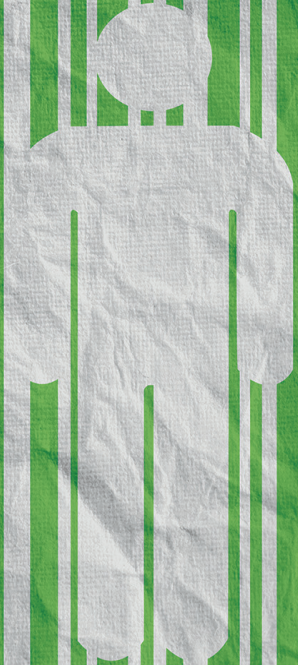


INTEGRATION



Erlanger Migrations- und Integrationsstudien 8

Tobias Weidinger

Onward (Im)Mobilities and Integration
Processes of Refugee Newcomers in
Rural Bavaria, Germany

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P R E S S

Tobias Weidinger

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Newcomers in Rural Bavaria, Germany

Erlanger Migrations- und Integrationsstudien

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Onward (Im)Mobilities and Integration Processes of
Refugee Newcomers in Rural Bavaria, Germany

Weiterwanderungen, (Im)Mobilitäten und Integrationsprozesse
geflüchteter Neuzugewanderter im ländlichen Bayern, Deutschland

Faculty of Natural Sciences
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Prof. Dr. Pablo Bose

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Even before 2015, which went down in (German) history as both the so-called “refugee crisis”¹ and the “long summer of migration”/“long summer of flight”², I interviewed local actors in the Bavarian forest in 2014 and became aware of an upward trend in the influx of asylum seekers needing to be accommodated locally. As a result of that influx, former hotels or guesthouses that had been on the brink of closure, due to investment bottlenecks, came back into use. Due to our previous research on tourism in that area, my colleague Stefan and I were keen to better understand the nexus between tourism and migration as well as the sustainability of this development; i.e. would refugee newcomers want to continue living in rural areas even after their recognition. We therefore successfully applied for two consecutive research grants, which consolidated and facilitated this PhD project. The first grant was provided by the STAEDTLER foundation (*STAEDTLER Stiftung*, 2016-2017), while the second was from the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (*Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft*, 2018-2021, Grant number: 2817LE035), based on a decision of the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany via the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) under the innovation support program. My dissertation was further enabled with funding from a PhD scholarship provided by the Hanns-Seidel foundation (*Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung*, 2017-2019) using funds from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*) as well as travel funds from the von Humboldt-Ritter-Penck foundation of the Geographical Society of Berlin

¹ Flüchtlingskrise, Bade 2017

² Der lange Sommer der Migration, Hess et al. 2016; Der lange Sommer der Flucht, Schulz & Schwertel 2017

(von Humboldt-Ritter-Penck-Stiftung der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin, 2017) and the Dorothea and Dr. Dr. Richard Zantner-Busch foundation (*Dorothea und Dr.Dr. Richard Zantner-Busch-Stiftung*, 2017).

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Erlangen, February 2021

Summary

Chosen by some and an ‘accidental’ host country for others as they have got stuck on their way to other places, in the last decade Germany has become the European country hosting the greatest number of forced migrants in absolute numbers. Having arrived by means of illegal entry, resettlement schemes, relocation within the EU or in the course of family reunion, freedom of movement and onward mobility is limited for asylum seekers as well as recognized and resettled refugees, by a dispersal policy and a residence rule, which has led to a situation in which forced migrants are not only situated in urban areas, but must also increasingly be considered a rural phenomenon. While population development in rural areas has been framed by the attributes ‘ageing’ and ‘decreasing’ for many years, going hand in hand with the necessity of safeguarding and adapting the provision of infrastructures and services, the (re)settlement of forced migrants in these regions has been seen as a possibility by many actors in the last couple of years. However, due to migrants’ expectations of onward mobilities towards cities, it remained unclear, whether forced migrants can sustainably reverse population decline, and counteract labor and skill shortages and the decline of infrastructures and services.

Against this backdrop, the goal of the thesis was to better understand the onward (im)mobilities and integration processes of these ‘refugee newcomers’ (i.e. asylum seekers and recognized and resettled refugees) in rural areas in Germany, focusing on rural specificities in terms of settlement and integration. The theoretical-conceptual aim, accordingly, was to contribute to the field of migration and human (im)mobility research. Empirically, the thesis aimed, firstly, to analyze the discursive framing of refugee settlement processes in rural areas; secondly, to analyze the residential and everyday (im)mobilities of refugee

newcomers in rural areas, drawing on the new mobilities paradigm, and, thirdly, to identify the characteristics of mechanisms of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion of forced migrants in rural areas in terms of everyday mobility and access to housing. Methodologically and ethically, the project sought to develop and enhance sound research tools that are able to give voice to refugee newcomers, and better able to integrate them in research processes, leading to an enhanced understanding of their life-worlds in general and of their experience of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion specifically. To achieve these goals, the dissertation is based on an interdisciplinary multi-method approach. Empirical research was conducted in rural Bavaria, Germany, and the results are presented in a series of five articles. Each article addresses particular aspects of onward (im)mobilities and integration processes as well as methodological issues.

Because refugees had already been subject to dispersal policies and residence rules, and in acknowledgement of the call for a historic turn in social sciences in general (McDonald 1996) and migration studies specifically (Bade 1987; Martiniello 2013), the first paper (**#1 NRG**) aims to add a historical perspective to the debate. By means of comparing policy narratives in favor of the spatial distribution of forced migrants towards rural areas in Germany during the most important periods and among the most prominent groups of refugee newcomers, i.e. refugees and expellees after World War II and asylum seekers and recognized refugees in the 2010s, the article shows that – even in changing economic and social contexts – three policy narratives on the distribution of forced migrants to rural areas continued to persist over time. Consequently, political actors intertwine aspects of burden sharing with issues of regional development of rural areas; i.e. they see refugee newcomers as a source of potential for development in the realms of housing and the labor market as well as for the provision of infrastructure, revealing the expectation of a migration-development-nexus, which was previously largely discussed in relation to the sending countries.

The second (#2 **EUR**) and third (#3 **ERD**) papers then discuss the onward (im)mobilities of forced migrants - especially with regard to the question of whether they move on to cities, as – along with immigration – this could hamper the governance of spatial development. Results from a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews with refugee newcomers and local actors revealed the complex (im)mobility trajectories of forced migrants. While forced onward mobility occurs during the asylum procedure due to the profitability of providers' of accommodation, and as a result of disciplinary measures and safety issues, after recognition other patterns of onward mobilities, including moving back and forth, i.e. rural-urban-migration, re-migration to rural areas and rural in-migration, and staying put (especially in rural small towns) can be identified. However, everyday mobility processes of varying duration result in periods during which forced migrants are absent as well as periods during which they are present. These processes indicate interdependency between residential and everyday mobilities and reveal the refugee newcomers' reaction against the sedentarist logic of the state.

The fourth (#4 **JRS**) and fifth (#5 **IMI**) papers attempt to contrast the political actors' lines of arguments with the everyday experiences of forced migrants. The everyday mobility of the population and refugee newcomers is a core issue in rural areas and was thus added to the integration model of Ager and Strang (2008) as an additional facilitating key component of integration. However, the newcomers' socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion in terms of everyday mobility is dynamic over time and depends on a number of things, including the availability of transport opportunities to places, the safety and security of the route, and the measures provided by local actors and refugee communities as well as their own mobility aspirations, family situations, and their agency and resources. Empirical data confirm that access to housing, seen as easily available in rural areas from a political actor's perspective, is another important means

and marker of integration. As with everyday mobility, forced migrants' socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion in terms of access to housing is dynamic over time and depends on a variety of interwoven factors: the number of houses available in the local housing market, the size, condition and location of available rental apartments, the previous experience of landlords and real estate agents, and measures provided by local actors and refugee communities as well as newcomers' own residential preferences, family situation, their agency and resources.

To analyze the spatial and temporal dimension of forced migrants' life-worlds, i.e. their everyday mobilities and the meanings they attach to places (#4 JRS) as well as their residential preferences and actions over time (#5 IMI), the thesis drew on both biographical-narrative and participatory and visual approaches, and integrated the timeline tool and mobility mapping into biographical-narrative interviews. Due to their mostly visual character, the interviews were more independent of participants' reading and writing abilities and thus able to better integrate refugee newcomers into the research process. The graphic visualization supported forced migrants' ability to remember and chronologically structure residential locations and life events and strengthened their ability to express themselves. In this way, interaction and discussion was stimulated, allowing for a collaborative analysis even at the interview stage, reducing asymmetries of power and raising self-awareness among participants.

Based on its findings, the thesis recommends that future research should more systematically focus on how receiving societies influence the integration of forced migrants, i.e. 'refugee-integration-opportunity structures' (Phillimore 2020), bearing in mind the important role that place and locality have on integration. Secondly, it should seek to compare both refugee newcomers' decision-making processes about moving on or staying

put and their experiences of mechanisms of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion with those of other groups residing in rural areas, e.g. children, teenagers, seniors, illiterates, individuals with limited financial resources, and people of color or other migrants ('de-migranticization', Dahinden 2016). Finally, the thesis suggests a need for longitudinal studies on the life-worlds of refugee newcomers.

Zusammenfassung

Weiterwanderungen, (Im)Mobilitäten und Integrationsprozesse geflüchteter Neuzugewanderter im ländlichen Bayern, Deutschland.

Von den einen bewusst gewählt, von anderen ‚zufälliges‘ Ziel, weil sie auf ihrem Weg in andere Länder hier strandeten, wurde Deutschland im letzten Jahrzehnt zum zahlenmäßig bedeutendsten Aufnahmeland für Geflüchtete in Europa. Nach der Ankunft in Deutschland mittels illegaler Einreise, Umsiedlungsprogrammen innerhalb der EU oder im Zuge von Familienzusammenführung ist die Bewegungsfreiheit und Weiterwanderung sowohl von Asylbewerber:innen als auch von anerkannten und umgesiedelten Flüchtlingen aufgrund einer Verteilungspolitik und einer Wohnsitzregelung eingeschränkt. Dies führte dazu, dass Geflüchtete nicht nur in städtischen Gebieten angesiedelt wurden, sondern zunehmend auch als ländliches Phänomen betrachtet werden müssen. Während die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in ländlichen Räumen über viele Jahre mit den Attributen ‚Alterung‘ und ‚Bevölkerungsabnahme‘ beschrieben wurde und mit der Notwendigkeit der Sicherung und Anpassung der Infrastruktur- und Dienstleistungsangebote einherging, wurde die An- bzw. Umsiedlung von Geflüchteten in diese(n) Regionen in den letzten Jahren von vielen Akteur:innen als Chance gesehen. Aufgrund der zu erwartenden Weiterwanderung in die Städte blieb jedoch unklar, ob die Geflüchteten in der Lage sind, den Bevölkerungsrückgang nachhaltig umzukehren und dem Arbeits- und Fachkräftemangel sowie dem Rückgang von Infrastrukturen und Dienstleistungen entgegenzuwirken.

Vor diesem Hintergrund war es Ziel der Dissertation, die Weiterwanderungen, (Im)Mobilitäten und Integrationsprozesse

dieser ‚geflüchteten Neuzugewanderten‘ (*refugee newcomers*), d.h. Asylbewerber:innen und anerkannten und umgesiedelten Flüchtlinge, in ländlichen Räumen in Deutschland besser zu verstehen, wobei der Fokus auf ländlichen Spezifika in Bezug auf Ansiedlung und Integration lag. Das theoretisch-konzeptionelle Ziel war dementsprechend, einen Beitrag zum Feld der Migrations- und (Im)Mobilitätsforschung zu leisten. Empirisch zielte die Arbeit darauf ab, erstens die diskursive Rahmung von Ansiedlungsprozessen von Geflüchteten in ländlichen Räumen zu analysieren, zweitens die Wohn- und Alltags(im)mobilitäten von geflüchteten Neuzugewanderten in ländlichen Räumen unter Rückgriff auf das ‚neue Mobilitätsparadigma‘ (*New mobilities paradigm*) zu analysieren und drittens die Charakteristika von Mechanismen der sozialräumlichen Exklusion und Inklusion von Geflüchteten in ländlichen Räumen in Bezug auf Alltagsmobilität und Zugang zu Wohnraum zu identifizieren. Methodisch und ethisch wurde angestrebt, solide Forschungsinstrumente neu zu entwickeln (bzw. bestehende Instrumente zu verbessern), die geflüchteten Neuzugewanderten eine Stimme geben und sie besser in Forschungsprozesse einbinden. Dadurch sollte ein besseres Verständnis ihrer Lebenswelten im Allgemeinen und ihrer erlebten sozialräumlichen Exklusion und Inklusion im Besonderen erreicht werden. Um die skizzierten Ziele zu erreichen, setzt die Dissertation auf einen interdisziplinären multimethodischen Ansatz mit empirischer Forschung im ländlichen Bayern und stellt die Ergebnisse in einer Serie von fünf Artikeln vor. Jeder Beitrag befasst sich mit bestimmten Aspekten von Weiterwanderungen, (Im)Mobilitäten und Integrationsprozessen sowie mit methodischen Fragen.

Aufgrund der Tatsache, dass Verteilungspolitiken und Wohnsitzregelungen bereits in der Vergangenheit angewandt wurden, und in Anerkennung der Forderung nach einer ‚historischen Wende‘ in den Sozialwissenschaften im Allgemeinen (*historic turn*, McDonald 1996) und der Migrationsforschung im Besonderen (Bade 1987; Martiniello 2013), zielt der erste Artikel

(#1 NRG) darauf ab, die Debatte um eine historische Perspektive zu erweitern. Anhand einer Gegenüberstellung von Politiknarrativen zur räumlichen Verteilung von Geflüchteten auf ländliche Räume in Deutschland für die bedeutendsten Zeiträume und Gruppen von geflüchteten Neuzugewanderten, d.h. Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg und Asylbewerber:innen und anerkannte Flüchtlinge in den 2010er Jahren, zeigt der Artikel, dass drei Politiknarrative zur Verteilung von Geflüchteten auf ländliche Räume - trotz sich verändernder wirtschaftlicher und gesellschaftlicher Kontexte - über die Zeit fortbestehen. Dabei verschränken die politischen Akteur:innen Aspekte der Lastenverteilung mit Fragen der Entwicklung ländlicher Räume, d.h. sie schreiben geflüchteten Neuzugewanderten Potenziale für die Bereiche Wohnen und Arbeitsmarkt sowie die Bereitstellung von Infrastruktur zu und offenbaren damit die Erwartung eines ‚Migrations-Entwicklungs-Nexus‘ (*migration-development-nexus*), der zuvor vor allem für Herkunftsländer von Migrant:innen diskutiert wurde.

Der zweite (#2 EUR) und dritte Artikel (#3 ERD) diskutieren Weiterwanderungen und (Im)Mobilitäten von Geflüchteten - insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Frage, ob sie in Städte weiterziehen, da dies die Steuerung der räumlichen Entwicklung mit Hilfe von Zuwanderung erschweren würde. Die Ergebnisse einer quantitativen Befragung und qualitativer Interviews mit geflüchteten Neuzugewanderten und lokalen Akteur:innen zeigen komplexe ‚(Im-)Mobilitätsverläufe‘ (*(Im)Mobility trajectories*) von Geflüchteten. Während des Asylverfahrens findet erzwungene Weiterwanderung aufgrund von Wirtschaftlichkeitsdenken von Unterkunftsanbieter:innen, Disziplinarmaßnahmen und Fragen der Sicherheit statt. Nach der Anerkennung lässt sich ein Nebeneinander von Weiterwanderungen mit Hin- und Rückwanderung, d.h. Land-Stadt-Wanderung, Rückwanderung in ländliche Räume und Zuwanderung in ländliche Räume, und Bleiben (insbesondere in ländlichen Kleinstädten) identifizieren. Praktiken der Alltagsmobilität sind jedoch unterschiedlich

lang und führen zu temporärer Ab- und Anwesenheit von Geflüchteten. Die Prozesse weisen auf Interdependenzen von Wohn- und Alltagsmobilitäten hin und offenbaren Widerstände geflüchteter Neuzugewanderter gegen sesshafte Logiken des Staates.

Der vierte (#4 JRS) und fünfte Artikel (#5 IMI) zielen darauf ab, die Argumentationslinien der politischen Akteur:innen mit den Alltagserfahrungen der Geflüchteten zu kontrastieren. Die Alltagsmobilität der Bewohner:innen und Geflüchteten ist ein zentrales Thema des Lebens auf dem Land und wurde daher in das Integrationsmodell von Ager und Strang (2008) als zusätzliche begünstigende Schlüsselkomponente der Integration aufgenommen. Die sozialräumliche Exklusion und Inklusion der Neuzugewanderten in Bezug auf die Alltagsmobilität ist jedoch im Zeitverlauf dynamisch und hängt von verschiedenen Aspekten ab: von Transportmöglichkeiten, Orte zu erreichen, von der Sicherheit auf dem Weg dorthin, von Maßnahmen lokaler Akteur:innen und Geflüchteten, sowie von eigenen Mobilitätsbestrebungen, familiären Umständen, Handlungsfähigkeiten und Ressourcen. Empirische Daten bestätigen, dass der Zugang zu Wohnraum, der aus Sicht politischer Akteur:innen in ländlichen Räumen als überdurchschnittlich verfügbar angesehen wurde, ein weiteres wichtiges ‚Mittel für und Kennzeichen von Integration‘ ist (*means and marker*, Ager & Strang 2008). Ähnlich wie bei Alltagsmobilität ist sozialräumliche Exklusion und Inklusion von Geflüchteten in Bezug auf den Zugang zu Wohnraum im Zeitverlauf dynamisch und hängt von miteinander in Beziehung stehenden Faktoren ab: der Situation auf dem lokalen Wohnungsmarkt in Bezug auf Anzahl, Größe, Zustand und Lage der verfügbaren Mietwohnungen, bisherigen Erfahrungen von Vermieter:innen und Immobilienmakler:innen, den von lokalen Akteur:innen und Geflüchteten bereitgestellten Maßnahmen sowie Wohnpräferenzen, familiären Umständen, Handlungsfähigkeiten und Ressourcen der Neuzugewanderten.

Um die räumliche und zeitliche Dimension der Lebenswelten von Geflüchteten, d.h. ihre Alltagsmobilitäten und die mit Orten verbundenen Bedeutungen (#4 JRS) sowie ihre Wohnpräferenzen und Handlungen im Zeitverlauf (#5 IMI) zu analysieren, griff die Arbeit sowohl auf biographisch-narrative, partizipative und visuelle Ansätze zurück und integrierte das Zeitleisten-Instrument (*Timeline-Tool*) und die Mobilitätskartierung (*Mobility Mapping*) in biographisch-narrative Interviews. Durch den überwiegend visuellen Charakter sind die Interviews unabhängiger von den Lese- und Schreibfähigkeiten der Teilnehmenden und können geflüchtete Neuzugewanderte besser in den Forschungsprozess integrieren. Die grafische Visualisierung unterstützt die Fähigkeit der Geflüchteten, sich an Wohnorte und Lebensereignisse zu erinnern und diese chronologisch zu strukturieren und stärkt ihre Ausdrucksfähigkeit. Auf diese Weise wird die Interaktion und Diskussion angeregt und eine gemeinsame Analyse bereits während des Interviews ermöglicht. Dadurch werden Machtasymmetrien abgebaut und das Ich-Bewusstsein der Teilnehmenden erhöht.

Basierend auf den Ergebnissen dieser Arbeit sollte sich zukünftige Forschung systematischer darauf konzentrieren, wie Aufnahmegesellschaften die Integration von Geflüchteten beeinflussen und ‚Geflüchteten-Integrations-Gelegenheitsstrukturen‘ (*Refugee-integration-opportunity structures*, Phillimore 2020) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der wichtigen Rolle von Ort und Lokalität für Integration untersuchen. Zweitens sollte versucht werden, sowohl die Entscheidungsprozesse von geflüchteten Neuzugewanderten über Weiterwandern oder Bleiben als auch ihre Erfahrungen in Bezug auf sozialräumliche Exklusions- und Inklusionsmechanismen mit denen anderer Gruppen, die in ländlichen Räumen leben, zu vergleichen, z.B. mit Kindern, Jugendlichen, Senior:innen, Analphabet:innen, Personen mit begrenzten finanziellen Ressourcen, *People of Color* oder anderen Migrant:innen (‚De-Migrantifizierung‘, *De-migrantization*, Dahinden 2016). Schließlich werden

Zusammenfassung

Längsschnittstudien zu Lebenswelten von geflüchteten Neuzugewanderten angeregt.

ملخص³

العيش والبقاء في المانيا ، الهجرة وإمكانية تنقل الوافدين الجدد في المانيا وذلك ضمن عملية الاندماج في الريف البافاري.

سواءً عن تخطيط مسبق أو عن طريق الصدفة انتهى بهم الطريق إلى المانيا التي أصبحت أهم دولة مضيقة للاجئين وبأعداد كثيرة خلال العقد الأخير. بعد الوصول إلى المانيا من خلال الدخول غير القانوني وبرامج إعادة التوطين داخل الاتحاد الأوروبي أو في سياق لم شمل الأسرة، يتم تقييد حرية التنقل وإكمال الهجرة لكل من طالبي اللجوء واللاجئين المعترف بهم والمعاد توطينهم بسبب سياسة التوزيع وتنظيم الإقامة. ونتيجة لذلك لم يتم توطين اللاجئين في المدن فحسب بل أصبح من الضروري أيضاً اعتبارهم ظاهرة ريفية بشكل متزايد. بينما تم وصف التنمية السكانية في المناطق الريفية خلال سنوات عديدة بـ "الشيخوخة" وانخفاض عدد السكان مع الضرورة لتأمين البنى التحتية والخدمات ، أصبح توطين أو إعادة توطين اللاجئين خلال السنوات الأخيرة في هذه المناطق فرصة من وجهة نظر العديد من الجهات الفاعلة. ومع ذلك ، نظراً للهجرة المتوقعة إلى المدن ، ظل من غير الواضح ما إذا كان اللاجئون سيكونون قادرين على المساهمة في الازدياد السكاني بشكل مستدام ومواجهة نقص العمالة واليد العاملة الماهرة بالإضافة إلى التدهور في البنية التحتية والخدمات.

انطلاقاً من ذلك، كان الهدف من هذه المقالة هو فهم الهجرة، متابعة الهجرة، إمكانية التنقل أو عدمها وعملية اندماج الوافدين الجدد في المناطق الريفية في المانيا ، حيث كان التركيز على الخصائص الريفية من حيث التوطين والاندماج . وفقاً لذلك، فإن تقديم المساهمة في مجال أبحاث الهجرة والتنقل هو الهدف النظري والمفاهيمي لهذه الأطروحة. كان الهدف البحثي للعمل أولاً هو تحليل الإطار الاستطراذي لعمليات توطين اللاجئين في المناطق الريفية، وثانياً تحليل التنقل المعيشي واليومي للوافدين الجدد في المناطق الريفية باستخدام نموذج التنقل الجديد، وثالثاً تحديد خصائص آليات الإقصاء الاجتماعي المكاني وإدماج اللاجئين في المناطق الريفية فيما يتعلق بالتنقل اليومي والحصول على السكن. من الناحية المنهجية والأخلاقية ، كان الهدف هو تطوير أدوات بحث قوية جديدة (أو تحسين الأدوات الموجودة) ، لإعطاء صوت للاجئين المهاجرين حديثاً وإشراكهم بشكل أفضل في عمليات البحث. كان القصد من ذلك تحقيق فهم أفضل لبيئتهم المعيشية بشكل عام والإقصاء الاجتماعي والمكاني والإدماج الذي عانوه بشكل خاص. من أجل تحقيق الأهداف المحددة تعتمد الأطروحة على مناهج متعددة التخصصات ومتعددة الاساليب مع البحث التجريبي

³ The summary in Arabic stands exemplarily for the variety of languages spoken by the participants.

في ريف بافاريا ويقدم النتائج في سلسلة من خمس مقالات تتناول كل مقالة جوانب معينة من عمليات التنقل و عمليات الاندماج بالإضافة الى القضايا المنهجية.

بسبب حقيقته تطبق قواعد توزيع اللاجئين وقوانين الإقامة في الماضي بالفعل، وإقراراً بالحاجة الى إحداث تحول تاريخي في العلوم الاجتماعية بشكل عام (historic turn, McDonald 1996) ودراسات الهجرة بشكل خاص (Bade 1987; Martiniello 2013) تهدف المقالة الاولى (#1 NRG) الى اضافة مفهوم تاريخي للنقاش. استناداً على مقارنة الروايات السياسية حول التوزيع المكاني للاجئين لأهم الفترات وأهم مجموعات اللاجئين الجدد اي اللاجئين والمهجرين بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية وطالبي اللجوء المعترف بهم في العقد الاول من القرن الحادي والعشرين ، يكشف المقال انه حتى مع التغيرات في السياقات الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لا تزال ثلاث روايات السياسية حول توزيع المهاجرين قصراً على المناطق الريفية مستمرة مع مرور الوقت. حيث يربط الفاعلون السياسيون جوانب تقاسم الأعباء بمسائل التنمية الإقليمية في المناطق الريفية أي أنهم ينسبون المهاجرين الجدد الى امكانيات في مجالات السكن وسوق العمل بالإضافة الى توفير البنية التحتية أي التأثير الإيجابي للاجئين على منطقة معينة، وبالتالي يكشفون عن توقع العلاقة بين الهجرة والتنمية والتي نوقشت سابقاً في المقام الأول لبلدان منشأ المهاجرين.

تناقش المقالتان الثانية (#2 EUR) والثالثة (#3 ERD) التنقل والهجرة للاجئين خاصةً فيما يتعلق بمسألة الانتقال إلى المدن حيث أنها تجعل من الصعب السيطرة على التنمية المكانية بمساعدة هذه الهجرة. تظهر نتائج المسح الكمي والمقابلات النوعية مع الوافدين الجدد من اللاجئين والجهات الفاعلة المحلية محطات تنقل معقدة ومتنوعة للاجئين. يحدث التنقل القسري للاجئين أثناء إجراءات اللجوء لعدة أسباب منها : النظرة الاقتصادية من قبل مزود الإقامة أو بسبب إجراءات تأديبية أو إجراءات تتعلق بسلامة اللاجئين. بعد الحصول على تصريح الإقامة يمكن تحديد أنماط التنقل أي تحديد الهجرة من الريف الى المدن والهجرة العائدة الى المناطق الريفية والهجرة الريفية الداخلية او البقاء في المناطق الريفية. وبسبب اختلاف ممارسات التنقل اليومية للاجئين بشكل مطول فإن ذلك يؤدي الى تواجد أو غياب اللاجئين في مناطق إقامتهم . تشير العمليات الى الترابط بين التنقل السكني والحركة اليومية وتكشف عن مخالفة الوافدين الجدد من اللاجئين لمنطق التوطين للدولة.

تهدف المقالتان الرابعة (#4 JRS) والخامسة (#5 IMI) الى إيجاد التباين بين خطوط نقاشات الفاعلين السياسيين مع التجارب اليومية للمهاجرين. يعد التنقل اليومي للمقيمين واللاجئين موضوعاً رئيسياً للحياة في المناطق الريفية وبالتالي تم تضمينه في نموذج التكامل من قبل (إيجر اند سترانج 2008) كعنصر أساسي إضافي مفيد للاندماج. إن الإقصاء الاجتماعي-المكاني وإدماج المهاجرين الجدد فيما يتعلق بالتنقل اليومي بمرور الوقت يعتمد على جوانب مختلفة: خيارات النقل، والأماكن التي يمكن الوصول إليها، والأمان في الطريق إلى هناك، وعلى الإجراءات التي تتخذها الجهات الفاعلة المحلية في الداخل و اللاجئين ، وكذلك على جهود التنقل الخاصة ، وظروف الأسرة ، والقدرة على التصرف والموارد. تؤكد البيانات التجريبية أن الوصول إلى السكن ، والذي كان يُنظر

إليه من وجهة نظر الفاعلين السياسيين على أنه أعلى من المتوسط المتاح في المناطق الريفية ، هو وسيلة مهمة أخرى للتكامل وخاصة مميزة (means and marker, Ager & Strang 2008) . على غرار التنقل اليومي ، فإن الإقصاء الاجتماعي-المكاني وإدماج اللاجئين فيما يتعلق بالحصول على السكن بمرور الوقت يعتمد على العوامل ذات الصلة: الوضع في سوق الإسكان المحلي من حيث العدد والحجم والحالة والموقع المتاح شقق للإيجار ، الخبرات السابقة لأصحاب العقارات ووكلاء العقارات ، التدابير المقدمة من قبل الفاعلين المحليين واللاجئين بالإضافة إلى تفضيلات السكن ، الظروف الأسرية ، مهارات وموارد المهاجرين الجدد.

من أجل تحليل البعد المكاني والزمني للبيئة المعيشية للاجئين على مدار الوقت أي تنقلهم اليومي والمعاني المرتبطة ب أماكن إقامتهم (JRS 4#) بالإضافة الى تفضيلاتهم وإجراءاتهم في السكن (IMI 5#)، استندت الأطروحة الى كل من أساليب سرد السيرة الذاتية والتشاركية والبصرية ودمجت أداة الجدول الزمني و رسم خرائط التنقل في مقابلات السيرة الذاتية السردية. نظراً للطابع البصري السائد ، تكون المقابلات مستقلة عن مهارات القراءة والكتابة للمشاركين ويمكنها دمج المهاجرين الجدد بشكل افضل في عملية البحث. يدعم التصور البياني (الجرافيكى) قدرة اللاجئين على تذكر أماكن الإقامة ومجريات الحياة وتنظيمها ترتيباً زمنياً وتقوي قدراتهم في التعبير عن أنفسهم. بهذه الطريقة يتم تحفيز التفاعل والمناقشة ويمكن من إجراء تحليل مشترك أثناء المقابلة. وهذا يزيد من الوعي الذاتي للاجئين أثناء المقابلة .

بناءً على نتائج هذا العمل ، يجب أن يركز البحث المستقبلي بشكل أكثر منهجية أولاً على كيفية تأثير المجتمعات المضيفة على اندماج اللاجئين و هياكل فرص دمج اللاجئين مع إيلاء اهتمام خاص للدور المهم للمكان والموقع من أجل الاندماج.

(Refugee-integration-opportunity structures, Phillimore 2020)

ثانياً ، يجب بذل محاولة لمقارنة كل من عمليات صنع القرار للاجئين المهاجرين حديثاً بشأن الانتقال أو البقاء ، بالإضافة إلى تجاربهم فيما يتعلق بالآليات الاجتماعية-المكانية للإقصاء والدمج مع تلك الخاصة بالمجموعات الأخرى التي تعيش في المناطق الريفية، على سبيل المثال مع الأطفال، المراهقين، كبار السن، الأميين، الأشخاص ذوي الموارد المالية المحدودة والمهاجرين الآخرين أو السود والملونين.

(De-Migrantifizierung, De-migrantization, Dahinden 2016)

أخيراً ، يتم تشجيع الدراسات المطولة حول البيئات المعيشية للوافدين الجدد من ا.

