The Phantom of the Neighborhood: Reactions Toward a Planned Emergency Shelter for Asylum Seekers in a Berlin Suburb

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STATUTORY DECLARATION

I declare that I have authored this thesis independently, that I have not used other than the declared sources/resources, and that I have explicitly marked all material which has been quoted either literally or by content from the used sources.

Abstract

In 2015, an estimated number of 1.1 million refugees had arrived in Germany. Shelters were hastily established. In their search for available space, local authorities decreed the occupancy of facilities in wealthy, ethnically rather homogeneous quarters which until then had little to none contact to other strata of society. In some cases, this has led to forms of NIMBYism (not-in-my-backyard) against such shelters. When the 'LAGeSo', the office which is responsible for the distribution and accommodation of newly arriving refugees in the state of Berlin, had announced plans to convert a former fabric into a shelter for at least 1000 people in a northern district of the city, an outcry and heated discussions filled local online news portals. Against the backdrop of right-wing politics becoming increasingly acceptable in public discourse, this MA thesis is an ethnographic inquiry about attitudes of middle-class residents toward the planned shelter in the neighborhood. Interviewees' statements were assessed by using Michael Dear's framework of NIMBY conflicts and embedded in a history of the neighborhood as a changing place due to increasing suburbanization and a history of migration to Germany. Thus, the academic concept of NIMBYism – evolved out of the discipline of human geography, yet analytically constrained to the backyard – is further developed in light of contemporary events and broader historical trajectories. The findings suggest that contrary to research on NIMBYism so far, residents' reactions to planned facilities are much more dependent on global and historical developments than on just local ones.

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Abbreviations

AfD	Alternative for Germany
ASOG	General Law for Security and Public Order
Bamf	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
BIM	Berlin Real Estate Management
BVV	District Representatives Council
BZA	District Administration
CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CKV	Christian Krawinkel Portfolio Managment
FRG	German Federal Republic
GDR	German Democratic Republic
LAGeSo	State Office for Health and Social Matters
Pegida	Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident
SenGeSo	Senate Administration Health and Social Matters
WIR	Welcome in Reinickendorf
WW I	World War One
WW II	World War Two

1. Introduction

As the stream of migrants into Germany seemed to continue infinitely, a major weekly summarized the mood of perplexity by headlining an article 'Why are they still coming?' In the face of a massive influx of people, a feeling of congestion permeated the discourse on administrative capacities, the citizens' willingness to help the newcomers, and in general, the country's ability to absorb and integrate the incoming people. The welfare state would implode and the housing and labor markets collapse. Reports of outbreaks of violence in the reception camps had shocked the public. When reading about the European crisis of 2015, which usually is referred to as the refugee crisis, this tone sounds all too familiar. Yet, the above mentioned article was published in February 1990 after around 840,000 people, mostly GDR citizens and Germans from Eastern Europe, had migrated to West Germany in the precedent year (DER SPIEGEL 1990).

A quarter century later, in 2015, approximately 1.1 million people were registered upon arrival in Germany. It was the largest migration stream in a single year since the end of WW II (BAMF 2016).[1] For a short historical moment, from June to October 2015, it seemed that German politics and the Germans finally had come to terms with the nation being a country of immigration. People gathered at bus and train stations, applauded the arriving refugees and donated clothes, blankets, baby buggies, food, and their spare time to an extend that exceeded the actual demand. Watching the news left the impression that the whole country is on foot, pragmatically providing support were it was needed.

On the last day of August – after already ca. 400,000 refugees had come to Germany that year and four days before she decided to open the borders for those people still waiting in

[1] Meanwhile, the BAMF corrected the number down to 890,000. The top three countries of origin are Syria (326,872), Romania (213,037), and Poland (195,666). However, for the latter two the netto-immigration is at ca. 40% due to emigration that year. The top three non-EU countries of origin are Syria, Afghanistan (94,902), and Iraq (73,122). For these, net-immigration is almost at 100%. Overall, 476,649 asylum applications were submitted, a number that nearly covers the registered immigrants from all non-EU countries (BAMF 2016a).

Hungary – Chancellor Angela Merkel proclaimed 'We can do that!' ('Wir schaffen das!'; Süddeutsche Zeitung 2016). Her plea meant that the country is politically and logistically capable of taking in so many refugees, but even more that its people would not run away from the moral obligation to do so. Yet, Merkel did not just hop on a train already rolling toward an inclusive, solidary society. Rather, she needed to calm emerging voices of discontent and an alarming rise of violence against minorities. In retrospective, her claim was proven to be a faulty assessment. The numbers of those who could not be convinced to see themselves included in that 'We' were drastically underestimated.

Over a thousand crimes against asylum shelters were committed in 2015, a 16 times increase in comparison to 2013. Violent hate crimes against minorities have risen by 87 percent in the same period. The outburst was so severe that Amnesty International accused the government of failing its citizens in their right to physical integrity on a scale that comes close to complicity with the perpetrators (Amnesty International 2016). Such developments are possible in the absence of the state,[2] but also when perpetrators could feel authorized by a silent, indifferent, or even tacitly approving society.

The rise of right-wing extremism goes hand in hand with the rise of right-wing politics and movements. Resistance against the politics of open borders was formed by a broad spectrum, ranging from openly racist parties to public intellectuals to local citizen initiatives. The 'concerned citizen' has become a belittling buzz word under whose disguise racism is articulated on a scale not seen for a long time. The nationalist and racist party AfD has gained considerable double-digit percentages in recent elections in 8 different federal states. Overall, the party that agitates against refugees, immigration, and multiculturalism in general is now

[2] Culprits rarely have to fear conviction. Out of 222 arson attacks on refugee hostels in 2015, only in 12 cases files were charged, resulting in 4 convictions (Zeit online 2015).

represented in 14 state parliaments. The right-wing movement Pegida could mobilize tenths of thousands every week to demonstrate in Dresden against the 'islamization of the occident'.

Where do all the xenophobes suddenly come from? Generic media answers speak of losers of globalization living in communities devastated by neoliberal policies and de-industrialization who feel forgotten by the 'liberal elites'. Usually, reporters head out to some economically hard-hit place, make photos of run-down buildings and interview former workers now living on the dole (for example, Zeit online 2017). The argument here is not that such places and people do not exist. But there are two problems with this kind of explanation. First, it cannot account for the sheer numbers of people turning to right-wing positions. Long-term studies about the development of authoritarian and right-wing tendencies in Germany show that these attitudes continuously have creeped into the 'middle' since 2002 (Decker et al. 2016). Second, the attention paid to the visible forms of discontent with refugee politics, the violence and the noisy political movements, has a blind spot. Radicalization means a departure from mindsets perceived as moderate, normal. As long as people remain within that normalcy, there seems to be nothing to be worried about. However, hypocrisy, bigotry, and prejudice flourish likewise among the 'normal people'.

This MA thesis is an inquiry about middle class opinions and attitudes toward a planned refugee shelter in a Berlin suburb called Heiligensee. It is located on the north-western edges, sharing the border with the federal state of Brandenburg. The LAGeSo, a local government institution which is responsible for the distribution and accommodation of newly arriving refugees in the state of Berlin, had announced plans to convert a former factory for carton packaging into a reception camp for at least 1000 people.[3] The factory which ceased to produce in 2014 is in immediate vicinity to wealthy, middle class single-family house settlements. Thus, the refugees literally would have a look into the well-maintained gardens of the affluent. As it

[3] The target number of inahbitants swayed between 500 and 2500, but never was verified by any official instance.

could be expected, an outcry and heated discussions filled local online news portals after the plans became public (cf. Kiezkatze 2017, Die Dorfzeitung 2017). Hereby, residents expressed an attitude which came to be known as NIMBYism (not-in-my-backyard) – while they in principle approve the reception of refugees, their accommodation in specifically *this* neighborhood would not be possible for an array of reasons.

The means by which NIMBY residents' fears, concerns, or bigot worldviews translate into real exclusive practices are different from those sketched out above. They are usually more civic, political and economic capital is deployed by writing letters to local politicians or engaging lawyers. The outcome, however, is the same: A reception camp cannot be built, a new location has to be found. Some refugees somewhere in Germany living in tents at an airport or in overcrowded barracks have to wait longer for an accommodation that is decent at least in terms of construction and sanitary standards.

It was this kind of hypocrisy I became interested in. Why are these residents so resilient against shelters for refugees, but state that Merkel's decision to open the borders was right? Are they just racists as well, only better suited? Do they not see the contradiction? How can one 'sell' refugee asylums to people in economically and structurally weak districts or areas when even those who have the best conditions refuse to host them? These were questions I have asked myself. After all, it is the still-strong middle class that decides elections that will have an influence on the political course of action. It is the middle class that will teach, serve and get served by, employ and get employed by, sell to and buy from the newcomers. Approximately a million new actors have entered the grid of social interaction. Ultimately, it will be the middle class and their actions which collectively decide over the success or failure of this chapter in German immigration history. When I came to know about the case of Heiligensee, I decided to do an anthropology of the 'normal'.

What I have found after visiting Heiligensee for several times did not match the first impression. The people who I have met during fieldwork were overwhelmingly open-minded, warm-hearted, and reflective about their own life in the context of the European crisis. This does not mean that the reception camp was a self-evident necessity for them. Caught between own moral standards in favor of refugees on the one hand and practical restraints in daily life due to already occupied schools and sports facilities on the other hand, taking a definite position regarding the implications of the upcoming facility was not easy. An overstrained and partly incompetent bureaucracy and hysterical media reports on criminal refugees added their share to the impression of an emergency state in which the authorities had lost control. In the end, the reception camp never came. Its opening was delayed several times, but it remained a phantom, not without having haunted people's visions of the neighborhood before it eventually died.

Playing 'Waiting for Godot' in a Berlin suburb at Christmas can evoke uncomfortable feelings, especially when Godot should have been already operational for hosting people fleeing from warzones. In this season of good living and reciprocal gift exchange some people may have reflected on their privileged life. Others might have been glad that some visible misery next door did not come yet. The character of the phantom was volatile, and a residents' imagination of it could only form in the interplay of rumors and speculations, a bit of information here and an occasional newspaper article there. The rest had to be filled in by the people themselves. Personal and family history, political preferences, the experienced everyday state-citizen interaction, the functionality of public services, the perceived long-term developments of the quarter, the district, the city, the country – all those and more pieces feed into the speculative assessment of what is not there yet.

1.1. Research Question and Hypothesis

Are those residents refusing the shelter racists and xenophobes, unreflexively repeating the plain claims of populists and demagogues? Some of them certainly are, but the argument of this thesis is that when asking about populism and the middle class, the analysis has to be uncoupled from what at a first glance is thought to be the point of discussion. In this case, this would be the migrants and the shelter. However, working along a stimulus-response pattern (refugees - fear) is populists' business, and whenever I have asked a resident in the beginning of my research whether he or she would have any problems with refugees living next door, what answer did I get? 'No, but…' Often, the answers revealed issues, concerns, and worldviews that have developed way before the European crisis with no actual linkage to it.

