas took over, since she did not want to help in the name of the Caritas. She too learned on that day that refugees were arriving at the Hauptbahnhof and that helping hands were needed.

As did all the other interviewees, they first checked the list of needed items, published on Facebook under the Hashtag *trainofhope*<sup>20</sup> and went with their donations to the Hauptbahnhof. At the train station Jan found 150 asylum seekers and 10 or 20 volunteers.

Claudia (2016) told me that roughly 50 refugees, mostly in families, arrived at the Hauptbahnhof and about 100 volunteers were present for their support. Both Claudia (2016) and Jan (2016) are firm that the number of volunteers as well as the number of refugees rose rapidly, and that the situation they encountered was *very chaotic and unstructured*.

The increase in numbers of helpers was caused in particular by the social media networks. Claudia explains how social media became the main channel of communication.

*'That was the channel for the people. There was a Refugee Welcome group at the Hauptbahnhof in the beginning and there, people shared postings. I think it's simply the social media that made it [the quick growth and dissemination] happen so fast...'* (Claudia 2016)

A social media team formed on the spot, working with their laptops, informing the virtual world and updating the spreadsheets on needed donations. The *Train of Hope* Facebook group was started, so was a twitter account to effectively spread the word. This proves the efficiency of social media to mobilize people (Koça 2016). Social media platforms were not only a tool for mobilization, but also provided the organizational ground for the emerged civil society organizations in Vienna (and in Brussels). Within days the Facebook group had 30 000 members. Christian recounted that *'Train of Hope only needed to make a posting on Facebook: 'We need this, that and this'. You had to take it offline after 15 or 20 minutes, because you received boxes over boxes of the respective objects'* (Christian 2017).

Teams (such as the social media team) have formed and a structure was established that *'[...] prevailed in baby steps'* (Claudia 2016).

### 6.2.2 A Structure is Established

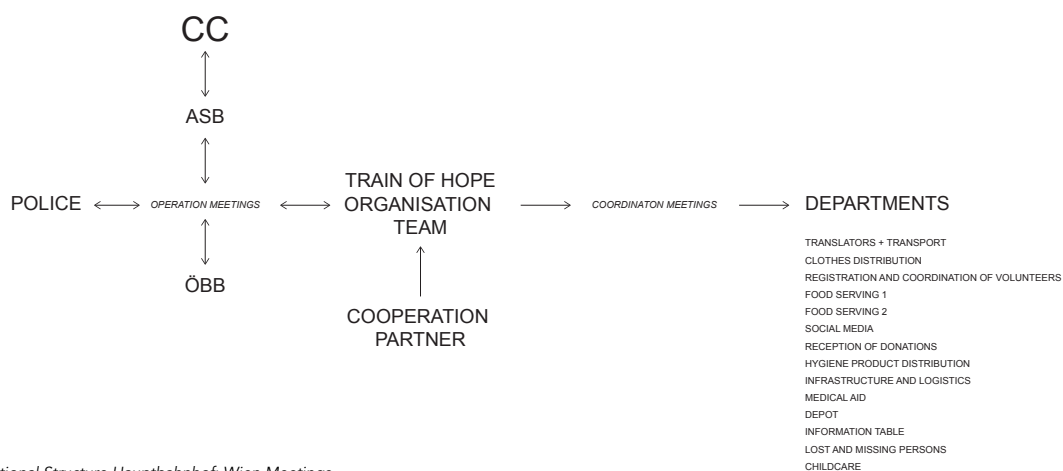
TOH has been portrayed as chaotic and likely as horizontally organized. However, a closer analysis shows that the emerging organization, quickly had the power to police the space. They had the power to control the space, to say what a particular place is and what is done with it (Swyngedouw 2007: 69).

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<sup>20</sup> Train of Hope first was the label for hashtags for volunteers and donators at various train stations in Austria and Germany.

The political was foreclosed as soon as these organizations have become more structured. Stark hierarchies within TOH lead to very view people deciding over the space, the allocation of people and things, hence were policing. Following pages are explaining how the internal organization of Train of Hope was structured and how hierarchies emerged within the civil society organization. Further it shows how positions are legitimized and to what extend they were conflicted or/and questioned.

People who stayed for a longer time, such as Jan who was there for three full days after his arrival (*'For me it was never an option to go home.'* [Jan 2016]), seem to have, somehow automatically, become the coordinators of the initiative (so Jan 2016 and Claudia 2016). The duration of their stay on site and the resulting overview seems to have legitimated such a prominent position. Soon Jan, who had worked as an event manager before, seems to have introduced a system that is commonly used in the organization of public events. Different departments were formed, each of which had a team coordinator (also referred to as "team leader"). Their job was to keep an overview of the area and tasks assigned to their department. This system was a starting point for an organization that would last for several weeks and that constantly grew, transformed and improved, quasi organically. Hannah, who only arrived a week later (second week of September) used the following words to describe this permanent transformation: *'It was really like that, once you left for four hours and returned after that, everything looked different'* (Hannah 2017)<sup>21</sup>. It is this flexibility that many people involved identified as the great feature and benefit of the TOH as a civil society organization, in contrast to established NGOs and crisis teams that function strictly hierarchically. However, Train of Hope was mistaken as democratic and horizontally organized. After these few hours of *chaos*, a (flexible) structure emerged that was not only hierarchical, but also established its own police, where all are assigned a proper place (Swyngedouw 2014). A consensus emerged that was: 'helping the poor refugees'. Rancière (2001, Thesis 10) identifies a consensus as the end of politics. The moral approach of TOH foreclosed the political since it did not exceed the dichotomy of *us* and *they* and therefore, the Hauptbahnhof was not a space for egalitarian encounter (Swyngedouw 2014; Rancière 2001).



Organizational Structure Hauptbahnhof: Wien Meetings  
from the perspective of TOH

<sup>21</sup> Jan (2016) nearly used the same words to describe the fluidity.

### 6.2.2.1 Train of Hope Organization Team

*'And then there was – I would say – a level above that [the team-coordinators] – somehow – an organization team, that kept an overview of the greater picture.'* (Hannah 2017)

On top of the internal hierarchy was the Train of Hope Organization Team (also referred to as Melde-Sammelstelle - central point of information). Their main task was the overall coordination of the sub-teams, the communication with the ÖBB, the City and state authorities, social media appearances, press relations and of the donations...

The term *Melde- Sammelstelle* comes from the emergency-service jargon. It is the place where all operation-relevant information comes together, both from outside and from inside. This team was a small team of a dozen (others said a handful) people, who had an office from where they operated. Jonas (2017) described their space as clearly separated from the rest of the happenings and that they were vigilant about keeping the refugees and other volunteers out. Further he did not have the impression that anyone could join this team anytime, thus, this group made a rather closed impression. Members from the coordination team did not only have the capacities to spend much time (or even nearly all of their time) at the Hauptbahnhof, but also comprised of those people who were there the longest. Hannah (2017), who came in the second week of September told me that she was the last one to *'sneak into this group'*. Persons in this team were the people who *took responsibility*, so Hannah (2017), Simone (2017), Claudia (2016). The organization team held regularly meetings in a hotel<sup>22</sup> next to the train station to discuss specific issues, such as operative topics i.e. incoming trains and figures of expected refugees, going through the agenda, coordinating who is there when

It was this team that eventually had the decision making power, they instituted a police order, the exclusive force that separates the possible and the impossible (Rancière 2011). Also the board of the founded association Train of Hope consisted out of members of the Organization team. It was the founding of the association that reinforced and fixed the hierarchy. Legitimized then through legal responsibility and liability.

### 6.2.2.2 The Forming of a Legal Association

The legal ground of the association allowed Train of Hope not only to carry the seal for charitable contributions<sup>23</sup>, but also to be eligible for funding by the Ministry of the Interior (BMI). A grant agreement<sup>24</sup> over € 200 000€ was signed. As discussed above, for Rancière (2016) collaboration with government authorities is a weakness of movements, whereas Mouffe (2012) supports the proximity to existing institutions.

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<sup>22</sup> In the hotel: 'Because that was simply the only possibility to sit calmly around a table and have half an hour repose, without being constantly interrupted with 'We need this, we need that.' And on the other hand it was not far away. 'When the phone rings: Help! Than you're right there' (Hannah 2017).

<sup>23</sup> This seal allows companies to donate money and in turn get tax reductions.

<sup>24</sup> These grants were given to various NGOs who were involved in the care of the refugees (NGOs that ran shelters, provided services at the borders and at the train stations.)

It was very difficult to get coherent information about the process of founding the association, but it seemed that it was no transparent and/or inclusive process. The founding of the association instituted and re-inscribed the positions within Train of Hope. This led to internal conflicts within the board and two camps emerged, representing different ideas on how Train of Hope should be organized. Jan on the one side and Simone on the other.

Jan, who pursued the idea of a horizontal organizational structure was clearly frustrated by the developments that came with the association and blames Simone for bringing in the rigid hierarchies.

*'People came that thought that there was no structure and that it needed to be more coordinated and then they formed hierarchies. [...] The board then centralized the approach of self-organization and self-determination. Then they actually made board decisions.'* He further calls it a *'chain of unfortunate coincidences.'* (Jan 2016)

It seems that Simone and her idea of how to organize has prevailed. While Jan (2016) referred to himself as the main coordinator (simultaneously denying hierarchies), all the other interviewees, confirmed Simone's authority (or even autocracy?). Christian summarized the situation as following:

*'The psychologists in my team have very early articulated a warning. At the beginning, Jan had a manic phase, where he thought of himself as God and you couldn't tell him anything. And then at some point, as Jan collapsed energywise, Simone took over. Somehow she managed, fortunately for Train of Hope, to rapidly create a network with leadership personalities à la Peter Hacker.'* (Christian 2017)

Simone (2017) herself, legitimized her approach by personal liability, as she was the one to sign all contracts. She is convinced that *'There has to be a hierarchy.'* She relates that she was the one on top not only because *'there was no other idiot who could/would have done my job and take liability'*, but also because she, as an event- and project manager, had many contacts to politicians and the media. *'A grassroots approach is senseless'*, so Simone (2017) further, *'when I have to take the rap for it.'* She would not care if small decisions were taken on site. For example, she would not care whether cucumbers or tomatoes were put in the sandwiches, but she clearly states that this kind of decisions are the limits to democracy at the train station, as far as she is concerned (Simone 2017).

Due to tensions within the team, now board, that arose with the founding of the association, three of the six initial board members left.

Jan (2016) and Claudia (2016) did not only report of internal conflicts, but also of volunteers' reaction towards the paradigm shift in the train station. Jan (2016) told me that some volunteers left the train station. Claudia too was confronted with criticism: *'Okay, you are now the board – and now you suddenly have something to say just because you are the board?'* (Claudia 2016). She countered by arguing with their liability.

#### 6.2.2.3 Departments – Department Coordinators

Besides the organization team there were 14 different departments. They are subordinated the Organization Group. (An exception was the medical care, that had its own operational organization carried out by a male-nurse and a doctor (with hundreds of volunteering doctors and nurses: see

Appendix) and one food serving department was carried out by Sikh Help Austria in cooperation with TOH).

Depending on the respective task the departments were more or less autonomous in how to organize within their team. Each department had a coordinator (or team leader). A team leader was discernible not only by the walkie-talkie in their hand, but also by a yellow safety vest he/she was wearing. Furthermore, the team coordinators stood out from the (other) *volunteers*<sup>25</sup> by having a laminated name sign with a picture, opposed to the sticker the volunteers were given (see above). Therefore, the hierarchies and the different positions within the organization were clearly visible. Hence, clearly no equality was staged (Swyngedouw 2011: 5).

How to become a coordinator?

According to my interviewees it was considered an honor to be appointed as a team leader.

Claudia sees the handing over of a leading position of a department as a *'leap of faith [...] It was a mixture between; okay, I recognize you have potential, you are obviously capable and okay, I know that this person is good and has experience in that field; you do it, for example'* (Claudia 2016).

In some departments, there was one team-leader for the whole period, people, mostly students, who had the capacities to be there for weeks. In other areas, the contact persons varied from day to day. And each coordinator ensured that someone who knew about the tasks else would follow them in their place. The organization team controlled the team leaders and made sure that accountable persons are taking over responsibilities, that are considered as more challenging than others.

*'There were some key positions, where we always took care that really (!) always someone was there who was well informed and had done this before. Therefore, we had posters in the office to guarantee that someone will do this for the next two, three days. For example, the coordination at the tracks. To make sure that, when trains come, the refugees get in the trains and to assure that the tracks are secure. Here it's clear that this was a different responsibility than handing out hygiene products.'* (Hannah 2017)

At the beginning, there were daily team leader sessions, which were discontinued after a while, and communication went mostly through the runners and walkie-talkies.

Runners were collecting and transferring information via the Melde-Sammelstelle. Although walkie-talkies were in use<sup>26</sup> there was *'[...] Information that had to be transferred orally (Jan 2016)'* or because it was *'[...] the only possible way. [...] Because even with the walkie-talkies it didn't [always] work, because in this certain area there was a dead spot'* (Hannah 2017).

#### 6.2.2.3.1 Translators and Transport

Each department itself had again an internal structure. (For a detailed description of the individual departments see Appendix). To illustrate the internal control and police system, I will here zoom into the department of Translators and Transport.

These two departments merged because it turned out that a strong cooperation among them was needed. The transport team was responsible for the trains; to see when they departed, when they

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<sup>25</sup> A distinction has been made by my interviewees through volunteers and coordinators.

<sup>26</sup> In general, each team coordinator had one Walkie-Talkie, except in Translation; see above.

arrived, to know how many people were arriving and consequently, how many volunteers were needed at the track to receive 200 refugees.

*'Because we had to get the people out of the trains. At the beginning people didn't get off the trains, because they were afraid. They didn't know where they were and they didn't know whether they were safe. We had to explain to them in Arabic and Farsi: You are safe, we are your welcome team and we have provided services for you.'* (Claudia 2016)

Hence the transport and translator teams were interdependent, and therefore combined, with two team leaders.

More than 500 volunteers worked as translators at the Hauptbahnhof. Most of them, young adults and teenagers, native speakers of Farsi or Arabic and members of the *Muslim Youth Organization of Austria* (orig: Muslimische Jugend Österreich). Translators received orange safety vests and laminated name tags with the name, a picture of the person and a numerical-code.

*'We repeatedly had cases where natives informed us that people were not translating correctly. We made sure that these people didn't translate under our [TOH] name. Because it harms people, when misinformation is communicated.'* (Hannah 2017)

Claudia told me that it was her responsibility to know all translators and that a certain ability to judge character was required as a team-leader. *'And then you will notice if someone is trustworthy or not. Because in the end we need to trust the people. [...] Meaning, we give them the information and whether the accurate information gets communicated, is another question...'* (Claudia 2016). She further reported of smugglers who mixed in with the translators, and that some people who were supposedly translators in fact sold train tickets for twice the price.

After forming a legal association, TOH started to collect the data of the translators (which they were not allowed to do before due to privacy protection laws). Thus, an internal control-system emerged. Claudia asked her friends, that were on site to volunteer, to keep an eye on certain people who seemed unreliable and cooperated with the police and the ÖBB security (for more see: Chapter 6.3). Once she called the police to check on a man. *'With this guy, it turned out, nothing was wrong. He was just ultra-weird, really (!), but according to the police he was totally clean'* (Claudia 2016).

The translators were grouped in sub-teams of 5 people. Each group had a walkie-talkie and consisted of two-three Farsi and two-three Arabic speakers. Claudia (2016) explained that this was the best way for her to communicate with them and to keep an overview of the whereabouts and activities of everyone.