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List of abbreviations

AFG	Afghanistan
AsylG	Asylum Act (<i>Asylgesetz</i>)
AufenthG	Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory (<i>Residence Act, Aufenthaltsgesetz</i>)
BA	Federal Employment Agency (<i>Bundesagentur für Arbeit</i>)
BAMF	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (<i>Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge</i>)
BMEL	Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (<i>Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft</i>)
CZE	Czech Republic
DVAsyl	Asylum Implementation Order in Bavaria (<i>Asyldurchführungsverordnung</i>)
ERI	Eritrea
EU	European Union
EUGH	European Court of Justice (<i>Europäischer Gerichtshof für Menschenrechte</i>)
FRG	Rural district of Freyung-Grafenau
GENESIS	Common New Statistical Information System of the Statistical State Offices and the Federal Statistical Office (<i>Gemeinsames Neues Statistisches Informations-System</i>)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GG	German Basic Law (<i>Grundgesetz</i>)

List of abbreviations

HOH	Inter-municipal alliance Hofheimer Land
HRV	Croatia
HUN	Hungary
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
INTERREG	European Territorial Cooperation, cross border cooperation program Germany/Bavaria – Czech Republic
IRQ	Iraq
MAK	City Marktredwitz
n.y.	no year
par.	Paragraph
PoC	People of Color
REG	Rural district of Regen
ROU	Romania
RQ	Research question
SGB II	Second book of the Social Code (<i>Sozialgesetzbuch Zweites Buch</i>)
SYR	Syria
TUR	Turkey
UFF	City Uffenheim
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States

WWII	World War II
XXA	Stateless person

1. Introduction and aims of the thesis

“Refugee movements are nothing new: as a result of war, conquest and political struggle they are as old as human history. The imagery of flight and exile is to be found in the holy books of most religions and is part of the founding myths of countless nations. The task [...] is to analyse the new characteristics of forced migration in the epoch of globalization.” (Castles 2003: 17)

According to the UN Refugee Agency, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide, at 79.5 million, reached a historical high in 2019 (UNHCR 2020). As a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations, the majority were displaced within their own countries (45.7 million) or settled in neighboring states, while only a factional part moves further away. For a range of reasons, however, including deteriorating conditions in UNHCR refugee camps, or changing legal or economic situations in former host countries, such as Turkey or Jordan⁴, onward mobilities as one coping and adaptation strategy could, and can, be detected in various regions of the world.

Since the 2010s, individuals from such diverse contexts as Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, Syria or Venezuela have made their way to Europe in search of refuge. While some have ended up in Greek and Italian⁵ refugee camps or illegal settlements, not least due to Dublin regulations and forced return,

⁴ For the situation in the host countries Turkey and Jordan, see, for instance, Weidinger (2020a) and Opoku Dankwah & Valenta (2018).

⁵ For the situation in the host country Italy, see, for instance, Weidinger & Bergamasco (2020).

others have managed to move further north. Their decisions are always made in relation to other countries and in the light of individual and household aspirations and (cap)abilities (Carling 2002; de Haas 2011). Individuals and households take into consideration a potential host country's economic situation and the access it offers in terms of settlement services, as well as a common language, established communities or the presence there of family members or friends (e.g. Boyd 1989; Koser & Pinkerton 2002; Townsend & Oomen 2015; Kuschminder 2018; Opoku Dankwah & Valenta 2018).

Chosen by some, and an 'accidental' host country for others as they have become stuck on their way to other countries, in the last ten years Germany has become the country hosting the greatest number of asylum seekers and refugees in Europe in absolute terms. Having arrived by means of illegal entry, resettlement schemes, relocation within the EU or in the course of family reunion, the freedom of movement and onward mobility of asylum seekers and recognized and resettled refugees is restricted. Drawing on a dispersal policy of distribution quotas for the Federal States (*Länder*) and further quotas on the *Länder* level, Germany has a compulsory system of allocating asylum seekers to reception facilities countrywide. Furthermore, in 2016, it established a residence rule for recognized refugees⁶ who are reliant on social welfare and restricted their choice of residential location at least to the *Länder* level. Refugees who have entered the country by means of different admission programs, likewise, are assigned to a place of residence with a residence rule (*Wohnsitzregelung*) if they are dependent on social welfare.

The dispersal system and the implementation of the residence rule has led to a situation in which asylum seekers and recognized and resettled refugees are not only located in urban

⁶ The term recognised refugees is used here to denote individuals who receive an entitlement to asylum, refugee protection or subsidiary protection, or a national ban on deportation based on an asylum application.

areas, but also increasingly have to be considered a rural phenomenon⁷. At the end of 2015, the starting point of this thesis, about 58% of foreigners with open protection status (*offener Schutzstatus*⁸) and about 35% with recognized protection status (*anerkannter Schutzstatus*⁹) resided in rural areas¹⁰ (author's own calculations¹¹, based on Statistisches Bundesamt 2019a).

For many years, the story of population development in rural areas has been framed by the attributes 'ageing' and 'decreasing' (e.g. Barlösius & Zimmermann 2013; Johnson & Lichter 2019; Wiegandt & Krajewski 2020). However, hand in hand with the need to safeguard and adapt the provision of infrastructures and services, the (re)settlement of forced migrants in these regions has been seen as an opportunity by many actors in the last couple of years, as the translated titles of German media reports indicate: "Association of Municipalities sees space for refugees in villages" (FAZ 2015), "Population development and vacancies. Refugees to the countryside" (Handelsblatt 2015) or "Researcher predicts: Refugees are the last chance for rural regions in Germany" (Focus 2016). However, it remains unclear whether

⁷ For a comparative assessment on the location of hosted asylum seekers in OECD regions and cities, see Proietti & Veneri (2019).

⁸ This includes both individuals with a proof of arrival (*Ankunftsnachweis*) and a permission to reside (*Aufenthaltsgestattung*) due to a pending asylum application. For statistical purposes, on this, see Eberle (2019).

⁹ This includes individuals who received a temporary protection status as a result of their asylum application (entitlement to asylum, refugee protection or subsidiary protection, or a national ban on deportation) or for other reasons (such as resettlement), as well as individuals with a permanent protection status (i.e. permanent residency for humanitarian reasons).

¹⁰ I am aware that spatial categories such as rural or urban are socially constructed in relation to one another. They are dynamic, constantly renegotiated and contested (Massey 1994b; Massey 2005), but remain a highly relevant category of thought for individuals and policy-makers (Mormont 1990).

¹¹ Data exclude the city and rural district of Kassel, as well as the districts within the Federal State of Saarland as the number of foreigners cannot be reported separately there.

forced migrants are able to sustainably reverse population decline and counteract labor and skill shortages and the decline of services (Hugo & Morén-Alegret 2008). Newspapers, for instance, reported a ‘cold receptivity’¹² among the rural population (“The village is crowded”, Spiegel 2012) and expected them to “prefer to move to big cities” (Zeit Online 2017).

Against this backdrop, the goal of my thesis was to better understand the onward (im)mobilities and integration processes of these ‘refugee newcomers’¹³ (i.e. asylum seekers and recognized and resettled refugees) in rural areas in Germany, focusing on rural specificities in terms of settlement and integration¹⁴. The theoretical-conceptual aim, accordingly, was to contribute to the field of migration and human (im)mobility research. Empirically, the thesis aimed to

- analyze the discursive framing of refugee settlement processes in rural areas,
- analyze residential and everyday (im)mobilities of refugee newcomers in rural areas drawing on the new mobilities paradigm, and
- identify characteristics of mechanisms of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion of refugee newcomers in rural areas.

The creation or production of knowledge about forced migration in general and the integration processes of refugee newcomers in particular has often been characterized as a ‘talking over’ instead of ‘talking with’ and has been criticized for lacking refugees’ voices (Malkki 1996; Doná 2007; in the German-speaking context, e.g. Aden et al. 2019). While this has at least partly

¹² For the concept of receptivity and its positive and negative manifestations, i.e. warm and cold receptivity, see McDaniel (2013) and Glorius et al. (2019).

¹³ For linguistic reasons, throughout this framing paper, the term ‘refugee newcomers’ is used interchangeably with forced migrants. Where necessary for interpretation, however, legal statuses are specified.

¹⁴ For a critique of the urban bias, see Schammann (2021).

to be considered the result of the ‘campization of refugee accommodation’ (Kreichauf 2018) leading to difficulties in approaching forced migrants (Harrell-Bond & Voutira 2007), nonetheless, subject-centered participatory and visual approaches have the potential to provide a more adequate research setting (Chatty et al. 2005; Mackenzie et al. 2007). They offer an alternative and solidary form of de-hierarchized knowledge production and provide the opportunity for new methodological debates (Aden et al. 2019; cf. Jacobsen & Landau 2003; Autonomous Geographies Collective 2010). Methodologically and ethically, therefore, the aims of the thesis were to develop and enhance sound research tools that give voice to forced migrants and that are able

- to better integrate refugee newcomers in research processes, and
- to better understand the life-worlds of refugee newcomers in general, and experiences of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion in particular.

To reach the goal and achieve the aims outlined, my dissertation is based on an interdisciplinary multi-method approach, in which empirical research was carried out in rural Bavaria, Germany.¹⁵ The results are presented in a series of five articles. Each article addresses particular aspects of onward (im)mobilities and integration processes as well as methodological issues.

The remainder of this framing paper comprises the introduction of the research questions and the compilation of the papers (chapter 2). Following this, in chapter 3, I present the state of the art and the theoretical background with a focus on onward (im)mobilities, forced (im)mobilizations, integration and socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion in general, and in terms of everyday mobility and housing in particular, as well as on researching

¹⁵ For a general critique on the ‘Western/Eurocentric bias’ and the ‘receiving-country bias’ in (forced) migration studies, see Connell (2007), Chimni (2009) and Castles (2010).

the life-worlds of refugee newcomers. Chapter 4, then, sets the scene and provides information on the history of forced (im)mobilities to rural Germany, on the dispersal policies and current restrictions on freedom of movement that affect individuals with both open and recognized protection status, as well as on their spatial distribution in Germany. Chapter 5 outlines the research design, selection and description of the study region, methods and dataset as well as data processing methods and analysis. In chapter 6, I synthesize the research highlights of each article, before discussing the major results in the light of the most recent findings in the literature and outlining a future research agenda (in chapter 7). The annexes contain the complete articles and background information, including a list of interviews, open-access publications and press articles related to the cumulative PhD thesis.

2. Research questions and compilation of papers

Research on the onward (im)mobilities and integration processes of refugee newcomers needs to take into account the localized contexts; i.e. the specificities of localities (cf. discussions about the local turn in migration and integration studies by Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2009; Caponio & Borkert 2010; Decker et al. 2015; Emilsson 2015; Barbehön & Münch 2017) as well as (im)migration) histories of places (cf. discussions about the historic turn in migration and integration studies by Bade 1987; Martiniello 2013). However, due to the fact that rural areas have to be considered as heterogeneous and diverse with regard to both rurality itself and their socio-economic situation (Champion & Hugo 2008; Küpper 2016), the thesis draws on empirical research from rural Bavaria, Germany, to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Which policy narratives ought to legitimize dispersal policies for asylum seekers in favor of rural areas and residence rules for recognized refugees that limit the residential location choice to a specific spatial scale?

RQ2: Which (forced and voluntary) residential and everyday (im)mobilities can be detected for asylum seekers and recognized refugees after their arrival in rural Germany and how do they counteract these?

RQ3: Which mechanisms of exclusion can be identified in relation to refugee newcomers' everyday mobility and access to housing in rural areas and how are they overcome?

The dissertation seeks to answer the following methodological questions with empirical evidence:

RQ4: How do you design a method to enable analysis of the everyday mobility and subjective meanings ascribed by refugee newcomers to their important places as well as the identification of processes of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion?

RQ5: How do you design a method that is able to grasp the dynamic interplay between individual and household aspirations, (cap)abilities and actions, and the structure of housing contexts over time?

The five research questions were addressed in a series of five (double-blind) peer-reviewed articles written by myself and my co-authors, of which three have been published in the ISI-indexed journals *Die Erde – Journal of the Geographical Society of Berlin* (0.641), the *Journal of Refugee Studies* (1.459) and *International Migration* (1.274) (for the articles, see Annex I a-e). Throughout the frame of this cumulative PhD thesis, I will refer to the articles using numbers and short codes indicating the journal or title of publication.

#1 NRG: Weidinger, Tobias (2020): Policy narratives about the distribution of forced migrants to rural areas. Searching for traces in recent German history. In: Steinführer, A., Heindl, A.-B., Grabski-Kieron, U. & Reichert-Schick, A. (Eds.): *New rural geographies in Europe: actors, processes, policies* (= Rural areas: Issues of local and regional development 6) (pp. 269-290). LIT: Münster et al.

#2 EUR: Weidinger, Tobias, Kordel, Stefan & Pohle, Perdita (2017[2016]): Bleiben oder Gehen? Einflussfaktoren auf die Wohnstandortmobilität anerkannter Flüchtlinge in ländlichen Räumen am Beispiel des Bayerischen Waldes. *Europa Regional* 24(3-4), 46-61.¹⁶

¹⁶ A similar version of the manuscript was published in English in an edited volume (cf. Weidinger 2018).

(part of the Special Issue “Zuwanderung in ländliche Räume Europas” / “Immigration in rural areas of Europe”, edited by Stefan Kordel)

#3 ERD: Kordel, Stefan & **Weidinger, Tobias** (2019): Onward (im)mobilities: conceptual reflections and empirical findings from lifestyle migration research and refugee studies. *Die Erde – Journal of the Geographical Society of Berlin* 150(1), 1-16. DOI: 10.12854/erde-2019-408

#4 JRS: **Weidinger, Tobias**, Kordel, Stefan & Kieslinger, Julia (2021 [2019]): Unravelling the meaning of place and spatial mobility: analysing the everyday life-worlds of refugees in host societies by means of mobility mapping. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34(1), 374-396. DOI: 10.1093/jrs/fez004

#5 IMI: **Weidinger, Tobias** & Kordel, Stefan (2020): Access to and Exclusion from Housing over Time: Refugees’ Experiences in Rural Areas. *International Migration*, 1-18. DOI: 10.1111/imig.12807 (part of the Special Issue “Post-2015 refugees in Germany: ‘Culture of welcome’, solidarity or exclusion?”, edited by Miriam Schader and Zeynep Yanasmayan-Wegele)

While the first, fourth and fifth research questions are tackled in papers 1, 4 and 5, the second and third question are answered in two different papers each (cf. Table 1). The first article (**#1 NRG**) deals with the socio-historical frame of settlement of forced migrants in rural (Western) Germany after World War II and in the 2010 decade and reveals policy narratives that have aimed and continue to aim at legitimizing their distribution to rural areas, drawing on a document and qualitative-oriented content analysis. The second article (**#2 EUR**), then, provides empirical results with regard to the residential mobility of recognized and resettled refugees in rural Germany at the present time. These results, in turn, are embedded and analyzed further in a third article

2. *Research question and compilation of papers*

with a conceptual focus on the onward (im)mobilities of refugee newcomers (#3 ERD). Both articles are built on a quantitative survey of, and biographical-narrative interviews with, refugee newcomers as well as qualitative interviews with local actors. The fourth article (#4 JRS) presents and discusses mobility mapping – as one part of the biographical-narrative interviews with refugee newcomers – as a valuable space-related instrument for analyzing the meanings of places and everyday mobility. The fifth article (#5 IMI), finally, focusses on the housing pathways of refugee newcomers in rural areas and their residential preferences, as well as mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion, relying particularly on the timeline tool as part of the biographical-narrative interviews (for the research highlights of each article, see chapter 6; for a discussion of the major results, see chapter 7).

Table 1: Research questions, methods applied and papers addressing the respective questions

Research questions	Methods	Papers
<p>RQ1: Which policy narratives ought to legitimize dispersal policies for asylum seekers in favor of rural areas and residence rules for recognized refugees that limit the residential location choice to a specific spatial scale?</p>	<p>Document and qualitative-oriented content analysis</p>	<p>#1 NRG</p>

<p>RQ2: Which (forced and voluntary) residential and everyday (im)mobilities can be detected for asylum seekers and recognized refugees after the arrival in rural Germany and how and how do they counteract these?</p>	<p>Quantitative survey of and biographical-narrative interviews with refugee newcomers, qualitative interviews with local actors</p>	<p>#2 EUR #3 ERD</p>
<p>RQ3: Which mechanisms of exclusion can be identified in relation to refugee newcomers' everyday mobility and access to housing in rural areas and how are they overcome?</p>	<p>Quantitative survey of and biographical-narrative interviews with refugee newcomers, qualitative interviews with local actors</p>	<p>#4 JRS #5 IMI</p>
<p>RQ4: How do you design a method to enable analysis of the everyday mobility and subjective meanings ascribed by refugee newcomers to their important places as well as the identification of processes of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion?</p>	<p>Biographical-narrative interviews with refugee newcomers</p>	<p>#4 JRS</p>

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RQ5: How do you design a method that is able to grasp the dynamic interplay between individual and household aspirations, (cap)abilities and actions, and the structure of housing contexts over time?	Biographical-narrative interviews with refugee newcomers	#5 IMI
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(Source: Author's own draft)

This cumulative PhD thesis is part of my wider on-going research on immigration (of refugee newcomers) to rural areas in Germany as well as on participatory and visual methods. It focuses on six different areas:

- the diverse processes of immigration to rural areas in Europe and Germany, their specific implications for development, and strategies for coping (Kordel et al. 2018a, Kordel & Weidinger 2018, 2020b, 2020c, 2021, Weidinger & Spenger 2020);
- conceptual issues surrounding immigration to and integration in rural areas (Glorius et al. 2017);
- the socio-historic frame of immigration (of refugee newcomers) to rural areas, i.e. reception conditions then and now as well as local-regional immigration histories (Weidinger & Kordel 2019; Weidinger et al., *accepted*);
- the presentation of the state of the art on different aspects of forced migrants' immigration to, and integration in, rural areas (Weidinger & Kordel 2016; Weidinger & Kordel 2020a);
- the presentation of empirical results on the integration processes of refugee newcomers, both as a whole and

with regard to particular dimensions of integration (Kordel & Weidinger 2017; Weidinger 2018; Glorius et al. 2020); and, finally,

- methodological and ethical issues surrounding research with forced migrants as well as methodical development in the context of human (im)mobilities (Kordel et al. 2018b; Kieslinger et al. 2020; see also chapter 5).

3. The current state of research and theoretical background

In the five sections of this chapter that follow, I present the theoretical-conceptual starting points of my PhD thesis and derive the five research questions from the current state of research in this area. Section 3.1 deals with (im)mobilities as a new, enlightening perspective on migration and my underlying migration model and previous knowledge of onward (im)mobilities of forced migrants, while section 3.2 highlights the role of the state in mobilizing and immobilizing refugee newcomers in rural areas. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 address the integration process of forced migrants, the underlying integration model and the socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion of refugee newcomers in everyday life in general and with regard to everyday mobility and access to housing in rural areas in particular. Finally, section 3.5 focuses on the analysis of refugee newcomers' mobile life-worlds, and thus takes a methodological perspective.

3.1 Onward (Im)Mobilities of forced migrants and the aspiration-ability model

By the early 2000s, scholars had already begun to criticize sedentarist assumptions of the social sciences (Urry 2000; Cresswell 2001; for 'sedentarist bias', see Malkki 1995). Instead, given the normality of mobilities of people, objects and ideas (Cresswell 2011), they proclaimed an 'era of mobilities' (Urry 2007), a 'mobility turn' (Hannam et al. 2006) and a 'new mobilities paradigm' (Sheller & Urry 2006). They argued that the distinction between residential and everyday mobility becomes blurred and called for a more substantial consideration of mobility and mobilizations in empirical research and methodology, where 'being mobile' should be placed at the core (see also #3 ERD; in the context

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of forced migration, see Gill et al. 2011). However, because migration and mobility exist “in tandem with new forms of exclusion, dislocation, immobility, segregation and stratification” (Tazzioli 2018), other scholars have highlighted the dialectical and relational, co-constitutive character of mobility and immobility, of being on the move and staying put (Adey 2006; Franquesa 2011). Accordingly, immobility and immobilizations should not be taken for granted, but should become a focus of inquiry itself (in the context of forced migration, see Lubkemann 2008).

In migration, as one important form of human mobility, scholars distinguish between voluntary and forced movement (Bähr 2010; Gans 2011; Hillmann 2016; Wehrhahn 2016). Due to the cumulative causation of migration (Massey et al. 1998) and the fact that “both force and choice – structure and agency – are expressed within *all* migrations” (Barcus & Halfacree 2018: 234), however, it is better to think of ‘voluntary’ and ‘forced’ as two ends of a continuum. In the case of so-called forced migrants, the term ‘mixed migration’ may often be more suitable (Van Hear et al. 2009). In the course of this cumulative PhD thesis, I draw on the migration theory of Carling (2002; Carling & Schewel 2018), who developed an aspiration-ability model¹⁷ that takes a two-step approach to migration. In the first step a decision is made about whether the place of residence should be changed or not (cf. ‘threshold of indifference’, van der Velde & van Naerssen 2011), while in the second, people assess their ability to realize their decision at a given moment – or not. Both the aspiration and the ability to migrate depend on individual level characteristics and the structural context, i.e. the emigration environment and the immigration interface (cf. Figure 1; see also

¹⁷ De Haas (2014) combined the aspiration-ability model of Carling and Sen’s (1999) works on capability into an expanded aspirations-capabilities framework, which gives credit to the fact that the capacity to migrate is relevant to all individuals, regardless of people’s preferences for staying or leaving (Carling & Schewel 2018).

section 3.2). The emigration environment encompasses “the social, economic and political context in which particular social constructions of migration exist” (Carling & Schewel 2018: 947), whereas the immigration interface “comprises a range of possible modes of migrating, either in compliance with or defiance of the various migration regulations” (ibid.: 948; cf. ‘trajectory threshold’, van der Velde & van Naerssen 2011). By means of this two-step approach, it is also possible to shed light on immobility, whether it is experienced as voluntary or involuntary/forced.¹⁸

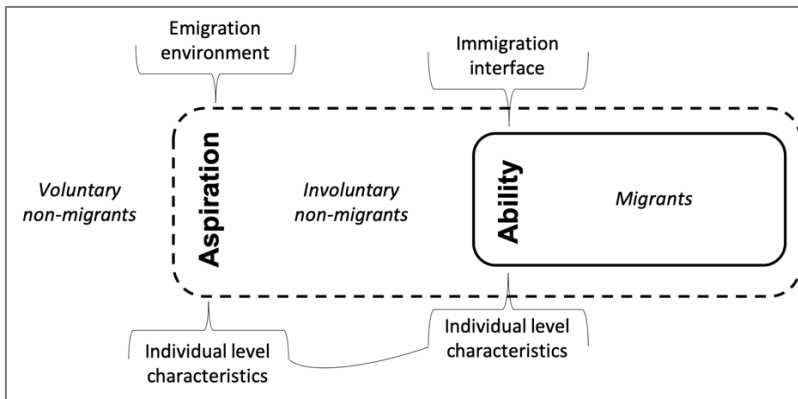


Figure 1: The aspiration-ability model

(Source: Author’s own draft, based on Carling & Schewel 2018: 946)

As highlighted by the aspiration-ability model above, individual aspirations and (cap)abilities concerning (im)mobility are central. Thus, the authors do not solely focus on structural influences or (forced) migrants’ vulnerabilities, but instead emphasize their agency (Sewell 1992; for the autonomy of migration approach, see Papadopoulos & Tsianos 2013; De Genova 2017; for

¹⁸ Mata-Codesal (2018) suggests a threefold typology of immobilities that adds acquiescent immobility to the two other forms of immobility mentioned by Carling (2002), i.e. desired immobility (voluntary immobility) and involuntary immobility.

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the role of agency in forced migration studies, see Malkki 1996; Taylor 2015; Geiger 2016; Innes 2016; Spenger & Kordel, *in preparation*). According to Emirbayer and Mische (1998), agency is a “temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its ‘itinerational’ or habitual aspect) but also oriented toward the future (as a ‘projective’ capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a ‘practical-evaluative’ capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment” (ibid.: 962). Based on this, (im)mobility can only be realized by drawing on different forms of resources or capital (Triandafyllidou 2017), for example economic, social (network), cultural or spatial (mobility) capital (Bourdieu 1972, 1986; Kaufmann et al. 2004; Elliott & Urry 2010; Rérat 2018; see also section 3.4), which are “interlinked and accumulated, transmitted and reproduced inter-generationally” (Bourdieu 1986, cit. by Major et al. 2013: 99).

When addressing forced migration in particular, the interplay between agency and structure(s) often does not lead to migration from place A to a strictly defined destination B (Opoku Dankwah & Valenta 2018; cf. ‘locational threshold’, van der Velde & van Naerssen 2011), but is better understood as a fragmented journey (Collyer 2010; Benezer & Zetter 2015) or trajectory (van der Velde & van Naerssen 2011). The widely used terms ‘primary migration’ (e.g. movement from the country of flight to a host country) and ‘secondary migration’ (e.g. movement within a host country or from one host country to another)¹⁹, therefore, are considered inadequate to capture the complexity of migration histories of forced migrants (Lindley & van Hear 2007). Instead, I follow Lindley and van Hear (2007) as well as others (e.g. Jeffery & Murison 2011; Stewart 2011; Sim 2015; Ahrens et al. 2016;

¹⁹ Selected authors, who have used these terms are Haines (1982), Forbes (1984), Robinson and Hale (1989), Simich et al. (2001), Nielsen (2004), Morét et al. (2005), Huisman (2011), Ott (2011), Weine et al. (2011), Bloem (2014) or Marks (2014).

Kelly & Hedman 2016; UNHCR 2016), who suggest the phrase ‘onward migration’, which is ‘open’ to multiple moves over time (cf. #2 EUR; #3 ERD). However, drawing on the new mobilities paradigm, I prefer to speak of ‘onward (im)mobilities’.

As has been indicated, onward (im)mobilities among forced migrants are common (e.g. Rogge 1977; Black 1991; Foley & Beer 2003; Simich et al. 2003; Harte et al. 2009; Ott 2011; Weine et al. 2011; Stewart 2011; Haandrikman & Hassanen 2014), while reasons to move on or to stay put may vary. They can range from a preference for staying close to, to a preference for avoiding, pre-existing communities of co-ethnics (e.g. Haines 1982; Forbes 1984; Simich et al. 2001; Huisman 2011; Harkins 2012)²⁰ and can also depend on the presence of other social contacts, educational infrastructure, employment opportunities, housing options, health considerations and life course events (e.g. Haines 1982; Carey-Wood et al. 1995; Harkins 2012; Stewart & Shaffer 2015; for the key dimensions of integration, see also section 3.3). In the case of onward mobilities to (other) cities, the presence of an ethnic community, or of family or friends is a dominant narrative (e.g. Cox 1972; Haines 1982; Nann 1982; Robinson & Hale 1989; Simich et al. 2001; Harte et al. 2009). Onward mobilities to (other) rural areas, instead, have been reported to be related to employment opportunities (Fennelly 2005; Major et al. 2013; Marks 2014), more affordable and available housing (Taylor & Stanovic 2005; McDonald et al. 2008; Boese 2010; Schech 2014), quietness, and the ability to escape problems associated with urban life such as racist violence, drug abuse and youth peer pressure (McDonald et al. 2008; Major et al. 2013). Finally, onward mobilities abroad have been linked, for example, to economic and educational opportunities or the presence of relatives and friends (e.g. Lindley & van Hear 2007; Kelly & Hedman 2016). For

²⁰ Repeat migration to a certain place can trigger path dependence and lead to a self-perpetuation of migration to that destination (Massey et al. 1993, see also ‘chain migration’, Boyd 1989 or Massey et al. 1998).

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Germany, the European country currently hosting the greatest number of forced migrants, however, no information about onward mobilities and reasons behind it was available at the beginning of this PhD project (SVR 2016).

It is widely acknowledged among migration scholars that refugee newcomers' decisions about whether to move on or stay put are not a single act but are constantly negotiated in everyday life (Halfacree & Rivera 2012; McAreavey 2012) – in relation to other places, times and social networks (Kieslinger et al. 2020; see also section 3.5). While places may be ones either previously inhabited, visited or imagined, 'time' refers to both historical time, generational time and the individual's life course (for the life course perspective, see Coulter & van Ham 2013), whereby the length of stay in a specific place allows individuals to make particular experiences or life events (Kieslinger et al. 2020; for the role of time and temporality, see Baas & Yeoh 2019). Individual decisions are also embedded in social structures like household or family networks, where events in the lives of others may influence individual biographies (Coulter & van Ham 2013; for a discussion about 'linked lives', see Bailey et al. 2004). Developing emotional ties with or establishing a personal feeling of being at home in a place was previously captured by terms such as 'place-based belonging'²¹ (Yuval-Davis 2006), 'sense of place' (Eyles 1985) and 'place attachment' (Altman & Low 1992; Hummon 1992; Gustafson 2006; Lewicka 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Scannell & Gifford 2010). Referring to the latter in particular, it is not only about the meanings of places for the individual (Turton 2005; see also 'place identity', Mendoza & Morén-Alegret 2012), but also about the "functional uses of places and how well these serve the achievement of people's goals" (Mendoza & Morén-Alegret 2012: 764; see also 'place dependence', Lewicka 2011a).

²¹ For places of belonging, see Olwig (2003), Ehrkamp (2005) or Huizinga & van Hooven (2018), while for multiple, multi-farious place-based belongings, consider Lam and Yeoh (2004) or Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013).

Predictors of place attachment were found to be socio-demographic factors, e.g. length of residence, age, social status, having children or not, home ownership, local social capital, i.e. local community ties and the physical aspects of a place such as quietness, climate, landscape, or localization (Lewicka 2011b). Taking these predictors into account, it is obvious that both attachments to place and the decision to stay put depend on refugee newcomers' everyday practices and concrete experiences of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion, lack of access to, and non-participation in, individually important activities in places and identities (see section 3.3 and 3.4).

3.2 Forced (Im)Mobilizations and the role of the state: refugee newcomers in/to rural areas

Migration and mobility are a constant part of social reality (Hill & Yildiz 2018). However, despite the globalization dynamics that have produced increased movement and links across space and time (Tazzioli 2018), national politics mostly still considers them to be an anomaly (Dahinden 2016). They hierarchize migration and mobility (Amelina 2020), and differentiate between 'desired' and 'undesired' forms (Rass & Wolf 2018), and between 'good' and 'bad' migrants (Yildiz 2018; cf. Andrews 2017), resulting in unequal control of migration and mobility processes (Bélanger & Silvey 2020). The underlying assumption is that specific groups of immigrants might be a potential threat to security and public order (Belina 2010; Castles 2010), whereas forced migrants in particular are often considered to be detrimental in social, financial, cultural and political terms (Beck 1992; Bratich 2006; Witteborn 2011). Therefore, forced immobilizations of immigrants are a vital part of migration governance, both outside and at the (European or) national borders,²² for example by means of

²² For the externalization of borders and the process of 'bordering', see Newman (2006), Scott and van Houtum (2009), Casas-Cortes et al. (2010), Mezzadra and Neilson (2012), Mountz et al. (2013) or Burridge et al. (2017).

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border controls, fencing, surveillance machinery, sea patrols or ‘hotspots’ (Andersson 2014; Tazzioli 2018; Strukelj 2020), as well as after entering a state’s territory, for instance by means of dispersal, confinement/containment, encampment, or detention pending deportation (Boswell 2003; Robinson et al. 2003; Darling 2009; Khosravi 2009; Moran 2012). These measures are considered appropriate to deter (potential) migrants (Griffiths et al. 2005), and to channel and refine the places at which they arrive in the territory (Martin 2019), rendering them less perceptible to the locals (Tazzioli 2019), or facilitating identification and selection processes such as asylum procedures (on immobilization for reasons of control and security, see Foucault 1977; for processes of ‘bordering’, ‘ordering’ and ‘othering’ in the context of (im)mobilities, see von Houtum & van Naerssen 2002). Mechanisms and tactics of migration control by means of temporary immobilization, however, coexist with forced mobilizations (cf. ‘disciplined mobility’, Moran et al. 2012; see also Foucault 1977), such as the practice of transferring migrants between camps or prisons, to penalize them for political actions or prevent them from forming or maintaining social relations (Anderson et al. 2010; Hinger 2020; in the context of detention, see Gill 2009).