The research question in thesis is thus: How did historical and spatial configurations in Heiligensee lead to the outcome of socio-spatial exclusion of refugees? Auxiliary questions include: How do these configurations look like? How did they emerge? How do residents express their approval or rebuttal of the planned shelter? Along which lines do they argue? Out of this, the theoretical question emerges: How can the concept of NIMBYism be further developed in order to account for historical trajectories and global events which influence localized processes?

My hypotheses are: First, populist tendencies among the middle class have little linkage to the events of the European crisis. They are rather rooted in the citizen-state nexus and overall processes of change. Second, there is no direct link between wealth and NIMBYism. Third, exclusive practices by residents develop when opportunities for participation are missing.

1.2. Methods

How to assess a neighborhood's reaction toward a facility that is not there yet? How to assess residents' opinions when one and the same statement can mean everything on a scale

from full approval to full disapproval? For example, when asking people what they think how the reception camp will affect their lives, the statement ‘Things definitely will change here’ may mean that people enjoy the outlook of having new neighbors or that they expect the worse. A conspiratorial blink of an eye, intonation, and body language give each statement a specific spin. Furthermore, some people refused to explicitly state their opinion when I did introduce myself as a researcher. Knowing that I would make notes.

The findings in this thesis are the result from 9 visits to the field site between June 2016 and April 2017. I have followed four paths of research. First, to sense the mood in the neighborhood, I have visited the two local supermarkets and one bakery. One market is close to the planned shelter, in front of the train station in the north-western corner of the quarter. The other is directly vis-à-vis the facility. The bakery is located near the other train station south-east. Due to their location, these markets are almost exclusively used by local residents. There, I have started informal conversations and field notes were written about 27 of those.

Second, in order to understand the dynamics going on in the quarter, three formal, semi-open interviews were conducted with people closely connected to the life in the neighborhood: The priest of the parish Heiligensee, the editor in chief of the local monthly ‘Die Dorfzeitung’, and a columnist of that same paper. The questions for the interviews and informal conversations were oriented on Dear’s framework of NIMBYism and inquired about characteristics of the neighborhood, the facility, and the clientele.

Third, to cover the period from October 2015 to July 2016, I have analyzed over a 130 comments to 20 reports, editorial or by residents, on an online platform for local issues. In addition, hours of audio recordings of monthly BVV-sessions from December 2015 to December 2016 regarding the shelter were analyzed. In such sessions, the district administration (BZA) has to answer to appointed district representatives (from the BVV) and citizens alike on developments in the area and on the work of the BZA.

Fourth, to cover the historical development of Heiligensee from 1990 onward, official reports and statistics on the city development were analyzed. These allow to trace processes of (sub-) urbanization in Berlin and contribute to a deeper embedding of the case in long-term trajectories.

The thesis proceeds as follows: The second chapter looks into the theories on NIMBYism. Chapter three visits the field site to lay out the spatial configurations of the neighborhood and embeds it into broader developments of suburbanization as a place-making force. Chapter four traces major waves of immigration in Germany and thus embeds the case in a historical context. Chapter five interprets the findings of my ethnographic field work in light of the preceding parts.

2. Theoretical Framework

Solely thinking in terms of 'We – Them' relations along ethnic lines is not fruitful when asking about populist tendencies among the middle class in context of the European crisis. The introductorily anecdote from 1990, when anger and fear were projected on ethnic Germans, shows that repulsive attitudes in face of a sudden influx of migrants do not necessarily build on the ethnic characteristics of the newcomers. Furthermore, the phenomenon of the so-called 'Wutbürger' (enraged citizen) who relentlessly engages against construction projects of all kinds displays similarities to the case in Heiligensee regarding justification and means of enforcement of the own will.[4] It thus makes sense to look at the case at hand through the lens of what was framed as NIMBY conflicts.

The NIMBY syndrome – the acronym standing for *not-in-my-backyard* – became a popular term in the US during the 1980s. Residents had started to contest decisions on land use in their immediate neighborhood for controversial facilities such as wind turbines, waste disposal sites, wastewater treatment plants, prisons, shelters for homeless, lunatic asylums etc. Administrative authorities planning the location of a facility crucial to the functioning of a larger area, city, or even entire region faced massive resistance by the population in whose quarter this facility finally should stand (Gerdner and Borell 2003).

Three notions are inherent in the concept of NIMBY: First, at the core of each NIMBY conflict stand risks and costs of a facility subjectively assessed and perceived by the local population against an allegedly rationally made siting decision in the name of the common good. Second, NIMBYs are not fundamentally oppositional against a technology or facility as such, but only, as the name says, if it is in their immediate vicinity. Third, NIMBYism usually does not rely on radical tactics such as blockades, sabotage of construction sites or violently

[4] The neologism 'Wutbürger' came up around 2010 in context of the huge infrastructure project 'Stuttgart 21'. The project had been planned since 1994 and had passed all administrative instances. When construction work began in 2010, heavy protests forced the state government to hold a referendum (Vatter and Heidelberger 2013).

demonstrating. Rather, opposition is expressed in zoning hearings, letters to local politicians and to the media, and neighborhood petitions (Dear 1992).

More extreme varieties of the NIMBY position have been led to a blooming landscape of labels for both the attitude and the people exhibiting it. Selectively, this kind of fundamental opposition is referred to as BANANA (build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything/anyone), NOPE (not on planet earth), and CAVE (citizens against virtually everything). Similar positions by politicians seeking to accommodate the oppositional claims are called NIMTOO, standing for not in my term of office (Dear 1992: 289).

A common characteristic of these acronyms – and the attached *syndrome*, hinting at a disease – is their pejorative connotation. In the conflicts on balancing local with societal interests, oppositional claims toward facility sites often are depicted as backward, irrational, shortsighted, and selfish. The NIMBYs are accused to inhibit positive developments for the public good and the establishment of much needed services. The anti-NIMBY knockout argument is, that if one NIMBY claim is acknowledged to be justified than any else is too. If everyone acts like a NIMBY, the ultimate consequence is society's regression to a state of affairs in which everything stagnates and thus declines (Hermansson 2007; Feldman and Turner 2010). However, as the afore quoted authors argue, the superiority of reason over the superstitious, egoistic, and unreasonable claims of the locals quickly bears a presumed moral supremacy effectively played out against the NIMBYs. While there is inevitably a moral dimension in each NIMBY conflict (are you willing to carry your share?), I consider this to be a personal question the answer to which has to be found by everyone on his or her own. Hence, my use of the concept focuses on the mechanism alone according to the three main characteristics mentioned above and renounces to ascribe a moral failure to those who reject the planned refugee shelter.

Research on NIMBY has followed varying explanation models. Since it evolved out of locational theories within the discipline of human geography, a spatial approach to the phenomenon predominated from the very beginning and is still fashionable today.[5] NIMBYism here is seen as a 'Politics of Space' (Purcell 2001) in which local residents engage to ensure prevailing of their vision of the neighborhood. As Michael Dear (1992: 288-90) has put it: 'In plain language, NIMBY is the motivation of residents who want to protect their turf. […] Opposition arguments, after the initial angry phase, usually express three specific concerns: the perceived threat to property values, personal security, and neighborhood amenity.' Unsurprisingly, Dear (1992: 291) finds that threat perception rather quickly declines with distance to the proposed facility. Hence, the spatial approach in NIMBY research is concerned with the question of 'how space inherits, and feeds into, the social production of opposition, conflict and the broader maintenance of socio-spatial exclusion' (DeVerteuil 2013). However, a sole spatial argument may be intuitively convincing, but it is also somewhat self-evident since the concept of NIMBY would not make any sense without any spatial relation (the non-spatial version would be the NIABY claim, standing for not in anyone's backyard; cf. Feldman and Turner 2010). Thus, the in here proposed analysis will build upon Michael Dear's (1992) framing of NIMBY since it takes into account various factors that influence and determine NIMBYism.

Michael Dear is a professor emeritus of city and regional planning at Berkeley University and has extensively written on locational conflicts. His article 'Understanding and Overcoming the NIMBY Syndrome' (1992) densifies his and others' work on the topic. Although the title already bears witness to a certain bias in favor of planners' perspectives, his framing of NIMBY can be a promising starting point. Next to geographical proximity, Dear identifies three key factors determining NIMBYism.

[5] For a comprehensive overview on the ideational history, see DeVerteuil 2000.

Client characteristics comprise residents' attitudes – not necessarily based on facts – toward the clients the planned facility will serve. A 'pecking order' (Dear 1992: 291) of acceptance gets established according to the assumed predictability, dangerousness, and culpability of the clients. At the time of Dear's research, this order ranged from physically disabled and terminal illness (high acceptance) via mentally retarded and mentally ill persons (medium acceptance, the first with higher acceptance since retarded persons cannot be blamed for their condition) to drug addicts and homeless people (low acceptance). Yet, the order is not fixed and can quickly change. In context of my research, what people believe to be the client characteristics is a fruitful category. After the initial phase of high acceptance of refugees, their reputation has shifted after the terrorist attacks in Paris after which all the talk about young, male, impossible to integrate Muslims came up. Some of the online comments reviewed suggest that some people rejecting the shelter are guided by such concerns.

For Dear, the *facility characteristics* have a double importance for approving or rejecting a facility. The service provider can assert direct control over what happens in that facility and thus alter the image local residents have of it. Main aspects are the type of facility, the size, the number of clients, how it is operated, the outer appearance, and the reputation of the provider. The interrelatedness of these aspects may be interesting for my case: For example, people might approve the type, even in their backyard, but reject it due to the number of clients or the perceived lack of security personal. As for the client characteristics, some online comments hint at that possibility.

The *characteristics of the host community* are equally a key factor in NIMBY conflicts. Physical and economical (in my case also ethnical) homogeneity seems to increase rejection of difference. In drawing on research conducted by Daniel Yankelovich, Dear (1992: 293) describes the 'following profile of the typical NIMBY advocate: high income, male, well educated, professional, married, homeowner, living in large city [*sic*] or its suburbs. According

to this survey, the single best predictor of opposition is income: The more affluent tend to be less welcoming.' While these characteristics match my case to large extend, the participation of women engaging in NIMBYism seems to equal the males' one. Yet, in this thesis, a distinction according to sex was not made.

Dear assumes that every person holds both restrictive sentiments and benevolent motivations based on religious or moral beliefs. The balance of these two traits as well as awareness and familiarity with the needs of the clients determine whether a facility is approved or rejected. While this notion is not necessarily path breaking, it nevertheless opens the frame for incorporating more contemporary issues and, for my case, the limits of a liberal world view.