This explanation clearly shows that even though often referred to as chaotic, TOH has developed a system of control and police and that everybody was assigned a *proper place* and task (Swyngedouw 2014: 128)

### 6.2.3 Volunteers

The mobilization of volunteers through various channels, through the social media, through broad medial presence and snow-ball-effect, a broad range of people came as volunteers to the Hauptbahnhof.



*'There people gathered. Some, that go daily to demonstrations, others that never had been at one. Some, that have never voted before, or are allowed to do so for the first time. We had school classes here, we had 70-year-old retired people who came daily for two hours to us. It was a clash of completely different worlds. But in my eyes, it nonetheless worked – or maybe for that very reason.'*  
(Jan 2016)

Or as Claudia (2016) put it: *'You couldn't see such a collection of people elsewhere'*. She further reported of *Voluntourists* coming to Vienna in groups and individually to spend some days as volunteers at Hauptbahnhof. Many volunteers with migration background themselves were active (and identifiable through features such as veils and turbans) in welcoming the refugees. Especially in the large group of translators and the Sikh community.

This corresponds with the observation Koca (2016: 101, 102) has made about the Refugee Welcome Movement in Great Britain, when she concludes that it (and so are NMS) is characterized by multi-class and heterogeneous activists, as well as it proves ICT as a successful mode of mobilizations and information.

Volunteers were registered. Collecting names and phone numbers did not only help for control and coordination purposes, but also to contact people in case of a lack of volunteers. Registered volunteers received a sticker with their name and the language(s) they speak and were therefore recognizable. Furthermore, they were insured for the time being at the train station. At the end, more than 6 000 different individuals were registered.

Jan stated that everybody who came could do whatever he/she wanted to do and whatever her/his skills and interests were. *'With us it was a bit chaotic, but still always structured in a certain way but one could evolve and unfold there and really engage one. [...] When someone thinks they know how to organize the stockage, then he/she should do it'* (Jan 2016).

However, Theo (2016) and Jonas (2017), two student volunteers, told me that when they arrived, they went to the volunteer registration and were clearly assigned a task. Jonas boiled water and collected garbage, Theo sorted cloths. Jonas thought that after staying on and acquiring the skills and bringing in the time to further engage, that he could have asked for other tasks or intervened and more actively engage. Now they followed the orders. Neither of them got an insight of the structure of the TOH, but experienced that there was a group of people there who were responsible for the organization (Jonas 2017, Theo 2016).

Generally, it seemed that the atmosphere was *'friendly, even if stressful and chaotic'* (Theo 2016). A strong sense of community prevailed, that is reflected in the identification with a *we*, in which all interviewees speak. But Theo also reported of competitive dynamics among the volunteers.

*'Sometimes there are people who aim for too much. [...] That has degenerated: one is already so 'selfless', that one doesn't sleep anymore and nothing, and people boast to each other: No, I am here already for 12 hours. No, for 14 hours. You know, battle-volunteers, somehow. But there was really a rivalry: Who makes bags the fastest and who is a better clothes-sorter and so on.'* (Theo 2016)

The volunteers that have been interviewed, did not choose the Hauptbahnhof over the Westbahnhof, necessarily because it was self-organized, but rather because its relatively flexible structure allowed to spontaneously appear without having to enroll in Doodle lists and adhering to it. Many thought better of the Hauptbahnhof because they had been sent away at the Westbahnhof when no further volunteers were needed. Not being able to help, to contribute to this wave of solidarity, led to the frustration of

volunteers, who then went to the Hauptbahnhof. The negative feeling of being rebuffed added to the Haupt- vs. Westbahnhof sentiment.

*'I think it was partly that people were, like: Okay, I'll bring things and get an impression of what is going on, who they [the refugees that they heard of in the (social) media and who were the topic in the public discourse at the time] are, that just arrived and so. [...] That's for sure a good reason to just go there and have a look.'* (Theo 2016)

#### 6.2.4 Transformation of Space

Along the establishment of a mode of organization comes a spatial extension and the transformation of space. The transformation of space is crucial for the political. According to Swyngedouw (2011) Politics *'unfolds in and through the transformation of space. [...]* Train of hope has spread over the train station, occupied spaces (unsolicited) - claimed a place in the order of things (Swyngedouw 2011: 5). At the beginning about a dozen people gathered around a pasting table in the main hall and at the platform 10-11, and then extended to the corridor that leads to the platforms. Eventually the *Train of Hope* had 2 000 square meters indoors plus a larger area outside the train station at its disposal. Two to three days after Jan and Claudia arrived, *Train of Hope* moved to the ground floor of the station, where they could use more space, out of sight of travelers and tourists and out of the way of the daily business. This, of course, was in line with the interests of the ÖBB (Austrian Railway System), who was first opposing Refugee Welcoming infrastructures at its new, representative train station and threatened with police eviction (see Christian 2017; T. Scheubl 2017). That transformation of space is crucial for the political has been discussed above. It has occurred, materially and symbolically. Parts of the train station turned into an acute care center, it temporarily changed its meaning significantly and became the symbol of the *refugee-welcome* movement and the engagement of the civil society.

### 6.3 CONFLICTUAL RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER ACTORS

The tensions and struggles within Train of Hope have been extensively discussed above. Following paragraphs are dealing with the relationship between Train of Hope and public services and institutions.

Christian (2017) acknowledged the support of authorities in turning a blind eye, and ignoring bureaucratic violations that have occurred in plentitude, concerning hygienic standards, labor laws etcetera. Therefore, a great benefit of Train of Hope, as a civil society organization as opposed to established NGOs and state-, city-institutions is that they could operate without much bureaucratic limits.

It seems that public services and Train of Hope have collaborated with each other. For Train of Hope it was important to be taken seriously and to win acceptance as the main actor of the Hauptbahnhof. This was accompanied by conflicts, power struggles, that have been won by TOH. As the organization internally gained structure and hierarchies have established, it was easier for other actors to cooperate

and coordinate with the civil society organization, since responsibilities and liabilities have been sorted out. However, there is a tension between external and internal conflicts, since, as elaborated above, the institutionalization of TOH, came with divergences within Train of Hope and eventually led to the departure of three board members.

As explained above, Rancière (2016: 80) defines the cooperation with institutions as a weakness of movements and criticizes their integration into existing frameworks. However, Train of Hope maintained somehow their autonomy in refusing to take orders by any institutions or organizations. Nonetheless, TOH eventually acquiesced in (if not state, but) city-and media agendas (Rancière 2016). The emerging prevailing consensus of the city of Vienna was to welcome the refugees and to provide arrival infrastructures. Analyzing the situation through Chantal Mouffe's (2012) concept, TOH and the city-authorities and public services had a friendly enemy-relations. They agreed on *helping* the refugees. Hence, there was a consensus on the principle, but disagreement on the interpretations (Mouffe 2012).

### 6.3.1 Public Authorities and Public Service

#### The Crisis Committee of the City of Vienna (CC)

As described above (Chapter 6.1) not only the movement as people can be seen as conflicting a post-political consensus of border-regimes, but also the attitude of the civil society that came in masses to help the refugees and be in solidarity with them are interpreted as such (Rygiel 2011; Walters 2006). They demonstrated a possible world (Rancière 2001, Thesis 8).

However, it is stated that the city of Vienna took over responsibilities of the government and also welcomed refugees and provided infrastructures that go beyond legal obligations. For example, the deployment of emergency shelters for transit-migrants were established and Busses organized to bring and take migrants to the train-station.

The city of Vienna summoned a crisis committee, consisting of representatives of the Red Cross Vienna, the Caritas, the ASB, the Police, Fire Brigades, City authorities and the FSW. Train of Hope, however (see above) refused to subordinate and receive or follow any instructions.

*They explicitly wanted to manage the thing on their own'* (Christian 2017). Hannah reacted similarly to the question about other NGOs, more precisely about the resistance against Caritas' presence at the Hauptbahnhof.

*'There was once this idea of the Caritas, that they stated, they will take over the Hauptbahnhof. And that was just the point where we said: Why? That was at a point in time when we had already been there for a while, had already established the structure. [...] We said we don't refuse to cooperate, but now there comes another organization and we have to subordinate ourselves. That was a weird approach. That was at the very beginning the point where we said: No! We will do this! We can do this!'* (Hannah 2017)

A power fight emerged, a struggle over and for space. Massey (2004: 7) discusses the politics of place and conceptualizes such conflicts. She states that political identities always struggle for territory and

that this struggle is a struggle for autonomy and self-determination. Therefore, place must be a site of negotiation and hence is often conflictual.

Train of Hope eventually was policing. They had the power to in- and exclude individual persons (see Chapter: 6.2) and NGOs (Caritas) (Swyngedouw 2007). All actors at the Hauptbahnhof subordinated to or cooperated with the Train of Hope. The TOH called everyone a cooperation partner who was in any form involved in the events. It seems that the rapid growth and the quick extensive occupation of space, as well as the high popularity of TOH, confirmed by 30 000 Facebook fans and great medial attention, legitimized for their position.

T. Scheubl (2017) affirms in saying that they (the crisis committee) ignored the happenings at the Hauptbahnhof for too long. When they realized the importance and the size of the Train of Hope, it was too late to do anything about it.

He stresses that he firmly acknowledges the commitment and engagement of the civil society, however, he added that communication and coordination of activities were necessary between TOH and the Crisis Committee in order to keep an overview on the situation in the city of Vienna as a whole. But: *'We had many communication difficulties, because we simply didn't know how they operate and they didn't know who we were and just realized, that it somehow doesn't work'* (Hannah 2017). In order to enhance the collaboration and the information flow to the Committee to keep an overview of the situation in Vienna including the Hauptbahnhof, the ASB was employed as interface between the TOH and the City. In an operation bus of the ASB, that Parked outside the train station, two daily meetings (one at 10 am the other one at 5 pm) with representatives of the ASB, the police and representatives of the ÖBB and the TOH (Simone) took place (see graph: *Organizational Structure Hauptbahnhof Wien*). ASB, police and ÖBB are considered as cooperation partners of Train of hope.

#### Police

Since many refugees were traumatized after having experienced police-violence along their journey, the TOH, according to Hannah (2017), made an agreement with the police, stating that the officers on duty were to be placed outside of the train station and would be called on in case of an incident.

#### ÖBB - Austrian National Railway

The transformation of the shiny new train-station into a refugee transit hub was not in the interest of the railway authorities. An interplay of the underestimation of the *'Chaos Troop'* (T. Scheubl 2017) at the Hauptbahnhof (as they were called by the crisis committee) and their rapid and seemingly inexorable growth made it eventually very difficult for the ÖBB to crack down on TOH, that has quickly established its own dynamics and a structure within.

The fact that TOH got more and more structured and tangible and responsibilities got sorted and delegated, allowed for a productive collaboration and cooperation with many different actors. In a nutshell, after threats of police evictions and general reluctance towards spontaneous seemingly uncoordinated infrastructures, the ÖBB and TOH found a way of collaborating.

*'At the beginning, when we were in the first hall [...] they [ÖBB] simply realized: Okay, on the one hand they want to get rid of us, because there was just a mess. But on the other hand they realized if they evict us now, they can't handle it alone. Because they understood: Okay, there are people that can manage that.'* (Claudia 2016)

#### 6.4 SPACE OF EQUALITY WAS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM ENACTED?

Following paragraphs are looking into processes that discerns the space of analysis, from the institutional procedure. It emphasizes on the question whether processes of de- and re-classifications have occurred in the train station.

##### 6.4.1 A more Humane Space?

Interviewees have claimed to have created a more humane space, as opposed to spaces organized by established NGOs. *'[...] for us it was important to give back some dignity to the people, give back a little bit of autonomy and to convey the impression that they are not only welcome, but that we encounter each other on eye-level'* (Hannah 2017).

Jan (2016) used the cloth distribution as an example to not only show the flexibility and the permanent adaptation of Train of Hope, but also to illustrate that they (compared to the Westbahnhof) met the needs of the refugees. To avoid the littering of cloths, since in the hustle many people took whatever they could get and sorted it out afterwards, the Train of Hope arranged the *distribution of cloths 'like a second-hand shop. There was an area for women and one for men and always enough people inside and there you had the quiet to choose something.'* (Jan 2016) Jan (2016) told me (proudly) that they had a dressing room and that after these adjustments (starting point being a table on which cloths were put) hardly any cloths ended up in the bins or on the floor anymore.

*'We treated them mostly with respect and as equals. There were seats, we did not aim to get rid of them as soon as possible, questions were answered, there was an information table, where you could go, but also nothing was imposed on people. And like this the people could really calm down and for the first time in weeks breathe freely.'* (Jan 2016)

The dichotomy however, of locals and immigrants; the providers of services and the *poor refugees* has not been dissolved at the Train Station. Jan's quote above clearly shows a distinction between a *we* (the volunteers) and *the people* (the refugees), so does Claudia (see next paragraph) in stating: *'We have provided for you'* (Jan 2016). There was a stark differentiation between the arriving immigrants, that are objects to the services provided by - and on the other hand - the *generous local volunteers*. This proves that humanitarian space is separate from the political and that humanitarian ethics have literally inscribed inequality (Ticktin 2006). The procedure at the refugees' arrival re-affirms the categories.

#### 6.4.2 Arrival of the refugees

When the trains with refugees arrived, they were welcomed by a cheering and applauding audience waiting at the tracks. Most members of this reception committee were translators, who went on to explain to the newcomers what was happening here. At the beginning, so Christian (2017), the translators had to go into the trains and dispel the fear of the arriving asylum seekers, of whom many had experienced police violence in Hungary. The Train of Hope was instructed by the ÖBB to clear the platforms rapidly after a train had arrived. Claudia explained the situation as following: *'They [the refugees] didn't know where they were, they didn't know whether they were safe. One had to explain to them that they were safe. We are, so to say, the welcoming-team and we have provided services for you.'* (Claudia 2016) So once the refugees got off the train and entered the area in which TOH was operating, they could *'run through the check points'* (Christian 2017) along the hallway.

*'Everything happened in such a great rush: The next train leaves in 10 minutes. Okay, we need to make sure that we give them food, tralalala, and so on. [...] cloths, because they don't have clothes and need a jacket, medical supplies, okay and go go go! All in this direction. In stress situations, we sometimes pushed them.'* (Christian 2017)

It seems that a transgression of the host-guest dichotomy was hardly possible in Vienna, where an encounter on eye-level from the organizational point of view was hardly impossible. Acute-care-provision was the aim. Hence, the intention was of humanitarian nature, which does not allow the evaporation of the host-guest relation. The structure at the Train Station as transit point where the refugees only stayed for a short period of time (either for before continuing the journey, or going to a shelter) did not allow for an abolition of the dichotomy locals, migrants. The representation of the asylum seeker rather re-inforced a discourse of traumatized and victimized refugees on the one hand, and generous helpers that have given up their jobs and changed their lives in order to help the arriving. The representation of the refugee as a patient, so Pupavac (2008: 280), claims rather for *'permissive empathy'* than solidarity it results in a relation-ship of dependency, rather than equals.

### 6.5 AFTER 2015

#### 6.5.1 Train of Hope

In December 2015, the Train of Hope was awarded the Human Rights Award by the Human Rights League of Austria, in representation for all volunteers who engaged in receiving refugees in the autumn months of that year in Austria.

At that time TOH had left the Hauptbahnhof. Many EU-countries had closed their borders, exodus routes had changed and the influx of incoming refugees had diminished in Austria.

