

# Working to 'Wait Well'

Exploring the temporalities of irregular migration in Germany



Kari Anne Klovholt Drangslund

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)  
University of Bergen, Norway  
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UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN



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## **Scientific environment**

My PhD was part of the interdisciplinary research project *Waiting for an uncertain future: the temporalities of irregular migration* (Wait), funded by the Research Council of Norway and led from the Centre for Women's and Gender Research at the University of Bergen. Prof. of Social Anthropology Christine M. Jacobsen was the project leader.

During my PhD, I was employed and had my workplace at the Centre for Women's and Gender Research at the University of Bergen. I was part of the research groups 'Foundational Questions in Gender and Sexuality Research' and 'Gender, Migration and Inequality'. I was also part of Bergen International Migration and Ethnic Relations Research Unit (IMER Bergen).

I was admitted to and followed the doctoral education at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Bergen. Prof. Christine M. Jacobsen, Centre for Women and Gender Studies, was my main supervisor. Prof. Håvard Haarstad, Department of Geography and Centre for Climate and Energy Transformation at the University of Bergen, and Prof. Helge Jordheim, Department of Cultural History and Museology at the University of Oslo, were my second supervisors.



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## Acknowledgements

In 2005, I volunteered over the summer to work with children in an asylum reception centre in my hometown city in the East of Norway. Many of the families I met that summer had lived in Norwegian asylum reception centres for many years. They had a negative asylum decision yet could not be deported for various reasons. The asylum reception centre was placed in an isolated area at the outskirts of the city. There were no playgrounds, no neighbours, and public transport to the city centre was rare. The people I met did not know how long they would stay in Norway, or to which asylum reception centre they would be relocated the next time the government decided to move them. As a student in urban planning and human geography, I was amazed by the fact that the asylum reception centre, which had been operative for years and the home of many people, was not mentioned in any municipal plans. Since that summer, I have been interested in how temporariness and understandings of time work together with spatial location and spatial imaginaries to legitimise the lack of rights, material precarity and isolation for people in asylum reception centres in Norwegian municipalities. The past ten years, I have engaged with this thematic on and off through consultation work, and design-, art- and architectural projects. Writing this PhD thesis has allowed me to dedicate time to explore the role of time and temporality in the governing of migration. My research has been made possible by the support of many people I am deeply grateful to.

Most of all, and although I cannot name them here, I would like to thank the participants in the study who shared their time, company, knowledge and thoughts. Thank you for giving me all this and help me learn. To those of you I came to follow over time: Thank you for letting me into your lives. I also want to thank the employees at the three organisations who welcomed me during my fieldwork and who shared their knowledge.

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I would like to thank all my colleagues at the Centre for Women's and Gender Research for providing an inspiring work environment, as well as the members of the two research groups of which I was part. Particularly I want to acknowledge the fellow PhDs and Post-Docs who have contributed to my research by reading, writing sessions, and through continuous academic conversation: Noor Jdid, Emily Violet Maddox, Redi Koobak, Marry-Anne Karlsen, Dinara Podgornova, and Anders Rubing. Thanks also to Tomas Salem (Department of Anthropology) and Helene Nilsen (Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities). Anders, thanks for all those coffee breaks, for reading, and for inspiring collaborations in teaching at the Bergen School of Architecture. Thank you, Marry-Anne, for being my 'thinking partner', and for engaging with my work. No matter how long we walk and talk, there is always the

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The Department of Geography at the University of Bergen has also been important to my work. In addition to Håvard Haarstad, I thank Ragnhild Overå and Kristin Eide. A special thanks to you, Knut Hidle, for your encouragements and for giving me the possibility to teach. Thanks also to Ståle Holgersen (Uppsala University) for collaborations over the years.

I also got the ability to spend half a year at the WiSo-Fakultät at Hamburg University. Thank you, Urs Stäheli for welcoming me. Thanks to my PhD-colleagues, Franziska Dahlmeier, Elena Beregow and Clara Wieghorst for giving me a wonderful stay. Thanks also to Sonja for answering all my questions about German asylum law.

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## Abstract

During the past two decades migration and border scholars have increasingly recognised the role of time and temporality in the European states' governing of migration and in the production of migrant irregularity. This article-based thesis forms part of this growing, yet still incipient field of research. It provides an ethnographic exploration of the temporalities of governing and control of migration in Germany. Through three published papers, the study contributes to knowledges about the temporal dimensions of migration governing by centring on the peculiar German status of the *Duldung* (toleration permit) and by mobilising a framework of feminist temporalities. By bringing together rarely juxtaposed works by feminist scholars on bordering, migration and time, the thesis also contributes to feminist scholarship that seeks to trace the power relations shaping the uneven (chrono)politics of today's border regimes.

The empirical basis and spatial context for the study is eleven months of ethnographic fieldwork amongst irregularised migrants in Hamburg in Germany (August 2017 until June 2018). Furthermore, the study is shaped by legal and political developments in German migration governing since what has become known as *the long summer of migration* in 2015. In the years following the increase of asylum seekers to Germany in 2015, German asylum regulation was tightened. At the same time, however, there were political developments towards a reframing of asylum seekers and tolerated migrants as potential labour power, evident in an opening of labour market access to these categories of people. The thesis investigates the temporal dimensions of German border practices in this specific historical, spatial and socio-political context. It does so by exploring two variations of the German toleration permit, which is a legal status that prescribes a temporary suspension of deportation. The two variations of the toleration permit explored include a toleration permit for vocational training (*Ausbildungsduldung*) and a regional variant of the toleration permit that the Hamburg government gave to a group of West-African migrants in 2013. Both of these

toleration permits open for future regularisation based on successfully completed vocational training and/or labour market contributions.

The ethnographic study is guided by two research questions: what role do temporal rationalities and techniques play in the social and legal production of migrant irregularity through the German Duldung regulation? And, as part of that: how are unequal conditions of waiting produced and sustained through the Duldung? Through these questions the three papers explore how migrant irregularity is produced through temporal techniques of suspension, periodisation, temporal bracketing, tenuous future promises and deportability. I argue that the toleration permits studied in this thesis function to bracket the violence of border regimes by carving up time in homogenous periods in relation to a conditional promise of future regularisation. Waiting and suspension become narratively configured in political discourses in terms of ‘movement’ and as ‘worth it’. I argue, furthermore, that the German border regime embeds an expectation on migrants to orient to the future and endure suspension and deportability in specific and productive ways. They are expected to ‘wait well’. Exploring how migrants navigate their conditions in Hamburg, the thesis shows how people are unevenly positioned in relation to this expectation to ‘wait well’.

A growing literature deploys waiting as an analytical lens on questions of bordering and migration. This thesis explores the temporal assumptions and normativities attached to waiting as a socio-political condition *and* as an analytical optic. As part of this, it investigates how assumptions about temporal linearity might make the analytical optic of waiting susceptible to methodological nationalism. In its critical engagements with the spatiotemporal imaginary of waiting, the thesis formulates a third research question: how might a theoretical framework of feminist temporality be mobilised to enhance the use and value of waiting as an optic for analysis and critique of present regimes of bordering? Guided by this question, the thesis explores how waiting *time* might be conceptualised in ways that make relational subjectivity and located embodiment core to the analytical optic of waiting. I argue that from this vantage point the value of waiting as an analytical optic is strengthened when it comes to tracing and exploring the relations of power shaping present practices of bordering.

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## List of publications

### Paper 1

Drangslund, KA. (2020) Bordering through recalibration: Exploring the temporality of the German “Ausbildungsduldung”. *EPC: Politics and Space* 38(6): 1128-1145.

### Paper 2

Drangslund, KA. (2020) Waiting as a redemptive state: The ‘Lampedusa in Hamburg’ and the offer from the Hamburg government. *Time and Society* 29(2): 318-339.

### Paper 3

Drangslund, KA. (2020) Mo’s challenge. Waiting and the question of methodological nationalism, in Jacobsen, C.M, Karlsen, M-A and Khosravi, S. (eds) *Waiting and the temporalities of irregular migration*. London: Routledge.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

In her book, 'For Space' (2005), feminist geographer Doreen Massey turns her attention to time – perhaps somewhat surprisingly, given the book's title. Through a fine-grained analysis, she shows how imaginations of time have implications for how the spatial is imagined – whether, as she writes, people recognise it or not. This thesis springs from an interest in how directing attention to time and temporality might deepen the understanding of what researchers until recently have largely approached as a spatial phenomenon: It springs from an interest in the temporal dimensions of borders and in how time operates in the production of migrant irregularity. More specifically, the objective of this thesis is to explore and enhance the understanding of how temporal rationalities and techniques of bordering work to govern and control migration in the present European border regime. The empirical context and basis of this exploration is Germany after the so-called *long summer of migration* of 2015.

Through law and regulations, new technologies and refined procedures, the European Union (EU) has sought during the past decades to accelerate its processes of control and migration governing (Sontowski, 2018; Tazzioli, 2018; Jacobsen, 2020). Meanwhile, in response to the increased movement of people to and across Europe in 2015, the EU member states have made their humanitarian protection increasingly temporary, while rejected asylum seekers and other irregularised migrants are subjected to detention and immobilization in European cities, in camps and at external border sites such as in Libya. These processes illuminate the centrality of time to present practices of bordering.

Parallel to these empirical developments, migration and border scholars, during the past two decades, have increasingly recognised the role of time and temporality in states' governing of migration and in the production of migrant irregularity. Through empirically grounded research, scholars have highlighted temporality as a powerful point of departure for understanding how mobility is governed and controlled, and thereby added to prevalent work on borders' spatial dynamics (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013; Andersson, 2014; McNevin and Missbach, 2018; Tazzioli, 2018). This thesis



forms part of and seeks to contribute to the growing literature on the temporal dimensions of bordering and irregular migration. It does so by mobilising an analytical and theoretical framework shaped largely by feminist engagements with time and space. This is a framework that foregrounds the mutual imbrication of spatial and temporal imaginaries – both in bordering practices and research. It theorises time as relational and multiple and accentuates time as a relation of power. Through this optic, the thesis investigates how borders operate by enhancing certain ways of being in time and how migrant irregularity is produced through gendered, racialised and classed temporal constructs and imaginaries. By mobilising a framework of feminist temporalities, my study brings new perspectives and concepts to the theoretical and analytical ‘arsenal’ for thinking border temporalities.

As part of my investigation of the temporal techniques and rationalities of governing migrants in Germany, I seek to understand the often ‘uneventful’ and corrosive forms of violence (Povinelli, 2011: 145) that are enacted and produced through bordering practices and that frequently, ethnographically speaking, are manifested as ‘waiting’. During recent years, a growing literature has deployed waiting as an analytical lens in the study of irregular migration (for an overview, see Jacobsen and Karlsen, 2020). My work contributes to this literature by examining how immobility/mobility, stasis/progression come to be framed as such within the German border regime, and how the violence of waiting is bracketed in time through promises of future legalisation. The thesis builds on the premise that to deepen the understanding of the temporal dynamics of border practices, attention must be directed to conceptualisations of time as such. Based on this acknowledgement, I examine the often taken-for-granted understandings of time that might easily come to inform scholarly work on waiting. I develop a temporal theoretical approach to waiting that makes relational subjectivity and located embodiment intrinsic to waiting as an analytical imaginary. Doing this, my study provides a novel reading of Massey’s work on time in a new context.

The empirical basis and spatial context for my study is eleven months of ethnographic fieldwork amongst irregularised migrants in the *Land* (federal state) of Hamburg in

Germany (August 2017 until June 2018). Furthermore, my work is profoundly shaped by the historical context of 2017 and by developments in German migration regulation that became apparent during my fieldwork. In the years between 2011 and 2015, the increase in migration towards and across Europe challenged and sparked a reconfiguration of the EU migration regulation and border control (Hess et al., 2016; Hess and Kasparek, 2017). Germany took a leading role in the member states' negotiations of EU's response to this mobility, as well as in the reception of asylum seekers. During 2015 and 2016, Germany received more than 1.2 million applications for asylum (statista, 2020).<sup>1</sup> In the autumn of 2015, Merkel's decision to suspend the Dublin Regulation – thus allowing thousands of people to have their asylum application processed in Germany – was acclaimed internationally as a humanitarian gesture (Laubenthal, 2019).<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, a proliferation of local initiatives developed in support of newly arrived migrants, and the German response was labelled in the European media through the notion of *Willkommenskultur* (culture of welcome) (Hess et al., 2016; Borneman and Ghassem-Fachandi, 2017). However, when I started my fieldwork in 2017, the internationally acclaimed *Willkommenskultur* seemed to be changing. Between 2015 and 2017, the German parliament passed more than twenty new laws in the field of migration and asylum (Forum Menschenrechte, 2019). On a general basis, these raised the threshold for asylum, increased the use of temporary residence permits, and aimed to accelerate the pace of asylum and deportation procedures. As such, they were consistent with broader developments in EU migration regulation and management during these years (Hess and Kasparek, 2019).

At the same time there were other developments that became manifest through these bundles of legal changes. Several scholars have argued that the legal reforms between 2015 and 2017 illuminate an ongoing 'paradigm shift' in German migration regulation (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016: 246; Scherschel, 2016: 261; Will, 2018; Laubenthal, 2019; Schultz, 2020a: 8). This shift is articulated through the opening of labour market access for asylum seekers and tolerated migrants (people with a pending deportation issue). Moreover, it manifests through an opening of new 'pathways' to regularisation,

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<sup>1</sup> This number entails first (Erstantrag) and subsequent applications (Folgeantrag) for asylum.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the Dublin Regulation, see chapter 3.

which make regularisation conditional on work, economic self-sufficiency and language acquisition (Will, 2018; Schammann, 2019). These changes are pushed by economic actors and enabled within an economic and demographic rationality that frames some categories of irregularised migrants as a potential labour force in the context of labour shortage and demographic decline (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Will, 2018; Laubenthal, 2019). During my fieldwork, it became evident that these transformations in migration regulation and policy shaped the lives of the people I worked with in profound and uneven ways.

The empirical point of departure of this thesis is these later changes and reconfigurations of German migration law and policy towards a tightened migration control and, simultaneously, a reframing of asylum seekers and tolerated migrants as potential labour power (Chauvin et al., 2013a; Paul, 2019). More specifically, I centre on and explore recent changes of the German Duldung regulation. The Duldung is often translated in English as the ‘toleration permit’. It is not a residence permit, but provides a short-term temporary suspension of deportation, and defines as such, a form of illegal presence, yet one that is not subject to legal sanctions. Thus, it is a condition of pending, however uncertain deportation – a condition of life that is fundamentally shaped by ‘deportability’ – the possibility of deportation (De Genova, 2002: 439).<sup>3</sup> The three published/accepted papers of this thesis explore two different cases or variations of the Duldung regulation. The first case is the so-called *Ausbildungsduldung*.<sup>4</sup> This is a Duldung for vocational training that was introduced with the 2016 *Integrationsgesetz* (Integration Act). The *Ausbildungsduldung* breaks with other variations of the Duldung, as it is granted for the entire duration of the vocational training (normally three years) and comes with the conditional promise of a residence permit if training is successfully completed. It is illustrative of the shift in German migration regulation during recent years towards a reframing of tolerated

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<sup>3</sup> De Genova’s term ‘deportability’ captures ‘the possibility of deportation, the possibility of being removed from the space of the nation-state’ as key to the social and legal production of migrant irregularity as well as in shaping the lives of irregular migrants (2002: 439).

<sup>4</sup> When I introduce German concepts (legal, administrative, etc.), I write the original German concept in italics with the English in brackets. Subsequently, I use the English term. I make an exception for the terms ‘Duldung’, ‘Ausbildungsduldung’ and ‘Land’ (German federal states/regions) which I refer to in German throughout the papers.

migrants as potential labour power (Schultz, 2020a). The other case I study is a regional variant of the Duldung. This Duldung was enabled through political and discretionary practices at the Hamburg federal level, in response to the political mobilisation of a group of refugees who called themselves ‘Lampedusa in Hamburg’.<sup>5</sup> While it was an exceptional political process that enabled the Lampedusaduldung,<sup>6</sup> I argue it is a lens to broader developments of German migration governing.

I initially intended to explore more broadly the temporal dynamics of bordering. This intention was consistent with my PhD project as part of a broader interdisciplinary umbrella project aiming to explore the temporalities related to irregular migration in four European cities.<sup>7</sup> However, during fieldwork, I became particularly interested in the two variations of the Duldung studied in my papers. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, my interest was sparked by the salience of these regulations for the migrant research participants, and by the weight put on the Ausbildungsuldung by humanitarian, legal, and political actors. Secondly, the two cases are highly suitable for an investigation into the temporal dynamics of bordering, as they operate through conditional future promises, deportability, periodisation, and suspension. Thirdly, I concur with De Genova about the importance of exploring distinct and historically specific ‘configurations of illegality’ (2002: 242), to provide insight into the manifold ways migrant irregularity is produced, practised, and embodied. My work rests on the assumption that the Ausbildungsuldung and the Lampedusaduldung provide a lens into the broader discursive, legal, and administrative ‘paradigm shift’ of the German migration regime. As such, my study is a timely intervention in the sense that it opens a space for critique of these recent transformations. As Will (2018) notes, recent developments of German migration law and administrative practice tend to be interpreted in terms of improvement and benevolence. Accordingly, as she writes, it is ‘a tricky task’ to criticise them (2018: 182). It should also be noted, that by exploring these two variations of the Duldung, the thesis adds to the rather scant ethnographic

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<sup>5</sup> I use the notion ‘refugees’ here because they used the term to describe themselves.

<sup>6</sup> The ‘Lampedusaduldung’ is not an official notion. I use it to refer to the specific Duldung given to the Lampedusa in Hamburg.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Waiting for an Uncertain future: The temporalities of irregular migration’ (Wait).  
<https://www.uib.no/en/project/wait>

literature on the Duldung (Gehrig, 2006; Castañeda, 2010; Mitrić, 2013; Fontanari, 2017; Tize, 2020) and broadens the understanding of the Duldung as a spatiotemporal technique of bordering.

## Research questions and theoretical framework

This thesis aims to explore and deepen the understanding of how temporal rationalities and techniques of bordering work to govern and control migration in Germany.<sup>8</sup>

Following from the broader objective I have formulated three more specific research questions:

1. What role do temporal rationalities and techniques play in the social and legal production of migrant irregularity through the German Duldung regulation?
2. How are unequal conditions of waiting produced and sustained through the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung*?
3. How might a theoretical framework of feminist temporality be mobilised to enhance the use and value of waiting as an optic for analysis and critique of present regimes of bordering?

In brief, the thesis' draws on, juxtaposes, and connects three main theoretical frameworks or bundled approaches in its endeavour to explore the temporalities of the Duldung and to think about waiting as an analytical optic. On the one hand, my work draws on critical border studies, and the recognition that borders today must be understood as dispersed practices (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013; Gilmartin and Kuusisto-Arponen, 2019). Largely based on Foucault's (2004) work on governmentality, this body of research directs attention to the rationalities and practices of bordering and the governing of migration. From such a perspective, this thesis investigates practices of bordering and the production of migrant irregularity through the Duldung regulation. Secondly, I draw on feminist geographical

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<sup>8</sup> I use rationalities and technologies here in line with the governmentality literature, i.e. as more or less systematic ways of thinking about and responding to a problem and as mechanisms and instruments through which governing is accomplished (Dean 2010). I will explain this in chapter 5.

perspectives (Katz, 1996; Hyndman, 2004; Mountz and Hyndman, 2006; Massey, 2005). During the past decades, feminist geographers have developed refined and relational epistemological and methodological approaches to bordering and waiting. They highlight the locatedness of knowledges of borders and insist on the value in cross-scalar approaches that acknowledge the embodied and lived scale as deeply entangled with other geopolitical scales (Hyndman, 2004; Mountz and Hyndman, 2006; Hyndman, 2010). From such perspectives, feminist geographers have provided valuable accounts of waiting as a technique of bordering and as a socio-political condition that is produced through relations of power spanning different spaces and scales (Mountz et al., 2002; Conlon, 2011; Mountz, 2011). The work of feminist geographers has been epistemologically and methodologically enabling in my ethnographic approach.

Yet feminist geographers have to a lesser extent theorised waiting as a *temporal* condition or explored the assumptions about time that ground knowledge claims about waiting (Chakrabarty, 2000; Halberstam, 2005; Gray, 2011; Lahad, 2017). To deepen the understanding of the chronopolitics (temporal politics) of waiting – as well as of bordering more broadly – the thesis builds a temporal theoretical framework drawing on scholars who work with feminist, queer, and post-colonial perspectives, such as Barbara Adam, Doreen Massey, Victoria Browne, Jack Halberstam, Kathleen Davis, Sarah Sharma and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Based on these scholars' critical perspectives on time and governing I explore 'the political nature of the conceptualization[s] of time' (Bastian, 2011: 96) as these figure *both* in the border regime and in research on border temporalities and waiting. Furthermore, reading together the works of these different scholars enables me to build a theoretical framework to investigate how people are differently located within the relations of power producing conditions of waiting in Germany. Feminist, queer and post-colonial scholars theorise time as multiple and relational. This approach chimes with the plea for partial knowledge and for connecting different scalar levels in the analysis of bordering within feminist geography. By bringing together rarely juxtaposed works by feminist scholars on bordering, migration and time, the thesis contributes to feminist scholarship that seeks

to trace the power relations shaping the uneven (chrono)politics of today's border timespaces.

### Three papers and some main arguments

I investigate and respond to the research questions in three papers published/accepted as part of this thesis. I am the sole author of these papers, which include two journal articles and one book chapter:

- **Paper 1:** Drangslund, KA. (2020) Bordering through recalibration: Exploring the temporality of the German "Ausbildungsduldung". *EPC: Politics and Space* 38(6): 1128-1145.
- **Paper 2:** Drangslund, KA. (2020) Waiting as a redemptive state: The 'Lampedusa in Hamburg' and the offer from the Hamburg government. *Time and Society* 29(2): 1-22.
- **Paper 3:** Drangslund, KA. (2020) Mo's challenge. Waiting and the question of methodological nationalism, in Jacobsen, C.M, Karlsen, M-A and Khosravi, S. (eds) *Waiting and the temporalities of irregular migration*. London: Routledge.<sup>9</sup>

All three papers respond to the three research questions, however in different ways and to various degrees. The *two first papers* respond most directly to research questions one and two and explore the temporal politics of the German border. *Paper three* engages most directly with research question three regarding the analytical optic of waiting.

I will not reiterate the conclusions of the papers here, however some main findings and arguments may be highlighted:

- I argue that present configurations of German migration regulation establish a temporal order that manifests as an expectation on irregularised migrants to 'wait well'. The notion of 'waiting well' captures an expectation on migrants

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<sup>9</sup> The paper will be published in the autumn of 2020.

to endure suspension and deportability in specific ways in relation to tenuous promises of future regularisation made conditional on employment. I show how people are situated in different ways in relation to this expectation to ‘wait well’.

- I refine the conceptual apparatus of border temporalities by highlighting temporal techniques of periodisation and ‘bracketing’ (Povinelli, 2011) in the production of migrant irregularity and the condition of waiting. More broadly, my study identifies and explores five entangled techniques of bordering: *Suspension, deportability, periodisation, bracketing, and future promises.*
- I argue that to strengthen waiting as an optic for analysis and critique of present regimes of bordering, ‘waiting’s *now*’ should be approached as relational. The notion of ‘relational time’ involves a recognition of the ‘temporal interdependencies’ (Sharma, 2014: 148) of differently positioned subjects within temporal regimes of governing. Furthermore, to state that time is relational implies an understanding of waiting’s ‘now’ as constituted through interrelations and embodied practices. I contend that an understanding of waiting in terms of *constituted* or *temporal time* provides a ground for acknowledging relational subjectivity and located embodiment.

## Structure of the dissertation

A compilation thesis consists of self-contained papers, and an ‘Introduction’. The Introduction should be an independent research work, according to the regulation at the University of Bergen. However, its primary function is to draw and discuss connections between the papers and situate them in a broader empirical and theoretical context.

The introductory part of this thesis consists of six chapters. These are organised as follows. *The first chapter* (this chapter), provides a general introduction to the field of research, and describes the overall objective, theoretical framework and the research questions of the dissertation. Before I move on to the next chapter, I will also provide an extended summary of the three papers and highlight the linkages between them. *In*



*chapter two*, I outline the geographical and historical context of my research. The main aim is to contextualise the two variations of the Duldung that I explore in my papers. The chapter further aims to show the broader relevance of my work in relation to the current transformations of the German border regime. *In the third chapter*, I problematise my previous move to describe the context in terms of ‘change’ and ‘shift’. I base this on an acknowledgement that all acts to contextualise, periodise and historicise easily occlude other stories and people’s unequal locations within the identified ‘contexts’ or ‘periods’. The chapter focuses on those who are *not* eligible for the Ausbildungsuldung, either due to the European Dublin Regulation or due to gendered and racialised conceptions of labour or demographic decline. This change of orientation deepens the understanding of how migrant irregularity is produced through German migration regulation. It brings depth to the discussions in my papers, as these focus mainly on people who were eligible for the Ausbildungsuldung or the Lampedusaduldung. *Chapter four* details my choices of research methods and discusses positionality and research ethics. *In chapter five*, I introduce and discuss my theoretical approach to border temporalities and waiting and explain some core theoretical terms applied in my papers, such as the border regime, relational time and multiple temporalities. *The sixth and final chapter* goes back to the research questions and summarises the conclusions while making some final reflections. At the end I have attached the three papers.

I have aimed at avoiding repetition from the published papers. A major consequence of this is that I do not devote substantial discussion to research literature on the temporalities of borders, or on waiting and migration. The ‘Introduction’ presents several ethnographic accounts. These accounts primarily serve the purpose of introducing the reader to my fieldwork, and, thereby, of creating a firmer foundation for critically engaging with my analyses in the three papers. Throughout the introduction I refer to my papers as paper 1, paper 2 and paper 3.

## Overview of and linkages between the papers

The three papers published as part of this thesis were written in the order in which are presented here. However, the last paper (book chapter) is a component in a line of inquiry that I pursued throughout the work with this thesis. This is a more conceptual paper, whilst the other two are more empirical in nature.

**Paper 1** (*Bordering through recalibration: Exploring the temporality of the German 'Ausbildungsduldung'*) is an exploration of the *Ausbildungsduldung*. It draws primarily on ethnographic work with seven Afghan asylum seekers. More specifically, it analyses the temporalities of the *Ausbildungsduldung* based on data derived through long-term contact with three men who were either undertaking or contemplating whether to start training. The paper approaches the *Ausbildungsduldung* as a biopolitical technique of bordering. I discuss how the *Ausbildungsduldung* was politically enabled within a discourse of labour shortage and demographic decline and investigate how irregular migrants are governed and produced as future skilled workers. However, while I foreground demographic concerns as enabling for the *Ausbildungsduldung*, I also show how the regulation was shaped in its present form at the intersection of disjunctive institutional logics and temporalities.

The paper highlights three temporal techniques as core to present processes of bordering: tenuous and conditional future promises, suspension, and deportability. I argue that the *Ausbildungsduldung* illuminates a temporal order that manifests and materialises in migrants' lives as an expectation to 'wait well'. 'Waiting well' involves being 'motivated' and oriented toward the intermediate future of training and away from present longing, material precarity, and violence. I show how people negotiate the temporalities of learning, suspension, and deportability from their different positions within the border. Analysing these negotiations, I argue that the *Ausbildungsduldung* entails an expectation that migrants work on themselves and their embodied experiences of time while they are confined to a condition of deportability.

The paper argues for the necessity of investigating how borders intervene in people's affective and embodied relations to time. Theoretically, I draw on Sharma's (2014)

work on temporal ‘recalibration’. With the concept of recalibration, Sharma directs analytical attention to the embodied scale of everyday practices and explores how power works by synchronising people’s practices and experiences of time to a dominant temporal order. This theoretical and methodological move enables me to complement studies of the synchronising function of borders, as these mostly have focused on tempo and deadlines as techniques for synchronising migrants’ mobility with the needs of labour markets (Tsianos et al., 2009; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018).

**Paper 2** (*Waiting as a redemptive state. The ‘Lampedusa in Hamburg’ and the offer for the Hamburg government*) furthers the investigation into the role of conditional future promises, suspension, and deportability as techniques of governing. It introduces a new case, and thereby adds to the understanding of how the temporal order of ‘waiting well’ is articulated and produces the embodied condition of migrant irregularity and waiting. This paper explores an offer of possible legalisation that the Hamburg government gave to a group of 350 illegalised West-African migrants in 2013 (the Lampedusa Duldung).<sup>10</sup> This offer took the form of a Duldung, and came with a conditional promise of legalisation for those who managed to find full-time work. I direct ethnographic attention to the embodied and gendered condition of waiting, as to how this condition is shaped through relations spanning various spaces. Analysing how people navigate and make sense of ‘living in the offer’, as one research participant called it, I show how the ‘the offer’ implies a form of corrosive and slow violence – a violence that is also illuminated in paper 1.

My analysis is theoretically informed by the work of anthropologist Povinelli (2011), the feminist historians Bastian (2011) and Browne (2014) and medieval scholar Davis (2012). Povinelli’s (2011) work on narrative time and temporal bracketing as a technique of governing, provides me with a conceptual apparatus for exploring how temporal constructs function to bracket the violence of ‘living in the offer’. I contend that the violence of ‘the offer’ is bracketed, in the sense of not apprehended, because the Lampedusaduldung is narrated and judged from the future perfect when the

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<sup>10</sup> For the sake of brevity, I will call this offer the ‘Lampedusaduldung’ throughout the Introduction.

violence will have ended. In this future perfect, migrants have become full market economy participants and their stay, accordingly, is regularised. Moreover, I read Povinelli's critique of bracketing in relation to Davis' critique of periodisation as a technique for carving up time in periods, and thus rendering time homogenous. I argue that periodisation should be understood as a technique of governing that works by narrating time as a distinct period in relation to waiting's end. By reading the works of Davis and Povinelli together, I am provided with an analytical framework for exploring how migrant irregularity and waiting are produced and sustained – in the context of demographic rationalities and market interests. The paper focuses more explicitly than the first paper on the role of discursive constructions or imaginaries of time in the articulation of borders and the governing of migrants.

The paper introduces a notion of multiple and relational time, as an analytical lens that makes visible that life, as it is relationally lived, does not wait. I explore how life in the offer is shaped at the intersection of different temporal schemes or constructs, by directing ethnographic attention to, for instance, gendered life expectations and ageing. By foregrounding the situated knowledges of people who live in the offer, its temporal rationalities are rendered visible.

The first two papers highlight the entanglement of spatial and temporal techniques of bordering. Furthermore, they both address how temporal rationalities are imbricated within the territorial logic of nation-states. **Paper 3** (*Mo's Challenge and the question of methodological nationalism*) engages more directly with the question of the imbrication of spatial and temporal imaginaries. Doing this, I reorient my attention towards methodological and epistemological questions related to approaching migrant irregularity from an analytical perspective of 'waiting'. Through a situated reflection on my own ethnographic research practice, the paper explores how the analytical optic of waiting might be susceptible to methodological nationalism when deployed in research on irregular migration. These concerns have been raised before by scholars such as Ramsay (2017a) and Malkki (1995). My study animates the discussion in a new empirical context, where irregularity is produced through conditional promises of future residence.

While paper 3 was the last paper I wrote, it developed out of an ongoing struggle with waiting as an analytical perspective. Waiting was one of the core analytical perspectives on migrant irregularity that was defined in the umbrella Wait-project.<sup>11</sup> However, I struggled with the use of the analytical lens of waiting, conscious that it entails assumptions about space and time, in the same manner as do spatiotemporal imaginaries such as globalisation (Adam, 2002; Massey, 2005) or global acceleration (Sharma, 2014). In the first two papers, I accordingly did not use waiting as an analytical perspective from the outset. Rather it was Sharma's notion of differential and normalising temporal orders, Davis' work on periodisation and Povinelli's thinking on how violence is bracketed that guided my analytical endeavours in these papers. Yet as this presentation of my papers highlight, waiting became a core analytical concept in these studies. The analytical attention to and centring of waiting in these papers rose from the ethnographic material. People I met would often refer to their situation as waiting. Furthermore, I needed a concept to articulate how power works through suspension, deferral, immobilisation and tenuous future promises – core dimensions of the temporal construct of waiting as it appears in research literature, policy documents and popular culture (Adam, 1990; Bourdieu, 2000; Lahad, 2017).

The fact that waiting kept rising from the ethnographic material turned my struggle into a fruitful curiosity about how waiting might be refined as an analytical lens. The paper draws largely on the work of Massey and Chakrabarty. Engaging their work in relation to two ethnographic encounters, the paper refines my thinking about waiting and border temporalities as developed in the two first papers. Papers 1 and 2 engage with time in the sense of the governing of people in and through clock and calendar time; that is, they deal with time as something that might be controlled, accelerated or carved into periods. Moreover, they engage with the normativities attached to time and with the world-configuring role of spatiotemporal frameworks. Paper 3 extends my approach to time and theorises the condition of waiting in terms of *temporal* or *constituted* time. In other words, I theorise waiting *time* as constituted through

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<sup>11</sup> Initially the Wait-project set out to approach the temporalities of irregular migration through the concept of 'Waitinghood'. This concept, however, was abandoned at an early stage in the umbrella-project. For a discussion of this, see Jacobsen and Karlsen (2020).

interactions and relations, and as a constant emergence of something new. I argue that such an understanding of waiting's 'now' enhances the value of waiting as an analytical lens for examining the violence of border regimes, and for critiquing the individualising temporal order of 'waiting well'.