One might argue, that Dear's understanding of NIMBYism is slightly outdated or at least not comprehensive enough. Indeed, ethnicity, gender, class, global impacts, and the resident's attitudes beyond their backyard can rarely be found in his concept. While Dear points out that external events and developments influence NIMBY configurations, these would remain limited to the level of the nation state. In Heiligensee, however, the shelter was meant to host a global clientele. Yet, I consider his concept valuable for two reasons. First, the three key characteristics can be observed in my case. They deliver precise leverages for tackling my research question and thus were helpful in developing my interview guide. Second, as pointed out above, it acknowledges the role of factors that are hard to measure, such as attitudes and opinions. Since these are contextual and changing over time and place, Dear's concept is in principle open for modification. Hence, it may be enriched by extending the scope and including a more detailed account of the individual's position, caught between moral demands by the society and a conflicting personal interests.

3. A Place Like Anywhere Else: Characteristics of the Host Community

The characteristics of the host community are a major influencing factor in NIMBY conflicts. However, as outlined above, a sole focus on measurable facts such as income and education of the residents cannot be sufficient to explain residents' repulsive attitudes. Dear's concept of NIMBYism has to be adapted and enriched in order to grasp what processes are at work on the ground. This chapter therefore engages with the characteristics of Heiligensee, its history, its transformations in time and space, and its residents. The first section, 'A Walk with a Purpose', descriptively explores parts of the neighborhood while giving first accounts of their relevance for the case. Section Two looks at neoliberal city development and processes of (sub-) urbanization in Berlin and in Heiligensee since the 1990s. The place and space making forces of capitalism along with its underlying ideologies of meritocracy and deservingness have shaped the suburb and its spatial and social relations within and to the external world. Using Lefebvre's (1996) notion of *simultaneity*, I argue that everyday life in the quarter must be understood as a complex interplay of analytically divided, but simultaneously interconnected processes which influence residents' attitudes in one or another way. This interplay becomes visible when undertaking a walk with a purpose through the neighborhood.

Starting from downtown at the train station Berlin Friedrichstraße, some 2 kilometers up the road from Cold War Checkpoint Charlie, it takes half an hour when taking the urban railway to get to Heiligensee. The quarter is located in the north-west of Berlin at the city's current administrative borders. During the Cold War, it was part of West Berlin and thus directly located at the border to the GDR. To the west, Heiligensee is confined by a lake on whose other shore a watchtower of the GDR border regime still stands. To the north, Heiligensee is enclosed by forests already belonging to the federal state of Brandenburg (former GDR).

Heiligensee has nearly 24.000 inhabitants with only under 4 percent non-Germans. To compare, the district of Reinickendorf, to which Heiligensee belongs, has a total population of 254.000 inhabitants with 13.5 percent foreigners. The average share in Berlin is around 16 percent. Furthermore, the German population of Heiligensee predominantly lives in high- and mid-segment residential areas whereas the non-Germans overwhelmingly live in low-scale areas (StatIS-BBB 2016; data from 2014). Thus, the quarter's corner where my field site is located can be considered as ethnically and economically homogeneous.

Upon arrival by train at Heiligensee, an assembly of small, two-story family houses can be seen directly next to the railway when looking out of the window to the left. These are typical for the most recent wave of suburbanization in the quarter; built wall-on-wall, yet each with an own front garden and separate entrance, they represent a quite new form of suburbanization in Berlin that bears witness to increased land prices. The single plot area is small and the overall impression of the settlement resembles a miniature version of an inner city street of tenement houses.

In close proximity to the train station are two supermarkets. These were modernized and enlarged in recent years to meet rising demands of a growing suburban customer base. I conducted parts of my informal interviews at these markets. Vis-à-vis one of the markets lies the small industrial park which includes the area of the planned shelter. Until 2013, the company Tetra Pak used to produce carton-made packaging for milk and juice here. The estate measures ca. 45,000 square meters, out of which ca. 20,000 square meters are occupied by two manufacturing halls and an administrative tract with an own cafeteria.[6]

Behind the supermarket and the Tetra Pak area is a manufacture and bottling plant for digestive alcohols called Underberg. The Tetra Pak and the Underberg estates measure 80,000

[6] According to a press release by the then-owner CKV (Kiezkatze 2015). The facilty characteristics will be further discussed in chapter 4.

square meters taken together, and since Underberg will cease to produce in 2018 both lots were purchased by a real estate portfolio management company in September 2016.[7]

Situated next to the Tetra Pak estate is a small settlement called Anglersiedlung ('fishers' settlement'). Founded in Weimar-times for recreational purposes (it has an own access to the lake), this assembly of single-family houses maintained its somewhat peculiar character. It has an own charter and annual meetings of members (IC 2016). In the beginning of my research, I had planned to focus solely on the Anglersiedlung since it shares the fence with the Tetra Pak estate and would have been affected most directly in case of any new occupation of the facility. However, as it had occurred to me that the implications of the shelter are broader in reach, I gave up the idea of analyzing this single settlement exclusively.

Since only a few years past, the residents of the Anglersiedlung have new neighbors to their South. Until the late 1980s, a manufacture for carbonizing cables needed for heavy industry was located here. After it became public that production did not meet environmental standards and poisonous Dioxin had seeped into the ground for years, the fabric was closed. The persons responsible for the disaster hastily fled overnight, as one resident told me. This was because the dioxin had poisoned the surrounding ground as well, and cultivation of edible crops was not possible unless the upper layer of soil would have been exchanged at considerable expenses. The production hall was dismantled and the lot stood empty for almost two decades, but the residents affected by the dioxin had to bear the costs for soil exchange themselves. Today, a new settlement of prefab single-family houses has attracted families and thus lowered the age cut. In the Anglersiedlung, however, not everyone is happy about the new neighbors: Those directly adjacent to the new houses have lost their formerly free view and noise levels have risen due to the new kids on the block (IC 2016).

[7] Press release by Capital Bay GmbH from September 13th, 2016.

Across the street lies one of the major residential parts of Heiligensee, a seemingly endless sequence of single-family houses with attached wooden carports. While each house and garden shows signs of individualization efforts, these do, however, in their sum contribute even more to the impression of being confronted with a uniform, standardized appearance of residences. Passing through this calm and quite neighborhood, one arrives at the quarter's other urban railway train station, called 'Schulzendorf'. From here, it takes a five-minute walk to get to the church 'Matthias-Claudius'.

The evangelical parsonage serves ca. 400 members of the parish, with an additional 600 people, not necessarily believers, who are loosely connected. It is a major hub for social activity in the area since there are barely other offers. At the entrance, a large poster advertises the 'Godspot', the wireless connection to God (free WiFi) which shall attract more young people. The parish was actively engaged in supporting and offering services to refugees who were accommodated in a school close by. Priest Jana Wentzek, with whom I had one of my formal interviews, was so friendly to offer valuable insights not only into the practical, everyday challenges during the immediate crisis but also into the mundane life of the neighborhood in general.

Close by the church is a center of the deaconry. The residential complex stems from the 1960s and combines social housing, geriatric nursing, cross-generational living, and care for people with disabilities. Around 1.500 people live and work here altogether. Since late 2015, ca. 30 asylum seekers live here, too (Interview A). Interestingly, the deaconry aimed to set up a boarding school for 'problematic' children and young people in 2007. After protests by parents, the project was cancelled. Stephan Schmidt, a local politician who will also play a role later, used almost the same wording as in the current case: The neighborhood could not stand such a facility (Der Tagesspiegel 2007).

Heading south-southwest from the deaconry, one arrives at a primary school, the 'Ellef-Ringnes-Grundschule' (ERG), whose sports facilities were confiscated by the SenGeSo for the emergency accommodation of refugees. The seizure took place on December 15th at half past 9 in the evening, supported by the local fire brigade. This cloak-and-dagger action did not exactly foster residents' trust in the authorities; this point will get some further attention below. The seizure was planned to last from mid-December 2015 to mid-May 2016. By the end of my research, the gym was still occupied (Interview B).

At the south-western borders of the quarter, is the lake Heiligensee. Here, on a peninsula between Lake Heiligensee and Lake Nieder-Neuendorfer See, are the historical roots of the village. It is mentioned in documents since the 14th century, and its coat of arms bears witness to an agrarian and fishery past. A single, small farm with animal husbandry to the north, encircled by the new suburb, and is one of the few remnants left of this history. Since the late 19th and early 20th century, Heiligensee was also a place of industrialization. Standing on the shore of the historical center, one can see the estuary of the Havel-Oder canal across the former inner-German border. The walk ends here and the observer embarks on a small boat.

The canal passes the steel plants of Hennigsdorf some three kilometers up the water road. From the above mentioned Anglersiedlung, water vapor emissions can be seen rising behind the treetops. The two plants were founded in 1917 during WW I, but dismantled and transferred to the Soviet Union as part of reparation payments for WWII in 1946. With Soviet permission, reconstruction started already in 1947 and capacities were continuously extended during GDR-times. After the fall of the downfall of the Iron Curtain the plants went into the 'Trust' which sold it in a bidding procedure to the current owner, the Italian-based, multi-national steel conglomerate 'Riva'. Today, both plants together employ over a thousand people and are thus a major employer in the heavy industry in the region (Rivastahl 2017).[8] The

[8] The 'Trust' (Treuhand) was founded to pull together the formerly nationally-owned companies ('the people's

favorable geographic location is due to the linkage via water roads to the Berlin harbor (Westhafen) on the one hand and to Szczecin in Poland on the other. From there, coal transports come in on a daily basis and do supply not only the steel plants, but also Germany's oldest coal-fired power plant in Berlin-Moabit in the midst of a residential area.

The access to the lake and its connectedness via the canals attract citizens from all strata of society who seek leisure and recreation. Berlin's lakes and their beaches are not only one of the few real commons left in this age of privatization, they perhaps also possess the most equalizing power among them. However, reflected upon the water surface are the same conflicts and wars of distinction as onshore. Industrial shipping versus leisure versus ecological claims, yacht versus rubber boat, tourists versus locals, brought along vegetables for the kids versus French Fries, local tabloid versus Le Monde diplomatique on the beach – the water landscape shapes the geography of the area, is an inseparable part of people's habitat and thus reflects and extends the conflicts of distribution, access, and use.[9]

The short exploration comes to an end. Why does it matter? What does it add to the case? Heiligensee is a mixture of a historically grown village, houses from the 1920's, from the 'Wirtschaftswunder' era in the 1950s and 60s, site of industrialization and de-industrialization, and post-German reunification suburb. At a first glance, it just seems to be a quiet and calm little place at Berlin's periphery with no major highlights (and its residents *do* appreciate that this means no negative highlights, too). However, these apparently banal observations add up to a picture that speaks volumes about the development of the city and the region. For example, the trivial note about the modernized and enlarged supermarkets hint at a growing customer base with higher demands on appearance and product presentation. The physical thus reflects a

companies', as the GDR jargon had put it) and then to privatize them.