The initial plan of becoming an NGO came to a standstill due to inner-organizational discrepancies and a split in the association's board. Further, there was no need for their previous activities. Many

volunteers reacted: *'The emergency is over, for me it's done. Whereas others said, yes, but the people are still here and need support and help, but in another way'* (Hannah 2017). A phase of reorientation has led to the realization of the following major tasks today, which are all carried out voluntarily: *'First we stayed in this field: supplying first care. Of course, now no longer in Austria, because it's not necessary anymore, but we have sent transports to the Balkan route. [...] We cooperate with local NGOs [...] that send us lists of what they need'* (Hannah 2017). Secondly, they support a network of volunteers who are working in different refugee establishments, and thirdly, they organize biking courses and German courses, a mobile legal consulting service.

The TOH now advocates for individual cases of threatening deportation or refugees that have for one reason or other not been taken into account by the supply-system of a respective state. It forms part of a greater network and of networking meetings of NGOs that have all engaged in the reception of refugees in 2015.

#### 6.5.2 Institutional Transformation

In Austria there was no political aftermath that occurred from the happenings in summer 2015, no institutional changes to meet an influx of refugees differently and prevent the exhaustion of infrastructures and shelters, nor any attempts of better coordinating the different actors that were involved (such as round tables etc...). It is assumed that the summer of 2015 was a one-time exception and therefore no adjustments are required (so T. Scheubl 2017, Hannah 2017, Christian 2017). The city of Vienna however, even if no institutional transformation has occurred, attempt to use the momentum of enthusiasm of the civil society. The city together with the NGOs of the crisis committee are currently working on tools to reach out to the residents of Vienna. *'One have to – although of course that's difficult to reach – make sure that the contact to this engaged civil society is nurtured and maintained.'* (T. Scheubl 2017).

Swyngedouw (2014: 124) would therefore not discern this event as political, since no establishment of the new situation has occurred, no transformation taken place.

### 6.6 CONCLUSION

The overstrain and temporary interruption of national institutional reception-systems, that has emerged has opened a space to perform an alternative to the institutional framework, to a post-political managerial and technological dispositive (Swyngedouw 2011), where refugees are seen as objects to professional management and represented as patients (Pupavac 2008). However, Train of Hope has much rather re-institutionalized and did not enact in a significantly different way to the NGOs or the city-authorities. The transit and arrival of thousands of migrants in Vienna, did interrupt an institutional order, space has been transformed. However, the civil society organization did not claim any concrete institutional transformation, but much rather blamed the authorities for not being able to maintain the usual procedure. Hence, they did not imagine a different instituted order (Dikeç and Swyngedouw 2016).

At the beginning it was a couple of locals, occupied space and performed the *Refugee Welcome*, they staged an alternative to the governmental line of forming migration as a threat. They started to give food and water to the refugees, not structured, not organized, not hierarchical. Walters (2006) and Cantat (2015) referred to this moment as *Temporary Autonomous Zone* (TAZ), when they analyzed no-border camps. It is this a '*utopian moment*' that eludes from formal structures of control. '*The TAZ is an insurrection rather than a revolution, a happening rather than an event, a festival as much as a demonstration*' (Walters (2006: 32). It is this moment that opened up for the political, a moment where the police was suspended. But this moment was transient and soon the crowd of people were institutionalizing, structures and stark hierarchies have emerged that have again policed the respective space. TOHs internal police was not actually challenged, the order of legitimacy and domination within TOH was not challenged. Those who positioned themselves outside of the consensus, left the train station and were therefore excluded (Swyngedouw 2007).

Train of Hope eventually operated very similar to the NGOs they have opposed due to their stark hierarchic structure. T. Scheubl (2017) described TOH as: '*basis-democratic dictatorial chair-circle*'. And also Simone (2017) didn't hide that it was actually her pulling the strings, taking the decisions. The different physical features, name-tags, warn-vests and walkie-talkies contributed and made visible the hierarchic structure of Train of Hope.

Considering the Hauptbahnhof, and Train of Hope operating there as a micro-system, where helping the *poor refugees* is the occurring consensus and TOH is policing the space. TOH had the power, legitimized first through its popularity and vast growth, and maintained through its cooperation with the police and political authorities.

*'Everything that would gratify the people [the refugees] was welcome. [...] as long as it didn't interrupt the procedure or constitutes a security-issue'* (Hannah 2017). It was therefore expected by the coordination team of train of hope, that locals that want to engage in any manner (such as bands performing, a hair dresser cutting hair, a bobby-race car, children's face painting...) would get in contact with TOH, ask for permission to exercise whatever activity and be assigned a certain time and space (Rancière 2001). Hence, in the end, everybody only could do anything, as long as TOH approved.

No true alternative in the encounter between locals and refugees has been performed. Yes, welcoming refugees has been seen as pull-factor and therefore not desired by the minister of inner affairs, the city however together with NGOs not only acted in a similar way to Train of Hope, but also cooperated. The Refugee Welcome spirit conflicted the governmental attitude, towards refugees, but was in line with the city's consensus of providing care-facilities and shelter to arriving and transiting migrants. However, it was the locals, mostly white people (from the board of TOH only Monica is the only one with migration background) that claimed a (symbolic) space for others. There was no political subjectivation, no appearance of those who disrupted in the name of equality. Therefore, it did not come to an emancipatory sequence (Swyngedouw 2014).

Concluding, it came to an '*anarchic disruption of function and place*' at the train station for a moment, but it didn't lead to a sweeping de-classification of people and place (Swyngedouw 2007: 68; Rancière 2001).



## 7. THE PLATEFORME CITOYENNE DE SOUTIEN AUX RÉFUGIÉS IN THE PARK MAXIMILIAN<sup>27</sup> IN BRUSSELS



Park Maximilian, by Laura Martinez

### 7.1 INTERRUPTION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ORDER

#### 7.1.1 Asylum Procedure in Belgium

In Belgium the Fedasil (Federal agency for the reception of asylum seekers) is responsible for the asylum procedure. There are two ways of applying for asylum:

First, an asylum application can be made at the border (or an airport). From there asylum seekers are sent to a closed center, a detention center where they stay 2-3 months, until the application is processed (Fedasil 2017; Bank 2000). The period of detention marks Belgium's immigration policies as harsh and are interpreted as aiming at comprehensive exclusion (Bank 2000: 286). These strategies are clearly to be seen as domopolitics.

Second, an asylum application can be (and is usually) made in the Foreigners Office. From there they are allocated to a reception place by Fedasil's dispatching service (after a medical examination and the assurance that Belgium is (according to Dublin II regulation) responsible for the respective person (Fedasil 2017).

Once the claim has been admitted asylum seekers are assigned to a commune, following a distribution plan and the local CPAS (Centre Publique d'Aide Social, Social Services) are further responsible for their provision and care facilities (Bank 2000; Fedasil 2017).

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<sup>27</sup> Since it is easier to use one language to refer to organizations and terms in Brussels, rather than adduce the Flemish and the French terms, I have decided to give English terminologies. Therefore, I call the Parc Maximilien or MaximiliaanPark hereinafter Park Maximilian, the Office des étrangers or Dienst Vreemdelingenzaken will be referred to as Foreigners office (or also Aliens' office) and the Plateforme citoyenne aux soutien des réfugiés will be called Platform.

### 7.1.2 What happened in 2015?

In August 2015 this procedure was interrupted due to a high number of refugees arriving in the capital city, Brussels. The Aliens' Office determined a limitation to a maximum of 250 registrations per workday. This caused an accumulation of hundreds of migrants queuing to get registered, that were not (yet) included in the asylum procedure. An informal refugee camp has established with the support of locals forming a legal organization (Plateforme Citoyenne de Soutien aux Réfugiés, further referred to as Platform) and NGOs.

The Park Maximilian is situated in the center of Brussels, in a political prominent and visible space, only 200 meters away from the North Station and within the business district locating government offices as well as big corporations (such as BNP Paribas, Engie and Proximus), on its east and north side its surrounded by a poorer multi-ethnic neighborhood (Depraetere et al 2017: 7).

The improvised organization of the camp both provided for medical support, food, clothing and shelter and representatives of the Platform advocated for asylum rights such as the right for shelter and care provision (Van Berlaer et al 2016).

The camp was accompanied by a great (international) media attention. This hype did not only mobilize hundreds of volunteers, but also gave the ground for putting pressure on the city of Brussels and the Federal State of Belgium, that is responsible for refugees' reception and the provision of care facilities. Only when the claim has been met, the Platform together with most of the NGOs vacated the Park.

### 7.1.3 'The authorities are not doing their job.' – Reality Check of a Narrative

Here too the interviewees have (publicly) claimed to do the government's job, and as in Vienna, the Platform has refused to subordinate to the city of Brussels, when they suggested to take over the camp. However, in Brussels no NGO was particularly paid to receive the asylum seekers in the Park Maximilian. It seems that the institutional system has failed. Whether this was intentional, in terms of a deterrent effect or not cannot be answered here, since I have not spoken to city, nor state authorities. However, it is certain that hundreds of refugees were pushed into homelessness and left without any care provision when the government decided to limit the number of daily registrations to 250. Here the narrative: *The authorities are not doing their job*, has a different significance.

Lisa too is firm that:

*'[...] the government wasn't doing what it is supposed to do and was violating peoples' rights that exist in Belgian law [...]; which is giving shelter, which is registering someone as an asylum seeker. Because basically all the people that arrived, they didn't get approved as asylum seekers. So they got into this kind of legal vacuum, where they didn't get the rights they are supposed to have.'* (Lisa 2017)

## 7.2 TRANSFORMATION

### PARK MAXIMILIAN AND THE PLATEFORME CITOYENNE DE SOUTIEN AUX RÉFUGIÉS DE PARC MAXIMILIEN

The development of the camp and the emergence of the Platform have transformed the space. This section looks into the civil society organization, how it emerged, how it organized internally and reflects on its position in the Park. The Platform also coordinated and planned the material transformation of the Park, and had the power to allocate people and things (Swyngedouw 2014). For a comprehensive understanding this section concludes with an explanation of the procedure of the arrival of the refugees in the Park Maximilian.

#### 7.2.1 The very Beginnings

At the beginning of September, a demonstration of *sans-papiers* (undocumented immigrants) and activists in solidarity with them ended in front of the Aliens' office at the Park Maximilian. Sofia (2016) and Lukas (2016) told me that they found a group of about 15 refugees queuing, waiting for registration and sleeping in front of the office. Together they decided to support these newcomers. *'The initial idea was to combine the struggle of sans-papiers with asylum seekers. To show that the good refugees and the bad sans-papiers are the same.'* (Lukas 2016) At this point in time there were no NGOs, nor city-/state authorities present, hence no infrastructure to provide any reception services and support for the persons queuing. Unfortunately, it was not possible to retrospectively determine the exact dates, but Lukas (2016) recalled that it must have been the same day on which the picture of Alan Kurdi conquered the mediascape. He defines this day as *'the start of solidarity'*. Sofia (2016) remembered that when she went home she called her friends, other activists, in order to organize tents and tarpaulins as rain protection and to make appointments to get together on the next day for coffee and biscuits to connect and exchange with the refugees. When they returned on the next day they not only encountered more refugees but also other people supporting them, bringing donations such as jackets, sleeping bags and so on. Sofia was surprised:

*'[...] for the first time we saw a lot of people coming, from nowhere, that we don't use to see. Usually we activist people [...] form a small network. At this time, we just said among friends: okay, we should collect the contact [-details] of these people.'* (Sofia 2016)

Similarly, Lukas reported the situation. Somehow, according to Lukas, the donators addressed him and his friends wanting to know where to put their stuff and asked them what was needed:

*'We accepted this role. That was a mistake and it led to the start of a little organization. At one moment there were too many people, too many things, so we decided to somehow become the leaders of the movement and to organize the space. The people who were there first decided for all.'* (Lukas 2016)

It seems, according to Sofia (2016) and Lukas (2016), that the number of people surprisingly increased in a very short time and that they *'accidentally'* happened to take responsibility (or even were expected to take responsibility). For Lukas (2016) this was the beginning of the end of his time in the camp. Sofia however, started to coordinate the camp, she collected the data of the appearing volunteers and created a Facebook group, the *Plateforme citoyenne de soutien de réfugiés de Park Maximilien*, which

subsequently served as platform that provided also the legal ground for this organization, that was to become a crucial actor in the camp. She added the people from her list and some friends, in order to inform and organize the happenings in the Park. *'We were thinking that maybe a few people will add their selves to the page just to follow... In activism - we never expect to be efficient. And at the end of the following day were 3 000 people following the page.'* Surprised about this throng of supporters Sofia further took on more responsibility and started to coordinate and organize the space and a whole informal refugee camp emerged.

*'The first week we had more people helping than people in the camp. [...] We had hundreds of people coming, bringing stuff; clothes, food and putting it in the middle of the camp. So there was a mess. Just like tons of cloths and food and stuff without being sorted [...]' (Sofia 2016)*

Lukas (and other [migrant] activists from the autonomous left) on the other hand, left the camp on day four. The day before, a group of sans-papiers had arrived and established a camp in the camp. Since they were not welcomed by *'Sofia and the Platform'* a conflict arose (Lukas 2016). Lukas' (2016) intention was not to help the refugees but to *'politicize the Belgian people who came to help'* and to emphasize on the struggle of the sans-papiers, or rather to combine the fight for asylum seekers and so called irregular (or even illegal) migrants. Frustrated and disappointed he complained about volunteers who came to the camp, collected trash for two hours and:

*'go home and feel good, feel that they have helped, but learned nothing. [...] He [/she] can help without talking to any migrants. This was my biggest problem with this situation. That there was no debate, no political work.'* (Lukas 2016)

The tension between Lukas and Sofia, exemplifies the tension between the political and humanitarianism. While Lukas aimed for *equality*, Sofia's intention was rather to quickly *help*. While for some the camp provided a space for *emancipatory politics*, other's wanted to quickly resolve this state of *exception*. Ticktin (2006: 44) has a rather critical standing to humanitarianism stating that humanitarian space is separate from the political. She is firm that it forecloses the political, the aim for equality, since it is rather about exception, generosity, than entitlement. A conflict of interests has emerged that characterized the camp, and nurtured the tensions around the undocumented immigrants in the Park.

### 7.2.2 A Structure is Established

Meanwhile it turns out that Sofia has become the spokesperson of the Platform. She negotiated with representatives from the city and federal government and reported in front of many cameras and microphones as the spokes-person of the Platform, in representation of the whole Park Maximilian.

The camp keeps on growing, up to 1000 refugees find shelter in the Park Maximilian. NGOs have appeared and have taken over certain parts and tasks of the camp. It seems that at the Park Maximilian there were more actors present than at the Hauptbahnhof in Vienna and that not all actors were collaborating with each other. I focus on the Platform as civil society organization, that was founded on site. But it is important to stress that Chiara, for example, completely ignored the Platform and so did Lisa. She too basically did her own things without collaborating much (see Chapter 7.3).

Rebecca (2017) described the role of the Platform as the frame of the whole Park, while NGOs fulfilled single specific tasks.

I will further discuss the different actors and their relationships, conflicts, collaborations, but in this part I will focus on how the Platform, as an actor who had gained the decision making power (this again was especially reflected through political representation, media representation and the decision to close/dismantle the camp), well aware that this is one perspective, or in Sahar (2017)'s words: the *Platform bubble*. (For the perspective of CollectActif see: Depraetere et al. 2017)

In the beginning different groups were claiming to organize and lead the camp. *'Somehow there was also a problem of egos and leadership and claiming who was the boss in the camp. [...] By the end it was definitely the Platform'* (Lisa 2017).