The spatialities or geographies of forced (im)mobilities/(im)mobilizations of a specific group of refugee newcomers manifest themselves especially in policies of dispersal to rural areas (‘forced scattering’, Tazzioli 2019) and confinement/containment (‘forced gathering’, Tazzioli 2019), for example in the politics of encampment, geographic restrictions and residence rules. These mechanisms are discussed in detail below.

Dispersal, i.e. spatial distribution across the country (and to rural areas), is a widespread mechanism that limits the freedom to choose where to settle for asylum seekers or recognized and resettled refugees (for an overview, see Robinson et al. 2003 or Bloch & Schuster 2005; for Australia, see McDonald et al. 2008 or Vasey & Manderson 2012; for Germany, see Boswell 2003; for

Italy, see Fratesi et al. 2018; for the UK, see Hynes & Sales 2010 or Stewart 2011; cf. #2 EUR). The underlying political aims were found to be twofold: On the one hand, the ‘burden’ on any one community should be decreased and costs should be reduced or shared (UNHCR 2002; Boswell 2003; Ott 2011), while the concentration of refugee newcomers in major cities or metropolitan areas should be prevented, to avoid the development of ‘ethnic enclaves’ or ‘ghettos’ (e.g. UNHCR 2002; Boswell 2003; Robinson 2003; Wren 2003; Griffiths et al. 2005; Walton-Roberts 2005; Finney & Robinson 2008; Anderson et al. 2010; wa Mungai 2014). On the other hand, however, dispersal has been, and is, meant to foster regional/rural economic and social development (UNHCR 2002; Robinson et al. 2003; Major et al. 2013). Regions can address their labor shortages and their specific demand for labor (Major et al. 2013; wa Mungai 2014), while forced migrants, on the other hand, can both make use of their resources to achieve early employment (McDonald et al. 2008; Ott 2011), and more easily make contact with local communities (Ott 2011). However, once on-site, forced migrants may encounter the negative attitudes of locals (Hubbard 2005a, 2005b; Pehm 2007), a lack of specific services such as interpreters, qualified medical staff, and local language or integration courses, or suffer from inadequate public transport (Schech 2014). In terms of the labor market participation of refugee newcomers in Denmark and Sweden, Edin et al. (2004), Åslund and Rooth (2007) and Damm and Rosholm (2010) found that those to whom dispersal policies applied also experienced negative effects.

Camps are another frequently used mechanism. They have previously been conceptualized either as ‘heterotopias’ (Foucault 2008[1967]; cf. Pieper 2008; Witteborn 2011), that is, as parallel spaces that contain undesirable bodies, or as ‘spatial biopolitical technologies’ (Minca 2015) that enable the construction of forced migrants as people in need of help, or as ‘total institutions’ (Goffman 1973; cf. Täubig 2009), in which ‘in-mates’ are controlled and regulated in an all-inclusive and holistic way,

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evoking organized/systemic disintegration (ibid.). Given the fact that asylum seekers are labelled and assigned to these heterotopic places for an unknown period of time, including separate or segregated housing and limited everyday mobility, they differ from citizens (Witteborn 2011; cf. Devlin et al. 2021). Despite the long-term nature of their spatial confinement, the fact that it is in former hotels and guesthouses may reinforce the transient and provisional character of their 'stay' (Pehm 2007). While more 'open' forms of asylum accommodation in terms of their spatial, material and institutional dimensions may foster familiarity between asylum seekers and local residents (Zill et al. 2019), over time asylum seekers may lose social roles, waste life time and be rendered dependent (Täubig 2009). As a consequence of this, Agamben (1998) talked of the 'desubjectification' of human beings in camp-like situations (cf. Ek 2006). A recent trend, finally, has been the identification of the neo-liberalization of accommodation policy, resulting in privatization and dispersed responsibilities (Darling 2016).

Besides dispersal policies and encampment, in the case of Germany geographic restrictions and residence rules are also applied to both asylum seekers and recognized and resettled refugees reliant on social welfare (for a detailed description, see section 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). While geographic restrictions limit asylum seekers' everyday mobility at least for the first three months after arrival to a specific spatial scale, i.e. to the district where they are accommodated (Carstensen-Egwuom 2014; El-Kayed & Hamann 2018), a three-year residence rule restricts the onward mobilities of recognized or resettled refugees to the Federal State in which the asylum procedure was carried out, or even to a district or municipality within this Federal State (El-Kayed & Hamann 2018). The latter regulation was recently found to be positive for planning and implementing integration measures (Rösch et al. 2020), but detrimental to newcomers' employment outcomes (Brücker et al. 2020).

Given the state of the art of previous studies on refugee newcomers' arriving in rural or regional areas up to 2016, when the first major empirical data collection took place (cf. section 5.1), and its regional focus on Australia and the US on the one hand (see Table 2), and the current state of research presented above, of studies on onward (im)mobilities (see also section 3.1) and forced (im)mobilizations such as dispersal, encampments and residence rules on the other hand, this cumulative PhD thesis focusses on the host country Germany and seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Which policy narratives ought to legitimize dispersal policies for asylum seekers in favor of rural areas and residence rules for recognized refugees that limit the residential location choice to a specific spatial scale?

RQ2: Which (forced and voluntary) residential and everyday (im)mobilities can be detected for asylum seekers and recognized refugees after their arrival in rural Germany and how do they counteract these?

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Table 2: Previous studies on refugee newcomers in rural areas, up to 2016

Country	Author(s)
Australia	Stilwell 2003; Taylor & Stanovic 2005; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2006; Broadbent et al. 2007; Shepley 2007; Carrington & Marshall 2008; McDonald et al. 2008, 2009; Nyagua & Harris 2008; Sypek et al. 2008; Correa-Velez & Onsando 2009; Boese 2010; Sawtell et al. 2010; Correa-Velez et al. 2011; Briskman 2012; Townsend & Pascal 2012; Vasey & Manderson 2012; Correa-Velez et al. 2013; Major et al. 2013; Taylor-Neumann & Balasingam 2013; Wilkinson & Langat 2013; Galligan et al. 2014; Pour et al. 2014; Schech 2014; wa Mungai 2014; Boese 2015; Dandy & Pe-Pua 2015; Jewson et al. 2015; Kilpatrick et al. 2015; Radford 2016
Austria	Brunner et al. 1994a, 1994b; Pehm 2007; Machold et al. 2010; Rosenberger & Haselbacher 2016; Scheibelhofer & Luimpöck 2016
Canada	Sherrell et al. 2004; Usman 2012; Ashton et al. 2016
Denmark	Tilia 2001; Larsen 2011, 2012
Germany	Baradaran 1993; Reimann & Kirchhoff 2015; Aumüller & Gesemann 2016; Nienaber & Roos 2016
Ghana	Agblorti 2011

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Netherlands	Bakker et al. 2016; Plug 2016; Zorlu 2016
Norway	Brekke 2008; Munkejord 2016
South Africa	Hargreaves et al. 2004; Polzer 2004; Schatz 2009; Polzer 2012; Sartorius et al. 2013; Williams et al. 2013
Sweden	Cvetkovic 2009; Stenbacka 2012, 2013; Wernesjö 2015, Lidén & Nyhlén 2015; Plug 2016
Tanzania	Alix-Garcia & Saah 2010
United Kingdom (incl. Northern Ireland and Scotland)	Hubbard 2005a, 2005b; Garner 2013; Larkin 2015
USA	Barker & Saechao 1997; Shandy & Fennelly 2006; Schaid & Grossman 2007; Huisman 2011; Weine et al. 2011; Lester & Anders 2013; Bloem 2014; Bose 2013, 2014, 2016; Marks 2014, Gilhooly & Lynn 2015

(Source: Author's own compilation)

3.3 Integration process and the socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion of refugee newcomers

Integration has multiple meanings in different contexts and is considered to be a ‘rather elusive concept’ (Bauböck 1994; cf. Castles et al. 2003). In general terms, rather than a condition, it is better understood as a continuous and non-linear process of negotiation and alignment to provide all individuals (including refugee newcomers) with as equal opportunities as possible for participation in all relevant realms of societal life, with the aim of achieving social cohesion in a society²³ (Castles et al. 2003; Strang & Ager 2010; Foroutan 2015; Home Office UK 2019; SVR 2020). Depending on the multiple factors that surround access to resources and opportunities in existing systems of socio-economic, cultural and legal relations (Penninx & Garcés-Mascreñas 2016; Home Office UK 2019), integration is considered to be multi-dimensional. The process or trajectory of integration, however, is also multi-directional and involves not only the newcomers themselves, but the host society and its government as a whole, too (Schammann & Gluns 2021) – or as Berry (1997) has put it, integration is a “two-way process”.²⁴ Whilst newcomers should “exercise their rights and responsibilities in relation to their new country of residence” (Huddleston et al. 2013: 71), host societies should be encouraged explicitly to increase their understanding of migrants’ contributions, and their acceptance of diverse cultures and religions (Cooke & Spencer 2006). Due to the fact that integration processes not only depend on the newcomer but also “on the opportunities open to them in the localities where they live” (Spencer 2011, cited by Platts-Fowler & Robinson 2015: 477), respective research on policies and practices has to focus on the local level (Radford 2017).

²³ Social cohesion in a society, however, does not imply the absence of conflict (see integration paradox, El-Mafaalani 2018).

²⁴ For a critique of immigrant integration, see Schinkel (2018) and Favell (2019).

The importance of the local context to the integration experience is reflected in the famous German catch phrase ‘*Integration findet vor Ort statt*’ (‘integration takes place locally’, Bommes 2012).

Ager and Strang (2008) recently developed a mid-level theory for analyzing integration that includes both the perspective of refugee newcomers and their struggle to participate in the economic, social, cultural and political life, and the host society and societal frameworks (Weidinger & Kordel 2020b).²⁵ The core of the theory is constituted by an understanding of ten interdependent key dimensions, which are presented hierarchically (cf. #2 EUR). Citizenship and rights is considered to be the basis of access to employment, housing, education and health (‘markers and means of integration’), while social connection, i.e. social bonds, bridges and links, plays an important role in facilitating and “in driving the process of integration at a local level” (Ager & Strang 2008: 177; for the role of social capital, see also Bourdieu 1986; Putnam 1993; Portes 1998). Apart from this, language and cultural knowledge as well as safety and security in the local environment further facilitate access to employment, housing, education and health (Ager & Strang 2008; cf. Weidinger & Kordel 2020b). However, especially in rural and mountain areas, spatial mobility has an important and supportive role and was thus added to the model as an additional facilitating key component (#2 EUR; Weidinger & Kordel 2020b).

Previously, the integration of forced migrants was measured by their long-term convergence towards national averages across a wide range of common social indicators (Cagiano de Azevedo 1993; Cagiano de Azevedo & Sannino 1996; Huddleston et al. 2013), following the underlying assumption that integration is an individual level process, where the demographic, social

²⁵ An enhanced version of this integration model was developed by Hynie et al. in 2016.

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or cultural characteristics of newcomers are the main explanatory variables (Soysal 1994). Instead, I follow a post-migrant perspective that aims to ‘de-migrantize’ migration as well as integration research (Dahinden 2016) and to uncouple social problem-situations from the ‘migration background’ or ‘refugee background’ of individuals or groups (for a critical discussion about terminology, see Fachkommission Integrationsfähigkeit 2021; for a critique of methodological nationalism, see Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2003). Thus, the experience of immigration is seen as only one of the categories that describes the social position of individuals or groups and impacts on his, her or their integration processes (Riedl 2020). Besides this, there should also be a focus on other, intersecting categories such as age, gender or religion and multi-dimensional discriminations (Crenshaw 1989) as well as underlying (societal) power structures and dynamics (Soysal 1994; Hill 2018; Brown & Gilmartin 2019). Accordingly, the cumulative PhD thesis analyses processes of the exclusion and inclusion of individuals and groups within society and the role of societal actors and institutions in excluding or including, and producing and reproducing power inequalities (cf. Correa-Velez et al. 2013).

So far, there is no common definition of social exclusion (Priya & Uteng 2009; Delbosc & Currie 2010). According to the European Commission (2020a), it is considered to be a situation (or process (Foley & Beer 2003)), whereby a person (or group (Correa-Velez et al. 2013)) is prevented from contributing to and benefiting from economic and social progress, which is available to the majority in society (Levitas et al. 2007). Exclusion mainly revolves around access to decision-making, or resources or to common narratives that enable social integration (Madanipour 2003). Social inclusion, by contrast, encompasses measures which aim to including newcomers in society, that are taken by various actors (including newcomers themselves), with regard to income, poverty, health and housing; i.e. the above-mentioned markers and means of integration (Huddleston et al. 2013;

European Commission 2020b). Exclusion and inclusion are simultaneously relational (i.e. they are social, temporal and spatial) (Madanipour 2003), as they can be described only in relation to other individuals or groups (Correa-Velez et al. 2013), for example in terms of different rights and privileges for the ‘established’ and for ‘outsiders’ (Elias & Scotson 1994), and can occur both temporarily, e.g. on certain days or at particular times of the week, and spatially, e.g. in relation to particular places, resulting in physical separation or segregation (Burchardt et al. 2002; Robinson et al. 2003; Cass et al. 2005; cf. Giddens 1984; #4 JRS). In acknowledgement of the spatial dimension of social exclusion, the term ‘socio-spatial exclusion’ was introduced (Kenyon et al. 2002; Madanipour 2003; Cass et al. 2005). Socio-spatial exclusion, non-participation or non-access is experienced and negotiated by the individual in everyday life, and requires an analysis of life-worlds (see section 3.5) to comprehend it. It is dynamic over time and operates at the same time as mechanisms of inclusion and agency accumulation (Geiger 2016, see section 3.1). Despite the interrelatedness of key dimensions of integration, until 2016 research on refugee newcomers’ experiences of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion in rural areas took into consideration several of these aspects in particular²⁶ (see Table 3). However, as highlighted in section 3.4 below, there is a need for further research on exclusion and inclusion in terms of refugee newcomers’ everyday mobility and access to housing in the countryside.

²⁶ The cross-cutting issue of the attitude of locals towards refugee newcomers was discussed by Brunner et al. (1994a, 1994b), Hubbard (2005a, 2005b), Agblorti (2011), Garner (2013), Rosenberger & Haselbacher (2016) and Zorlu (2016).

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Table 3: Previous studies of the socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion of refugee newcomers in rural areas up to 2016

Topic	Authors
Language and cultural knowledge	Brekke 2008; Nyagua & Harris 2008; Larsen 2011, 2012; wa Mungai 2014; Radford 2016
Safety and security	wa Mungai 2014
Everyday mobility	Bose 2013, 2014
Social connections	Larsen 2012; Major et al. 2013; Schech 2014; Dandy & Pe-Pua 2015; Kilpatrick et al. 2015; Wernesjö 2015; Bose 2016; Radford 2016
Access to education	Shandy & Fennelly 2006; Correa-Velez & Onsando 2009; Correa-Velez et al. 2013; Lester & Anders 2013; Major et al. 2013; Wilkinson & Langat 2013; Taylor-Neumann & Balasingam 2013
Access to employment	Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2006; Correa-Velez & Onsando 2009; Correa-Velez et al. 2013; Taylor-Neumann & Balasingam 2013; Schech 2014; Boese 2015

Access to health	Nyagua & Harris 2008; Townsend & Pascal 2012; Correa-Velez et al. 2011, 2013; Sypek et al. 2008
Access to housing	Shandy & Fennelly 2006; Taylor-Neumann & Balasingam 2013

(Source: Author’s own compilation)

3.4 Refugee newcomers’ everyday mobility and access to housing in rural areas

Everyday mobility and access to housing are two key determinants of integration in rural areas, especially of forced migrants (Boese 2015). In relation to the former, it is obvious that mobility in these regions is arranged more often around the car and less around public transport, making it difficult for refugee newcomers, especially upon arrival, when they do not have their own car. Limited transport options “can, in substantial ways, restrict the autonomy and independence of refugees, leaving them dependent on the services and schedules of others. This in turn, can adversely affect their ability to seek and secure gainful employment, receive necessary medical care, and access other goods and services vital to other basic survival and social advancement” (Bose 2014: 152). Simultaneously, everyday mobility also allows people to build a ‘sense of place’ (Buhr 2014, see also section 3.1). Regarding the latter, i.e. access to secure and affordable housing and housing conditions, the countryside is mostly characterized by a high number of owner-occupied dwellings, low rates of rented housing and a small rental market, potentially creating difficulties for refugee newcomers to find appropriate housing. At the same time, however, it has been found that housing contributes to the stabilization and facilitation of education, employment, health care or social bonds (Carey-Wood et al. 1995; Murdie 2008) and is interrelated with physical and

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emotional well-being, place attachment and a sense of belonging (Brun 2001; Phillips 2006; Ager & Strang 2008; Murdie 2008; Sampson & Gifford 2010; Fozdar & Hartley 2014; Boese 2015; see also section 3.1). The paragraphs that follow discuss both aspects (refugee newcomers' everyday mobility and access to housing) briefly, focusing on theoretical-conceptual aspects and previous empirical results with regard to mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion in rural areas.

Everyday mobility

The everyday mobility of refugee newcomers can be restricted by “personal (e.g. bodily ability, gender, age, needs, social/financial capital and legal status) or structural issues, such as limited transport options due to availability, schedules and distances or discrimination (...)” (Gustafson 2006; Uteng 2009; cited by #4 JRS: 4). Lucas (2012) and Kenyon et al. (2002) introduced the terms ‘transport-related disadvantage’ and ‘transport-related social exclusion’, which refer to the disadvantaging effects of insufficient mobility in an environment in which participation in the economic, political and social life depends on a high degree of mobility. Accessibility, then, describes the “ability of people to reach and engage in opportunities and activities” (Farrington & Farrington 2005: 2) and can be analyzed across four dimensions (Cass et al. 2005):

- the financial dimension, i.e. the resources necessary to afford different modes of transport,
- the physical dimension, i.e. the bodily aspects of an individual,
- the organizational dimension, i.e. the distance to the next bus stop, bus lines and connection times,
- the time dimension, i.e. individual time schedules.

It is obvious that everyday mobility is both a product and a producer of inequalities as it is not equally distributed as a resource among all individuals in society (Buhr 2014), while the mobility

of some can result in the immobility of others – or even require it (Bauman 1998). Accordingly, following Bourdieu's conceptualization of capital, Kaufmann and colleagues (2004) consider mobility a capital, too. According to them, mobility can be both practiced ('being physically on the move') and possessed ('potential of being so'), indicating a link between spatial mobility and social mobility (Morét 2018; Reed-Danahay 2020).

So far, previous anecdotal research on the everyday mobility of refugee newcomers in rural areas has discussed the problem of being a long distance from specialist health care (Shepley 2007; Correa-Velez et al. 2013; Taylor-Neumann & Balasingam 2013; Bose 2014), cold weather and climate (Bose 2014, 2016) and lack of own transport (Correa-Velez et al. 2013). Regarding the latter, public transport has been evaluated negatively due to limited or no services to neighboring towns (Vasey & Manderson 2012), at the times needed (Marks 2014) or at weekends/nights (Bose 2014). As a consequence, in spite of the high cost, refugee newcomers aspire to have a driver's license and their own car (Bose 2013, 2014). For those, who could not afford their own car, employers have supported the purchase (Bose 2014), while others have carpooled with their co-workers (ibid.), neighbors or friends or drawn on delivery services by various groups (Larsen 2012; Stenbacka 2012).

Access to housing

The analysis of housing circumstances, i.e. the access to housing and interactions with housing (infra)structures of minority ethnic groups in general and forced migrants in particular, has historically referred to the concept of housing careers (Murdie 2002; Özüekren & van Kempen 2002), understood as the sequence of dwellings that a household occupies during its history (Pickles & Davies 1991, cf. #5 IMI). This has been criticized for a failure to focus on changing preferences and choices over time as well as the development of individuals' own agency and strategies for overcoming exclusion (Robinson et al. 2007; Aigner

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2019), and Clapham (2005) has proposed the housing pathways approach instead. Instead of a constrained choice-perspective, the approach takes a social constructivist one and aims to analyze “the interaction between choice and constraint, that is between action and structure” (ibid.: 1; cf. Giddens 1984), over time and space. “Housing pathways, thus, must be understood as a product of the dynamic interplay between individual and household preferences and choices, and the structure of a specific housing context (Aigner 2019), without neglecting the relationships and interactions between the different actors involved” (#5 IMI: 3). Thus, the individual’s or household’s capacity to take and enact decisions with regard to housing is facilitated by four different kinds of resources: “financial or material (e.g. income, welfare benefits), cognitive (e.g. language competency, knowledge of the housing market), and political (e.g. knowledge about and exercise of rights) as well as social resources (e.g. social bonds, bridges and links that can provide assistance, cf. Putnam 1993)” (#5 IMI: 3; cf. Özüekren & van Kempen 2002; see also section 3.1).

Previous research on refugee newcomers’ housing in rural areas – at least during asylum procedures, when housing is often strongly regulated by the state (see section 3.2) – has characterized their accommodation as provisional and transient (Pehm 2006). When accessing private housing, e.g. after having been granted asylum, they prefer to live close to their former asylum accommodation (Wernesjö 2015), but have to confront the negative attitudes of landlords (Shandy & Fennelly 2006; Correa-Velez et al. 2013; Dandy & Pe-Pua 2015) as well as real-estate agents (wa Mungai 2014). On the other hand, however, they receive support from religious communities (Shandy & Fennelly 2006), welfare organizations, friends and acquaintances (Major et al. 2013) or employers (Boese 2015). In addition, forced migrants have found themselves confronted by high rents (Shepley 2007; Correa-Velez et al. 2013; Nienaber & Roos 2016), while big families have not found apartments big enough (Shepley 2007).

As a result, refugee newcomers have been found to live in low quality housing (Scheibelhofer & Luimpöck 2016).

Based on the current state of research on everyday mobility and access to housing, this cumulative thesis seeks to answer the following research question:

RQ3: Which mechanisms of exclusion can be identified in relation to refugee newcomers' everyday mobility and access to housing in rural areas and how are they overcome?

3.5 Researching the life-worlds of refugee newcomers

Given research questions that aim to detect the (forced and voluntary) residential and everyday (im)mobilities of forced migrants (RQ2) and to identify mechanisms of exclusion in terms of their everyday mobility and their access to housing (RQ3), the analysis of the mobile life-worlds of refugee newcomers is considered central to this PhD thesis. Following Husserl (1970) and Schütz and Luckmann (1973, cited by Kraus 2013), life-worlds are “a person’s subjective construction of reality, which he or she forms under the condition of his or her life circumstances” (ibid.: 153). Accordingly, research needs to focus on the interplay “of human senses with the external environment, including the diversity of inter-human interactions, encounters, observations, but also the interplay with the natural and built environment” (Morén-Alegret & Wladyka 2020: 55).

Thus, a synchronic perspective helps us to capture a deep understanding of individuals' life-worlds at a certain moment, e.g. the structure of participants' everyday lives, and meanings attributed to places and social interactions (Kieslinger et al. 2020: par. 2). In this context, earlier works of Goffman (*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1959), Buttimer (*Grasping the dynamism of Lifeworld*, 1976), Tuan (*Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 1977) and de Certeau (*The Practice of Everyday*

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Life, 1984), are considered especially useful²⁷. I acknowledge their understanding that individuals can influence their environment by means of everyday practices, allowing them to appropriate space ('place-making'), while being aware that practices are performed in social interactions. Analysis, therefore, should not focus on what is 'real' but on what is 'perceived' by individuals. A diachronic perspective, in addition, is able to capture, for example, "individuals' negotiations between mobility and staying over a period of time" (Kieslinger et al. 2020: par. 2). In this context, of importance are both relational approaches, which connect social contexts (e.g. Simmel 1908; Elias & Scotson 1965), individuals' pasts, presents and futures (e.g. Mead 1932) and different places (e.g. Massey 1994a, 1994b), and biographical-narrative approaches (e.g. Bertaux 1981; Schütze 1977, 1983; Carr 1986; Fischer-Rosenthal & Rosenthal 1997), which interpret and analyze social phenomena in the overall context of individual life stories (Rosenthal 2014).

Then and now, the life-worlds of migrants in general and refugee newcomers in particular are often only captured from an 'outsider' perspective (cf. the insider-outsider discussion in the course of the 'humanist turn' in human geography, Buttimer & Seamon 1983), for example by means of qualitative interviews with so-called 'experts' or by means of quantitative accessibility approaches (e.g. Buhr 2014), and were thus criticized for 'talking about'/'speaking for' instead of 'talking with'/'speaking with' (forced) migrants (Yildiz 2019; cf. Spivak 1988). 'Insider' or post-migrant perspectives, by contrast, were considered more appropriate (see also section 3.3). In recent years, authors have drawn on a diverse set of methods ranging from qualitative interviews in general (e.g. Huisman 2011; Harkins 2012; Kilpatrick et al. 2015) and biographical-narrative interviews in particular (e.g. Halfacree & Boyle 1993; Findlay & Li 1997; Eastmond 2007;

²⁷ For a discussion about humanism, phenomenology and geography, see Relp (1977).

Ghoarshi 2008; Clark-Kazak 2009; Mendoza & Morén-Alegret 2012; Apitzsch & Siouti 2014; Benezer & Zetter 2015), to focus group discussions (e.g. Harte et al. 2009; Huisman 2011; Dandy & Pe-Pua 2015), and participatory (action) research (e.g. Broadbent et al. 2007; Bose 2016).

Following the critique of the extractivist logics of data collection and the exclusion of participants from decision-making processes (Chambers 1994a, 1994b; Mata-Codesal et al. 2020), different approaches such as participatory action research (PAR, Freire 1968; Fals Borda 1980; Reason & Bradbury 2007), participatory rural appraisal (PRA, Chambers 1994a, 1994b) or community-based participatory research (CBPR, Israel et al. 1998, 2010) have arisen since the 1970s (for an overview, see von Unger 2014 or Schönhuth & Jerrentrup 2019).²⁸ Applied by practitioners in development work in particular, PRA, aims “to enable local (rural and urban) people to express, enhance, share and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act” (Chambers 1994b: 1253). The visual methods used as part of participatory approaches are considered fruitful for various reasons: they structure and help memorize histories (Chambers 1994b; Pretty et al. 1995); they are able to raise participants’ awareness of their own experiences and (cap)abilities, initiating mutual learning (Madge et al. 1997; Brun 2001; Morén-Alegret 2002; Mendoza & Morén-Alegret 2012), which may result in empowerment, e.g. capacity-building or developments of skills (Mackenzie et al. 2007). In intercultural contexts, in particular, they can help to overcome language barriers. So far, their use in

²⁸ While participatory approaches were developed in various contexts using different theoretical and applied references (von Unger 2014), action research, more generally, dates back to German psychologist Kurt Lewin, who conducted field experiments in factories and urban neighborhoods in the US to test the effects of democratic participation on economic productivity, aiming to overcome the exploitation of workers (Lewin 1946). For an overview of the variety of approaches and terminology, see Bergold & Thomas (2012) or von Unger (2014).

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the context of forced migration, however, is mostly limited to reflexive photography, i.e. photovoice and photo-elicitation, with individually important places or persons (e.g. Warwick et al. 2006; Green & Kloos 2009; Lenette & Boddy 2013; Major et al. 2013; Fozdar & Hartley 2014; Schmauch & Giritli Nygren 2014; Wernesjö 2015) and in research with children (e.g. Warwick et al. 2006; Gifford et al. 2007; Green & Kloos 2009; McBrien & Day 2012; Major et al. 2013; Wernesjö 2015) and women (e.g. Lenette & Boddy 2013; Schmauch & Giritli Nygren 2014; see also #4 JRS).

Based on current methodologies and methodological shortcomings, especially in terms of participatory space- and time-related visual tools for grasping the life-worlds of refugee newcomers, this cumulative thesis seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ4: How do you design a method to enable analysis of the everyday mobility and subjective meanings ascribed by refugee newcomers to their important places as well as the identification of processes of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion?

RQ5: How do you design a method that is able to grasp the dynamic interplay between individual and household aspirations, (cap)abilities and actions, and the structure of housing contexts over time?

4. Setting the scene

Following the discussion above of the current state of research in terms of forced (im)mobilities and (im)mobilizations to/in rural areas in general (cf. section 3.1 and 3.2), this chapter gives an overview of the situation of refugee newcomers in Germany. It provides insights into the history of dispersal policies and residence rules that restrict the freedom of movement of individuals (section 4.1), the current procedures relating to refugee newcomers (section 4.2 and 4.3) and the effects on their spatial distribution (section 4.2 and 4.4).

4.1 History of forced (im)mobilities / (im)mobilizations to/in rural Germany

In Germany, forced (im)mobilities to rural areas²⁹ were taking place even in the early years of World War II (WWII), when people took the precaution of leaving the industrial cities where they lived, to take refuge in rural areas and live with relatives or acquaintances. As the war continued and Allied bombing raids on urban centers increased, the Nazi regime also relocated armament industries and their workers as well as urban dwellers to the countryside on a compulsory basis (Erker 1988; Feiber 2000). The regime drew on the ‘Guiding principles for the accommodation of population during aerial war’ (*Grundsätze zur*

²⁹ Besides this, literature on in-migration to rural Germany dealt with suburbanization (Boustedt et al. 1975, 1978), counter-urbanization (Koch 1980; Reichert-Schick 2016) and multi-local living arrangements (Dirksmeier 2010; Lange 2018) as well as retirement migration (Born et al. 2004; Weidinger & Kordel 2015). Research on international migration to rural areas, instead focused on former guest workers and their descendants (Ransberger 2012), labor migrants in general (Nadler et al. 2012; Nienaber & Roos 2016), and seasonal workers in agriculture in particular (Becker 2010; Fiałkowska & Piechowska 2016; Lechner 2020; Schmidt 2020; Stachowski & Fiałkowska 2020) as well as US-soldiers (Anslinger 2015).

luftkriegsmäßigen Unterbringung der Bevölkerung) and a 'Reich relocation plan' (*Reichsumquartierungsplan*), which were developed by the Reich Agency for Spatial Planning (*Reichsstelle für Raumordnung*) in 1943 and 1944, respectively. Both aimed to accommodate urban evacuees in the surrounding small towns and villages (Hampe 1963). In order to replace the farming workforce, who were drafted for military service, the Nazi regime also sent forced workers and prisoners of war from France, Poland and the Soviet Union into these areas (Erker 1990; May 2000; Seipp 2009). Four of the ten million people hosted in Germany could not return to their homes before 1947 (Bade 2003; Oltmer 2009).

After WWII, following a decision of the Allied Control Council (ACC) in November 1945, the twelve million German refugees and expellees arriving from the former Eastern territories, i.e. East Prussia, Silesia, Pomerania and the so-called Sudetenland, were distributed between the four occupation zones according to the following quota: 4.25 million to the Soviet,³⁰ 2.25 million to the US, 1.5 million to the British and 0.15 million to the French zone (#1 NRG). Within the British occupation zone, the Control Commission for Germany – British Element (CCG/BE) established an allocation scheme that was based on population size and later also on available housing space (Brosius 1985). However, this approach was abandoned due to massive onward mobilities (Parisius 2008). Using the same criteria, the Committee for Refugee Welfare of the Council of the States adopted a preliminary distribution key in the American occupation zone, while in the state of Wuerttemberg-Baden it was determined that two refugees should be directed to one available (living) room in rural municipalities (Kossert 2008). In 1946, as a consequence, 85% of refugees and expellees lived in rural areas, as compared with 61% of the native population (Harris & Wülker

³⁰ For the situation in the Soviet occupation zone and the former GDR, see Bauerkämper (1999), Mehlhase (1999) or Liebig (2005).