[9] As so often, the Berlin vernacular has captured these observations in its own, unrivalled way: The public beach is called the 'Bürgerablage' (literally 'citizen dump'), where those without own access to the lake or a boat cram together. The term nicely encapsulates the observable phenomenon and the underlying social relations at the same time.

change in the functional realm. This in turn hints at changes in the spatial relations of habitat and workplace, therefore, at changes in the social relations between the affluent and the poor, or relations between capital and space. The historical transformations from agriculture to industrialization to de-industrialization, the processes of urbanization, of diversification and stratification, class segregation and dissolution – all this that takes places in Heiligensee everyday does not only add to that *oeuvre* called Berlin, inscribed in it is in fact a version *en miniature* of the whole itself. The *form of simultaneity* which the constituent parts of the oeuvre take on, all the ambiguous, conflictual, and contradictory relations, in short, the production of the social fabric of the city as result and act at the same time can be found in Heiligensee (cf. Lefebvre 1996, 1991). Thus, the next question is how this place came to be what it is today.

Berlin is actually a city of tenants. Around 85 percent of all flats and houses are rented. During the past two decades the housing market has come under severe pressure and rents have risen by 60 percent between 2008 and 2014 (IBB 2015) alone. This is explained through an increased demand for housing due to the federal government's move from Bonn to Berlin in 1999, an increased demand due to an overall growth of the city, and a trend toward single-households which exceeds the supply of single-room flats (ibid.). However, these explanations are only partially true. The annual reports on the housing market, issued by the Berlin Investment Bank in cooperation with the senate of Berlin, are telling examples of how neoliberal city development policies have shaped the trajectory of the city.

The first report was published in 2002 (IBB 2002) and heralded the golden age. What was needed, so the then-senator for city development, was to 'secure the quality of housing in the inner city' (ibid:3). This should be achieved through three measures. First, the plans for the 'Stadtumbau Ost' (modification of East-Berlin) meant deconstructing 'not used' (ibid.) kindergardens, schools, and whole settlements of socialist prefab houses. This program artificially downsized the supply side of the housing market, especially in the affordable

housing sector. Second, in the 'urban quarter management' – the main instrument of the large-scale program 'Soziale Stadt' (social city) that affected 390.000 people in 33 areas – the city was zoned into sections according to the degree of their 'social problems'. These problems were not further defined, but it was clear that they had to be countered by a massive upscaling of neighborhoods through state-subsidized, private investments in infrastructure (IBB 2007). The problematic zones were often long neglected, inner-city neighborhoods with cheap estate values but attractive, old buildings in aesthetically cohesive arrangements. Restoration, development and subsequently gentrification led to a considerable exchange of such quarter's populations. If the problems are gone, they took the residents with them. Third, concerted efforts by the senate of Berlin and the federal state were made to privatize state-owned estates and flats. Between 2002 and 2015, Berlin lost 30% of its social housing stock (Der Tagesspiegel 2015). One of the biggest privatizations was made in 2004, when a consortium of US-based investment fund Cerberus and Whitehall (Goldman Sachs) bought the nonprofit housing cooperative 'GSW' with its 65.000 flats from the state of Berlin. The following years saw a rush by international financial capital on state-owned housing stock in Germany (cf. Berliner Zeitung 2004, NYTimes 2004). This leads to the question of the role of speculative capital in the rise of rents.

The mechanism of financialization within global cycles of capital accumulation was first introduced by Jonathan Friedman in the late 1970s and later on elaborated by Giovanni Arrighi (1994; cf. Kalb 2013). Friedman argues (cf. 2008a:55), that the Marxist focus on wage labor as the sole constituent of the capitalist mode of production is insufficient for explaining contemporary capitalism. Rather, a global historical anthropology is needed, 'in which global systems are understood as historical systems of shifting accumulation and empire formation' (ibid:43). The model accounts for long-term tendencies in the rise and decline of hegemonic economies. I argue, that the influx of 'money capital', as Friedman would put it, into Berlin's

housing market is part of the larger process of the decline of the US as the hegemon in the current global system.

According to Friedman and Arrighi, the rise of a new hegemon is characterized by an increased industrial production at home and export of the produce. Profits get reinvested and perpetuate the domestic accumulation of capital. However, this is possible only up to a certain point. As wages rise and productivity cannot be increased endlessly, profitability dwindles. Capital gets withdrawn from the core and exported in the forms of loan capital, portfolio investments, or industrial capital to places where it can generate higher margins. These return in the forms of debt service, dividends, or repatriated profits (Friedman 2008a:51). But capital cannot lay idle and hence, in the process of capital export, 'it shifts increasingly into speculative and fictitious accumulation at home' (ibid: 54). This is exactly what happened in the US where the housing market got bloated by financialization. And, financialization is also one underlying cause for the exploding rents in Berlin. Now, things come full circle. The above outlined neoliberal policies for city development converted state-owned land and social housing stock into fictitious commodities and thus merged them into flows of speculative and fictitious accumulation.[10] The whole process is, of course, way more complex than could be sketched in here. Yet, there are strong indices that suggest using the Friedmanian global anthropology for relating local configurations to larger processes.

There comes yet another aspect into play. Rising rents are a predicament for many people. Those who cannot afford living in the inner city have to move elsewhere. However, there is also another group: Taking a loan and buying or building a house on the city's periphery may become a serious option if instalment payments do not differ much more from paying the

[10] This point is not fully clarified. Polanyi (2001) sees land, labor, and money as being fictitious commodities since they are not produced for the market, but traded like commodities. I would argue, that existing houses are equally not produced for the market; they are already there. Yet, newly built houses, esp. the prefab single-family houses in the suburbs, are directly produced for the market. But as soon as they are built, they turn into a fictitious commodity. Thus, houses might represent some sort of 'hybrid commodity'.

monthly rent. Not wanting to pay rents anymore was a common reason for many of my interlocutors in Heiligensee. Between the years 1995 and 2000 alone, nearly 180.000 people moved to the urban hinterlands of Berlin (IBB 2002). After a break during the 2000s, the migration to the outskirts continues to flow (IBB 2015). For sure, suburbanization has many and complex reasons, but it has one major outcome – it is place making. For David Harvey (2003, 2012), suburbs are the physical manifestation of capital surplus absorption, an argument not so dissimilar to Friedman's. Capitalist accumulation thus creates a "spatial-temporal fix" (in fact, many fixes; Harvey 2003:87), which can profoundly alter (urban) landscapes and the way of living in them. When taking a walk through Heiligensee, a lot of new structures (houses, supermarkets, bicycle lanes) can be seen. Turning to David Harvey in order to grasp that place making force of capitalism might help in understanding how the suburb of Heiligensee became shaped as it is today.

The neoliberal policies of city development like the privatization of social housing stock aimed at freeing tapped potential for capital valorization. The reason behind this is the mechanism of financialization as described by Friedman, whereby returning profits from the periphery need investment possibilities in the core. One outcome of this was a drastic increase in rental costs which led to a profound change in the city's population composition. As part of this, new spatial fixes were created, visibly in the increased suburbanization around Berlin.

To sum this chapter up, the quarter of Heiligensee is partly an outcome of what Lefebvre has called the historical double process of industrialization and urbanization (Lefebvre 1996). In addition, processes of suburbanization since the reunification have shaped the neighborhood's social and spatial configurations toward an ethnic and economic quite homogeneous place. Heiligensee is thus a place that could be anywhere else in Germany. Whether these characteristics facilitate NIMBY opposition against the planned refugee shelter will be discussed in the next chapter.

4. A Short History of Migration to Germany

Each act of migration inherently bears a potential for conflicts. There are the inner conflicts within each person, conflicts of mental reconciliation between the old and the new. That what was known, natural, and true was left behind while the new is uncertain and follows different rules. Outer conflicts may arouse between the long-established and the newcomers, usually revolving around questions of distribution, welfare, housing, jobs, and cultural differences like religion, customs, etc. A single person has an advantage here, it can get absorbed and assimilate more easily or likewise easily maintain an exotic status and perhaps even live off it. Large groups of migrants, on the other hand, appear as an abstract mass to the authorities, administration, and the local population. Hereby, it does not seem to matter whether there is a successive influx over years, like in the case of the Turkish 'guest workers' in the 1960s or whether it is a sudden and concentrated migration as seen during the European crisis of 2015. The 'facelessness' of any such an abstract mass renders it an easy target for pejorative attributions while its quantity makes it an political pawn, an administrative task, and a potential social issue. These three levels, politics, administration, and population, may have different and even conflicting interests in regard to the newcomers, but their specific perceptions and images of 'the migrant mass' discursively influence each other and are thus, again simultaneously, result and process.

This chapter engages with refugee and immigration politics in the FRG since 1945 as a history of neglect and failure. By comparing reactions to major waves of immigration – the post-War refugee crisis, the period of labor migration 1955-1973, and the migration movements around 1990 – with those to the current crisis, it argues that the way of coming to terms with the refugees today is much more a repercussion of past times than a genuinely novel issue. [11]

[11] All numerical values in this section refer to gross-immigration (without emigration) while the percentages are balanced values (immigration minus emigration).

After World War II, between late 1944 and 1949, 12 million refugees and expellees moved from Eastern Europe into the four occupation zones (Russian, French, British, US). Their numbers equated approx. a sixth of the resident population (Connor 2007: 1, 19). The influx of the refugees and expellees posed a major problem to the Allied forces, food and housing being the most urgent ones. Roughly a quarter of the pre-war housing stock was destroyed after the war in the British and American occupation zones, and the Allied Council issued a law that put refugee accommodation in private households of the local population on a legal basis. This was a source of discontent among the resident population which often culminated in lawsuits or even violent incidents between them and the newcomers. However, the Allied authorities feared a political radicalization of the impoverished refugees when accommodating them in crowded camps. Yet, due to shortages construction material, labor, and capital as well as an ongoing influx of refugees from the Soviet zone until the construction of the Berlin Wall, refugee camps existed even beyond the year 1961, often with horrible conditions for the inmates (ibid: 29-38).

On the political level, German office holders had developed a certain flexibility when speaking about the newcomers. First, they insisted on the term 'refugee', because it implied temporality while 'expellee' bore the notion of permanency. The legality of the expulsions, decided by the Allies at the Potsdam Conference, made a return of expellees impossible; this simple fact was not much appreciated by the native population and politicians were hence careful with definite statements regarding the refugees (ibid: 20-23). Second, a crass discrepancy existed between the legal rights of refugees set by national politics and their implementation by local politics. This, again, was most notably in the question of housing. Local officials faked numbers of occupied rooms, did not publish ministerial orders that informed refugees about new rights to financial support or delayed the closure of camps in order to protect their community. "The political leaders of the parish refused to comply with

instructions from 'above' if they did not correspond with the wishes of the old-established citizens" (Rita Müller in Connor 2007: 67).

Labor migration accounts for the second most number of immigrants to Germany (West). From the mid-1950s onward the government started recruitment programs to attract foreign labor for further nurturing the 'economic miracle'. These programs came to full fruition after the construction of the Berlin Wall, which restricted the influx of migrants fit for work from the GDR. Bilateral treaties were signed with Italy (1955), Spain, Greece, Turkey (1961), Portugal, Tunesia, Morocco, and Yugoslavia (1968). By 1973, when the recruitment programs were stopped, 2.6 million foreign laborers accounted for 12 percent of all gainfully employed people in the FRG. Officially, the labor migration was ought to be temporary, but many stayed and due to family reunification programs, the overall number of the foreign population had climbed to ca. 7 million by 1991 (Münz and Ulrich 1998).