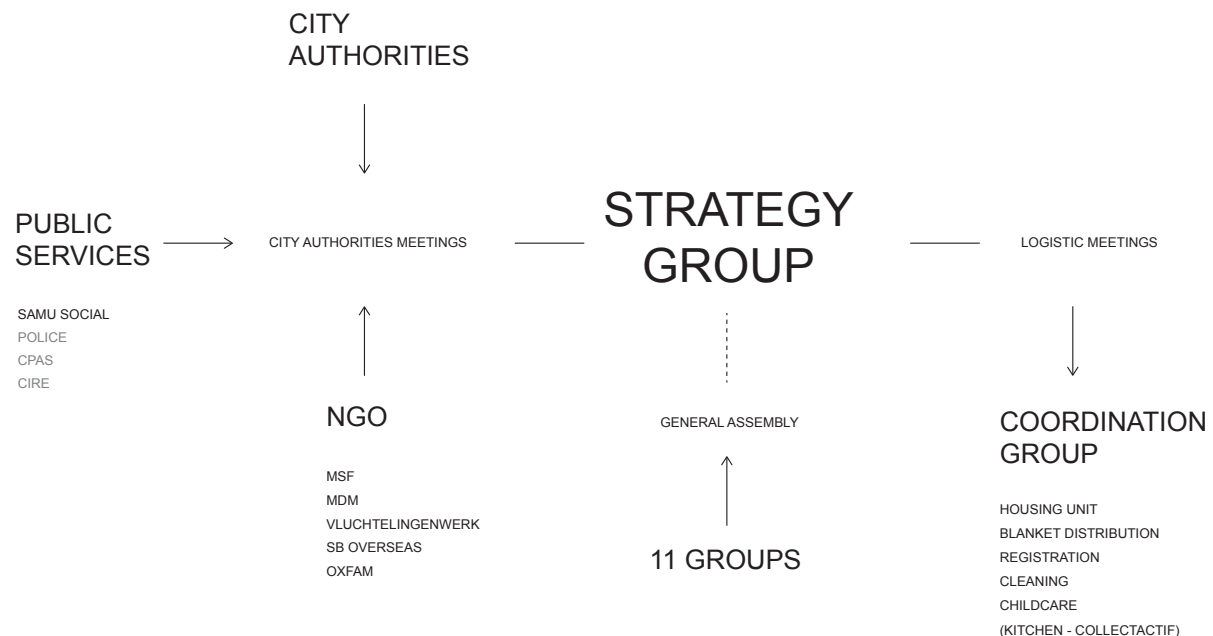
The Platform represented the camp (or a camp) towards the media and political authorities. In addition, the Facebook group registered up to 33 906 members [July, 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017]. Thus also in this case, social media has proven as an effective channel spreading information to broad public, but also as legitimization of power.

Similarly to Vienna, also here slowly a structure established out of attempts to organize a chaos, or in Sofia's (2016) and Rebecca's (2017) words: *'a mess'*. The emerging structure was flexible and was formed through daily needs. Here too internal hierarchies have established. Different departments emerged, with one or two persons being responsible for it. Listening to Sofia (2016), it seems that this nearly grew organically: *'People always taking their responsibility and building up their own projects.'*

According to Sofia (2016) and Mourad (2017), both in the coordination team of the Platform at the time of the camp, the structure of the camp was *'horizontal'*. Lisa (2017) confirms this idea, but adds: *'[...] they were having some kind of horizontal structure in theory and in practice I think there were 4-5 leaders who kind of decided'* The motto of the Platform was, and still is: *'You have an idea: do it! You want to gather a team: do it!'* (Mourad 2017).

Sahar, who has left Brussels for a week at the very beginnings of the camp was stunned about the developments in the Park at her return. However, she was surprised about the internal hierarchies within the Platform, that were displayed; persons in different positions within the camp were wearing safety vests in different colors.

*'[...] Then I came back and then there was a whole organization. Then I was really positively shocked, surprised how it worked. Then you had people wearing orange things and people wearing yellow; orange the organization team... It was really interesting. And I was a bit like: Ah, how did this all happen while I was away?' There was a bit of bureaucracy – I want to do this, oh but then you have to... – you don't have to..., but there were guidelines. There was this feeling; I'm now wearing yellow and they're wearing orange.'* (Sahar 2017)



Organizational Structure Park Maximilian: Meetings  
from the perspective of the Platform

#### 7.2.2.2 Strategy Group

The strategy group consisted of Sofia, who was responsible for medial and political representation and two other people, responsible for the logistics of the camp. They were the inner chore of the Platform. Comparable to the organization group at the Hauptbahnhof, this was a rather closed group who had the decision making power and then informed (rather than consulted) the coordination group in the logistic meetings. In daily meetings (outside the camp) they discussed how to proceed and which stance to take towards the media and authorities. The strategy group represented the Platform in the meetings organized by the city council (see Chapter 7.3).

This is the 4-5 persons who Lisa (2017) referred to. Although there were votes and the feeling was conveyed that the structure was horizontal, Sofia (2016) admitted that the decision-making processes were not transparent and that the strategy group has decided and then rather informed, than consulted the coordination group.

*'This one [the strategy group] was super controversial. It was the one the most criticized at the end of the Platform. Because they were saying; there is no transparency and this, it's actually true. But we didn't want to be transparent at this time. [...] The idea was to give an update about what's going on. But not about the strategy! If we have 45 persons giving their opinion on strategy, at some point you just kill yourself. We already had fights – it was complicated.'* (Sofia 2016)

This is why many interviewees also stopped attending the logistic meetings, as they felt that their opinion is not considered anyways.

#### 7.2.2.3 Coordination Group (/ Logistic group)

The logistic meetings, attended by the coordination group (about 35 to 45 persons, according to Sofia (2016)), were daily meetings, where the logistics, the daily operation of the camp was discussed. The coordination group consisted of the team-leaders of each department of the Platform, as well as the

representatives of the NGOs on site. However, some NGOs or groups did not attend these meetings or stopped attending those, as explained above.

The coordination group was informed by the strategy group about decisions that were made, and information was exchanged about the needs of each department and for their tasks, operational problems were solved and they checked whether someone needed more support. At the beginning of each day each team-leader stated how many volunteers were needed in the respective team.

Supposedly ‘*naturally*’ (Mourad 2017) team leaders became the coordinators of a group and hence attended daily meetings with other coordinators. Sahar explained that this leading positions were legitimated by time and pro-activity:

*‘It seemed when you had given a lot of your time, then you got a [leading] position. [...] Joëlle took care of the housing unit, because she was very proactive about it. She started thinking about ways to organize it. And then it became her unit.’ (Sahar 2017)*

#### 7.2.2.4 General Assembly

In order to meet the critique of being in-transparent and undemocratic, the Platform initiated a general assembly. The idea of the general assembly was to create a forum for everyone to discuss and decide on the camp. According to Sofia (2016) 1 500 people attended the first assembly, however, all the other interviewees I have spoken to, have not attended the meeting. Eleven groups were formed and each group announced two representatives, who were supposed to meet once a week to exchange the outcomes of each groups’ internal discussions. Unfortunately, it is not possible to reconstruct all groups, but there was: Communication, Fundraising, Advocacy, International Solidarity, Opinion, Culture.

Only two meetings of the general assembly took place, one during the time of the camp and one after. Mourad was critical of the approach of a general assembly:

*‘I didn’t go, because the way they described the assemblée general [general assembly] didn’t fit my beliefs. I don’t believe that you gather 500 people in front of the North Station and you say: We’re going to do that; say yes, say no.’ (Mourad 2017)*

Sofia, who is a political activist, was disappointed by the general assembly:

*‘We tried to be more participative and open. It was very disillusioning regarding democracy for me. [...] It became super complicated with this group, because actually they were completely disconnected from the daily life of the camp. Completely! In the sense that they were having conceptual discussions actually, on ideology more or less. [...] the advocacy [group] was saying: Stop the NATO, stop the FRONTEX and stuff.’ (Sofia 2016)*

So, it seems that while the Platform, or its strategy group was focusing on the camp, on the *crisis*, on the state of exception, trying to resolve it with the goal of closing the camp and having all refugees accommodated in government shelters, there was another group, pursuing rather universal claims. Taking advantage of the medial and societal hype around the Park Maximilian.

It is again this tension between between social and political movements (Swyngedouw and Dikeç 2016: 9). According to Sofia (2016) it was not possible to bridge these controversial intentions and therefore the decisions made in the general assembly were not considered by the strategy group.

### 7.2.3 Volunteers

The volunteers comprised of a very heterogeneous group. Many volunteers were of Arabic origin. Numerous volunteers were asylum seekers themselves, who had found shelter before August 2015 and lived in the *Petit Chateau*<sup>28</sup> or refugees that had just found a space in the *pre-accueil*<sup>29</sup>, but returned to the Park as volunteers and to hang out (for more see Chapter 7. 4), but also the migrants that lived in the camp engaged in its organization and took over different tasks (Depraetere et al 20167.

Muslim communities from the Netherlands also got together and collected donations to bring it to the Park. Also numerous Moroccans were active in the Park. The Arabic language skills of many volunteers were of course much needed in communicating with most of the asylum seekers. But also *white* students and *Voluntourists* came in from Germany and Norway...

Similarly to Vienna, there were numerous people who came to the Park on a regular basis, some daily, others who even lived in the camp for a period of time. Yet other volunteers only showed up sporadically, fulfilled tasks and went back to their homes. For many volunteers, the camp became the center of their lives for a month, they integrated themselves in this new social network and found their place in this microcosm.

The tension between charity and politics was also reflected when talking with the interviewees about the volunteers. For Chiara (2017) the volunteers were not political enough, she complains that student volunteers did not join the fight of the *sans-papiers*.

*'They take it like an internship [laughs] and they find a job. And for me this is an instrumentalization of refugees and immigrants. [...] students come to the Park just to say: I worked at the Park. And it's always like that and it's not fair and we can not fight like that all the time.'* (Chiara 2017)

Sofia (2016) told me that she was blamed as a pro-active in the camp who would eventually get a job in a big association. When she received a position at MSF, the critiques felt of course vindicated.

Anika (2017) has observed that many volunteers spent all their spare-time in the camp, without breaks, without sleeping and that it even went so far that they felt guilty when they could not manage to come to the Park. To counteract the fatigue of many, a tent was set up for volunteers, to use for taking breaks. Leaflets were handed out in order remind them of the importance of rest and sleep (Depraetere et al 2017: 30).

### 7.2.4 Transformation of Space

A material transformation has occurred in the Park Maximilian in a very short time: hundreds of tents have been set up, sanitary services have been installed, a kitchen has been built. At the beginning the inhabitants of the camp slept in private regular camping tents (*igloos*), donated by locals. Samsung donated about 150 festival tents and then MSF (Médecins sans Frontières) provided larger tents. (Dikeç and Swyngedouw 2016: 8) again referring to urban insurgencies stress the inherent role of space when analyzing these events; since they produce their own spatiality and unfold precisely through this

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<sup>28</sup> The Petit Chateau is an asylum center close tot he Park Maximillian, accommodating asylum seekers that have beforehand registered at the Foreigners' Office.

<sup>29</sup> A pre-registration center has been opened in Brussels after some days in the camp (see Chapter 7.5).



production. An idea or imaginary is always placed, localized in public space, as policing is the allocation in which everyone is assigned a proper place (Rancière 2001; 2016; Swyngedouw 2014: 128). With the establishment of the camp a disruption of the police order has occurred, according to Swyngedouw (2014: 129, 131) this is a political act, since it the political is *the 'claiming of a place in the order of things'*. In the Park this happened in a twofold, materially a space in Brussels has been occupied, to give place to does who do not have. Place for those who do not have a place in the order of things; the sans-papiers and also the refugees in this weeks, where no other spaces were provided. But also symbolically, since the occupation pointed out the malfunctioning of the national reception system. Necessarily the occupation of hundreds of people led to a restructuring of a space, which is according to Swyngedouw (2014) considered as political.

However, the transformation of the space also led to its policing. When the Platform gained the power struggles over the camp, the Housing Department (consisting of 8-11, rather permanent volunteers. 5 were making the plans and between 3 to 6, equipped with walkie-talkies, were spread over the Park finding/ looking for empty tents) was responsible for everything that had to do with tents.

Sahar was asked by the coordination team to make use of her architectural and planning skills and was in charge of the planning, or zoning of the camp (see map in Appendix).

The existence of a zoning plan for the Park is a fine example for the Platforms policing strategy. Eventually the Platform had the power to create an order. Dikeç (2016: 2) notes that spatial orders are source for domination. The Platform developed a *partition of the sensible* (Rancière 2001), where everybody and everything was assigned to a proper place (Swyngedouw 2014).

#### 7.2.5 Arrival of the Refugees

While at the Hauptbahnhof, the migrants were guided through several stops and did not stay longer then a couple of hours, completely different dynamics occurred at the Park Maximilian.

The Platform organized the arrival of the Refugees as follows: The newly arrived refugees went to the Reception Point. There they were given a number and an associated tent and were asked to inform the volunteers at the Reception Point when they departed from the camp, in order to keep an overview on the tent capacities. There was no registration.

*'It was almost like a hotel: check in, check out. Try to put Afghans together with Arabs in order for them to understand each other. Trying to put families together. And we made daily checks in the tents; cleaning in the tents.'* (Mourad 2017)

### 7.3 CONFLICTUAL RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ACTORS

As opposed to post-political arrangements that eliminate political space of disagreement (Swyngedouw 2007; Rancière 2016), the Park Maximilian was characterized by a range of conflicts. While internal conflicts are subject of analysis elsewhere (see Chapters 7.2; 7.4; 7.5; 7.6), following paragraphs are looking into the different actors that pursued different intentions in the Park, already existing organizations, that were present at the Park to fulfill specific tasks in which they have an

expertise on. While in Vienna most actors subordinated TOH, in Brussels these groups and organizations came into the Park with their own structure and some collaborated more with the Platform, others less.

### 7.3.1 NGOs on Operating on Site

#### CollectActif

The CollectActif is a collective founded in 2013 by a group of six sans-papiers (CollectActif, 2017). Together with many volunteers they fight against food waste and are active in helping undocumented immigrants. They collect left over fruits and vegetables from a big market in Brussels and re-distribute it. They also regularly organize a *people's kitchen* (= dinners free of charge) in Brussels.

The collective came to the Park in the very beginning. First they brought food that that was already prepared in their kitchen, but after the rapid increase of people in the camp they decided to build a permanent kitchen in the Park. The CollectActif together with the refugees and other volunteers formed a crucial part of the camp and were therefore highly respected by most of my interviewees.

However, the status of its members and the political agenda they are pursued, led to strong tensions and conflicts among different actor (see Chapter 7.4; Chapter 7.5).

Further, the collective stopped attending the coordination meetings, as they did not feel represented by the Platform nor did they have the impression that their opinion was taken into consideration. They felt that decisions had already been taken beforehand, and that other perspectives were not welcome. The lack of a constructive way of dealing with disagreement was criticized (Depraetere et al 2017: 23).

#### OXFAM (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief)

Oxfam, was sent by the CPAS (Centres Publics d'Action Sociale) in order to take charge of the distribution and storage of clothes, as the capacities of the Platform to store donated were soon exhausted, and cloths were stored in a depot in Molenbeek<sup>30</sup> by Oxfam.

#### Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

MSFs responsibility in the camp was material support, *'everything that had to do with building, constructing'*: large tents, money and construction workers. They also supported the logistic management of the camp. MSF cooperated with the Platform (Sahar 2017).

Lisa identified the presence of the MSF in the Park and the provision of the tents as a crucial point; *'These [the arrival of MSF and the installation of showers by Samu Social] were the focal points to start organizing'* (Lisa 2017).