1953; #1 NRG; cf. Ther 2017). To safeguard the accommodation of refugees on-site, the Allied Control Council adopted ‘rent-controlled housing’ (*Zwangsbewirtschaftung von Wohnraum*) and a housing law (*Wohnungsgesetz*) in March 1946, while a land reform (October 1946) and a ‘Refugee Act of settlement’ (*Flüchtlingssiedlungsgesetz*, August 1949) aimed to provide refugees with land on which to build houses and – for those with a background in farming – arable land (Kolb 1990; #1 NRG). Furthermore, they introduced in-migration bans to prevent the immigration of refugees to cities (Brosius 1985; Poutrus 2016). When the economy recovered in the 1950s (Miracle on the Rhine/*Wirtschaftswunder*), however, the Federal Republic of Germany launched relocation programs to direct refugees towards the more industrial Federal States and cities, accompanied by public housing projects (Kolb 1990; Oltmer 2009; #1 NRG).

After WWII, in addition, the constituent assembly added an enforceable right to political asylum to the German constitution (*Grundgesetz*, §16 GG, today §16a GG, 1949), while, in 1953, the Geneva Convention on Refugees was implemented into national law, providing a second, international form of protection for those persecuted by either state or non-state actors. Until the 1970s, however, the number of asylum seekers, who mainly originated from socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, remained lower than 6,000 persons per year³¹ (see also Poutrus 2014). Accordingly, the Federal Department for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees (today: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, BAMF) maintained only one asylum accommodation building in the region of Nuremberg, Bavaria (Münch 1993). In the 1970s, when the number of asylum seekers grew, especially from Turkey, Asia and Africa, the aim was to “‘spread’ the

³¹ Exceptions were the popular revolts in Hungary and Poland in 1956 and Prague Spring in 1968/1969 (Oltmer 2016).

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increasing costs of receiving and supporting asylum seekers between the Federal States” (#1 NRG: 273; cf. Boswell 2003). The Interior Minister’s Conference introduced the distribution key *Königsteiner Schlüssel* (§45, AsylG), which is based on the tax revenues and population size of the Federal States and is renewed and adjusted by the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*) every year (#1 NRG).³² As a result, asylum seekers are mandatorily distributed between the Federal States, allowing only family members (spouse and children under 18) to live together (Boswell 2003). “After spending up to three months (later six months) in the allocated state reception centres, they are distributed again within the Federal States according to state legislations until their asylum procedure is legally decided” (#1 NRG: 273; see also section 4.2). Due to increasing numbers of asylum applicants in the 1980s, the Federal government introduced ‘Geographic restrictions’ (*Residenzpflicht*, as part of the Asylum Procedure Act 1982; §56, §59a, AsylG), which limited everyday mobility for at least three months to the Federal State or the district within the Federal State, where the allocated state reception center is situated (Carstensen-Egwuom 2014; El-Kayed & Hamann 2018; Wiegandt 2018, see also section 3.2).³³ When, due to the end of the East-West-conflict and the growing Balkan conflict, the number of asylum applicants reached a peak of 438,000 in 1992, accommodation was increasingly provided in rural areas, in both West and East Germany (Baradaran 1993; Miksch & Schwier 2001). In particular, refugees in the former GDR were housed in the remotely located barracks of the Soviets and the National

³² This distribution coefficient was initially established in 1949 to distribute the share of costs for nationwide research institutions to the Federal States. The coefficient also remains valid for the distribution of asylum seekers until the Federal States opt for a new regulation (§45, AsylG; Aumüller & Gesemann 2016; Geis & Orth 2016).

³³ A similar type of residential obligation already applied to Togolese forced laborers and foreigners during colonial times as well as during the Third Reich (Jakob 2016).

People's Army (*Nationale Volksarmee*) (Weiss 2011; Jakob 2016; Glorius 2020).

After the end of forced displacement in the early 1950s, the Federal Republic of Germany accepted a further 4.5 million repatriates (*Aussiedler:innen*) and late repatriates (*Spätaussiedler:innen*), i.e. Germans and Ethnic Germans and their dependents from (former) Communist countries such as Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union, where they were suffering the after effects of the war in the form of ethnically based discrimination or persecution (Klekowski von Koppenfels 2009). In the mid-1980s, after the adoption of democratization and liberalization measures with regard to exit from the former Soviet Union, the number of annual immigrants rose very strongly, i.e. from 36,459 in 1984 to 377,055 in 1989. Following the distribution key 'Königsteiner Schlüssel' (see above), the Federal Administration Office (*Bundesverwaltungsamt*), responsible for the acceptance process, directed (late) repatriates from the transit camps (*Grenzdurchgangslager*) or state reception centers (*Landesaufnahmestellen*) to the Federal States. However, given the freedom of movement provided in art. 11 of the German constitution (*Grundgesetz*), (late) repatriates could state a preference for a certain Federal State (Koch 1991; Worbs et al. 2005). Federal States, in turn, partly implemented further allocation schemes for the first place of residence of (late) repatriates within the states, drawing on population distribution or housing or labor market indicators on the one hand (Veith 1994; Wenzel 1999; Haug & Sauer 2007) and intentionally located reception centers (*Übergangswohnheime*) in rural areas on the other (Wenzel 2004). Since (late) repatriates mostly chose to live close to family members and kin from their country of origin, spatial concentration occurred in urban areas (Tiedtke 1989; Koch 1991; Jones & Wild 1992; Wierling 2004; Bürk & Fischer 2013).³⁴ Amongst

³⁴ Drawing on the example of the Federal State of Brandenburg, Bautz (2007), in addition, emphasizes that a lack of structures for integration in rural areas

other restrictive policy measures (see Klekowski von Koppenfels 2009), the Federal government adopted the Residence Assignment Act (*Wohnortzuweisungsgesetz*) in 1989, which regulated the onward mobilities of (late) repatriates (Miksch & Schwier 2001).³⁵ For those without a job or apprenticeship, who had not studied at university and were reliant on social welfare, the Act restricted freedom of movement and assigned a place of residence where they had to stay for at least two years.³⁶ If (late) repatriates left their assigned place of residence, they lost their claim to social benefits, job retraining programs and access to language courses (Jones & Wild 1992; Tröster 2003; Klekowski von Koppenfels 2009). The Residence Assignment Act was eventually terminated, but not before the end of 2009 (Bürk & Fischer 2013; Engel 2013; Wiegandt 2018).

After German reunion, the 1991 Conference of Federal Prime ministers decided to accept Jewish migrants and their descendants from the former Soviet Union as quota refugees (*Kontingentflüchtlinge*) on a case by case basis. This resolution stemmed from Germany's historic responsibility towards Jews on the one hand and the aim of strengthening and reviving Jewish parishes in Germany on the other hand (Hillmann 2016; Roos 2016). While the annual influx did not exceed 20,000 and even dropped after the change in the acceptance process in 2005, the number of people in Jewish communities grew from 29,089 in 1990 to 107,330 in 2005 (ZWST 2017). Similar to (late) repatriates and asylum seekers, they were distributed between the Federal States according to the allocation scheme 'Königsteiner Schlüssel' (see above) and if they were reliant on social welfare

as a result of out-migration processes was an important reason for the onward mobilities of late repatriates.

³⁵ The Residence Assignment Act was not applied in the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate (Miksch & Schwier 2001).

³⁶ The duration was changed two times: From 1997 to 2000, the assignment was without a time limit, and after 2000 the duration of compulsory residence was limited to three years (Haug & Sauer 2007).

were assigned a place of residence (Plamper 2019). However, similar to (late) repatriates, they could give a preference for a certain Federal State beforehand (Worbs et al. 2005; BMI 2008; Bürk & Fischer 2013).

4.2 Spatial dispersal of asylum seekers and asylum applicants (to rural areas) today

Today, Germany's refugee regime is mostly based on requests for asylum on arrival at airports or national borders and subsequent asylum procedures, while resettlement plays only a minor role in terms of numbers (#4 JRS; for their legal situation, see Tometten 2018). Asylum seekers arriving in Germany are compulsorily distributed to reception centers (*Aufnahme-einrichtungen*) according to the distribution key *Königsteiner Schlüssel* (see section 4.1). The decision to send an applicant to a specific Federal State or reception center is affected by the reception center at which they arrived after entering the country. If the Federal State has capacity according to the distribution key, applicants may continue to stay there. The nationality of the applicant is another factor that influences spatial patterns as asylum applications from certain countries are only handled in certain branch offices of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees within Germany (BAMF, §46, AsylG, BBSR 2017). In addition, for at least the first three months in Germany, asylum seekers are not allowed to leave the district without permission ('Geographic restrictions', see section 4.1).³⁷

After spending up to six months in their allocated reception centers in the respective Federal State,³⁸ asylum seekers are

³⁷ Notwithstanding, the geographic restriction does not expire as long as the asylum seeker has to live in a reception centre.

³⁸ The duty to live in state accommodation expires after 18 months, for parents with children under 18 after 6 months (§47 AsylG). For individuals from countries declared as 'safe countries of origin' (*sichere Herkunftsländer*) a

distributed again within the Federal States according to state legislation until their asylum procedure is legally decided (§50, AsylG). Internal distribution to rural and urban districts (*Landkreise* and *kreisfreie Städte*) is mostly based on the number of inhabitants (Müller 2013; SVR 2016; BBSR 2017; Renner 2018).³⁹ However, districts and municipalities that already have a reception center are exempted from admissions in many cases. Federal States are responsible for further accommodation, which should be provided in collective accommodation (*Gemeinschaftsunterkünfte*) and not in private flats (§53 AsylG). However, the policy leaves some room for maneuver (Wendel 2014; Schammann & Kühn 2016; BBSR 2017).

The countability of asylum seekers in population statistics was limited in 2015 and 2016, e.g. due to non-registrations, or registrations that took place in the municipality associated with a refugees' first reception center, despite the fact that individuals lived in dependencies of the center situated elsewhere (written information from the Bavarian Statistical office, Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik 2015; Gießener Allgemeine 2015; Statistisches Bundesamt 2019b, 2020b). However, the graph below (Figure 2) gives an indication of the general spatial distribution of individuals with open protection status (*offener Schutzstatus*), i.e. individuals with proof of arrival (*Ankunftsnachweis*) and permission to reside (*Aufenthaltsgestattung*) due to a pending asylum application, at the end of 2015, when the all-time high for formal asylum applications was reached (BAMF 2019). Their share of the total population was especially high in the Southeast of Germany as it represented the end of the so-called 'Balkan route' (Abikova & Piotrowicz 2021). In addition, there were high

fast-track procedure is used, where applicants may have to stay in the reception centre until the end of their procedure or their possible return.

³⁹ Brandenburg and North Rhine-Westphalia also take into account the size of the districts, while Hesse considers the share of foreigners in the district (SVR 2016).

shares of asylum seekers in urban and rural districts accommodating first reception centers in particular Federal States, such as Deggendorf and Schweinfurt (Bavaria), Eisenhüttenstadt (Brandenburg), Ludwigslust-Parchim (Mecklenburg-Hither Pomerania), Chemnitz (Saxony) or Neumünster (Schleswig-Holstein; see also Rösch et al 2020). In total, about 58% of all people with open protection status lived in districts classified as 'rural' according to the Thuenen typology of rural areas (~196,000 individuals, by the author's own calculations, based on Statistisches Bundesamt 2019a; cf. Küpper 2016).⁴⁰ This is an increase of six percentage points and about 154,000 individuals in rural areas compared to the end of 2012. The Federal States with the highest relative shares of asylum seekers and asylum applicants living in rural areas were Brandenburg (95.9%), Mecklenburg-Hither Pomerania (93.2%) and Thuringia (80.4%), while North Rhine-Westphalia (36.4%) had a particularly small relative share. In terms of absolute numbers of individuals with open protection status in rural areas, Bavaria (44,725 individuals) had the greatest share.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Data exclude the city and rural district of Kassel, as well as the districts within the Federal State of Saarland as the number of foreigners cannot be reported separately there.

⁴¹ The city states (*Stadtstaaten*) Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg are excluded from this ranking as they are considered to be urban districts according to the Thuenen Typology. Saarland was excluded as well, as data on foreigners for the districts within the Federal State cannot be reported separately.

4. Setting the scene

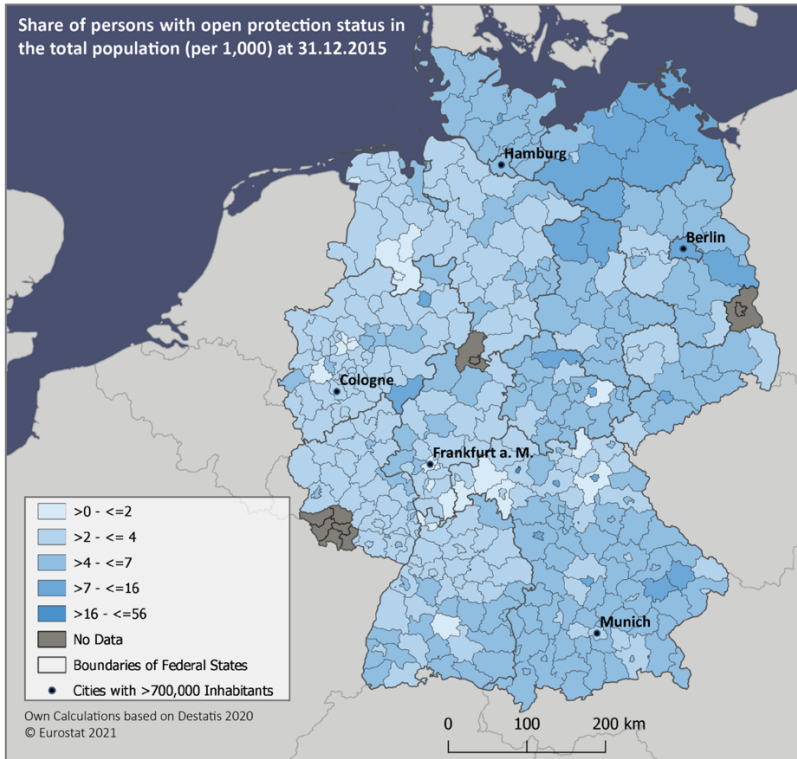


Figure 2: Share of persons with open protection status in the total population (per 1,000) at 31.12.2015

(Data: Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis) 2021;⁴²

Idea and data treatment: Author; Cartography: Lukas Schorner)

⁴² Data on foreigners for the city and rural district of Kassel, the city of Cottbus and rural district of Spree-Neiße as well as for the districts within the Federal State of Saarland cannot be reported separately.

4.3 Current restrictions of freedom of movement for recognized refugees

Having been granted asylum, recognized refugees lose their claim to live in state accommodation and are allowed to get their own housing. In 2016, however, the Integration Act (*Integrationsgesetz*) was passed, which encompassed a residence rule (*Wohnsitzregelung*) for recognized refugees (and their family members, i.e. spouse and children) that aims to “promote their lasting integration into the way of life in the Federal Republic of Germany” (§12a, *AufenthG*).⁴³ To receive social welfare, those who were granted protection after January 1, 2016 and who neither study, nor have an apprenticeship or a job that encompasses more than 15 hours per week and a salary of more than 748€⁴⁴ (§12a, *AufenthG*), are obliged to continue living for three years in the Federal State in which they were first accommodated during their asylum procedure.⁴⁵ The Federal States are also allowed to issue even stricter regulations, and may prescribe a place of residence, for instance, within a rural district, a municipality or even a city (‘positive residence obligation’, *positive Wohnsitzauflage*). Prerequisites for this placement of recognized refugees, however, are the availability of appropriate housing, sufficient language learning opportunities and a local labor market that provides them with a good chance to become employed (§12a, *AufenthG*). Conversely, the Federal States can also impose a ban on moving to a specific municipality or city in order to prevent social or societal exclusion (‘negative residence

⁴³ The argument that a restriction of freedom of movement needs to aim at promoting integration was necessary after a ruling of the European Court of Justice in 2016 (EUGH, C-443-14 and C-444-14, Lehner & Lippold 2016).

⁴⁴ This amount is valid for 2019 and equals the standard average to ensure one’s socio-cultural subsistence minimum (Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband Gesamtverband e.V. 2020).

⁴⁵ Exceptions can be made for family reunions and to prevent undue hardship. The residence rule, however, generally also applies to family members who arrive in Germany due to family reunification.

obligation', *negative Wohnsitzauflage*; #1 NRG). In 2019, the three-year residence rule was extended for an indefinite period of time.

Up to the present, regulations (*Rechtsverordnungen* and *Erlasse*) for positive residence obligations have been set by seven out of sixteen Federal States (Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt), and as a result the distribution of recognized refugees within the Federal States mainly follows the numbers of inhabitants.⁴⁶ In Bavaria, for instance, the distribution key takes into consideration both the numbers of asylum seekers and recognized refugees and comes down to the level of the rural and urban districts (§8, DVAsyl). Thereby, the recognized refugee's place of residence is taken into account in deciding where to place them. In Baden-Württemberg and North Rhine-Westphalia the distribution key even comes down to the level of municipalities (Hinsen 2018). On the other hand, negative residence obligations with in-migration bans are applied to the cities of Delmenhorst, Salzgitter, Wilhelmshaven (all Lower Saxony) and Pirmasens (Rhineland-Palatinate, Deutscher Bundestag 2018).

Apart from this, other measures that might restrict residential mobility are implemented by the employment services (*Jobcenter*), responsible for the provision of welfare-state benefits to recognized refugees. Claims for reimbursement for rent and heating can be denied or at least be reduced if they move to a flat that is not deemed appropriate in terms of locally applied maximum rates for rent or the size of the flat, or move from their own flat to another place of residence, where this move seems 'unnecessary' (§22 par. 1 and par. 6 SGB II; cf. Schammann & Kühn 2016).

⁴⁶ Only North Rhine-Westphalia and Saxony-Anhalt also take into account labor and housing market indicators (Renner 2018).

4.4 Spatial distribution of individuals with recognized protection status in Germany

When analyzing the spatial distribution of individuals with recognized protection status (*anerkannter Schutzstatus*), i.e. individuals who have received temporary protection status due to their asylum application or for other reasons, as well as individuals with a permanent residency for humanitarian reasons, at the end of 2019, the last available point in time, Figure 3 shows a high proportion among the total population for the Northwest of Germany in general and in urban districts in particular – especially for those where negative residence obligations have been issued (see section 4.3; cf. Table 4). In Southern Germany, in turn, a heterogeneous pattern is observable, while in Saxony, for instance, a greater proportion could be identified only in the cities of Chemnitz, Dresden and Leipzig (cf. Heider et al. 2020; Rösch et al. 2020; Kordel & Weidinger 2020b). In total, about 42% of people with recognized protection status in Germany (~556,000 individuals) (still) live in districts classified as ‘rural’ according to the Thuenen typology of rural areas (author’s own calculations at 31.12.2019, based on Statistisches Bundesamt 2021).⁴⁷ This is an increase of seven percentage points, and amounts to about 372,000 individuals in rural areas compared to the end of 2015. The Federal States with the highest relative shares of foreigners with that status in rural areas at the end of 2019 were Brandenburg (83.1%), Mecklenburg-Hither Pomerania (78.2%) and Rhineland-Palatinate (70.0%), while North Rhine-Westphalia (22.8%) and Saxony (31.4%) had relatively low shares. In terms of the absolute numbers of individuals with recognized protection status in rural areas⁴⁸, Lower

⁴⁷ Data exclude the city and rural district of Kassel, or districts within the Federal State of Saarland as the number of foreigners cannot be reported separately there.

⁴⁸ The city states (*Stadtstaaten*) Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg are excluded from this ranking as they are considered to be urban districts according to

4. Setting the scene

Saxony (100,540 persons), North Rhine-Westphalia (85,210 persons) and Bavaria (83,605 persons) had the greatest proportions.

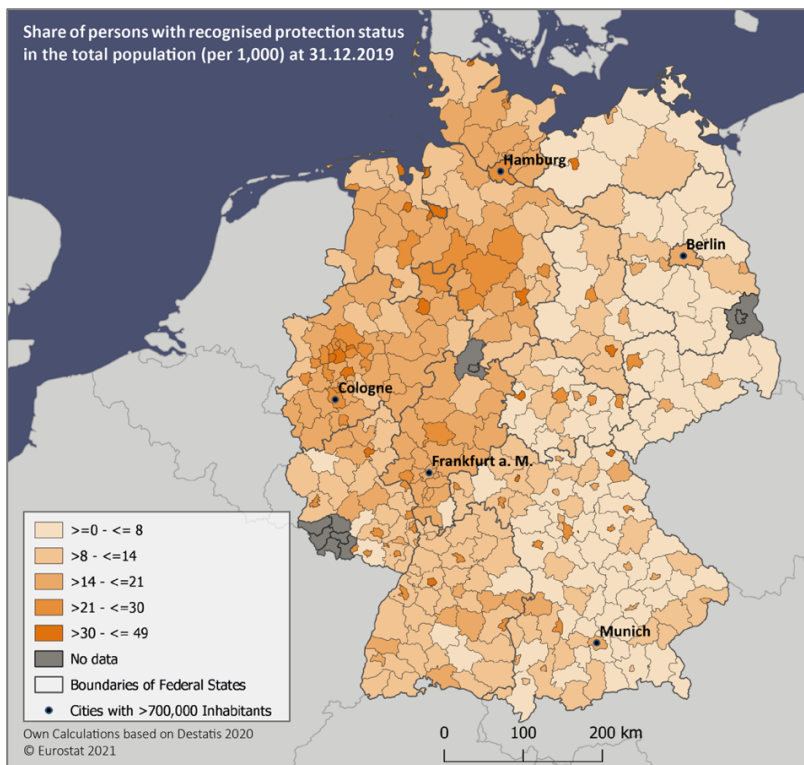


Figure 3: Share of persons with recognized protection status in the total population (per 1,000) at 31.12.2019

(Data: Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis) 2021;⁴⁹

Idea and data treatment: Author; Cartography: Lukas Schorner)

the Thuenen Typology. Saarland was excluded as well, as data on foreigners for the districts within the Federal State cannot be reported separately.

⁴⁹ Data on foreigners for the city and rural district of Kassel, the city of Cottbus and rural district of Spree-Neiße as well as for the districts within the Federal State of Saarland cannot be reported separately.

Table 4: Top 10 – Districts with highest shares of people with recognized protection status in their total population (per 1,000) at 31.12.2019

Name of the district	Category of the district	Federal State	Share of persons with recognized protection status in their total population (per 1,000) at 31.12.2019
Salzgitter	Urban district	Lower Saxony	48.6
Hof	Urban district	Bavaria	48.2
Schweinfurt	Urban district	Bavaria	40.6
Schwerin	Urban district	Mecklenburg-Hither Pomerania	39.3
Wuppertal	Urban district	North Rhine-Westphalia	39.2
Bremerhaven	Urban district	Bremen	38.8
Pforzheim	Urban district	Baden-Württemberg	38.2
Delmenhorst	Urban district	Lower Saxony	37.5
Essen	Urban district	North Rhine-Westphalia	35.5
Bremen	Urban district	Bremen	35.2

(Source: Author's own compilation)

5. Research design, study region, methods and dataset

5.1 Research design

In awareness of the existence of the ‘dual imperative’ (Jacobsen & Landau 2003) that research on forced migrants should serve scientific aims on the one hand and the applied aims of both refugee newcomers and politicians on the other, and the fact that research is always an intervention that may lead to unanticipated consequences (von Unger 2018), there is an even stronger need in the context of forced migration to self-critically develop, and consequently re-think and re-evaluate the research design and the methods chosen. Therefore, the cumulative PhD thesis follows the principles of humanistic geography, for example, on the importance of ‘being reflexive’ about one’s own research, and takes into account “the conceptual, practical, political and ethical implications arising from these projects, for [oneself], for the people and places under study, and perhaps even for society more generally” (Cloke et al. 2004: 22; cf. Finlay 2002; for the reflexive turn in general, Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; for the reflexive turn in migration research, Amelina 2020).

As a researcher, one has to reflect on one’s own personal, cultural and political values in relation to the work (Buttimer 1974; Foucault 1974; Bourdieu 2013) and one’s own **positionality**, backgrounds and attributes as they influence the ability to gain access to particular research settings, building ‘research alliances’ of empathy, trust and dialogue, what findings one can obtain and how they will be interpreted (Cloke et al. 2004; Denzin & Lincoln 2018; see also ‘subjective bias’, Denzin 1989). While certain markers or personal characteristics are almost impossible to change, such as name, age, gender, sexuality, race, education, family status, religion, residence status, physical appearance and disabilities (Carling et al. 2014), others such as dress

code or cultural competence can be altered and may contribute to the reduction of existing power differences in the inter-personal relationships between the researcher and researched. However, the power inequalities can never be dissolved (Neuburger & Schmitt 2012; Pacitto & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2013). In relation to cultural competence, it was particularly important for my colleagues (one male, one female) and myself to start a long-lasting learning process in making ourselves familiar with people's life-worlds (Jackson & Russell 2010; Kabranian-Melkonian 2015; Snijder et al. 2020) and to gain appropriate knowledge and understanding of culture and cultural diversity (Clark-Kazak 2017), without falling into generalization and stereotyping (Osland & Bird 2000). In this regard, the continuous fieldwork dialogue and reflection between co-researchers was of vital significance (Lassiter 2005; for the role of the co-researchers, see below).

Pre-existing scientific knowledge always predetermines the hypotheses and the setup of a research design (Finlay, 2002; Husseini de Araújo & Kersting 2012). There was therefore a risk of reproducing knowledge about 'the other', and the risk of 'talking about' or 'talking for' (Spivak 1988; Neuburger & Schmitt 2012; see also section 3.5). Simultaneously, forced migrants have often been considered to be in need of help, rather than as the authors of their own actions (Kibreab 1993; Doná 2007) or the 'co-creators' of knowledge (Mata-Codesal et al. 2020). **Recognizing individuals as experts in their own life-worlds** and accessing and understanding these life-worlds, experiences and meanings, drawing on intersubjective encounters, were thus considered central to this research (cf. Husserl 1970; Schütz & Luckmann 1973; Buttner 1976; see also section 3.5). **Participatory and visual approaches** with "a collaborative investigation and, an attempt to even up power imbalances between researcher and participant" (Kieslinger et al. 2020: par. 14; cf. Heron 1996; Beazley & Ennew 2006; Mata-Codesal et al. 2020) are seen as especially valuable for helping refugee newcomers

represent themselves (Ellis et al. 2007; Guerin & Guerin 2007; Hugman et al. 2011; see also section 3.5). However, it was also kept in mind that the ‘democratization process’ (Kaltmeier & Berkin 2012) and empowerment of participants throughout the whole research process in terms of dialogic engagement, e.g. as co-researchers, could lead to excessive demands (von Unger 2018), while ‘giving voice’ to forced migrants might also cause problems “if silence is preferred or an even more empowering strategy” (Barnett 1997, cited by Cloke et al. 2004: 31; cf. Krause 2017).

Following these presuppositions, and with the research questions in mind, the research was designed as an **interdisciplinary**⁵⁰ **empirically-oriented multi-method approach** (for an overview of methods, see section 5.3). The research design was based on the concept of **triangulation**, i.e. a combination of theories and methods (Flick 2009; cf. Denzin 1989). Conceptually, this research on the onward (im)mobilities and integration processes of refugee newcomers was inspired by social constructivist approaches and the new mobilities paradigm, while analytically reflecting Ager and Strang’s (2008) integration model, Clapham’s (2005) housing pathways approach and socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion (cf. chapter 3). Apart from theoretical triangulation, the research drew on ‘between-method’-triangulation and applied a **mixed methods-approach**, i.e. both quantitative and qualitative methods, to grasp the context, decision-making processes and everyday experiences of individuals and to be able to diminish the blind spots of certain methods and exploit the strengths of each method (Bazeley 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003; Flick 2009; in the context of migration, see

⁵⁰ To take into account the complexity of migration and integration phenomena, Brettell and Hollifield (2000), Voutira & Doná (2007) as well as Samers and Collyer (2017) called for the need for interdisciplinary research in migration and refugee studies.

Findlay & Li 1999 or Fauser 2018). While quantities and structural aspects were captured by means of quantitative research, i.e. a quantitative survey of refugee newcomers (see section 5.3.1), where the researcher is fairly remote from his or her respondents (Cloke et al. 2004), qualities, processes, practices and meanings were garnered by means of qualitative research with different actors, including refugee newcomers as well as local actors such as politicians, volunteers or landlords (Bryman 2001; Cloke et al. 2004; see sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3). Because research instruments have to be valid in the respective cultural and societal context, biographical-narrative research tools were combined with participatory and visual research tools that gave power to participants over how and what knowledge was produced (Campbell 2001; Doná 2007; Ellis et al. 2007; Mackenzie et al. 2007; see section 3.5). In this way, different data generated within the biographical-narrative interviews could be combined ('within-method'-triangulation, Denzin 1989; see section 5.3.2). Generally, data were drawn from a **local case study** in rural Bavaria, Germany. The study region encompassed the rural districts of Freyung-Grafenau (FRG) and Regen (REG) alongside the German-Czech border (for the selection and description, see section 5.2), while for method development and refinement a series of interviews was done in three further places in different parts of Bavaria: The inter-municipal alliance Hofheimer Land (HOH)⁵¹, Marktredwitz (MAK)⁵² and Uffenheim (UFF)⁵³ (see also Figure 4).

⁵¹ HOH comprises 7 municipalities with a total of 14,600 inhabitants in the rural district of Hassberge, Northern Bavaria. It is an internationally cited example in terms of the integration of refugee newcomers in rural areas (BBSR 2017; Rhein 2017; Galera et al. 2018; Gauci 2020).

⁵² MAK is a city of 17,200 inhabitants in the rural district of Wunsiedel in the Fichtel Mountains in North-East Bavaria, bordering the Czech Republic.

⁵³ UFF is a city of 6,500 inhabitants in the rural district of Neustadt a.d.Aisch-Bad Windsheim, situated between Nuremberg and Würzburg in North-West Bavaria.



Figure 4: Location of the study region and additional places of empirical fieldwork within Bavaria

(Source: Revised by author based on #5 IMI: 5;
Idea: Author; Cartography: Stephan Adler)

Throughout this PhD project, phases of desk research and empirical fieldwork, development of methods, data analysis and interpretation were not separated but were organized in a circular manner in the style of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967). To generalize, the **research process** can be divided into five consecutive phases (cf. Figure 5):

- In the first phase, from 2014 to 2015, an exploratory pre-study was carried out in the rural district of REG, where qualitative interviews with local actors were conducted.
- To take into account the perspectives of refugee newcomers, the second phase in 2016 particularly focused on the development of an interview method able to grasp participants' life-worlds. In the course of a seminar with master's students,⁵⁴ biographical-narrative research tools were combined with participatory space- and time-related visual tools and applied in a series of interviews in the city of MAK.
- In the third phase, from 2016 to 2017, the Staedtler foundation-funded research project titled 'Came to stay?! The residential choices of recognized refugees in rural Lower Bavaria, Germany. A retrospective analysis' aimed to depict the residential mobility patterns of recognized and resettled refugees in the districts of FRG and REG as well as at pointing out individual motivations and structural factors that influenced staying put. Apart from qualitative interviews with local actors and the newly developed biographical-narrative interviews with refugee newcomers, a quantitative survey of recognized and resettled refugees was also carried out, due to a lack of timely and relevant information about refugee newcomers' living contexts in the study region in general, as well as about their flat hunting and residential and everyday mobility processes in particular.
- The fourth phase from 2017 to 2018 was constituted by two student projects in HOH and UFF, where the biographical-narrative interviews were refined based on experience gained during the research project. In parallel,

⁵⁴ For a critical discussion on student projects with forced migrants in the course of the teaching curriculum, see Dilger et al. (2017) and von Unger (2018).

interviews with local actors in the study region FRG were carried out in the course of another student project.