## Chapter 2. Providing context

*I watched Sharif's silent profile from my place in the left backseat.<sup>12</sup> Steffi, a volunteer and retired teacher I had met in the camp where Sharif lived, navigated the car out of the car-park in a quiet semi-industrial area in Hamburg North. Radi, who sat on my right side, looked out the window. Steffi turned on the radio. The radio announcer's reports about 'stockende Verkehr' (slow traffic) on the Autobahn made the silence less pressing as we drove back the same way we had arrived three hours ago.*

*(three hours earlier)*

*'You are a whole delegation', Mr. B., a Hamburg vocational training advisor, smiled as he picked us up at the desk at 10 a.m.<sup>13</sup> He signalled that we should follow him down the hallway, past offices where people were busily talking into the phone or chatting with one another over their computers. Mr. B. worked in a non-governmental organisation that supported youths with 'special needs' into education and vocational training. It was Mrs. H., a Hamburg public official working with young asylum seekers, who had scheduled the consultation for Sharif. Steffi had offered to take him and asked Radi to join them so that he could learn about the system. Both the young Afghan men had received a negative response to their applications for asylum, and Steffi spent much of her free time trying to help them find ways 'to stay in Germany', as she put it.*

*Water and coffee awaited us on the table inside the NGO's bright meeting room at the end of the hallway. Mr. B. took a seat next to Sharif and started to talk rapidly while he sat down. He was worried because Sharif had not yet decided which training programme he wanted to do: 'There are not so many options for you now', he said. Sharif and I had several times talked about his interest in nursing, and I understood this had been a topic in previous conversations when*

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<sup>12</sup> Sharif is one of the men on whose reflections and insights I base my analyses in paper 1. In so doing, I draw on other parts of the encounter narrated here. I return to Sharif in chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>13</sup> Conversations are translated from German by me.



*Mr. B. at one point said: 'Nursing is not possible, but you can do elderly care'. 'What about merchant?' Steffi asked. 'It is full', Mr. B. responded. He turned to Sharif, seeking eye contact: 'You do not have much time. All Afghans must use the time until the thirty-first of December'.<sup>14</sup> He leaned forward on the table and talked about German deportation practices to Afghanistan and the declining asylum acceptance rate for Afghans: 'It will be hard, but we can make it if we move fast', he said. The meeting went on for about an hour. Towards the end, Mr. B. turned to Steffi: 'You have to help him to find an internship. If he does so, then they will fight for him at Mrs. H's office. She says "yes" or "no". Internship is our weapon. Preferably he would start already tomorrow'.*

*After the consultation, Steffi drove us to a beautiful old industrial building some twenty minutes away. On the way, she told us about the company we were to visit; it was involved in social entrepreneurship and furniture design and eager to employ refugees. Steffi wanted to check if there could be a possibility for an internship there for Sharif or Radi. A woman and a man greeted us as we arrived. One of them showed Sharif and Radi around, while the other sat down with Steffi and me for a cup of coffee. We talked about the latest developments in German migration law. 'It is evil', the company manager said: 'You have to find work, or else you have no prospects of staying, yet there is no work and no salary'. While we talked, I watched Radi through the office's glass windows. He threaded a sewing machine and began to sew what looked like a bag.*

*(back in the car)*

*In the car, the traffic messages gave way to British musician Phil Collins and his 1982 hit 'You can't hurry love'. Then, Sharif broke the silence: 'Will the time come when I will have a car? Yes, or no?' he looked at Steffi. Steffi comforted him, reassuring him that surely his time would come, sooner or later. More silence. Then, Sharif spoke again: 'It is my fault too'. 'What do you mean?' Steffi replied. 'I could have looked for something else', he said. Steffi*

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<sup>14</sup> He is referring to an expected change in policy at the turn of the year.

*said that he should not talk about blame and reminded him that he had spent his time well, by completing his B1 exam.<sup>15</sup> ‘If you were older it would have been different. Or if you were under 18 years old. Then you would be in school. Between 18 and 25 is the most difficult age to make sure that you can stay. You are at the age where there is this border (Grenze): To stay here or not’, she said.*

*The song faded, and Steffi turned up the radio to listen to the traffic messages. Radi and I talked about music and he showed me some Afghan and German rap videos on YouTube. After a while, Sharif sighed: ‘Ausbildung...’, he said into the air. Steffi replied, and they talked for a while about his options, when Sharif reminded her: ‘It is also conditional on Mrs. H’s decision’; ‘Yes’, Steffi answered and continued: ‘And I do not know what her decision is conditional on’. (Hamburg, September 2017).*

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The journal article and book chapter format provide limited space to elaborate on the broader context of the cases explored in this thesis. This chapter aims to contextualise my analysis of the Duldung regulation with the broader German migration regime as perspective. The chapter should also be read as a reflection on how doing fieldwork in the historical context of 2017 has influenced my research. Indeed, as De Genova argues:

Only by reflecting on the effects of sociolegal, historical contexts on research does it become possible to elaborate a critical [anthropological] perspective that is not complicit with the naturalization of migrant “illegality” (2002: 421).

To contextualise my work, the chapter outlines developments in German migration law, policy and practice since the end of the so-called ‘guest-worker regime’ in 1973. Doing this, I foreground what several scholars have argued is a discursive, legal and administrative ‘paradigm shift’ (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016: 246; Scherschel, 2016: 246;

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<sup>15</sup> ‘B1’ refers to a degree of competence in the German language according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Vocational training officially requires a B1 level.

Schultz, 2020a: 8) taking place during the past decade. This shift became particularly apparent in Merkel's third governing period (2014-2017), in the light of what German scholars often refer to as *Der lange Sommer der Migration* (the long summer of migration) of 2015 (Kasperek and Speer, 2015). It is defined through the opening of labour market access to asylum seekers and tolerated migrants and a rationality that posits asylum seekers and tolerated migrants as potential labour force (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Will, 2018; Laubenthal, 2019; Schammann, 2019).<sup>16</sup>

The *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung*, which is the empirical focus of this thesis, may seem insignificant in numerical terms. This chapter aims to illuminate the broader relevance of these two variations of the *Duldung* and the insights they provide into the temporal dynamics of German border practices. On 31 December 2019, 178,495 people held a *Duldung* (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2020).<sup>17</sup> Of these, 3,655 had an *Ausbildungsduldung*, according to the Federal Statistical Office of Germany.<sup>18</sup> In May 2018, Hamburg reported that the regional immigration authorities had issued a total of 344 toleration permits based on vocational training since the law went into effect in 2016 (FragDenStaat Behörde für Inneres und Sport Hamburg, 2018). My other case, the *Lampedusa-Duldung*, only pertained to 350 people.<sup>19</sup> Yet the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung* were immensely important for many people I met during fieldwork, as the ethnographic vignette above exemplifies. In 2017, Sharif, Redi and other young Afghans had poor prospects of receiving a positive answer to their applications for asylum. The vignette exemplifies the salience ascribed to vocational training as a path to regularisation, and indicates the resources allocated to personnel and institutional structures in support of vocational training. Indeed, in 2017 the *Ausbildungsduldung* shaped the public discourse on regularisation for rejected asylum seekers and people who were categorised as having 'bad prospects of staying', like Afghans such as Radi and Sharif. More generally, my work rests on

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<sup>16</sup> Caution must be taken when narrating something as a historical 'shift'. I spell out some of the challenges pertaining to this narrative framework in the next chapter. A key reason why I deploy the narrative framework of a 'shift' is because the sense of a novelty, change or shift was highly tangible during my fieldwork.

<sup>17</sup> Of these, 68 per cent were men and 32 per cent women.

<sup>18</sup> Numbers are provided in mail correspondence with Statistisches Bundesamt (20.07.2020).

<sup>19</sup> However, while 350 members of the *Lampedusa* in Hamburg were 'offered' the *Duldung*, only 150 accepted it.

the assumption that the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung* – the latter more indirectly, however – provide a lens to the chronopolitics of German bordering practices more broadly, and may be seen as emblematic of the aforementioned shift (see also Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Schultz, 2020a). This chapter seeks to bring empirical weight to this assumption.

The chapter starts by introducing the *Duldung* regulation and focuses on its temporal structure. Subsequently, I contextualise the *Ausbildungsduldung* in relation to previous regularisation programs. Following this, I address some key aspects of the historical development of Germany's approach to migration before I discuss the legal and administrative changes between 2015 and 2017 in more detail. At the end, I summarise and emphasise some core insights that this chapter provides for engaging with my papers.

## The *Duldung*: A temporary suspension of deportation

The *Duldung* is a legal instrument in German law that governs the lives of foreign nationals who are legally required to leave the country (*Ausreisepflichtig*) by temporarily delaying their deportation.<sup>20</sup> According to §4 of the German *Aufenthaltsgesetz* (Residence Act), all foreign nationals are required to have an *Aufenthaltstitel* (residence title) whilst in Germany. A person who does not have a residence permit is in principle obliged to leave the country and face mandatory deportation by the authorities. However, there are circumstances in which the state decides not to carry out deportations due to factual, legal or humanitarian reasons such as conditions in the asylum seeker's home country, the case of a petition, illness or pregnancy, or the lack of identity papers. Since 2015, enrolment in vocational training is also a reason for temporary suspension of deportation for some categories of migrants (predominantly rejected asylum seekers). In cases like these, the deportable migrant is granted the *Duldung*. Most people who had a *Duldung* in 2017 were rejected asylum seekers (Deutscher Bundestag, 2018).<sup>21</sup> Importantly, the *Duldung* is

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<sup>20</sup> It does so according to § 60a-d in the Residence Act.

<sup>21</sup> This is evident by looking at the nationality given of the people registered with a *Duldung*.

not a residence permit. It merely prescribes that deportation has been suspended. In other words, the tolerated migrants' presence on the sovereign territory is *illegal*, but not subject to legal sanctions (Rausch, 2016). Mitrić argues, while quoting Riecken (2006), that the Duldung in legal terms might best be understood as an 'in-between state of unlawful, non-sanctioned residence' (2013: 149).

A specific feature of the toleration permit is its temporal structure. It is the public officials in the Länder who decide on the duration of the toleration permit. Public officials in Hamburg told me that the prescribed standard time of duration of the Duldung was three months.<sup>22</sup> Yet during fieldwork, I observed toleration permits with a duration of anything between two weeks and six months or even longer. A Duldung holder is required to reappear at the immigration office at regular intervals to re-evaluate and possibly extend the toleration permit. In its temporal structure, the Duldung thus differs for example from the 'discretionary leave' in the UK, that normally has been granted for a duration of two to three years (Home Office, 2015).

However, while the Duldung is intended to regulate short-term suspensions of deportation, extensions are frequently granted because the reasons for the suspension of deportation are still in force. Many people remain in Germany with a Duldung for years. Amongst 180,124 people with a Duldung in Germany on the 31 December 2018, eighteen per cent had been tolerated for more than five years (Deutscher Bundestag, 2019).<sup>23</sup> While there has been little ethnographic research on the toleration permit, scholars such as Gehrig (2006), Mitrić (2013), Fontanari (2017), and Tize (2020) have shown how the toleration permit interrupts peoples' life-projects because of the threat of deportability and the imposition of temporariness and uncertainty regarding the future. As Castañeda notes, the continuous renewals make the Duldung a condition of 'hypervisibility' (2010: 253). This aspect distinguishes those holding a Duldung from other deportable populations in Germany.

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<sup>22</sup> Literature often points to six months as the 'standard' time of the Duldung (e.g. informationsverbund ASYL & MIGRATION, 2020b).

<sup>23</sup> Yet it should be noted that the official numbers are criticised for being inaccurate and too high (see, for instance, Bundesministerium des Innern für Bau und Heimat, 2019).

The temporalising function of the *Duldung* must also be seen in relation to how this legal and administrative construct performs an outspoken control over migrants' movements in space and deprives people of rights that are fundamental to the pursuit of life-projects. For the first three months, tolerated migrants are not allowed to leave the federal state they are assigned to under the dispersal system (so-called *Residenzpflicht*). This obligation is prolonged in cases where people are found uncooperative during the governments' deportation preparations, for example by failing to provide personal identification documents (Informationsverbund ASYL & MIGRATION, 2020a). In the event tolerated migrants receive social support, they are not allowed to move to another state notwithstanding the length of their stay. Furthermore, people holding a toleration permit are not allowed to leave the country nor to apply for family reunification. However, it should be noted that the *Duldung* regulation differentiates between people based on the cause of the suspended deportation and that there are different rights attached to the different variations of the *Duldung*. For example, people from so-called 'secure countries of origin', and people who are deemed uncooperative with the government in relation to their deportation process are prohibited from working (Voigt, 2020).<sup>24</sup>

## Duldung and 'earned' regularisation

Since the inception of the *Duldung* with the 1965 *Ausländergesetz* (Aliens Act), there has been few possibilities for tolerated migrants to regularise their stay through obtaining some form of *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* (residence permit) in Germany.<sup>25</sup> As Chauvin et al. note, the toleration permit has been 'the standard response to the prolonged presence of irregular migrants' (2013a: 126). Furthermore, the few measures that the German state has adopted to regularise long-term tolerated migrants during the past twenty years have been numerically insignificant.<sup>26</sup> This section gives

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<sup>24</sup> Voigt (2020) provides an overview of the regulation of asylum seekers and tolerated migrants' right to work. I note that there have been some changes since my fieldwork in 2017.

<sup>25</sup> The *Ausländergesetz* was replaced by the *Aufenthaltsgesetz* (Residence Act) in 2005.

<sup>26</sup> The *Duldung* has been compared to other forms of exceptional leaves to remain, found for example in the USA (Castañeda 2010). However, as Castañeda (2010) notes, there have been fewer ways, comparatively, for irregular migrants in Germany to legalise their stay through providing proof of economic and moral 'deservingness'.

a brief outline of such measures up until 2017. My aim is to provide a backdrop for understanding the prevalent public framing of the *Ausbildungsduldung* as a positive development (for tolerated migrants *and* the labour market), a perspective that my papers stress. Moreover, attention to previous regularisation programmes illustrates how the toleration permits studied in this thesis must be understood in the context of a rationality of ‘earned’ regularisation that characterises German migration management more broadly (Chauvin et al., 2013a; Paul, 2019).

In 2007, certain categories of tolerated people were given the opportunity to obtain a humanitarian residence permit, conditional on proof of employment and sufficient income (Sekino, 2010; Chauvin et al., 2013a; Scherschel, 2016). One stated intention behind this legal revision was to avoid long-term toleration permits or so-called *Kettenduldung* (chain *Duldung*) through continuous renewals. The regulation was, as Juretzka (in Scherschel, 2016) notes, a temporary *Amnestie unter Bedingungen* (conditional amnesty) and lasted until 2011. Of the some 220,000 tolerated migrants living in Germany in that period, approximately 30,000 managed to regularise their stay through the 2007 regulation (Scherschel, 2016).

In 2009, an amendment was made to the Residence Act that gave tolerated migrants who completed vocational training or higher education (*Hochschulstudium*) the possibility to obtain a residence permit (Sekino, 2010; Will, 2018). Then, in 2015, the parliament passed a law that recognised training as a legally valid reason for a toleration permit. The issuance of this toleration permit remained at the discretion of the responsible officials at the regional immigration authority level and the right was restricted to people under 21 years of age (Sass, 2017). Notably, these were generally shorter-term toleration permits that had to be renewed throughout the course of training.

This brief description shows that there have been some previous openings for regularisation based on vocational training. However, the *Ausbildungsduldung* that was introduced with the 2016 Integration Act contrasts in substantial ways with previous regulations because it was formulated as a *legal right* to a long-term

toleration permit throughout training (normally 2-3 years).<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, it did not, at least in the letter of the law, discriminate on the grounds of age. The Integration Act specifies that those who complete training will get a residence permit of two years duration if they manage to find work in the field in which they are trained. According to this temporal structure (training + work), the regulation was referred to in policy documents and public discourse as ‘the 3+2 regulation’. As I argue in my papers, this labelling of the *Ausbildungsduldung* indicates how the regulation works through techniques of periodising time in relation to a conditional future residence permit.<sup>28</sup>

As Chauvin et al. (2013a: 118) note, regularisation procedures ‘distinguish migrants who are considered deserving of legal status and those who are not’. A common denominator of the *Ausbildungsduldung*, the *Lampedusaduldung*, and the other regulations outlined above is that they make regularisation conditional on work and economic self-sufficiency. They are what scholars refer to as forms of ‘earned regularisations’ (Chauvin et al., 2013a: 126; Paul, 2019). This notion captures how regularisation becomes linked to employment and with professional and educational achievements. In a historical and comparative discussion of German labour migration management, Paul (2019) shows how the normative basis of the German Bismarckian welfare state model works to couple decisions on legal entrance and residence with labour market contributions. Through an impressive comparative examination of German, French and British labour migration policies, she highlights the comparative strength of a rationality of ‘earned migration’ and regularisation in German constructions of migrants’ il/legality (Paul, 2019: 109). Furthermore, she shows how Germany historically, in contrast to France and the UK, has privileged migrants with skills acquired in Germany (as students) in decisions on regularisation and residence. This privileging, she argues, gives evidence to how norms of earned regularisation based on work co-exist with norms that favour ‘culture-based modes of belonging’ (Paul, 2019: 109). Furthermore, and of interest concerning the *Ausbildungsduldung*, she shows how this entanglement of norms provides a backdrop for understanding why

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<sup>27</sup> The list of approved programmes is extensive. The participants in my study were enrolled in/considering enrolment in training courses to become e.g. mechatronics engineers, industry mechanics, merchants, construction mechanics, bricklayers, chefs, dental technicians, electronic technicians, elderly caregivers.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of periodisation, see chapter 5 and paper 2.



Germany has historically opened regularisation pathways for tolerated migrants based on vocational training.

It should also be noted here that whereas the notion of ‘earned regularisation’ pinpoints the salience of employment in regularisation procedures, scholars have shown how ‘performance[s] of reliability within precarious labour markets’ increasingly also ‘come to be framed as cultural requirements’, as Chauvin et al. (2013b: 82) write in a discussion of earned regularisation procedures in Europe. In Germany, this framing of earned regularisation as a ‘cultural requirement’ is evident in the concept of ‘good integration’ – a core concept of German migration policy since the turn of the decade (Geddes and Scholten, 2016). Indeed, while employment is a marker of ‘good integration’, other aspects of migrants’ character and performance are also central in integration discourses and policy programmes. This is visible, for example, in discussions about the so-called *Leitkultur* or ‘guiding national culture’ (Geddes and Scholten, 2016: 91; see also Hess, 2015). Paper 2 addresses the coupling of work and notions of ‘good’ integration in the context of the Lampedusa offer.

Working in the context of a border regime that structures regularisation as something that can be ‘earned’ in the future due to present achievements (vocational training, labour) has shaped my analysis of waiting and of the temporalities of bordering in this thesis. Yet while ‘earned’ regularisation is a feature of German migration governing more broadly, asylum seekers and tolerated migrants have historically largely been denied access to legal labour (Chauvin et al., 2013a; Scherschel, 2016; Maroufi, 2017), and to forms of “‘earned” socio-economic inclusion pathways’ (Paul, 2019: 79). Below, I turn to current developments towards ‘opening’ such ‘pathways’ to asylum seekers and tolerated migrants.<sup>29</sup> Before embarking on this, however, I will sketch some key developments of the German migration regime since the post-war years up until 2019.

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<sup>29</sup> However, irregular migrants were already framed as labour in a negative sense through the sorting out of ‘economic migrants’ from genuine ‘refugees’. Thanks to Chauvin for pointing this out (personal communication).

## From the guest-worker regime to the worlds 'most modern' migration law

The following overview of German migration regulation shows how economic interests and efforts to control migration have coexisted in shaping the state's management and governing of migration (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Paul, 2019). In this sense, present developments could be understood as new articulations of concerns and interests that have formed the German migration regime since the Second World War (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016). Migrant illegality and labour market statuses are produced according to such articulations.

In the post-war years, the German migration regime was characterized by what has come to be known as the Guest-worker regime (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Geddes and Scholten, 2016). During the economic upturn after the war, Germany had an immense need for labour power. Immediately after the war, the recruited labour mainly consisted of ethnic German refugees from Eastern Europe (so-called *Aussiedler*). Then, when the wall was built in 1961, the Bundesrepublik Deutschland (BDR) had to recruit migrant workers elsewhere. In the years between 1950 and 1973, workers were recruited mainly through bilateral agreements with southern European countries such as Italy, Turkey, Greece, Portugal and Yugoslavia. As Bojadzijeve et al. (2016) note, many of those who came were fleeing dictatorship in Portugal, Spain or Greece, but did not apply for asylum and were not recognized as asylum seekers. With the economic crisis in 1973, Germany launched a recruitment ban on labour migrations. This introduced a phase of restrictive immigration policies that lasted up until the turn of the century. The recruitment ban also marked the start of a time when undocumented migration became central in filling the continued need for cheap and flexible labour (Castañeda, 2007).

Simultaneously, in the years between 1988 and 1993, there was a rise in asylum seekers to Germany, that 'reached its peak' at about 438,000 applications for asylum in 1992 (Bundesamt für migration und Flüchtlinge, 2005: 14). However, in the early 1990s, a starkly polarised debate concerning asylum evolved. There was an increasing concern with *Überfremdung* (over-foreignization) and several deadly racist attacks on

migrants (Lewicki, 2018). At the same time, the reunification of Germany in 1989 sparked new concerns with the German national identity project and striving to become one *Volk* (Mitrić, 2013). The debates over asylum culminated in the so-called asylum compromise in 1993, that had the consequence of illegalising the stay of thousands of people. The asylum-compromise is often referred to as a turning point in the German approach to migration, in the sense that it severely restricted the access to asylum (Hentges, 2002; Castañeda, 2007; Laubenthal, 2019). In the years following 1993, asylum approval rates dropped significantly (Hentges, 2002: 117). The asylum compromise also resulted in drastically reduced benefits for refugees, including the standard of minimally available health care. At the same time, as Hentges (2002) notes, German asylum regulation and policy was shaped on the European level, through the Schengen agreement and the Dublin Convention (see also Laubenthal 2014).<sup>30</sup> These changes broadly resulted in more resources allocated to border control, and rising thresholds for asylum. For instance, as part of the legal changes in 1993, the concept of *sichere Herkunftsstaaten* (secure countries of origin) was transposed into German law, in accordance with EU regulation (Hentges, 2002; Gehrig, 2006). As a result, people from so-called secure countries of origin, defined at that time as Bulgaria, Ghana, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Hungary, would no longer have the chance to obtain asylum in Germany.

Below, I discuss developments in German asylum regulation and policies since 2015, and illuminate, for instance, the continued salience of the legal construct of secure countries of origin. However, first, I will briefly address some recent changes in the policy field of labour migration, as these give context to the legal reforms aimed at asylum seekers and tolerated migrants.<sup>31</sup> The restrictive line of labour migration largely lasted until the turn of the century. However, since 2000, significant changes have taken place in Germany's labour migration regime (Laubenthal, 2012; 2014; Paul, 2019).<sup>32</sup> Revisions of the 2005 and 2012 Residence Act are examples that

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<sup>30</sup> Hentges (2002) discusses how these policy changes were initially launched by Germany as one of the European 'core' countries.

<sup>31</sup> My use of the notion of 'labour migration' refers to the kind of mobility that is politically defined and thereby produced as legal labour migration.

<sup>32</sup> The extent to which these changes were mostly rhetorical or empirical changes is debatable. Paul argues that it was mostly rhetorical: '[w]hat changes with the policy reforms of the early 2000s then is not so much the

introduced several legal and administrative measures aiming at encouraging so-called highly skilled labour migration (Laubenthal, 2012; Geddes and Scholten, 2016).<sup>33</sup> Discussing these legal changes, Paul argues that they provide evidence of how (perceived) scarcity of labour works together with skill levels as ‘key selection principle[s]’ in the German management of migration (Paul, 2019: 107). She shows, moreover, how these principles have co-existed with ethno-cultural criteria and a favouring of EU residents and people from ‘rich, industrialized, and arguably culturally similar countries’ (2019: 113). The changes towards opening for and actively facilitating ‘qualified’ labour migration during the past twenty years culminated in a bundle of laws that were ratified by the German parliament on 6 June 2019. Amongst these laws was the *Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz* (Skilled Immigration Act). Minister of the Interior Seehofer proudly proclaimed this law by stating that Germany now had the most ‘modern’ migration law in the world’ (Kieler Nachrichten, 19.12.2018).

A feature of the Skilled Immigration Act and German labour migration management more generally is what critical border scholars such as Bojadzijeve and Mezzadra have referred to as ‘just-in-time’ and ‘to-the point’ management (2016: 265). These notions capture a form of migration management that targets the right amount of migrants, with the right skills, in relation to the right place, and at the right time (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016: 265). This temporal form of governing migration is interesting to mention in the context of my work on border temporalities. It highlights the multiple ways time is made subject to control in border practices and shows how time is used differently when it comes to the management of ‘legal’ labour migration and the governing of tolerated migrants who already are present on the sovereign territory (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016). Indeed, this difference becomes powerfully illuminated if turning attention to another law that was launched with the 2019 legal reform packet. This law, *Gesetz über Duldung bei Ausbildung and Beschäftigung* (act for toleration permit due to

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empirical reality of labor migration itself but the welcoming and proactive tone of regulation’ (2019: 4). It is outside the scope of this thesis to discuss the relation between the ‘empirical reality’ and ‘tone’ of labour migration regulation.

<sup>33</sup> Paul (2019: 107) shows how skills are constructed in German legalisation in terms of highly skilled, skilled, unskilled.

training and employment),<sup>34</sup> entailed a streamlining of the *Ausbildungsduldung*, but also a new toleration permit called *Duldung bei Beschäftigung* (employment *Duldung*).<sup>35</sup> The *Beschäftigungsduldung* is conditional on full-time work and is provided for thirty months. After this period, the person can apply for a residence permit. The issuing of the *Beschäftigungsduldung* as such, however, is conditional on a *previous* period of twelve months toleration and eighteen months full-time work. As the types of toleration permits discussed in my papers, the *Beschäftigungsduldung* works by carving up time in periods, by keeping migrants deportable and by ‘stretching’ time to produce workers who might ‘earn’ their regularisation. Indeed, this law – one that was launched after my fieldwork and which my thesis does not discuss – renders visible the broader relevance of my work.

The government framed the 2019 reform packet as a culmination of years of work towards a ‘modern’ migration regulation (notice how Seehofer grounds the value of the law by periodisation and reference to the law’s ‘modern’ quality).<sup>36</sup> However, it entailed regulations that severely cut back the rights of asylum seekers and other irregular migrants and opened for more coercive practices in the form of detention. As part of my discussion of the ‘shift’ towards a reframing of irregular migrants as potential labour, the next section addresses the tightening of German migration control since 2014. Indeed, to understand how migrants and migrations are produced as il/legal through changing conceptions of migrants-as-labour, attention must simultaneously be paid to practices that render migrants deportable and that govern their lives through material precarity, uncertainty and temporariness (Anderson, 2013).

## Der lange Sommer der Migration: Curtailed rights, accelerated procedures and increased temporariness

‘It will be hard, but we can make it if we move fast’, Mr. B. told Sharif. ‘It is evil. You have to find work, or else you have no prospects of staying, yet there is no work and no salary’, the social entrepreneur exclaimed. ‘You are in the age where there is this

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<sup>34</sup> My translation.

<sup>35</sup> This *Duldung* runs until 2023.

<sup>36</sup> I outline my theoretical approach to periodisation in chapter 5.

border: To stay here or not’, Steffi said in her effort to convince Sharif that his predicament was not ‘his fault’. These statements and the settings in which they were uttered illustrate the general sense of urgency and hardship that characterised my fieldwork.

The substantial increase in the number of asylum seekers to Germany in 2015 was followed by rapid and immense legal, institutional and administrative reforms (Pelzer and Pichl, 2016; Will, 2018; Schammann, 2019). This largely meant rising thresholds for asylum, increased use of detention, cutbacks in social rights, as well as procedures aimed at more efficient deportation practices (Pelzer and Pichl, 2016; Will, 2018). The government cut the financial support to asylum seekers and tolerated migrants to a minimum, whilst extending the time asylum seekers were obliged to live in reception centres from three to six months (Pelzer and Pichl, 2016). Moreover, regulations pertaining to deportation were severely tightened. For instance, legal changes made it increasingly difficult to obtain a deportation suspension because of health issues.

As Scherschel notes, the legal reforms carried forth in these years illuminate how Germany increasingly differentiates between asylum seekers based on ‘ethno-national’ criteria (2016: 257, my translation). One example of this practice of differentiation is the administrative instrument of defining people according to (good or bad) *Bleibeperspektive* (prospects of staying), which was introduced with the so-called *Asyl Pakete 1* (asylum package 1) in 2015. This regulation was launched with the intention to accelerate asylum procedures and to enable ‘early integration’ (Schultz, 2020b). The administrative instrument differentiates between people based on their nationality and defines their ‘prospects to stay’ based on previous rates of positive decisions for that nationality category, with 50 per cent protection rate being the defining threshold (Pro Asyl, 2019). The introduction of this administrative instrument had consequences for Afghan asylum seekers, for example, whose protection rate ‘dropped’ below 50 per cent in 2017.<sup>37</sup> People categorised as having bad prospects are denied access to language and integration courses. Afghans were the third largest category of asylum

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<sup>37</sup> The protection rate for Afghan nationals in Germany in 2015 was 72.2 per cent. In 2016 it was 55.8 per cent. In comparison, the protection rate in France was respectively 80.9 per cent (2015) and 82.4 per cent (2016) (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2016).

seekers to Germany and Hamburg in 2017 (Bundesamt für migration und Flüchtlinge, 2018), and constituted one of the main categories of people I worked with (see chapter 4). Another example of the practice of differentiating between people based on national criteria is the body of laws passed between 2015 and 2017 that targeted people from so-called secure countries of origin. Like the instrument of prospects of staying, these laws were launched with the stated intention to speed up the processing of asylum applications. For instance, the deadline for appealing for nationals from ‘secure countries’ was cut to one week.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, people from ‘secure countries’ are banned from working – including if their deportation is suspended through the *Duldung*. Additionally, the opportunity to obtain residence through vocational training is largely denied for people for countries defined as ‘secure’.

Pertaining to the temporal aspects of borders, the legal reform processes since 2014 exemplify the salience of techniques of acceleration to German and European border control, as these manifest through the design of efficient asylum and deportation procedures (Tazzioli, 2018; Jacobsen, 2020). However, techniques of acceleration effectively work together with techniques of deferral and suspension. For instance, the so-called *Asylpakete II* (asylum package II) from 2016 suspended family reunification for two years for people with a subsidiary protection.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, with the 2016 Integration Act, the standard minimum time that recognised refugees or people entitled to asylum must wait for a permanent residence permit was extended from three to five years. Furthermore, the Integration Act made residence conditional on economic self-sufficiency and mastering of language. Performance-based rights were thus made ‘relevant for approved asylum seekers’, as Will (2018: 178) notes in a discussion of recent legal changes.

## Tolerated migrants as potential labour power

The introduction of performance-based criteria for residence for approved asylum seekers illuminates a broader tendency towards a strengthened coupling of the policy

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<sup>38</sup> This was regulated through several laws. For a discussion of these regulations, see Pelzer and Pichl (2016) and Will (2018).

<sup>39</sup> Will (2018) provides an overview of the different protection statuses of German law.

‘field of humanitarian reception’ (Will 2018: 172) with the needs of the German labour market. Furthermore, it highlights how a logic of ‘earned’ regularisation also is in force for approved asylum seekers. While these developments might be traced back to the turn of the century, as the regularisation procedures from 2007 and 2009 exemplify, they have been particularly apparent in recent years (Chauvin et al., 2013a; Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Laubenthal, 2019). This section addresses the changes towards a reframing of asylum seekers and tolerated migrants as labour power potential and shows how research literature explains recent developments.

As mentioned, German migration regulation has been characterised by a strict regulation of access to labour for asylum seekers and tolerated migrants. However, this has changed considerably during the past few years (Scherschel, 2016; Paul, 2019). For instance, in 2014, the period during which asylum seekers and certain categories of tolerated migrants were prohibited from employment was reduced from nine to three months, in accordance with the Reception Conditions Directive of the EU’s Common European Asylum System. Another example is the partial abolition of the *Vorrangsprüfung* (priority check) in 2014, which had prescribed that employers were obliged to prioritise German residents ahead of foreign ones.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, *Flüchtlinge*<sup>41</sup> (refugees) have increasingly become the target of integration policies and programmes. The 2016 Integration Act provided the opportunity *and* made it compulsory for certain categories of asylum seekers to enrol in integration and language courses (people with good prospects of staying). Together with the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Beschäftigungsduldung*, these developments give substance to the claim that there has been change towards a reframing of asylum seekers and tolerated migrants as labour power since 2014 (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Schultz, 2020a). Generally, legal developments couple prospects of regularisation with employment and the acquisition of language skills.

Scholars emphasise different factors in their examinations and explanations of these developments. Based on many years of work on German labour migration policies,

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<sup>40</sup> The priority check was fully abolished in 2019.

<sup>41</sup> For a discussion of the term *Flüchtlinge* in the German context, see chapter 4.



Laubenthal (2019) argues that the recent changes towards an opening of the labour market for tolerated migrants and asylum seekers should be understood as being enabled and shaped by previous developments within the policy field of labour migration. Her interest is primarily to explore ‘spillover effects’ (Laubenthal, 2019: 413) between what she approaches as two different policy fields, and she takes less interest in the underpinning rationalities, normative basis and socio-economic processes pushing these developments. Other scholars emphasise that recent developments must be understood in the context of a changing German labour market with increasing demands for flexible labour, and a general turn towards a market orientation of the German welfare state (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Maroufi, 2017). Indeed, as Geddes and Scholten state in an analysis of broader developments in German migration regulation the past decades: ‘there is now a much greater reliance on the market to deliver “solutions” as a result of the liberalisation of the German labour market and welfare state’ (2016: 94). Maroufi (2017) mobilises concepts from the political economy of labour, and argues that the change of policy towards (rejected) asylum seekers the past years must be contextualised within the general turn towards an activating labour market policy. This has been central to the German welfare state since the introduction of the so-called Hartz-reforms in 2000 (see also Chauvin et al., 2013a; Geddes and Scholten, 2016). Activation policy, she argues, ‘tr[ies] to influence either the employability of people or the willingness or compulsion to work’ (Maroufi, 2017: 24). In asylum procedures, activation policies manifest in policies that make welfare benefits conditional on migrants’ willingness to accept job offers by the state – including so-called one Euro job opportunities.<sup>42</sup> The German welfare state’s coupling of residence rights with labour participation and economic contribution forms an important backdrop for understanding the peculiar legal and temporal structure of the *Lampedusaduldung*, as discussed in paper 2.