#### Médecins du Monde/ Dokters van de Wereld (MdM)

MdM was responsible for the medical consultation for the inhabitants of the camp. They cooperated with the Platform, participated in the coordination meetings, but operated within their own structure employing their own doctors and volunteers. They were situated in three tents: one for the medical consultation, one for the logistics, one for the psychological care. In 4 different shifts 2 doctors, two

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<sup>30</sup> Molenbeek is a neighborhood in the western part of Brussels, close tot he Park Maximilian.

nurses, in addition to translators, psychologists and receptionists (people receiving the patients) were on the job around the clock.

Together with a woman-teacher, a native speaker, from SB Overseas (Soutien Belge Overseas), they created a mobile team that went from tent to tent. *'Because some women didn't want to go to the consultation because we only had one entrance, [...] we were not able to receive them [men and women] separately'* (Rebecca 2017).

### Vluchtelingewerk

The Vluchtelingenwerk is a Belgian ASBL (a non-profit, non-governmental organization) that provides information to asylum seekers.<sup>31</sup>

*'We were not part of the creation of the Park Maximilian, because our mission was to give information and we were always limited to that. [...] So we went with teams of volunteers, walked around, spoke to people, explained to them how the procedure works, what the problems were...'* (Lisa 2017)

Lisa describes her position as rather external. There were attempts to cooperate. *'We have done meetings and cooperated and made agreements, at the same time I think, we really stayed doing things next to each other [...]'* (Lisa). For Vluchtelingenwerk the campaign of the sans-papiers was a thorn in the side. In her opinion there was a lot of 'wrong information' spread by undocumented migrants. *'The idea was created, like you will all become sans-papiers like us, there was no rights in Belgium: these things were problematic'* (Lisa 2017). Lisa (2017) thus, clearly distinguished between the new arrivals and the undocumented migrants, as she is advocating for refugees' rights. Vluchtelingenwerk went to the Park with media and politicians to point out that refugees' rights had been violated. *'This is completely illegal! [...] They should be registered and they should get shelter!'* (Lisa 2017). Therefore, she agreed with the Platform's strategy of asserting that the government should provide access to these facilities (registration and shelter) in order to make the Park superfluous. Lisa (2017) further reported of conflicts between NGOs and volunteers. Retrospectively she reflected that these tensions had been related to 'ego-driven struggles'. That volunteers created and distributed themselves brochures on legal information for the newcomers lead to frustration by Lisa. *'So you say, we don't do it well? Which is a valid point [...] but then say that we don't do it well or give critics. But don't start doing next to us the same thing'* (Lisa 2017).

### SB Overseas (Soutien Belge Overseas)

SB overseas is a NGO working in the field of education and empowerment for refugees. They were active in the school that emerged in the Park and in psychological support of the asylum seekers.

### 7.3.2 Public Authorities and Public Service

Concerning the Public authorities and public services, there was no such collaboration and cooperation as has been observed in Vienna.

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<sup>31</sup> The French counter-part to Vluchtelingenwerk is CIRÉ. According to Lisa (2017), CIRÉ was not present in the Park, but have been contacted from the Platform and subsequently CIRÉ established a contact between Vluchtelingenwerk and the Platform.

## The City of Brussels

According to Sofia (2016) there were meetings, convened by the city of Brussels, assembling NGOs and associations involved in refugees' work and care provision and consulting on how to proceed with the camp. They met once a week (see graph: *Organizational Structure Park Maximilian*).

Similar to Vienna, the Platform has refused to subordinate, and also here (to a certain extent) had the power to do that, legitimized by the contacts to and regular appearance in the (international) media and the dozen thousands supporters (virtual and real). But yet it seems that here the Platform, although identified as a central and crucial actor for the running of the Park, did not have such a supremacy as the Train of Hope, since different actors have seemed to work rather parallel than necessarily subordinating to the Platform.

Sofia about the meeting in the city hall and the struggle for the Platform to be recognized as an (/the main) actor:

*'One of the main fights of the Platform was to be recognized as an actor. We were the only main actor like coordinating, but nobody wanted to take a civic movement into consideration. And then we had this meeting with CPAS, and CPAS said that Samu Social will take over the coordination. And we were saying: No! No way! If you want to cooperate, okay. Maybe yes. But you (!) won't take the coordination! [...] [In the meeting CPAS said:] you don't have the knowledge and blablabla. [But] we want to keep the citizens free to come and help if they want.'* (Sofia 2016)

## Samu Social (Service d'Aide Médicale Urgente)

This branch of Samu Social is an organization funded by the Brussels Region that provides emergency support to homeless people. In the Park Maximilian they provided hygiene articles and installed showers and toilets.

## Police

With regards to the question whether the police were present in the Park or not, I got contradicting answers. Rebecca (2017) stated that there was a general agreement among those present and active in the Park, to avoid police presence, also in order to shield the undocumented immigrants. Sofia on the other hand said that: *'Police [...] didn't want to get involved into this. They were pretending it's because they let us being in charge to run the camp. [...] But I never understood why they didn't get involved'* (Sofia 2016). She further stated that a constant police presence was not desired, but also admits that at some point, when violence rose in the camp, she requested police presence in the camp, which was not granted.

## 7.4 SPACE OF EQUALITY WAS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM ENACTED?

Following paragraphs are analyzing processes of de- and re-classification that have emerged in the Park Maximilian. Therefore, an emphasis is given on the camp as socio-political space Kim Rygiel (2011; 2012), when analyzing suggests to draw attention to the camp from below. The camp as a socio-political space, a space of everyday lives (as opposed to a space of exception and control [see

Agamben 2012]), as a space has developed in and resulted from the movement of individuals (and groups).

As opposed to asylum centers, the camp allowed for an engagement in the organizational structure for migrants (refugees and undocumented immigrants), but it also served as a space to linger and stay, to make friends, dance and make music. A post-political order has been interrupted and refugees here were not merely object to professional management in a distance to society (Pupavac 2008: 280). They actively engaged and *volunteered* themselves, and thereby a helper-victim dichotomy was suspended. These acts of citizenship are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Further, an emphasis is given on the presence of the *sans-papiers*, that both challenged legal categorizations and the police of the Platform and evoked stark emotions and tensions in the Park. The chapter concludes with a brief look into fights that arose in the Park and eventually contributed to its closure.

#### 7.4.1 The Camp as a Space to Hang Out

The Park Maximilian became the center of the lives of not only the refugees and immigrants, but also of many locals.

The kitchen, with its hang-out area and sofas and couches around it, served also as a social center. Therefore, the space is to be considered as a social space with the potential to create networks and friendships. The hanging out and socializing was well appreciated by some and criticized by others. *'It was a lot about making friends as well. [...] People came because it was fun and then they made some friends'* (Lisa 2017). Lisa (2017) criticized that the space was used as a hang-out, she had the feeling that people came to the Park Maximilian, to have a good time and to meet (new) people. *'From the beginning I had this kind of frustration, I had the feeling that [...] the aim was not to stop the Park – the aim was to construct the Park'* (Lisa 2017). Lisa and Vluchtelingenwerk's intention however was to put enough pressure on the officials to provide enough spaces for refugees and their provision, so that the Park would be no longer necessary.

Sahar, who had just moved to Brussels, on the other hand, enjoyed to spend time in the Park. Sometimes she just went there for some hours to sit around, chat with people, and before she left the city for a small trip *'it was very important for me to come by'* (Sahar 2017). She told me that she made many friends in the camp, people with whom she is still in contact.

#### 7.4.2 De-Classification, *Campzenship* instead of Citizenship?

*„Alongside the presupposition of equality, and inseparable from it, is the emergence of a we [...]'* (May 2010: 55).

The structure of the camp, as opposed to the train station, allowed for a (temporally) denouement of the helper, victim; citizen – non-citizen dichotomy temporarily through the act of being together in place and actively engaging in the configuration of the camp. The migrants that became volunteers, acted as citizens, and vanquished the representation of the *poor refugee*, that is depending on the generous help and provision of the locals. But also among other prevailing categorizations and

statuses, through acting as a volunteer in the Park, the status evaporated and did not play a role any more at the camp.

The volunteers, formed a new category. A *We* emerged alongside the ongoing activity (May 2010). As Depraetere (2017) notes, persons at the Park could present themselves anew, independent of the categories imposed by the society. The boundaries of the community were redrawn (Swyngedouw 2011), and socio-economic and socio-legal categories temporarily overruled. Rancière (in Swyngedouw 2007) refers to a political being together as a *being in between*, between identities, between worlds. Anika (2017) has observed that a being in between, a period where status was overruled, when it did not matter if you were a homeless person, a doctor, a Belgian citizen or an undocumented immigrant. Within the camp a different social-economic order had emerged and statuses (temporarily) lost their relevance. Irregular migrants, long-time unemployed persons, asylum seekers, those who are marginalized in their day-to-day lives, have all felt they had a place within a larger and meaningful whole (Depraetere et al 2017: 41).

Sahar (2017) reported, that the refugees who actively engaged in the organization of the Park *'were more comfortable. They created a network around them and are still in this network of acquaintances.'* There was mutual understanding of each other as colleagues, whereas some other refugees were *'annoyed of the helping'* (Sahar 2017). Mourad (2017) also reported of this aspect of the camp: *'Every night people were dancing, playing music, making barbeques.'* He calls the refugees that acted as volunteers:

*'Lucky guys, because they were lucky at the end. Because they created immediately a social network. And honestly when we look at it today, we notice they are way further with the integration than the others. Of course... They met people, they learned the language easier... When they start to look for a job they know more people.'* (Mourad 2017)

A deep sense of community and belonging has risen around the Park Maximilian, that is not bound to any nation state or other territoriality, but much rather to being in the camp. In other words, if we consider migrants as active political subjects, then the very act of movement is challenging and questioning a police order – a sovereign bound to a territoriality and the categorization of inclusion and exclusion, the division into citizens and non-citizens.

Similarly argues Nando Sigona (2014), who introduces the concept of *Campzenship* to define exactly this form of membership:

*'[A] specific and situated form of membership produced in and by the camp, the complex and ambivalent relationship of its inhabitants with the camp and the ways the camp shapes the relationship of its inhabitants with the state.'* (Sigona 2014: 1)

He too finds fault with Agamben's (2012) conceptualization of the camp as a space of exception as it forecloses the *'complexity of social relations within the camp'* and the tactics of the camp's inhabitants to claim rights and membership (Sigona 2014:1). He further argues that this membership is produced by the camp and is to be seen as a call to depoliticize the exception. He frames the camp as space of everyday life that is more than a space of control over a group that is deemed to represent a threat to society (Sigona 2014: 12).

However, the camp in the Park Maximilian was also a space of control (so was the HBF). Even if not in the traditional sense, of institutional policing, the camp itself developed its own police system. After a moment of chaos, a new police order has established through the stabilizing of the structures, roles and tasks and the emergence of the Platform, that in itself was hierarchical and exclusive.

Yet, due to different reasons this de-classifications were hamstrung. Government authorities reinforced categorizations, not only through portraying the volunteers in the Park as radical left-activists, hence treating those outside of the consensus were as extremists (see Swyngedouw 2007: 66), but also in pointing out the different origin of the migrants in the Park and *warning* the citizens in solidarity with the immigrants, that many of the campers are actually not eligible for the refugee status, and therefore '*illegal immigrants*' (Anika 2017).

And apparently it appealed. Although Sofia (2016) stated that '*there is no division in misery*' and advocated for equal treatment of all migrants, the Platform eventually conflicted with the undocumented immigrants (see hereinafter). Ticktin (2006) draws attention to the danger of humanitarianism that it creates hierarchies and acts as policing, choosing exceptional individuals and excluding the rest. Interviewees reported of volunteers and donators that would only wanted to help and give to Syrians, that are considered as *the poorest*, and simultaneously most likely to receive asylum in Belgium (Rebecca 2017; Sofia 2016; Lukas 2016; Sahar 2017; Lisa 2017). This again reinforced categories and alongside tensions.

The conflicts between different groups, along ideological or ethnic lines re-inscribed categorizations. Many undocumented migrants, *sans-papiers*, were present in the Park. They were thoroughly effected and involved by/in the tensions and conflicts in the Park. Therefore, a closer analysis on presence of the *sans-papiers* in the Park, their incentives, their agenda, the tensions that it created and the conflicts that occurred, is required.

#### 7.4.3 A Division within Migrants? The Presence of Sans-Papiers in the Park.

Many undocumented migrants were present in the camp. They supposedly came in different groups with different agendas but were referred to as one group by most of my interviewees. Again it needs to be stressed that these insights are not representing the truth. It is one particular truth, gained through interviews with persons that all have papers.



Campaign of Sans-Papiers in Park Maximilian  
Source: <http://www.lacapitale.be> [20.07.2017]

*'We are the same because we are different. Against our migration and economic politics. Join the fight of the sans-papiers. Refugee today, sans-papiers tomorrow. All together, the same battle.'* [Campaign of sans-papiers in the Park Maximilian]

The tensions around the sans-papiers issue in the Park Maximilian are complex and manifold. In a nutshell: many volunteers and humanitarian NGOs regarded the provision of services for asylum seekers as their task. Actors were motivated by the medial hype around (foremost Syrian) refugees and the fact that the reception system in place at that time was not sufficient and therefore, hundreds of refugees found themselves in a limbo, without any access to care, which they, according to the Geneva convention, had the right to.

While the sans-papiers, are not accounted for and are forced into a life of undocumented individuals, they are often also being referred to as *illegal*, because they do not have a secure residence status. According to rtbf (2014) an estimated number of 100 000 undocumented immigrants lived in Belgium in 2014. While some live a life of invisibility, others seek for visibility and organized themselves (together with activists of different statuses) in groups and organizations to fight the increasing regulation and



the decrease of possibilities and chances for the immigrant population, who are not eligible for an asylum status, i.e. to receive papers.

They advocate for solidarity with immigrants and speak out against the systemic differentiation of refugees and immigrants, hence they refuse of an identity that is imposed by the police order (Swyngedouw, 2011).

Their struggle was fuelled in the weeks of the Park Maximilian, where former activists were denying them the services that were provided to the refugees. Sofia, who told me that she was beaten up by an *'illegal migrant [...] because they felt betrayed by me because I was helping the refugees at this time and not the illegal migrants and I used to be with them since ages'* (Sofia 2016).

Sahar (2017), who was active in the Housing Unit also reported of a physical fight between one of her volunteer colleagues and a *sans-papier*. Anika, who heard about this fight too, justified the situation in saying: *'But he wasn't aggressive because he was an aggressive person. He was aggressive because these divisions were being made again and again and again'* (Anika 2017).

Sahar reflected on her inner conflict:

*'As I saw them in the corner where they had their space, their tents with a lot of political messages, I felt full heartedly with them. When they made marches around the camp [...] I was full-heartedly with them and their position. Also they were saying: Les réfugiés d'aujourd'hui sont des sans-papiers de demain.<sup>32</sup> And somehow the kling in my head was [= the moment where she realized]; yes, there is a lot of rejection in the asylum system. So if I'm with the refugees, I'm also with the undocumented migrants...' (Sahar 2017)*

But on the other side:

*'When they would come to the housing unit asking for tents, I transformed into this person: No, you're not a refugee arriving just now, so I can't give you a tent. And I had some tension with some of them. So one guy shouted with me: I need a tent more than – like other people – was speaking French and Moroccan Arabic. He was very angry with me. And then I was really sad. Because also my reaction to him was: don't you think that it's unfair that you come and ask for a tent when some people have made the journey for days, walking, and need a place to sleep and – so this was my argument that I was always saying, and their argument was: I need it as much as them. But I had a fierce position.'* (Sahar 2017)

When I asked Chiara about the political message of the *sans-papiers* she answered:

*'[...] undocumented immigrants are always (!) forgotten by people. Refugees it's a new concept of society to say: oh my God the poor Syrians are in a [...] shitty situation, And we have to help them. But [laughs] undocumented immigrants are there (!) for – I don't know – 10 years. The last process of regularization in Belgium was in 2009. [...] and there is no possibilities to be with a legal status here.'* (Chiara 2017)

As already discussed in the theoretical part of this paper, the representation of immigrants has profound effects. In 2015 a (medial) discourse nourished by many images of the hazards, the suffer and the journey of Syrian refugees has strongly contributed to a public perception of refugees as victims, as poor. Whereas, undocumented migrants have to cope with the label of illegality and face structural criminalization.