While the German profiteers of these arrangements enjoyed the wealth accumulated on the backs of the migrants, German politicians paradoxically, if not to say in a totally unworldly manner, kept up the slogan of 'Germany is not a country of immigration'. This was reflected in the fact that Germany had no official immigration policy, but a 'foreigners policy' (Ausländerpolitik; cf. Schierup 2006). A 'federal commissioner for foreigners' (Ausländerbeauftragte) was appointed in 1978. The office was subordinated to the 'Ministry of Labor and Social Order' (Ministerium für Arbeit und Soziale Ordnung), which speaks volumes about the perception and recognition of migrants by FRG politics. Only as late as 2004 the 'foreigners policy' was replaced by an Immigration Act which finally recognized a reality being at hand since 50 years (and by the way set higher impediments for migrants; Die Bundesausländerbeauftragte 2017a, Schierup 2006).

This denial of reality or, from another perspective, rather technocratic view on foreigners as a statistical preserve was fostered by the fact that the 'imagined community'

(Anderson 2006) of Germany was based on bloodline. Being of German descent, however muddled that concept is, was the only way to citizenship. Practically this meant that in 1973, the majority of the 4 million foreigners accounting for 7 percent of the total population were denied basic rights and access to social welfare like unemployment insurance etc., albeit many of them were in the country since almost 20 years by that time. “The aim of West Germany's recruitment policy was not to foster organized immigration but to counterbalance cyclical and demographic bottlenecks in the West German labour market” (Münz and Ulrich 1998: 34). The dimension of the psychological effects on people who have to renew their residence permit, bound to employment, every two years can only be imagined.

The socio-spatial dimension of that practice is visible: Since most labor migrants were blue collar workers – 1.1 million alone working in the manufacturing and construction sectors in 1993 – they concentrated in the big cities and densely populated regions host to industrial production (ibid: 45-48). Adding a considerable income gap between the resident and the migrant population (cf. Schierup 2006: 160), there is then a trinity of neglect, denial, and discrimination that has led to urban grids of a de facto ethnic separation.

Coming now back to the introductorily anecdote, the years around 1990 marked a third major wave of immigration. This was a triple process. Each year from the mid-80s onward, approx. 30,000 GDR citizens had moved to West-Germany.[12] In 1989, their numbers reached 400,000 and another 380,000 came in 1990 (here: balanced values; Münz and Ulrich 1998: 31). During the same period, ca. 50,000 ethnic Germans from Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and the USSR moved to the FRG each year, reaching a peak of equally 400,000 in 1989. Between 1990 and 1995, an additional, annual 200,000 ethnic Germans moved to the now reunified Germany. The third group of newcomers were asylum seekers and refugees

[12] While officially not permitted to travel into the ‘West’ they often went to Hungary from where they tried to enter Austria. It was thus partly the same route as for many refugees in 2015, the final step into a relative safety.

whose share in the total immigration had dramatically increased between 1987 and 1994. Passing the 100,000 marker in 1988, their numbers had almost doubled in 1990 and climbed further up to 438,000 in 1992 due to the first Yugoslavia war and an increased migration of Roma from Romania (cf. Münz and Ulrich 1998, BPP 2005). Another 322,000 were coming in 1993 and in 1994, still 127,000 people were seeking asylum in Germany. Although the acceptance rate of asylum applications fell to ca. 7 percent, many applicants could stay. On the one hand, the administrative procedures took months and sometimes years, leading to a de facto toleration. On the other hand, deportations of rejected applicants often were simply not carried out due to the 'nonrefoulment' principle.[13] Overall, 8.3 million people have entered German territory (former GDR included) between 1988 and 1994, with a positive net-migration balance of ca. 4 million people (Münz and Ulrich 1998).

Like in the post-war period, the massive influx of people around 1990 coincided with severe shortages on the affordable housing market. In 1988, approx. 700,000 people dwelled in flats that were deemed too small and too shabby. Around 200,000 people were accommodated in emergency shelters like sports facilities and makeshift barracks and another 100,000 were homeless. The real figures may likely have been higher, overcrowded student flat-sharing communities and foreigners living in dilapidated rear buildings were not even included (DER SPIEGEL 1988). The growing numbers of immigrants further aggravated the precarious situation. However, these shortages were as much a consequence of the neoliberal policies by the Christian-Liberal coalition (CDU and FDP), with its trickle-down and the-market-regulates-it-all fantasies, as of a real increase in demand due to immigration.

Three main policy decisions facilitated the state of emergency in the housing sector. First, from the early 80s onward, social housing programs were gradually phased out and

[13] The nonrefoulment principle is part of the Geneva Convention, stating that deportations to safe countries are not justified if the safety for life and limb cannot be guaranteed.

ultimately terminated in 1986. Second, heavy subsidies for privately owned single-family homes favored the construction of these type of buildings over multi-family houses. The trickle-down logic had it that the new property holders would make available their formerly occupied flats. Yet, simultaneously, old and dilapidated housing stock was demolished or converted into business units. Nearly 100,000 flats got withdrawn from the market this way – year for year, while the overall construction activity almost halved between 1980 and 1987. Third, new regulations in the rental sector rendered it easier for landlords to raise the rent. In addition, rent control for old buildings from the 'Gründerzeit' era and early 20th century was repealed. The idea was that if capital investment in the rental sector would be encouraged, more flats would get built. Yet, this proved to be the case only in the upper and premium rental sectors. Altogether, a huge deficit in the affordable housing sector was at hand when the demand wave kicked in.

The tense situation on the housing market caused frictions between the resident population and politics. In the Berlin state election in 1989, the right-wing party 'Die Republikaner' gained 7.5 percent from scratch and thus entered the parliament. But the electorate's wrath increasingly targeted the newcomers directly. In this context it is interesting to note that the resident population did not much differentiate between GDR citizens, the 'Aussiedler' (the ethnic Germans from the eastside of the Iron Curtain) and asylum seekers. In the competitive struggle for affordable flats, all newcomers were, at least initially, indiscriminately regarded as a potential threat to social peace (cf. DER SPIEGEL 1989a, b, c, d). Later on, when chancellor Helmut Kohl proposed a special housing program exclusively for the 'Aussiedler', and when the number of asylum seekers started to increase, started what I would call the 'gradation game'. Rights and claims of the different groups were jealously debated and weighed against each other. Thereby, the asylum seekers more and more turned out to be the losers of that game. Economically the weakest, easily recognizable by a different

color of skin and often accommodated in already socially precarious neighborhoods, they were made the scapegoats for virtually everything that went wrong. This pattern reached its sad climax in 1992, when a mob jubilantly burned down a refugee asylum in Rostock-Lichtenhagen while the residents were still in it. Fortunately, no one died that night, but in the memory of many civic-minded people, the 1990s forever will remain the decade of rampant Neo-Nazism, acting with impunity 'thanks' to a justice system which was proverbially 'blind on the right eye'.

Like in the previous waves of migration, German politicians displayed an astonishing capacity to ignore or downplay such developments. Instead, they rather indirectly sided with the bigot and racist native population (a vote is a vote) by tightening asylum regulations. While mainstream media and civil society organizations increasingly paid attention to the growth of Neo-Nazism and right-wing extremism, politicians mainly from the CDU still held on to the fairy tale of a non-immigration country. Only as late as in the year 2000, when foreigners already accounted for 9 percent of the total population, citizenship was also granted on the basis of Germany being the place of birth (Die Bundesausländerbeauftragte 2017b).

Reviewing the correspondence from 2015 at the beginning of this section in light of the history of migration in Germany reveals how "extraordinarily 'thick' it is", to borrow a Geertzian expression (Geertz 1973: 9). This by no means exhaustive look back has shown that there are recurrent patterns and path dependencies which influence the way immigrants are perceived, how one speaks about them, and how it is sought to come to terms with a situation. In this short exchange between residents and politician, three patterns become visible that are actually recurring throughout history: First, the question of housing is perhaps the most influencing factor. The burden of hosting and integrating newcomers is most often carried by the lower strata of society. Concentration and ghettoization of poverty and ethnic minorities took place in urban centers linked to industrialization. The more affluent could move elsewhere,

avoiding the emerging conflicts. Yet, consciously or not, they are aware of the dialectical nature of space and wealth. Thus, the idea of sharing a place affects poor and wealthy people likewise. This is reflected in the first statement.

Second, office holders in Germany were apt to ignore and downplay the role of immigration. Thereby, fear is a major factor. In the post-war period, politicians feared radicalization of the refugees, whereas in later times they feared the radicalization of the resident population. To counter these assumed reactions, they turn the cause-effect mechanism on its head and appease bigot worldviews by seeking to remove the alleged source of that bigotry, which is thought to be the migrant. This can be seen in the politician's statement. Rather than clearly positioning himself, he beats about the bushes, thus confirming the racist viewpoint. This must be regarded as being a strategy of political survival, learned over decades and proven to be successful.

Third, the former two patterns could evolve because of the way 'Germany' treats its migrants. They were an administrative and logistical challenge, a source of cheap labor that could be called and sent away at will, they were a potential threat to the social order or to an imagined German identity based on descent. But they were never full citizens, neither in a legal sense nor in a humanist sense. That is, acknowledging their human existence as individuals with dreams, desires, and aims in life. Instead, they were collectively perceived by politicians, by the administration, and by the population as an abstract mass, quasi like a herd of sheep which has to be directed, moved, and placed somewhere. As this chapter has argued, these perceptions continue to have an effect on the contemporary 'natives'' visions of who 'the migrant' is. This must not be understood as being a direct historical line leading from 1945 to 2015. It is rather a faint, but constant background noise buzzing in people's heads, subtly influencing the presumptions on what the European crisis represents. As will be seen in the next chapter, this holds true for approvers and opponents of the refugee shelter in Heiligensee.

5. A Case of NIMBYism?

Until today the Tetra Pak factory remains unoccupied, the emergency shelter never came. Have concerted efforts by the local residents forced politics to withdraw the plans? Was it really a success of NIMBY activism, confirming assumptions that wealthier neighborhoods tend to evade taking a 'just share'? To anticipate the answers to these questions: Little evidence was found that this was the case in Heiligensee. While there were voices of discontent, and some of them were proposing joint action against the shelter, these suggestions did not translate to typical NIMBYism like the foundation of a citizen initiative, legal measures, or joint lobbyism. On the contrary, a high degree of organization and collective planning was found with those engaging for refugees in the quarter. Why, then, has the establishment of the shelter failed, although the demand for space for accommodation was high and different actors stated their willingness to cooperate?