Scholars have also emphasised the driving role of economic actors and ‘migration experts’ in various research institutes in enabling the opening of labour market access

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<sup>42</sup> The Hartz-reforms introduced temporary jobs that were compensated with one Euro per hour (additional to unemployment benefits) for unemployed people. As Maroufi (2017: 25) notes: ‘The jobs are meant to serve public interest and to keep unemployed people active’.

to asylum seekers and tolerated migrants, and in ‘securing’ legal status for tolerated migrants’ while they are in training (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Laubenthal, 2019; Schammann, 2019). One such example is that of the *Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände* (BDA, The Confederation of German Employers’ organizations). In 2015, they demanded that the hurdles to vocational training for asylum seekers and tolerated migrants should be abolished (Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände, 2015; Bojadzijeve et al., 2016). More generally, economic actors have pushed for what they call a *Spurwechsel* (lane-change) model within migration regulation. The spatiotemporal metaphor of lane-change signifies a policy targeted at enabling people who have entered the territory illegally as asylum seekers to obtain a residence status as labour migrants (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Laubenthal, 2019). As Schammann notes: ‘In the “Spurwechsel model”, individual performance shows the way out of the insecure status of asylum seeker and into the conditionally less precarious status of a labour migrant’ (Schammann, 2019: my translation). Paper 3 engages critically with the spatiotemporal metaphor of ‘lane-change’.

The ‘lane-change’ discourse is premised on concerns with present and future labour scarcity. Indeed, scholars working in the German context have illuminated the centrality of demographic rationalities and knowledge production in shaping German migration regulation and discourse the past decades (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016; Schultz, 2018; Paul, 2019).<sup>43</sup> As Laubenthal (2019) shows through a media content analysis, the term *Fachkräftemangel* (shortage of qualified labour), in the years from 2000 onwards, was gradually established in German public discourse as a political problem that needed to be solved partly through migration. Of particular interest for my study, scholars have also accentuated the role of perceived (short and long-term) labour shortage and concern for the ageing population in pushing the reframing of tolerated migrants as potential skilled labour power (Bojadzijeve et al., 2016). Yet as Paul notes,

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<sup>43</sup> As Schultz (2018) shows, demographic concerns are also the basis of developments of labour migration policies at the EU level.

it is only recently that tolerated migrants have been ‘drawn into the logic of the national skilled shortages imaginary’ (2019: 168).

Public officials whom I interviewed emphasised shortage of labour power as an enabling factor for the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the general changes towards opening the labour market for asylum seekers and tolerated migrants. An interview I conducted with a bureaucrat in the *Behörde für Arbeit, Soziales, Familie und Integration* (Ministry of Labour, Social and Family Affairs and Integration) in Hamburg, exemplifies how demographic concerns shape understandings of problems and solutions of migrant irregularity. I asked her how the *Ausbildungsduldung* was enabled politically. She answered by outlining the developments in the field of labour migration since 2000 and argued that the *Ausbildungsduldung* must be understood as part of these broader changes and as politically enabled in response to concerns about future workforce shortage. A bureaucrat in the *Bundesministerium Für Arbeit und Soziales* (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), presented a similar narrative. I asked her how she understood the role of economic actors in pushing the regulation. She said:

The reasons are related to the fact that in Germany one speaks about demographic change and age pyramid. There are a lot of companies who have shortage of skilled labour. They understand the refugees as skilled labour potential (*Fachkräftepotenzial*). They had worries, that when they hired a migrant with uncertain prospects of staying, that this person could be deported at any time. A big risk. This is the reason why the economy pushes... the economic aspects are at the forefront. (Telephone interview, January 2018).

Accordingly, she clarified, economic stakeholders lobbied for a regulation that would enable a long-term toleration permit for tolerated migrants in vocational training. It could be noted, though, that while vocational training targets migrants as (potential) ‘skilled’ labour, the general opening of the labour market also pertains to migrants as ‘unskilled’ labour.

My papers discusses the role of demographic concerns in producing knowledge about solutions and problems associated with migrant irregularity. In this endeavour, I am indebted to Schultz's (2015; 2018) work on what she calls the 'demographization' of several German policy areas, including the field of migration. By the notion of 'demographization', Schultz refers to an

epistemology within which social conflicts and problems are interpreted as demographic conflicts or problems and within which demographic or population policies are highlighted as solutions (2018: 2).

Demographization, furthermore, accentuates how 'speculative future knowledge influences current migration policy rationales' (Schultz, 2018: 1). Interestingly, thus, Schultz highlights how demographic knowledge is informed by a specific temporal reasoning. This is a reasoning that serves to legitimise policies in the present by judging them from the perspective of the future well-being of the population (see paper 1).<sup>44</sup> However, the notion of 'demographization' also captures a specific spatial rationality. Indeed, Schultz argues, demographic rationalities are 'shaped by a strong methodological nationalism constituting national populations as if in a national "container"' (2018: 5). This thesis does not engage with the accuracy or 'reality' of demographic knowledge claims. It is the spatiotemporal claims and assumptions embedded in and performed through demographic knowledge production that are of interest for my work.

### A temporal order of 'waiting well': Some concluding remarks

*'We waited for almost 4 years... and in that time we could only go to a Deutsch [German] course to learn something, although there were opportunities to go to Ausbildung... But, normally, when we came here, it is like... we are already grown up, we already have working experience, so the more we wait, the more we stay with Duldung, people forget all these [experiences], the past. You know, life has to be continued... When we wait, we have breakages, so you lose all*

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<sup>44</sup> Schultz deploys a theoretical framework of governmentality and biopolitics. For a discussion of such an approach to power and knowledge, see chapter 5.

*your past working experience, so then you have to learn another thing'. (Tim, former member of the Lampedusa in Hamburg, who accepted the Lampedusaduldung. The interview was conducted in December 2017. By that time, he had acquired a temporary residence permit).*

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In the concluding pages of this chapter, I spell out some of the insights provided in terms of bringing context to my examination of the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung*. The literature review and empirical discussion in this chapter illuminate the strong 'link between work and equivalent social and residence rights' in German migration management (Paul, 2019: 167). This link is an important backdrop for understanding the specific temporal structure and the embedded norms that are illuminated in my examination of the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung*. Furthermore, by discussing recent legal regulations and contextualising these historically, this chapter has given empirical evidence to my claim that the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung* form part of a broader shift towards a reframing of asylum seekers and tolerated migrants as potential labour power.

In my papers, I show how the *Lampedusaduldung* and the *Ausbildungsduldung* are legally and discursively structured as 'lanes' towards residence. I argue, that 'on these lanes', migrant irregularity *and* (future) worker statuses are produced through temporal techniques of suspension, deportability, periodisation, bracketing and conditional future promises. This chapter has showed that such techniques of bordering are more generally operative, for instance, pertaining to how residence permits for approved asylum seekers are made increasingly temporary and conditional on work. The regulations that open 'lanes' towards residence on the normative basis that regularisation can be 'earned' through labour market contributions should be understood as practices of power that produce certain forms of migrant irregularity and legality as well as certain types of workers (Anderson, 2010; 2013; Chauvin et al., 2013a; Bryan, 2018). Based on many years of research on British and EU migration control, Anderson contends that one way in which 'immigration controls produce

status' (2013: 89) is through 'the institutionalization of uncertainty' (2013: 89). Her concern is with labour status. By the notion of 'institutionalization of uncertainty', she captures how '[e]nforced temporariness and uncertainty over visa renewals or family reunification' might make migrants more inclined to take advantage of work opportunities 'however unappealing they may be' (2013: 89). Hence, she argues, uncertainty – as a technique of organising time *and* a lived relation to time – produces migrants' positions on the labour market. Indeed, the introductory ethnographic account highlights how the uncertainty of the future and the threat of deportation work to compel Sharif and Radi to find an internship and start vocational training – dynamics that I explore in paper 1. However, as Maroufi observes, while the *Ausbildungsduldung* improves the security of a migrant's stay for a period, it renders people dependent on their employers. The *Ausbildungsduldung*, she argues: 'exert[s] pressure on refugees to integrate economically in a labour market whose precarity and segmentation allow for insecure and exploitative employment relations' (Maroufi, 2017: 24-25). More generally, in the context of 'earned' regularisation programs, 'employment precariousness' also becomes the source of 'legal precariousness', as Chauvin et al. (2013a: 118) write in a discussion of the role of employment provisions in European regularisation programmes. My work on the *Lampedusaduldung* illuminates these dynamics (paper 2),

Through the *Ausbildungsduldung*, people are produced as *Fachkräfte* (qualified/skilled labour). Yet skills, as a constructed category in legislation and policy discourse, 'needs to be problematized', as Paul (2019: 137 ) writes. The quote above from Tim illuminates that, from his perspective, the *Ausbildungsduldung* forms part of a broader process of deskilling. Like many of the Lampedusa migrants, Tim had completed higher education in Ghana, yet his skills were not acknowledged in Germany. 'Waiting' as a tolerated migrant, he explains, involves 'breakages' and the loss of work experience. Indeed, his comment problematises the political dominant imaginary of training as a path to acquire skills, and illuminates how political discourses about 'skills' and 'skilling' should be critically examined for their embeddedness in broader relations of power (Man, 2004; Kofman, 2012; Sprung, 2013). Indeed, this chapter's discussion of recent changes within German migration

regulation and discourse illuminates how ethno-national criteria, legal status, and classed notions of labour intersect in shaping migrants' uneven positions within recent procedures for earned regularisation based on 'skilled' labour. This attests to the value of an intersectional approach (Cassidy et al., 2017) in the examination of the present reframing of asylum seekers and tolerated migrants as 'potential labour'.

Intersectionality is understood here in line with Cassidy et al. (2017: 140) in terms of relations of power that are 'mutually constituted and shaped'. Such an approach entails acknowledging that interrelations of power such as class, health, gender, ethnicity and race work together to form people's located positions within the German border timespace (see also Sharma, 2014). I advance this line of thinking in the next chapter, by focusing attention on the racialisation inherent to demographic rationalities and an gendered assumptions of labour underpinning the construction of 'skills'.

This chapter has accentuated the role of employment in the 'political economy of migrant legality'; that is; in the political discourses and policies that render migrants more or less illegal (Chauvin et al., 2013a: 118). However, such discourses and policies should also be understood as articulating a 'moral economy' (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas, 2012).<sup>45</sup> With this notion, Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas capture the assumptions or 'immanent logics' (2012: 247) embedded in migration regulation, which serve to differently frame migrants' civic value and their 'deservingness' of future residence (see also Fassin, 2005). My papers illuminate how migration regulation embeds an expectation that migrants must endure suspension, deportability and uncertainty in particular, and in the 'right' ways (paper 1). Put another way, my papers direct attention to what could be approached as the normativities attached to waiting within the moral economy of migrant irregularity.<sup>46</sup> In paper 1, I draw on the words of a migrant interlocutor to develop my argument that migrants encounter an expectation to 'wait well' (*gut warten*). As my thesis shows, 'waiting well' involves being 'active' (defined as learning language, working) and goal-oriented, and grasping the 'opportunities' provided by the state and the market.

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<sup>45</sup> I draw on Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas' reworking of Fassin's (2005) concept.

<sup>46</sup> Chapter 5 provides a theoretical framework for thinking about time and normativity.

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I want to end this chapter by suggesting that the migrant subject who is expected to wait well, to work and become ‘integrated’ is predominantly constituted as a self-contained individual. Indeed, this individual is also constituted through ethno-national criteria and intersecting axes of differentiation such as age, health, class, race and gender (see next chapter). However, here it is the inscription of the subject as an *individual* that I want to focus on. This inscription is visible, for instance, in how family reunification is suspended for migrants in training (see also Goodman and Wright, 2015). The figure of the self-contained individual is also embedded in the *Ausbildungsduldung*. Like Sharif, other young Afghan asylum seekers I met were targeted as individuals, and expected to make up their mind, make a decision and go ‘towards the goal’ as one social worker once told Sharif (see chapter 5). Still, while people went ‘step by step’ through work towards a residence permit in Germany, people they loved or depended on moved in other directions (found new boyfriends, grew old) or got stuck in their lives (for example, due to lack of sufficient remittances for paying school fees). A central argument in my thesis is that to grasp the violence of waiting as a governmental technique, a temporal concept of waiting is needed that can encompass people’s relationally lived and embodied ‘now(s)’ (paper 3).





## Chapter 3. Problematizing context: The uneven politics of ‘waiting well’

*I took a seat in the waiting room of the health clinic where I did fieldwork. After a while Sam appeared. She was a Ghanaian woman in her thirties and had lived in Germany for about three years. We had met several times before, and she sat down with me to chat while she waited. She told me that she had stopped working. I knew she had been cleaning the house of an older woman in Blankenese – one of the richer areas in Hamburg. ‘I am pregnant’, she said. I congratulated her, although a little hesitatingly, because I knew she had no permanent place to live and that she was exhausted from trying to make a living under harsh conditions. ‘Are you happy?’ I asked. ‘Yes’, she smiled. She told me she had a meeting with a representative from the Hamburg Flüchtlingszentrum - a publicly funded organisation that assists irregular migrants with legal issues in the event of pregnancy. As part of this, they support women in getting a Duldung. This Duldung is given from six weeks before to eight weeks after delivery and authorises access to prenatal care and shelter and covers the costs of delivery. The week before I had joined her to visit an organisation providing free legal advice for irregular migrants, as Sam wanted to find out whether she could apply for asylum to ‘get into a camp’, as she said. However, because she was a Dublin migrant and from a secure country of origin, the lawyer told her there was nothing they could do for her. ‘If you seek asylum, they will deport you to Italy’, he said. Sam hoped that the pregnancy could provide her with shelter, at least for the time of the pregnancy. While getting the Duldung meant she would have to register with the immigration authorities, this was a risk she was willing to take.*

*I sat with Sam for a while before I accompanied her to the consultation. Afterwards, I picked up my bike to go to the camp where I also did fieldwork. This was only a couple of weeks before the federal election of 2017, which would give the right-wing party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) their first*

*seats in the parliament. Along the way, I passed several of their posters. Some of them had a picture of a white pregnant woman. The caption read: ‚Neue Deutsche? Machen wir selber‘ (New Germans? We make them ourselves). (Hamburg, September 2017).*

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In the previous chapter, I contextualised my exploration of the toleration permit within broader shifts in the German migration regulation. Yet an important contribution of the feminist and post-colonial thinkers that I draw upon in this thesis is the acknowledgement that historical accounts always are narrated ‘from somewhere’. From their different points of departure, scholars such as Massey (2005) and Chakrabarty (2000) show how acts of narration easily conceal the (hi)stories’ partial character and might occlude power relations (see chapter 5). In a similar vein, to contextualise my work in relation to a historical ‘shift’ in German migration regulation, might conceal how people are unevenly located within the relations of power shaping this ‘shift’. For many reasons, related to her biography and health condition for instance, training was not a ‘lane’ or path that Sam saw as hers to follow. However, in the event that she *had* wanted to attend training, it would not have been legally available to her because she was a Dublin migrant and from a so-called secure country of origin. Indeed, the introductory vignette indicates the theme that I will discuss in this chapter: How people are differently and unevenly positioned on the new ‘lanes’ towards residence in Germany.

My papers analyse the temporal techniques and rationalities of the German border largely based on ethnographic work with people who had – or were legally eligible for - the *Ausbildungsduldung* or the *Lampedusaduldung*. Focusing on these categories of people enables me to give a timely and critical intervention in a context where the violence of waiting disappears in the public debate and might be hard to grasp analytically (see chapter 5). Nonetheless, I believe my papers gain from being situated within a larger discussion of the uneven temporal order of the German border (Sharma, 2014). Indeed, my analyses were informed by the insights I got from working with people who were not recognised as proper subjects for the *Ausbildungsduldung*, who

for various reasons did not understand training to be a possibility or who were prohibited from working. Such insights have informed my analysis of how the *Ausbildungsduldung* might produce different effects for young Afghans in relation to educational background, material resources and gendered obligations to care (paper 1). Moreover, working with Dublin migrants or people from secure countries of origin generally focused my attention on how migration regulation works to differentiate between migrants and produce migrant irregularity. Accordingly, I find it purposeful to present some of this research to provide a sense of my broader fieldwork and to contextualise the analyses in my papers. While my thesis argues that there is an expectation to ‘wait well’ embedded in the temporal order of the border, this chapter underlines an important aspect of this argument: It brings focus to how people are differently and unevenly positioned within the axis of differentiation shaping the temporal orders of borders. To paraphrase Massey out of context: The temporal order of ‘waiting well’ ‘needs differentiating socially’ (1994: 148; also Mountz, 2011).

This chapter proceeds as follows: First, I address the uneven politics of ‘waiting well’ through a discussion of the Dublin Regulation. The previous chapter showed how migration regulation is formed through economic and demographic imperatives. Addressing the Dublin Regulation allows me to illuminate how migration regulation shapes and frames who is effectively recognisable as potential labour (see also Chauvin et al., 2013a). Second, I address the racialisation of demographic knowledge production. Third, focusing on the work Sam performed (domestic care work), I discuss how gendered conceptions of labour are inscribed in German migration regulation and the temporal order of ‘waiting well’. Generally, this chapter highlights how the obligation to ‘wait well’ also takes the form of a ‘privilege’, to paraphrase Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas’ (2014: 422) argument about migrant deservingness.

### Suspending the possibility to ‘wait well’: The Dublin system

As previously mentioned, people from countries categorised as ‘secure countries of origin’, such as Sam who held a Ghanaian passport, are not allowed to work and are

not eligible for the *Ausbildungsduldung*.<sup>47</sup> There are also other criteria that exclude people from training and/or legal work; for instance, having a criminal record or being deemed uncooperative with the government regarding their own deportation process (Voigt, 2020). Moreover, unauthorised migrants (not registered with a *Duldung*) are not a target for regularisation schemes or considered in policy discourses on migrant labour in Germany (Paul, 2019: 159-160).

In Sam's case, the fact that she had already had her fingerprints taken in Italy also would have excluded her (at least temporarily) from the right to work and from taking vocational training *if* she had registered with the government. Sam was one of many people I met in Hamburg who was a so-called 'Dublin migrant'. In fact, more than half of the migrant research participants in this study were categorised as such. This grounds my focus on the Dublin Regulation in my endeavour to differentiate the temporal order of 'waiting well' and to problematise the 'shift' discourse (while partaking in it). The European Dublin regulation is seen as a cornerstone of the Common European Asylum System. It is an EU law that determines which EU Member State is responsible for the examination of an application for asylum submitted by persons seeking international protection under the Geneva Convention and the EU Qualification Directive.<sup>48</sup> The regulation aims to determine the member state responsible for an asylum claim and provides for the deportation of an asylum seeker to that state. In recent years, Germany has had a dominant role in the operation of the Dublin system, in terms of out-going requests to other EU member states to 'transfer' (as it is called in policy documents) Dublin migrants. The country initiated 64,267 Dublin procedures in 2017 (aida Asylum Information Database, 2018).

The number of initiated Dublin procedures indicate that the Dublin Regulation has a profound impact on thousands of people's lives. This impact became tangible in my fieldwork: While many of the people with whom I spent time in the camps hastened to language courses or to work, studied or visited training fairs, the days of Dublin migrants grew long. Dublin migrants have a work ban and are not eligible for official

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<sup>47</sup> In the case of the *Lampedusaduldung*, this regulation was set aside.

<sup>48</sup> Regulation No. 604/2013; also called the Dublin III Regulation; previously the Dublin II Regulation and Dublin Convention.

language courses or for the *Ausbildungsduldung*. The reason for their exclusion from the latter is, as described in the Residence Act, that the Dublin decision as such is framed as *Maßnahmen zur Aufenthaltsbeendigung* (a process of preparation for deportation).<sup>49</sup> In other words, their deportation is discursively and temporally structured as *always already pending*. The time limit for ‘transfer’ of Dublin migrants to the responsible country is six months. After this deadline, people have the right to a regular asylum procedure in Germany. If people ‘go underground’ (*untertauchen*) during the procedures, and deportation cannot be carried out, the deadline is extended to eighteen months. Yet while a Dublin decision is framed as a process of a soon-to-come deportation, statistics from 2017 show that 89 per cent of the Dublin procedures that Germany initiated did *not* result in ‘transfer’ (aida Asylum Information Database, 2018: 5). Furthermore, Dublin deportations to several countries, such as for instance Bulgaria, have been suspended by the courts in recent years due to conditions in the responsible country. Because of this practice, some of the people with whom I spent time had been living in Hamburg with a Dublin decision longer than six or eighteen months.

The exclusion of people from training, work, and integration measures based on the Dublin decision or the construct of secure countries of origin illuminates how the (materially effective) recognition of migrants as potential labour force is discursively and materially produced through migration law and its implementation. Having stated this, it is crucial to acknowledge that laws and regulations are normative and value-laden constructs (Valverde, 2015). In recent years, scholars have explored how the Dublin regulation and the construct of secure countries of origin serve to discursively mark migrants as ‘bogus asylum seekers’ and ‘criminals’, and to construe them as illegal migrants (Schuster, 2011; Lohse, 2018). An example of such discursive marking is how the EU Commission writes about the necessity of hindering the ‘disruption of the Dublin mechanism by *abuses* and *asylum shopping* by applicants for

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<sup>49</sup> According to § 60c Abs. 2 Satz 5 of the Residence Act.

and beneficiaries of international protection’ (European Commission, 2016: 3, my italics).<sup>50</sup>

## The racialisation of demographic knowledge production

In paper 2, I contextualise the offer to the Lampedusa migrants within the broader German migration regime and argue that the offer should be understood in the context of the centrality of demographic concerns to this policy field. On this basis, I argue that the Lampedusa migrants and the German population are tied to ‘the same future’ through discourses of demographic change (paper 2). In the following, I will highlight the racial aspects of the German border regime by focusing attention on demographic knowledge production. Thereby, I also bring a nuance to my argument in paper 2. Indeed, the notion of the ‘same’ (demographic and economic sustainable) future, needs ‘socially differentiating’, to borrow Massey’s phrase above.

Paul’s (2019) empirical and historically detailed work on German labour migration provides a point of departure to trace the racial dimensions of German migration governing as these are articulated in demographic discourses. Her research on legal(ised) labour migration illustrates that while concerns regarding future labour shortage are central to migration management, migrant skilled workers are only seen as supplementary to ‘German’ workers (while the ‘need’ for unskilled workers generally remains unthematized) (also Schultz, 2015). Furthermore, Paul argues that there are:

instances of outspoken exclusion of non-European workers in Germany, where decreasing migrant skill level implies increasing selection of workers by (largely European) countries of origin (2019: 198).

Paul’s analysis of German migration law and policy accentuates how ‘racist and class-selective differentiation is central to demographic rationalities’, as Schultz (2018: 5)

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<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, concerning border temporalities, the European Commission (2016:3) argues that one way to avoid ‘abuse’ is to ‘speed up’ asylum procedures and make them more convergent.

writes in her study of German demographic rationality.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, in her study of German migration and family policies, Schultz (2015; 2018) comes to similar conclusions as Paul. Through a close reading of German family policies and debates on migration and demographic decline, she shows how demographic discourses privilege not only certain types of workers, but also certain kinds of children and mothers. Also, Heide Castañeda's (2008) long-term research with women living irregularly in Berlin illuminates this latter dimension of privileging/exclusion. Drawing on ethnographic work with one Ghanaian pregnant woman, she argues that pregnancy in Germany 'is hierarchically arranged so that it is empowered for some but stigmatized for others' (2008: 341). Embarking on German demographic discourses from the perspective, not of labour, but demographic decline more generally, Castañeda shows how this policy discourse is underpinned by the assumptions that:

the future of the German population, as a demographic—even biological—unit, rests on the reproduction of “real” Germans and is threatened by high fecundity among foreign-born populations (2008: 344).

The AfD-poster of the white pregnant woman that I passed riding my bike, after Sam had told me the happy news about her pregnancy, illuminates how demographic concerns are used in right-wing political discourses. However, as the works of Schultz, Castañeda, and Paul show, racial and class-selective differentiation is more fundamentally inscribed into demographic future imaginaries. While tolerated migrants increasingly are drawn 'into the logic of the national skilled shortages imaginary' (Paul, 2019: 168), they are done so in uneven ways, along lines of legal status, race and class. Furthermore, the future inscribed in *and* produced 'in the present' by demographic knowledge production – the future to which I argue that the Lampedusa migrants are tied - is already racialised and classed (also Povinelli, 2011; Ramsay, 2017b; Smith and Vasudevan, 2017).

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<sup>51</sup> Schultz draws on Foucault's (2003) notion of racism to understand what she calls the 'the relational moment of racism in demographic strategies' (Schultz, 2015: 347). In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault links racism not only to theories of (biological) inferiority, but, as Schultz accentuates, 'also to a specific relationship between life in general, which has to be protected or optimized, and the extinction (or exclusion) of some population groups, seen to be necessary to achieve this aim' (2015: 347).



## Domestic care work is no lane to the future

In the remaining part of this chapter, I direct attention to gender as an axis of differentiation within the temporal order of ‘waiting well’. I do so by tuning in on the work Sam performed –informal domestic care work. More specifically, I address how assumptions about work shape regularisation procedures along gendered lines (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas, 2014; Schultz, 2015).

As noted above, Sam had just quit working. She had been earning an income by cleaning for an elderly German woman. Accordingly, she was one of the many migrant women who work irregularly and without legal residence within the domestic and care work sector in Germany and Europe– a sector defined by Andersson (2000) as the ‘three C’s’: cooking, cleaning, and caring. On a global scale, 80 per cent of domestic workers are women (PICUM, 2019).

As Schwenken writes, there is a European ‘trend towards outsourcing care and household services to undocumented or semi-documented migrants’ (2013: 135). In the German context, guesstimates indicate between 100,000 to 300,000 migrant domestic workers in German homes (Kniejska, 2015). However, as Kniejska (2015) takes care to emphasise in a recent study, it is impossible to be certain about this, as many are not registered. In the German context, Schwenken argues that the official policy has been to:

turn a blind eye to the demand for domestic and care services, neither expanding the public care sector nor creating regular immigration venues for domestic and care workers. While there is a legal recruitment scheme for household aids for persons in need of care [...], the administrative hurdles are high; very few household workers are employed under this scheme (Schwenken, 2013: 135; also Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2010).

The lack of regular immigration venues for domestic care workers might be taken as an indication of how this labour has tended to fall outside ‘the economic framework of evaluation’, as Adam (2002: 19) writes in her study of the temporal politics of domestic care work globally. Indeed, Schultz (2015) draws a similar conclusion in a

study of the racialised and gendered rationalities of German demographic strategies. Through a careful reading of policy papers, debates, and legal reform work, she shows how care- and domestic work are not recognised as needed labour to ensure the *Nachhaltigkeit* (sustainability) of the German economy and its (future) labour force.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, her study illuminates how German migration regulation broadly does not include the sector of domestic and care work as ‘demographically relevant “qualified migration”’ (Schultz, 2015: 351).<sup>53</sup> Rather, she argues, care work is present in these documents by its absence as a domain for investment. Returning to the specific case of Sam, the work she did in the elderly woman’s home in Blankenese would not make her eligible for a work-based residence permit. While demographic decline and labour shortage concerns have been key in the reframing of tolerated migrants as potential labour, the invisibility of domestic care work in demographic strategies and in the reshaping of migration regulation illuminates how notions such as ‘potential labour’ and ‘skill’, and the perception of ‘labour shortages’, are gendered in profound ways. Yet it should be noted here that these policies might change and that gender intersects with other axis of differentiation to produce migrant statuses ‘in particular historical moments, within particular social, economic and political contexts’ (Cassidy et al., 2018: 140). As Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas (2013a) highlight in a comparative work on employment-based regularisation programmes in Europe, countries such as Italy, Spain and Austria have to various degrees made domestic care work a justified basis for migrant admissions and/or regularisation (also Bonizzoni, 2017).

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<sup>52</sup> However, while domestic care work broadly is not recognised as ‘demographically relevant’ (Schultz, 2015: 351), Schultz shows how German demographic policies nevertheless aim to recruit domestic care workers with the purpose to ease the time-conflicts of white German middle-class women (so they decide to get more children). Recalling work on relational time by feminist scholars such as Sharma (2014) (see chapter 5), Schultz stresses the relation between the ‘time conflicts of migrants and poor, often also migrant, people. The time conflicts of the latter are produced as they alleviate the time conflicts of the middle-class. However, as Schultz notes (2015: 351), in contrast to the time conflicts of the white middle classes, the time conflicts of the poor do not appear in demographic government strategies. In other words, the need to alleviate the time conflict between work and labour for middle class women ‘legitimizes the inequitable orchestration of the time and labour of others’, to paraphrase Sharma (2014: 20).

<sup>53</sup> There are some exceptions, see Paul (2019: 112-113, 205).

## Where and when do you study?

*December 2017. Hamburg at its coldest, windy and rainy. I had tea with Mona (39), a Syrian nurse and Dublin migrant, in her 12-square-metre camp barrack. Her husband lay on the bed, while their two small children played around us. The left white barrack wall was covered with German words and phrases neatly scribbled with a black marker pen.*

*Mona: 'I cannot study German here'.*

*KA: 'Where do you study?'*

*Mona (laughing): 'Here'.*

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Addressing the gendered dimensions of labour as I do above prompts attention more generally to the effects on women of the tightening of German asylum legislation and the increasing relevance of performance-based criteria for residence (Will, 2018). This is not a line of investigation that I have pursued in my ethnographic exploration of the Duldung regulations. My three papers foreground the experiences and situated knowledges of men.<sup>54</sup> In the case of the Lampedusaduldung, the reason is that all members of the Lampedusa in Hamburg were men.<sup>55</sup> In relation to the Ausbildungsuldung, my focus on men had to do with the fact that most of the women I worked with were not legally eligible for the Ausbildungsuldung. Many were Dublin migrants. Others were categorised as coming from a secure country of origin or had not to registered with the government. While I have not explored the effects of recent legal developments on women, my fieldwork allows me to make some reflections. By providing some reflections in the last pages of this chapter, I also illuminate the necessity of bringing social differentiation to the German border timespace, which was this chapter's starting point.

<sup>54</sup> For a theoretical discussion of situated knowledges and a reflection on my focus on men, see chapter 4.

<sup>55</sup> This thesis does not investigate the historical struggle of the Lampedusa in Hamburg. I do not know why all the members of the group were men.

In a discussion about the recent opening of the labour market to asylum seekers, Scherschel, a long-term scholar on gender and migration in Germany, notes that ‘it remains to be seen’ whether ‘women will be targeted as members of a family’ or as ‘subjects for labour market policy’ (2016: 259, my translation). In the camps where I did fieldwork, the camp management actively targeted people for vocational training and internships. Indeed, they accentuated competence in labour market relations and labour ‘brokering’ as an asset in the competition with other non-governmental organisations for contracts in future tender processes. As I show in chapter 2, camp volunteers also actively worked to support migrants in training, internship and work. Generally, the migrants who were targeted as subjects for work and vocational training in the camps were men who were ‘young’ (under 30). Yet by being present in the camp, I witnessed how volunteers and camp employees also targeted some of the few young, ‘non-parent’, Syrian and Afghan women I met as (potential) ‘workers’ and ‘students’. Federal information material pertaining to refugees, work and training accentuate the importance of recruiting women (for instance, Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, 2018). Recounting my ethnographic data here, I do not intend to suggest they provide the answer to Scherschel’s question. They certainly do not, not only because of the legal status of the women I met, but because the vast majority of the camps’ residents were men. Yet while I do not know whether women will predominantly be understood as ‘family members’ or ‘workers’, my data provides a basis for reflecting on how caring obligations, but also the material conditions of irregularised migrants might distribute the possibility to ‘wait well’ unevenly (see also Brücker et al., 2020). I note here, that these reflections resonate with my emphasis of located embodiment in the theoretical excavations into the analytical optic of waiting in chapter 5.

To enrol in training requires a B1 level of German language competence. Training is undertaken together with German students (mostly 16-25 years old). Those I met who were enrolled in training or publicly funded pre-training programmes, attended evening classes and devoted much time to self-studies after their eight hours of school or traineeship. Hence, vocational training is less accessible for people with caring obligations (for children, sick relatives). *Time* appears in this sense as a limited and

unevenly distributed resource. Yet, as a resource, time cannot be understood without attention to space and material context. To be specific, time spent studying is used by people who find themselves in specific material situations, as the short account about Mona's living quarters exemplifies. People lived in cramped conditions in the camps. A common topic in my conversations with women living there involved the perception of camp-space as unsafe for women and children. Hence, many mothers were reluctant to allow their children to play outside without someone looking after them.

Additionally, poverty and the necessity of being in the camp at the set meal-hours<sup>56</sup> conditioned daily mobility (for instance to study in libraries). It should be stressed in this respect, that time is a scarce resource in another sense as well. As my discussion in chapter 2 shows, people who were categorised with 'bad prospects' were put under pressure to rapidly start learning the language and to navigate the German training structures or labour market, Moreover, to find work quickly and acquire a 'normal life', as Mona once said, was also the expressed desire of the participants in my study.

The material (and temporal) conditions illuminated in this section are material expressions of German bordering practices. In other words, these material conditions are produced within the relations of power outlined in this and the previous chapter (also Mountz, 2011). Scherschel (2016) calls for more research on the effects on women of recent reforms of German migration regulation. As part of this, I contend that there is a need for research that grounds analysis in the uneven material conditions in which people are located and in which they live their relational lives. Indeed, my papers show that caring obligations also more generally shaped how people related to training and work. Sharif and the other young Afghan interlocutors in my study stressed how obligations and desires to send remittances to family 'back home' influenced their decisions on training/work. Together with health and educational background, they argued that caring obligations to distant family conditioned people's possibilities to (choose to) start and succeed in training (see paper 1). As Sharif said once: 'Everybody wants to do it [training]. But they cannot...'. Then he corrected

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<sup>56</sup> Cooking in the barrack was prohibited in all the camps (Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen) I visited in Hamburg. The meals people get in the camps are subtracted (literally) from their monthly financial support from the state.

himself: ‘No, everybody does not want to do it’.<sup>57</sup> His last statement provides an important reminder by which to end this chapter: While I put dominant temporal imaginaries centre stage in this and the previous chapter, his utterance; ‘they do not want to’, bears witness to how people navigate time and imagine spatialised futures in multiple ways.