Anika (2017) informed me about governmental attempts *'trying to curb the solidarity'* Through media and twitter they re-divided the group of refugees and warned:

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<sup>32</sup> *'The refugees of today are the sans-papiers of tomorrow.'*

*'Be careful! Not everybody is from Syria, they're also from Iraq. [...] they started to make classifications. Like the worthy refugees, the unworthy undocumented migrants. [...] They were trying to make classifications of who you should be helping and who you should not be helping.'* (Anika 2017)

Lisa (2017) clearly categorized the immigrants in asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants. She also differentiated the struggles: 'It was about the struggle for people to get shelter. To get what they had a right for.

*'[...] So many established rights in Belgium that exist in Belgium, [were] violated at that time. Like the right to have shelter, the right to have information, the right... At that point it seemed kind of not strategically good and also kind of pointless to start fighting for rights that don't exist.'* (Lisa 2017)

She further elaborated on a discourse populist media and politicians were evoking in saying: *'The whole camp is full of sans-papiers, there is no refugees in the camp'* and further explained that this representation of the inhabitants of the camp *'played a big role. [...] This made a part why the sans-papiers were often not really wanted or excluded'* (Lisa 2017).

According to Chiara (2017) the presence and the actions of CollecActif in the camp, had a multi-tiered meaning: In the act of solidarity, the provision of food for all those present in the Park they aimed to change of the representation of sans-papiers as criminals and demonstrate that *'undocumented migrants are not here to make crazy stuff and they're not terrorists, they are not criminals. But we really do something better for the Brussels society'* (Chiara 2017).

It is these practices that Depraetere et al (2017: 21, 22) refers to as acts of citizenship. In her report on her research in the Park Maximilian she writes that volunteers mistook undocumented immigrants that were active in CollectActifs kitchen as public servants. This anecdote proves that acts of citizenship (acts, where individuals may nonetheless act as citizens, seeking presence in the public sphere and disrupt the categorization of the police and demanding the part of those who have no part (Darling 2014: 165; Rancière 2001, Thesis 8)) are de-classifying and emancipatory.

Also an agenda of the sans-papiers was to combine the struggle of migrants, to communicate that that not all asylum seekers are going to be given an asylum-status, and hence, the refugees are potential future undocumented migrants. Or in Chiara (2017)'s words: *'It was logic for us [CollectActif] that they [refugees] will remain in Belgium. So it was logic for us that we were talking to undocumented immigrants and we explained that'* (Chiara 2017).

Lisa in turn, interpreted this as interfering and as stoking up fear:

*'They were creating a discourse and a fear for the newly arriving, that they were the sans-papiers of tomorrow. And for me that was a problem at that time. Because they kind of created the feeling that there were no fair institutions in place to define whether you get the refugee status – and we can discuss whether they [the institutions] are fair or not [laughs] – I'm also not saying that they are completely fair. But they [sans-papiers] gave a certain feeling, a fear which made that people started doubting to apply for asylum, which was super problematic, because this was – I mean a lot of this people they would get refugee status and somehow they wanted support by saying you will be the sans-papiers of tomorrow, they wanted the support for their cause.'* (Lisa 2017)

In a nutshell, the presence of the sans-papiers created tensions and led to fights. The interviewees reported also of inner conflicts, of being torn between solidarity with the sans-papiers and on the other

hand, following and reinforcing legal categorizations in order to advocate for (existing) refugee rights. And the undocumented migrants, who were fighting to get papers

*'they felt they never had such support for their own issue [...], they felt forgotten by the Platform and by the refugees themselves. They felt that (..) they have less possibilities than the refugees themselves. (...) Because all the attention was on the refugees.'* (Sofia 2016)

#### 7.4.4 Fights

It seems that, especially towards the end, physical fights became more and more frequent. Fights between the newly arrived and the sans-papiers, between asylum seekers (mostly) of different national background and also as mentioned on above, between sans-papiers and members of the Platform. Unfortunately, it was not possible for me to talk to neither a sans-papiers nor to a refugee. Therefore, I am very well aware of the limits of this research, limitations of its perspective. To hear about the experiences and perspective of immigrants living in the Park, would definitely broaden the picture and introduce a crucial viewpoint on the camp and the fights.

Many fights have arisen due to classifications reinforced by institutional differentiations.

*'Iraqis and Syrians [were] prioritized, but not explicitly. Afghans were very present in the camp, getting services like all the others. [There were] fights between Iraqis and Afghans, a lot of fights. In front of the office. But this developed really fast. Then this fights were becoming more and more. Becoming big fights in the camp, towards the end. Between sans-papiers and refugees...'* (Sahar 2017)

### 7.5 WITHDRAWAL OF THE PLATFORM AND THE NGOS FROM THE PARK

The increase of fights in the camp, the worsening of weather-conditions at the end of September and the opening of a pre-reception center lead eventually to a withdrawal of the Platform and the NGOs from the Park and the subsequent dismantling, and eviction by the police reinforced the conflict between the Platform and the sans-papiers.

According to Sofia the camp got out of control:

*'I think we were at a point of no return. With the recruitment, a Jihadist in the camp and with tensions, we had militia more or less, security ones...ran by this guy super violent and religious extremist. We had homeless people, Roma [...]. Violence we had, this is a rumor but I think it happened, a rape on the camp. We had all the misery of Brussels.'* (Sofia 2016)

Mourad, also from the Platform argued similarly:

*'We started to have people being sick, there were fights sometimes. When there was a Syrian Sunnite meeting a Jihad guy you don't understand each other. And there was not enough food, not enough tents, not enough clothes. Tensions were there. We had a (?) issue, we had diseases. We could not as citizens just take the responsibility of keeping on like that. So we said: listen, we have a problem.'* (Mourad 2017)

Sofia talked with MdM about closing the camp. They agreed: *'It did make sense for us to close the Park. After a month we were tired. The fact that there was also such a mixture in the population, the fact that there were more fights between the people.'* (Rebecca 2017) But Rebecca (2017) seemed surprised about a rather sudden decision to withdraw the Platforms activities from the Park.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross opened a pre-reception center in the WTC (World Trade Center), right next to the Park Maximilian. At first, it was only a night-shelter, which lead to the fact that many asylum seekers, who had access to the center, actually preferred to stay in the Park, or came to the Park during the day. For MdM, who is strictly following the policy not to replace any services and to only fill the gaps in an acute lack of care-facilities, the question at that time emerged, whether their presence in the Park is still necessary. Inconsistently Rebecca told me:

*'We did not make any difference, who was coming for our consultation. [...] [But] at the end there was the biggest mixture, because yes, there were the new arrivals but there were also people not depending on the CPAS, but also depending on Fedasil, so some people who were living in the structures and centers and who could see their doctors in the centers, preferred to come to our consultation in Park Maximilian. [...] There were actually people leaving their centers, once they had their centers and coming back to the Park because they preferred living in the Park than being at the centers.'* (Rebecca 2017)<sup>33</sup>

After negotiations between the Platform and city authorities, the center opened all day and provided eventually space for all 1 500 asylum seekers (at the beginning it was only 500 beds for women and children). The Platform, through its decision-making members, also expressed the standpoint, that they are first and foremost filling up the gap in government responsibilities. Thus, they reached the agreement with the government that they would leave the Park Maximilian, when access to shelter was guaranteed for all asylum seekers.

In this stage of affairs, the strategy group of the Platform decided to leave the Park. The decision was passed on to the coordination group, of which a part did not agree with this choice and a vote was made. Neither the general assembly, nor the sans-papiers including the Collectif Actif were consulted, because, according to Sofia (2016), they knew that this decision would not have been approved.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of September, a huge demonstration was organized by the Platform together with many organizations and NGOs, under the name: *Refugees Welcome*. More than 15 000 people attended according to the news-broadcaster rtbf (2015) (Sofia (2016) talked of 23 000 people and Mourad (2017) even of 30 000 demonstrators.) Two days later they announced the departure of all NGOs and the Platform.

Resistance to the dismantlement of the camp came from members of the Platform, which eventually lead to a huge fight within and its split-up; the conflict within the Platform eventually caused the leaving of half of the members of the strategy-group.

But also many sans-papiers refused to leave. They wanted to stay, wanted to stay visible and fight against the restrictive immigration regulations and the selective asylum procedure in Belgium. Mourad (2017), from the Platform, clearly disagreed with the activists *'using'* the great attention and visibility.

*'They were trying to manipulate a little bit the facts and figures and people there. Like trying to call the[m] refugees, even if at some point we left, the organization left, and all the asylum seekers got shelter. [...] They [the activists] were pissed at us. They were really angry because we were leaving.'*

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<sup>33</sup> MdM did treat all patients (no matter what legal status they carried) if they had acute health complaints.

*And all the attention, all the media also went to the other side of the street [to the Maximilianhall], with us. Because the problem was the refugees, as soon as you say refugees, Syrians, you got the headlines.’ (Mourad 2017)*

Mourad’s terminology clearly shows his distinction between refugees and sans-papiers. It affirms the Platform’s attitude towards the undocumented immigrants and proofs Ticktins (2006: 44) argument, that humanitarianism creates hierarchies and chooses exceptional individuals, while excluding others.

Also volunteers, who did not explicitly join the struggle of sans-papiers, did not support the closing of the camp. The strong sense of community that has emerged within the month of the camp has caused strongly emotional responses to the closing of the camp. (Depraetere et al 2017: 43). Many actors in the camp had spent all their spare time in the Park and the experience had changed their lives. *‘I really loved the experience. It changed my life completely. I used to be a Samsung guy; earning a lot of money and I didn’t care about anything except me. And we were a lot like that’ (Mourad 2017).*

According to interviewees, volunteering and being in the Park became the center of many peoples’ lives and that the dismantlement of the Park has therefore left a gap in their lives. Mourad (2017) told me that he heard people questioning themselves: *‘What am I going to do with me life now?’* He explains: *‘Some volunteers had nothing else to do. It gave sense to their lives’ (Mourad 2017).*

Sahar has affirmed Mourad’s comment in stating: *‘If you volunteer full time you kind of have a task. So my bubble was the MaximilianPark. And everything (!) else came later’ (Sahar 2017).* She further told me, that she was happy that she was kept busy in the Park, in a time that was emotionally very hard for her.

## 7.6 AFTER THE PARK

### 7.6.1 Platform Moved to a Building

With the withdrawal of the services, MdM rented a building, the Maximilianhall on the other side of the street of the Park, where activities of the Platform and some NGOs that were present in the Park, would go on, except the CollectActif were excluded, they were not given space there.

*‘We did feel that stopping it from one day to another without having anything in between was too quick. Because people were still arriving and [...] I think we did good to continue in another way. [...] They [the Platform] needed us because the owner of the building didn’t want to sign the lease contract with the Platform. We [MdM] were the instance that was legally responsible for the building.’ (Rebecca 2017)*

But Rebecca (2017) stated that the continuation of the activities in the building did not work out in the way they had initially expected. *‘The Platform became destructed and kind of lost its soul.’* She referred to the split up within the group and added that once the camp was dismantled and people returned into their normal lives:

*‘[The] everyday problems come back and your everyday thing that you do come back and you have to stick with that. And some did get nice job offers from organizations. They kind of preferred that and there were internal fights between people. It became a real personal thing afterwards for some of them. People just lost their motivation. Sadly.’ (Rebecca 2017)*

While Mourad (2017), who is still active in the Platform, reassured me that the Platform and the hall is an open space, welcoming everybody and organized horizontally, Sahar (2017) however, as well as Sofia (2016) and Lisa (2017), told me that at the time the Platform re-formed. She reported of a 'controlling attitude of the new people' (Sahar 2017). Lisa (2017) obviously agrees when she explains how the hall was managed:

*'[It] started becoming a vertical organization. People started leaving. [...] and other people taking charge and then the housing unit became more exclusive [...]. In the building a stark hierarchy developed between those from the reception and those who work for them somehow. [It] was a very small circle of people where you really couldn't enter anymore.'* (Lisa 2017)

A group of sans-papiers meanwhile *'[...] stayed in the Park to symbolize that they were being forgotten. That there was no indoor place for them in the Maximilian hall. And as a statement of their exclusion, they took their small tents and put them in front of the hall. And then the police came and evicted them.'* (Anika 2017) The justification for not giving space to the CollectActif was that cooking in the hall was legally prohibited.

The new Platform decided to only concentrate on asylum seekers and provide services for them. They distinguished between political activism and the rather humanitarian and charitable perspective of providing care facilities to the group of refugees.

*'[...] The citizen Platform would only support refugees and the socio-professional integration for asylum seekers arriving in Brussels. [...] Others should continue doing their activities; CollectActif, la voix des sans-papiers<sup>34</sup>, they were already existing. And trying to use the refugees to get more [attention and support], I didn't agree with that.'* (Mourad 2017)

He is firm:

*'Those people have suffered enough to be manipulated to get more points. [...] we [Platform] have tons of activities. That's what we define. We're not going to protest every week. We're not going to break doors. We're not going to use that. [...], that's the final decision we took at the Platform. We had a couple of, not enemies, but some of them really didn't appreciate it.'* (Mourad 2017)

In November 2015, one month after the closure of the camp again large groups of refugees were arriving and there was no space available in the WTC. Plans of a re-establishment of a camp were discussed and also expected of the migrants who arrived at the Park because the word had spread that the newcomers could camp there. However, the Platform launched a call on Facebook for citizens to privately host a migrant. Within a very brief time-frame enough locals offered space in their homes to receive an asylum seeker.

#### 7.6.2 Transformation in the reception procedure?

As discussed above by Swyngedouw (2014), an event is only discerned as political, when sustainable institutional transformation has resulted.

The answers to the question whether there have been institutional steps to avoid a re-establishment of a refugee and immigrants camp in the city of Brussels were contradicting. While Rebecca (2017), is firm that there were no changes at all, Lisa (2017) told me that the pre-reception that was put in place in

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<sup>34</sup> An organization, translated: the voice of sans-papiers that is fighting for regularization for undocumented migrants.

2015 in order to provide shelter to the arriving asylum seekers in the WTC was still in place and in the process of being institutionalized.

However, currently in the minutes I am writing this text (July 22, 2017), a growing group of transit migrants (an estimated number of 300 people) on their way to the UK are gathering and sleeping in the Park Maximilian. For the moment NGOs are not present in the Park but Vluchtelingenwerk, Ciré (Coordination et Initiatives pour Réfugiés et Étrangers, the Wallonian version of the Vluchtelingenwerk) and MdM together addressed a letter to the state-secretary of Asylum and Migration, Theo Francken. They demand to open the pre-reception center for transit migrants and to provide '*shelter, food and showers*' (Pierre Verbeeren, director of MdM in Bergmans 2017). Local residents are coming to the Park to hand out blankets and coffee for the campers. (Bergmans 2017)

Although the outcome of the current situation can not be discussed in this paper, the events clearly show that the Park Maximilian has become a reference, a node for migrants and refugees as well as those who are in solidarity with, resp. support, the newcomers.