- The final phase, from 2018, consisted of the implementation of the research project ‘A future for refugees in rural regions of Germany’, which was and is funded by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), based on a decision of the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany via the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) under the innovation support program. The joint project aimed to investigate how, and under what conditions, humanitarian engagement and rural development (can) interact, and how politics and civil society can influence this process positively. In the course of this project, both qualitative interviews with local actors and biographical-narrative interviews with refugee newcomers were conducted in the district of REG.

Throughout the whole research process, methodology and intermediate results were discussed at national and international scientific conferences. Intermediate results were also communicated within the study region itself, in two lecture events in May and June 2017, to which politicians, administrative staff and volunteers (individuals as well as organized in refugee relief groups) were invited. To give voice to the various stakeholders involved in the publication process as well, the publications #2 EUR, #3 ERD and #5 IMI included interview quotes from the qualitative and biographical-narrative interviews (cf. Ragin 1994). In addition to articles in English-speaking scientific journals and edited volumes, open-access **publications** in German were created to disseminate results both within the study region and beyond (#2 EUR; cf. Annex III). **Policy recommendations** based on both the current state of the art and the research findings were published in Weidinger and Kordel (2016) and Kordel and Weidinger (2020a). Research products were handed over or sent to local actors on a regular basis. However, for refugee newcom-

ers in particular, traceability was problematic partly due to on-ward mobilities (cf. Akesson et al. 2018). Last but not least, the author contributed to **press releases** on the research topic (Annex IV).

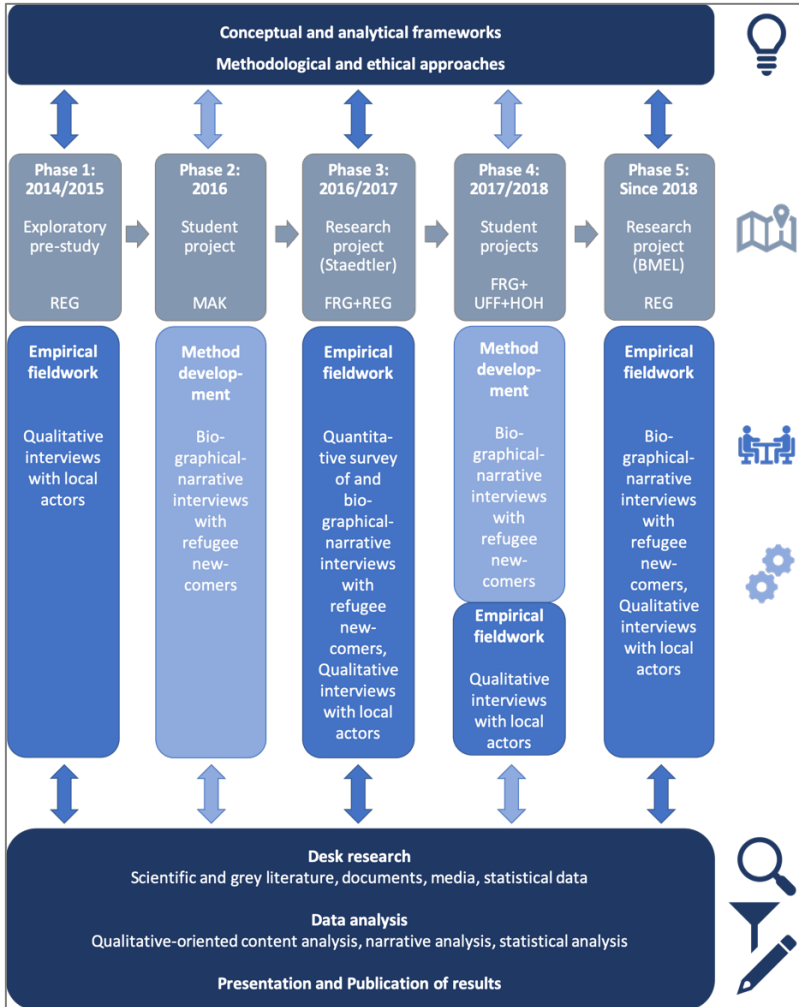


Figure 5: Research process

(Idea and draft: Author)

Accessing potential participants and recruiting them for research, as well as acquiring valid and reliable data are strongly influenced by trust, language and interview setting.⁵⁵ Establishing a trust relationship with refugee newcomers was considered key to the research, as it is a prerequisite to avoid potential emotional or physical harm (RatSWD 2017) and provides the basis for an authentic, inter-personal relationship (Miller 2004; Mackenzie et al. 2007). In turn, this allowed for easier access to the ‘backstage’ of participants’ experiences (Goffman 1959; Miller 2004).

To build a trust relationship, numerous short but intense **fieldwork-stays** were undertaken, of up to one week each, constituting an ‘immersion in the field’ (Aitken & Valentine 2015). During these we had informal conversations (‘hanging out with forced migrants’, Rodgers 2004; Gilhooly & Lee 2017b), while diverse gatekeepers such as volunteers, social workers or members of the migrant community helped us to gain access (Doná 2007; Kissoon 2011; Kabranian-Melkonian 2015; Curry et al. 2017; cf. section 5.3.4). Furthermore, **leaflets about the research project**, the team “and the investigation were prepared in different languages, distributed among gatekeepers and put on the notice boards of relevant institutions for, and meeting points of, refugees” (#4 JRS: 9; cf. Harris & Roberts 2011; Kissoon 2011; Boese 2015; Bendel & Scholz 2016; Haug et al. 2017; Fang et al. 2018). The leaflets also included information about the “voluntariness of participation, the anonymity of collected data and the non-transfer of data to the Federal Immigration Agency BAMF, which is responsible for implementing the asylum procedure

⁵⁵ In terms of research ethics, the research design followed the Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice set up by the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford (Refugee Studies Centre 2007), the Guidelines of the European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation on research on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation 2016) and those of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM 2018).

and renewing residence permits” (#4 JRS: 9; cf. Hynes 2003). In the fourth and fifth phases of the project, **ice-breaker meetings** were held with potential participants for the biographical-narrative interviews (cf. section 5.3.2). At these meetings, researchers presented themselves and tried to intensify the interpersonal relationship between the interviewer and the participant by drawing on perceived commonalities and differences in terms of interests and activities⁵⁶ (for fluid positionings, see Temple & Edwards 2011; Ryan 2015; Stachowski 2020b), while at the same time informing participants about the aim of the study, data protection regulations and the preferred interview setting (#4 JRS; Kieslinger et al. 2020). Due to fears that a written form could discourage forced migrants from participating as signing would “jeopardise their anonymity” (European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation 2016: 2; cf. von Unger 2018), **informed consent** for biographical-narrative interviews was taken orally in a less formal way at the beginning of the research, i.e. in a more dialogic and processual way (see also Düvell et al. 2010; Fozdar & Hartley 2014; Müller-Funk 2020; Stachowski 2020b). At a later stage, it was taken by means of content forms available in different languages as individuals had become accustomed to German bureaucracy. The **protection of personal data** was warranted by means of password-protection for the respective Cloud folders on servers of the FAU and the Thuenen-Institute using powerfolder (FAUBox) and nextcloud. In addition, personal or communication data were stored separately. To make it harder to trace the participants, transcripts were not released in full. Instead, like other scholars who have worked in rural or small town contexts such as Bose (2016, 2018), Haug et al. (2017), Woods (2018) or Stachowski (2020b, cf. Krause 2016, Akesson et al. 2018 or von Unger 2018), we published only short quotes making use of pseudonyms for persons

⁵⁶ The interviewers’ youth fostered participants’ curiosity about their personal backgrounds and thus facilitated many conversations (#4 JRS; cf. Doná 2007).

and institutional affiliations as well as small places. Nevertheless, internal confidentiality and anonymity, i.e. the principle of anonymity between the participants themselves, could not always be maintained due to a high degree of social and spatial proximity among both refugee newcomers and local actors (Tolich 2004; for similar experiences in rural research settings, see Stachowski 2020b; for similar experiences in refugee settings, see Akesson et al. 2018).

Lacking competence in language may exclude particular group of people from research, so **language** is another important aspect, first in gaining access to potential participants, and secondly for gaining access to their life-worlds. As a solution to potential difficulties here, technical solutions in terms of translation apps, translators and interpreters were included throughout the research process (Enzenhofer & Resch 2011) – in awareness that neither translating nor interpreting are ever neutral but constitute a ‘contextualized interpretation’ (Rumpel & Tempes 2019; cf. Edwards 1998; Mackenzie et al. 2007; Temple & Edwards 2011). Metaphors, figurative language and local specificities are challenging in particular (Enzenhofer & Resch 2011). In the third phase of the project, translators as well as a Kurdish interpreter were only partly embedded in preparation, implementation and post-processing, but in the last phase two **interpreters** of Arabic (one male and one female) were recruited as co-researchers. They contributed not only with door-opening, language and cultural mediation during the fieldwork, but also with both preparation of interview guidelines and data analysis (Kabranian-Melkonian 2015; Rumpel & Tempes 2019). During the interviews, however, they were only deployed if so desired by the participants, and in those cases we attempted to match participant-interpreter gender (Rumpel & Tempes 2019; Müller-Funk 2020). The recruitment of co-researchers, however, led to a change from a dialogue/trialogue to a trialogue/multilogue and changed understandings of the roles of interviewer and interpreter (Lauterbach 2014; Uçan 2019; cf. Bourdieu 2015). This

may have increased the distance between interviewer and participant and thus may have inhibited trust-building (Block et al. 2013), but was able to create a more informal atmosphere, too (Müller-Funk 2020). The co-researchers had themselves fled from Syria, which could have helped them to better understand the situations and circumstances of participants (Mestheneos 2006; Haug et al. 2017), and “increase cultural sensitivity and facilitate relationships of familiarity and trust” (Müller-Funk 2020: 8). Although the fact that they had studied at the same university as the author may have reduced the probability of their being acquainted with participants in the study region (Jacobsen & Landau 2003), it remained possible that interpreters’ names, appearance, accent, style of dress as well as place of origin may have caused fear or contempt and led participants to give socially desired responses (Enzenhofer & Resch 2011; Kabranian-Melkonian 2015; Haug et al. 2017; Müller-Funk 2020). Despite the fact that both interpreters had already worked as interpreters in research projects with forced migrants in both Germany and Greece, they brought their own preconceptions to the project and consequently a two-day workshop on the principles of research, methods, communication skills, ethical concerns and data protection and management took place in September 2017 (cf. Correa-Velez & Onsando 2009).

The **interviewing setting** is another important criterion for a trusting atmosphere (Cloke et al. 2004; Bergold & Thomas 2012). Therefore, wherever possible, participants could decide both about the presence of other people and where to meet (Harris & Roberts 2011; Curry et al. 2017; Holthusen 2019) – given the prerequisite that it was not too noisy on-site, and – in case of the biographical-narrative interviews – that there was enough space there to draw. To avoid adding to their emotional burden and fostering participants re-traumatization (Kissoon 2011; Sigona 2014; von Unger 2018; Deger et al. 2020; Müller-Funk 2020), it was decided that none of the questions should directly or explicitly address the situation in their country of origin, nor

the circumstances of their flight. However, the subject was not blocked if interviewees wished to talk about it of their own volition. In addition, no questions about ethnicity or political affiliations were raised (cf. Müller-Funk 2020). For participants, it was always stated clearly and repeated throughout the inquiry that it was possible to withdraw from a survey or stop an interview at any time, to skip certain questions if they did not feel good about them (Kissoon 2011; Akesson et al. 2018), or to switch off the tape recorder at any point in the interview (Cloke et al. 2004; Akesson et al. 2018). To make this easy for them, participants were given control of the recorder (Kissoon 2011). If requests by participants or incidental findings indicated a need for counselling or legal advice, contact details or further information were provided (Haug et al. 2017; Schouler-Ocak & Kurmeyer 2017; Akesson et al. 2018; von Unger 2018). No financial **reimbursement** was provided for participation (in contrast to Netto 2011 or Fang et al. 2018, for instance). However, if surveys and interviews were conducted in a public or semi-public space, foodstuffs were paid for, and power banks for mobile devices were given to those who participated in the biographical-narrative interviews in the fifth phase of the project (#4 JRS; Kieslinger et al. 2020). In addition, when asked, researchers offered contact details or information about future career and housing opportunities, e.g. in university cities (for similar experiences, see Glorius & Schondelmayer 2020; for a critical discussion of ‘giving assistance’ to participants, see Lammers 2007).

5.2 Selection and description of the study region

The Federal State of Bavaria was chosen for various reasons:

- **Absolute and relative importance:** At the end of 2015, of all the Federal States, Bavaria accommodated the highest absolute numbers of people with open protection status (57,675) as well as people with open protection status in rural areas (44,725), not least due to

its location at the end of the so called ‘Balkan route’. In addition, Bavaria also had the highest relative share of people with open protection status living in rural areas of all Federal States in Western Germany, i.e. 77.5% (author’s own calculations, based on Statistisches Bundesamt 2019a, cf. data in section 4.2 and 4.4).

- **Regional research gap:** While the first research initiatives had already started, for instance, in rural Brandenburg (SVR 2016), Rhineland-Palatinate (Roos 2016), Saxony (Glorius 2017) and Schleswig-Holstein (Akademie für die ländlichen Räume Schleswig-Holsteins e.V. 2017), this was not the case for rural Bavaria at that time. The only exception was Haug et al.’s (2017) study, carried out in Nuremberg and the peri-urban district of Ebersberg, which focused solely on asylum seekers and their reasons for their flight, their values and their intention to stay in Germany.
- **Preliminary work of the author:** Knowledge previously gained by the author in the course of research on structural change in rural tourism in Bavaria (e.g. Weidinger 2014; Kordel et al. 2015; Kordel & Weidinger 2016) was relevant, e.g. to understanding the accommodation policy for asylum seekers and the reactions of the local population. Hotels and guesthouses, for instance, which had dropped out of the market due to investment bottlenecks and changed consumer preferences, were frequently used to house asylum seekers (cf. #2 EUR, see also Pehm 2007). This also provided the opportunity to make use of local knowledge and long-term observation.
- **Research-practical reasons:** The accessibility of the study region in Bavaria both from the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in Middle Franconia and the second home of the author, situated in the district of Deggendorf in Lower Bavaria, allowed for mitigating travel time and costs. In addition, the location of the

study region within one Federal State meant that the same legal framework applied with regard to the dispersal of asylum seekers and the restriction of freedom of movement for recognized refugees (cf. chapter 4).

The process of selecting the study region within Bavaria was based on the principle that rural areas (as the arrival contexts of refugee newcomers) are diverse (Champion & Hugo 2008). The Thuenen typology of rural areas is considered helpful here, as it differentiates between rural areas based on indicators of the extent of their rurality (*Ländlichkeit*) and socio-economic situation (*sozioökonomische Lage*, Küpper 2016, cf. Table 5). The first dimension aims to distinguish rural from non-rural districts and at differentiating districts further between fairly rural (*eher ländlich*) and very rural (*sehr ländlich*). The second dimension, socio-economic situation, instead, distinguishes districts with a good socio-economic situation (*gute sozioökonomische Lage*) from districts with a less good (sic!) socio-economic situation (*weniger gute sozioökonomische Lage*) in order to set this against discourses that equate rural areas with deprivation (Küpper 2016). Indicators used can be partly related to the structural prerequisites for the integration of forced migrants, e.g. access to urban centers and everyday mobility or vacancy rates and access to housing.

5. Research design, study region and dataset

Table 5: Types of rural areas, share of all rural and urban districts in Germany and Bavaria and number of foreigners with open protection status at 31.12.2015

very rural / good socio- economic situation	15.7% of rural and urban districts in Germany (39,210 for- eigners with open protec- tion status)	fairly rural / good socio- economic situation	16.2% of rural and ur- ban districts in Germany (50,645)
	39.6% of rural and ur- ban districts in Bavaria (21,775)		28.1% of rural and ur- ban districts in Bavaria (16,330)
very rural / less good socio- economic situation	27.4% of rural and ur- ban districts in Germany (57,185)	fairly rural / less good socio- economic situation	16.9% of rural and ur- ban districts in Germany (49,370)
	20.8% of rural and ur- ban districts in Bavaria (6,620)		0% of rural and urban districts in Bavaria (0)

(Source: Author's own calculations, based on Statistisches Bundesamt 2019a)

As a result, four different types of rural areas can be distinguished (cf. Table 5 above). Districts characterized as “very rural” with a “less good socio-economic situation” are the most common type of rural district in Germany and amount to nearly a third of all districts. They are also the type that housed most people with open protection status at the end of 2015 (author's

own calculations, based on Statistisches Bundesamt 2019a). Because rural areas with a less good socio-economic situation were also most controversially discussed at that time with regard to equal living conditions (e.g. Bayerisches Staatsministerium der Finanzen, für Landesentwicklung und Heimat 2015; Spiegel Online 2015) and despite the better socio-economic situation of Bavarian districts in general, this type of rural area was chosen.

To facilitate data collection and avoid a residence bias, i.e. the exclusion of a place as a research location due to potentially low numbers of research participants (cf. Schammann 2021), the neighboring rural districts of Freyung-Grafenau (FRG) and Regen (REG) alongside the German-Czech border, which display similar rurality indexes and population sizes, were added to the areas to be the empirical research (cf. Figure 6 and Table 6). The study region is situated in the low-mountain range called the Bavarian forest and thus characterized by high intensity topographical relief. The districts show a dispersed settlement structure and each have three so-called ‘medium centers’ (*Mittelzentren*)⁵⁷ with 8,000 to 11,000 inhabitants, where services of general interest for the region (i.e. including the surrounding municipalities), are provided. This also entails services for refugee newcomers, e.g. language and vocational schools, the *Job-center* and welfare organizations offering counselling services. With regard to the housing market, vacancy rates are higher than the Bavarian average (with REG having the sixth highest rate in Bavaria). The districts are characterized by a high proportion of owner-occupied dwellings on the one hand (with FRG having the highest share of owner-occupied dwellings in Bavaria), and a small rental market on the other hand. In economic terms, unemployment rates are around the Bavarian

⁵⁷ The ‘medium centers’ are specified in the state development program of Bavaria (cf. Enactment of the State development program Bavaria 2018; for the principle of Central Place Theory, see Christaller 1972).

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average. There is a smaller percentage of foreigners than the average across the Federal State (with FRG having the sixth lowest rate in Bavaria); however, this has increased in the last five years. While Turkish individuals predominate overall in Bavaria, in the districts foreigners mainly comprise individuals from other EU countries and ‘countries of origin of asylum’ (*Asylherkunfts-länder*). The main countries of origin of refugee newcomers are Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq and Syria, which are also the main countries of origin in Bavaria overall.



Figure 6: The study region and the six ‘medium centers’
(Idea: Author; Cartography: Florian Dworzak)

Table 6: Overview of characteristics of the districts

	FRG	REG	Bavaria
Rurality (Index, <i>Landatlas 2016a</i>)	+1.04	+0.98	-3.77 - +1.05
Socio-economic situation (Index, <i>Landatlas 2016b</i>)	+0.25	+0.16	-99 - +0.78
Type of rural area (<i>Thuenen Typology, Küpper 2016</i>)	very rural – less good socio- economic situation	very rural – less good socio- economic situation	
Population size (31.12.2019)	78,362	77,410	13,124,737
Size (2016, in km ² , <i>Statistisches Bundesamt 2021</i>)	983.9	974.8	70,542.0
Altitude (range, in meters above sea level, own calculations based on <i>Bayerisches Staatsministerium der Finanzen und für Heimat 2020</i>)	337 - 1,453	387 - 1,455	102 - 2,962

5. Research design, study region and dataset

Vacancy rates of all residential buildings (Census 2011, Statistisches Bundesamt 2013)	5.4%	6.1%	3.7%
Rate of owner-occupied dwellings (Census 2011, Statistisches Bundesamt 2013)	72.6%	65.0%	51.0%
Rate of unemployment (annual average 2019)	2.5%	3.1%	2.8%
Percentage of foreigners (31.12.2019, own calculations)	5.2%	6.7%	13.6%
Increase of foreigners (2015 to 2019, own calculations)	38.7%	49.0%	21.0%
TOP-3 nationalities of foreigners (31.12.2019, persons, Statistisches Bundesamt 2021)	1. HRV (550) 2. CZE (470) 3. HUN (365)	1. SYR (1,095) 2. CZE (850) 3. ROU (550)	1. TUR (192,235) 2. ROU (180,455) 3. HRV (119,880)

<p>Share of acceptance of asylum seekers and recognized refugees according to Federal State regulations (own calculations, according to DVAsyl)</p>	0.62%	0.61%	100%
<p>Foreigners with recognized protection status (31.12.2019, persons, Statistisches Bundesamt 2021)</p>	320	855	150,115
<p>TOP-3 nationalities of foreigners with recognized protection status (31.12.2019, persons, Statistisches Bundesamt 2021)</p>	<p>1. SYR (125)</p> <p>2. AFG (85)</p> <p>3. ERI (35)</p>	<p>1. SYR (710)</p> <p>2. AFG (35)</p> <p>3. IRQ/XXA (25)</p>	<p>1. SYR (52,020)</p> <p>2. IRQ (20,310)</p> <p>3. AFG (19,255)</p>

(Source: if not specified, Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik 2021; Draft: Author)

The next section discusses the districts FRG and REG with a focus on their previous experience of migration and mobility processes, which are embedded in on-going structural transformations in the districts investigated.

The rural district of Freyung-Grafenau (FRG)

The rural district of FRG was established in 1972 as a result of local government reorganization, by unifying the districts of

Grafenau and Wolfstein. Around the 10th century, due its location alongside historical salt trade routes to Bohemia, the population spread into the areas from the Danube (Erkens et al. 2013). The economy was based on natural resources for a long time. Thus, the district was and is famous for glass production and refinement as well as forestry and the timber industry (Czechl 1968). In addition, grassland farming was and is practiced in the lower-lying parts.

In terms of migration and mobility processes, FRG was for a long-time shaped by out-migration. In the 19th century, poor farmers, second or third born children, servants and craftsmen emigrated to East Galicia, Upper Slovenia and the USA. In parallel, the construction of the railway by about 500 Italian workers⁵⁸ (Praxl 1982), fostered the start of summer tourism and the establishment of the industrial plants of Saxonian entrepreneurs including employees (Czechl 1968; Zuppinger 1982). During the Third Reich, the state-operated leisure organization ‘Strength Through Joy’ (*Kraft durch Freude*) fostered mass tourism, while after WWII, as a result of a housing shortage and wartime destruction (Czechl 1968; Presl 1968), refugees and expellees from Silesia and Sudetenland had to be accommodated in former guest houses (Presl 1982a, 1982b). Tourism recovered after the transfer of newcomers into newly built houses in the region (Presl 1968) and the provision of funding for borderland areas during the Cold War (*Grenzlandförderung/Zonenrandförderung*, von Krezmar 1960; Boer 1962; Haversath 2015), which was used to prioritize the development of street and winter sports infrastructure as well as large-scale tourist accommodation (Maier 1974; Paulus 1982). To strengthen the economy of the district and to make use of the potential labor force available during the winter months in particular (Czechl 1968; Paulus 1982; Kordel et al. 2015), industrial plants (for example in the automotive sector)

⁵⁸ For an overview of the seasonal migration of Italian citizens to Bavaria in the 19th century, see Gattinger (2012).

were established there, and drew on the aforementioned subsidies (Zuppinger 1982). In addition, a garrison of the German army (*Bundeswehr*, 1960) was stationed there, and the first German National park was founded (1970, Presl 1982a). A well-known and often cited immigrant, who arrived in the course of the “Guestworker” (*Gastarbeiter:innen*) recruitment era in 1959, is the glass cutter Giuseppe Guarino, who opened the first pizzeria in the Bavarian forest in 1971. In contrast to most of the others, who went back to Italy, he is still living in the region (PNP 2009c; Da Hogn 2013; PNP 2019; Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte n.y.).

After the end of the East-West conflict, the Federal Border Police barracks (*Bundesgrenzschutz*) in Grafenau were converted to accommodation that was used between 1989 and 1991 to house forced migrants arriving from the GDR. The same accommodation was used, between 1991 and 2007, to house late repatriates and Jewish emigrants from former Soviet countries, and since 2007 has provided accommodation for asylum seekers. Apart from this, and as in the situation after WWII, former guesthouses and hotels were reused for late repatriates and asylum seekers in the 1990s and 2000s (e.g. Haidmühle-Bischofsreut (1989-1994)⁵⁹, Fürsteneck-Atzldorf (n/a-1997), Grainet (1989-2000)). In order to provide support, a counselling service for migrants and asylum seekers was established by the district Caritas association in the mid-1980s, which still exists today (Kreis-Caritasverband Freyung-Grafenau e.V. n.y.). In 1997, when accommodation for late repatriates in Fürsteneck and Grafenau was about to be converted into accommodation for asylum seekers, local inhabitants and politicians discussed it critically. While in the village close to Fürsteneck, people complained about the high number of asylum seekers compared to the local population (PNP 1997a), in the small town of Grafenau,

⁵⁹ Data based on own research by means of analysing newspaper articles.

negative consequences for tourism as well as an increase of problems related to criminality and drugs were feared (PNP 1997b; PNP 1997c). Simultaneously, however, public talks on immigration, exhibitions, information evenings and annual festivals were held in cooperation with the protestant church (e.g. PNP 1999b; PNP 2004), which had been strengthened by the immigration of protestant refugees and expellees after WWII. The closure of accommodation for late repatriates in the former school building in Schönberg, which had been established in 1989, was criticized by the mayor on the basis of migrants' contribution to safeguarding infrastructure and services such as schools, as well as local retailers. At the same time, he drew on the municipalities' own engagement in terms of fostering integration locally, not least in having nominated a commissioner for repatriates and foreigners (*Aussiedler- und Ausländerbeauftragter*) in the local branch of the conservative party (CSU) in 2001 (PNP 2005).

Today, the economic situation in this rural district is characterized by small and medium-sized enterprises – often termed hidden champions – in plastics processing, electrical engineering and automotives (Landkreis Freyung-Grafenau 2018; cf. Zink 2013). Farming is mostly done as a part-time job nowadays, while daily and weekly commuting to the more prosperous Danubian plain and even towards Munich was and is still common (Junker 1992; Dorner & Lemberger 2013). Three research and technology campuses of the Deggendorf Institute of Technology (*Technische Hochschule Deggendorf*) were founded in the small towns of Freyung and Grafenau as well as in the municipality of Spiegelau, to foster cooperation with regional industries and allow young people to continue their training on-site without being forced to leave the region. In addition, to overcome a shortage of skilled workers, the district has begun to persuade high school graduates to stay in the region, and has tried to attract young families from among those who have left the region for

educational purposes (Landkreis Freyung-Grafenau 2018). In recent years, this rural district has also experienced in-migration of retirement migrants from urban centers, who have often had long-standing relationships with the region in terms of regular tourist stays.

The rural district of Regen (REG)

Like FRG, REG was united with the neighboring district of Viechtach in 1972 in the course of a local reorganization of local government. This settlement began around the 9th century with an economy focused on grassland farming (in the lower-lying parts), forestry and the timber industry as well as on glass production and refinement (Ettl 2001; Braun 2004).

In terms of migration and mobility in the 19th century, REG was characterized by out-migration, both to cities and abroad⁶⁰ (Rieder 2015). In parallel, tourism began to be a key industry, and mainly accommodated individual hikers. At the beginning of the 20th century, then, the appearance of hiking guides and new transport connections by train simplified arrivals and ascents, while the Bavarian Forest Association (*Bayerischer Waldverein*) started to place the region on the market, leading to an increase in overnight stays (Landkreis Regen 1962). WWII disrupted this positive tourist development but resulted in the arrival of evacuees from cities instead (Stadt Regen 1967; see also Weidinger et al., *accepted*). Due to destruction of buildings and the immigration of refugees and expellees from Silesia and Sudetenland, as well as the arrival of the occupation army from 1944, the district was characterized by a housing shortage, and during the post-war years these groups had to be housed in hotels and guest-houses as well as schools (Landkreis Regen 1962; Stadt Regen 1967). Bodenmais, the tourism hotspot of the region, for example, recorded 20,000 overnight stays in 1938 but only 846 during

⁶⁰ For an overview on emigration from Bavaria to the United States, see Hamm et al. (2004).

the summer season of 1947, as nearly 1,000 refugees needed accommodation (Weigl 1996). These rooms were not vacated until the 1950s and 1960s, when about 2,500 buildings containing more than 4,000 housing units to accommodate 15,000 people, were completed (Landkreis Regen 1962; cf. Figure 7). The refugees and expellees who stayed in the region also founded territorial associations (*Landmannschaften*) (Stadt Regen 1967), which still exist today.



Figure 7: 'Repatriate housing estate' (Heimkehrersiedlung) in the small town of Regen

(Source: Author's own photo, 2019)

In addition, during the post-war years and until their emigration to the newly-founded Israel, a Jewish community (*Kommittee*) existed in Regen consisting of about 50 Displaced Persons (DPs),

mainly originating from Eastern Europe (Vogl 2013). From 1951 on, a US border camp was opened on the outskirts of Regen (Stadt Regen 1967), while in 1960, a garrison of the German army (*Bundeswehr*) was stationed in the same town (PNP 2020). Partly to reduce out-migration, a production-oriented economy was located in the region and winter sports infrastructure and tourist accommodation were established, drawing on the aforementioned funding for borderland areas during the Cold War (see above). As a result, retirement migration grew alongside tourism (Fürstberger & Pietrusky 1980; Weidinger et al., *accepted*). Nevertheless, seasonal unemployment during the winter months was and is still common, especially for those employed in tourism and construction (Röll 1998). Restaurateur Cevdet 'Jeff' Oragaz, who did an apprenticeship in glass manufacturing and who, nowadays owns a diner, is a well-known and often cited immigrant, whose father arrived in the course of the 'Guest-worker' (*Gastarbeiter:innen*) recruitment era in 1968 and brought his family here in the course of family reunion (PNP 2009a; PNP 2018).

The opening of the Iron curtain in 1989 and the 2004 and 2007 expansion of the European Union ended the region's isolated position, brought foreign markets and a cheap labor force from Eastern Europe, e.g. for tourism and hospitality as well as healthcare (Karl 1998). Due to the end of the East-West-conflict, the former US border camp in Regen, mentioned above, was transformed into a camp for asylum seekers in 1993 and accommodated individuals who fled from the Yugoslav wars and Afghan civil wars as well as the Persian Gulf Wars until 2007 (PNP 2007a). In the 1990s, the expansion of the national park promoted tourism (see above), while an investment bottleneck and changed consumer preferences led to many guesthouses and hotels dropping out of the market at the same time (Klee 2013; Kordel et al. 2015). These were reutilized for the accommodation of late repatriates from the former Soviet Union as well as for asylum seekers, who have arrived in the district since the

1990s (e.g. Böbrach-Maisried (opened 1989)⁶¹, Zwiesel-Glasberg (1989-2005), Regen-Schönhöher Weg (n/a-2004) and Regen-Dreieck (n/a-2008)). The local population supported forced migrants by donating clothes and days designed to welcome people to asylum accommodation, as well as exhibitions and public talks about the asylum and repatriation topic took place sporadically, organized by the Catholic Church mainly (e.g. PNP 1999a; PNP 2003). Simultaneously, as in FRG, a counselling service for migrants and asylum seekers was established by the Caritas association of the district in the 1990s, which still exists today. The most controversial accommodation was the former guesthouse in Böbrach, which is run by the administration of the administrative district and situated in the middle of the forest, 500 meters away from the bus stop and 1.3 kilometers from the center of the municipality with about 1,500 inhabitants in total (cf. Figure 8).