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<sup>57</sup> Paper 1 shows how he was one of those who ‘do not want it’.



## Chapter 4. Research methods, positionality, and ethics

*'And then this woman came up to me... and I just "uh, what does that white woman want from me?" But then I thought, I have nothing to do, I might as well talk to her for a while'. Sam looked at me laughingly. We sat in a café in central Hamburg, spending some last hours together ahead of my moving back to Norway. We talked about our first encounter in the autumn of 2017. She let me know what went through her mind when I approached her and interrupted her wait in the stairway outside the health clinic, where I had waited for two hours to talk with someone for my study in conjunction with the Wait-project. (Hamburg, June 2018).*

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Sam's comment in the ethnographic vignette raises questions regarding access to research participants, consent, research positionality and power relations in the field. Surely, we were waiting in different ways and waiting took on a different character for us there in the stairways. Surely, I 'wanted' something from her. What is the significance of me being a 'white woman', as she points out? Can I know? In this chapter, I will address these and related issues, in a discussion of my choice of research location, research methods, data analysis, positionality, and research ethics. I address these topics in the listed order. Finally, the chapter addresses some implications, weaknesses and strengths of my methodological approach and choice of research methods.

My methodological approach included a range of research methods. The main source for production of data could be addressed as 'deep hanging out', in the sense that I spent time with and followed irregular migrants in their everyday activities. However, my methods also included participant observation in different arenas, semi-structured interviews with migrants, volunteers, asylum law experts and public bureaucrats, and analysis of legal and policy documents. It also involved reading newspapers and



careful attention to social media postings by various state, humanitarian, and political actors. This bundle of approaches has enabled me to provide grounded and multifaceted analyses.

My choices pertaining to research strategy have been guided by the need for a set of methods to study the temporal techniques and rationalities of the Duldung regulation and German migration regulation more broadly. Furthermore, the larger umbrella-project also impacted my delineations, both in terms of identifying field sites and themes of research.

Before I present and discuss my methodological choices, I will outline my methodological approach to the study of migrant irregularity and address the methodological question of terminology.

### **A methodological approach to migrant irregularity**

In several works the past two decades anthropologist Nicholas De Genova (2002; 2016) has pointed to epistemological, political, and methodological challenges in studies of migrant ‘illegality’. One of his main concerns and critiques is that migration scholars have tended to reify and naturalise the category of the ‘irregular migrant’, in the sense that it is addressed as a fact of life. In other words, he argues, scholars often approach migrant irregularity as something that ‘comes about automatically as a mere effect’ (De Genova, 2016: 3) of breaking the law and offending a set of more or less unquestioned, sovereign territorial principles. By approaching migrant irregularity in this way, the social, legal, and normative forces that produce irregularity are concealed. Furthermore, he contends, since such an objectification of migrant irregularity happens on the national spatial scale, migration scholars risk reproducing the spatiotemporal presuppositions of nationalism and leave the territorial frame of the nation-state unexamined (De Genova, 2002; 2013a; also Gill, 2010). In other words, the methodological problem of how to approach irregular migration is also fundamentally a problem of methodological nationalism. Additionally, De Genova argues, studies which do not pay attention to the production of migrant irregularity might contribute to an aestheticization of irregular migrants’ lives, in the sense of

‘showing it just to show it’ (2002: 422). Indeed, this insight seemed important during my fieldwork in 2017, in the context of the hundreds of journalists and researchers travelling to document the lives of migrants in Europe since the summer of 2015.

In response to these considerations, De Genova (2002) calls for research that approaches migrant irregularity as a socio-political condition (see also Anderson, 2013). This approach implies empirical and analytical attention to legal and socio-political processes that render migrants illegal and ‘produces types of legality’ (Anderson, 2013: 86). As De Genova’s writes, it is an approach that acknowledges how ‘the law defines the parameters of its own operations, engendering the conditions of possibility for “legal” as well as “illegal” practices’ (2002: 424) and statuses. Importantly, in accordance with the Foucauldian perspective he deploys, De Genova understands ‘the law’ as working through a myriad of practices.<sup>58</sup> The outlined approach has been analytically enabling for scholars such as Karlsen (2015). In an ethnographic investigation of the provision of welfare to irregular migrants in Norway, she designs her study as an ethnography of state bordering practices. This approach allows her to examine how migrant irregularity is produced through multiple legal regulations and in the discretionary decisions of welfare service providers (for another example, see Coutin, 2003).

My epistemological and methodological approach to irregular migration draws on the insight from these works. Thus, while my ethnographic work deepens the understanding about *how it is to live* under the spatiotemporal ‘condition of deportability’ (De Genova, 2002: 440), this question has not guided my analytical endeavour. For the purposes of my thesis, ethnographic fieldwork with irregular migrants has primarily served as a method for producing knowledge about the temporal dynamics of the German border regime. Moreover, this choice of method is based on the insight that the accounts of variously irregularised migrants are particularly valuable in explorations of migration law and administration. As Coutin notes, all ‘explications of immigrant law’ should be understood as ‘situated

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<sup>58</sup> I discuss a Foucauldian perspective on power in chapter 5.

knowledge' (2003: 55).<sup>59</sup> Thus, 'as beings who are created and delegitimised through law' (2003: 55), irregularised immigrants can expose the taken-for-granted temporal constructs that operate in the construction of their irregularity. I will elaborate further on this epistemological and methodological approach in the next chapter, in a discussion of my approach to 'lived time'.

### *Terminology*

The people that were part of my study comprise a jumble of legal statuses: asylum seekers, tolerated migrants, people with a Dublin decision, people who came on a tourist visa for health issues or to find work, and people who came to marry and who found themselves in the country illegally when they divorced. Furthermore, as Sam's situation illustrates (chapter 3), people also moved between legal statuses. What terminology can be used to denote this mixture of people and statuses? Indeed, in a politicised field, and with the risk of naturalising migrant irregularity in mind, the choice of terminology appears as an 'epistemological and conceptual problem, with significant methodological ramifications, ethical implications, and political repercussions' (De Genova, 2002: 423).

There is an on-going discussion amongst scholars regarding what vocabulary should be used in studies on irregular migration (De Genova, 2002; Willen, 2007). Alternative notions include, for example, illegal, illegalised, undocumented, clandestine, irregular, or unauthorised. There are no perfect choices here. Each concept has an associated set of challenges (for a discussion, see De Genova, 2002: 420; Willen, 2007: 11; Karlsen, 2015: 82). Consistent with the terminology of the umbrella Wait-project, I have chosen to use the term 'irregular migrant'. As Karlsen notes, an argument in favour of this term is that it opens for an approach that addresses not only the legal dimension, but also 'the social, administrative, and political constructions of the category' (2015: 82). As such, the term goes well with my understanding of borders as produced and practised by different actors and through multiple regulations and discretionary

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<sup>59</sup> Coutin draws on Haraway's (1991) notion of situated knowledges, which I discuss below in the section of positionality.

practices (see chapter 5). Furthermore, there are several reasons why the notions undocumented, clandestine, and unauthorised would be unsuitable for my work in the German context. A core reason is my focus on tolerated migrants. Firstly, the condition of being tolerated is defined by identity documentation: The government stamps a red line over tolerated migrants' ID-cards to signal their tolerated status. Secondly, the obligation to renew the toleration permit makes tolerated migrants everything but clandestine. Thirdly, tolerated migrants' authorisation to be present on the sovereignty territory is highly ambivalent. While I mostly use the term irregular, I also use the notion 'undocumented' when this is used by persons themselves, and *irregularised* migrant when I wish to accentuate the administrative and legal process of deprivation of rights (Castañeda, 2007: 24).

It should be noted that my choice of the term 'irregular' contrasts with the terms used by my research participants. The people I met from West-Africa, who were not enrolled in the asylum system, used the English terms 'undocumented' or 'without papers' to describe their situation. They also talked about being 'illegally' in the country or working 'illegally'. The people I met in the camps who had a Dublin procedure often referred to their condition with the phrase: 'Ich habe/bin Dublin' (I have/am Dublin). Many migrant research participants also referred to themselves as 'Flüchtlinge' or 'Refugees'. The notion of 'Flüchtlinge' is consistent with the terminology used by volunteers, non-governmental actors, public officials, and lawyers I talked with in relation to all of the aforementioned categories of people.<sup>60</sup> These actors also used the term 'Menschen mit einem ungesicherten Aufenthalt' (people with an uncertain residence status). This latter term encompasses a variety of legal statuses and categories of people, including temporary East-European labour migrants. Moreover, they often used the term *geduldet* to refer to people with a *Duldung* and *illegalisierte* about people living on the territory without authorisation. The notion *illegalisierte* can, as Castañeda (2007: 24) notes, best be translated as

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<sup>60</sup> For a discussion on the use of the notion 'Flüchtlinge' in the German context, see Castañeda (2007: 25; Hamann and Karakayali, 2016).

‘persons who have been made illegal’ or ‘persons who have been illegalised’. It thus entails an understanding of the condition of illegality as socio-politically produced.

### Choice of research location: Fieldwork in Germany

The PhD candidate in the Wait project was expected to carry out ethnographic fieldwork in one European city. This work was to contribute to the research done by three other researchers in the cities of Stockholm (Sweden), Oslo (Norway) and Marseille (France).

I chose Germany as the location for my ethnographic fieldwork for several reasons. The fact that I already had some knowledge of the German integration and migration discourse and policy was an important factor in my decision. I wrote my master’s thesis in geography in 2007 on the subject of the German urban regeneration programme *Die Soziale Stadt* (The Social City). My thesis was an examination of the relation between integration and urban planning policies (Drangsdland, 2007). It was based on ethnographic fieldwork with planning actors and neighbourhood organisations in the city of Mannheim (in the federal state Baden-Württemberg). Through this and previous studies in Germany, I had a good knowledge of the German language.

Another reason for my choice of Germany as a research location pertains to the central role played by the country in the EU’s response to the mobility of people to and across its borders in 2015 and 2016. This role was highly profiled in European media when I was writing the proposal for my PhD studies in the summer of 2016. At that time, it had also become evident that Germany’s asylum and migration policies were changing in ways that implied both accelerated processes, conditional regularisation regulations, and prolonged waiting – processes that highlighted the temporal dynamics of bordering.

Germany furthermore seemed relevant because of its large population of irregular migrants (including tolerated migrants). Research often reveals figures showing that between 100,000 and 1.5 million persons live in Germany without any form of

government authorisation (Schönwälder et al., 2006). It is important to note, however, that these figures are highly contested and are based on ‘more or less intelligent’ guesstimates (Schönwälder et al., 2006: 27).<sup>61</sup> I also found the *Duldung* highly relevant for an exploration of the temporal dynamics of the production of irregular migration.

### *Why Hamburg and with what implications for the knowledge produced?*

Research on migration policy, law and administration in Germany must take into consideration that a lot of power lies with the *Länder*, which have a high degree of autonomy both regarding their institutional structure and in many policy fields (Laubenthal, 2012; Tangerman and Grote, 2017). This includes the fields of integration, asylum, and labour migration policies. An example is the way irregular minors’ right to education has been differently interpreted, regulated and practised among states (Laubenthal, 2011). The offer made by the state of Hamburg to the Lampedusa migrants (paper 2) also profoundly illustrates the legal and discretionary power of the *Länder*. It highlights the importance of acknowledging that conditions vary from region to region when one studies the *Duldung* regulation. In most cases, the immigration authorities in the *Länder* are responsible for deciding whether a *Duldung* should be issued and what duration it is to be given. They also have considerable discretionary power regarding the issuance of work permits to tolerated migrants (Schultz, 2020a).

I choose the city-state of Hamburg for my fieldwork partly because I had some contacts in the city who were active in the city’s left activist milieu. I hoped they could help me to get access to fieldwork sites. I also knew that the city had a big population of irregular migrants and asylum seekers, as well as numerous organisations working with irregular migrants, that could serve as fieldwork sites.

The choice of Hamburg as the fieldwork context has impacted my work substantially – in some ways I know and others that I cannot fully know. An obvious consequence of

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<sup>61</sup> For more recent estimate, see Schneider (2012). Schönwälder et al. (2006) discuss challenges pertaining to making and quoting estimates in the research and policy field of irregular migration.

my choice of research location is the inclusion in my thesis of the study of the Lampedusaduldung. Furthermore, Hamburg's political position in the federal debates on German migration policies needs mentioning. Hamburg has been an important regional force in pushing for an opening of the labour market to asylum seekers and tolerated migrants (Laubenthal, 2014).<sup>62</sup> Several of those I interviewed about the Lampedusaduldung foregrounded the region's political position as crucial in enabling the political 'solution' for the Lampedusa migrants.<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, Hamburg's position on the question of labour market access for asylum seekers and tolerated migrants has shaped the regional implementation of the Ausbildungsuldung in ways that demand consideration.<sup>64</sup> The introduction of the Ausbildungsuldung in 2016 left much leeway for interpretation and discretion to the Länder. During 2017 and 2018, several states released their own *Ländererlasse* (decrees) specifying how central aspects of the regulation were to be understood and practised. These decrees, as well as reports on its implementation from various organisations, show great differences between the states (for an overview over Ländererlasse on the Ausbildungsuldung see Deutscher paritätischer wohlfahrtsverband gesamtverband e. v., 2018). Hamburg has been amongst the states with the most generous interpretation of the Ausbildungsuldung and has invested resources in building support structures for training. There are reasons to believe I would have found other practices in other regions. Conscious of these regional differences, I have, however, read up on administrative practices and legal decisions on the Ausbildungsuldung in other Länder. I am confident that my findings and analyses illuminate dynamics that pertain more generally to the implementation and practice of the regulation in Germany.

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<sup>62</sup> I base this statement on interviews with two bureaucrats who worked in two different Hamburg ministries, as well as on an interview with a centrally placed humanitarian actor, who took part in the federal negotiations of the Ausbildungsuldung.

<sup>63</sup> The 'offer' as a political 'solution' must also be understood in relation to the intense and broad mobilisation that the group sparked in Hamburg (see Niess 2018).

<sup>64</sup> A speech given by former Hamburg Major Scholz in 2017 provides insight into how Hamburg politicians understand their role in enabling the Ausbildungsuldung (Scholz, 2017).

## Discussion of research arenas, access, and methods

Due to the complexity of the methods used in this study, I start this section by providing a birds-eye view of my ethnographic fieldwork. Then, I discuss methodological issues related to each of the arenas where I recruited research participants. I subsequently discuss the method of following interlocutors to service providers. At the end, I address methodological questions pertaining to interviews with volunteers, legal experts, economic actors, and public bureaucrats, and outline the texts sources I have used.

As part of my discussion of the different arenas and methods, I address ethical concerns and questions of positionality specific to these. I discuss more general questions pertaining to ethics and positionality later in two separate sections.

### *A birds-view on my ethnographic fieldwork: Access and recruitment of research participants*

Several studies have addressed the challenge of recruiting research participants in qualitative studies on irregular migration.<sup>65</sup> Irregular migrants often have an interest in remaining hidden and reasons not to trust the state and people (researchers) that might be associated with the state (Castañeda, 2007; Düvell et al., 2010; Karlsen, 2015). The latter point also pertains to tolerated migrants. A major task in the initial research phase was accordingly to identify strategic sites for recruiting research participants and to get access to such sites.

To get a ‘sense of the field’, in terms of identifying central themes and getting an overview of legal regulations and relevant organisations, I conducted three weeks of fieldwork in Baden-Württemberg in April 2017. This preliminary fieldwork was initially not part of my research design, but a matter of coincidence. Just after I had started my PhD work in January 2017, an acquaintance put me in contact with

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<sup>65</sup> I will use the three notions ‘research participants’, ‘interviewees’ and ‘interlocutors’ when referring to the people who participated in this study. I, however, use them for different purposes. In the analyses of my work with people I followed closely over time, I prefer the term ‘interlocutor’, as this captures better our embodied encounters. I use the term ‘research participants’ when I speak of my research in a more birds-eye view. The notion ‘interviewee’ is used when I want to signal that the encounter between the person in question and myself took the form of a semi-structured interview.



someone in a non-governmental organisation working with *Flüchtlinge* in this region. I contacted the person to do an explorative interview. He took an interest in my work and invited me to come and do preliminary fieldwork. During my weeks in Baden-Württemberg, I interviewed neighbourhood volunteers (*Ehrenamtliche*), the leader of the organisation and several (rejected) asylum seekers. I also participated in the organisation's activities, such as language courses, 'welcome cafés' and a board meeting. This work gave me insight into central discussions, themes, and actors in the field.

This preliminary fieldwork took place half a year after the introduction of the *Ausbildungsduldung*. While Baden-Württemberg has had a rather restrictive implementation of the *Ausbildungsduldung*, the regulation nevertheless was one of the main topics in my conversations with people. Many of the volunteers were working with people who were categorised as having 'bad prospects of staying' and tried to help them into training. My stay in Baden-Württemberg added to the impression of novelty and significance attached to the regulation that I had got from following discussions in the media. My interest in the *Ausbildungsduldung* was sparked during these weeks.

Afterwards, I started the process of getting access to arenas for recruiting research participants in Hamburg. Three organisations were positive towards and accepted my research in their locales. Amongst them were two non-governmental organisations working with irregular migrants and a camp operator who allowed me access to two of its camps. These two organisations and the two camps became my main fieldwork sites.

My initial plan was to conduct fieldwork in Hamburg from August 2017 until December 2017. However, I got a research stay at Hamburg University that allowed me to extend my stay until June 2018. I spent the first half-year exclusively doing fieldwork research. From January to June 2018, I spent time with migrant research participants on a regular but less frequent basis.

During my fieldwork, I did semi-structured interviews or engaged in longer conversations with 52 migrants. I had follow-up conversations with most of them. The research participants included 12 women and 40 men. Most came from Afghanistan, Syria, and different West-African countries (mainly Nigeria and Ghana). They were aged twenty to sixty years. Consistent with my methodological approach to migrant irregularity, I did not focus on one cultural, national or ethnic group. What these people had in common, was the particularity of their relation to the state (Karlsen, 2015). Most research participants had been in the country between one and a half and five years. Two persons had lived in Hamburg for around twenty years, partly with a Duldung.

All conversations were in English or German. I did not use an interpreter. While I initially was worried that language might be a barrier, it turned out that many of the people I met either spoke English and/or German. Yet my reliance on German or English has implications for the knowledge produced in this study. In the camp, there were several older people as well as people who for various reasons had not learned the language. I did not get insight into the knowledge of the border that these categories of people had. As age is one of the lines along which the possibility to ‘wait well’ is differentiated (chapter 2), my lack of insight into the condition of waiting for older people must be acknowledged.

Particularly important for my research were conversations and encounters with eighteen interlocutors with whom I kept close and regular contact throughout fieldwork. Amongst these were five women and thirteen men. During fieldwork, I ‘followed’ them, in the sense of having multiple encounters and conversations with them, accompanying them in their various daily activities, including appointments with service providers. I remained in contact with eight of these in the years following my fieldwork, via telephone and a subsequent visit to Hamburg. Longer-term contact deepened my understanding of the governing of migration in Germany. For instance, I was able to follow how interlocutors navigated the border timespace in relation to the changing conditions of their loved ones at ‘home’, and how insecurity, longing and precarious material conditions affect their health.

### *Recruiting research participants in two non-governmental organisations*

The two organisations where I recruited participants for my study were a health clinic for migrants without health insurance and an organisation working more generally to support irregular migrants. From September until December 2017, I was present in the waiting-rooms of these organisations between two and four hours respectively twice and once a week. In both arenas, the research participants decided where the interview was to be conducted. Most were conducted in cafés or outdoors. Being present in these two arenas proved valuable not only in terms of recruiting migrant participants but also because of the insights I got from talking with people working there. Through conversations with the staff, I got valuable knowledge about the policy field, the discretionary practices of the immigration authorities, and about the situation of irregular migrants in Hamburg.

#### *The health clinic*

Humanitarian organisations are core providers of health service to irregular migrants who are not registered with the state, and accordingly provide an arena where one can meet irregular migrants.<sup>66</sup> I contacted the health clinic because I initially wanted to work with temporalities related to health, chronic illness, and pregnancy. In total, I recruited ten people (six men, four women) for the study in the organisation's waiting room. However, the waiting room was normally cramped with people and confidentiality was hard to ensure. I decided to terminate my work in this arena earlier than planned. I subsequently decided that I did not have enough data to follow up on my interest to study temporalities related to pregnancy or chronic illness.

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<sup>66</sup> Migrants who are not registered with the state are afforded by law the same access to healthcare as asylum seekers (according to the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz, § 1.5, § 4 and § 6). This covers health care in the event of acute pain and illness, and maternity care. However, because of the procedures irregular migrants must comply with to have their care subsidised, they run the risk of being reported to immigration authorities when they access health care (for a description and European comparison see PICUM, 2007).

### *Organisation working with irregular migrants*

The other organisation proved a better arena for recruiting participants for the study, in terms of securing anonymity. There were fewer people present at any given time, and the way the tables were set out in the organisations' waiting room invited conversations. In total, I interviewed thirteen people that I met in this organisation – or through contacts made there. Most held a Duldung. My work with the Lampedusaduldung (paper 2) is based on fieldwork in this arena. People regularly visited the organisation, hence it turned out to be a space for recurrent conversations. I engaged on some occasions in translating documents and making enquiries in relation to the Scandinavian legal system.

### *Ethnographic fieldwork in two Erstaufnahme camps*

During fieldwork in Baden-Württemberg, I realised that *Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen* (EAE) would be a good arena in which to recruit participants for my study. EAE are temporary camps where migrants in 2017 were obliged to live for their first months in Germany. The upper time limit of residence in EAE camps was changed from three to six months with the launch of the Asylum Package 1 in 2015 (Pelzer and Pichl, 2016).<sup>67</sup> However, partly due to the pressure on German migration bureaucracy, many stayed longer in such camps in the years following 2015. As the Sager and Öberg note in the context of Sweden, the asylum procedure is a 'process of production of irregularity' (2017: 7). Hence, camps are one arena to research these processes through the situated knowledges of migrants.

Access to EAE camps is generally strictly regulated. Once again, I was 'lucky'. By coincidence, I became acquainted with a person who had contacts with one of Hamburg's camp operators. He put me in contact with the operator, who subsequently negotiated my access with the government. I got unlimited access to two of the

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<sup>67</sup> In the 2019 revision of the *Asylgesetz* (Asylum Act) the upper time limit was extended to eighteen months (§ 47 Abs. 1 AsylG).

operator's camps. In one of the camps, I got my own barrack where I work during the days and evenings.

When the weather was good, I would sit outside on the benches with a book, a newspaper, or my phone. I would start all conversations by introducing myself as a researcher. The camp management had hung information posters with my picture, name, and the reasons for my presence in the common areas. After some informal conversations, I would ask to do an interview. Most interviews took place in people's barracks or in some of the nearby parks. As I got to know people, they invited me to join them in the camp canteen and in their barracks, where we spent time together; listening to music, watching YouTube, playing cards, practising German, sharing meals and playing with the children. I conducted semi-structured interviews with nineteen camp-residents (fifteen men, four women). These comprised two major categories of people: Syrians with a Dublin decision and Afghans who were awaiting the answer to their asylum decision.

Being present in the camp also proved valuable because of the contact with camp employees, who provided background data about legal regulations, political decisions and administrative procedures in Hamburg. The camp leader invited me to join in the weekly staff meetings, where they discussed challenges pertaining to running the camp, as well as strategies for recruiting migrants to training and ways of allocating resources that could support people during training. The discussions in these meetings added to my understanding of how migrant (ir)regularity is produced through the *Ausbildungsduldung*. However, I was conscious that my relationship with the employees – visible in the camp space through our recurrent friendly conversations – might also influence my work in terms of the need to maintain a trusting relationship with research participants living in the camp.

An ethical challenge associated with doing fieldwork in camps pertains to camps being people's homes. Living in an EAE implies a situation of surveillance, of discipline and of being subjected to random controls (for example to check if people are keeping a stove or refrigerator illegally in the barracks). I was conscious of how I might add to this intrusion into people's lives and applied different strategies to navigate this

dilemma. For instance, I made the decision not to knock on peoples' doors, if we did not already have an appointment.

### *Visits with interlocutors*

An important source of data in my fieldwork is observation of encounters between migrants and service providers of various kinds. During fieldwork, interlocutors asked me to accompany them to legal consultations, to public and humanitarian service providers, to the immigration authorities and to medical consultations.

In her research on the provision of welfare to irregular migrants in Norway, Karlsen (2015) observes that encounters between migrants and service providers are highly valuable as arenas for learning about the enactment of migration law (see also Gehrig, 2006: 46). In the German context, and particularly in relation to my study of the *Ausbildungsduldung*, the opportunity to be able to accompany people to various public immigration offices was important due to the amount of discretion placed on regional and local immigration officers (Mitrić, 2013; Schultz, 2020a). Furthermore, spending hours of waiting in different offices, such as the regional immigration office and the public free legal counselling, provided insight into the stress and anxiety that such waiting situations cause for research participants. It also gave me experience of the racialised and classed normativities attached to waiting. Generally, waiting hours at these offices were long. Several times, when I waited with interlocutors, guards approached me to apologise or to explain the long wait. I discussed this treatment with some interlocutors, who attributed this to my 'whiteness'.<sup>68</sup> I believe, that the position I was ascribed in these encounters was a specifically classed, gendered and racialised position as a female, white, middle-class volunteer. I will reflect more on this below, as I discuss matters of positionality.

Yet my presence in such arenas raises ethical questions. One question pertains to the consent of service providers. Sometimes I had the possibility to present myself and to ask if I could take notes for research use. On other occasions, this was not possible. In

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<sup>68</sup> For a discussion on how 'whiteness' affects how bodies can "'take up" space' and 'what they "can do"' see Ahmed (2007: 149)

such cases, I refrained from including fieldnotes as part of my data material. Secondly, I had to consider how my presence might affect the consultation and its outcome for the people I accompanied. My considerations should be understood in the context of how street-level bureaucrats might value different forms of deservingness, with implications for their decisions on provisions of rights and resources. As Schultz (2020a) shows in her work with German regional immigration offices, notions of moral and legal deservingness based on vulnerability coexist with notions of deservingness that foreground performance and migrants' agency in shaping street-level bureaucrats' decisions. I did not know how my presence would be interpreted: Would it, for example, make the service provider inclined to understand people as more or less vulnerable (in the sense of being in need of my help) and/or more or less aimful and competent (in the sense of making an informed, deliberate decision on support, drawing on available resources) – and with what outcomes? These were issues I had to be aware of, and that I discussed with interlocutors. As a general rule, I remained silent in consultations, and maintained an 'observer role'.

### *Formal interviews and texts*

Formal interviews with different actors working in the field of migration and asylum have been an important source of knowledge in this study. These interviews had different functions. Broadly, however, they served the purpose of providing contextual, legal, and historical background knowledge on German migration regulation and practice.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with employees or volunteers in ten Hamburg-based non-governmental organisations. This included several actors working with tolerated migrants and vocational training. I also conducted interviews with three bureaucrats in leading positions in two different Hamburg ministries. Actors were recruited through e-mails or over the phone. Interviews were conducted in German.

As I developed an interest in the *Ausbildungsduldung*, I conducted four interviews with actors who had been centrally placed in the political negotiations of the regulation or in its regional implementation. These included one leader in *Bundesvereinigung der*

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*Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände* (The Confederation of German Employers' Associations), one leading bureaucrat in the Hamburg *Behörde für Arbeit, Soziales, Familie und Integration* (Ministry of Labour, Social and Family Affairs and Integration), one legal expert from the non-governmental organisation Pro Asyl, and one bureaucrat in the *Bundesministerium Für Arbeit und Soziales* (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). These interviews helped me to contextualise historically and politically the ethnographic data obtained through fieldwork. They provided important insight into the different, partly disjunctive, temporalities of different institutional government bodies, such as the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Federal Ministry for the Interior, Building and Community. In paper 1, I address how their different temporal horizons and orientations shaped the *Ausbildungsduldung*.

In addition to the interviews, I participated regularly in a monthly meeting arranged by asylum lawyers in Hamburg. I was not allowed to take fieldnotes from these meetings and have not included them in my analyses. However, they gave me an invaluable overview of German migration law *in practice*. I also got in contact with an asylum lawyer through one of my migrant interlocutors, and we met regularly and discussed legal issues throughout my fieldwork.

Texts have also played a role as source of data in this thesis, and my work draws on three principal sources of texts. The first source of texts pertains to legal and policy documents issued by the German federal state and the *Länder*. This source includes laws, regulations, circulars, press releases and other textual material. It also includes court decisions by various regional administrative courts on the *Ausbildungsduldung*. Court decisions have provided insight into the various ways of practising the legal framework in different regions. The second source of text pertains to documents issued by non-governmental organisations in the field of migration and asylum. This text source also includes legal hearings. The third body of texts is media coverage in the field of migration in the years between 2016-2020.

Texts have played several roles in my study. I have used texts to understand the historical and legal context in which I worked between 2017 and 2020. I have also relied on textual material in my analysis of the temporal rationalities of governing



migrants in Germany. For instance, texts were important as I sought to understand how the *Ausbildungsduldung* was enabled and framed, and the disjunctive temporal logics of different government bodies.

## Analysis of data

Ethnographic fieldnotes have been the main source of data in my study. During fieldwork, I kept my notebook with me and jotted down notes while spending time with people and engaging in different activities.<sup>69</sup> My days ‘in the field’ often lasted from early morning to the evening, and I would spend ‘free’ hours transcribing my handwritten fieldnotes. To help me remember the fieldwork encounters I also took pictures of research locations and made sound recordings on my phone or an external recording device. I often returned to pictures and recordings when I transcribed the fieldnotes or worked on my analyses. Keeping the notebook visible in encounters with research participants served as a reminder of the ambiguity in our researcher/friend relation, that I will address below.

I tape-recorded all interviews with volunteers, public bureaucrats and different service providers. Only in eight cases did I record my interviews/conversations with migrant research participants. Mostly, people preferred that I did not record, and furthermore, the practicalities of our conversations made recording unsuitable. All recordings were transcribed verbatim by me or by a German research assistant at the University of Hamburg. All translations of German quotes are my own. In the cases where I use quotation marks from fieldnotes, these quotes are written down verbatim in my fieldnotes. In the ‘Introduction’ I specify the cases in which English quotes are my translations from original German quotes.

I entered my hand-written fieldnotes into OneNote and used this to create a system for the hundreds of pages of fieldnotes. I used the program’s ‘Tags’ function to locate keywords while writing my fieldnotes into OneNote. In the beginning, the coding of data was exploratory, based on the ‘hunches’ I got through fieldwork and theoretical

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<sup>69</sup> For a discussion on how to write and produce knowledge from fieldnotes, see Ghodsee (2016).

considerations. Examples of such keywords are ‘future’, ‘promise’, ‘marriage’, ‘waiting’, ‘Ausbildung’. I added new tags throughout the project, returning to the old fieldnotes to code these as well. This form of provisional coding proved valuable when I started to write and to organise the notes more systematically in relation to the themes I discuss in my papers. I did not code the interviews with volunteers or with public and private professionals. I found it sufficient to read through them and organise quotes based on the themes that I was discussing in the papers. Concerning legal and official documents, I have organised these thematically and with keywords in my Endnote library. I tacked back and forth between interviews and documents, to situate the interviews in a broader policy context.

I conducted analysis in all phases of the research – starting during fieldwork, where I conducted data analysis and data collection largely at the same time. I also had a possibility to discuss my analyses with interlocutors during a return visit to Hamburg in April 2020 and over the phone. The process of analysis occurred as a back-and-forth process between data-collection, coding of data, writing and theory. My analysis was informed by my theoretical commitments, and theory shaped the collection of data (for a discussion of this process, see Ghodsee, 2016). One salient feature in this respect was my commitment to focus on time and temporality as part of the umbrella Wait project. I wrote several drafts of the three papers, returning to my fieldnotes to allow the ethnography to drive my analysis. While the thesis’ overall research questions are shaped by theoretical considerations, they are also informed by ethnographic data. Indeed, the specific research questions I pose in the papers grew from situations in the field that I struggled to understand. An example of this is the question of ‘how Alan can make the promised future of the *Ausbildungsduldung* his own’, that I discuss in paper 1. Another example, this time from paper 2, is the way taking seriously the question ‘is it worth the wait’ – an affective question of dire importance to people I met – enabled me to discuss how violence, waiting and redemption are framed.

## Positionality in fieldwork and writing

*John, his friend Tim, my son and I sat on two beds in the little room that John rented north of Hamburg.<sup>70</sup> Except for a TV and a chair, the two beds were the only furniture in the room. There was a comfortable scent from the men's eau de cologne. The TV was muted; CNN was broadcasting a reportage from Gaza. John had arranged a meeting with me and one of his 'undocumented friends', and I had brought my son to our encounter. I had not met Tim before. However, John had told me he lived a harsh life, with no place to sleep, and no work. I introduced Tim to my project, and I sensed that the young man was, if not unfriendly, at least hesitant. He had kept his black leather jacket on and supported his newly shaved face with both hands while he listened, all along tapping the floor with his blue NIKE sneakers. When I finished, he said; 'Okay... you are doing your PhD. What is in it for me?' I had received that question many times before. As I used to, I started to say something that would lead to what I held to be the honest answer: 'nothing'. However, John interrupted me and talked about the value of research, on how it is to be 'undocumented' in Germany.*

*They agreed that we could proceed with the interview. While we talked, my son lay on the bed holding a book and a small bar of chocolate. After an hour or so, the alarm on his continuous glucose measure apparat (CGM) went off: His sugar was high. Tim and John looked at me in silence as I muted the alarm on the CGM apparatus and retrieved the wireless insulin pump from my purse. 'He has diabetes', I said. As I pushed the button to give my son more insulin, Tim grinned in a way I could not interpret and said something to John in the Twi language. I laughed: 'What are you saying?' John replied: 'Tim said, "you white people. In Africa he would die"'. (Hamburg, November 2017).*

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<sup>70</sup> I introduce John in paper 3.