## 7.7 CONCLUSION

In Brussels, as opposed to Vienna, refugees were left without any supply of the federal government. This led to a clear claim articulated by the Platform and other NGOs: The government has to come after its responsibility to guarantee shelter and care provision to all refugees, and only when it has been met, the Platform together with most of the NGOs vacated the Park.

The presence of hundreds of shelter-less refugees led to an accumulation of refugees and locals that gathered to organize the welcoming. Here, as in Vienna, a civil society organization has emerged that was likely to be portrayed as chaotic, unorganized and horizontal. However, also in Brussels the analysis of the space showed, that the Platform had an internal structure and eventually the power to police the space. Interviewees identified the collaboration and alliances with the NGOs, such as MdM and MSF as legitimation for its position in the camp, as well as the Facebook group with 30 000 members, the contact to the media and the negotiations with governmental and city representatives.

The great medial attention helped, so Sofia (2016), to put pressure on the government.

However, in Brussels, as opposed to Vienna, many NGOs were on site, fulfilling specific tasks. While the Platform strongly cooperated with MdM and MSF, they had a rather conflictual relation ship to those, who did not collaborate, such as Vluchtelingewerk.

In the Park Maximilian it came to moments of equality. For a transient period socio-legal categories were abolished. However, this sequence has soon passed due to external factors; the government publicly reinforcing the categorization of migrants by their national origin, and thus the discrimination of persons coming from 'supposedly safe countries', that are not likely to receive asylum in Belgium (Afghans) and the undocumented immigrants. But also internal fights in the camp, between groups of migrants of different origin, between the Platform and the sans-papiers, and between asylum seekers and sans-papiers, reinforced ethnic-legal categories.

The presence of the undocumented immigrants in the Park has evoked political sequences. The sans-papiers enacted equality in a double sense:

- Through announcing that the refugees of today will be the sans-papiers of tomorrow. Although, it created fear among the refugees, as reported by interviewees, the sans-papiers have through this pushed for a discussion of the selectiveness of the asylum system, that eventually leaves many individuals, that were not eligible for the asylum-status, in a place (Brussels) without papers.
- Through acting as citizens in volunteering in the Park and running the kitchen. In organizing the kitchen 'real' democracy is performed; where the unaccounted acquire speech, appropriate voice, where they become visible and perform the capacity to govern. (Swyngedouw, 2014: 128).

Considering the Park as a microcosm, the sans-papiers, that were eventually excluded by the Platform, refused to leave, they demanded the part for those who have no part (Rancière 2001) and were voicing speech that claimed a place in the order of things (Swyngedouw 2011). *'They were visible and loud. Singing, chanting [...]: Solidarité avec les réfugiés! Solidarité avec des sans-papiers!'*<sup>35</sup> (Sahar 2017).

Concluding it can be said, that the structure of the camp (as opposed to the Train station), opened up windows for the political; for political sequences and political arguments<sup>36</sup>. The camp was not merely a space for humanitarian aid, where the *good* locals, helped the *poor* refugees. The many different actors pursuing different interests foreclosed impeded this dichotomy and challenged prevailing socio-legal categories. However, it also evoked conflicts. A tension between political and social movements, between the solving of an *emergency situation* and universal claims for equality, has not been resolved.

As concluded above, the scholars on the political consider conflicts as the pre-requisite and central for the political. The camp though, was characterized by conflicts, of internal and external sources, and this eventually, destroyed it.

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<sup>35</sup> *'Solidarity with the refugees! Solidarity with the sans-papiers!'*

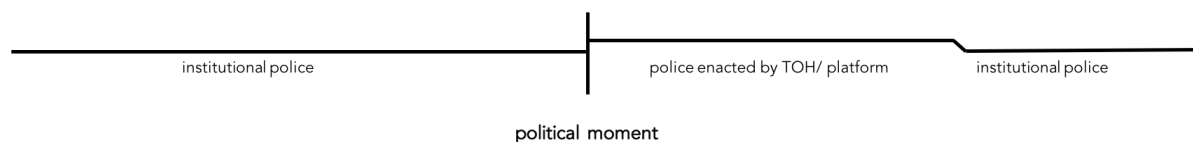
<sup>36</sup> Political argument is *'the demonstration of a possible world'* (Rancière 2001: Thesis 8)



## 8. CONCLUSION

Civil Society, so what?

As conceptualized by scholars (Rancière, Mouffe...) an interruption of an institutional order is a prerequisite for the political. In summer 2015 a rupture occurred. The arrival of an unusual high number of asylum seekers in Europe overstrained and interrupted the usual procedure of refugees' reception. This led to spaces of accumulation of both migrants and locals that were indignant at the gap of care provision by the national governments. The usual procedure was interrupted, the police was suspended and this opened up for spaces that were rather anarchic. Interviewees referred to it as chaos, or mess. For a brief moment there were no hierarchies in place, no one that told anyone where to be, where to put what, what to say – there was no regime of the sensible (Rancière 2001; 2016). In this very rupture and the suspension of the police opened up for the enacting of alternatives to a technocratic and managerial mode of governance, where experts dispose power, the so-called post-political. (Rancière 2016: 23; Swyngedouw 2007: 59) The Vienna Train Station as well as the Park Maximilian were spaces where local volunteers claimed the power over the space towards authorities and established NGOs. They occupied and re-appropriated space. However, the analysis shows that the political moment was transient and soon structures and stark hierarchies emerged that again policed the respective space. These structures arose through power fights that were pursued. These power fights are to be interpreted, according to Rancière (2001; 2016) as politics, since the police order is contested and challenged. Doreen Massey is firm that every space is always made up of a configuration of power (Massey in Mouffe 2012). This has also been confirmed in the Park Maximilian resp. the Hauptbahnhof, where eventually the Platform and Train of Hope won the power struggle and was policing the space.



Interruption happened, transformation occurred and the spaces of analysis were characterized by many conflicts; however, this did not lead to spaces of equality. The emerging organizations rather filled the gap than enact alternatives.

The spaces were not democratic, as hierarchies emerged within the organizations and the civil society organizations had the power to control and police the space. A partition of the sensible (Rancière 2001) had occurred.

Movements that aim for democracy and equality strive for transfiguring of identitarian positions (Swyngedouw 2014; Kaika and Karaliotas 2014:9). However, the dichotomy between locals and refugees, helpers and objects of help, has not been resolved.

In Vienna, it seems that this dichotomy had not been challenged nor questioned. The Train Station turned into a space of humanitarian help, where a friend-enemy (Mouffe, 2012) consensus on the provision of care-facilities for (transit) migrants occurred as consensus, and the Train of Hope (eventually) cooperated with city-authorities and NGOs (as long as these did not issue commands, but cooperated) and even received governmental funding. While in Vienna every migrant was given shelter,

the situation in Brussels differed; the Camp as a space where refugees did not only rush through before going to a shelter or continuing the journey, but stayed for longer periods of time, allowed for the refugees to engage in the organizational structure of the Camp. These acts of citizenship (Rygiel 2011; 2012; Işın 2005; 2009) enabled a temporary suspension of the helper – victim dichotomy.

However, the only group that actively claimed equality were the *sans-papiers* in the Park Maximilian. They challenged and questioned the categorizations, the citizen- non-citizen divide and border-regimes. They were (again) excluded even within the microcosm Park Maximilian, they were positioned outside the consensus of humanitarian aid, that was “helping” the “poor” refugees. However, the *sans-papiers* in the Park Maximilian refused the identity imposed by the police order in saying “the refugees of today are the *sans-papiers* of tomorrow,” denying a differentiation between immigrants (Swyngedouw, 2011). The presence of the *sans-papiers* disrupted the regime of the sensible (Rancière 2001, Thesis 7) and made visible and performed (Swyngedouw 2011; 2014), the wrong of the situation.

While Dikeç and Swyngedouw (2016: 9) identify a shift and distinguish between Political – and Social Movements, the present research showed that these movements can appear simultaneously but are conflicting each other. I identify a strong tension between political and humanitarian approaches, since humanitarianism always looks for the poorest (Ticktin 2006) and thereby creates and reinforces categories and hierarchies. This tension created many conflicts in the cases studied and manifested in fights in Brussels. Equality was not possible because there was always – even if in Brussels, for a moment, it was suspended – there was always us and the refugees. Neither the Train Station nor the Park Maximilian exceeded categorizations, but much rather reproduced them.

Mouffe (2012: 55-56), acknowledging this tension calls for a non-moralistic approach of politics. She claims that a charitable approach of helping the ‘poor’ is unable to deal with the root of the problem. Arriving refugees are only the peak of geo-political problems, but leaving those arriving, therefore without any infrastructure and care provision is not a desirable, nor satisfactory solution.

The present thesis has demonstrated that there is a gap between the abstract conceptualizations of Rancière, Mouffe and Swyngedouw and the empirical ground. Even though preconditions of the political occurred (interruption, transformation, conflicts), these spaces are not to be considered as political, as spaces of equality or democratic spaces. Political moments and sequences did occur, such as the very moment where spaces were occupied and transformed, the chaos moments, where the police was suspended. These moments of anarchic interruption are for Rancière (2001) political moments, the period of declassifications in the Park Maximilian are, according to Rancière (2001) political arguments, the demonstration of another world possible.

However, these moments were transient and did not result in changes.

There was no institutional transformation, so according to Swyngedouw (2014:132), these events are much rather to be interpreted as pre-political events, (while Rancière (2016) strictly opposes any institutional co-operation or integration).

To resolve the dilemma between theory and practice, I want to refer back to Chantal Mouffe who reminds us of Jacques Derrida’s notion of Democracy to Come. Which allows us to strive for an ideal that is always to come, and reminds us that another world is possible (Derrida, in Mouffe 2012: 14).

Lukas, who is familiar with these theories, was an example of how these theories trigger down in practice. He disagreed with the Platform’s humanitarian approach and aimed for universal equality

when he says: *'The initial idea was to combine the struggle of sans-papiers with asylum seekers. To show that the good refugees and the bad sans-papiers are the same'* (Lukas 2016).

This proves that the conceptual discourse triggered a discussion and lead to a discourse that went well beyond the mere crisis-resolving. However, the established consensus in the Camp was rather of humanitarian nature, claiming the (existing) rights for a specific group, than of political nature. Those who aimed for equality eventually conflicted with those who gained the decision-making power and were excluded (/ not considered) and/or left themselves.

Thus I conclude that the movements that occurred around the Central Train Station in Vienna and the Park Maximilian in Brussels are not to be considered as political.

### Outlook

For me, this research evoked great enthusiasm and curiosity for the spaces of arrival organized by emerging civil society organizations in The Summer of Migration 2015 and further research is aspired. I want to broaden the perspective by looking into literature of and on humanitarianism and dig into this tension between political and social movements, further look into the literature on Social Movements, to find out more about internal conflict potential, the conflicts that go along the establishment of Movements.

I believe there is much empirical material to be collected. This thesis' point of departure were the civil society organizations, but for a comprehensive understanding of the spaces of analysis the perspectives of the migrants (undocumented or refugees) are crucial, as are the viewpoints of authorities and other actors on site. Since at the Park or the Train Station every person pursued different intentions and followed different agendas, there was not the one camp or one train station, but as many as persons present.

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# Appendices



## APPENDIX 1

### QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDELINE BRUSSELS

- About the Person
- About the Organization
  - o Why
  - o Which actions
  - o Who?
  - o How funded
  - o How organized
  - o French/Flemish pendant – if/how there's cooperation
- Park
  - o Camp for whom? What aim?
  - o Role of Organization / Person
  - o When/how got there
    - Called? By whom? Own initiative?
  - o Which actors are identified at Park?
  - o Networks? Cooperations? With other actors, NGOs, GOs
  - o How was the space organized?
  - o How was the camp organized?
  - o Who was in charge?
  - o Conflicts / tensions
- Plateforme
  - o How communicated? Relationship?
  - o With whom?
  - o Who pulled the strings?
  - o How important Plateforme for the happening?
  - o Representation? Media, political negotiations, claims
- Hierarchies
  - o Space of equality?
  - o Relation between: volunteers – refugees - sans-papiers – Rome – Homeless – Plateforme – NGOs – Police – city authorities – state authorities
- Sans – papiers
- Volunteers
  - o Who?
  - o For what reason
  - o Conflicts / tensions
  - o How it worked when they came?
- End / Eviction
  - o When?
  - o How?
  - o Why?
  - o Who decided?
  - o Voices that wanted to keep it?

- After Park:
  - o What's the outcome?
  - o Has anything changed?
    - Brussels
    - Civil society
    - Personally
    - Organization
  - o What's left from the wave of solidarity?
  - o Still cooperating with plateforme/GOs/NGOs?
- Mental Map

## APPENDIX 2

### QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDELINE VIENNA

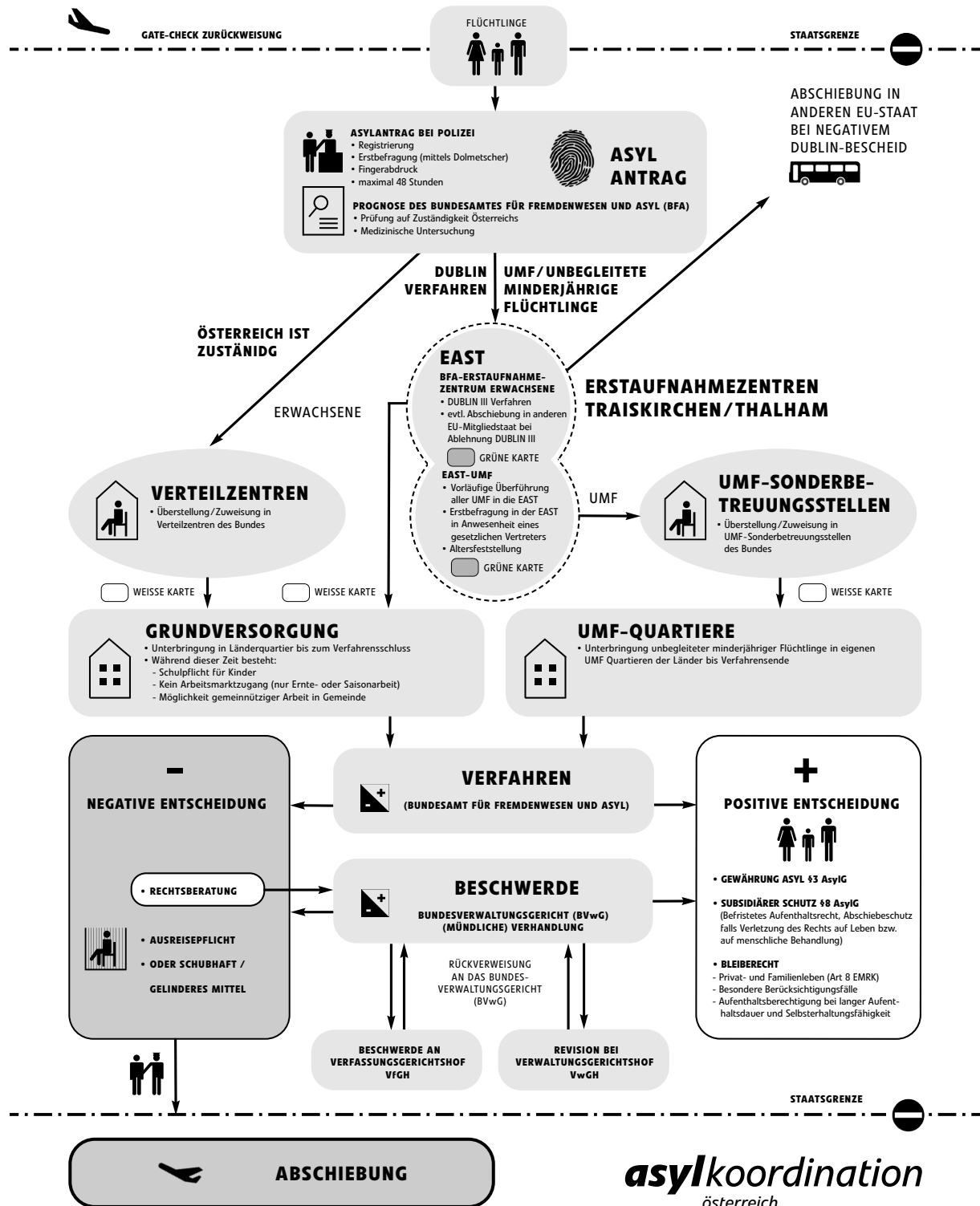
- About the Person
- About the Organization
  - o Why
  - o Which actions
  - o Who?
  - o How funded
  - o How organized
- Train Station
  - o Camp for whom? What aim?
  - o Role of Organization / Person
  - o When/how got there
    - Called? By whom? Own initiative?
  - o Which actors are identified at the Trainstation?
  - o Networks? Cooperations? With other actors, NGOs, GOs
  - o How was the space organized?
  - o How was the camp organized?
  - o Who was in charge?
  - o Conflicts / tensions
- Train of Hope
  - o How communicated? Relationship?
  - o With whom?
  - o Who pulled the strings?
  - o How important Train of Hope for the happening?
  - o Representation? Media, political negotiations, claims
- Hierarchies
  - o Space of equality?
  - o Relation between: volunteers – refugees – Rome – Homeless – Plateforme – NGOs – Police – city authorities – state authorities - ÖBB
- Volunteers
  - o Who?
  - o For what reason
  - o Conflicts / tensions
  - o How it worked when they came?
- End
  - o When?
  - o How?
  - o Why?
- After 2015
  - o What's the outcome?
  - o Has anything changed?
    - Vienna