In 2007, the municipal council rejected its conversion from accommodation for late repatriates to asylum accommodation, as this would weaken tourism, while language barriers would be a burden for the administrative staff (PNP 2007b). Then in 2009 and 2013, the isolated location, lack of internet and mobile reception was criticized by both asylum seekers and refugee organizations such as the Bavarian Refugee Council (*Bayerischer Flüchtlingsrat*) and made waves in the Bavarian media (e.g. Nürnberger Nachrichten 2009; PNP 2009b; PNP 2013; Süddeutsche 2013). In the border town of Bayerisch Eisenstein by contrast, the closure of the accommodation for late repatriates and asylum seekers in 2007 was regretted by the mayor, as migrants contributed to upheld infrastructures such as kindergarten and school (PNP 2007c).

⁶¹ Data based on own research by means of analysis of newspaper articles.



Figure 8: Asylum accommodation in Böbrach

(Source: Author's own photo, 2015)

The economic situation in REG today is characterized by small and medium-sized enterprises in similar branches as in FRG (Arberland REGio GmbH 2019; cf. Zink 2013), while daily and weekly commuting from the region is still widespread (Sauer 1997; Dorner & Lemberger 2013). The district has attracted two research and technology campuses of the Deggendorf Institute of Technology (*Technische Hochschule Deggendorf*). REG aims to overcome the shortage of skilled workers by attracting young families who have previously left the region for educational purposes and recruits young doctors and international working migrants (Adam 2014; Landkreis Regen 2015; Kordel & Weidinger 2021).

5.3 Methods and dataset

Table 7 provides an overview of the methods applied and data gathered and used in this PhD thesis. Regarding the latter aspect, there is a distinction between primary and secondary data. In contrast to primary data collected in the course of empirical fieldwork, secondary data - including documents, newspaper articles and radio and TV spots as well as statistical data – served as background information about the study region and aimed to contextualize “perceptions and knowledge brought up in interviews” (cf. Morén-Alegret & Wladyka 2020: 119-120). In the following sections, methods and data as well as data processing and analysis are discussed in detail.

Table 7: Overview of applied methods and data gathered and used

Applied methods/ used data	Sort of data	Data collection	People involved	Study re- gion
Quantitative survey of 171 recognized and resettled refugees	Primary data	August 2016 – February 2017	Tobias Weidinger, Stefan Kordel	FRG, REG

<p>106 biographical-narrative interviews among 113 asylum seekers and recognized and resettled refugees</p>	<p>Primary data</p>	<p>August 2016 – June 2019</p>	<p>Tobias Weidinger, Stefan Kordel, Silke Hachmeister, Mahmood A., Baraa K.</p>	<p>FRG, REG</p>
<p><i>36 biographical-narrative interviews among 46 asylum seekers and recognized and resettled refugees</i></p>	<p>Primary data</p>	<p>January 2016 – December 2017</p>	<p>Tobias Weidinger, Stefan Kordel, Julia Kieslinger, students</p>	<p>HOH, MAK, UFF</p>
<p>44 qualitative interviews with 61 local actors</p>	<p>Primary data</p>	<p>April 2014 – January 2019</p>	<p>Tobias Weidinger, Stefan Kordel</p>	<p>FRG, REG</p>
<p>Participant observation</p>	<p>Primary data</p>	<p>whole duration of research</p>	<p>Tobias Weidinger, Stefan Kordel</p>	<p>FRG, REG</p>

Documents (e.g. legal texts, plenary protocols)	Secondary data	whole duration of research	Tobias Weidinger	
Newspaper articles and radio and TV reports	Secondary data	whole duration of research	Tobias Weidinger	FRG, REG
Statistical data	Secondary data	whole duration of research	Tobias Weidinger	FRG, REG

(Source: Author’s own compilation)

5.3.1 Quantitative survey of recognized and resettled refugees

Between August 2016 and February 2017, a quantitative survey of 171 recognized and resettled refugees over legal age was carried out in 25 municipalities of the districts of FRG and REG. The social survey, which was designed as a cross-sectional study, aimed to understand more about refugee newcomers’ accommodation during and after the asylum procedure, their everyday lives, their everyday movements, their access to private housing and social statistics. We tried to ask questions as simply as possible (with regard to word choice and syntax, Mattissek et al. 2013; Afeworki Abay & Engin 2019) and to draw on well-established items used in other studies, such as the BAMF Study on Refugees 2014 (*BAMF-Flüchtlingsstudie*; cf. Worbs et al. 2016) or the IAB-SOEP

Migration Sample 2015 (cf. TNS Infratest Sozialforschung 2016).⁶² The survey used closed questions, to a certain extent drawing on semantic differentials that allowed the validation of presuppositions and previous results in the literature as well as the exploration of emerging topics of interest (Atteslander 2008). The addition of open questions facilitated consideration of subjective viewpoints besides predefined categories.

Prior to carrying out the survey, relevant topics of research were discussed with a member of one of the rural district administrations, while the draft survey was piloted for comprehensibility with a representative of the refugee community living on-site. After reflection on which languages were most important, the survey was translated into the most-spoken ones, i.e. Arabic, English, Farsi and Tigrinya (cf. Deger et al. 2017; Röder et al. 2018). Two scientists working in Social and Natural Science at FAU and one external person translated it into Arabic, Farsi and Tigrinya, and these translations were crosschecked by someone else who made suggestions that helped to reduce the margin of error and to increase the quality of the survey in the respective languages (cf. Bloch 1999; Jacobsen & Landau 2003). The translation into English was undertaken by the author and his colleague Stefan Kordel.

For the sampling, non-probability techniques (e.g. Ayhan 2011; Kohler 2019) had to be used due to the limited quality of the data in the central register of foreign nationals (*Ausländerzentralregister*, AZR) at that time, and to comply with data protection regulation in the registration offices in the study region (see also section 4.1; for similar experiences, see Haug et al. 2017; Jacobsen 2020). Therefore, access to respondents was provided by various gatekeepers, including mayors, language

⁶² Questions from the IAB-BAMF-SOEP representative longitudinal survey, which was carried out for the first time in the second half of 2016, could not be considered due to the fact that the questionnaires were only published afterwards (Brücker et al. 2017).

course providers, employees of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-statutory welfare-providers, volunteers or members of the local refugee relief groups in the municipalities, as well as trusted members of the refugee communities, who knew refugees on-site and who served “as a bridge between the researchers and the target group” (#4 JRS: 9; cf. Haug et al. 2017; Haug & Huber 2018; Bergedieck 2019). Apart from this, in order to avoid sampling bias (cf. Bloch 1999; Doná 2007; Kabranian-Melkonian 2015), we used cold acquisition at Arabic shops and during the consultation hours of counselling services for refugee newcomers, as well as networking and snowball sampling. To overcome a timing bias (Kumar 2002), recruitment of respondents took place at different times of the day and week. Self-selection, in turn, occurred, when individuals themselves responded to the leaflets displayed at various locations in the study region (cf. Röder et al. 2018). At a later stage, quota sampling was also applied, to fulfil the nationality and sex criteria in the study region. Interestingly, the number of refusals among prospective respondents was seen to be low (cf. Haug et al. 2017) as the survey offered a welcome distraction from everyday routines and, probably, because none of them (yet) suffered from ‘survey fatigue’.

We met respondents either in the communal spaces of asylum accommodation, or the class rooms of language course providers, or during asylum cafés organized by refugee relief groups, or in the townhall, or in their private apartments, if they wished. After explaining the aim of the research and that the data would be anonymous, which was crucial not least due to respondents’ fear that participating would have a negative effect on the renewal of residence permits (Haug et al. 2017), the surveys were normally filed in presence of the interviewers, while a Kurdish-speaking interpreter recruited in the study region assisted in the data collection in one of the municipalities. The presence of an interpreter along with the interviewers may have had a negative

impact, for example in terms of provoking socially desirable responses (cf. Jacobsen & Landau 2003; Cloke et al. 2004; Mattissek et al. 2013; Röder et al. 2018). On the other hand, however, it enhanced “the researcher’s ability to interpret some of the context in which questionnaire answers are set” (Cloke et al. 2004: 133). This may have increased the respondents’ motivation and the accuracy of the processing, and helped to clear up intellectual or intercultural misunderstandings (Schnell et al. 2005; cf. Röder et al. 2018). In turn, the default rate and distortion of the sample were reduced, while representativity was improved (Bloch 1999; Mattissek et al. 2013).

Regarding the sample characteristics, the majority of respondents were from Syria (73%) and Eritrea (19%) and lived in cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants (especially in Damascus and Aleppo). More of the Eritreans originated from municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants. The age range was 18 to 65, with an average age of 29.7 years, and with Eritreans being comparatively younger. Most were male (88.9%) and lived without partners or children (67%). Three quarters had a residence permit valid for three years and arrived in Germany less than two years ago. The overall education level was higher compared to the BAMF Study on Refugees 2014 (9.8%) as 19.3% were more highly qualified (*Höherqualifizierte*).⁶³ In their countries of origin respondents mostly had jobs in trade and commerce, services in general and tourism and the hospitality industry in particular, while every second Eritrean and two thirds of the Syrians reported experiences of self-employment. At the time of investigation, however, three quarters were participating in language and integration courses with one third declaring a language level above A1. Only one in ten of the respondents was employed, with jobs in construction, the hospitality industry, the crafts sector or

⁶³ In the BAMF Study on Refugees, higher qualified persons were defined as individuals between 25 and 65, who had attended at least 12 or more years of school (and university), corresponding to an ISCED level of at least 5.

the social professions, for instance. The same proportion accessed the labor market by means of internships. In terms of social connections, less than 10% were actively involved in local clubs and associations. However, significant proportions reported at least weekly contact with volunteers (48%) and neighbors (44%) (Kordel & Weidinger 2017).

5.3.2 Biographical-narrative interviews with asylum seekers and recognized and resettled refugees

To better understand the life-worlds of refugee newcomers in general and their residential and everyday (im)mobilities as well as the specific socio-spatial inequalities they experience in rural areas, 106 biographical-narrative interviews⁶⁴ with asylum seekers and recognized and resettled refugees were conducted in the study region between August 2016 and November 2016 (the third phase of the project) and between January and June 2019 (the fifth phase of the project, see Table 8 and lines highlighted in grey color, for a list of interviews, see Annex II). Biographical-narrative tools (e.g. Schütze 1983; Atkinson 2001; Jackson & Russell 2010; Goodson 2017) were combined with visual tools derived from participatory research in the Global South. To develop and refine an appropriate method for capturing these perspectives, further 36 interviews with asylum seekers and recognized and resettled refugees were conducted in three other places all over Bavaria in the second and fourth phase of the project (see Table 8 and lines in white color, cf. section 5.1). To capture the passage of time for operationalization, interviews were divided into three modules:

⁶⁴ The term ‘interview’ is used in the academic context as interviews are “conversations with a purpose” (Webb & Webb 1932, cited by Cloke et al. 2004: 149), while, when referring to talking with participants on-site, the term ‘conversation’ is used, in order to distinguish it from the term ‘interview’ used by the BAMF for the hearing in the course of the asylum application (cf. Rumpel & Tempes 2019).

- the first dealing with participants’ past in Germany and their arrival at their current place of residence in a retrospect⁶⁵,
- the second focusing on their current everyday lives and mobilities;
- the third module was future-oriented and asked them about their aspirations (see Table 8).

Table 8: Overview about visual tools used within biographical-narrative interviewing

Phase of the re-search process	Time of investigation	Study region	Number of interviews	Visual tools used for the first module (Past)	Visual tools used for the second module (Present)	Visual tools used for the third module (Future)
2	Jan 2016	MAK	<i>18 interviews with 22 refugee newcomers from Syria and Iraq</i>	//	<i>Mobility Map</i>	<i>SWOT-Analysis</i>

⁶⁵ The interviews conducted in 2016 did not contain the first module about the past. This was excluded due to two main reasons: the proximity of time to the flight and fears of re-traumatisation as well as the short amount of time respondents spent in Germany yet. Instead, questions on this were included in the quantitative survey (see section 5.3.1).

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3	Aug 2016 – Nov 2016	FRG and REG	86 interviews with 86 refugee newcomers from e.g. Syria and Eritrea	//	Mobility Map	Dream Map
4	Dec 2017	HOH	8 interviews with 12 refugee newcomers from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan	-	Mobility Map	-
4	Dec 2017	UFF	10 interviews with 12 refugee newcomers from Syria and Iraq	Time-line	Mobility Map	-
5	Jan 2019 – Jun 2019	REG	20 interviews with 27 refugee newcomers from Syria, Eritrea and Palestine	Time-line	Mobility Map	-

(Source: Author's own compilation)

To capture participants' pasts in Germany and their arrival at their current place of residence, we used as our research tools both life history interviewing (Atkinson 2001; Jackson & Russell 2010; Goodson 2017) and the time-related visual timeline tool (Kumar 2002), which were combined in the **first module of the interview** (for methodical development of the so called '(im)mobility biography', see Kieslinger et al. 2020). The structure of this module, accordingly, followed the five phases of a narrative interview as suggested by Lamnek (2010, according to Schütze 1977, 1983 and Hermanns 1995). During the first phase, i.e. the recruitment and explanation phase, the aim of the research was again made clear to the participants and they were reminded that the interview would be recorded. The introductory phase, then, provided a situational embedding for the participant. The initial stimulus for narration aimed to place the participants at the time of their arrival in Germany, "e.g. by asking them about how they recognized that they were in Germany, or any specific memories, possibly associated with feelings and emotions" (Kieslinger et al. 2020: par. 28). Then, during the narrative phase (Lamnek 2010) participants were invited to talk about the different places they had lived so far, including negative and positive experiences in those places, as well as the reasons for their onward mobilities. The interviewers stayed quiet during these stories, sending listening signals only. To stimulate narration and support participants' recall, however, it was sometimes necessary to ask them for the name of a place, the type of accommodation and the period of time spent there, letting them fix this information to small cards, and arrange them chronologically on a prepared blank timeline (Kieslinger et al. 2020: par. 28; cf. bottom part of Figure 9). In addition, participants were also free to draw things, visualizing individually important aspects of these places. The interviewer later raised questions about things that remained unclear.

When this phase was complete, another narrative phase was stimulated "in order to capture individually important life

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events during this time. In particular, participants were asked to talk about events associated with legal issues as well as family-related occurrences” (Kieslinger et al. 2020: par. 28). At the same time they were asked to portray these events on round yellow cards, if they had not done so up to now (cf. top part of Figure 9). Finally, a balance was drawn up. To do this, the participants were invited “to reflect on the drawn places and life events in order to differentiate between the meanings of places and times in light of their overall desires. In concrete terms, it was asked whether the places they had lived in, and the events that had taken place, e.g. time spent in Germany, had been expected to be like this beforehand” (Kieslinger et al. 2020: par. 28).

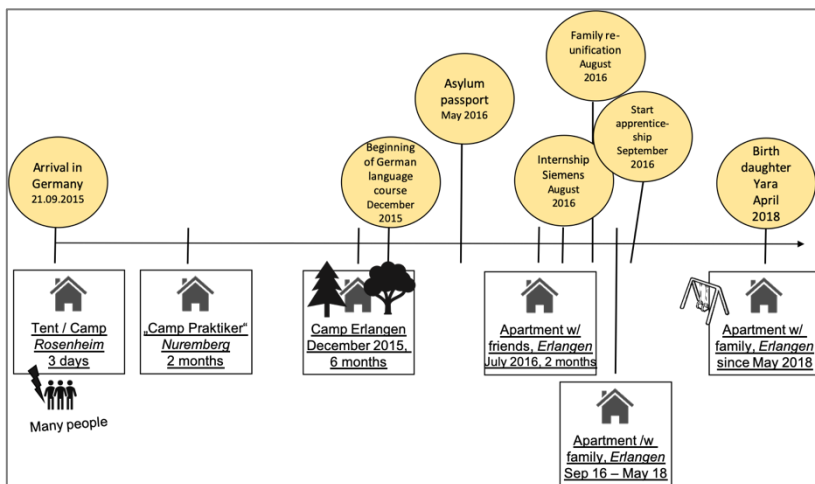


Figure 9: Schematic example of an (im)mobility biography

(Source: Revised by the author based on Kordel et al. 2018b: 20;
Draft: Author)

The **second module of the interview** that dealt with everyday life and everyday mobility combined narrative interviewing (Schütze 1977, 1983) with the space-related research tool of a mobility map (Kumar 2002, following narrative mapping, see

Lutz et al. 2003; for methodical development, see #4 JRS; Kordel et al. 2018c, 2019). Because it is nearly impossible to narrate recurring everyday activities (Hermanns 1995, cited by Flick 2009), the first narrative phase was focused on mobility practices, places visited and the meanings ascribed to these places. In the request phase, prompt cards with pictograms of different realms of everyday life and short explanations in different languages served as reminders (#4 JRS). Then places were written on small white cards with corresponding pictograms, and distributed on the poster according to the distance from the apartment/house. These were glued on it by participants themselves (cf. Figure 10). Next, participants were asked to draw lines between the house and the place visited indicating the means of transport used to reach these places. For the different means of transport (on foot/walking, by bike, by public transport/by long-distance bus and by car/given a lift), different colors were preselected (cf. Figure 10).⁶⁶

A subsequent narrative phase aimed to depict places that they did not want to go, but must visit for various reasons as well as places that they wanted to visit but could not (cf. Gifford et al. 2007; Täubig 2009). While places that they did not like to visit were written on red square cards, the places that they wanted to visit but could not were written on red round cards. These cards were also placed on the poster (cf. Figure 10). To bring this module of the interview to a close, again, a balance was drawn up. Thereby the participants were invited to reflect on the place that was most important to them or their family as well as to name a place that Germans would think should be their most important place.

⁶⁶ Being aware that certain colors do have certain assigned meanings (e.g. in Islam, Schirmacher 2005) and that the preselection of colors may inhibit participants, inter-subjective comprehensibility was considered more important in this case.

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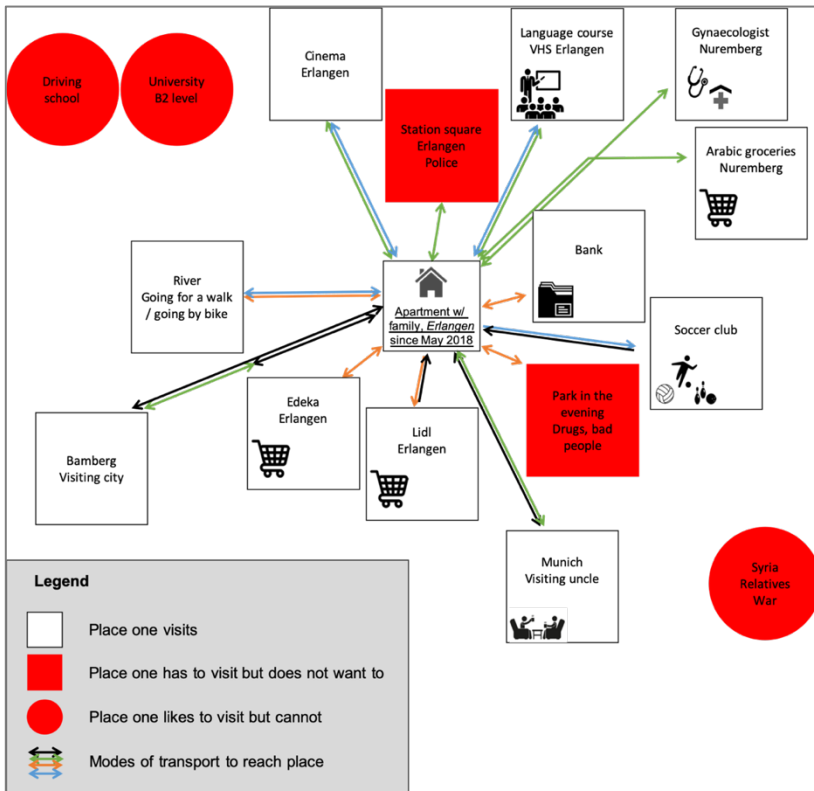


Figure 10: Schematic example of a mobility map

(Source: Revised by the author based on Kordel et al. 2018b: 21; Draft: Author)

In the **third module of the interview**, then, participants were invited to talk about their future plans, not least in terms of residential (im)mobility. This narration process (cf. Schütze 1977, 1983) was further encouraged in the third phase of the project by means of the dream mapping tool (Kumar 2002, cf. Figure 11). Participants were asked to select from five ideal-typical places of residence, which were provided as laminated aerial photos including descriptions in different languages: A farm, a village in the countryside, a multi-family house in the inner-city, a high-

rise housing area on the outskirts of the inner city, and a housing area in the suburbs. In addition, two modes of ownership (rental or own property) and the different types of social contacts that should live with the participant were made available on small cards in different languages.

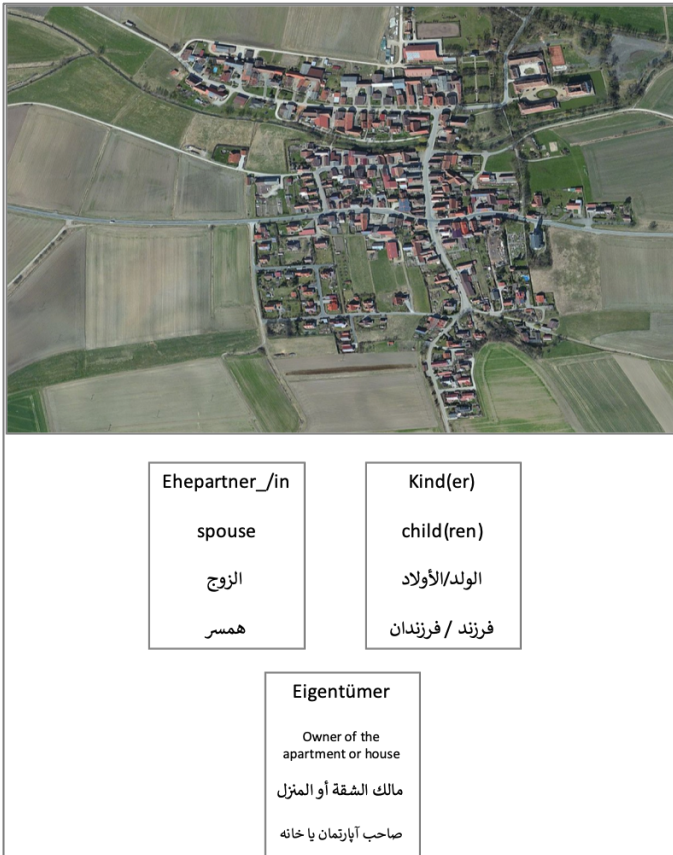


Figure 11: Example of a dream map

(Author's own draft, Maps Data: Google, ©2021 TerraMetrics, Kartendaten)

The final interview guidelines were pre-tested with one participant from the study region at the beginning of the third phase

of the project, while at the beginning of the fifth phase of the project, feedback on the guidelines was sought by means of a pre-test with two participants from the Nuremberg area as well as a review loop with (inter)national scientific colleagues (Prof. Dr. Pablo Bose (University of Vermont, USA), Dr. Birgitte Romme Larsen (Aarhus University, Denmark), Dr. David Ledstrup (University of Southern Denmark, Denmark), Dr. David Radford (University of South Australia, Australia), and Prof. Dr. Hannes Schammann and Christin Younso (both University of Hildesheim, Germany)). For the recruitment of participants, non-probability sampling, i.e. purposive sampling, was chosen (Bernard 2006). The underlying idea was to recruit a variety of participants in terms of socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics (e.g. age, sex, nationality, marital status, household, living situation, educational and professional background, and working situation; cf. Flick 2009) as well as duration of stay in Germany. To better understand experiences, negotiations and decision-making processes within households, we intended where possible to interview couples together (for the advantages of interviewing couples together, see Bjørnholt & Farstad 2014; for a critical view on this, see Valentine 1999). As with the quantitative survey (cf. section 5.3.1), we chose different points of access to participants and made an attempt to reduce timing bias. In the fifth phase of the project, ice breaker meetings were also held with potential participants (for virtual ice-breaker meetings, see Haugen 2019; see section 5.1) and gender-matching was attempted (cf. Bendel & Scholz 2016).

Regarding the sample characteristics, the majority of the 113 participants were male (100) and from Syria (89) and Eritrea (12). The age range was 17 to 65, with an average age of 29 years. While 9 of them had open protection status, 104 were recognized or resettled refugees or arrived by means of family reunification. The average stay in Germany was below two years during the fieldwork in the third phase of the project, i.e. in 2016/2017, and three years in the fifth phase of the project, i.e. in 2020.

Interviews took place in various locations, i.e. the group rooms of asylum accommodation, the townhall, the rooms of language course providers, the rented apartment of the research team and the private flats of participants. Mostly, they were attended by two researchers so that one researcher could focus on the participant, while the other was able to prepare the drawing materials and make notes that would help with asking questions. The language most commonly used in the interviews was German. This was because participants wanted to practice their recently acquired language skills (#4 JRS; for similar findings, see von Unger 2018). Others explicitly asked us to bring interpreters. The small white, yellow and red cards were labelled either in participants' mother tongue or in German; where the participants' mother tongue was used, the German equivalent was added. Where the participants had difficulty completing the labels on their own, the process was taken over by the researcher or interpreter. At the end of each interview, socio-demographic and socio-economic statistics were gathered and, after a picture of them had been taken, the drawings they had produced were given to each participant. This allowed participants to look at their pictures and show them to others. At the same time as providing immediate research products the drawings contributed to counteracting the possibility that participants would feel that researchers had 'stolen their story' (cf. Pittaway et al. 2010).

5.3.3 Qualitative interviews with local actors

To contextualize the results with local knowledge about the residential and everyday (im)mobilities of refugee newcomers as well as access to the housing market, local actors' perspectives in the study region were taken into account by means of explorative and systematizing semi-structured guideline-based interviews (Bogner & Menz 2009; Meuser & Nagel 2009). Between April 2014 and January 2019, 44 individual or group interviews were conducted with a total of 61 people (38 men, 23 women) in a variety of positions (including local politicians, representatives

of the *Jobcenter*, members of NGOs and refugee relief organizations as well as real-estate agents) (for a list of interviews, see Annex II). Guidelines were prepared beforehand using both open and semi-structured questions (cf. Flick 2009), covering the thematically relevant spectrum of interest; i.e. they addressed asylum seekers' accommodation in the municipalities or rural districts and local actors' reactions (resistance vs. welcoming culture), and the everyday lives of refugee newcomers as well as their everyday mobilities and access to the rural housing market.

Interviewees were contacted via telephone or email, and informed about the research project and interview topic. The questions themselves, however, were not sent beforehand. The selection of interviewees was based on regional variety and their respective fields of expertise. To achieve this, we did desk research on relevant actors on-site, and then applied snowballing techniques (for purposive sampling, see Bernard 2006). It was noticeable that many interviewees had multiple roles in their municipality or within the region, which could not always be distinguished clearly (for similar experiences, see also Haugen 2019). Except for the interviews with real estate agents, all were conducted in person and lasted up to 135 minutes (average was 1 hour and 6 minutes). The order of questions was always adapted to the interview situation and with the interviewees' permission they were all audio-recorded. This was done for all the interviews, except those involving real-estate agents, which were conducted by my colleague Stefan Kordel, and one interview with two members of refugee relief organizations. In these cases, interviews were documented by means of written notes.

5.3.4 (Participant) Observation

(Participant) Observation in the study region was undertaken throughout the duration of the research. At the beginning of the

research process, observations took place as unstructured everyday encounters including informal first conversations with community members and refugee newcomers as well as exploratory walks. The observations had a more descriptive manner to orient oneself in the study region and to specify research questions (cf. Spradley 1980; Müller-Funk 2020). At a later stage, more focused and selective observations took place, oriented towards the relevant processes and problems of the research questions (Flick 2009), for example by participating in a meeting of a local refugee relief group (07/2016), by watching a carnival procession (02/2016) or a festival procession in the course of the parish fair (08/2016) or (inter-)cultural festivals in small towns (10/2016, cf. Figure 12; 05/2018).



Figure 12: 'We are colorful. For tolerance and diversity' – Intercultural festival at the town square of Freyung

(Source: Author's own photo, 2016)

Each time, field notes were made afterwards in order to maintain distance for systematic understanding. Throughout the entire

research process, photographs were taken during the fieldwork in the study region.

At a supra-regional level, I attended several meetings and conferences that dealt with the integration of refugee newcomers in rural Bavaria from an applied perspective, for example the summer colloquium “Refugees in the countryside?! Challenges and chances” (*Sommerkolloquium „Flüchtlinge aufs Land?! Herausforderungen und Chancen“*) in Munich (07/2016), the “Welcome to the global village’ – Meeting and information day about integration and cohabitation in the village” (*„Willkommen im globalen Dorf“ – Begegnungs- und Infotag zu Integration und Zusammenleben im Dorf*) in Niederalteich (02/2017), the INTER-REG conference “Integration: Theory and Practice” (*Konferenz „Integration: Theorie und Praxis“*) in Plzeň, Czech Republic (03/2018), and the 7th Bavarian Integration Conference for Municipalities (*7. Bayerische Integrationskonferenz für Kommunen*) in Pfaffenhofen a.d. Ilm (11/2018).

5.3.5 Extensive literature review

In order to describe the current state of research on all aspects relevant for answering the research questions, an extensive interdisciplinary literature review was conducted throughout the whole research process, drawing on various sources including scientific articles, anthologies and books, research reports and grey literature. Literature was accessed through the scopus.com database, libraries at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, by means of inter-library loan and by visiting libraries in the study region.

5.3.6 Documents

To analyze the discursive framing of the settlement of refugee newcomers in rural areas then and now, different documents from the periods 1945 to 1955 as well as 2010 to 2017 were col-

lected (cf. #1 NRG). These encompassed protocols of plenary debates of the German parliament (*Bundestag*), the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*) and the parliaments of the Federal States Bavaria and Hesse, 'printed matter' (*Drucksachen*), publications of ministries and political lobby organizations, as well as interviews given by political actors. To cover the period of Allied-occupied Germany, papers of the Military Government and debates in the predecessor organizations of the parliaments were also collected.

In addition, documents relevant to better understanding the legal circumstances of the settlement and integration of refugee newcomers in rural areas were collected, as well as documents relating to their life-worlds and everyday lives in rural areas. This encompassed legal documents at national and Federal State level as well as publications and newsletters of ministries, the commissioner for integration, local authorities and schools. During field visits in the study region, the leaflets of local institutions and organizations were collected, minutes of meetings of local refugee relief groups were requested and photos of notices were taken.

5.3.7 Newspaper articles and radio and TV reports

Supra-regional media, i.e. the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the *Bayerischer Rundfunk*, as well as local media, i.e. the *Passauer Neue Presse* (PNP), the *Viechtacher Anzeiger*, the local online journal '*Da Hogn*' and the local TV station *Niederbayern TV Deggendorf-Straubing* were screened throughout the whole research process in order to identify articles, radio and TV reports that focused on the onward (im)mobilities and integration processes of forced migrants in FRG and REG. Specifically content about the accommodation of asylum seekers in the municipalities or rural districts and the reaction of local actors (resistance vs. welcoming culture) was considered, along with that on the everyday lives of refugee newcomers as well as their everyday

mobility and access to the rural housing market. This allowed us to refer during the interviews to statements that were made by both refugee newcomers and by local actors, and deepened the opportunities for analyses. Articles of the PNP between 1996 and 2020 were accessed through the *wiso-net.de* database of the GBI Genios Deutsche Wirtschaftsdatenbank GmbH, while articles from other newspapers as well as radio and TV reports were accessed via the webpages of the newspapers, broadcasting companies and TV stations.