This fieldwork scene from John's apartment touches upon issues of researcher positionality and consent that I will address respectively in this and the following section. Indeed, Tim's question at the outset of our meeting, the fact that I have a son that I brought with me to an interview, and Tim's comment regarding our different access to medical equipment raise important questions: Where does one 'see from' when one produces knowledge through ethnographic fieldwork? In what relations of power is one situated as a researcher in fieldwork and writing? How do such relations of power shape the knowledge produced? These are questions at the core of feminist methodological critique. In their endeavours to think through such questions and the challenges they pose, feminists have argued for the necessity of rethinking objectivity in terms of 'situated knowledge'.

The concept of situated knowledge, as developed by Donna Haraway (1988), implies the acknowledgement that all knowledge is the product of embodied knowers. In other words, to understand knowledge as situated implies an understanding of the researcher as always already located 'somewhere' – both physically and theoretically (see also Adam, 1989). Feminist objectivity, Haraway argues, is about 'limited location and situated knowledge' (1988: 583). It is thus an objectivity that 'allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see' (Haraway, 1988: 583). This insight makes questions of positioning core to feminist methodologies. According to Haraway 'positioning is . . . the key practice grounding knowledge' (1991: 193).

As Rose (1997: 305) notes, reflexivity is key to practices of 'marking' knowledges as situated. In other words, she writes, reflexivity is a 'situating technology' (Rose, 1997: 308) that must be developed and practised.<sup>71</sup> In ethnographic fieldwork, reflexivity pertains to the role of position in matters of gaining access and relating to interlocutors, and to the role of position in analysis, interpretation, in the writing process. Important here is the acknowledgement that 'marking knowledge' is a matter of positioning the researcher and the researched within fields of power relations.

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<sup>71</sup> As Rose (1997) notes there are different ways of theorising positionality, which entails different conceptions of identity as something that might be known to the researcher, or as something that is rather co-produced in encounters between the researcher and the researched. I contend with the latter position.

Rose questions researchers who presume they are transparent to themselves, and that they can fully know ‘the landscape of power’ (1997: 310) in which they are situated. Her concern chimes with the critique raised by historians and anthropologists regarding scholars’ assumptions that they find themselves in the ‘same time’ as the people they are working with and that this time can be known by the researcher (Bastian, 2013; Lea, 2014; Bevernage, 2016). I agree with Rose (1997) that I cannot fully articulate the space – or time – I inhabit in my research.<sup>72</sup> Yet, what I can do, is to reflect on aspects of my located position that might have affected my production of knowledge, in ways that open for critical engagements for readers of my study. I can also reflect upon relations of power that became apparent through the practicalities of doing fieldwork, as I do above when I discuss visits with interlocutors to various service providers.

I believe that one significant aspect concerning gaining access was my position as a mother. As the fieldwork scene at John’s place illustrates, I brought my two sons and husband with me to Hamburg. While my oldest son (7 years old) accompanied me to John’s place, I more often brought my youngest son (2 years old) with me. I soon realised that bringing him with me to the camps helped me to get in contact with people. This played out in different ways. Several of the young boys I met in the camps expressed a concern that people were looking at us when we walked alone, implying a breach of norms of sexuality and gendered norms of sociality. Bringing my son enabled us to meet in private and eased my interlocutors’ concerns about rumours. His presence seemed to foreground my role as a mother. Generally, his presence in the camp spaces functioned as an icebreaker, particularly in relation to other mothers. However, it is important to note that bringing him might have influenced which people I got in contact with, and our conversations, in ways I cannot fully know. For example, his playful presence broke the silence that often marked my hours with camp residents in their barracks.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Rose draws on Spivak (1991) in her approach to this question.

<sup>73</sup> For work that engages with how knowledge might be obtained by paying attention to silence in ethnographic fieldwork, see Makaremi (2008) and Wikan (1992).

My role as a married woman should also be mentioned. Several of my interlocutors met my husband. Their contact invites a reflection on the situatedness of knowledge produced in ethnographic encounters by embodied knowers. My husband is a mathematician and teacher. In September 2017, I introduced him to Hossain, who had enrolled in a training programme to become a bricklayer. Hossain was ambitious regarding his own studies, and during the first encounter with my husband, they decided they would meet regularly to practise maths. I joined in some of their sessions and soon discovered that my attending deepened my knowledge about the practicalities of training, and about how longing and deportability influence the ability to learn and concentrate – topics I discuss in paper 1. I also experienced how the topic of conversations shifted when my husband was present. This, for example, pertains to the contact between my husband and John. John thought about exporting old cars to Ghana while he was in Hamburg. However, John never discussed this issue with me; and it only came to my knowledge as he asked my husband to join him to look at a car. John told me later that he considered cars to be a male interest. This example illustrates the gendered dynamics of knowledge production in ethnographic fieldwork.

My role as a musician is another aspect of my positionality that should be addressed because it became important during fieldwork to enhance my sensitivity towards who ‘counts’ as a knower in fieldwork with irregular migrants. On several occasions, my interest in music and skills in singing and in playing the guitar opened for conversations and embodied encounters based on a shared interest and joy in listening and practising music. For instance, I played together with musicians I met in the camps and sang together with children and mothers. I often struggled to play or sing, as the rhythms and melodies were unfamiliar to me. Furthermore, people introduced me to music that was unknown to me, yet that has millions of listeners. Being together in music, playing the wrong first chord or not getting the rhythm right served as a reminder of my unknowingness, in a field of power relations where nationality, legal status and whiteness produced me as the ‘knowing subject’.

Finally, I find it important to reflect on how my access to research participants and research arenas was enabled through my ability to embody a specifically gendered,

classed and racialised role of the German volunteer (Braun, 2017). During 2015 and onwards, there was a massive increase in volunteers in the *Flüchtlingsarbeit* (refugee work) in Germany, in response to the arrival of migrants and establishment of new asylum reception centres. Research has documented how women and people with a middle-class background dominate amongst volunteers (Hamann and Karakayali, 2016; Karakayali and Kleist, 2016). Indeed, volunteers are not exclusively middle-class and female, and I am cautious to reproduce an exclusionary depiction of the typical volunteer. Yet, I mention these factors because I believe that my access to research participants and arenas was partly enabled since I was ascribed the role of a middle-class and female *and* white volunteer. For instance, one of the activities of volunteers in German refugee camps that Hamann and Karakayali (2016) document is the practice of accompanying migrants to various service providers. As such there was nothing exceptional in my accompanying of people.

## Ethical considerations

*At the outset of my fieldwork, I presented my project and the umbrella Wait project to two lawyers who were working with asylum law in Hamburg. After the presentation, I got into a conversation with one of the lawyers about the latest legal reforms in Germany. We talked about how they illuminated the ways in which the state uses waiting and immobilisation to control migrants and to make their everyday lives harder. 'Just look at how people are made to wait for indefinite hours at the regional immigration authorities', the lawyer said. His colleague remained silent while we talked. After a while, however, she interrupted our conversation with a worried look, and said: 'If you write about waiting and how bad it is... is it not possible you give the government the arguments they need to do everything faster?' (Hamburg, September 2017).*

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The lawyer's question was timely. It should be understood in the context of Germany's and EU's efforts the past year to accelerate asylum and deportation procedures and processes, as discussed in chapter 2. In response to her concern, we discussed the

challenges pertaining to how to relate to the fact that while processes were speeding up, one consequence of these processes for many is exactly deferral, suspension, and immobilization. However, her question also brings up a more general ethical concern in ethnographic research with irregular migrants. This concern is powerfully captured by Karlsen who states that:

even by questioning and denaturalizing the state's production of illegality, ethnographic research runs the risk of producing knowledge that different state actors might deploy in ways that make the lives of people categorised as irregular migrants even more precarious and difficult (2015: 81).

Indeed, the risk of producing knowledge that might be used in harmful ways is one of several ethical considerations that have been central to this project. I have discussed such questions with the project team throughout the project period. The project is reported to and complies with the Norwegian Social Science Data Services' regulations and conforms to the guidelines of The National Committee for Research Ethics in The Social Sciences and the Humanities. However, the ethical challenges of working with irregular migrants necessitate a more thorough discussion.

### *Exposure, consent, and fieldwork relations*

As Düvell et al. (2010) note, a central ethical concern in research with irregular migrants pertains to the risk of exposure and the consequences this might entail. I was conscious of this risk. However, it turned out to be a minor concern in my work because most of the research participants had some form of state authorisation. Nevertheless, some people expressed the fear that our encounter could entail a risk of exposure. In these cases, we set up our meetings in places and at times of the day where and when they regarded it to be safe.

Another ethical concern relates to the issue of obtaining informed consent (Mackenzie et al., 2007). Irregular migrants are deprived of rights and struggle to navigate violent conditions in unfamiliar contexts. Relations of power will influence peoples' practices of giving consent in ways the researcher cannot always account for. For example, the



people I met knew that I was fluent in German, and understood I had a knowledge of the ‘system’ (from another position than their own). Echoing Tim’s question above (‘What’s in it for me?’), several interlocutors said that they decided to talk/keep talking with me because they believed they could get something out of it, such as emotional support, an opportunity to practise German, translation of legal documents or knowledge about support structures. For others, it was important that I addressed the violence of European bordering practices. Or, as Sharif once said: ‘I help you now, and then later you can help someone else’. In line with Mackenzie et al. (2007), who discuss the ethical aspects of doing research with displaced people, I found it important to be responsive to the needs of those participating in my study. During fieldwork, I sought to use my knowledge where it could be useful: I translated documents, wrote letters on request, and accompanied people to consultations. However, I was also conscious about how taking on a ‘helper role’ could influence processes of giving consent – or negatively influence people’s situation (Karlsen, 2015). One strategy in this respect has been to discuss these issues with research participants.

Pertaining to the people I met on a regular basis, obtaining consent took on the nature of an ongoing process during fieldwork (Mackenzie et al., 2007). We talked about where my research was going, about my analyses, about how we understood our relation, and about what people expected from me and my research. One interlocutor withdrew her consent because she found that my research was not developing as she had expected.

A related challenge of ethnographic fieldwork pertains to the acknowledgement that fieldwork is, as the geographer England argues, ‘inherently confrontational in that it is the purposeful disruption of other people’s lives’ (1994: 3). She contends that (ethnographic) fieldwork might expose people to greater risk than other methods, in the sense of being more intrusive and potentially more exploitative. One aspect of the possible intrusive and exploitative nature of fieldwork pertains to the close relationship that develops over time between researchers and research participants. During fieldwork, I spent many hours with the people who came to be my closest

interlocutors. We spent time together in their homes, in the camp or grilling food in the park. We shared stories, tears and laughter. I address my closest interlocutors as ‘friends’ when writing messages in WhatsApp or when we talk on the phone. Yet I have continuously reflected on the power relations in which these friendships are shaped and on the way I build my academic future on the time and insights people gave me – an aspect that Tim powerfully illuminates with his question (see also Skeggs, 1994). One strategy for me has been to discuss the role of ‘friendship’ with interlocutors throughout the project, and what it might mean in the context of a research project. The research group of the umbrella project has also been an important environment for discussing these ethical considerations.

### *Research dissemination, representation, and anonymity*

This study documented activities and strategies that are illegal or coded as illegitimate or unethical in public discussion. These were activities undertaken by migrants, but also by people working in organisations that provide aid or services to migrants. My writing has been guided by a principle of ‘doing no harm’ (Mackenzie et al., 2007). Nevertheless, it is important to consider how the researcher will never be in control of the way readers and listeners perceive and make the work intelligible. To exemplify, in my research, discussing and foregrounding how migrants negotiate the *Ausbildungsduldung* has been a way of producing knowledge about the role of temporality in the governing of migrants and a way of highlighting migrants’ affective and embodied navigations within the border timespace. However, when I have presented my work to a Norwegian audience, part of the feedback I have received is that the people I write about seem ‘ungrateful’ and ‘lazy’ in the sense of being unwilling to train or work. This response illuminates the ethics and politics of dissemination, and the danger of (re)producing stereotypes.

To secure the anonymity of research participants, I have altered what I considered non-essential information. What I considered non-essential information (bodily characteristics, number of children, age, and years in the country and country of origin) varied from case to case. In two cases, I have created a ‘new character’ based

on the accounts given by several research participants. Writing about the Lampedusa in Hamburg, I reflected deeply on issues regarding anonymity, as the population accepting the offer was rather small. Several of the men had been interviewed before in other research settings and expressed their knowledge of what it meant to participate in an academic study. Several also stated explicitly that they found it important for someone to write about the state practices and violence that shaped their lives. To secure their anonymity, I state explicitly in the journal article that I have changed several characteristics pertaining to the contexts of our encounters, as well as the men's backgrounds.

## Reflections on methodological challenges and implications

Every choice of research methodology and methods has consequences for the knowledge produced and entails specific ethical and political challenges (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). In this section, I will address two implications of my methodology and research design that require special attention.

### *Using waiting as an analytic optic*

In paper 3, I address some epistemological challenges pertaining to the use of waiting as an analytical lens in research on irregular migration. In the following, I reflect on two challenges which I do not cover in paper 3.

A first challenge pertains to how waiting in this study, on the one hand, serves as an analytical concept, while on the other, it is a term that research participants used to describe their situation. Research participants used the English verb 'waiting' or the German verb 'warten' when they talked about their lives (addressed in paper 3).

Writing out the analysis, I have tried to distinguish between when the term serves analytical purposes, and when it is used by research participants.

A second, and related, challenge pertains to translation and to my understanding of the phenomena that my interlocutors talked about in terms of 'waiting'. I often discussed the term with the people I spent time with during fieldwork. I asked them what waiting meant to them, and which word they would use to signify waiting in their vernacular

language. Yet these conversations often took place in German or English, which were second languages of most research participants. The fact that I did not speak my interlocutors' native language necessarily entails consequences for the knowledge produced. However, I realised during fieldwork that to understand the condition of waiting, it would be more useful to explore how waiting was lived and embodied than to talk about the meaning of the notion of 'waiting'. Moreover, I was conscious of the possibility that asking direct questions about waiting in interviews and conversations might serve to foreground a specific temporal structure or relation to time from the outset. This concern must also be understood in relation to waiting as a signifying term in humanitarian and policy discourses on migrants' condition in Europe – a discourse in which migrants also take part.

### *Implications of choice of thematic and ethnographic cases*

As this chapter has aimed to show, my fieldwork was explorative in scope and extensive in reach in the sense that it included many interlocutors, arenas and legal statuses. My three papers draw on all the different data sources that were part of my methodological approach: They use ethnographic fieldwork from all the three fieldwork arenas, observation in organisations, visits to service providers, interviews with state officials and legal and policy documents. However, I focus empirically on the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung*. As mentioned in chapter 1, this focus was a matter of picking up the stakes of my fieldwork. Yet, an aspect of my choice of ethnographic cases needs to be highlighted, namely, that this choice implies that the voices of women are not heard and their experiences are not analysed in the three papers.<sup>74</sup> I address the reasons for this in chapter 3, and have included ethnographic data based on my work with women in the 'Introduction'. Overall, I find that my decision to focus on the two variations of the *Duldung* allows me to illuminate the temporal politics of present developments of the German border regime. Furthermore, by centring analytical attention on male research participants, the papers provide valuable insight into how men negotiate the border timespace in relation to

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<sup>74</sup> There was one woman amongst the seven research participants on whose experiences I base my analysis in paper 1.

gendered and heterosexual norms of masculinity. The fact that I can include only smaller parts of my ethnographic data is more generally a consequence of my choice to write an article-based thesis. Accordingly, I have chosen to include ethnographic data in the 'Introduction'.

## Chapter 5. Theoretical framework: Time and governing

*November 2017. I stood at the gate to the camp where Fatima lived with her husband and their two children. Like the other camps I had visited, it was fenced in, and guards were checking the ID of people who were coming and going. I had met Fatima just once and had not visited this camp before. When the guard greeted me, I realised I had forgotten to bring my passport. I explained it, and the uniformed woman smiled and told me I was lucky: She had just heard a radio reportage about how Norwegians do not use ID-cards. She waved me through.*

*Fatima waited on the other side of the gate. She guided me to their 12-square-meter barrack room, where Di, her husband, greeted me in seemingly perfect German. I expressed my surprise: They had only been half a year in Germany. 'I need to learn German', he said.<sup>75</sup> He had attended a basic language course. However, because they were Dublin migrants and held a Duldung, he was not eligible for further courses. There was a delicious aroma in the room, and I noticed the steam rising from two pans on a little oven placed on a table. The table, along with two beds and a cupboard, made up the room's furniture. Fatima served the Afghan dish on a plate for me, while she laughed: 'Three times the guards have taken it [the oven]. But we buy a new one every time. They were here just before you arrived. But we managed to hide it'.*

*As we ate, we talked about how Di could find a language course. He wanted to get into vocational training or find work as soon as the Dublin period expired, and they worried about insufficient language training. Their youngest, Nora (4 months), slept on one of the beds, but their older daughter, Mona (2), soon became impatient. Di apologised and took her out. I wondered what they would*

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<sup>75</sup> My translation.

*do outside. Within the fences of the camp compound, there were only muddy paths between the barracks.*

*While Di and Mona were outside, I asked Fatima about ‘the Dublin’ which would expire in some weeks. ‘The lawyer told me these are risky times... Germany is doing everything fast now’, Fatima said. She talked about their fear of deportation back to Denmark before the six-month period was over and showed me some pills she had gotten to ‘help her with her feelings.’ Her feelings were bad that day, she said. Yesterday, the date on the calendar showed that they had been eight years in Europe – years of hard labour, of friendships forged, and sometimes lost, and of languages they had learned and forgotten: ‘Yesterday we have been eight years in Europe. That made me cry. Before I had so much energy. Now, I do not have any left. I have used up all my energy’, she said.*

*When Di and Mona returned, Fatima collected chocolate, nuts, cakes and biscuits from a carton under the table and arranged the food on small painted floral porcelain mugs on the floor. Then she measured her blood glucose. I commented on it. ‘Diabetes type 1’, she confirmed. I wondered where she kept the insulin since she had no refrigerator, and I knew that insulin must be stored cool or else its quality will deteriorate. ‘I hang it in a bag outside the window’, she said. I went up and looked out the window, as she continued: ‘But last time I did, some children stole it’.*

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Time is present in multiple, interrelated forms in this account from Fatima and Di’s barrack a little East of Hamburg. The Dublin construct renders time visible as a resource that can be stretched out, carved into periods and manipulated to control migrants. Time also figures as tempo – acceleration that renders time ‘risky’. The lawyer’s statement about ‘risky times’, furthermore, calls attention to the meanings ascribed to and the uneven workings of time: For whom are ‘these’ times ‘risky’ and for whom are they not risky? Time is also present as something that can be used

productively (learning a language) for the sake of future gain, yet Di's situation highlights that people have uneven access to spending and using time in what society deems productive ways. Moreover, Fatima thematises time as something that can drain people of energy. And yet, given that 'time' is used by scholars to signify and conceptualise change, continuity, and becoming, perhaps one could turn the perspective around and ask: Might the loss of and change in energy be understood as part of what constitutes (waiting) time?

My aim in this chapter on theory is to spell out what I will describe as a 'time-infused' (Adam, 1989: 465) approach to bordering practices and waiting. I follow Adam in her argument that 'to take time seriously' in a research project:

is not like a cooking recipe: take space and matter, add on time and stir. Rather, to make time a central feature of your work changes your understanding and your theory at the level of ontology, epistemology and methodology. To centrally encompass time in the analysis, therefore, presents significant challenges (2008: 1).

To Adam, taking time seriously involves acknowledging that time is 'simultaneously abstracted and reified, experienced and constituted' (1989: 468). Furthermore, she argues, this multidimensionality of time fruitfully provides for a common meeting ground of studies of social time and feminist epistemological concerns. This is so, she explains, because a perspective that takes the complexity of time seriously will necessarily be a perspective that rejects dichotomies, and that foregrounds embodiment, relational subjectivity, context, and partial knowledge – all core in feminist epistemological endeavours. I agree that taking time 'seriously' in the sense of acknowledging its many dimensions and questioning its taken-for-granted assumptions has epistemological implications that chime with feminist concerns. I hope to render visible this common ground in the following, by outlining my theoretical approach to time in the context of my study of the German border timespace.



The chapter is organised in four sections. In the *first section*, I outline my approach to power and explain the notions of the *border regime* and the *biopolitical border*, that I deploy in my papers. In *section two*, I situate my approach to time and power within a wider research field, through a focus on periodisation and waiting. In *the third section*, I elaborate three central concepts in my work; *lived time*, *relational time*, and *multiple temporalities*. My aim is to clarify the underpinning epistemological assumptions and implications of approaching time as lived, relational, and multiple when studying the temporalities of borders and the production of migrant irregularity. In the *fourth section*, I draw on Doreen Massey to theorise the condition of waiting through an understanding of time as constituted through interactions and relations, and as a constant emergence of something new. In other words, I develop an approach to waiting time in terms of what I will call *constituted* or *temporal* time (Adam, 1990). I argue that such a conceptualisation of (waiting) *time* provides a point of departure for a critique of the individualising and normative temporal order of ‘waiting well’ and for exploring the ‘cruddy’ and ‘corrosive’ (Povinelli, 2011: 145) violence of border regimes.

The empirical context that prompts and frames my thinking is one in which migrant irregularity is produced according to notions of ‘earned regularisation’ (chapter 2) and through techniques of governing that I identify analytically in my papers as suspension, bracketing, deportability, periodisation, and conditional future promises. Theoretically, my work rests on the premise that studies of border temporalities should consider the politics embedded in conceptualisations of time – both in border regimes and in research. As Bastian writes: ‘The concern is that without explicit attention to the way time itself is thought, unexamined assumptions, for example regarding time’s linearity, neutrality or all-encompassing character, may implicitly shape [these] analyses in problematic ways’ (2013: 96). In other words, as feminist scholars from fields such as history (Felski, 2002; Bastian, 2013), sociology (Adam, 1989; 2002), and geography (Massey, 2005) have argued, assumptions about time are political, as they condition what researchers see.

I outline my theoretical approach mainly through a selective reading of feminist, but also queer and post-colonial engagements with time. Yet while it is a selective reading, it is a ‘focused selectiveness’ (Adam, 1990: 69) that is motivated by my objective to explore the temporal dimensions of borders and the temporal assumptions that underpin waiting as an analytical lens.

To illustrate my points and ground my arguments, I include some ethnographic data. In addition to Fatima, I introduce another of the Lampedusa migrants, Andy, and return to Sharif (chapter 2, paper 1). I note that these ethnographic narratives also serve the more general purpose of introducing the reader to my fieldwork.

## Governmentality, the biopolitical border, and the border regime

The approach to power that underpins my study of the temporalities of the German border is largely shaped by Foucauldian understandings of power in terms of governmentality and biopolitics. Foucault’s work has been influential in the past decades of critical engagement with irregular migration and borders, on which this thesis draws (De Genova, 2002; Johnson et al., 2011; Conlon and Gill, 2013; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013; Karlsen, 2015).

### *Governmentality*

Through his effort to rethink conventional models of power through various works in the 1970s and 1980s, Foucault developed an understanding of power that shifted attention from questions about who *holds* power to questions about *forms and operations* of power (Rabinow, 1984; Foucault, 2004). Foucault’s concern was how power, to quote Brown, irrigates ‘the social order as opposed to an imagined positioning of power as on top of, visibly stratifying, or forcibly containing its subject’ (2008: 67). This is power in its dispersed, regulatory, and productive character.

As part of this endeavour to understand the power relations of contemporary societies, Foucault outlined a concept of power in terms of *governmentality* in a series of lectures from 1977-1978. Governmentality, in Foucault’s understanding, is ‘the ensemble formed by institutions procedures, analysis, and reflections, calculations and

tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument' (2004: 108).

Governmentality refers to the way human conduct (of individuals and populations) can be directed, and how subjectivities are produced. Moreover, the notion of governmentality alludes to a certain relationship of government with other forms of power, in particular discipline and sovereignty (Brown, 2008; Foucault, 2004). In Foucault's words: 'In fact we have a triangle, sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management, which has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism' (2004: 107-108). The apparatuses of security in Foucault's work 'include all the practices and institutions that ensure the optimal and proper functioning of the economic, vital and social processes that are found to exist within that population and would thus also include health, welfare and education systems' (Dean, 2009: 29). As Dean notes, rather than replacing discipline and sovereignty, Foucault argues that 'the modern art and government recasts them within this concern for the population and its optimization (in terms of wealth, health, happiness, prosperity, efficiency), and the forms of knowledge and technical means appropriate to it' (2009: 30).

### *Rationalities and techniques of power*

My papers explore the role of temporal *techniques* and *rationalities* of governing migration in the German border timespace. This thesis approaches rationalities and techniques of power through the framework of governmentality. Rationality concerns a form of knowledge that informs *and* arises from the activity of governing. In the context of Foucault's (2003) work, rationality signifies ways of calculating, thinking about, and responding to a problem. These ways of thinking are presented as rational and coherent. As Schultz notes in her discussion of German demographic strategies; rationalities 'create political problems and make them governable at the same time' (2015: 343). Importantly, for Foucault, governmentality is a way of linking political *rationalities* to *technologies* of government. To study power as governmentality involves an interest in how rationality, as Dean writes, 'becomes linked to and is

embedded in technical means for the shaping and reshaping of conduct and in practices and institutions' (2009: 27). Hence, to think rationality in the context of governmentality involves an engagement with how 'truth' is 'made practical' and is produced in political, social, and cultural practices (Dean, 2009: 27). Furthermore, it entails attention to how governing (of others and ourselves) is practised according to these truths. Such practices of governing form, to quote Dean; 'more or less organized ways, at any given time and place, we think about, reform and practice such things as caring, administrating, counselling, punishing, educating and so forth' (2009: 31). The operation of practices in such relatively organised and systemised ways is captured through the notion of 'regimes of practices'. Regimes of practices operate through certain techniques and mechanism, by which they 'attempt to realize their goals, and through which they have a range of effects' (Dean, 2009: 31). Such techniques include, for instance, statistics, kinds of qualitative and quantitative calculation (such as the 'prospect of staying', see chapter 2), forms of spatial and temporal architecture (for example clocks, calendars, design of asylum processing centres) or types of training (such as vocational training).

### *The border regime and the biopolitical border.*

My papers approach borders through the notions of the 'border regime' and the 'biopolitical border'. These concepts signal specific theoretical, epistemological and methodological assumptions about (how to study) borders. Accordingly, they demand some elaboration.

To approach borders theoretically as 'regimes' signals an approach to power as 'regimes of practices' in a Foucauldian sense (Tsianos et al., 2009: 2). More specifically, I use the notion of the 'border regime' following critical border scholars such as Mezzadra and Neilson (2013: 178), Tsianos, Hess and Kasperek (Hess and Kasperek, 2010; Tsianos et al., 2009). In their work, the conceptualisation of borders as 'regimes' implies an accentuation of the ubiquitous, reterritorialized character of borders. The term captures how borders are made and re-made through the practice of different actors, for example in the making and discretionary uses of law, in decisions

and provisions of welfare services and volunteer activities, as well as in migrants' embodied practices. My discussion of the recent developments of German asylum law and policy in chapter 2, exemplify, for instance, the central role of economic actors in present German border practices.

Furthermore, the notion of the border regime is useful in my work due to how it captures a now wide-spread conception of borders as spread out throughout the sovereign territory (Balibar, 2002; Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2009). In this approach, borders are conceptualised 'as practices that are situated and constituted in the specificity of political negotiations as well as the everyday life performance of them, being shifting and contested between individuals and groupings as well as in the constructions of individual subjectivities', as Cassidy et al. (2018: 139) write. Or, as Karlsen formulates it, 'the physical borders of nation-states come to follow irregularised migrants in their everyday life, always providing a background set of rules which structure the relationships that they have in the countries in which they reside' (2015: 183). As I argue in the previous chapter, to approach borders and the production of irregularity as produced through a manifold of practices has methodological implications regarding *where* the border can be studied.

Foucault's work on governmentality and biopolitics has served as a basis for rethinking borders in terms of their functioning as governmental tools in the optimisation of the health and prosperity of the population. It is this aspect of borders that Walters (2002) seeks to capture through his work on the 'biopolitical border' – a work that I am indebted to in my analyses in paper 1 and 2. Walters develops this concept through an attempt to contribute, as he writes, to a 'more historicized understanding of borders' (2002: 561) which might allow for their 'denaturalization' (2002: 562). His empirical example is Schengen. He argues that Schengen could be theorised and traced along three lines: 'the geopolitical border', the 'national border', and the 'biopolitical border'. With the first term, Walters highlights the role of the border in relation to the 'geographical territory understood as a power resource' (2002: 562), while the notion of the 'national border', captures the association of the border with the nation-state. For his notion of the 'biopolitical border', Walters takes his point

of departure in the phenomenon that borders have increasingly become ‘regulatory instruments’ (2002: 562) as states seek to regulate migration and ‘calibrate’ migration in relation to economic interests (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013) (see also chapter 2). As he writes himself, Walter tries ‘to capture the relationship of borders’ to ‘populations – their movement, security, wealth and health’ (2002: 562). The notion of biopolitics, as developed by Foucault (2003), captures a form of power that is concerned with the government and administration of and through life.<sup>76</sup> Its object is the ‘population’, which should be understood as ‘a living entity composed of vital processes’ (Dean, 2009: 266). Biopolitics targets populations and the capacities and forces of living individuals, as members of a population, as resources to be optimised, fostered and used (Dean, 2009: 29). Notably, Foucault understood discipline and biopolitics as coexisting and mutually supportive, as a ‘bipolar technology’ and power of which the ‘highest function [is] to invest life through and through’ (1978: 139). Approaching the border through a framework of the ‘biopolitical border’ has been enabling in my attempt to understand the production of migrant workers through training in relation to practices of governing that aim to secure the longer-term future workforce. Furthermore, biopolitics is a framework through which to make sense of what I call ‘biological time’ and ‘relational time’. I return to these latter dimensions of time later.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> In the late 1970s, Foucault turned to the problem of government, and largely abandoned the language of biopolitics. For a discussion of the relation between governmentality and biopolitics, see Dean (2009).

<sup>77</sup> It should be noted here that there is an ongoing discussion regarding the usefulness of the Foucauldian lens of biopolitics in studies on irregular migration and for understanding irregular migrants’ ‘relation to the state in which they live’ (Karlsen, 2015: 10). There is an influential scholarship approaching irregular migration through Agamben’s concept of ‘bare life’, understood as a life that is expendable in contrast to the life of the citizen (the ‘population’) (for an overview and critical discussion, see Karlsen, 2015). There is also a line of critique that draws on Achille Mbembe’s (2019) concept of necropolitics, arguing that biopolitics is less useful for understanding how migrants are ‘let to die’ in present regimes of bordering (for instance, Round and Kuznetsova-Morenko, 2017).

## Governing through time: Periodisation and waiting

This section contextualises my analyses of German border temporalities in relation to literature that approaches time from a perspective of power, and, vice versa, that seeks to understand power relations through a temporal perspective.

In 2014, Nancy Griffiths argued that migration scholars have tended to neglect the temporal dimensions of mobility (see also Griffiths et al., 2013). Four years later, Barber and Lem (2018a) reiterated Griffiths' argument in their introduction to the edited volume *Migration, temporality and Capitalism*. While it still holds true that a spatial perspective dominates in literature on borders and migration, I also find, writing this chapter in the summer of 2020, a rich and growing literature on migration and bordering that takes a temporal approach.

One strand of this literature - and one to which my work is indebted - investigates bordering and migration from a Marxist and Foucauldian approach. This literature understands time as a technique and relation of power, and as a quantity or phenomenon that can be manipulated and used in the control and governing of migrants. Core in such approaches are notions of time discipline, engagements with the commodification of time in capitalism, and a concern with the role of time in processes of subjectification. One influential work is Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson's (2013) *Border as Method, or the Multiplication of Labour*, which devotes one chapter to a discussion of the temporalities of borders. Other border and migration scholars such as Martina Tazzioli (2018) and Barber and Lem (2018a) also deploy a Foucauldian and/or Marxist approach when discussing issues such as deadlines, temporal borders, and the role of camps and immobilisation in synchronising migrants' movements into labour markets. Moreover, there is a growing literature that discusses the temporal dimensions of detention and encampment and investigates waiting as a technique of bordering and governing of migrants (Andersson, 2014; Bagelman, 2016; Osseiran, 2017; Jacobsen et al., 2020).

This brief introduction sketches the contours of a field of migration and border studies in which my work is situated. For the remainder of this section, I will focus on two

aspects that form part of my broader approach to time and governing. These are, respectively, periodisation and waiting. Concerning the latter, I focus specifically on critical engagements with the analytical imaginary of waiting and the normativities attached to waiting as a temporal construct. Thereby, I also establish the grounds for my discussion in the third part of this chapter concerning how waiting might be refined as an analytical imaginary. I believe that my accentuation of periodisation and the normativities of waiting, *and* my mobilisation of these perspectives ethnographically contribute to deepen the understanding of the temporal dimensions of how migrant irregularity is produced. While periodisation of time is core to practices of bordering through ‘earned regularisation’ (chapter 2), literature on border temporalities has paid little attention to this temporal technique. This is a line of thinking where feminist, queer and post-colonial scholars have much to contribute.

### *Periodisation: Carving up time in periods*

One core argument in my work is that the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung* operate through ‘carving up time’ (Klinke, 2013: 676) in periods. As my discussion of temporary refugee protection statuses and the *Beschäftigungsduldung* in chapter 2 shows, this temporal technique of governing migration is also more generally present in German border practices. To discuss this technique of structuring, manipulating and rendering time legible, I deploy a concept of *periodisation*.