This 'non-event character' of the shelter, its position in the realm of speculation, rumor, and gossip, brings with it certain problems of assessing the meaning of single bits of information – for the residents, the politicians, and the researcher. Visions and imaginations of what should happen, what will happen, and what may happen form the basis for gauging the impact and effects on daily life. These speculations are held against what allegedly can be checked: Most residents took into account the global level, the international dimension of the crisis and Germany's part and position in it. Here, moral values and an awareness of the global capitalist order influenced the held opinions. On the local level, the capacity of politics and the administration to effectively control the situation as perceived by the residents was most decisive. Thus, the overall perception of the European crisis, as it was unfolding, has fed into the speculations about the shelter and how it would be like. Because of this, the factor time in the flow of information between residents, politics, and the media plays a crucial role.

This chapter traces the events around this 'non-event'. By analyzing the findings gained from ethnographic fieldwork in Heiligensee, certain isotopies and heterotopies become visible. As they enter into relations with each other, lines of conflict emerge and contradictions surface. Along these lines, but also in the temporal sequence of events, the project of the emergency shelter has failed. The first section provides a short overview on actors and procedures during the crisis, which will help to better assess the sequence of events that led to the non-event. In the second section, the interplay of the different actors will be analyzed. Section three analyses the online world of NIMBYism since it represents almost a diary of the initial phase.

5.1. The Bureaucracy of the 'Welcome Culture'

Imagining for a short time the shelter in Heiligensee would have been operational, how would an asylum seeker, once in Germany, could have got there? The bureaucracy of the 'Welcome Culture' is quite complex and, as will be seen later on, its functionality is a major indicator for local residents measuring the state's capacity to act.

Responsible for the acceptance or rejection of asylum applications in Germany is the 'Bamf', the federal office for migration and refugees. In theory, any refugee may decide to apply for asylum directly upon arrival in Germany. Therefore, he or she can contact border control which forwards an application to a 'first reception facility'. If he or she decides to apply after arrival, an application can be submitted at any police station, immigration office (Ausländerbehörde), 'reception facility', or at a so-called 'Arrival Center'.

Any person having submitted a request for asylum must then register with the Bamf. Therefore, the office established so-called PIK stations at the above mentioned institutions.[14] Here, personal data and fingerprints are taken, the requirement for receiving a temporary 'arrival certificate' which in turn is the requirement for the actual processing of the asylum

[14] PIK stands for 'personalization infrastructure component', a term bearing witness to the rise of technocracy.

request and entitles the bearer to receive financial support. This is the official procedure according to the Bamf (2016b). In practice, however, the different jurisdictions of the institutions, whether they belong to the the 'Bund' (federal) or to the 'Länder' (the states), already lead to first confusions and delays. Why? In order to get the 'arrival certificate' a refugee must already have been at some sort of reception facility, because an address is needed. Yet, the reception facilities are state business. Hence, an unregistered refugee may well go the police, an immigration office, or directly to a reception facility, but ultimately he or she is directed to the state's single point of registration which *then* allots the respective place to stay. While this may work in normal times, it creates a bottleneck when a large influx of people arrives at once.

In the state of Berlin, the office responsible for the registration and accommodation of refugees is the LAGeSo, the state office ('Landesamt') for health and social matters. It is subordinated to the senate administration for health and social matters, the SenGeSo. The LAGeSo distributes registered refugees among the city's districts according to a quota. The pool of real estates for the accommodation is provided by the SenGeSo in collaboration with the 'Berlin Immobilien Management' (BIM) which is a fully state-owned subsidiary. It administrates the real estates owned by the state of Berlin and is also entitled to conclude tenancy agreements with private property holders. However, the available, suitable estates for accommodation and those who could be easily converted in a short term were by far not enough to absorb the large stream of refugees. To counter the shortage, the senate administration had three options.

The senate is entitled to confiscate public estates according the 'ASOG'. The ASOG is actually an emergency law in the realm of law enforcement for immediate danger defense. Thus, the SenGeSo could confiscate sports facilities usually attached to schools. This could be done even against the will of the district administrations (the 'Bezirksämter', abbr. BZA) in whose

territory the schools stand. The second option was to book rooms in hostels and hotels. The third option was to buy, rent, or confiscate private estates. In Heiligensee, SenGeSo and BIM rented the Tetra Pak buildings.

While the senate holds an enormous power, any BZA politician is quite in a predicament. Getting pressure from above to comply with the senate's demands, they are the closest to the electorate and are thus getting equally pressure from below if the voter dislikes certain developments. On the other hand, however, the BZA has a mighty leverage: It holds the right to plan ('Planungsrecht') on its territory. Hence, the right to designate an area as industrial or residential, to decide on type and dimension of construction, and the oversight on the fulfillment of constructional and environmental standards lies on the district level (BZA Reinickendorf 2017). A careful examination of all the circumstances, potential structural defects and threats to the environment with all due diligence certainly takes its time.

This short overview on the bureaucratic procedure of registration and accommodation of newcomers and on the political actors on different levels of the state and the power relations between them has shown that it can be a long way through multiple instances before a single refugee finally finds shelter. With this outset in mind, we can now turn to the actual non-event of the inhibited emergency shelter in Heiligensee.

5.2. A Neighborhood Reacts: Part I

The phantom's story starts at the LAGeSo, located in the district of Berlin-Moabit, where any newly arriving refugee has to register. An estimated 90,000 people arrived in Berlin in 2015, but 50,000 of them between September and December. Hundreds of people, at times 2500, were camping outside the office each day at temperatures around 39 degree Celsius. With winter approaching, they rapidly fell by the day, down to 5 degrees. Since the LAGeSO is just an office, it had no own means to shelter people or to provide food and water, but the average

waiting time between arrival and registration was three to five weeks. This meant that the people who came with nothing but their lives, who were exhausted, hurt, ill were left homeless, without food and water supply, and no provision of medical care. The LAGeSo had collapsed, and in the capital of one of the world's richest countries a humanitarian disaster was unfolding (Der Tagesspiegel 2015b, DER SPIEGEL 2015).

Reports of eruptions of violence at the LAGeSo came in daily. Refugees were fighting for a place in the waiting queue, but also the private security forces, actually responsible for the order, were beating refugees, insulting them, or trading access to better places in the line. The LAGeSo itself kept normal office hours, closing each afternoon and on the weekends. Whistleblowers from within reported that the whole institution is in chaos, heavily lacking personnel, and that the higher superiors are either incompetent or simply have given up. In an open letter, several citizen initiatives providing help for the refugees at the LAGeSo criticized the senate's passiveness. The provision of food and medical aid was completely carried out by voluntaries who thus kept up alone the compliance with basic human rights. This state of affairs lasted way into the year 2016 (RBB 2016, Süddeutsche Zeitung 2015).

The situation during the late summer, autumn, and winter 2015 was, of course, exceptional. Yet, it is important to note that it should not have taken the SenGeSo by surprise. This branch of the senate administration and its senator, Mario Czaja, have a history of bad planning, misconduct, and even corruption dating back to the year 2012, when a first big wave of Syrian refugees arrived in Berlin. The problems were the same back then and in the three years in between, no measures were taken to properly prepare the LAGeSo for a similar situation (Süddeutsche Zeitung 2015, RBB 2016, DER SPIEGEL 2015). This point will become relevant later, because the impression of an emergency situation due to the failure of the senate directly has fed into how Heiligensee residents have perceived the role of politics.

With the above outlined circumstances at hand, the senate extended the requisition of school gyms in the districts, a measure that was already taken in 2012 and 2014. 33 gyms were occupied by November 2015 and another 48 should follow. While the districts initially had complied, they increasingly resisted the confiscation since it affected the families and the sports clubs, two large constituents of the electorate (Berliner Morgenpost 2015a). Because of this, but also because it was clear that even with the occupation of gyms the space for accommodation would not be sufficient, the senate presented a new concept. As part of this, three large emergency shelters should be established in which refugees could stay until registration. The senate decided to use the former Tetra Pak factory as such an emergency shelter for at least 1000 people.

One of the first references of the shelter can be found in the 'Berliner Morgenpost' (2015b) from October 13th, 2015. The article dropped the number of 1000 refugees who would be accommodated there, but also cited Stephan Schmidt, faction chairmen of the CDU in Reinickendorf and of the quarter Heiligensee, who spoke of maybe 2200 people. A day later, a resident referred to that article and wrote to Stephan Schmidt:

> '[…] Do we really have to expect this and why were the citizens not be informed and asked about this? […] We deliberately live in Berlin's green belt since 1988 because we did not want to be confronted on a daily basis with integration and Islam problems (against which especially the big cities increasingly have to fight). Your Ms. Merkel thinks that we can do that, and with 'We' she means in a totally unworldly manner us citizens who do not want this. […]'
>
> (Reprinted in Die Dorfzeitung 2017a).[15]

How to react to such an expression of obviously deep-rooted bigotry? Mr. Schmidt, being the reliable contact person for citizens he is and close to the electorate as always, did not hesitate to respond:

[15] All quotations of residents' statements, from online sources or interviews, were translated by me from German language.

> '[…] The initiative does not come from the BZA, but from SenGeSo, LAGeSo, and BIM. They expect from the district to tolerate a short-term occupation of the factory. This utilization would be residential and is – according to the current legal status [designated as industrial zone] – not approvable. Furthermore, the BZA has made clear that all requirements subject to approval have actually to be present. The health department, for example, currently states that the sanitation is not in a state which would render the usage as refugee shelter representable. Therefore, a toleration cannot be expected […]. Yet, the BZA can be deprived of approval procedure [by the senate]. Much more annoying is the fact that we do not get any reliable information from the responsible state offices about the numbers of refugees […]. The number of refugees to be accommodated shall supposedly be at 2500 […]. I am deeply concerned that a massive occupation leads to an atmosphere that plays into the hands of right-wing parties. Like you, I do believe that the willingness to take in refugees must not be overstretched. […].'
>
> (ibid.)

The correspondence was posted by the resident on the webpage of 'Die Dorfzeitung'[16] and anticipates the patterns which would shape the 'phantom' over the following weeks. First, the number of expected refugees varied severely, within the first two days already between 1000 and 2500. The politician himself dropped two different numbers. Second, the BZA referred to the senate as the 'culprit' while retreating itself behind the walls of formal procedure. Officially, the BZA and the district mayor, Frank Balzer (like Schmidt a CDU member) spoke of attempts to guarantee a 'dignified accommodation' for the refugees, which should be secured by careful examinations of the factory buildings. While legally correct, this seemed to be out of proportion in light of the situation in front of the LAGeSo. Third, the BZA appeased the residents or used them as a shield, claiming that the shelter would not meet acceptance among the population. Indeed, there was discontent, but mainly online (see next section). The outbreak of online NIMBYism perhaps has left the politicians with an impression of an unwelcoming electorate. The early reactions to the shelter, as expressed on an online platform, will be analyzed next as an insertion, before continuing to look at the neighborhood's reactions.

[16] Die Dorfzeitung ('village's newspaper') is a privately issued monthly for Heiligensee with whose editor in chief, Annemarie Harms, I had an interview.