5.3.8 Statistical data

To better understand local contexts and the historical and current situation of the study region with regard to immigration and emigration, statistical data were compiled for various dimensions, e.g. population figures and labor and housing market data, where possible for the period 2000 to 2020. Data were downloaded from the GENESIS Database of the Federal Office of Statistics (*Statistisches Bundesamt*), the GENESIS Database of the Bavarian State Office for Statistics (*Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik*), the statistics webpage of the BA or were extracted from the reports published by the BAMF. In addition, unpublished statistical data that could be found in the “written requests” (*Schriftliche Anfragen*) of members of parliament on the national and federal level, and the monthly abstracts of the Central Register of Foreign Nationals provided by the BAMF and the local authorities were considered (for a critical discussion on the quality of data in the Central Register of Foreign Nationals, see section 4.2; cf. Eberle 2019 and #3 ERD).

5.4 Data processing and data analysis

Quantitative data deriving from the **survey** were prepared for analysis first. Open questions that were answered in participants’ mother languages, i.e. Arabic and Tigrinya, had to be

translated and students from FAU were recruited to do this. Afterwards, following plausibility checks, specified answers were entered into SPSS (V. 26), while passages of text and other answers were numerically coded according to the code plan. Finally, data were treated with uni- and bivariate analyses, e.g. (cumulated) relative frequencies, central tendencies (mean, median, mode) or measures of dispersion (standard deviation, coefficient of variation) as well as correlations.

Qualitative data deriving from the **interviews with refugee newcomers** were transcribed verbatim soon after the event, following the simplified transcription rules of Dresing and Pehl (2015), in awareness that transcription inevitably involves interpretation (Atkinson 2001, cited by Kieslinger et al. 2020: par. 35). Within interviews that were conducted in languages other than German or English, only the German translation was put down in writing for reasons of capacity. If interpreters had used third person singular or plural instead of first person singular or plural, this was adapted. Connections between the spoken word and the graphic elicitation of the timelines and maps were also emphasized. Afterwards, interviews were coded using a deductive-inductive approach including both descriptive and analytical codes. On the one hand, codes were formed a priori in a deductive manner following the research questions, the conceptual approaches and the international research literature, while, on the other hand, codes were inductively developed by means of extracting them from the transcripts (cf. Voutira & Doná 2007). Thus, the codes were both starting point and end product of the qualitative analyses, which means they could also be used for further abstraction of the content (Mayring 2007). To approach intercoder-reliability, at the beginning of the coding process with atlas.ti (V. 7), consensus on the description and content of the respective codes was reached between the author, Stefan Kordel and the three student employees who conducted the coding. In addition, timelines and maps were edited graphically and

were rendered anonymous. While these had already been analyzed during the interviews by participants themselves following the visualization of their biography, their everyday (im)mobility and their future plans (cf. Kieslinger et al. 2020: par. 33), analysis at the aggregate level (that is, for the whole sample), followed the product-oriented mode of analysis for narrative mapping suggested by Lutz et al. (2003), as well as using thematic (and visual analysis) as part of narrative analysis as suggested by Kohler Riessman (2005, 2008). Thus, places (not) visited as well as life events were categorized and places of residence and duration of stays, as well as the means of transport used were quantified. In addition, graphics and written descriptions of places (of residence) and routes on timelines and maps were put into writing and coded using the same coding system as for the interview transcripts, which allowed for linking the text to “visual-based quotations and to interrogate data on multiple levels” (Bagnoli 2009: 567-568, cited by Kieslinger et al. 2020: par. 35).

Similarly, qualitative data deriving from the **interviews with local actors** were transcribed verbatim soon after they were carried out, following the simplified transcription rules of Dresing and Pehl (2015). Afterwards, the transcripts were coded inductively, using both descriptive and analytical codes, and were analyzed by means of qualitative-oriented content analysis (Mayring 2007, 2019). For data triangulation between the different qualitative interviews, conjunctions between the code books were made and commonalities and divergencies between the actors’ perspectives were identified.

By means of qualitative-oriented content analysis (Mayring 2007, 2019), the **documents** acknowledged within #1 NRG were coded inductively to identify policy narratives; that is lines of argument which legitimized the distribution of forced migrants to rural areas and those that aimed at de-legitimization (non-stories or counter-stories, Roe 1994). In a second step, then, checks were made on which policy narratives had continued to persist

over time and in reaction to different groups of forced migrants. **Newspaper articles** were catalogued and stored in the cloud, while minutes were written for **radio and TV reports**. **Statistical data**, finally, were processed by means of Microsoft Excel and were used to prepare tables and develop maps.

6. Research highlights / synthesis of paper results

The starting point of the discussion on refugee newcomers in rural areas lies in dispersal policies and residence rules (cf. section 3.2). Because these measures were already being applied in the past (cf. section 4.1), and in acknowledgement of the call for a historic turn in the social sciences in general (McDonald 1996), and migration studies specifically (Bade 1987; Martiniello 2013), #1 NRG aims to understand how political actors have legitimized these policies in both the past and the present (RQ1). Concentrating on both refugees and expellees after World War II, and asylum seekers and recognized refugees in the 2010s, the paper shows that – even though the economic and societal context has changed – three policy narratives on the distribution of forced migrants to rural areas have persisted over time. Political actors mix aspects of burden sharing with issues of the regional development of rural areas; that is, they attribute potentials for realms of housing and the labor market, as well as the provision of infrastructure to international migrants, indicating a migration-development nexus for the host country Germany (#1 NRG).

If development through migration is desirable, it is of vital importance to know whether refugee newcomers continue to live in rural areas after they get their recognition, or whether they move on to cities (RQ2, cf. section 3.1), as this would adversely affect the governance of spatial development with the help of immigration. #2 EUR and #3 ERD, therefore, discussed the onward (im)mobilities of forced migrants. On the one hand these studies identified a juxtaposition between onward mobilities including moving back and forth (that is rural-urban-migration, re-migration to rural areas and rural in-migration) and

staying put (especially in rural small towns). However, temporary absence and presence for the purpose of commuting to work or visiting friends and relatives, on the other hand, suggested that residential and everyday mobilities were interdependent. Onward (im)mobilities, furthermore, showed how refugee newcomers learn to “maneuver themselves through bureaucracy and state regulations regarding mobility” (#3 ERD: 12), while measures taken by local actors and the refugee community in terms of housing and social connections aim to foster integration processes and encourage refugees to stay in rural areas (#2 EUR).

Taking the policy narratives as a starting point, the third research question (RQ₃) aims to contrast the political actors’ lines of arguments with refugee newcomers’ everyday experiences. The first consideration is that of inclusion and exclusion in terms of everyday mobility (#4 JRS) as this has a particular role in integration in rural areas (cf. sections 3.3 and 3.4). Identified as a counter-narrative, that is, as a line of argument against the distribution of forced migrants to rural areas in #1 NRG, the everyday mobility of refugee newcomers in rural areas is aggravated by the “relatively long distances to (infra)structures and services resulting from dispersed settlement and infrequent, or even absent, public transport” (cf. #4 JRS: 2-3). Refugee newcomers’ inclusion and exclusion in terms of everyday mobility is dynamic over time and depends on various factors: transport opportunities to get to places, safety and security in getting there, and measures provided by local actors and refugee communities as well as newcomers’ own mobility aspirations, family situations, agency and resources. Because housing is another prerequisite for refugee newcomers’ integration in rural areas (cf. section 3.4) and because there is assumed to be an excess of available housing in rural areas from political actors’ perspectives (#1 NRG), their access to and exclusion from housing is focused in #5 IMI. As with everyday mobility, it can be shown that inclusion and exclusion in terms of access to housing is dynamic over time and

depends on intertwined constellations: The state of the local housing market in terms of number, size, condition and location of available rental apartments, the past experience of landlords and real estate agents, and measures taken by local actors and refugee communities as well as newcomers' own residential preferences, family situations, agency and resources.

The final two research questions (RQ4 and RQ5) are very much intertwined with RQ3 as they were focused on designing methods to capture well the life worlds of refugee newcomers in rural areas in terms of their everyday mobilities and the meanings ascribed to places (#4 JRS), as well as their residential preferences and actions over time (#5 IMI; cf. section 3.5). Drawing on both biographical-narrative, and participatory and visual approaches, the narrative interview (Schütze 1977, 1983) as a research tool and the space-related visual tool of a mobility map (Kumar 2002) were brought together to analyze the fourth question (cf. section 5.3.2), while, for refugee newcomers' residential preferences and actions over time, the research tool of life history interviewing (e.g. Atkinson 2001) and the time-related visual tool of a timeline (Kumar 2002) were combined, and was named '(im)mobility biography' (cf. section 5.3.2; see also Kieslinger et al. 2020). These methods were able to strengthen participants' expressiveness in terms of the spatial and temporal dimensions of their everyday lives and allow shared analysis to take place even during the interview.

Paper 1 (New Rural Geographies, #1 NRG): Policy narratives about the distribution of forced migrants to rural areas. Searching for traces in recent German history.

Weidinger, Tobias (2020): Policy narratives about the distribution of forced migrants to rural areas. Searching for traces in recent German history. In: Steinführer, A., Heindl, A.-B., Grabski-Kieron, U. & Reichert-Schick, A. (Eds.): *New rural geographies in Europe: actors, processes, policies* (= Rural areas: Issues of local and regional development 6) (pp. 269-290). LIT: Münster.

STATUS: published as a book chapter in an edited volume in the LIT Series, Rural areas: Issues of local and regional development, after review by two of the editors (for full chapter, see Annex I a)

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

The paper...

...seeks to explore which policy narratives should legitimize dispersal policies in favor of rural areas and residence rules that limit choice of residential location to a specific spatial scale, and which have persisted over time and in relation to different forced migrant groups;

...contributes to the current literature on the distribution of forced migrants to rural areas as it adds an important temporal perspective to the discussion and thus counteracts a-historicism;

...illustrates the history of forced migration to Germany since the mid-20th century and the respective dispersal policies and residence rules applied;

...compares policy narratives in favor of spatial distribution towards rural areas in Germany for the most significant periods and groups of refugee newcomers: Post World War II refugees and expellees and asylum seekers and recognized refugees in the 2010s;

...presents empirical evidence from a qualitative-oriented content analysis that took into account the perspectives of politicians and bureaucrats on the national and regional level, drawing on primary and secondary data from the respective periods;

...demonstrates that three historical policy narratives in favor of distributing forced migrants to rural areas continue to exist in the present: Forced migrants...

- i) shall be accommodated in rural areas because housing space is available there;
- ii) can meet the demand for labor in rural areas;
- iii) have a demographic effect as they stabilize population and/or infrastructure in rural areas.

...also discusses counter-narratives (policy narratives that aim to de-legitimize discursive hegemonies), and identifies incoherence caused by temporal dynamics, for example with regard to housing and the economic situation;

...concludes that political actors intertwine aspects of burden sharing with issues relating to the regional development of rural areas, while the restriction of refugee newcomers' freedom of movement both followed and follows the imperative of governing spatial development through immigration, revealing a migration-development nexus for the host country Germany.

KEYWORDS: Policy narratives, national dispersal policies, local connection rules, historical comparison, migration-development nexus.

OWN CONTRIBUTION:

- Single authorship

Paper 2 (Europa Regional, #2 EUR): Factors influencing the residential mobility of recognized refugees in rural areas.

Weidinger, Tobias, Kordel, Stefan & Pohle, Perdita (2017[2016]): Bleiben oder Gehen? Einflussfaktoren auf die Wohnstandortmobilität anerkannter Flüchtlinge in ländlichen Räumen am Beispiel des Bayerischen Waldes. *Europa Regional* 24(3-4), 46-61.

STATUS: published as an original journal article as part of the Special Issue “Zuwanderung in ländliche Räume Europas” (“Immigration in rural areas of Europe”) in *Europa Regional* in 2018 after a double-blind peer-review process (for full article, see Annex I b)

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

The paper...

...discusses the residential mobility of recognized refugees who were accommodated in rural areas during their asylum procedure;

...illustrates the application to asylum seekers of national dispersal policies that foster the immigration of refugee newcomers to rural areas, in Germany and other European countries;

...applies the integration model proposed by Ager and Strang (2008) to the discussion of the structural specificities of rural areas, and expands it by adding the facilitating key component “Spatial Mobility”;

...concludes in summary that rural areas have heterogeneous preconditions, with regard to different components, that make it necessary to conduct local-regional case studies;

...argues that based on empirical findings, recognized refugees can be seen to use four mobility patterns after the completion of their asylum procedures:

- i) rural-to-urban-migration,
- ii) re-migration to rural areas,
- iii) in-migration to rural areas, and
- iv) staying in rural areas.

...proposes the term “onward migration” for refugees’ movements after the completion of their asylum procedures, instead of the widely-used “secondary migration” as it enables us to capture multiple moves over time and space and is not connected with failed integration efforts and integration policies;

...shows that local actors draw on arguments for legitimization, such as better integration opportunities to justify their encouragement of refugees’ staying, at least in the short term;

...highlights the importance of local actors’ support of refugee newcomers with regard to the key components of housing and social connection, but identifies differences depending on the attitude of local elites.

KEYWORDS: National dispersal policies, residential mobility, onward migration, supporting practices

OWN CONTRIBUTION:

- Development of paper idea and line of argumentation jointly with co-author Stefan Kordel;
- Development of conceptual analytical framework;
- Writing the paper;
- Corresponding author in the review process.

Paper 3 (Die Erde – Journal of the Geographical Society of Berlin, #3 ERD): Onward (im)mobilities: conceptual reflections and empirical findings from lifestyle migration research and refugee studies.

Kordel, Stefan & **Weidinger, Tobias** (2019): Onward (im)mobilities: conceptual reflections and empirical findings from lifestyle migration research and refugee studies. *Die Erde – Journal of the Geographical Society of Berlin* 150(1), 1-16. DOI: 10.12854/erde-2019-408.

STATUS: published as an original journal article in *Die Erde* in 2019 after a double-blind peer-review process (for full article, see Annex I c)

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

The paper...

...aims to unravel mobility processes among lifestyle migrants and refugee newcomers after arrival in Spain and Germany and to identify how migrants' mobility strategies counteract the sedentarist logics of the state;

...takes the new mobilities paradigm as a starting point, and provides a broader perspective on migration processes that goes beyond decision-making processes, the journey and arrival with the idea of onward (im)mobilities;

...argues that in order to understand onward (im)mobilities one also has to take into account processes of the establishment and re-negotiation of individual place-based belonging;

...identifies three main reasons for forced onward mobility during the asylum procedure, e.g. profitability for accommodation providers, disciplinary measures and safety issues (for onward (im)mobilities after the completion of their asylum procedures, cf. #2 EUR);

...demonstrates that habitual and everyday mobility processes varying in duration result in the temporary absence of asylum seekers and refugees, which can be interpreted as a reaction to regulation policies as they hamper the possibility of living close to their own ethnic communities;

...illustrates how refugee newcomers, while negotiating mobility and immobility, develop agency and learn to decide whether, when and how to be mobile or to be fixed to places and establish strategies to deal with the territorially based logic of the state;

...highlights that onward (im)mobilities and the complex patterns of people's absence and presence challenge local administration and policymakers in providing infrastructures such as mandatory language courses;

...suggests that future research should focus on forced migrants' accumulation of agency and pay attention to how they fulfil preferences for (im)mobility as well as acquire knowledge on counteracting sedentarist logic;

KEYWORDS: New mobilities paradigm, onward (im)mobilities, place-based belonging, agency, sedentarist logics of the state

OWN CONTRIBUTION:

- Development of paper idea, conceptual analytical framework and line of argumentation jointly with co-author;
- Presentation of chapter 3 "Case studies and methods" jointly with co-author;
- Writing sections 2.3 "Refugee migration – and onward mobilities" and 4.2 „Refugees in rural Bavaria, Germany“;
- Drafting part of section 2.4 „Place-based belonging“ on refugees;
- Amending of and commenting on all other chapters.

Paper 4 (Journal of Refugee Studies, #4 JRS): Unravelling the meaning of place and spatial mobility: analysing the everyday life-worlds of refugees in host societies by means of mobility mapping

Weidinger, Tobias, Kordel, Stefan & Kieslinger, Julia (2021 [2019]): Unravelling the meaning of place and spatial mobility: analysing the everyday life-worlds of refugees in host societies by means of mobility mapping. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34(1), 374-396. DOI:10.1093/jrs/fez004

STATUS: published as an original journal article in Journal of Refugee Studies in 2021 after a double-blind peer-review process (for full article, see Annex I d)

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

The paper...

...proposes mobility mapping as a valuable space-related visual tool to analyze everyday mobility and the subjective meanings forced migrants ascribe to their important places, as well as for identifying processes of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion;

...draws on a phenomenological perspective to access subjective life-worlds of forced migrants (Husserl 1970; Schütz/Luckmann 1973) and takes a participatory approach (Chambers 1994a, 1994b) that reduces asymmetric power relations between researchers and participants and empowers the latter group;

...adds to the literature on methodological approaches used to investigate place, mobility and socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion in the process of refugee settlement and integration;

...explores the methodological origins of space-related visual tools using respondent-generated material, that can be traced back to development studies as well as childhood studies in the 1980s, and reflects on the previous use of these tools in refugee

studies, which was limited to their application among accompanied or unaccompanied minors.

...illustrates the processing and implementation of mobility mapping with refugee newcomers in rural Bavaria, where both places that were and were not frequented for various reasons were captured;

...presents three modes of analysis, as mobility maps have to be framed verbally or visually (cf. Lutz et al. 2003): i) Temporal-processual analysis, ii) quantitative or qualitative analysis of product, and iii) a combination of the first and second mode of analysis;

...exemplarily applies the second mode of analysis to the data gathered and identifies different kinds of places that were individually important for the participants (e.g., places of relaxation/restoration, places of safety and places of sociality, places of conviviality and places of fear);

...concludes in summary that some places could not be accessed for both individual and structural reasons, e.g. due to a lack of knowledge about how to get there, a lack of temporal or financial resources for getting or staying there or a lack of legal opportunities for getting or staying there.

KEYWORDS: Mobility mapping, meanings of places, everyday mobility and accessibility, participatory research

OWN CONTRIBUTION:

- Development of paper idea and line of argumentation jointly with co-authors;
- Development of conceptual analytical framework jointly with co-author Stefan Kordel;
- Development and implementation of the presented tool jointly with co-authors;
- Writing the paper;

6. Research highlights / synthesis of paper results

- Drafting the chapters „Analysis and Interpretation of Mobility Mapping“ and “Discussion and concluding remarks”;
- Corresponding author in the review process.

Paper 5 (International Migration, #5 IMI): Access to and Exclusion from Housing over Time: Refugees' Experiences in Rural Areas

Weidinger, Tobias & Kordel, Stefan (2020): Access to and Exclusion from Housing over Time: Refugees' Experiences in Rural Areas. *International Migration*, DOI: 10.1111/imig.12807

STATUS: published as an original journal article as part of the Special Issue "Post-2015 refugees in Germany: 'Culture of welcome', solidarity or exclusion?" online first in *International Migration* in 2020 after a double-blind peer-review process (for full article, see Annex I e)

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

The paper...

...argues that there is an urban bias in scientific debates concerning the housing of refugee newcomers, given that political measures have fostered an increase in the number of forced migrants in rural areas in many countries of the Global North, including Germany;

...proposes a long-term and multi-method empirical case study that aims at better understanding refugee newcomers' individual and family-related residential aspirations in these regions, and mechanisms of exclusion (i.e. processes that limit their access to housing or their choice in the search for housing), as well as social practices or strategies and actors that help to overcome mechanisms of exclusion;

...applies the housing pathways approach (Clapham 2005) that highlights the dynamic interplay between individual and household aspirations, (cap)abilities and actions, and the structure of housing contexts;

...demonstrates that the residential aspirations of refugee newcomers were dynamic over time and were adapted according to

changing situations, including family reunion, and thus shifted from the need for smaller to the need for bigger apartments;

...illustrates that mechanisms of exclusion occurred (for example due to the structure of the local housing market and the location of vacant flats, including the accessibility of public transport as well as landlords' unwillingness to let to forced migrants);

...identifies that mechanisms and practices of exclusion could be overcome; for example by means of refugee newcomers' own accumulated agency and resources in terms of language and the acquisition of knowledge, and by means of personal social contacts with landlords and rental mediators among locals and the refugee community;

...calls for more serious consideration of specificities of place in housing trajectories, and of the significance of social resources in refugee newcomers' practices and local intermediaries' strategies for overcoming exclusion and the provision of access to housing.

KEYWORDS: Housing pathways approach, access to housing, mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion, agency

OWN CONTRIBUTION:

- Development of paper idea and line of argumentation jointly with co-author;
- Development of conceptual analytical framework;
- Writing the paper;
- Corresponding author in the review process.

7. Discussion of results and outlook

This final chapter discusses the results of the five articles #1 NRG, #2 EUR, #3 ERD, #4 JRS and #5 IMI that constitute the cumulative PhD thesis, drawing on the most recent literature and latest societal debates. At the end of each section, the need for future research is outlined.

7.1 Policy narratives legitimizing dispersal policies and residence rules

Analyzing narratives about dispersal policies and residence rules, the findings show that political actors intertwined, and continue to intertwine, aspects of burden sharing with issues of the regional development of rural areas when arguing in favor of dispersal policies and residence rules. They expect forced migrants to occupy vacancies in the housing and labor markets and to contribute to the stabilization of population and the maintenance of infrastructures (#1 NRG). To capture the imperative of governing spatial development through immigration, I suggested reinterpretation of the term ‘migration-development nexus’. While, in the past, the term was mostly applied in the context of sending countries and with regard to the positive impact of remittances there (see also van Hear & Nyberg Sørensen 2003; Golding & Curtis 2013; Weidinger 2020b), its use is considered appropriate for host societies, too.

The validity of the results in #1 NRG is reflected in recent discussions of the forced immobilization and instrumentalization of forced migrants, which have emerged especially in economics and political science. With regard to the former, Arfaoui (2019) identified that, besides a humanitarian approach, the reception of asylum seekers in non-metropolitan France was characterized by a utilitarian approach, i.e. asylum seekers were not only considered as human beings in need, but also as potential resources

(cf. Ther 2017; Hesse et al. 2019). In a related way, Hansen (2016) argued that it may be economically rational for many countries to admit a large number of forced migrants as it creates a ‘triple win’; i.e. protection for refugee newcomers, a labor force for businesses and demographic relief for states (for the ‘demographic dividend’, see Luy & Köppen 2018; for a critique of replacement migration, see UN 2000). In terms of economic growth, in particular, the arrival of refugee newcomers is related to government investment, which acts as an initial fiscal stimulus, aggregating demand. Accordingly, Hansen (2016) introduced the term ‘refugee Keynesianism’. In political science, in addition, debates have revolved around the new nexus between the formerly separate sub-policies of asylum/refugee policy and labor migration as a result of demographic change and a labor shortage (Bendel & Borkowski 2016; Schammann 2017). In the German context for instance, this became visible in the earlier and easier access of refugee newcomers to employment and language and integration courses as well as in the legal connection between rewards of residence permits or visas and forced migrants’ performance on the labor market or in the education system. As a consequence, Schammann (2017) proclaimed the advent of a ‘meritocratic turn’.

Another key aspect concerns the ‘regionalization’ of migration/refugee and integration policies (Pellerin 1999; for immigration federalism, see Gulasekaram & Ramakrishnan 2015). To improve the regional or local situation in terms of depopulation, ageing, economic decline and labor shortages, regional and municipal actors aim to influence national and supra-national policies and not just to implement them – despite the fact that they often do not have the respective legal competences (Bendel et al. 2019). Thus, they may not only persuade refugee newcomers to move from cities to their regions or municipalities (van Kooy et al. 2019, for Australia), but also lobby for the international relocation of forced migrants (Patuzzi et al. 2020). Regarding the latter, Bendel et al. (2019), for instance, recommended a more

active role for municipalities in EU refugee and asylum policy, and suggested a municipal relocation mechanism that considers both the integration requirements and needs of forced migrants, and the integration conditions and preferences of receiving municipalities, for example, in bringing together newcomers' skills and employment aspirations with local employment opportunities (cf. Ziersch et al. 2020). According to them, such a matching process is considered able to combine long-term integration prospects and regional development strategies (ibid.). To address existing demographic and other challenges as well as safeguard social cohesion, in addition, regional and local actors – to a certain degree – have also initiated their own regional integration policies (Boese & Phillips 2017; Gauci 2020), including the provision of services to as many inhabitants as possible, irrespective of their legal status (cf. 'whole-of-society approach', Papademetriou & Benton 2016). While they are dependent on the availability of financial and human resources to do so (Gauci 2020), the use of funding from national and EU rural development programs was infrequent, not least due to complicated application processes and low numbers of potential beneficiaries (Arora-Jonsson 2017; Günther et al. 2021).

The positive contribution that political (and economic) actors have expected forced migrants to have on developing rural areas can often be limited in cases where newcomers' skills and aspirations fail to match the integration conditions of the receiving municipalities. Regarding the latter, their presence in the last couple of years has revealed structural weaknesses in rural areas and made the shortcomings of previous policies more obvious (cf. Tardis 2019). Accordingly, apart from the individual perspective, future research should more systematically focus on how receiving societies influence the integration of refugee newcomers. In this context, Phillimore (2020) introduced the term 'refugee-integration-opportunity structures', defined as "sets of resources, arrangements and pathways that can facilitate or block integration" (ibid.: 7). She suggests five interconnecting

sets: Locality, discourse, relations, structure and initiatives and support.

Similar to the calls in #4 JRS and #5 IMI (see also Radford 2017; Guma et al. 2019; Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019; Nugin 2020; Stachowski 2020a), in terms of locality, firstly, more attention should be paid to the significance of place and the quality and availability of local resources in shaping forced migrants' integration outcomes. Secondly, political and media discourses on immigration are another important realm, as they shape the "kinds of reception and the emotional orientation of receiving communities" (ibid. 9). Thus, according to the call in #1 NRG, more knowledge is needed of differences between discourses on the national and local level (cf. Cooper et al. 2017). Thirdly, the nature of host-refugee relationships and the extent of warm or cold receptivity (Glorius et al. 2019; for 'hostipitality', see Derrida 2002) should be investigated (see also the call in #2 EUR). Drawing on data from the study at hand, a recent paper in which the author was involved addressed the quality and quantity of social contact between refugee newcomers and resident populations, and the expectations, perceptions and experiences of everyday encounters and social relationships in neighborhoods in rural areas in Germany (Glorius et al. 2020; cf. Kristjánsdóttir & Skaptadóttir 2019). Fourthly, structures (that is the nature of immigration and integration regimes), need to be addressed more thoroughly, for example in terms of the legal preconditions for the mobility and settlement of forced migrants (see call in #3 ERD). Finally, the impact of the integration initiatives of migrant and refugee community organizations, and the support of state integration programs should be a fifth focus of research. Regarding the former, however, I suggest including engagement both 'of migrants and 'for' migrants, by, for example, newly-founded refugee relief groups. Regarding the latter aspect, i.e. state integration programs, one has to be aware of the multi-level governance of migration and integration and local political actors' great degree of autonomy and discretionary

space in the implementation of national and regional policies (e.g. Bendel & Borkowski 2016; Zapata-Barrero et al. 2017; Caponio & Jones-Correa 2018). Therefore, the role of key actors such as mayors in the local governance of integration is considered core (see call in #2 EUR; cf. Søholt et al. 2018).

7.2 Residential and everyday (im)mobilities of refugee newcomers

With regard to residential (im)mobilities, the results revealed the complex (im)mobility trajectories of refugees who have recently arrived in Germany (cf. #2 EUR; #3 ERD). Onward (im)mobilities can be characterized as ‘movements into, out of, within and through rural places’ (Milbourne 2007) as well as by a staying put in the respective locales, while negotiations about moving on or staying put are negotiated relationally.

While asylum procedures are ongoing, the study confirmed refugee newcomers’ accommodation in former hotels and guest-houses (cf. Meindl 2017; Galera et al. 2018; Haselbacher 2019) and in ‘infrastructures of emergency’ such as former hospitals (Bock 2018), as well as their forced movement between first reception centers, communal and decentralized accommodation (cf. Kreichauf 2020, for Denmark; Zalewski 2017, for Germany). To the pre-existing concept of ‘disciplined mobility’ (Moran et al 2012), one can add the onward mobility of forced migrants for security or economic reasons, for example the Bavarian State government’s aim of reducing the cost of asylum accommodation by drawing on a recentralization strategy (see also BBSR 2017 and Chemin & Nagel 2020; cf. Haselbacher 2019, for Austria).

After the end of the ‘paternalistic accommodation policy’ (Aigner 2016), i.e. when newcomers have been granted asylum and allowed to leave state accommodation, out-migration to

urban areas in Western Germany⁶⁷ has been both a noticeable phenomenon and an aspiration for those who thought that their needs could not be met on-site (cf. SVR 2017), while expecting better future opportunities elsewhere (cf. Beetz & Heintze 2018). Regarding the latter, similar to recent findings, a (perceived) lack of matching working or study opportunities on-site and (perceived) better ones in cities (cf. Curry et al. 2017; Ziersch et al. 2020, for Australia; Fang et al. 2018, for Canada; SVR 2017; Garming et al. 2018; Ketzmerick 2019, for Germany), as well as (perceived) social isolation on-site and existing ethnic kinships and social networks in cities, were highlighted in particular (cf. Fang et al. 2018; Garming et al. 2018; Ketzmerick 2019; El Moussawi & Schuermans 2020; see also Edin et al. 2003). However, the study could not validate climate-related reasons for onward mobilities away from the often snowy and cold Bavarian forest, as found in the cases of rural Canada (Fang et al. 2018), Finland and Sweden (Laine & Rauhut 2018).

Re-migration of recognized and resettled refugees to rural areas was mostly related to legal aspects, i.e. to the residence rule, as well as to negative experiences of cities (cf. BBSR 2017; Wildling & Nunn 2017; Bloem & Loveridge 2018; Mann et al. 2018), for example with regard to unexpectedly high rents and a lack of social support. While migration into the rural was strongly related to forced migrants' own rural origins in the case of Karen refugees in the US (Gilhooly & Lee 2017a), this was true mostly for single Eritreans but is only partly true for Syrians, who were often married. For them, instead, existing family and friend ties on-site fostered family reunifications and chain migration (cf. Gilhooly & Lee 2017a; Ziersch et al. 2020, for Australia). With regard to internal migration to rural areas, the German IAB-BAMF-SOEP refugee panel recently counted that at least 7-

⁶⁷ Due to hearsay or own experiences of hostility, refugee newcomers sometimes explicitly connotated Eastern Germany as 'dangerous' (cf. Helal 2017).

10% of responding refugee newcomers had lived in an urban district during the last survey period (Brücker et al. 2020).