As a temporal theoretical concept, periodisation is deeply embedded in discussions of historical time (Chakrabarty, 2000; Davis, 2012; Jordheim, 2012). Within the field of history, there is by now a well-established critique of historical periodisation as a powerful narrative technique that operates through slicing up time in periods (such as the medieval/religious, and the modern/secular). Core to post-colonial, feminist and queer critiques of practices of historicist periodisation is the insight that historical periods are commonly rendered meaningful within teleological and stage-oriented histories (Chakrabarty, 2000; Dinshaw et al., 2007; Davis, 2012; Traub, 2013). Such narratives of historical time, post-colonial scholars argue, function to situate ‘non-



western' parts of the globe according to previous periods of western historical development (Chakrabarty, 2000; Gupta, 2008). Within these imaginaries of time, thus, some people and places are narrated as 'lagging behind' in history, and have their 'coevalness denied', as Fabian (1983) formulates it. Furthermore, critical historians have shown that scholarly and political acts to periodise history and thus define the historical 'now' in specific ways function to homogenise time. Hence, periodisation renders invisible how 'individual groups have their own distinct histories, rhythms and temporalities quite apart from traditional forms of periodization' (Felski 2000 in Browne, 2014: 10; Chakrabarty, 2000; 2004). Indeed, as scholars such as Dipesh Chakrabarty (history) and Ian Klinke (critical geopolitics) have argued, historical and geopolitical practices of periodisation imply a narrator (politicians, researchers, popular culture etc.) who is placed in 'the superior position of the one who knows time' (Klinke, 2013: 675) and who accordingly has the power to define 'the now' in specific ways (Chakrabarty, 2004; Hutchings, 2013; Browne, 2014). Such definitions of the 'now', work to value and devalue lives according to what is rendered to be the 'right' (ways of being in) time.<sup>78</sup>

Yet notwithstanding the critique of historical periodisation, the periodising impulse in history prevails, as Kathleen Davis (2012) notes in her thought-provoking book *Periodization and Sovereignty: How ideas about feudalism and secularisation govern the politics of time*.<sup>79</sup> Puzzled with this fact, Davis argues that periodisation should be understood as a 'regulating principle' (2012: 2). By this approach, she captures how periodisation (in history and politics) works to 'ground[] political orders' (2012: 3) and establish truth claims about time. Davis' field of research is the Middle Ages, and the empirical context for her discussion of periodisation is the periodic divide between what she calls the 'monoliths medieval/religious/feudal and the modern/secular/capitalist (or "developed")' (2012: 2, brackets and quotation marks in

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<sup>78</sup> Critique of large-scale periodisations is also central in queer scholarship. Scholars such as Edelman (2004) Halberstam (2005), and Freeman (2005), have investigated how taken-for-granted heteronormative life cycle periodisations work to render some ways of living, and some ways of organising time more valuable than others. These scholars' engagements with periodisation refocus the temporal lens away from historical time.

<sup>79</sup> Davis (2012: 189) accentuates her indebtedness to the post-colonial scholar Dipesh Chakrabarty, and to Carolyn Dinshaw who has done important work on queer temporality. I note this to render visible the connections in the field of thinking from which I draw.

original). She argues that the notion of secular, capitalist time is grounded as a political order through its relation to the medieval/religious period (that is; what this secular/capitalist time no longer is). This relation then, which takes the ‘form of a claim to detachment’ (2012: 2), is established through periodisation. In other words, Davis argues that the political order of secular time is grounded by its attachment to the medieval/religious ‘at the point of a division in time’ (2012: 2). Based on this analysis, she contends that the important questions to be asked when encountering historical and geopolitical periodisations are: What does periodisation ‘hold[] in place’, what does it obscure, and what political assumptions – for instance about the ‘naturalness’ and homogeneity of capitalist and secular time – does it leave unchallenged? (2012: 2).

While my engagement is not with ‘historical time’ and my empirical context differs from that of Davis and the other historians referred to above, their work has been fruitful for my thinking on border temporalities. As the *Ausbildungsduldung* exemplifies, current regularisation schemes in Germany operate through techniques of carving up time in periods in relation to a future residence permit. I contend that periodisation could be understood and approached as a ‘regulating principle’ also in the context of present border timespaces. My thesis shows how approaching periodisation in this way valuably adds to the conceptual arsenal for examining border temporalities (papers 1 and 2). In my papers, to approach periodisation as a ‘regulating principle’ in the sense discussed by Davis involves attention to how techniques of carving up time in periods (through the *Duldung*) work to establish ‘truth claims’ about migrant irregularity and migrants’ time. Furthermore, it involves attention to how periodisation works to mediate the conflicts and ‘disjunctive temporalities’ (Barber and Lem, 2018a: 4) between border enforcement concerns and economic concerns. As I show in paper 1, the partly conflicting interests and logics of different German ministries are mediated by the establishment of a period of temporary

suspension of deportation in which migrants' might 'earn' their regularisation yet remain deportable.<sup>80</sup>

### *Periodisation and temporal bracketing*

In paper 2, I read the periodising techniques of migration legislation in relation to Elisabeth Povinelli's (2011) work on techniques of temporal 'bracketing' in her book *Economies of Abandonment*.<sup>81</sup> One of Povinelli's concerns in *Economies of Abandonment* is an engagement with how harms and violence that people endure in the present might come to be narrated and judged from the perspective of the future perfect. She shows such logics as operative both in the Bush administration's justification of the war in Iraq (where killing is narrated from the future perfect of a re-established order) and in the justification of state programmes that deteriorate the livelihood of Australian indigenous communities. As Olund writes in a reflection on Povinelli's work in the empirical context of welfare cutbacks in the UK, such programmes are legitimised by 'proclaiming that the additional suffering' they inflict in the process "will have been worth it" at some future date when the other becomes an equal in the only proper milieu, the market' (2013: 231). According to Povinelli (2011), such proclamations and statements (be they from politicians or critical scholars) function to bracket violence. In other words, they function to frame harms and violence through 'narrative configurations of time' (2011: 96) 'in such a way that they effectively disappear from public discussion, sentiment, and ethics' (2011: 77).

The programmes and political processes discussed by Povinelli and Olund do not come with a set (if conditional) endpoint and do not work through installing a (more or less) specific periodic division in time. Hence, these contexts differ from the two cases

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<sup>80</sup> While she does not engage with periodisation, Niess (2018) exemplifies the value of post-colonial historical critiques in her thesis, in which she explores the political struggle of the Lampedusa in Hamburg and the migrants' negotiations of the Duldung-offer. She shows how Hamburg politicians narrated the migrants' distrust of the government and their reluctance to accept the offer as a matter of not (yet) knowing and having to learn about true and 'western' democratic processes (Niess, 2018: 290).

<sup>81</sup> Povinelli does not situate herself firmly within feminist and/or gender studies. Nonetheless, I argue that her theoretical interests, her indebtedness to gender and feminist scholars, and the engagements with her writing in feminist scholarship (Coleman and Stuesse, 2016; Smith and Vasudevan, 2017) make it plausible to read her in a framework of feminist temporality. Furthermore, my papers illuminate how her work might be fruitfully mobilised in engagements with feminist, post-colonial and queer work on time.

of the Duldung that I analyse. In the case of the Lampedusaduldung and the Ausbildungsduldung, techniques of temporal bracketing work in tandem with techniques of periodisation and suspension in the governing of migrants and construction of migrant irregularity. Suspension as conceptualised in my work aims to capture how power operates through controlling migrants' spatial and social mobility in quantities of time.<sup>82</sup> As temporal techniques of governing, suspension, periodisation and temporal bracketing produce conditions of waiting.

### *The technique, experience, and condition of waiting*

During the past ten years, 'waiting' has become a central analytical lens and object of study in research on migrant irregularity and border temporalities (Griffiths, 2014; Bagelman, 2016; McNevin and Missbach, 2018; Jacobsen, 2020; Karlsen, 2020). Scholars approach waiting variously as a technique of bordering, as a temporal and embodied experience, and as a particularly temporalised socio-political condition produced through law and the practices of various border actors. In ethnographic studies of waiting, such different approaches often coexist (for a review on literature on migration and waiting, see Jacobsen and Karlsen, 2020).

One example of the manifold meanings of waiting is provided by Andersson's (2014) study of migration control at the EU southern frontier. In his much-quoted article, Andersson usefully mobilises a multifaceted notion of waiting to explore the temporal aspects of bordering. One core aspect of his approach is an understanding of waiting as a *technique of migration control*. Through this lens, he captures how borders work through 'an active usurpation' of migrant's time, 'time delay', spatial immobilisation, as well as through a 'colonization – of migrants' vital experiences of time, including their hopefulness or longing' (2014: 805).<sup>83</sup> The withholding of migrants in camps, he contends, produces economic gains for actors and institutions involved in border

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<sup>82</sup> As defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, suspension 'implies temporary stoppage with an added suggestion of waiting until some condition is satisfied' (see: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/defer>). This definition captures how suspension, also on the level of terminology, is closely entangled with techniques of conditional future promising

<sup>83</sup> Andersson's study interestingly illuminates techniques of 'promise-making' in a highly different empirical setting than the one I work in. He shows how border guards in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta maintained a 'faint promise of liberation' for detained migrants, partly conditional on 'good' uses of time (Andersson, 2014: 805).

controls, such as camp contractors. The ‘landscape of time’ (Andersson, 2014: 789) of the EU southern border differs starkly from my fieldwork context and importantly illuminates other processes and material techniques through which migrants’ time is controlled, suspended and used for economic gains in the European border timespace. To explore waiting as a technique of bordering, Andersson focuses analytically on surveillance technologies and camp schedules, but also on what he calls migrants’ ‘subjective time’ (Andersson, 2014: 797). Turning to ‘subjective time’, his approach to waiting is broadened to encompass an understanding of waiting as a *temporal experience* - a state of ‘stuckness’ (Hage, 2009a) in which time appears as ‘sticky and suspended’ (Griffiths, 2014). Furthermore, he theorises waiting as a ‘*tactic*’ through which migrants negotiate their conditions of imposed waiting and co-produce the temporalities of control (Andersson, 2014: 803).

Andersson’s work exemplifies how waiting takes on many and entangled meanings in ethnographic work on bordering and migration. These meanings might be hard to disentangle analytically (also Hage, 2018). The manifold meanings of waiting in scholarly works might have to do with how *time* is core to the concept of waiting. As Adam (1989) states – and as my introductory account from Fatima’s barrack highlights – thinking about time in empirical work implies grappling with complexity. Waiting also takes on entangled meanings in my work.<sup>84</sup> In my papers, I argue that waiting is a technique of governing. In this sense, waiting serves as an umbrella term that encompasses the techniques defined and discussed in this thesis: periodisation, bracketing, promise-making, deportability and suspension. Yet, as my research questions illuminate (chapter 1), I also theorise waiting as a particularly temporalised socio-political condition, produced by law, regulation, administrative procedures and the practices of different actors.<sup>85</sup> Pertaining to the latter, I explore the contested spatiotemporal frames through which the condition of waiting and its inherent violence is rendered meaningful (paper 2). Furthermore, I identify how the condition of waiting

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<sup>84</sup> In chapter 4, I discuss challenges pertaining to the fact that ‘waiting’ is both an ‘emic’ and analytical concept.

<sup>85</sup> I explain the notion of ‘socio-political condition’ in chapter 4, in conjunction with the outline of my approach to migrant irregularity. Indeed, approaching waiting as a ‘condition’ prompts a question concerning its analytical relation to the ‘condition of irregularity’. To some extent, waiting could be said to define a particularly temporalised condition of irregularity. Accordingly, the condition of irregularity and waiting are to some extent analytically entangled in my work.

is produced through a normative, normalising and differential temporal order (paper 1). While my papers primarily seek to unpack the temporal rationalities and techniques of governing, my ethnography shows how migrants navigate conditions of imposed waiting in ways that resonate with Andersson's work on waiting as a tactic.

### *The analytical construct of waiting*

As Fabian argues in his book on time in anthropology, 'Time and the Other', social science scholarship constructs its objects 'through temporal concepts and devices' (1983: xxxviii). Such constructions, he contends, have epistemological and political implications. The epistemological implications of using waiting as an analytical lens in the context of migration have been a matter of concern in my study. Indeed, other researchers have raised similar concerns. Through empirically grounded work, scholars have explored the underpinning assumptions about time, space, agency and subjectivity inscribed into the analytical imaginary of waiting (Brun, 2015; Rotter, 2016; Ramsay, 2017a; Hage, 2018; Jacobsen et al., 2020). One line of discussion has been the equation of waiting with passiveness, rupture and stasis in scholarship, popular culture and political discourse (Gray, 2011; Brun, 2015; Rotter, 2016). An example of work that deals with this issue is Kathrin Brun's (2015) research with internally displaced Georgians from Abkhazia. Critical of the equation of waiting with passivity, she argues that the 'temporality' of waiting must be rethought for waiting to be a useful perspective on protracted displacement. People, she argues, are 'constantly monitoring' their condition of waiting and relate to and evaluate different futures in relation to their pasts (2015: 23). She proposes the interlinked concepts of 'agency in waiting' and 'active waiting,' to grasp this aspect of waiting analytically. Her concept of time – the *temporality* of waiting – centres, as I read Brun, on time as (practised) experience. Also, another geographer, Breda Gray (2011), has argued for a conceptualisation of waiting in terms of 'active waiting'. Gray examines the negotiations of waiting and mobility by people who decided to stay in Ireland during the time of mass mobility to the US in the 1950s. To some extent, her notion of 'active waiting' chimes with the one proposed by Brun. Gray argues for a conception of waiting that can encompass how people negotiate the condition of waiting 'in relation

to their own life projects and those of others' (2011: 420). Interesting in relation to my analysis of how bordering through the Duldung plays out on 'the scale of the lived experiences' of migrants (paper 1), she accentuates how waiting takes shape through the interweaving of multiple temporalities, related to gendered life-cycle expectations and work, for instance. Yet Gray's notion of 'action' goes further than Brun's to also encompass an engagement with how embodied life and placemaking goes on while waiting. The 'logic of action' that she identifies as inherent to waiting is one that 'involve[s] the ongoing making and remaking of self, place and belonging' (Gray, 2011: 426). In Gray's work, thus, waiting is a lens for exploring people's ongoing lives and how people 'become men' and 'women' while waiting (2011: 426). Gray's and Brun's studies illuminate that the way waiting is understood has implications for the researcher's gaze on the world. I will return to and discuss the epistemological implications of the analytical imaginary of waiting towards the end of this chapter. Doing this, I show how my endeavours to apprehend the violence of the Duldung regulations, and my obligation to 'take time seriously', as formulated at the introduction of this chapter, pushed my thinking towards a critical engagement with underpinning assumptions about time. This engagement takes me beyond an occupation with time in terms of temporal experience (Brun's focus) and towards a theorisation of waiting *time* that enables me to understand people's ongoing and relational lives (Gray's focus) as constitutive of waiting's 'now'.

### *The normativities of waiting*

A core argument in Gray's work is that to gain an understanding of 'the temporality and experience of waiting' (2011: 420) in empirical contexts, there is a need to consider how waiting is shaped by social and cultural norms. Also other scholars, such as Ghassan Hage (2009b) and Kinneret Lahad (2017), have shown how waiting and evaluations of waiting time is shaped according to social norms and within broader relations of power. I want to highlight Lahad's work here, because of the way she valuably addressees how waiting – as used in political and popular discourses - should be approached and investigated as a normative temporal construct.

Lahad's (2017) book, *A Table for One. A Critical Reading of Singlehood, Gender and Time*, investigates social constructions of singlehood in Israel, with a focus on white, single, Israeli middle-class women. Drawing on Foucauldian notions of power, she looks at waiting as 'both a temporal construct and as an interactional process which sheds light over how power relations, forms of knowledge, and subjectivities are constituted and reified' (Lahad, 2017: 94). From such a perspective, she analyses how single women are 'designated with a waiting position' (2017: 11) through what she calls the 'linear life-course imperative' (2017: 26; see also Halberstam, 2005). They are understood, in popular culture, to be 'missing the train' to a valuable future as a complete grownup. Furthermore, exploring the self-doubts of single women, Lahad contends that their 'questions and self-doubts emerge as pervasive disciplinary apparatuses' (2017: 48). Lahad's work importantly illuminates that waiting is not a neutral concept, but that what is perceivable as waiting – and, relatedly, as movement – will always be shaped within normative temporal orders. She shows that waiting, as a normative concept, entails specific ways of valuing lives, and of understanding people's lives in terms of mobility/immobility. These insights accentuate the importance of critically scrutinising one's own assumptions about waiting – including in research that deploys waiting analytically (paper 3).

## Lived time and multiple temporalities

In my papers, I use the notions *lived time*, *lived timespace*, *multiple temporalities* and *relational time*. This section outlines the meaning of these terms in my work and clarifies the epistemological and methodological considerations they signal. First, I explain the role of 'lived time'. Secondly, I outline two different meanings that the notion of 'multiple temporalities' carries in my work. On the one hand, the notion captures an occupation with multiple ways of experiencing and rendering time meaningful. On the other hand, it entails an engagement with biological time, in the sense of the ongoing biological processes of the ageing body. Thirdly, I address the relational politics of time. These different approaches to time form part of an epistemological, methodological and theoretical framework for the investigation of border temporalities.



*Lived time(space)*<sup>86</sup>

The notion of ‘lived time’ to some extent signals an engagement with phenomenological approaches to time and migrant irregularity. My indebtedness to phenomenological approaches to time (Ahmed, 2006; Shubin, 2015) is visible in my papers through their engagements with how people render time meaningful, and organise and make sense of their lives in relation to and through time. Indeed, my papers show how migrants relate and orient affectively to the future, and make sense of time in terms of urgency or ‘stuckedness’ (Hage, 2009b), change and stasis (Andersson, 2014; Griffiths, 2014).

However, the objective of my thesis has not primarily been to deepen the understanding of the temporal dimension of migrant irregularity as, ‘a mode of being in the world’, as anthropologist Sarah Willen (2007: 12) formulates it in her work to develop a phenomenologically inclined approach to migrant irregularity (see also chapter 4).<sup>87</sup> Rather, my deployment of ‘lived time’ as an analytical lens signals epistemological and methodological considerations concerning how to study and produce knowledge about the temporalities of governing migration. More specifically, my accentuation of ‘lived time’ is premised on the assumption that all knowledges about borders, as well as about time and temporal existence, are situated (Adam, 1989).<sup>88</sup> In this, I am indebted to the work of feminist geographers the past decades to rethink the epistemological grounding of geopolitics and border studies. Scholars such as Massey (1994), Hyndman (2004), Mountz (2013; Mountz and Hyndman, 2006), Coleman and Stuesse (2016) and McDowell (2008) have shown how the embodied scale of peoples’ everyday life is a valuable point of departure for knowledges about borders. As Coleman and Stuesse write in the context of a study of immigration enforcement in the US South, a core feature of feminist approaches to state power has been to ‘place emphasis on understanding the practice of state power by those who

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<sup>86</sup> I use the notions of ‘lived time’ and ‘lived timespace’ interchangeably. While I contend that space is involved in how time is lived and vice versa, the notion of ‘*lived time*’ accentuates my focus on time.

<sup>87</sup> Willen draws on the anthropologist Robert Desjarlais to develop ‘a phenomenologically inclined account ... which attends at once to the concerns and lifeworlds of [our ethnographic subjects] and to the interrelated social, discursive, and political forces that underpinned those concerns and lifeworlds’ (2005: 369).

<sup>88</sup> Cf. discussion of situated knowledges in chapter 4.

literally embody it' (2016: 528). Those who 'embody' state power are frontline officials, they are volunteers and lawyers, such as those I met in Hamburg, but also migrants, such as Sharif, Sam and Fatima. To Coleman and Stuesse, 'immigrants' struggles to labor and socially reproduce are indeed the grounds of immigration control in practice' (2016: 525).

In different ways, the scholars mentioned above take as a point of departure the assumption that analytical attention to the intimate and embodied scale might reveal relations, mechanisms and processes of power otherwise obscured (Mountz, 2013; 2004).<sup>89</sup> As Cassidy et al. note in a review of feminist geographers' research on borders, these works reveal 'how the everyday is the scale where the geopolitical is worked out and embodied' (2018: 140 ; see also Pain and Staeheli, 2014). One example is Alison Mountz (2013), who contends that the embodied and intimate is a valuable scale for investigations into the interconnections between sovereign and biopolitical forms of power. In her own words: 'Sovereign power acts upon the body that struggles, moves, is contained and produced, showing intimate connections between sovereign and biopower' (2013: 836). In line with these approaches, the accentuation of 'lived timespace' in my thesis signals an epistemological concern with how to study border temporalities and should be understood as a way of emphasising the temporal dimensions of what feminist geographers call the lived, embodied, intimate scale. This sparks the question of how this 'temporal dimension' might be approached.

### *Multiple temporalities: The multiple ways of rendering time meaningful*

'The Europeans were the first to come to Africa without any documents' (Pat, member of the Lampedusa in Hamburg. He declined the offer in 2012).

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<sup>89</sup> With the notion of the 'intimate' Hyndman and Mountz conceptualise 'embodied social relations that include mobility, emotion, materiality, belonging, alienation. The intimate encompasses not only those entanglements rooted in the everyday, but also the subtlety of their interconnectedness to everyday intimacies in other places and times: the rough hands of the woman who labors, the shortness of breath of the child without medication, the softness of the bed on which one sleeps' (2006: 447).

In my analytical attention to lived time, I am indebted to engagements with ‘alternative temporalities’ in queer and feminist scholarship. As the works discussed so far in this chapter highlight, temporal constructs and schemes of living are often taken for granted. One contribution of feminist and queer scholars is their illumination of alternative and multiple ways of living and organising life. Moreover, by highlighting alternative temporalities, they establish a perspective from which to render visible normalising temporal constructs and the differential valuation of lives embedded in temporal orders. What is at stake in these works is an engagement with chronopolitics or the politics of time (Freeman, 2005: 84). The notion of chronopolitics rests on the assumption that there will always be competing articulations and struggles over time and temporal experience (Browne, 2014: 29, 144). Furthermore, engaging with the politics of time entails acknowledging how time and temporal orders, as Sharma writes, are ‘produced at the intersection of a range of social differences’ (2011: 440). Such temporal orders privilege certain lives while deprivileging others.

An example of a work that mobilises alternative temporal frameworks in a critique of dominant temporalities of governing, is Halberstam’s (2005) book *In a queer time and Space: Transgender bodies, subcultural lives*. In this book, Halberstam investigates queer uses of time and space in order to think through notions of ‘queer time’ and ‘queer temporality’ (see also Freccero, 2007). Following Halberstam, queer subcultures ‘produce alternative temporalities by allowing their participants to believe that their futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience - namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death’ (2005: 2). Feminist scholars have also explored alternative ways of living and structuring time and thereby rendered visible homogenising temporal logics. By foregrounding the temporal experiences of women and women’s histories, feminist scholars have, as Hutchings notes, ‘objected to their exclusion from political time and to modes of inclusion that effectively subsume women’s time and women’s history under a masculinist master narrative’ (2018: 162).

My use of ‘lived time’ and ‘multiple temporalities’ as analytical approaches rests on the acknowledgement that people live and relate to time according to multiple

embodied, and normative ‘temporal schemas’ (Browne, 2014: 38). Furthermore, it is an approach that foregrounds how temporal ‘schemas’, orders and experiences are produced and lived within relations of power. Exploring people’s navigations in and through time within the border timespace, is a perspective from which to gain knowledge about border temporalities. For instance, it was partly by exploring people’s negotiations and contestations of the periodising function of the Duldung and their attachments to other periodising schemes, that I was able to ‘see’ periodisation as a technique of bordering.<sup>90</sup>

*Multiple temporalities: Including biological time in the theoretical arsenal of border studies*

So far, I have emphasised ‘multiple temporalities’ as an approach that centres on the manifold ways of organising, using and experiencing time. However, the lens of ‘multiple times’ also takes on another meaning in my work. More specifically, it implies an engagement with ‘biological time’ as a specific ‘kind’ of time (paper 2).

In paper 2, I turn to biological time as a lens for rendering visible how time ‘in the offer’ cannot be homogenised, and how life while waiting is on-going (recall Gray’s argument above). While I define biological time with reference to ageing in my paper, my analysis implies that my turn to biological time encompasses an attention to bodily physiological processes more broadly (to ‘blood’ and ‘beard’). In this sense, my understanding of biological time is akin to that of Adam (1990). In her book, *Time and Social Theory*, Adam (1990) argues that explorations of social time also need to include a notion of what she calls ‘biological time’; that is, the time of living organisms. Biological time, she clarifies, encompasses the time of ageing (life between birth and death), but also the physiological processes of living organisms, that is, ‘the multiple interconnections within the organism (Adam, 1990: 78). Furthermore, she

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<sup>90</sup> To highlight the discrepancies between the temporality of migration regulation and migrants’ temporal schemes of living is of course not new. For instance, Barber and Lem (2018b: 4) seek to capture the temporal dimensions of migration control *and* migrants’ lived time with their notion of ‘discrepant temporalities’ (Also Andersson 2014).

stresses that these processes, ‘stand in an existential relation to their multiple environments’ (1990: 78).

Paper 2 analysis how one interlocutor, Foster, made sense of the violence of the *Lampedusaduldung* in relation to the time of his ageing body. While we talked, he pointed to his grey beard, and to his genitals and talked about his declining sperm quality. His reflections exemplify a broader concern amongst research participants with the fact that age, bodily change and decay affected their ability to have children, to find good work and create a good life. For instance, Sam and the other women that I met who lived ‘unregistered’ in Hamburg, navigated their condition of irregularity in relation to the knowledge that their ability to have (healthy) children would decline with age. All of them decided (or had previously decided) to try to get pregnant, notwithstanding the insecurity regarding the future and their harsh living conditions.<sup>91</sup> However, they expressed the concern that the stress and worry (lack of proper food and housing, insecurity, fear of deportation) could affect the menstruation cycle and negatively impact an eventual pregnancy. I am conscious about reproducing what Lahad calls ‘biological deterministic arguments’ (embedded in notions such as the ‘the biological clock’), that reduce people’s ‘existence to features mainly articulated in biological and evolutionary terms’ (2017: 10). Indeed, as I emphasise in paper 2, experiences of biological ageing are produced through gendered and sexual norms, such as life-cycle expectations and social constructions of masculinity (Wong, 2006; Adinkrah, 2012). However, I believe it is useful to include a notion of biological time within the analytical framework of border temporalities, because the ageing body and its physiological processes and circumstances (sperm quality, menstruation cycles, hormones) was highlighted in my study as a central temporal dimension that shaped the condition of waiting for research participants (see also Lem, 2018).

As noted, inherent to Adam’s notion of biological time is an understanding of how organisms are ‘constituted based on their relationship with the environment’ (1990: 77). In the context of my work on border temporalities, this insight is valuable yet needs to be supplemented with a recognition of how these ‘relationships’ are

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<sup>91</sup> For discussion on migrant illegality and pregnancy in Germany, see Castañeda (2007).

relationships of power (Sharma, 2013). From this perspective it becomes clear that accentuation of biological time in research on border temporalities should be done within a framework that acknowledges that while all bodies age and change, they do so unevenly according to how they are (dis)invested in by regimes of power (Sharma, 2014; 2011). To exemplify, I will return to the introductory ethnographic account from Fatima's barrack. Both Fatima (24 years old) and my son (7 years old) had diabetes type 1 – a chronic condition that exhausts ('ages') organs such as the heart, kidneys and eyes, due to high and rapidly changing blood glucose levels. However, their bodies were differently supported in terms of having uneven access to diabetes equipment (such as a pump or continuous glucose monitor), and to material support such as a refrigerator to keep the insulin at the proper temperature or enable the storing of 'diabetes-friendly' food. Furthermore, they had different access to money to buy food and to a stove on which to prepare food. They were also differently exposed to stress in the form of rising levels of hormones such as cortisol and adrenalin, which again in turn cause blood glucose levels to rise. This example, I contend, illuminates the usefulness of mobilising biological time through a biopolitical framework in exploration of border temporalities. This framework opens a space for exploring the corrosive and 'uneventful' (Povinelli, 2011: 145) violence of borders, which are (and indeed remain) difficult to 'substantiate in fieldwork', as Coleman and Stuesse (2016: 527) formulates it in the context of their work in the US South.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, as I show later, thinking about the time of the body – a time characterised by 'the multiple interconnections within the organism and between the organism and the environment' (Adam, 1990: 78) – paves the ground for engaging with questions about rethinking waiting's 'now' in terms of *constitutive* or *temporal* time.

### *Relational time*

As argued above, multiple times (in both senses of the notion) must be situated and understood in a context of social relations of power. This acknowledgement leads me

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<sup>92</sup> However, it should be noted that Povinelli (2011) is critical of the use of biopolitics as it is commonly deployed when it comes to understanding the uneventful forms of killing that she associates with neoliberalism.

to another core concept of my work that requires some clarification; the notion of ‘relational time’.

I will start my explanation of ‘relational time’ with an excerpt from an interview that I conducted with Andy in October, in a crowded café in Hamburg centre. Andy was a former member of the *Lampedusa in Hamburg* who decided to accept the government’s offer in 2012. Like others in the group of Lampedusa migrants, Andy used the interview to give a political analysis of the offer, and of German and European migration and colonial politics. He was concerned with people’s struggles to find work, and with their violent and exploitative working conditions. At this point in our interview, he raised the topic of *Zeitarbeit* (temporary agency work). Many of the Lampedusa migrants were employed by temporary work agencies. However, such work made it hard to fulfil the conditions of the offer (full-time work).

*Andy: How can a company like Vattenfall use Zeitarbeit? Then a person comes to work and knows nothing! It is dangerous! You go to dangerous places.*

*KA: What do you mean?*

*Andy: They ask you to fill in a form and sign; ‘if something happens to you... you agree’ ... You sign it. You have no choice. It is like a gunpoint.*

*KA: A gunpoint?*

*Andy (showing with his hands a gun, shooting): Yes, they put a gun to your head, and you do this. Its dangerous work. We go and clean. All toxic, toxic, toxic. But you need to eat and survive... You have signed a contract, so you have to go. They [the Hamburg government] do not want you to have a good work so you can have a paper. They give us to these people [the companies]. They are giving us to these people’.*

In this excerpt, Andy narrates different actors into the timespace of the Lampedusa offer: The Swedish energy company Vattenfall, the Hamburg government and the Lampedusa migrants. Doing this, he highlights their different, yet interrelated, positions within the temporal order of the offer – an order shaped by techniques of

periodisation, deportability and a conditional promise of future legalisation. His reflections illuminate a defining feature of the notion of ‘relational time’ as used in this thesis: Relational time is a lens that accentuates the temporal interdependencies of differently located subjects within the border timespace.

In my thinking about ‘relational time’ I am indebted to the work of feminist and queer thinkers from different fields and disciplines, such as Schultz’s work on demography (2015), Freeman’s work on queer temporality (2005), and Massey’s engagements with space (1994). Sarah Sharma’s book, *In the Meantime*, has been particularly useful. One of Sharma’s main objects of inquiry in this book is how people today are governed in accordance with global capital’s quest for speed. Sharma develops her thinking through ethnographically grounded work with people who are differently positioned within the world of global financial capital. She shows how (the temporal being of) business travellers is related to and interdependent with (the temporal being of) irregularised migrant taxi drivers who bring them to the airport. Both are constituted within a temporal order that values speed, yet they are unequally positioned in relation to this ‘normalizing and differential temporal order’ (Sharma, 2014: 18). Drawing on Massey’s (1994) understanding of space as produced through a multiplicity of intersecting power relations (a geometry of power), Sharma argues that temporal orders – and people’s located position within such orders - should be understood as produced through intersecting axes of differentiation such as gender, age, class, religion, race, and ableness (see also chapter 2 and 3, this ‘Introduction’).

An acknowledgement of the ‘temporal interdependencies’ (Sharma, 2014: 148) of differently positioned subjects is core to what I refer to as *relational time*. To state that these interdependencies are ‘temporal’ accentuates how people are relationally and unequally positioned within dominant temporal orders. From such a perspective the (demographic) time and economic prosperity of the ‘German population’, or the time of Andy’s employers in Vattenfall, might be conceptualised as interdependent with the time of migrants washing Vattenfall’s offices. They are all positioned, although unevenly, within the (spatio)temporal order of the German border regime. However, Sharma’s description of ‘relations’ and ‘interdependencies’ as ‘temporal’ could also be



understood in another way, one that adds meaning to the notion of ‘relational time’. Sharma theorises these temporal interdependencies through a framework of biopolitics. Within this theoretical framework, her accentuation of the ‘temporal’ also serves to capture what she calls the ‘explicitly temporal aspects of the force of life’ (Sharma, 2011: 441) that biopolitics targets. Biopolitics, she argues, ‘it is after all about longevity, vitality, and health’ (Sharma, 2011: 441). From this perspective – and echoing my discussion of biological time – working from the perspective of ‘relational time’ entails acknowledging how (temporal) lives are differently (dis)invested through intersecting relations of power.