5.3. Interlude: Online NIMBYism

Like many of the residents, I first came to know about the shelter via a rumor.[17] A quick google search led to a few short articles in Berlin-based newspapers and to an online platform named 'Heiligensee24.de'. The platform has an editorial part in which articles about upcoming cultural events, new construction activities in the area, reports of the police, etc. are published. In addition, it offers the possibility to post news and rumors regarding a specific 'Kiez'.[18] Unlike Facebook, it does not require a login or the membership to a group. Everyone can open or respond to a thread which is publicly visible. At a first glance, the posts and comments regarding the planned shelter gave the impression of a neighborhood being in revolt. A few examples:

> '[…] My opinion regarding 1000 refugees: That is all rubbish ['großer Mist'; the commentator refers to the situation and not to the refugees] and I don't want them here. At a friend's place in Hennigsdorf, they piss on the sidewalk on their way to the train station. Armed with their smartphones they just kick you out of the way. All of this gets on my nerves […].'
>
> User 'Rudi Rabe' commenting on a post regarding rumors about the shelter (KK 2015a).

> 'Dear Heiligensee neighbors. Please go to that information session and state your opinion. Inform your elderly neighbors who may not have internet. We all have to pay the price for this historical mistake. As democrats we all have the chance to raise our voices. I have *Angst* about the future of this country.'
>
> User 'AME' commenting on the posting of the invitation letter for the information session (KK 2015c).

> 'I think it makes sense to take action against the assumed, constant overcrowding, the congestion of our still tranquil Heiligensee, and against our 'so great' senators. Is there already an initiative one could join or someone who could organize and coordinate something like that?'
>
> User 'Axel Schlote' commenting on a reprint of a letter by the district mayor (KK 2015j).

[17] My mother lives in Heiligensee, but has asked to not appear in this thesis.

[18] The platform and the content meanwhile have migrated to the domain https://kiezekatze.berlin/ (KK 2017). All references here refer to the new domain, abbreviated KK. The term 'Kiez' belongs to Berlin vernacular and denominates a sub territory of a quarter. It may refer to a single street or a few blocks.

These posts speak for themselves, and there were indeed many others who went in the same direction. As the priest of the parish Heiligensee, Jana Wentzek, stated, the racism and 'discussion culture' on the online platform was perceived as so daunting by many Heiligensee residents that they did not participate there. Intermittently, the police even investigated because some of the comments were considered to fulfill the criterion of being an 'incitement of people' (Volksverhetzung), which is a criminal offense in Germany (Interview B). The operator of the website then published a plea on December 18th, 2015, urging the users to focus on concrete issues in the neighborhood rather than discussing generally about refugees. The 'diplomatic letter' did not mention racism directly, but stated clearly that some posts were already deleted from the site and will continue to be deleted if 'they do not fit in here' (KK 2015m).

A closer look on the leftovers reveals that while the above cited posts are representative for the dismissive reactions, they constitute only a part of the whole. The platform contains 20 posts regarding the planned shelter, 12 of them published between October and December 2015 when the topic was 'hot' (KK 2015a-l). Another 4 posts came up between January and April 2016 (KK 2016a-d). During this period, the fate of the factory was still undecided. Two posts, from June and September 2016, already deal with future plans after it seemed clear that the shelter would not come (KK 2016e, f). The remaining two posts are from April 2017 and are about the political fallout (KK 2017a, b). Altogether, 148 comments to these 20 posts were made by the readership, but it is interesting to note that 115 of them commented to only five of the posts between October and December 2015. Out of these five posts, two were unconfirmed rumors about the actual number of the refugees (15 and 7 comments). One post reprinted an info letter by the district mayor and received 12 comments. The vast majority of comments was made to posts regarding the information session on October 20th (24 comments) and to the summary of that session (57 comments).

The temporal distribution of posts and comments reflects the uncertainty of the initial phase, but also shows that most commentators at least waited until some official information was given before engaging in the discussion. To further analyze these 115 comments, three categories of reactions were defined: 1) rejecting – comments directly rejecting the planned shelter and/or the intake of refugees in general; 2) neutral – comments adding an information or asking for one, but with no display of a clear preference; 3) approving – comments directly approving the planned shelter and/or the intake of refugees in general. Out of the 115 comments, 84 fell in either of these categories.[19] More than half of the comments belong to the first category (44), 19 are neutral, and 21 are approving.

Certain coarse patterns became visible in the rejecting and approving comments and between them. The deniers always posted first and were mainly guided by concerns or fears in three variants: 1) The actual number of refugees that would live in the shelter will be higher than announced; 2) Their presence will affect the safety of life and/or property and thus threaten the tranquility of daily life; 3) The refugees will stay, then reproduce or bring their families later, and attempts to integrate them will fail as can be seen already today in the inner cities. The approvers, on the other hand, always responded to the deniers and did seek to calm them down. They mainly argued along four lines: 1) empathy for the refugees – they had suffered displacement, survived the hardship of the flight, and cannot be held accountable for the developments in their home countries because 2) the power relations in the capitalist world system and arms dealing first world countries did facilitate war and terror in the refugees' home countries. The 'refugee crisis' is thus partly homemade; 3) Germany and Heiligensee are wealthy, the intake of refugees would not be a problem; 4) because of the former three considerations, the acceptance of refugees is a moral obligation. These are only rough patterns

[19] The difference of 31 comments comprises second responses to other users' comments which repeated an already stated opinion, and liveblog entries from the information session, which were purely informative. Therefore, these comments were not counted.

and quite a few comments in all three categories touch all of the above mentioned topics. Yet, a division along the local-global line is clearly visible.

The analysis so far shows that the deniers constitute a majority and argue rather locally and materialistic, while the approvers argue globally and morally. However, this does not mean that the deniers are all heartless egocentrics. Of the 44 rejecting comments, 'only' 12 were fundamentally oppositional. 21 comments displayed varieties of NIMBYism: Refugees would certainly need proper accommodation, but not in Heiligensee. One recurring reason given for this viewpoint was that the area already has a refugee asylum close by. Yet, it stands on the territory of the state of Brandenburg (in Hennigsdorf) and hence is not included in the Berlin quota for the distribution of asylum seekers. However, since the asylum is actually closer to Heiligensee than to the next residential area of Hennigsdorf, it is perceived as a service already provided by Heiligensee. Therefore, this argument displays a basic feature of each NIMBY conflict, which is an imagination of territorial justice. The second reason is a deep mistrust in politics and it is in this realm, that things start to become increasingly interesting.

Of the 84 comments in all three categories, 32 made a reference to local politics (city and district level) with an explicitly negative connotation. These were not just dumb sentiments many politicians have to face regardless of whether things work properly or not. Rather, these comments addressed quite specific points of critique. The three major issues were: First, a complete absence of communication policy left the residents in the dark. Second, the inability of Senate and BZA to make binding agreements about the number of refugees and the duration of the occupation was perceived as either incompetence or hubris – the stupid citizen will swallow what is served anyways. Third, Senate and BZA have lost control over the situation, they cannot effectively handle the crisis and therefore cannot guarantee the validity of their promises.

The critique reflects the mistakes made by politicians in the course of the crisis and may thus plausibly explain why some of the residents reject the shelter. However, the 32 comments were distributed almost proportionally among the three categories, 18 in the 44 rejecting, 6 in the 19 neutral, and 8 in the 21 approving comments. The impression that local politics have failed is thus shared equally by deniers, neutrals, and approvers.

5.4. A Neighborhood Reacts: Part II

While the opponents of the shelter represented a majority online, little proof was found that this was also the case in the 'offline world'. According to my interview partners, the residents actually reacted quite calmly. Annamarie Harms, the editor of 'Die Dorfzeitung', remembers:

> 'I did not notice any major excitement, but this was perhaps because the circles I move in are rather liberal in this regard. But I can imagine that for some residents here this was an issue. Many here are already old and rather conservative, so maybe there was a bit of talk here and there. But as I said, I can only speculate about that since I did not hear such things myself. Also, we did not suddenly receive more letters from readers complaining about the shelter. The only case of discontent I know of happened at the deaconry. They took in some 30 refugees or so and there live some social welfare recipients as well. They were complaining that the refugees all had smartphones. You know this kind of discussion, but I think that was a rather minor issue.'
>
> (Interview A)

In one of the informal conversations a resident stated that:

> "[…] I think, I first heard about it from a neighbor – or was it in the newspaper? I cannot remember […], but anyway, the thing was that no one knew what was going on. No information, no nothing. Personally, I didn't care, I mean these poor folks [the refugees] needed accommodation, right? And the factory was empty, so why not. But of course there was some disconcertment. I mean, look around you, this is not exactly the place where you would expect Syrians and Iraqis to show up. I think, for most people the real problem was that they [the politicians] didn't inform us. At least they could have asked us. One wants to know what's going on in the quarter."
>
> (IC 2017)

This statement, given by a middle-aged male in front of the Aldi supermarket in March 2017, and the statement by Ms. Harms contain three important aspects that I have encountered in many conversations with the residents in Heiligensee. Most people cannot remember how they came to know about the plans for the shelter, but almost everyone remembers that no information came from the administration. Second, many residents were somehow indifferent toward the shelter, sometimes because it would not have affected their lives directly, but also because they simply saw it as a necessity. Third, while most people stated that they personally had nothing against a refugee shelter, they suspected others to hold such views. The last point will receive attention further down below.

While there were those not feeling affected, there were also many who already engaged for refugees. Jana Wentzek, the priest of the evangelical parish Heiligensee, describes the mood among the members back then:

> 'I cannot remember that the refugee crisis would have been an all-dominating topic here [at the church]. Of course, we regularly did speak about it, simply because our church was already engaging for refugees, together with the 'WIR network' ('Welcome in Reinickendorf', a voluntary organization). Yet, for many of our members who come for reading circles or the worship this was not an issue. Only a few of our members, mainly elderly people, were, let's say, a bit grumpy in regard to the refugees. They had no own experience with Muslims, but have heard and read so much half-truths about them. So, a bit of concern and fear was certainly present. On the other hand, they remembered the hardship of the post-war era and some of them were refugees themselves back then. Usually, reminding them of that experience and encouraging them to compare the refugees' situation with their own past changed their minds.'
>
> (Interview B)

Ms. Wentzek's account not only confirms the overall quiescence in regard to the shelter. The historical experiences of flight and migration has helped to foster support for the newcomers. While politicians and opponents of the shelter infer the need for a defensive strategy from historical lessons, the subtly influencing force of past events can also work the other way round. Depending on age and own experiences, the residents draw comparisons to

the current situation. My third interview partner for example, the columnist of Die Dorfzeitung, Ulrich Stauf, is today a retiree who saw the 1990s as a mid-ager. To him, the 'refugee crisis' shows similarities to the contemporary events:

> 'You should have seen what was going on when around the 90s. People from the East were flooding into the West. A lot of movement every day. There was a huge camp out there in Marienfelde [a quarter in Berlin] where they [West Germany] herded them [the GDR citizens] because they did not know where to put them else. Basically, it was the same like today, so it is not like if we would not have seen this before. And if I were them [the today's refugees], I would do the same thing. Everyone would do […]. No, I did not hear bad talk about the camp myself, but this is a conservative place. I would not wonder if people talk behind closed doors'
>
> (Interview C)

While the residents' reactions show that the speculation was not only going on about the shelter. People's vision of the neighborhood included also the neighbors. Thus, the protection of turf is not only followed by opponents, but by approvers as well.