Staying put in the rural was found to depend on various factors, i.e. having a ‘good’ job, taking a language and integration course, or a school place for oneself, a partner and the kids – or at least the perception of better prospects here than elsewhere (cf. SVR 2017; Beetz & Heintze 2018; Fang et al. 2018; Mann et al. 2018; Ketzmerick 2019), or of accessibility (cf. Akademie für die ländlichen Räume Schleswig-Holsteins e.V. 2017; SVR 2017) and the availability of social networks (cf. SVR 2017; Hessisches Ministerium für Soziales und Integration 2018; Ketzmerick 2019). Individual or household life events such as the termination of a job, or graduation from a language or integration course or school, however, could result in a re-negotiation of the residential location choice (cf. Brekke 2008; Huisman 2011), supporting the argument of the temporality of the decision to stay. Furthermore, the study confirmed previous findings about rural staying, e.g. with regard to forced migrants’ constructions of rural areas as good and safe places to raise children (cf. Wildling & Nunn 2017; Ziersch 2018; Ziersch et al. 2020, for Australia; Fang et al. 2018, for Canada; SVR 2017; Beetz & Heintze 2018; Hessisches Ministerium für Soziales und Integration 2018; Mann et al. 2018; Liedl 2019, for Germany; Gilhooly & Lee 2017a, for USA). Apart from straightforwardness and social control, this holds true also for the friendliness and helpfulness of rural society in general (cf. Meindl 2017; Fang et al. 2018; Mann et al. 2018; Rösch et al. 2020; Ziersch et al. 2020) and volunteers in particular (cf. Bloem & Loveridge 2018, for USA; Herslund 2021, for Denmark). Regarding the latter group, as was also shown by Bloem and Loveridge (2017, 2018) in the US, both being advised by volunteers to stay and refugees’ gratitude towards them partly influenced their decision. Nevertheless, in line with recent studies, both short-distance moves and a process of concentration towards the small towns within rural areas occurred. They were often related to the availability and better accessibility of

work places or educational institution, e.g. due to reduced distances, or even being able to walk there (cf. Ohliger et al. 2017; Garming et al. 2018; Mann et al. 2018; Stalman-Fischer 2019; Rösch et al. 2020; Ziersch et al. 2020; see also Abu-Laban et al. 1999).

The lives of forced migrants during and after the asylum procedure are characterized by both everyday immobility (for example as a result of various mechanisms of exclusion), and everyday mobility (see also section 7.3), becoming manifest in their temporary absence and presence in rural areas. As such, everyday mobility realized as (daily or weekly) commuting to the workplace, or as city excursions to buy culturally appropriate food like bread or halal meat, or participate in religious feasts or visit friends and relatives (cf. Curry et al. 2017; Bock 2018; Bose 2018; Suter 2019), serves two interrelated aims: Firstly, it allows refugee newcomers to take “temporary breaks elsewhere” (Lynnebakke 2020: 19) and may, secondly, enable them to continue to live in rural areas – either voluntarily, or in order to abide by the residence rule. Translocal living arrangements, however, may counteract geographic restrictions or the obligation to register at one address, but can be seen as meaningful practices of resistance, revealing forced migrants’ own agency (BBSR 2017; Zalewski 2017; Täubig 2019; for translocal geographies, see Brickell & Datta 2011; Hedberg & do Carmo 2012).

In terms of future aspirations, forced migrants had often had only vague ideas and representations of German cities and rural areas in the past (cf. Beetz & Heintze 2018). Over time, however, they accumulated knowledge about ‘good’ and ‘bad places’ to live, based on own experiences, the media and their social networks (cf. Bloem & Loveridge 2017, 2018). Similar to the study of Fang et al. (2018), about one third of the participants wanted to continue to stay in rural areas in the future, while those in small towns reported a higher satisfaction than those in rural municipalities (cf. Kordel & Weidinger 2017). The recent data from the

IAB-BAMF-SOEP refugee panel confirm the trend that refugee newcomers have a strong desire to move in the future if they live in rural areas, have higher education levels or are men (Tanis 2020). As such, the preferences of those currently living in rural areas are either in favor of (big) cities, but also of small towns of between 5,000 and 20,000 inhabitants.

To sum up, the residential and everyday (im)mobilities of refugee newcomers after arrival in Germany are interdependent and characterized by multiple moves of different periods of time and spatial directions as well as decisions or ‘necessities’ of staying put – at least temporarily. (Forced) onward mobilities into, out of, within and through rural areas, in particular, can lead refugee newcomers to have difficulty in developing attachments to places, as reported by Lechner et al. (2016), Bundesforum Männer (2018) or Hessisches Ministerium für Soziales und Integration (2018), while caring local actors may face desperation (cf. Garming et al. 2018; Rösch et al. 2020), ‘hidden populations’ (cf. Jacobsen 2006) and difficulties in planning integration measures (cf. Rösch et al. 2020). Conceptually, the study concluded that the terms secondary and onward migration (cf. European Parliament 2017; Wagner et al. 2019; Nelson & Marston 2020; see also section 3.1), as well as the more recently proposed terms ‘post-migration mobility practices’ (Morét 2018) and ‘post-arrival geographies’ (El Moussawi & Schuermans 2020) do not adequately capture the complexity of the mobility trajectories of forced migrants. Instead, in line with the understanding of ‘uneven geographies of (im)mobilities’ (Brown & Gilmartin 2019) and the recently proclaimed ‘im/mobility turn’ (Bélanger & Silvey 2020), I consider the term ‘onward (im)mobilities’ to be more appropriate and suggest its application in future research (see also Schapendonk 2017; Suter 2017; Costello 2018; Etzold 2019; Sterly et al. 2019; de Hoon et al. 2020).

7.3 Exclusion and inclusion of refugee newcomers in terms of everyday mobility and access to housing

When it comes to the mechanisms of socio-spatial exclusion in terms of refugee newcomers' everyday mobility, the study validated the importance of adequate transport options for the ability to reach individually important places. Walking or cycling, for instance, were often not considered by forced migrants because of the climate in the study region (for example, cold-weather, especially during the winter months) (Bose 2016, for the US; Fang et al. 2018, for Canada), and, more generally, due to long distances between their starting point and various (in-)structure (cf. Bose 2014; BBSR 2017; Mehl et al. 2017; Ziersch 2018; Schammann et al. 2020). The mountainous environment was another issue that came up during the interviews. The organizational dimension of public transport can be confirmed as a further obstacle to refugee newcomers' everyday mobility. Depending on migrants' residential location within rural districts, there could be long distances to the next bus or train stop (cf. Bose 2014), while services were mostly limited to student transport and thus unavailable when needed, e.g. during evenings, weekends or holidays (cf. Bose 2014; Eggers 2017; Mehl et al. 2017; Fang et al. 2018; Rösch et al. 2020). In addition, the scarcity of direct services to neighboring rural districts from refugee newcomers' places of residence, long wait times to change between bus routes, or long overall travel times (cf. Mehl et al. 2017; SVR 2017; Fang et al. 2018; Mann et al. 2018), restricted the usefulness of public transport for commuting to work or attending further language and integration courses outside the district (for similar findings of apprentices in rural Brandenburg, Germany, see Binder & Matern 2020). At least in the early days and weeks, complicated tariff and booking systems that required advance planning (e.g. for on-call busses), as well as language barriers, also meant that it was considered difficult to learn how to use

the transportation system. Furthermore, on rare occasions, refugee newcomers reported that the lack of safety and security in getting to places was detrimental to their everyday mobility, for example when bus drivers or other passengers discriminated against them (cf. Kurtenbach 2018). Finally, the socio-spatial exclusion of forced migrants was fostered by their inability to afford different modes of transport due to limited financial resources, and a reduction in ‘time sovereignty’ (Cass et al. 2005); that is, a low degree of control over, or flexibility built into, their temporal regime. Regarding the former, the study verified the perceived high cost of public transport, or of the acquisition of a driving license and buying a car, as well as of a car’s maintenance (cf. Eggers 2017; Morken & Skop 2017; Fang et al. 2018; Stalman-Fischer 2019; Herslund 2021). With regard to the latter, mandatory participation in language or integration courses or shift work were found to be hardly compatible with the timetable of public transport (cf. Kordel & Weidinger 2017; Siegert et al. 2019; cf. ‘temporal mismatch’, Kwan 2013). Thus, the results reaffirmed the interrelation between everyday mobility and other realms of integration.

Difficulties in terms of everyday mobility could be partly overcome over time by means of local actors’ and refugee communities’ own measures, as well as by refugee newcomers’ practices themselves, drawing on their accumulated knowledge and resources. Making services local, by means of mobile counselling (cf. Rösch et al. 2020), informal ‘delivery services’ provided by family members, friends, neighbors or volunteers, as well as newly opened grocery stores and restaurants selling or offering culturally appropriate food reflected the aim to avoid the everyday mobility of forced migrants (cf. Eimermann & Karlsson 2018; Ziersch et al. 2020). In parallel, a pragmatic handling of the disadvantageous mobility situation could be detected where forced migrants interlinked diverse spatial practices during their everyday journeys (cf. Kordel & Weidinger 2017) or when language course providers and case workers scheduled the start of a

course to fit in with the timetable of public transport. As was highlighted in section 7.2, onward mobility to small towns was another means to deal with the issue. Finally, measures and practices were found to target the improvement of everyday mobility of forced migrants, for example by providing or demanding lifts. In this respect, the results confirmed the important role of family members and friends, neighbors, volunteers, employees of asylum accommodation, employers or colleagues (cf. Ziersch et al. 2020, for Australia; Haselbacher 2019, for Austria; Fang et al. 2018, for Canada; Eggers 2017; SVR 2017, Mann et al. 2018; Sauer & Vey 2019; Rösch et al. 2020; Schammann et al. 2020, for Germany; Casati 2018, for Italy; see also Bose 2014). Apart from this, refugee newcomers were supported on their arrival by the provision of second hand bikes by volunteers, on which to travel short distances. Later on, volunteers as well as the *Jobcenter* and refugees' employers helped them with the search for a car, or by (partly) taking over the costs of the acquisition of a driving license or the purchase of a car. In spite of the expense, having their own car was considered to be necessary among the majority of forced migrants so as to no longer depend "on the services and schedules of others" (Morken & Skop 2017: 322; cf. SVR 2017; Fang et al. 2018; Mann et al. 2018), revealing an experienced 'car dependency' (Gilhooly & Lee 2017a) or 'forced car ownership' (Bose 2014). However, so far, women only benefitted marginally from the availability of their own car in the household (cf. Gilhooly & Lee 2017a).

Similar to everyday mobility, inclusion and exclusion in terms of access to housing is dynamic over time and depends on intertwined constellations: the situation in the local housing market, previous experience on the part of landlords and real estate agents, measures provided by local actors and refugee communities as well as refugee newcomers' own residential preferences, family situations, and agency and resources. In relation to exclusion from access to private housing, recognized

refugees in general faced a lack of social housing, quality housing and available housing in small towns, which they preferred over rural municipalities due to their good transport connections and short distances (cf. Eichholz & Spellerberg 2019; Liedl 2019; Rösch et al. 2020). In particular, the results also confirmed a lack of one room apartments, especially where newcomers were single or still awaited family reunification (ibid.), but could not confirm that apartments were too small for big families (cf. Martzoukou & Burnett 2018; Ziersch et al. 2020). The reservations of landlords and real-estate agents about letting to welfare recipients in general, and refugee newcomers (of color) in particular, could be witnessed (cf. Hessisches Ministerium für Soziales und Integration 2018; Ziersch 2018; Smith et al. 2020; Ziersch et al. 2020), while the arguments used to avoid letting to forced migrants were also similar to those found previously in urban areas (cf. Carey-Wood et al. 1995; Bosswick et al. 2007; Murdie 2008; BBSR 2017; Adam et al. 2020). Among these arguments, a perceived lack of knowledge about correct waste separation was mentioned, as well as language barriers (cf. Martzoukou & Burnett 2018). While landlords were well aware of the locally applied maximum rates for rent of refugee newcomers reliant on social welfare (cf. BBSR 2017, for urban areas), rents, set too high, were not reported as excluding (in contrast to what was found by Ziersch 2018 and Herslund 2021).

Access to private housing was fostered in case of available on-site vacancies (cf. BBSR 2017; Corrado & D'Agostino 2018; Galera et al. 2018). The identification of potential vacancies and the (potential) overcoming of landlords' and real-estate agents' reservations strongly depended and still depends on 'rental mediators' (UNHCR 2013), such as administrative staff, NGOs and welfare organizations, volunteers, employers, and family and friends drawing on their personal social networks (cf. BBSR 2017; Marcher et al. 2017; Larsen 2018; Mann et al. 2018; Eichholz & Spellerberg 2019; Liedl 2019; Rösch et al. 2020; Ziersch et al. 2020; for similar findings in urban contexts, see Carey-Wood et al.

1995; Murdie 2008; Meer et al. 2021). Volunteers and employers in particular helped furnish apartments (cf. Akademie für die ländlichen Räume Schleswig-Holsteins e.V. 2017; Rösch et al. 2020). Rural district and municipal administrations were engaged to a differing degree in transforming state accommodation into private housing for refugee newcomers (cf. BBSR 2017), providing consultation hours for those seeking private housing and, against the backdrop of the availability of large apartments in the region, promoting shared flats for singles (cf. BBSR 2017; Schammann et al. 2020). Over time, however, refugee newcomers themselves accumulated agency and could draw on their knowledge of the housing market as well as on their own social resources, resulting in apartments being passed on within the refugee community (cf. Adam et al. 2020, for urban areas). As a result, the number of unjustified occupants (*Fehlbeleger:innen*), that is, recognized refugees still residing in state accommodation, decreased. While in 2016, about 30% of individuals with recognized protection status still lived in state accommodation according to the IAB-BAMF-SOEP refugee panel (Brücker et al. 2016; Baier & Siegert 2018), that share dropped to 17% by 2018 (Tanis 2020). However, respondents living in rural areas were found to be significantly less satisfied with their housing situation (ibid.).

Acknowledging the dynamics of everyday mobility and the volatility of (access to) housing, I conclude by suggesting an ongoing need for studies that take a long-term perspective on refugee newcomers' experiences of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion (see also section 7.4). In addition, future research should seek to compare forced migrants' decision-making processes about moving on or staying put with those of other groups residing in rural areas. A further focus should be the examination of similarities and differences in refugee newcomers' experiences in relation to mechanisms of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion with those of, for example, children and teenagers or

seniors in terms of everyday mobility, illiterates in terms of access to education, individuals with limited financial resources in terms of access to housing, or other migrants and PoC in terms of everyday racism. In this way, it can be discovered whether the challenges faced by refugee newcomers are related to their ‘migration or refugee background’, or, indeed, a result of more general challenges already existing in rural areas, such as the provision of infrastructure and services of general interest (cf. ‘de-migranticization of migration and integration research, Dahinden 2016).

7.4 Participatory and visual methods to analyze life-worlds of refugee newcomers

In parallel with the development of the PhD thesis, where the timeline tool and mobility mapping were integrated into the biographical-narrative interviews, a considerable number of studies have used both time- and space-related participatory and visual research methods (PVM) to grasp both the temporal and spatial dimension of refugee newcomers’ life-worlds, reflecting an on-going methodological interest in refugee studies. Besides Melo-Pfeifer and Schmidt (2019), who let young forced migrants prepare two drawings, one on their lives now and one on their lives in a year’s time, the focus, however, has been on space-related methods and tools, such as walking interviews in the neighborhood, home or garden (Archambault & Haugen 2017; Hughes 2019; Ratnam 2019; Ratnam & Drozdowski 2020; for GIS-tracked ones, see Akesson et al. 2018), photo elicitation/photovoice (Joyce & Liamputtong 2017; Yam 2017; Bose 2020; Due et al. 2020; Lounasmaa et al. 2020; Miled 2020; Saksena & McMorro 2020) as well as participatory cartography or mental mapping. Regarding the latter, both migrant journeys (for instance across the Mediterranean) (Scheuing 2017; Squire 2018) and everyday lives in the hosting societies have been visualized by forced migrants (Arfaoui 2019; Göler 2020).

At the end of the research process, that is, after the implementation of the method and the analysis of the results, it became obvious for Kieslinger, Kordel and Weidinger (2020) that, contentwise, the method facilitated the consistent application of a relational approach and was able to capture practices and decisions about (im)mobility, taking into account both individual and household perspectives. The method also helped to identify both subjective meanings ascribed to important places or people at a certain time in someone's biography, and processes of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion in everyday lives, even allowing for longitudinal analyses (*ibid.*). Furthermore, due to their mostly visual character, the interviews were more independent of the reading and writing abilities of participants and were able to better integrate them in the research process (*ibid.*). Graphic visualization supported the refugee newcomers' ability to remember and chronologically structure residential locations and life events and provided a 'multimodal voice' (Melo-Pfeifer & Schmidt 2019) to visually represent and communicate their truth (*cf.* Weber 2019). It gave them autonomy over the ways they chose to express themselves (Kieslinger et al. 2020), and, thus, strengthened their expressiveness and enhanced their meaningful engagement (*cf.* Brown et al. 2020). In this way, interaction and discussion was stimulated which allowed for a collaborative analysis even at the interview stages (Kieslinger et al. 2020), while simultaneously reducing power asymmetries, and engendering newcomers' confidence and self-awareness of their biographies, everyday lives and future aspirations at the same time (*cf.* Brown et al. 2020). Finally, the participatory and visual research method was seen as a welcoming distraction from everyday life not only for adults, but also for the children involved (*cf.* Akesson et al. 2018). On the other hand, however, the process was quite time- and resource-intensive (Kordel et al. 2019). During the interview, it also happened that participants could not remember certain aspects or faced gaps in their life histories, which could not be reconstructed due to the absence of family

members who shared the same experience or everyday practice (Kieslinger et al. 2020). A perceived lack of experience of visualizing techniques, different experiences of open forms of interviewing and freedom to express their opinion partially resulted in a fear of drawing on one's own, as well as incoherent storytelling (#4 JRS; Kieslinger et al. 2020; cf. Küsters 2009). This was overcome on the one hand by researchers' encouraging the participants or doing the drawings on their behalf (Kordel et al. 2019). On the other hand, trust in the research team was found to be essential for refugee newcomers to share their private, personal and sensitive stories about their histories and life-worlds (ibid.).

Given the strengths and challenges, I concur in the opinion of Berg and Seeber (2016), McMichael et al. (2015) and Müller-Funk (2020), who called for both 'slow science' in general and longitudinal studies in forced migration studies in particular. During the research process, it became obvious that the processes under study unfold over an extended period of time (cf. section 7.3), while developing sound research designs and methods and achieving the trust of participants definitely take time and should not be rushed.

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Annex

Annex I – Full articles

Annex I a - #1 NRG

Weidinger, Tobias (2020): Policy narratives about the distribution of forced migrants to rural areas. Searching for traces in recent German history. In: Steinführer, A., Heindl, A.-B., Grabski-Kieron, U. & Reichert-Schick, A. (Eds.): *New rural geographies in Europe: actors, processes, policies* (= Rural areas: Issues of local and regional development 6) (pp. 269-290). LIT: Münster.

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Annex I b - #2 EUR

Weidinger, Tobias, Kordel, Stefan & Pohle, Perdita (2017[2016]): Bleiben oder Gehen? Einflussfaktoren auf die Wohnstandortmobilität anerkannter Flüchtlinge in ländlichen Räumen am Beispiel des Bayerischen Waldes. *Europa Regional*, 24(3-4), 46-61.

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Annex I c - #3 ERD

Kordel, Stefan & Weidinger, Tobias (2019): Onward (im)mobilities: conceptual reflections and empirical findings from lifestyle migration research and refugee studies. *Die Erde – Journal of the Geographical Society of Berlin*, 150(1), 1-16. DOI: 10.12854/erde-2019-408.

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Annex I d - #4 JRS

Weidinger, Tobias, Kordel, Stefan & Kieslinger, Julia (2021 [2019]): Unravelling the meaning of place and spatial mobility: analysing the everyday life-worlds of refugees in host societies by means of mobility mapping. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34(1), 374-396. DOI: 10.1093/jrs/fez004



Annex I e - #5 IMI

Weidinger, Tobias & Kordel, Stefan (2020): Access to and Exclusion from Housing over Time: Refugees' Experiences in Rural Areas. *International Migration (Special Issue: Post-2015 refugees in Germany: "Culture of welcome", solidarity or exclusion?)*, DOI: 10.1111/imig.12807

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Annex II – List of interviews

Annex II a – List of biographical-narrative interviews with refugees

Interview	Nationality ⁶⁸	Protection status ⁶⁹	Rural district	Age group	Gender	Date	Research project
1	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Aug 16	Staedtler
2	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Aug 16	Staedtler
3	Syr	rec	REG	in his 40s	male	Aug 16	Staedtler
4	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Aug 16	Staedtler
5	Syr	rec	REG	in her 40s	female	Aug 16	Staedtler
6	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Aug 16	Staedtler
7	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Aug 16	Staedtler
8	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Aug 16	Staedtler

⁶⁸ Eritrean = Eri; Iraqi = Irq; Nigerian = Nig; Senegalese = Sen; Somalian = Som; Stateless/Palestinian = Xxa, Syrian = Syr; unknown = unk

⁶⁹ recognized = rec

9	Syr	rec	FRG	in her 30s	fe- male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
10	Syr	rec	FRG	in her 20s	fe- male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
11	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
12	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 10s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
13	Eri	rec	FRG	in her 20s	fe- male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
14	Som	rec	FRG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
15	Eri	rec	FRG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
16	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 50s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
17	Eri	rec	FRG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
18	Som	open	FRG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
19	Som	open	FRG	in his 10s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
20	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 30s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
21	Nig	open	FRG	in his 30s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler

22	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
23	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
24	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
25	Nig	rec	REG	in his 40s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
26	Sen	open	REG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
27	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
28	Syr	open	REG	in his 10s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
29	Nig	open	REG	in his 30s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
30	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 30s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
31	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
32	Eri	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
33	Eri	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler
34	Eri	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Sep 16	Staedt- ler

35	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 10s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
36	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 10s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
37	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
38	Syr	open	FRG	in his 10s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
39	Syr	rec	FRG	<i>unk- nown</i>	fe- male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
40	Irq	open	FRG	in his 30s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
41	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 30s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
42	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 30s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
43	Syr	rec	FRG	in his 40s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
44	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
45	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
46	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
47	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler

48	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
49	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
50	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
51	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
52	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
53	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
54	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
55	Syr	rec	REG	in his 40s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
56	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
57	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
58	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
59	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
60	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler

61	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
62	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
63	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
64	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
65	Syr	rec	REG	in his 40s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
66	Eri	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
67	Eri	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
68	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
69	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
70	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
71	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
72	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
73	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler

74	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
75	Syr	rec	REG	in his 60s	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
76	Syr	open	REG	<i>unk- nown</i>	male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
77	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
78	Syr	rec	REG	in his 40s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
79	Eri	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
80	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
81	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
82	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
83	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
84	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
85	Syr	rec	REG	in his 10s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
86	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler

87	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Jan 19	BULE
	Syr	rec	REG	in her 20s	fe- male		
88	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Jan 19	BULE
	Syr	rec	REG	in her 20s	fe- male		
89	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Jan 19	BULE
90	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Jan 19	BULE
91	Syr	rec	REG	in his 40s	male	Jan 19	BULE
92	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Jan 19	BULE
93	Syr	rec	REG	in his 10s	male	Jan 19	BULE
94	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Jan 19	BULE
95	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Jan 19	BULE
	Syr	rec	REG	in her 20s	fe- male		
96	Eri	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Jan 19	BULE

97	Syr	rec	REG	in her 30s	fe- male	Mar 19	BULE
	<i>unk</i>	rec	REG	<i>unk- nown</i>	male		
98	Syr	rec	REG	in her 30s	fe- male	Mar 19	BULE
	<i>unk</i>	rec	REG	<i>unk- nown</i>	male		
99	Syr	rec	REG	in her 40s	fe- male	Mar 19	BULE
100	Xxa	rec	REG	in his 40s	male	Mar 19	BULE
	Xxa	rec	REG	in her 30s	fe- male		
101	Eri	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Mar 19	BULE
	Eri	rec	REG	in her 30s	fe- male		
102	Syr	rec	REG	in his 20s	male	Mar 19	BULE
103	Syr	reco gnize d	REG	in his 30s	male	Mar 19	BULE
104	Syr	rec	REG	in his 50s	male	Mar 19	BULE

105	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Mar 19	BULE
106	Syr	rec	REG	in his 30s	male	Jun 19	BULE

Annex II b - List of qualitative interviews with local actors

In-ter-view	Function	Ru-ral dis-trict	Age	Gen-der	Date	Re-search project
1	Leader of local refugee relief group and representative of catholic church	REG	in his 50s	male	Apr 14	
2	Landlord of different asylum accommodation	REG	in his 40s	male	Aug 15	
3	Representative of protestant church	REG	in her 40s	fe-male	Aug 15	
4	Volunteer and district representative of a political party	REG	in his 70s	male	Aug 15	
5	Volunteer and member of the catholic parish council	REG	in his 60s	male	Aug 15	

6	Volunteer	REG	in her 40s	female	Aug 15	
7	Mayor and member of the district council	FRG	in his 50s	male	Jun 16	
8	Leader of local refugee relief group	FRG	in her 50s	female	Jun 16	
	Leader of local refugee relief group	FRG	in his 60s	male		
9	Volunteer	REG	in his 70s	male	Jul 16	Staedtler
	Volunteer	REG	in her 60s	female		
10	Employee at counselling service for refugees	REG	in her 50s	female	Jul 16	Staedtler
	Employee at counselling service for refugees	REG	in his 50s	male		

11	Volunteer	REG	in her 60s	female	Jul 16	Staedtler
12	Volunteer	REG	in her 70s	female	Jul 16	Staedtler
	Volunteer and member of the city council	REG	in her 70s	female		
	Leader of local refugee relief group and former employee at counselling service for refugees	REG	in his 60s	male		
	Leader of local refugee relief group and member of the catholic parish council	REG	in her 50s	female		
13	Volunteer	REG	in his 70s	male	Jul 16	Staedtler

14	Volunteer and commissioner for integration of municipality	FRG	in his 60s	male	Jul 16	Staedtler
15	Leader of local refugee relief group	FRG	in his 60s	male	Jul 16	Staedtler
16	Volunteer	FRG	in his 70s	male	Jul 16	Staedtler
17	Volunteer	FRG	in his 60s	male	Jul 16	Staedtler
	Employee at municipal administration	FRG	in his 20s	male		
18	Volunteer and former politician on the Länder level	FRG	in her 60s	female	Jul 16	Staedtler
	Volunteer	FRG	in her 30s	female		
19	Volunteer and employee at municipal administration	REG	in her 50s	female	Jul 16	Staedtler

20	Mayor, member of the district council and district representative of a political party	REG	in her 60s	fe- male	Oct 16	Staedt- ler
21	Employee at counselling service for refugees	FRG	n.y.	fe- male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
	Employee at counselling service for refugees	FRG	n.y.	fe- male		
	Employee at counselling service for refugees	FRG	n.y.	male		
22	Representa- tive of <i>Jobcenter</i>	FRG	n.y.	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
23	Volunteer, member of the city and dis- trict council	REG	in his 50s	male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler
24	Representa- tive of <i>Jobcenter</i>	REG	in her 50s	fe- male	Nov 16	Staedt- ler

25	Real-estate agent	REG	n.y.	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
26	Real-estate agent	FRG	n.y.	female	Jan 17	Staedtler
27	Real-estate agent	FRG	n.y.	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
28	Real-estate agent	REG	n.y.	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
29	Real-estate agent	REG	n.y.	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
30	Real-estate agent	REG	n.y.	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
31	Real-estate agent	REG	n.y.	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
32	Representative of housing cooperative	FRG	n.y.	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
33	Representative of district development company	REG	in her 30s	female	Jan 17	Staedtler
	Representative of language and integration course provider	REG	in her 50s	female		Staedtler

34	Representative of intercultural association	REG	in his 30s	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
35	Representative of intercultural association	REG	in her 40s	female	Jan 17	Staedtler
36	Employee at city administration	REG	in her 20s	female	Jan 17	Staedtler
37	Representative of language and integration course provider	FRG	n.y.	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
38	Representative of the district administration	FRG	n.y.	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
	Employee at district administration	FRG	n.y.	male		
	Employee at district administration	FRG	n.y.	female		

39	Mayor and member of the district council	FRG	in his 50s	male	Jan 17	Staedtler
	Volunteer, employee at municipal administration and member of municipal council	FRG	n.y.	male		
40	Mayor	FRG	in his 40s	male	Apr 18	
	Volunteer, member of the municipal council	FRG	n.y.	female		
41	Mayor and member of the district council	REG	in his 50s	male	Jan 19	BMEL
	Deputy mayor and member of the municipal council	REG	n.y.	male		

42	Mayor and member of the district council	REG	in his 50s	male	Jan 19	BMEL
43	Representative of city administration	REG	n.y.	male	Jan 19	BMEL
	Employee at city administration	REG	n.y.	male		
44	Mayor	REG	in his 20s	male	Jan 19	BMEL

Annex III – List of open-access publications in German language

Weidinger, T. & Kordel, S. (2016): „Was wir von Erfahrungen anderer Länder lernen können. Geflüchtete in ländlichen Räumen“. In: Franke, S. & Magel, H. (Eds.): *Flüchtlinge aufs Land?* (= Argumente und Materialien zum Zeitgeschehen 106) (pp. 103-111). Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung: München.

Kordel, S. & Weidinger, T. (2017): „Sicht der Geflüchteten auf Ländliche Räume“. In: Mehl, P. (Ed.): *Aufnahme und Integration von Geflüchteten in ländliche Räume: Spezifika und (Forschungs-)Herausforderungen. Beiträge und Ergebnisse eines Workshops am 6. und 7. März 2017 in Braunschweig* (= Thünen-Report 53) (pp. 43-53). Johann Heinrich von Thünen-Institut: Braunschweig.

Weidinger, T. & Kordel, S. (2020): „Perspektive Geflüchteter auf das Leben auf dem Land“. *BPB Kurzdossier „Zuwanderung, Flucht und Asyl: Aktuelle Themen“*, Thematic complex „Migration in der Stadt und auf dem Land“

Annex IV – List of press articles related to the cumulative PhD thesis

Press article “Zuflucht im Ferienidyll”, *Passauer Neue Presse* (Passau New Press), 27.08.2015

Press article “Asylbewerber: Zuflucht im Ferienidyll”, *Mittelbayerische Zeitung* (Central Bavarian Newspaper), 01.09.2015

Press article “Flüchtlinge: In welche Orte zieht es sie?“, *Passauer Neue Presse* (Passau New Press), 10.06.2017

Press article “Wo würden Flüchtlinge gerne wohnen?“, *Mittelbayerische Zeitung* (Central Bavarian Newspaper), 19.06.2017

Interview “Von wegen schnell wieder weg! Warum leben Geflüchtete auf dem Land“, *Straßenkreuzer. Das Sozialmagazin* (Straßenkreuzer. The social magazine), August/September 2018

Press article “Geflüchteten eine Stimme geben“, *Fränkische Landeszeitung* (Franconian Regional Newspaper), 29.11.2018

In the last decade, Germany has become the European country hosting the greatest number of forced migrants in absolute terms. Due to a dispersal policy and a residence rule, asylum seekers, recognized and resettled refugees must increasingly be considered also a rural phenomenon. Against this backdrop, the study aimed to better understand the onward (im)mobilities and integration processes of these ‘refugee newcomers’, focusing on rural specificities in terms of settlement and integration. Drawing on an interdisciplinary multi-method approach and a case study in rural Bavaria, Germany, this cumulative PhD thesis analyzed three aspects: first, the discursive framing of refugee settlement processes in rural areas; second, the residential and everyday (im)mobilities of refugee newcomers in these regions; and, third, characteristics of mechanisms of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion of forced migrants in terms of everyday mobility and access to rural housing.

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