### Broadening the temporal approach to waiting: A turn to ‘temporal time’

*I had not talked with Sharif in weeks and was happy when he answered yes to my WhatsApp message as to whether we could meet the following day. We agreed to meet by the church, not far from his camp. He preferred to meet outside the camp, because there were many ‘eyes’ watching there, as he said. The next day was warm and sunny, and we walked slowly along the narrow, grassy paths amongst the gravestones. Sharif told me about a recent celebration that he had attended in the mosque and about the role of forgiving in Islam. At some point, he stopped speaking and searched for words. I encouraged him to go on, but he cut me off, rejecting my suggestion with a wave of his hand: ‘If you want to tell a story, you need the past tense.’<sup>93</sup> We talked about German grammars for a while, until, to my confusion, he said: ‘I do not want to learn German.’ I uttered my surprise: Sharif had been in Germany for less than two years yet had already completed the German B1 exam. He told me, that when he went to his German class, he usually would attend only two days out of five a week. The days he did attend, he would turn the book down on the table after an hour and look into the air. ‘Like that’, he said and looked up into the blue autumn sky. ‘Why?’ I wondered. ‘I do not know. Perhaps I have no ...’, he*

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<sup>93</sup> The conversation is translated from Germany by me.

ended the sentence with a word in Dari. We looked it up in the German dictionary app on his phone that he often used when we talked. 'Motivation' (motivation), the digital translator told us. 'You need it to do training, to start working, to learn a language', he explained. Then he said that his lack of motivation might be related to the absence of his mother and father. Trying to explain his view on motivation, he searched for words again: 'It is about.... Beziehung (relation), Gemeinschaft' (community). His explanation made me think about something he had said another time we had walked amongst the gravestones: 'My social worker said, that "in Germany, you make yourself a goal and there are different roads towards the goal".' I recalled how he had pointed his finger to the diverging green paths ahead of us to indicate the roads: 'There and there and there'. With these words in mind, I said: 'perhaps, in Europe, one thinks that one can have motivation and go towards the goal by oneself ...' 'No!' he interrupted me. 'That is related to the family in particular. Earlier, when I was with the family, I was very happy. I had no marks in my face'. He pointed to his face, and I saw some small black spots that I had not noticed before: 'yet as I fled.... I turned like this'. (Hamburg, November 2018).

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In the remaining pages of this chapter, I discuss a shift in my approach to time that I undertake in the third paper. This is a shift towards an engagement with what could be called the *constitution of time* as such, or, what I, with Adam (1990: 23), also will call 'temporal time.'<sup>94</sup> It is an approach that complements my theorisation of time in terms of 'multiple temporalities.' It broadens the temporal lens beyond engagements with time as socially constructed, in terms of experience and as something that can be used, controlled, manipulated and carved into periods. In my turn towards temporal time I am indebted to the work of Doreen Massey (2005), who theorises time as constituted through relations and interactions, and as an emergence of something new. This

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<sup>94</sup> In paper 3 I use Massey's notion of 'temporal heterogeneity'. However, I find that the notions of 'temporal' or 'constitutive' time capture better the broader argument I am making here.

section aims to clarify how such an approach to time might contribute to strengthening ‘waiting’ as a tool for critique and analysis of present border regimes.

As part of this endeavour of clarification, I return, at the end of the chapter, to the interview with Andy, but also to my encounter with Sharif at the Hamburg graveyard. Pertaining to the latter, I engage with Sharif’s explanation of ‘motivation’, which, I argue, illuminates motivation as a relation to time that is intersubjectively produced. However, before I turn to Massey’s work, and draw on my ethnography to discuss its usefulness for thinking about waiting, I believe it is useful to provide some context and to recount my initial struggles with the analytical perspective of ‘waiting’. I discuss my concerns in paper 3, yet I will briefly reiterate some central aspects.

### *Struggling with waiting*

For a PhD. -candidate who is part of a larger project, the thematic, theoretical, epistemological and methodological outline of the umbrella-project will shape the ‘researcher gaze’ in profound ways. In my case, to be part of the Wait-project meant that ‘time’ and ‘waiting’ were introduced as core analytical perspectives on irregular migration. However, as mentioned in chapter 1, I was from the outset concerned with the epistemological ramifications of using waiting as a lens in a study of irregular migration. Accordingly, ‘waiting’ was not a main analytical lens deployed in my two first papers. Yet as these papers illuminate, deferral, suspension, immobilisation and tenuous future promises – core aspects of the imaginary of waiting in scholarship and popular culture (paper 3) – saturated my ethnographic material. Furthermore, the research participants used the notion of ‘waiting’ to make sense of their lives. Hence, in the course of my project, my initial concerns were channelled towards an engagement with how to enhance the analytical value of waiting as a temporal and temporalising concept.

My concern with using waiting as an analytic lens was, amongst others, based on an acknowledgement of how taken-for-granted assumptions of temporal linearity tend to underpin scholarly and political imaginaries of waiting (papers 2 and 3). Linear time pertains to an understanding of time as a ‘series of discrete now points’ (Bastian, 2011:

153). This is the conception of time that underpins common periodised history writing, and more generally defines a dominant way of thinking time in contemporary capitalism and geopolitics (Klinke, 2013; Bastian, 2011). As Bastian (2011: 164) argues, linear time forms ‘the apolitical background’ within which difference is managed in today’s societies. Linear time, she contends,

offers communities the ability to render individual senses of time commensurable at any moment of the day. What is important to note, however, is that this commensurability is dependent on ignoring difference and focusing, instead, on what can be made homogeneous and uniform (2011: 153).

As I discuss in paper 3, I struggled with underpinning assumptions about temporal linearity (in literature and my own thinking) when using waiting analytically in the first two papers. More specifically, I struggled with how waiting as an analytical imaginary seemed to make migrants’ present(s) legible from the perspective of and as tending towards one future: A future of nation-state reinsertion. Indeed, Ramsay (2017a) has raised a similar concern before in a discussion of the linearity attached to the spatiotemporal metaphor of ‘liminality’ which scholars often use to characterise the temporal aspects of migrant displacement (see paper 2 and 3). In paper 2, I found that the analytical optic of ‘multiple temporalities’ provided a conceptual ground for illuminating and critiquing the homogenising narrative of time ‘in the offer’ as tending towards ‘one’ future. Yet I had other concerns with using the temporal imaginary of waiting that were not easily resolved by approaching waiting in terms of ‘multiple temporalities’.

These ‘concerns with waiting’ were shaped within a socio-political context where regularisation was present (in the present) as a tenuous and conditional promise, and as something to be ‘earned’ by individual people through work and ‘good integration’.<sup>95</sup> In this context, embodied conditions of life that manifested ethnographically as stasis, immobility, and uncertainty, were partly framed by politicians, volunteers and economic actors in terms of movement and progression (on the ‘lane’ towards

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<sup>95</sup> I discuss in paper 3 how researchers’ imaginaries of time is shaped and practiced in specific research contexts.

residence). One effect of this framing was that the ‘slow violence’ (Hyndman, 2019: 3) of the toleration permits became hard to ‘see’ or appeared as ‘worth it’ – also for me (papers 2, 3). I found that to explore the relations of power producing waiting in Hamburg, it was important to understand this ‘slow’ and ‘uneventful’ violence (Povinelli, 2011). To some extent, ‘waiting’ seemed an useful lens in this endeavour because of the temporal assumptions of stasis, insecurity and immobility that forms part of its ‘conceptual baggage’ (Desjarlais, 1997: 11). Andersson’s (2014) study from the EU southern border is a powerful example of how waiting might be deployed in order to research violent bordering practices, their logics and the predicaments for migrants (also Bryan, 2018; Hyndman, 2019). Nevertheless – and here my concerns resonate with Gray and Brun’s above – I also found that the underpinning temporal assumptions about stasis and immobility restricted the analytical usefulness of ‘waiting’. More precisely, I found that this conceptual baggage of waiting made it hard to ‘capture’ analytically the irreversible change that marked the embodied and relationally lived lives of the people I met in Hamburg – lives set within ongoing, transnational social processes (paper 3). Based on my analyses in the two first papers, it seemed to me that to explore the relations of power producing conditions of waiting through the Duldung, it was crucial to open the lens of waiting to change and relational subjectivity. To this purpose I found I needed another conceptual toolbox – another theory of waiting *time* – than provided by the approach of ‘multiple temporalities’.

As shown in this chapter, other scholars have thought valuably about change, embodiment and relational subjectivity in the context of waiting (Gray, 2011; Mountz, 2011). Yet there have been few engagements with the implications of *understandings of time* for how these dimensions might be conceptualised as intrinsic to waiting. However, as several feminist scholars have argued before me, how ‘time itself’ (Bastian, 2013) is thought has implications for how subjectivity, embodiment and relationality is understood (Adam, 1990; Grosz, 1999; Massey, 2005). As my ethnography pushed me to ‘stay’ with waiting, *and* given my intention to ‘take time seriously’, I wondered: How might one theorise (waiting) time – the ‘now’ - as ‘suspended’ *and* still be able to capture people’s embodied and ongoing lives? Or, to put it differently: If waiting is used to explore (bordering practices) of suspension and

deferral, how then to theorise the ‘now’ that is narrated as suspended in such a way that it might encompass change and relational subjectivity? These questions brought me to Doreen Massey and her book *For Space*.

My mobilisation of Massey’s work was partly prompted by engaging with Sharma’s relational approach to time and power in paper 1. As mentioned, Sharma bases her exploration of differential and relational time on Massey’s work. More particularly, she is inspired by Massey’s (1994) approach to space and power in terms of ‘power geometry’ as developed in the essay ‘A global sense of place’. As my discussion of relational time above illuminate, Sharma’s work has been useful for my explorations of how time is worked upon in uneven ways within the temporal order of the German border (paper 1). It pushed my attention towards an understanding of the ‘temporal interdependencies’ of differently positioned subjects. However, while Sharma fruitfully engages Massey’s work on relational space to think about how people are differently located within temporal orders, I seek, additionally, to mobilise Massey’s thinking about constituted or temporal time as part of a feminist framework of thinking waiting. Doing this, I also expand the meaning of the notion of ‘relational time’ in my work to encompass an understanding of time as *constituted* through relations and interactions. To mobilise Massey’s work in this way, however, requires an exploration of her thinking in some depth.

### *For space: The critique of frozen space and time*

Taking up many threads of her previous works, Massey’s prime task in her book *For Space* (2005) is an engagement with how space might be imagined in ways that enable a thinking of politics. To this end, she argues, a theory of time is necessary that leaves the future (and space) open. In this respect, Massey’s work forms part of broader feminist engagements with the relation between politics and temporal imaginaries that leave the future open and indeterminable (see for example Grosz, 2002).

Massey’s point of departure in *For Space* is what she identifies as a tendency in philosophy and the social sciences to conceive space in terms of closure and ‘frozen’ time (Massey, 2005: 158; see also Adam, 1990: 4). For instance, she criticises the

philosopher Henri Bergson's equation of space with representation, and the structuralist imagination of space in terms of 'closed synchrony' (Massey, 2005: 158). Massey argues that these approaches have a negative definition of space as a-temporal, both in the sense that it 'is a conceptual formulation *un-related* to time; and in that in its causal closure it disallows real change' (2005: 41, italics in original). Her concern is how such a bounded, a-temporal understanding of space is implicit in teleological and colonial narratives of globalisation, that narrate 'different "places" as different stages in a single temporal development' (Massey, 2005: 68). Thereby, she argues – recalling the work of post-colonial historians – coexisting spatial *and* temporal heterogeneity is occluded. Against such a 'stagist', a-temporal narrative, she argues for a conception of space *and* time that allows the 'coeval existence'<sup>96</sup> of spatial heterogeneity (Massey, 2005: 68). Indeed, she contends, for there to be heterogeneous trajectories and accordingly an open future (not defined by the 'West'), space must be thought in ways that allow it to be open too. What is needed, she concludes, is a theory of time *and* space that allows space to be rethought as always in the process of being made.<sup>97</sup>

### *Massey's theory of time: Time as constituted through interactions*

For Massey, thinking (about) time is a matter of how to understand the ongoing and conflictual process of constitution of space, but also of the social life in specific places. Notably, it is not how time is controlled, experienced or used that is at stake in her dealings with time. While she draws on several thinkers, she finds what she calls the 'Spinoza-Bergson-Deleuze line of philosophy' (Massey, 2005: 54) particularly useful for her endeavour to develop a theory, or, in her own words, an 'imagination' of time. As part of this endeavour, she reworks Bergson's concept of *duration*. This theoretical starting ground needs some explanation. Duration, as developed by Bergson, refers to 'temporal time', in the sense of time being the 'continuous emergence of novelty' (Adam, 1990: 24). Importantly, the 'emergent' is something more than the processes that led to it. Indeed, this understanding of time is grounded in the acknowledgement

<sup>96</sup> Massey takes the concept from Fabian's (1983) *Time and the Other*.

<sup>97</sup> Surely, Massey is not the only geographer who has engaged in the task of theorising the production of space (see for instance Lefebvre, 1991). What makes her work useful for my project, however, is the fact that her endeavour to rethink space pushes her to theorise time.

that for there to be time, in the sense of moments that are ‘distinguishable from another’ (Mead in Adam, 1990: 24), there must be change (Massey, 2005: 20-24). Change in this context refers to something that ‘happens to and in things that affects the nature of the thing’ (Mead in Adam, 1990: 24).<sup>98</sup> Through a critical reworking of (amongst others) Bergson’s notion of duration, Massey develops a conception of time as created through relations and interactions. Indeed, she argues that interaction ‘is essential to the generation of temporality’ (Massey, 2005: 55).<sup>99</sup>

Important here is to understand how Massey approaches ‘relations’ and ‘interaction’. Relations, she clarifies, should be understood as ‘real material practices, and always ongoing’ (Massey, 2005: 95). Or, as she states elsewhere, practices ‘form relations’ (Massey, 2005: 148). In this view, time is constituted through and in practices that form ‘configurations; it is out of them that new heterogeneities, and new configurations, will be conjured’ (Massey, 2005: 148). Furthermore, interaction here refers not only to people’s embodied practices, but also to the tiniest ‘interactions’ in biological processes and to the processes that form physical environments and landscapes. Notable here, Massey’s approach resonates with Adam’s approach to biological time as addressed above. Indeed, Adam argues, to think about biological time in the social sciences has implications for how time is thought more broadly, because it poses difficulties for conventional ways of thinking suspension, periodisation or change in terms of ‘plotting of events on a before and after basis’ (Adam, 1990: 81). To some extent, engaging with biological time in my analysis of the Lampedusaduldung (paper 2), pushed me towards a rethinking of time in terms of temporal heterogeneity in the third paper.

One last aspect needs mentioning, before I turn to the implications of Massey’s work for how waiting might be conceptualised. Importantly to Massey, for interactions and practices to exist and unfold there must be space. Indeed, she argues, space is ‘co-implicated’ (2005: 55) with time because without space there could be no interaction. ‘The role of space’, she clarifies, ‘might be characterized as providing the condition

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<sup>98</sup> While Adam quotes Mead here, she does so in a discussion of how Mead draws on Bergson’s notions of time in his work.

<sup>99</sup> Massey draws on Adam (1990) here, to whose work I also am indebted.



for the existence of those relations which generate time' (Massey, 2005: 56). In other words, space is the sphere of relations and interactions. It is the sphere where time *and* space are created through relational and embodied practices. In this perspective, space becomes apprehensible as 'actively and continually practiced social relations' (Massey, 2000: 282). Or, as she formulates it elsewhere, space becomes imaginable as 'the constant emergence of uniqueness out of (and within) the specific constellations of interrelations within which that place is set [...] and of what is made of that constellation' (Massey, 2005: 68). Furthermore, she argues – and resonating with my discussion of relational time above - these interrelations are always relations of power. My question when engaging with Massey's work is: What happens when we think about waiting in light of this understanding of time? Maybe the implications of my question might be best grasped if I borrow Massey's own words: What happens if waiting's 'now' is grasped as a 'constant emergence' of life 'out of (and within) the specific constellations of interrelations' within which peoples lives are 'set' and within which people struggle for a meaningful life? How might such an imagination of time strengthen waiting as a lens for analyses and critique of practices of bordering?

### *Implications of Massey's theory of time for thinking waiting*

*The interview with Andy was drawing to an end. We had taken a pause and watched the people enjoying the sunny autumn day in the adjacent park. Andy pointed towards an open green field and told me that he used to play football there with his friends. But not anymore. Waiting and the uncertainty about the future 'made his body weak', he said and explained how 'waiting takes all the energy'. We talked about his 'struggles' to create a meaningful life in Germany under the present condition, and the differences between his present life and previous years in Italy, Libya and Ghana. At some point, I asked:*

*KA: I speak with undocumented people here about their fear of deportation... the stigma.... I just wanted to bring this up... and hear your opinion on this?*

*A: Yeah... You are going to kill yourself. It's the fact of... You left home. That is where we all were in competition – for family, school, high school, to get to a*

*higher level of education. So, their lives continue there [in Ghana]. At least, if they do not have a car, they sleep in a room, they do not sleep outside. There, it is easy to organise a family because they live in their own country. If you do not build up your life well here, and go back with deportation, those that I know, they are finished, their lives are finished. Because, first of all, the society will look down upon you; you did not come with anything, and you cannot afford to work there. If you are educated or acquired some knowledge here, perhaps you could put up a business [in Ghana], but [your possibility] to go into government service, to go into military service or police service, is gone because your age has already put you down.*

*Ka: Could you repeat that?*

*A: You are grown up, so you cannot compete with the young. For example, in Ghana, I wanted to be a police officer. I tried but it did not work out, it is all about corruption. After that, they [the police] made several recruitments. Every year they took in new, and I saw it. I had to put that one behind me and do something new. So, this is where I made up my mind. Being accepted here... and going home...*

*After another couple of questions, we ended the interview and agreed to go for a walk. I stood up and turned right, to walk into the park. Yet Andy stopped me. He pointed with his hand and said that black boys sometimes sold drugs in that part of the park. I looked: Yes, I could see a group of boys who moved restlessly back and forth on the path and looked as if they were watching out for something or someone. Customers perhaps? Or the police? Yet I also saw families, an old lady, youths playing football, and young couples sitting or walking past the boys. Andy explained, that as a black man and having a Duldung, he had to be conscious of which places he passed or spent time in, not to risk being 'at the wrong place at the wrong time', in the sense of exposing himself to racialised police controls. An accusation of a criminal offence could*

*be detrimental to his chances of getting a residence permit. We turned left and went another way.*

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As Povinelli notes with some irony in *Economies of Abandonment*, scholars often refer to people (such as migrants) through a Kafkian image that depicts them as ‘hanging out with the doorkeeper of the law waiting for permission to enter’ (2011: 77-78). However, she argues, such a description occludes that people’s lives go on while they wait. In other words, and as Andy’s answers illustrate, people live embodied, relational, and transnational lives while they ‘wait’ for the right papers and labour in the racialised city, washing the offices of the ‘doorkeepers’ (in this case: Vattenfall). In the following I aim to show how an approach to waiting *time* as constituted through interactions and relations might enrich ‘waiting’ as a temporal and temporalising analytical perspective when deployed in the socio-political context of the Germany in 2017. To ground my argument, I will emphasise three entangled dimensions.

The first dimension pertains to the acknowledgement that waiting’s ‘now’ cannot be suspended. If the time of waiting – waiting’s ‘now’ – is understood in terms of constituted time, a perspective is provided that opens the analytical lens towards a recognition of continuity, irreversible change and becoming. Indeed, when *time* is thought as constituted through practices and interrelations, people’s embodied waiting in violent conditions could be understood in a sense affiliated with Povinelli’s definition of endurance, that is; as ‘the creativity of keeping in place something that is constantly changing’ (2017: 182). A conceptual space is established for theorising Andy’s and Fatima’s ‘loss of energy’, the change in Fatima’s organs due to improper treatment and the ‘weakening’ of Andy’s body as part of what *constitutes* waiting. From this perspective, the insight that ‘life in/when waiting does not wait’ becomes inherent to how waiting is thought, with implications for its use as a temporal and temporalising analytical perspective. Exploring the condition of waiting from a perspective that highlights how migrants’ time is used as a resource, or that centres on the multiple ways time is experienced, illuminates how border practices work to

suspend people's desired futures, rupture their life-projects, and immobilise people in space. An account of constitutive time adds to such insights. It does so by providing a perspective that captures how neither the 'now' nor the future (understood as emergent in the now) can be suspended. I argue that this conceptual space where waiting's 'now' might be thought *simultaneously* as suspended and as constantly emergent, is a point of departure for explorations that might deepen the understanding of the violence of present regimes of bordering.

The second dimension pertains to the relation between conceptions of time and understandings of sociality and relationally lived lives. This is an important line of discussion within feminist, post-colonial and queer engagements with time (Chakrabarty, 2000; Dinshaw et al., 2007; Bastian, 2011). Indeed, as Bastian writes in another context, 'attempts to rework understandings of relationality must be accompanied by reworked accounts of temporality' (2011: 97).<sup>100</sup> Massey's theorisation of relational places, and of sociality as embodied and spatial, chimes with an idea of interconnected subjectivity that is central to feminist theory. For instance, in a review article on feminist geography, Linda McDowell (1993: 312) thematises the 'parallel' between Haraway's thinking about relational embodiment and Massey's thinking about space. Massey herself argues in *For Space* that 'how we imagine space intersects with the question of subjectivity itself' (2005: 56).<sup>101</sup> I contend, that one implication of theorising the 'now' of waiting as 'a constellation of interrelations' (Massey, 2005: 68) is that this approach opens for thinking waiting in terms of interrelated subjectivity. Thereby, this temporal approach to waiting provides a ground for critique of the image of the migrant that is inscribed into the temporal order of 'waiting well': The individual migrant (while gendered, aged, classed and racialised), moving aimfully down the 'lane' towards residence. Indeed, this is one of the insights that Sharif conveys: There is no disembodied, individual motivation. One never walks on the 'road towards the goal' alone. Motivation has to do with 'Gemeinschaft' (community) and 'Beziehung' (relations).

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<sup>100</sup> Bastian grounds this argument in a reading of Gloria Anzaldúa's works.

<sup>101</sup> Recall that to Massey (imaginations of) space is co-implicated with (imaginations of) time.

Massey's understanding of time and space accentuates embodiment and spatial and material locatedness. This is the third dimension I want to highlight. The temporal theory of waiting outlined here makes Fatima's lack of a refrigerator, processes of bodily ageing and cramped living conditions in the camp (chapter 3) part of what constitutes waiting's 'now'. Andy's waiting in Germany took shape in relation to hiring processes in Ghana, about which he kept himself digitally updated. As he pointed out in our interview, not only did he age while waiting (age 'puts him down' in 'competition' with others) but other people's lives and political and economic processes in Ghana 'continue[d]' while he waited. These are processes and lives that co-constituted his own life. Indeed, my ethnography highlights how people's 'waiting(s)' in Hamburg are entangled with the spatialised and embodied lives of others and are 'set' within economic, social, and political relations spanning places. Theorising waiting time as constituted through interrelations provides a firmer ground for engaging with 'relational time' as outlined above, and for tracing the power relations producing waiting across different spaces and spatiotemporal scales. Indeed, as I address in paper 3, theorising waiting's now in terms of constitutive time has implications for how the spatiality of waiting is thought. It is a temporal perspective that captures how waiting is transnationally lived and produced in a geography of power relations spanning multiple spaces (Mountz, 2011). As such, it chimes with the spatial approach to waiting and bordering foregrounded by feminist geographers.

### *Keeping the awaited future open*

In paper 3, I engage Massey's work in a discussion of how the analytical optic of waiting might be susceptible to methodological nationalism.<sup>102</sup> I end the paper by arguing – albeit hesitatingly and with some ambivalence – for the value of a theory of time that allows the future to be 'open' when engaging the analytical imaginary of

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<sup>102</sup> I also draw on Chakrabarty's work in paper 3. Chakrabarty's (2000) theory of time has important similarities with Massey's. However, my main reason for 'thinking with' Chakrabarty in paper 3 is his critique of linear and teleological temporal narratives as addressed in my discussion of periodisation earlier in chapter 5. For this reason, I have emphasised Massey's work in this chapter. I believe paper 3 would have benefited from a clarification of the different contributions these two scholars bring to my analyses.

waiting. In this last section of the theory chapter, I aim to contextualise my argument *and* my ambivalence within feminist theory.

As mentioned, Massey's work forms part of a broader line of thinking within feminist theory. Indeed, insisting on the openness of the future has been important for feminist thinkers in their pursuit of alternative worlds.<sup>103</sup> In a discussion of the 'time and future of feminism' the philosopher Elisabeth Grosz (2000) states that she is:

interested in clearing conceptual space such that an indeterminable future is open to women. This idea of an open future, uncontained by the chains of the determinism that constrain the future directly through the past, that is, a future yet to be made, is the very lifeblood of political struggle, the goal of feminist challenge (2000: 2017).

To argue that the future is 'yet to be made' and 'open to women' of course means different things to feminist scholars (Browne, 2014). To Grosz, thinking about an open future is a prerequisite for imagining a 'future beyond patriarchy' and for political and scholarly projects that aim to forge new sexual and gendered relations (2000: 2018). In my third paper, to think in terms of an open future serves to establish a ground for thinking about waiting and migration in ways that 'gesture towards worlds beyond' a world where the naturalisation of the nation-state shapes what can be thought and done (Grove, 2017: 193; see also De Genova, 2013b). Furthermore, my thinking of the future as 'open' was sparked by ethnographic engagements with migrants' world-making practices in Hamburg.<sup>104</sup>

Yet as Massey (2005) recognises, to think the future as open when engaging with social processes must be done with an acknowledgement of the power relations that produce places and lives and condition what counts as a liveable life.<sup>105</sup> I remain ambivalent regarding the ethical and political implications of thinking the future as

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<sup>103</sup> Bergson is also central to Grosz.

<sup>104</sup> For a discussion of migrants' 'world-making' practices in a theoretical framework that foregrounds 'becoming', see Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2007).

<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, I find that Massey's understanding of the relation between becoming and structuring interrelations of power remain somewhat unclear.

‘open’ within the field of irregular migration (see also Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2007; Karlsen, 2020). The following quote by Povinelli captures my ambivalence well:

To what are we committing ourselves if we commit to a freedom that is the undefined and undefinable trajectory of a radical otherwise in our world’s scenes of abandonment? (2011: 130).

Povinelli’s question is prompted by many years of working with Australian indigenous communities where people struggle to endure violent conditions of life produced by Australian state and market practices. A central project for Povinelli in *Economies of abandonment* is the potential for alternative social worlds, projects and modes of social organisation to endure and persist *as difference* within such violent conditions. However, she also shows how the violent conditions people live under might ‘erode potentiality’, as Grove (2017: 191) writes in a discussion of her work. Hence, in Povinelli’s conception, potentiality and becoming are always embedded in and conditioned on specific material contexts. The ‘conditions of excess’, she argues, ‘always sit side by side with conditions of exhaustion’ (Povinelli, 2011: 130). I find Povinelli’s argument important in the context of a study on irregular migration, where poverty, precarious work and legal insecurity powerfully condition people’s lives (also Karlsen, 2020). The engagement with ‘open’ futures in my third paper should primarily be understood as a call for (and act of) critical self-reflection on how normative and politically dominant assumptions about time and space might shape thinking and analyses.

## Chapter 6. Concluding discussion

*[T]emporal concepts and orders are not neutral or incidental, but rather are inextricably tied to the way that political change and processes are understood, and to the way that politics works (Browne, 2014: 143).*

My objective in this thesis has been to explore and understand how temporal rationalities and techniques of bordering work to govern and control migration in Germany. From this broader objective, I articulated three research questions in chapter 1:

1. What role do temporal rationalities and techniques play in the social and legal production of migrant irregularity through the German Duldung regulation?
2. How are unequal conditions of waiting produced and sustained through the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung*?
3. How might a theoretical framework of feminist temporality be mobilised to enhance the use and value of waiting as an optic for analysis and critique of present regimes of bordering?

The thesis has sought to answer these questions by examining two variations of the German Duldung regulation and by contextualising these regulations within the broader German migration regime. The papers and my 'Introduction' relate to the questions from different angles, and I will not repeat their respective conclusions here. Instead, I want to reconcile and summarise some of the conclusions and arguments I make in this study and point to some of their contributions to research literature.

### The temporal rationalities and techniques of bordering in Germany

*Migrant irregularity is produced through temporal techniques of periodisation, deportability, temporal bracketing, future promises and suspension.*



My thesis approaches and explores the *Ausbildungsduldung* and the *Lampedusaduldung* as practices of bordering that produce migrant irregularity as well as precarious worker statuses. The *Duldung* is a peculiar legal and administrative regulation in the European context. Around 180,000 people lived with a toleration permit in Germany in 2019. However, while the *Duldung* has affected the lives of thousands of people in the past decades, the ethnographic research on the *Duldung* has remained rather scant. It remains to be seen how many will obtain a residence permit and rights through the *Ausbildungsduldung*, the *Lampedusaduldung* or related regulations such as the *Beschäftigungsduldung*. The ‘efficiency’ or ‘success’ of these regulations for tolerated migrants when it comes to achieving a better life has not been my concern in this thesis, however. Instead, one constant concern throughout the papers has been the contested spatiotemporal frames and political assumptions that condition how one might evaluate ‘success’ in the first place. This concern is articulated in paper 2 as an engagement with the spatiotemporal assumptions, norms and practices that shape how the *Lampedusa* offer came to be framed as ‘worth it’ – or not.

Recall the training manager’s words to Sharif in chapter 2, talking about potential deportation closing in: ‘Internship is the weapon we have.’ This is a forceful statement. It accentuates the violence of the German border timespace, and the rendering of work and vocational training as the only option in the fight against deportation, against social workers (Mrs. B.) and immigration authorities. As I was writing this conclusion in August 2020, I called Sharif, who received his *Duldung* in 2018. He told me that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he had registered what his employer considered too many sick days. Thus, his employer – one of Germany’s larger companies – refused to renew his contract. He had worked there one year full-time and had hoped to obtain regularisation through the *Beschäftigungsduldung*. Now, he said, he would try to get into vocational training and train to become a carpenter. The ethnographic encounters with Sharif over three years, narrated in this study, exemplify how legal insecurity works together with employment insecurity to produce precarious worker statuses and migrant irregularity.

My fieldwork was conducted during a time when significant transformations of German migration governing emerged. This empirical and historical context has shaped my thematic focus and analyses significantly, due to the way these transformations became manifest in my fieldwork encounters. Since 2015, legal and administrative changes have implied rising thresholds for asylum, increased the use and length of detention and cut back asylum seekers and other irregularised migrants' economic and social rights. At the same time, there have been changes towards opening access to the labour market for different categories of deportable migrants and a reframing of asylum seekers and tolerated migrants as (potential) labour power. The *Lampedusaduldung* and the *Ausbildungsduldung* pivot on a rationality that positions social and political rights as something that can be 'earned' through labour market contributions. In this empirical context, I have explored how migrant irregularity is produced through what I identify as five entangled temporal techniques of bordering: *Suspension, deportability, periodisation, bracketing, and future promises*. The toleration permits studied in this thesis function to bracket the violence of border regimes by carving up time in homogenous periods in relation to a conditional future promise of regularisation. This future, and migrants' ability to reconcile personal and social aspirations (Gray, 2011), are suspended in quantities of time. Furthermore, due to the continuous possibility and threat of deportation, migrants are compelled to stay on 'the right path' towards 'the right future' (paper 1). In other words, the *Duldung* works as a technique of governing by simultaneously producing prospects of deportation *and* regularisation.

Through its exploration of these five techniques that work together in the governing of migration, this thesis contributes to the arsenal of thinking border temporalities. I identify these temporal techniques of bordering analytically and explore their operation in an ethnographic exploration of two 'earned' regularisation schemes. These 'earned' regularisation pathways are produced within a spatiotemporal rationality that pivot on the sustainability of the German population and workforce. It should be noted that in other European states, such as the one in which I live, Norway, there is no legal opening for irregular migrants to regularise their stay through work (Hasås, 2019; Karlsen, 2020). Yet I believe that the present study has broader

relevance for understanding how migration is governed in the post-2015 European border timespace. After 2015, temporary and periodised protection schemes for refugees have gained salience in several European countries, including Germany (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2016; Schultz, 2020c). In the case of Germany, temporary protection is coupled with performance-based criteria for permanent residence. Several countries also couple family reunification with material requirements (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2016). In these contexts, periodisation and temporal bracketing through conditional promise-making might be usefully mobilised as analytical lenses.

### The redemptive condition and temporal order of waiting

*An uneven condition of waiting is produced and sustained as a 'redemptive state' and through the imposition of a racialised, gendered and classed temporal order of 'waiting well'.*

In my work, I approach the condition of irregularity as a particularly temporalised condition. It materialises as a socio-political condition of waiting. Research on irregular migration has illuminated how the lack of rights and possibility of deportation combine to turn irregularised migrants' temporal orientation towards the present and 'vacate' (Andersson, 2014: 805) their future in the sense that it becomes hard for them to make long-term plans (also De Genova, 2002). While I surely find that deportability and poverty impose an orientation towards the present for many of my research participants, my study illuminates other temporalising effects of deportability and insecurity. Indeed, scrutinising the *Ausbildungsduldung*, I show how this *Duldung* compels a temporal orientation *away* from present violence, *towards* future exams and achieved status as a skilled, legal migrant.

Based on my analysis of the *Lampedusaduldung*, I argue that the toleration permit structures waiting as a 'redemptive state.' More broadly, the notion of the 'redemptive state of waiting' serves to capture, firstly, how the German *state* that enforces waiting simultaneously figures as the redeemer of waiting (the redemptive sovereign state). Secondly, the notion captures how the *Duldung*-time is structured as a 'not yet' of its

foretold end of politico-legal inclusion (waiting as a redemptive condition). Within this temporal order, the violence of waiting is bracketed in time.

My papers and the 'Introduction' show that caring obligations, health, age, nationality, class and educational background shape people's uneven access to the 'redemptive condition of waiting'. Through a feminist epistemological framework that roots analysis in 'a politics of differentiation' (Mountz, 2011: 394), my study provides insight into the gendered, racialised, and classed dimensions that shape how the unequal condition of waiting is produced and sustained within the broader transformations of the German border regime.

Scholarly work on time and bordering has focused on tempo, synchronisation, acceleration, deadlines and time discipline. My study furthers this research by introducing a new empirical context and by exploring how German border practices work through enhancing certain ways of being in and relating to time. The papers highlight a temporal order that manifests as an expectation on irregularised migrants to 'wait well'. In the temporal order of 'waiting well', regularisation is present (in the present) as a tenuous and conditional promise, and as something to be 'earned' through work and 'good integration'. The notion of 'waiting well' captures the normative expectation imposed on migrants to endure suspension and deportability in specific ways. They are expected to be 'working to wait well', as the title of this thesis states. The title captures, first, how 'waiting well' in the border timespace compels migrants to 'work on themselves' (including on their temporal orientations). However, it also evokes, as a second meaning, how 'waiting well' is defined in terms of employment and tax contributions. The title also captures a third dimension. That is, it captures how, for my research participants, the expectation to endure waiting (wait well) and earn money (work) was also articulated by family members and shaped through gendered norms and caring obligations. More broadly, my thesis illuminates how migrants negotiate the border regime and embedded normativities attached to waiting in relation to gendered life cycle periodisations, caring obligations, masculinity norms and ageing.