Given that there were many people who either did not oppose the shelter, tacitly approved it, or who even engaged for refugees, it is not clear from where the non-acceptance in the population came from. The official records of BVV council meetings, especially from the usual residents' Q&A rounds, show that there was a high interest in everything related to refugee accommodation in Reinickendorf. In early October, 10 shelters were located in the entire district. Seven of these were emergency shelters, 4 of them in school gyms (BZA 2015a). Another gym in Heiligensee was confiscated in December 2015 (Interview B). However, the audio recordings of the council meetings give a sense of how calm and rather technical the residents asked for information. In some cases, they even urged the BZA to engage more for refugees (BVV 2015, 2016a, b, c).

The audio recordings reveal also how deeply shattered, if not hostile, the relations between BZA and senate were. One resident asked the district mayor, Frank Balzer, what the BZA would do for refugees in Reinickendorf except of engaging in endless mutual accusations

with the senate. The mayor held a lengthy speech, claiming that the district would try as much as it can, but is often hindered by the incompetence of the senate that would do clumsy work and does not share information (BVV 2015). The mayor of Berlin himself, on the other hand, criticized Balzer for inhibiting the shelter. He would no longer accept that Balzer does everything to keep the number of refugees in his district low (Berliner Morgenpost 2015c). Both versions have their plausibility and show how the shelter became a pawn in a political fight between different levels of the administration that had own specific interests.

BIM and SenGeSo nevertheless rented the Tetra Pak estate in October 2015 and will pay 158,576 Euro until 2019 – per month (Berliner Kurier 2017). While the BZA was insisting on lacking sanitarian standards, the owner, the CKV portfolio management (named after its founder, Christian Krawinkel), claimed that all necessary requirements were fulfilled. Only the heating would neded to be enhanced. The CKV's role is equally ambiguous. It stated that it would like to build a housing project with up to 1,200 units on the factory's ground. Therefore, the designation as industrial area needed to change. The detour via a refugee shelter that would mark the area de facto as residential might have come in handy. According to a press release, the CKV offered the senate the estate, officially because it otherwise could have been confiscated (cf. KK 2015e). The senate was under severe pressure to find suitable estates due to the situation at the LAGeSo, which might be a reason that it closed the deal so quick and lightheadedly. The BZA insisted on proper examination and certification, and ever new defects were found at the site. Simultaneously, the so-called 'Balkan route' was closed and fewer refugees were reaching Germany. The emergency shelter lost in importance, and the BIM decided that a conversion of the factory into an emergency shelter would exceed the budget (Der Tagesspiegel 2017).

The project had died between some office desks. The senate blames the BZA, the CKV blames the district mayor and the residents, and the district mayor refers to lacking certificates,

blames the senate and accuses the CKV of deceit. While no refugee has ever entered the factory buildings, it will cost the state of Berlin ca. 6.4 million Euro. For the residents however, the legal intricacies only did play a minor role, if at all. Their speculations revolved around other issues.

6. Conclusion

This MA thesis ventured out to do an ethnography of the 'normal'. A potential case of NIMBYism against a planned emergency shelter for refugees in a suburb of Berlin gave the occasion to enquire about attitudes and actions of the middle class toward refugees in the course of the European crisis of 2015. The establishment of that shelter was inhibited, it never became operational. On the processual level, the question was if and how the residents' attitudes translated into the outcome of socio-spatial exclusion. The assumptions of research on NIMBYism are that wealthier neighborhoods are less welcoming and that they deploy civic measures to sustain their vision of the quarter. Intuitively, and in light of the rise of right-wing populism among the middle class, this assumption seemed plausible. In the course of my fieldwork, however, it turned out that the residents' attitudes are much more contingent on what Lefebvre has called the interplay of isotopies and heterotopies. Thus, the hypothesis put forward in here was that NIMBY reactions must be analytically detached from the object that allegedly causes them – in this case the shelter. Therefore, this thesis asked more specifically how historical, spatial, and political configurations have facilitated residents' approval for or rejection of the shelter.

To begin with the processual level or, in other words, with the question of what actually happened, the outcome is highly ambiguous. While some evidence was found that residents' indeed have engaged in NIMBY actions like writing letters to the editor or contacting local politicians, any conclusion that this constitutes the main reason for the failure of the shelter would not be tenable. Three points have to be considered here: First, discontent was stated mainly online. In the physical world, a high level of engagement for refugees or at least acceptance of the situation prevailed. Second, one decisive criterion for NIMBYism is that the efforts are concerted. In practice, however, the opponents remained fragmented. None of my interview partners could confirm the existence of any organized resistance against the shelter.

Third, major political decisions that inhibited the shelter were made already very early, even before the usual, often tedious conflicts between NIMBYs and the respective administrative bureaucracies in which form, procedure, and legal knowledge are decisive could have formed.

The role of the local office holders, both on city and district level, is equally ambiguous. On the one hand, the BZA made efforts to support voluntary networks or in the schooling of underaged refugees. On the other hand, it made use of its right to plan to inhibit the shelter perhaps slightly *too* early. In the face of a humanitarian disaster, it retreated to the position that the Tetra Pak estate is not a designated residential area. Examinations of the factory were carried out with fastidious diligence. Furthermore, the BZA repeatedly referred to the low acceptance among the residents for which actually little proof was found. Whether this mode of action was systematic could, however, not be fully clarified.

On the city level, the SenGeSo and the BIM were at best unable to cope with the situation. The hastily announcement of the Tetra Pak building as a new emergency shelter was made without the BZA and prior to any own examination of the building's appropriateness. Solely based on promises of a private investor, 6.4 million Euro were burned for nothing. However, the senate did want the emergency shelter, and it could have made use of the special law (the ASOG) to disempower the BZA in the procedure. Yet, it did not.

In the midst of this cluster mess were the residents feeling uninformed and unasked. Was it all a huge misunderstanding? Was it the inevitable margin of error in the everyday madness of a highly formalized bureaucratic procedure in which any humanist pragmatism so easily can get out of view? This thesis has argued that for answering these questions the event, or rather the events around the non-event, must be pulled out of the analytical vacuum which is created by the limitations of the focus on the 'refugee crisis'.

On a temporal continuum, the vacuum starts in 2015 with the large influx of refugees and is still ongoing. All the actors – the politicians, the clerks, the residents, the voluntaries,

etc. – suddenly face something which was not there before and then react to it. The decisions they make are based on considerations evolving out of the situation. However, as the analysis of the residents' reaction has shown, their motives and perceptions, how they make sense of the developments around them, is rooted much deeper in three fields actually detached from the narrow case of the refugee shelter.

The first two fields are consciously assessed by the residents. One is characterized by the suburbanization process with its newly emerging relations between inner city and periphery. It is a visible change, not only physically, and the residents are well aware of their own privileged position in these relations. The approvers infer a moral obligation from this position while the deniers seek to defend what they deem valuable. The second field is equally consciously assessed. The capacity of the nation state, the city, and local office holders to control processes is well-watched by the residents. This does not only include the actual handling of the European crisis, but also the actions of politicians in the mid-term. Since years, Berlin residents witness the political inability to counter the shortage on the housing market, opaque processes of city planning like the new airport, austerity programs in police and administration, or increasing waiting times for public services. Each added issue, perceived as failure, feeds into the estimation of outcome of the next issue. Thus, this field heavily overlaps with the first one, since the shortage of housing, for the natives as well as for the residents, is traced back to past political agendas.

The third field, I argue, develops its effective force rather in the subconscious mind. The history of migration to Germany has left its traces in the common perception of 'the migrant'. Especially, the self-deceit that Germany is not a country of immigration has planted strong visions of the 'Other' in people's heads. For politicians, the evasion of immigration related topics has become a survival strategy over the decades. This does not mean that contemporary elected representatives act by a playbook written once and for all. But a sense that too much

honesty in this regard can be dangerous has yet survived each major wave of immigration. In turn, people's perception that immigration poses a problem equally has lived on over the decades. These patterns are changing since the 2000s, and the effective force of the historical trajectories in this regard must not be overrated. However, the reverberations of half a century of denial still can be heard.

The residents' assessment of and speculation on the shelter plays out in the three fields. It is perhaps the most interesting finding of this thesis that within these fields, both approvers and deniers actually argue along the same lines.

Awareness: Awareness here is understood as an informed sense of one's own spatial and social position within the city. For the approvers, the fact that there is enough space and wealth renders the intake of refugees simply feasible. For the deniers, the awareness that the tranquility of the quarter is not the norm in an overcrowded city makes it worth protecting.

Moral obligation: Partly, the moral obligation evolves out of the awareness, but it has also other, more global dimensions. Approvers argue here on the level of the nation state as part of a certain global order. As a profiteer of that order, Germany and hence the residents are obliged to host refugees. The deniers argue more locally as seen in Chapter 4.3. Yet, the global dimension is equally calculated, but not seen as justifying a moral obligation for a single place. Here, the deniers came closest to NIMBY attitudes, but it should not be forgotten that for most of them the main issue was the scale of the shelter. Hence, their position can be understood as representing too much globalism for a too small locality.

Mistrust in leadership: To a large extend, both approvers and deniers perceive the political leadership as incapable of doing it right. In that point they are closest to each other, albeit they have a different understanding of what would be right. Yet, both groups seem to expect more leadership; while the approvers demand more support for the engagement for refugees, the deniers demand more protection from them.

In a certain way, the findings of his thesis are ‘good news’. People still speak about a shared reality rather than living in complete different mental worlds. They just come to different conclusions. The case of Heiligensee hence shows that a pro or contra decision is much more contingent on factors that are detached from the actual event: The residents have an optimistic or pessimistic way of perceiving the world, a local or a global outlook, they regard refugees as deserving or threatening – all these positions did not develop over night when the plans for the shelter became public. Rather, they were built, achieved, developed, and nourished in the course of a lifetime. Hence, I would argue, the residents’ decision for or against the shelter was made to a great part before the plans for it were even announced.

Where does this leave us? Planners, decision makers, and voluntaries might have to live with a state of affairs in which a considerable part of the population cannot be won over for a cause since the reasons behind a refusal are beyond immediate influence. As time is moving on, new crises will emerge and new failures will happen that shape new generations’ perception of the world they live in.

There is some hope, though. Lefebvre’s vision of the city as a site of human possibility might remain utopian. Yet, the many voluntaries in Heiligensee engaging for refugees gave a glimpse of how such a human possibility could look like. Neither the inherently exclusionary character of the suburb itself, with its concentration of wealth and its ethnic homogeneity, nor the restraints of capitalism, encouraging egoism over sociality, has hindered them to do the obvious: To reach out a hand.

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