- Civil society
  - Personally
  - Organization
- What's left from the wave of solidarity?
- Still cooperating with Train of Hope/GOs/NGOs?
- Hauptbahnhof vs. Westbahnhof?
  - Conflicts / tensions?
  - How different?
    - Organizational
    - Volunteers
  - Which actors on Westbahnhof?
- Mental Map

## APPENDIX 3

### ASYLUM SYSTEM IN AUSTRIA

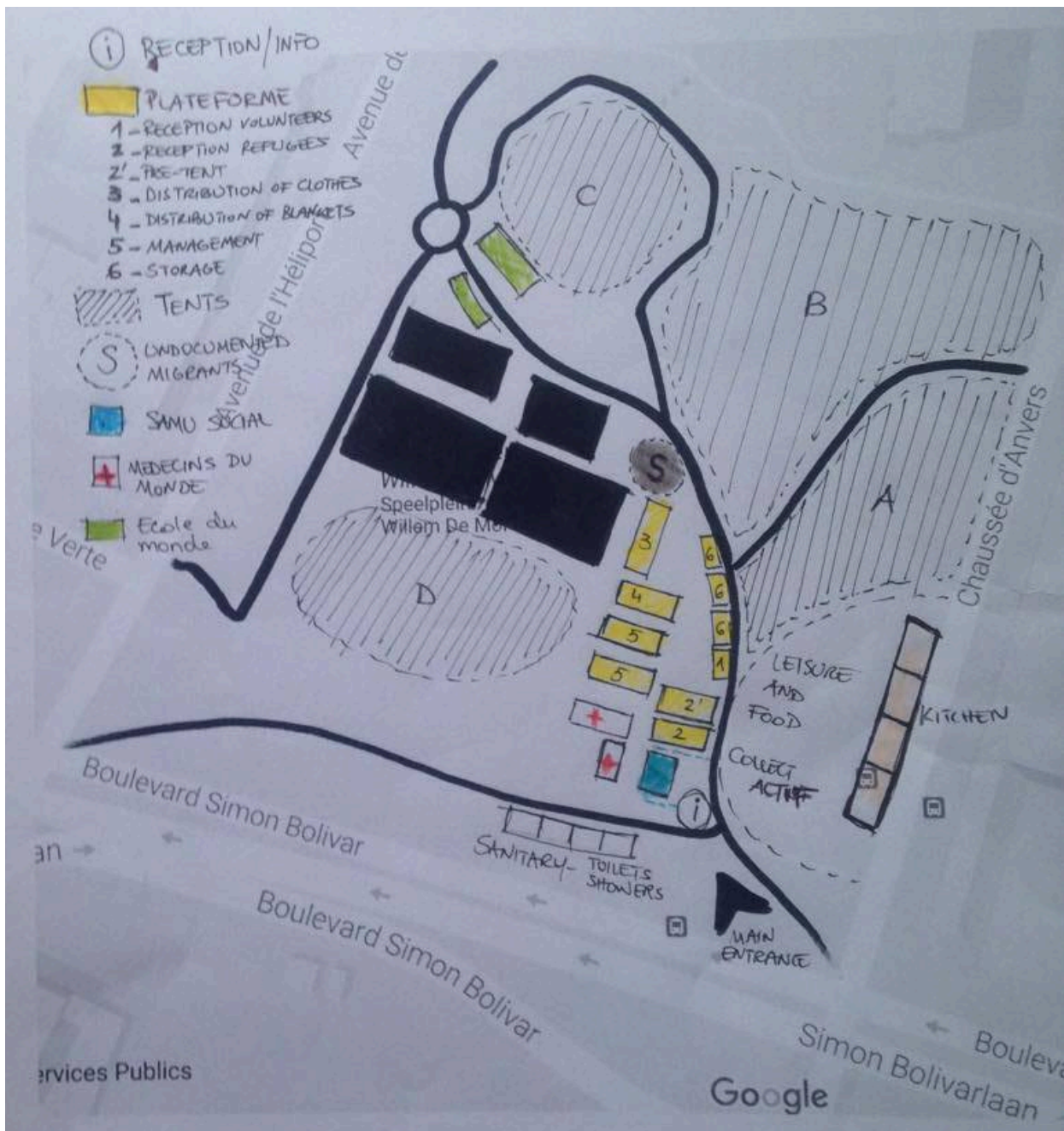
# Das Asylverfahren seit 2015



Source: <https://www.asyl.at/de/themen/asylverfahren/> [20.07.2017]

## APPENDIX 4

### MAPS OF THE PARK MAXIMILIAN



Source: Hala Dela in: Depraetere et al (2017)





## APPENDIX 5

### DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF TRAIN OF HOPE AT HAUPTBAHNHOF WIEN

The teams that have emerged were:

#### Organization Team – Meldesammelstelle

The coordination and organization team, that also partly formed the board of the association, will be elaborated on later. Their main task was the overall coordination of the sub-teams, the communication with the ÖBB, the City and state authorities, social media appearances, press relations and of the donations...

#### Social Media

#### Two food serving counters

Of which one was carried out by the *Sikh Help Austria* organization.

#### Medical aid

A hospital emerged at the Hauptbahnhof with 3 000 nurses and 700 doctors, all volunteers.

Markus, a qualified mail nurse with extensive job experience in event management, who called himself the leader of the field hospital, arrived at the train station on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September. He reported that the access to the refugees was denied by a member of the TOH and that he went back home after having delivered water bottles. Several hours later he returned, went to the medical care unit and took over from the medical orderly who had been there for 50 hours. *'Since I am active as a nurse, I know many people. So I started to build up the medical supplies. I took over the lead of this department and within the next 14 days we, or actually I, organized medication, manpower, equipment, supplies.'* After his arrival Markus called up various people and appealed for their support: the director of the labor union, Sonja Wehsely (the town deputy for Health and Social Affairs), Peter Hacker<sup>37</sup> (the director of the nursing school), the president of the Medical Association, the president of the Chamber of Pharmacists and many others.

A medical doctor was responsible for the management of the medical department. The coordinator for the day-to-day operations was rotated daily. Markus coordinated and organized the department as a whole. *'My task was to recruit, and to negotiate with the upper institutions, [...] because I was the one with most contacts. I was the front-face of the team, towards the politicians, police or institutions.'* Even though the TOH publicly presented the medical aid as part of their organization, Markus clearly stated that they were not part of the TOH. But *'my skill is it of course, that has worked from the beginning on, to convey to people, that they're holding the reins.'* Thus, he did not want to be involved in what he called the 'games' of the Train of Hope and operated independently with a clear structure (as opposed to the 'chaotic organization' of the TOH).

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<sup>37</sup> Peter Hacker is the director of Fonds Soziales Wien, the City's department for social services. He was therefore, responsible for the coordination of the refugees in the City of Vienna.



They operated in a triage-system; the urgency of each case was judged through pre-screening and classification system of from 1 to 5. The individuals were then handed over to the appropriate nurse or doctor. In the rush of the situation the medical aid station defied the registration of patient data, which is actually required. *'We had ,5 minutes after the train stopped, to run through the train with 50 people and to check. Is somebody actually dying? Somebody fainting? Anyone in acute need of care? And for that we had 5 minutes. There I can't go with a piece of paper and start to ask questions like: How old are you? Do we have a translator here?'* (Markus)

Markus and his team made an arrangement with Train of Hope to incorporate a team of 5 psychologists (*'that means they were then not part of us anymore, but part of the TOH.'* (Markus)) that had the right to send volunteers home who were overtired and exhausted.

### Translators and Transport

These two departments merged as it turned out that a strong cooperation among them was needed. The transport team was responsible for the trains; to see when they departed, when they arrived, to know how many people were arriving and consequently, how many volunteers were needed at the track to receive 200 refugees, *'Because we had to get the people out of the trains. At the beginning people didn't get off the trains, because they were afraid. They didn't know where they were and they didn't know whether they were safe. We had to explain to them in Arabic and Farsi: You are safe, we are your welcome team and we have provided services for you'* (Monika). Hence the transport and translator teams were interdependent, and therefore combined, with two team leaders

More than 500 volunteers worked as translators at the Hauptbahnhof. Most of them, young adults and teenagers, spoke Farsi or Arabic as native language and were members of the *Muslim Youth Organization of Austria* (orig: Muslimische Jugend Österreich). Translators received orange safety vests and laminated name tags with the name, a picture of the person and a numerical-code. *'We repeatedly had cases where natives informed us that people were not translating correctly. We made sure that these people didn't translate under our [TOH] name. Because it harms people, when misinformation is communicated* (Nina).'*'* Monika told me that it was her responsibility to know all translators and that a certain ability to judge character was required as a team-leader. *'And then you will notice if someone is trustworthy or not. Because in the end we need to trust the people. [...] Meaning, we give them the information and whether the accurate information gets communicated, is another question...'* (Monika).'*'* She further reported of smugglers who mixed in the translators, and that some people who were supposedly translators in fact sold train tickets for twice the price.

After forming a legal association, they started to collect the data of the translators (which they were not allowed to do before due to privacy protection laws) Thus, an internal control-system emerged. Monika asked her friends to keep an eye on certain people who seemed unreliable and cooperated with the police and the ÖBB security. Once she called the police to check on a man. *'With this guy it turned out, that nothing was wrong. He was just ultra weird, really (!), but according to the police he was totally clean.'* (Monika)'

The translators were grouped in sub-teams of 5 people. Each group had a walkie-talkie and consisted of two-three Farsi and two-three Arabic speakers. Monika explained that this was the best way for her to communicate with them and to keep an overview of the whereabouts and activities of everyone.

### Information Table

For refugees, about the train schedule, asylum procedure and places for registration, (emergency) shelters...

### Depots

One for food, another one cloths and hygiene products. The depots were in tents and containers in the outside-area. Donations were not only stored there, but also sorted.

### Infrastructure and logistic

Technical details such as electricity connections at the train station. This team worked in cooperation with the ÖBB.

### Reception of Donations

Thousands of locals brought donations. They were all collected at one Donation Reception. Markus recounted that *'the Train of Hope only needed to make a posting on Facebook: 'We need this, that and this'. You had to take it offline after 15 or 20 minutes, because you received boxes over boxes of the respective objects.'*

Although all people I have interviewed went there first to deliver goods, there was an informal distinction between people who 'only' donated and active volunteers. Clemens stated: *'I think it was partly that people were, like: Okay, I'll bring things and get an impression of what is going on, who they [the refugees that they heard of in the (social) media and who were the topic in the public discourse at the time] are, that just arrived and so. [...] That's for sure a good reason to just go there and have a look.'* But then Clemens (and so did other interviewees) stressed that this is *'[...] also okay. Because everybody contributes what he can contribute, wants to contribute.'*

### Registration and Coordination of volunteers

The registration of volunteers was not compulsory, so Nina and Monika. But collecting names and phone numbers did not only help for control and coordination purposes, but also to contact people in case of a lack of volunteers. Additionally, registered volunteers received a sticker with their name and the languages they speak and were therefore recognizable. Furthermore, they were insured for the time being at the train station. At the end more than 6 000 different individuals were registered.

Julian stated that everybody who came could do whatever he/she wanted to do and whatever her/his skills and interests were. *'With us it was a bit chaotic, but still always structured in a certain way but one could evolve and unfold there and really engage one. [...] When someone thinks they know how to organize the stockage, then he/she should do it.'* (Julian) Clemens and Lukas, on the other hand, told me that when they arrived, they went to the volunteer registration and were clearly assigned a task. Lukas boiled water and collected garbage, Clemens sorted cloths. Lukas thought that after staying on and acquiring the skills and bringing in the time to further engage, that he could have asked for other tasks or intervened and more actively engage. Now they followed the orders. Neither of them got an insight of the structure of the TOH, but experienced that there was a group of people there who were responsible for the organization. Lukas called it 'organization-team', Clemens named it the 'central' or 'leading team'.

### Cloths distribution

Julian used the cloth distribution as an example to not only show the flexibility and the permanent adaptation of Train of Hope, but also to illustrate that they (compared to the Westbahnhof) met the needs of the refugees. To avoid the littering of cloths, since in the hustle many people took whatever they could get and sorted it out afterwards, the Train of Hope arranged the *distribution of cloths 'like a second hand shop. There was an area for women and one for men and always enough people inside and there you had the quiet to choose something.'* (Julian) Julian told me (proudly) that they had a dressing room and that after these adjustments (starting point being a table on which cloths were put) hardly any cloths ended up in the bins or on the floor anymore.

### Hygiene product distribution

### Legal Consulting

Next to voluntary lawyers and judges, the Higher Regional Court provided legal practitioners in training. In Austria, prospective judges need to complete a compulsory internship in a social organization. Through an arrangement between the TOH and the Court, the trainees could do their internship at the Hauptbahnhof in giving legal advice to asylum seekers.

### Lost-Missing Persons

### Child Care

In addition of these above listed departments there were also so called *runners* collecting and transferring information via the Melde-Sammelstelle (central point of information). Although walkie-talkies were in use<sup>38</sup> there was *'[...] Information that had to be transferred orally (Julian)'* or because it was *'[...] the only possible way. [...] Because even with the walkie-talkies it didn't [always] work, because in this certain area there was a dead spot'* (Nina).

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<sup>38</sup> In general, each team coordinator had one Walkie-Talkie, except in Translation; see above.