## Engaging waiting through a lens of feminist temporality

*Focusing through a lens of feminist temporalities makes relational subjectivity and embodiment intrinsic to the analytical imaginary of waiting. Furthermore, waiting is illuminated as a condition marked by temporal interdependence between differently located subjects.*

The perspective developed throughout the papers is that waiting is a temporal and temporalising concept. Accordingly, it is important to explore the underpinning assumptions about time in one's own research practice. To this end, my study juxtaposes feminist, queer and post-colonial scholarly perspectives on time that are rarely read together. This framework includes historical work on temporal bracketing, queer critiques of temporal normativity, feminist geographers' engagement with waiting and bordering, and Massey's work on heterogenous, constituted time. Through this framework, I investigate what it means to 'take time seriously' (Adam, 2008: 1) when thinking (about) waiting. Drawing on Massey's work, I argue for a temporal theoretical approach to waiting that understands time as constituted through interrelations and material practices. This perspective opens for recognition of relational subjectivity, embodiment, and ongoing, located life as constitutive of waiting's 'now'. It highlights how lives are produced and unevenly positioned within relations of power. Furthermore, such a theoretical approach to waiting opens a space for tracing the power relations of the border, and for deepening the understanding of the violence of waiting. An approach to waiting time in terms of *temporal* or *constituted* time must, however, be supplemented with attention to normative temporal imaginaries, to tempo, synchronisation, and periodisation. Within such a bundled understanding of time, the 'now' of waiting might be thought as simultaneously suspended and as ongoing.

By juxtaposing work that is seldom read together, and by discussing them in a new empirical context, the thesis animates the feminist work on temporality, waiting and bordering with new questions and viewpoints. It provides a novel reading of Massey's work on time, and thus furthers the line of feminist geographical engagements with waiting and bordering. Furthermore, it illuminates how post-colonial and queer works

on historical periodisation might be analytically deployed to identify and explore the workings of power within present border regimes.



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# Bordering through recalibration: Exploring the temporality of the German “Ausbildungsduldung”

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## Abstract

The past decades of inquiry into the “what, where, and who” of borders have more recently been followed by an interest in borders’ temporal dimensions. In this article, I contribute to this research by analyzing how border temporalities operate on the scale of the lived experiences of rejected asylum seekers in Germany. My point of departure is the so-called *Ausbildungsduldung*, which since 2016 has permitted the suspension of deportation for rejected asylum seekers who start vocational training. After three years of training glimmers a promised residency permit. I approach the *Ausbildungsduldung* as a biopolitical technique of bordering and focus on its temporal aspects. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, I investigate how young Afghan asylum seekers negotiate the *Ausbildungsduldung* and how they can make its promised future their own. I show how the state deploys techniques of “future giving,” suspension, and deportability to produce skilled workers, and argue that the *Ausbildungsduldung* works as a bordering technique by producing affective attachments to a particular future trajectory, and by elevating certain ways of dealing with suspension and deportability in support of this trajectory. Showing how migrants are compelled to “wait well” while confined to a condition of deportability, the paper highlights how migrants’ experiences and practices of time become central to processes of bordering.

## Keywords

Borders, temporality, migration, Duldung, waiting

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## Introduction

I am sitting next to Alan in his lawyer's office in central Hamburg on an August afternoon in 2017. The lawyer has just told him that the German authorities have rejected his asylum application. She reads aloud from the *Aufenthaltsgesetz* (Residency Act) before she sketches out the consequences in plain German. Alan faces a situation of rightlessness and an everyday life overshadowed by the threat of deportation. Alan looks down, his hands still in his lap. For some seconds there are only the distant sounds from the street outside. I am thinking about his words in the waiting room: "I cannot stay like this... I think about my future, you know." Then, the lawyer rises and fetches an information leaflet from a stack of similar ones in the cupboard behind her. It is an advertisement for vocational training, signed by the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce. She gives it to Alan, and says, "Have you considered starting vocational training? You know I told you about this new regulation. With vocational training, you can stay." Alan holds up the leaflet, and I read, typed in white on a red background: "Your future starts right here."

With the 2016 *Integrationsgesetz* (Integration Act), German authorities opened a path to residency for rejected asylum seekers who manage to start and complete vocational training (*Ausbildung*). For the duration of training (mostly three years), rejected asylum seekers are granted the right to a long-term suspension of deportation, legally termed *Duldung*. The *Duldung*, or "toleration permit," is not a residency status; it merely prescribes that deportation is suspended and the migrant's presence temporarily tolerated. The *Ausbildungsduldung* terminates if training is broken off. Nevertheless, in the context of increasingly harsh German asylum policies, the so-called *Ausbildungsduldung* has created reverberations of hope. As the above story from the lawyer's office illustrates, the regulation comes with the promise of a German future. Completed training opens the possibility for a two-year residency permit, which might subsequently be renewed. The *Ausbildungsduldung* appears as a "gift of future," in this case represented by the advertisement passed over the lawyer's desk.

In this article, I approach the *Ausbildungsduldung* as a technique of bordering, and focus on its temporal aspects. The past two decades of critical engagement with the "what, where, and who" of borders (Johnson et al., 2011: 68) in critical border studies have recently been followed by a growing interest in what might be termed questions of borders' "when." In other words, scholars are paying increasing attention to the role of time in bordering processes (see for example Andersson, 2014; Bagelman, 2016; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018). I build upon and contribute to this research by engaging scholarship on time that allows for a focus on how borders operate in peoples' lived temporalities, understood as their practices, conceptions, and experiences of time (Sharma, 2014). I argue that such engagements may deepen understanding of the complex relation between time, power, and capital at biopolitical bordering sites such as the *Ausbildungsduldung*.

The analysis is based on ethnographic fieldwork among asylum seekers and tolerated migrants in Hamburg in 2017 and 2018. Particularly relevant is my interaction with eight Afghan asylum seekers in their early 20s. For all of them, *Ausbildung* was the subject of anxious reflection regarding their prospects of staying in Germany. Through encounters such as that between Alan and his lawyer, the word spread that *Ausbildung* was the "only way" for Afghan asylum seekers to a future in Germany. Yet, by highlighting the situated gazes of my interlocutors (Cassidy et al., 2018), I show that they are differently positioned in relation to its apparently open future. The *Ausbildungsduldung* thereby appears as a biopolitical mechanism for filtering migrants and for the differential investment in their lives, conditional on their ability to become a skilled worker. In other words, while the

advertisement promises Alan, “*your* future starts right here,” the question arises: How can Alan actually make this future his, or rather, become its “you”?

This article engages with this question by drawing on Sarah Sharma’s (2014) work on temporal “recalibration.” With the concept of recalibration Sharma (2011) highlights a form of temporal power that functions by synchronizing people’s practices and experiences of time, such as their “sense of the future or the present, to an exterior relation” (442). In other words, recalibration attends to the “normalizing temporal orders” (Sharma, 2014: 111) that elevate particular temporal practices and orientations to time and devalue others. As a technology of the self, recalibration involves learning to “deal with time” in the proper way (Sharma, 2011: 442).

In the context of the *Ausbildungsduldung*, the analytical lens of recalibration highlights how the regulation’s promise of a (German) future comes with the expectation that migrants synchronize their temporal practices and experiences to its particular spatiotemporal order, or what I call *border timespace*. Importantly, in this respect, I show how the regulation was enabled by discourses of demographic change and future labor shortages. As a mechanism for producing today’s future skilled workers, the *Ausbildungsduldung* deploys not only temporal techniques of what I label “future giving” but also suspension and deportability and thereby shapes a particular border timespace. Through an ethnography of my interlocutors’ negotiations of the expectation to recalibrate, I show how recalibration in this context pertains to enhancing particular orientations to the present and to the future, and specific ways of negotiating the uncertainties related to deportability and suspension.

The article is structured as follows. First, I situate my approach in the general literature on border temporalities and waiting. Then I discuss my methodology. In the next two sections, I explore the future promise of the regulation before I analyze it as a technique for producing today’s future skilled workers. I subsequently turn to three of my interlocutors and show how they negotiate this border timespace in relation to their lived temporalities. Their struggles make recalibration visible as a painful, incomplete, and resisted practice. By focusing on recalibration, which is articulated as an expectation to “wait well,” the article complements studies on the synchronizing function of borders that has mostly focused on tempo and deadlines as techniques for synchronizing migrants’ mobility with the needs of labor markets (see Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018; Tsianos et al., 2009). Furthermore, by highlighting how the *Ausbildungsduldung* enforces a suspension of the present, it gives nuance to current understanding of bodily and temporalizing effects of waiting and deportability.

## The temporalities of borders

In the past two decades, there has been a growing interest in the role of time and temporality in bordering processes. As Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) argue, the idea of the border as primarily a spatial arrangement tends to downplay the profound temporalizing effects of border crossings as well as the role of time in techniques of control and regulation in border regimes. The newfound interest in the temporal dimensions of how borders “are enacted, how they function, and how they generate effects of containment and selection” (Tazzioli, 2018: 15) seems crucial given current developments in the European border regime, to which temporal techniques of bordering are central.

Drawing primarily on Foucauldian and Marxist approaches to time as fundamental to disciplinary techniques of power and value production (Foucault, 1977; Thompson, 1967), scholars have illuminated the role of tempos, timings, and rhythms in the control and filtering of migrants. One endeavor of this literature has been studies of the role of deadlines



and time limits in “the disciplining of mobility” (Tazzioli, 2018: 16). As Tazzioli (2018: 16) shows in a study of the European hotspot system, such “precise dates and lapses of time” serve to limit migrants’ rights to access particular spaces and support systems. These have disciplinary effects, as migrants must comply with them to become eligible for protection, relocation, or legalization schemes. Another important contribution is studies of the paces and tempos of border regimes that illuminate the role of acceleration and deceleration as techniques of governing, filtering, and (il)legalizing mobility (see for example Tazzioli, 2018; Tsianos et al., 2009). Andersson (2014) makes a fine study of the “logics of speed” of ongoing developments in border surveillance, intelligence, and camp design within the European border regime (see also Cwerner, 2004). Importantly, Andersson shows how acceleration and time–space compression produce effects of waiting and immobility for migrants. In other words, while the system of control accelerates, migrants are slowed down in camps and detention centers. Yet, as Andersson argues, and as geographical work on waiting and displacement illuminates, waiting is not a byproduct of increased acceleration, but rather a technique of power (Conlon, 2011; Hyndman, 2019; Hyndman and Giles, 2011; Mountz, 2011; Mountz et al., 2002; Schuster, 2011; see also Karlsen, 2015; McNevin and Missbach, 2018).

While Andersson is concerned with the EU’s external borders, other scholars have underlined the centrality of temporal techniques when borders move inside the sovereign territory (Bagelman, 2016; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). These works are recalling how borders are increasingly understood to be performed through encounters between various actors, and to be made and remade through complex social, political, and cultural processes (Cassidy et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2011; Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, 2002). Importantly for the present analysis, such studies often approach borders from a biopolitical perspective, addressing their filtering function in relation to national and global economic policies. The notion of the “biopolitical border” directs attention to borders as instruments “in the systematic regulation of national and transnational populations, their movement, health, and security” (Walters, 2002: 571). In a context of states increasingly seeking to reconcile “sovereignty with economy” (Johnson et al., 2011: 64), a biopolitical approach highlights borders as regulatory mechanisms in processes of filtering that are largely “based on the capitalization” of people’s resources (Walters, 2002: 128).

From a perspective underlining the entanglements between capital and biopower, Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) for example analyze how border regimes manipulate and stretch migrants’ time to produce governable and useful subjects from “ungovernable flows” (149). As such, they form part of a broader literature focusing on how techniques such as programmed delays, suspension, and deportability function to synchronize migrant mobility with the needs of national and global labor markets (Barber and Lem, 2018; De Genova, 2013; Tsianos et al., 2009). This literature illuminates the “continuities between the temporal strategies” of temporary labor migration, and “the more violent practices of confinement and detention” (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013: 137). Indeed, it highlights how the “blurring of the boundaries between legality and illegality” is at stake in such “temporal contestations” (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013: 140)—an observation that has salience in relation to the *Ausbildungsduldung*.

### *Recalibration within the border timespace*

A feature of much of the aforementioned literature on border temporalities is that it approaches time “in terms of quantifiable units” (Sharma, 2011: 440), that is as something that can be saved or lost, stretched or compressed. In other words, the problem of time and

the “temporalities of control” (Tazzioli, 2018: 14) have to do with pace, tempo, and rhythms, and accordingly with how states use time to control migrants’ bodies and mobilities in space. Yet, the advertisement changing hands in Alan’s lawyer’s office, promising a future that is reachable through years of training in a condition of deportability, indicates that the “temporal aspects of managing the force of life” (Sharma, 2014: 16) in the German border timespace reach beyond pace and bureaucratic and legal rhythms and deadlines. Addressing how Alan can make its promised future his, requires, I suggest, extending the engagement with the temporalities of control, to include a focus on how borders intervene in peoples’ affective and embodied relations to time: their futures and presents (see Lilja et al., 2018). This article sets out to do so drawing on Sharma’s (2014) work on lived and relational time, and biopolitical techniques of recalibration. A rich literature has addressed how accelerated asylum procedures, temporariness, and waiting in camps and transit-zones affect migrants’ everyday lives (Bagelman, 2016; Hyndman and Giles, 2011; Mountz et al., 2002; Schuster, 2011). A focus on how power intervenes in tolerated migrants’ lived temporalities might extend such observations.

In her book *In the Meantime*, Sharma (2014) takes departure from past years’ engagements with speed and acceleration within the social sciences. Based on Massey’s (1994) critique of universalizing discourses of “time-space compression,” Sharma criticizes “common-sense notions of universal temporal acceleration under neoliberalism” (Smith and Vasudevan, 2017: 213). What is “shared across the temporal differential is not so much the general speed of life” (Sharma, 2014: 18) she argues, but rather an expectation that people synchronize their pace, practices, and experiences of time to speed as a powerful discourse and temporal order. Through an ethnographic investigation of business travelers, taxi drivers, and office workers in the US, she shows that while they are immersed in the same web of temporal relations, they are differently positioned in relation to this expectation to synchronize. Her work chimes with feminist geographers’ work on how migrants’ waiting is differentiated along lines of gender, race, and health (Conlon, 2011; Hyndman, 2019; Mountz, 2011; Schuster, 2011). Sharma reads people’s efforts to synchronize through the theoretical lens of Foucault’s (1978) biopolitics. Based on ethnography she argues that the temporal aspects of power cannot fully be understood in terms of disciplining bodies, their pace and movement in space through workhours, deadlines, or control of tempo, that is through controlling segments of time. Central in biopolitical time management, she contends, is techniques that operate through “giving meaning to time” (Sharma, 2014: 18) or what she terms “techniques of recalibration” (Sharma, 2014: 105). Recalibration “accounts for the multiple ways in which individuals and social groups synchronize their body clocks, their senses of the future or the present, to an exterior relation—be it another person, pace, technology, chronometer, institution or ideology” (Sharma, 2014: 18). In other words, biopolitical interventions in the life forces of populations and people “elevate certain time practices and relationships to time while devaluing others” (Sharma, 2014: 15), in relation to dominant and “normalizing temporal orders” (Sharma, 2014: 140). Sharma thus explores how power intervenes—discursively and materially—in people’s embodied conceptions and experiences of time. She shows how sedentary office workers are recalibrated to the pace of office-work through in-office yoga that both works on their bodies and experiences of time, in terms of “being in the present.” On the other hand, irregular migrant taxi drivers are expected to work on their embodied temporal experiences without any supporting infrastructure. Importantly for the present analysis, her work illuminates how recalibration “takes on a specificity depending on where one is located within the biopolitical economy of time; between investment and disinvestment, let to live and let to die” (Sharma, 2011: 442).

In this article, recalibration provides an analytical angle for engaging with temporal orders and related practices of synchronization within the German border regime. I approach such temporal orders through the notion of timespace. Timespaces, as formulated by May and Thrift (2003), contain diverse and often conflicting representations, disciplines, technologies, and rhythms of social time. While this article focuses on time, the notion of timespace captures how the spatial and the temporal are entangled (Hägerstrand, 1975; Massey, 2005; Pred, 1977). My exploration of the border timespace in the present analysis first involves unpacking how it is characterized by suspension, deportability, and “future giving.” Second, it involves ethnographic attention to how its promised future anchors measures of productive agency and temporality (Bear, 2014). Acknowledging how people are differently positioned within the border timespace, recalibration is a perspective from which to investigate how the *Ausbildungsduldung*’s promised future is conditional on how migrants navigate deferral, deportability, and its tenuous promise in relation to their lived temporalities and the “intimacies” of waiting (Mountz, 2011: 394). As Barber and Lem (2018) have shown, migrants’ lived temporalities are “often out of sync with the temporal priorities” (10) of various bordering actors. By paying ethnographic attention to material and discursive practices of synchronization, the analysis allows visibility to how these are resisted and negotiated.

## Methodology

My analysis is based on ethnographic fieldwork in Hamburg from August 2017 to June 2018. I conducted participant observation in two asylum camps and two humanitarian organizations. I also conducted interviews with partners within the craft sector, activists, and public bureaucrats (federal and regional).

This paper draws mainly on work with seven Afghan men and one Afghan woman, whom I met in the camps. I acquired unlimited (temporal) access to these otherwise strictly controlled spaces and met people in the common areas or through volunteers and camp employees. The *Ausbildungsduldung* presupposes that the migrant holds a deportation issue and has signed a training contract with a company. Furthermore, while the law is open for discretion, the prevailing interpretation in 2017 was that migrants with a Dublin-decision<sup>1</sup> and most migrants from so-called secure third countries were non-eligible (Röder, 2017).<sup>2</sup> My focus highlights Afghans as a target group for the *Ausbildungsduldung* in Hamburg.<sup>3</sup> Four interlocutors had started training or pretraining programs. The others were working to find a training company or to learn German, which is a prerequisite for a training contract. This illustrates how the *Ausbildungsduldung* affected my interlocutors even before having enrolled. Of particular importance for the analysis is long-term contact (2017–2020) with three interlocutors: Alan, Nasir, and Sharif. My focus on men is primarily a matter of circumstance, given that the majority of camp residents were male. However, gendered norms and family obligations seemed to make the *Ausbildungsduldung* less accessible to women.

The analysis draws from several consultations between migrants and their attorneys or service providers. My interlocutors often asked me to join such consultations, partly to provide emotional and language support. These encounters give invaluable insight into the temporal politics of borders and migrants’ negotiations of these. However, they do raise questions regarding consent and disclosure—questions pertaining more generally to my study. I use data from consultations to the extent that counselors and migrant interlocutors consented. Yet I had to be sensitive regarding how my presence could affect consultations and how power relations affected migrants’ consent. I often refrained from taking notes.

I have shared fieldnotes and analysis with interlocutors over the years. To manage issues relating to disclosure I have changed their names and slightly altered bodily and biographic features.

### **The Ausbildungsduhlung: Closed futures and glimmers of hope**

Recall how the lawyer gave Alan the brochure proclaiming that “your future starts right here” minutes after she had told him that his anticipated future was closed to him. Such a folding of closed and (apparently) open futures was a general characteristic of the border timespace that my interlocutors navigated. It requires attention in order to understand the affective force of the Ausbildungsduhlung and how it functions as a filtering technique.

When I started my fieldwork in Hamburg in August 2017, Germany had seen two years of rapid reforms of its asylum regulation through several so-called asylum packages. The German border timespace was marked by what an asylum activist interviewee labeled a “shock therapy” of asylum policies: a rapid series of changes including a cutback in asylum seekers’ rights, rising thresholds of positive asylum decisions, and harshening detention and deportation practices. An aspect that deserves mention in this context is the introduction of the concept of *Bleibeperspektive* (prospects of staying) in 2015. The notion is a temporal technique that establishes previous rates of positive asylum decisions for specific nationality groups as the basis for evaluating people’s prospects of staying in Germany. Since 2015, German authorities have categorized Afghan asylum seekers as having “bad prospects.” While implemented as a technical construct, critics have argued that it actually serves to *produce* prospects. On the one hand, this relates to the discursive force of categorizing migrants prior to the asylum decision. On the other, numerous rights and support structures, such as language courses, are differently distributed according to people’s good or bad prospects of staying. Thus, the concept influences migrants’ opportunities for “good integration”—a notion that is increasingly important in German asylum policies (Voigt, 2016). My Afghan interlocutors, while mostly still awaiting decisions on their asylum status, were painfully aware that their prospects were bad. In the context of increasing deportation flights to Afghanistan in 2017, this contributed to a general “sense of deportability” (De Genova, 2002: 439), characterized by uncertainty and fear.

It was against this bleak background that the Ausbildungsduhlung appeared in 2016. The regulation prescribes a long-term suspension of deportation for tolerated migrants who start vocational training. The Duldung needs some explanation. It is not a residency status, but prescribes a short-term (normally 3–6 months) suspension of the enforcement of expulsion due to factual, humanitarian, or legal reasons, such as health, pregnancy, or lack of identity papers (Mitrić, 2013; Drangland, 2019). It can however be renewed, and many live in this condition for years. While the Duldung provides some social rights and at least temporary security, studies highlight it as a condition characterized by uncertainty, social stigma, and rightlessness. Importantly, while my tolerated Afghan interlocutors had a work-permit, the Duldung often entails a work-ban (Castañeda, 2010; Mitrić, 2013). In this context, the 2016 Ausbildungsduhlung was launched as a radical change. First, it prescribes that training gives tolerated migrants the right to a Duldung for the full duration of training. Second, successfully completed training entails the right to a two-year work-related residency permit. Yet, the Ausbildungsduhlung remains a condition of deportability. Moreover, it entails a prohibition to travel abroad and to family reunification. The Ausbildungsduhlung thus highlights the interweaving of spatial and temporal forms of control in the German border timespace.

Nevertheless, the predominant framing of the Ausbildungsduhlung in 2017 was in terms of “hope” and “possibility.” As one volunteer in Alan’s camp said: “Before, there was such

a lack of perspectives. Depression all over. Since the summer of 2016, that has really changed. Now there is a new glimmer of hope.” Her comment demonstrates the sense of hope produced through the promise of a German future. The volunteers urged “their refugees” to start training to secure their stay, and the nongovernmental operator of Alan’s camp professionalized their relationship with the skilled craft sector to ease their residents’ transition into training. It is important to mention here that while other federal states have sought to limit the scope of the regulation, the social democratic government of Hamburg has pushed for a broad implementation and recruitment to training, as exemplified by the encounter between Alan and his lawyer in the public legal counseling service he visited. By 2017, the Hamburg Ministry for Integration and Labor had established numerous support structures related to training for (rejected) asylum seekers. Furthermore, they instructed camp operators to prioritize migrants in training for relocation to better housing. This illustrates how the regulation influenced the dynamics of investment in migrants within the border timespace. As one ministry employee told me: “We tell the volunteers to advise their young people not to study, but rather to say, make sure you get into training.” While her comment illustrates the political and bureaucratic support for the regulation, it also demonstrates a sense of urgency in giving the right advice; making other choices threatens migrants’ prospects of staying in Germany.

For my interlocutors, a sense of urgency fueled the regulation’s association with a secure future. As Nasir once said: “You know, we Afghans have bad prospects in Germany. My lawyer told me that to stay I should start vocational training. For us Afghans, that is the only way.” Nasir was awaiting his asylum decision for the second year. He gave much thought to starting training, as he had little hope of a positive decision and German law provides few other possibilities for legalization. Nasir’s comment demonstrates how for the people I spent time with, their affective attachments to the imagined future of *Ausbildung* were coproduced by a sense of there being no other options. Yet, before investigating how Nasir and Alan negotiated the tenuous promise of the *Ausbildungsduldung*, there is a need to unpack the conceptions of the valuable migrant subject that the regulation embodies, and how it deploys suspension and deportability to synchronize migrants’ mobility with economic concerns.

### **Producing today’s future skilled worker**

In the context of years of a booming German economy, the skilled craft sector and related political bodies have increasingly recognized tolerated migrants and asylum seekers as a recruitment base. “For eleven years, companies have had more positions than people,” the director of one of Germany’s largest employers’ associations told me to explain how the *Ausbildungsduldung* was enabled. Accordingly, since the early 2000s, economic actors, such as the skilled craft sector, have pushed for an adjustment of the *Aufenthaltsgesetz* to secure the status of rejected asylum seekers in training. While the *Aufenthaltsgesetz* has previously allowed for the possibility of some categories of tolerated migrants to undertake training, this right has been regulated through short-term toleration permits. As such, the timings and rhythms of the *Aufenthaltsgesetz* conflicted with the “temporal needs” of training companies. Tellingly, the skilled craft sector lobbied for the regulation under the slogan “security of planning,” referring to companies’ need to plan their labor force. This objective was actually inscribed in the act as a main intention of the regulation (Deutscher Bundestag, 2016b).

While past and present labor shortage is a backdrop for the identification of illegalized migrants as a recruitment base, it is important to notice how economic actors have framed

their claims within a broader narrative of future workforce shortages, or what Schultz (2018) calls a “demographic rationality.” As Schultz (2018) argues, demographic rationalities are based on a particular temporality “with reference to the future as the central dimension” (2). This future imaginary is often produced through long-term population projections that legitimize policies in the present. A further temporal characteristic is that of crisis narratives that draw on “imaginaries of the future reproduction of nations and human capital on the one hand” and on futures of “superfluous, globally fluctuating dangerous bodies on the other” (Schultz, 2018: 2). The former narrative was central to advocacy in support of the regulation. A position paper from the Confederation of German Employers’ Associations (BDA) is illustrative in this respect.

Not least with a view to the growing skills shortages that are already perceptible in many sectors and regions in the wake of demographic developments, it is important that all possibilities are identified and used to exploit all existing potential already present in Germany as fully as possible. This must also include a closer examination of the situation of asylum seekers and tolerated residents. (Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände, 2015: 1)

The position paper frames “growing skills shortages” in the present as evidence of a larger process of ongoing “demographic developments.” This framing is not unique to the BDA. A review of position papers and policy documents (see for example Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband, 2017) shows that an urgent future of workforce shortages was an important argument for actors pushing for the regulation.

From a perspective highlighting the market rationalities and related demographic epistemology underpinning the *Ausbildungsduldung*, it appears as a temporal and biopolitical technique of “re-embedding to enable future utility” (Hodges, 2014: 39). In other words, by discursively framing rejected asylum seekers as “potential skilled workers” and “re-embedding” them into material and institutional structures of training, they may be produced as skilled workers for a future that has “already become present” (Hodges, 2014: 39), as the BDA quotation shows. What seems to be at stake is not “who” migrants are in terms of their “legally marked” ID, but “what they have the potential to become” (Akalin, 2007: 212). The future of workforce shortages thus seems to be the standpoint from which migrants’ value in the present is judged. Such logics are present in the BDA paper, with its reference to asylum seekers and tolerated migrants as “existing potential” within the German territory that should “be exploited” “in the wake of demographic developments.” It becomes clear, as Mountz et al. (2002) note within the US context, how migrants’ waiting is imbricated with demographic and economic concerns (see also Barber and Lem, 2018; Conlon, 2011).

Yet, the framing of asylum seekers and tolerated migrants in terms of “today’s future” skilled labor conflicts with territorialist and temporal logics of sovereign border enforcement within which the illegalized migrant is primarily apprehensible as a “detainable and removable subject” (Noll, 2010: 253). A central stake in the political negotiations was whether deportable migrants starting training should be eligible for a temporary residency status or solely a tolerated status. The government decided on a long-term toleration permit. Following the government, making deportability conditional on (performance) in training ensures that the regulation would not be “misused” (*missbraucht*) to “delay” (*verzögern*) deportation (see for example Deutscher Bundestag, 2016a: 71). The *Ausbildungsduldung* chimes with De Genova’s (2002: 439) argument regarding “deportability”—the “possibility of deportation”—as not only crucial in the legal production of migrant illegality, but as sustaining illegalized migrants’ tractability and vulnerability as workers. As I elaborate more

later, in relation to the *Ausbildungsduldung* deportability works together with suspension and its future promise to ensure that migrants stay on the (right) path to the (right) future.

In that respect, the training contract has salience as a synchronizing tool. Its function might be illustrated by an example from a legal session for undocumented migrants that I visited. During the session, a young man told the lawyer that he was worried about the requirement to reveal his identity to receive the *Ausbildungsduldung*: “The reason the immigration authorities cannot deport me is that they do not know my name,” he said. The lawyer reassured him: “You make sure you give them your training contract before you give them your ID papers and not the other way around. Then you will get your toleration permit and you will be safe. You do this and this,” he said, pretending to place first one, then a second document on the table. His answer demonstrates the altered temporal standpoint of judgments, pointed out above. The marks of past border crossings are temporarily erased—what counts is the young man’s potential as a skilled worker. However, the reference to the timing of presenting papers highlights that the young man is only “safe” within the timespace defined by the contract. The training contract appears as a synchronizing tool, through which the government deploys suspension and delay to synchronize migrants’ mobility with the economic needs of the classed German labor market and, to paraphrase Sharma (2014), keep them “within a pace and path commensurate with [] capital” (54) and geopolitics. Its function recalls Barber and Lem’s (2018) conceptualization of temporary work schemes in terms of “temporal–spatial fixes” (7) that, they argue, function to “prepare laborers in waiting” (9), and resolve problems and contradictions of migrant surplus populations. The timespace of the *Ausbildungsduldung*, defined and regulated through the contract, appears as produced through suspension, deportability, and the folding of closed and promised futures. I will now explore how my interlocutors negotiate this timespace in relation to their lived temporalities, thereby highlighting how the regulation enacts its filtering function.

### “I cannot wait so well”

Once I was studying with Nasir on the floor of his 12-square-meter barrack room in the asylum camp, he showed me a biographical letter he had written in his German class. I read it, and in surprise pointed to the last sentence: “In my future I would like to do *Ausbildung*.” “Why did you write that? You said it is not an option for you” I asked. Nasir laughed: “I wrote ‘in my future I want to work,’ but my teacher corrected it with her red pen.” The teacher’s red pen powerfully accentuates the “redemptive” logic of the *Ausbildungsduldung* in 2017. A redemptive logic anchoring a conception of an open future and a subject with forward-oriented agency yet abstracted from concrete social and embodied experiences of time, as depicted below.

When I met Nasir, he had been living in Hamburg for two years, dreaming of making a living for himself and supporting his mother in Afghanistan. We spent many hours together, studying German and sharing Afghan food, defying the prohibition on cooking in the barracks. Camp life was marked by slowness and boredom—a sharp contrast to Nasir’s life in Afghanistan: “I have worked in construction since I was nine. You know us Afghans work all the time. Now I do nothing. I just play with my phone.” However, on an intimate, bodily scale, the inactivity and immobility made his “thoughts swirl” and “heart beat too fast,” as he put it, illustrating the “cumulative stress” (Mountz, 2011: 388) and “slow violence” (Hyndman, 2019: 7) associated with prolonged waiting. During one of our walks in Hamburg’s many parks, Nasir told me he feared he was “slowly going crazy,” owing to loneliness, insecurity, and fear of deportation—an utterance starkly highlighting

the embodied experience of his life slowly being disinvested. Struggling to find words of comfort, I asked him whether training could be an option for him. Yet while Nasir himself recognized *Ausbildung* as “the only way,” and indeed as an *open way*, at the same time it seemed painfully closed to him. Interrupting my question, he said: “Everybody tells me I should start training so I could stay, but I cannot. Training takes so long... I must work now. My parents really need money.” Nasir’s answer highlights training as a time of suspension of work and income. Moreover, it indicates how people are differentially positioned in relation to the *Ausbildungsduldung*’s promised future. Indeed, my interlocutors often discussed how gendered family obligations, but also age, health, and educational background conditioned who could start and succeed in training. Their discussions and Nasir’s concerns highlight how migrants negotiate waiting along various lines of differentiation (see Conlon, 2011; Mountz, 2011; Drangland, 2019). For Nasir, his obligations to support his mother in Afghanistan *now* and in the immediate future created a painful condition of inability to accept the regulation’s invitation to a German future.

Yet Nasir kept striving to make a living for himself at the intersection of these conflicting social, legal, and affective temporalities. While he often repeated that he had to work “now,” he kept visiting training events and preparing for the required German test, in accordance with the urging of people around him. However, he found German difficult, as he only had four years of primary school. Moreover, his “swirling thoughts” made it “hard to concentrate,” as he said. In December 2017, he failed the German test by one point. When he received his final rejection and deportation order in June 2018, he called to tell me. At that time, he had started self-medicating with drugs, and his mother’s disappointment with him combined with his fear of deportation. He said, “My mother asked, ‘are you a junkie now?’ She said she thought she had raised me as a man, not as a weakling.” Reflecting on his inability to start training, he continued: “You have to be strong to wait. I am not so strong. I cannot wait so well.” His comment regarding “waiting well” demonstrates how “crossing the border” to a future in Germany requires recalibration in the sense of dealing with learning, suspension, and deportability in certain ways. “Good waiting” here seems to involve an orientation toward the intermediate future of learning, the suspension of the relationally lived “now,” and particular ways of navigating the embodied and conflicting temporal modes of learning (concentration) and deportability (headaches and swirling thoughts). Nasir considered his inability to synchronize the conflicting temporalities of learning and deportability to be a personal failure, and a gendered mark of weakness. Seen in context of his teacher’s “red pen,” his statement regarding “waiting well” recalls Conlon and Gill’s observation that asylum seekers in the UK and Irish Republic are trained to be “reflective entrepreneurs of the self” (Conlon and Gill, 2013: 245). They show how migrants, through orientation booklet or educational classes, are compelled to “produce themselves as ‘liberal subjects’” (Conlon and Gill, 2013: 244) and acquire skills that facilitate their participation in “productive circuits of capital and liberal society” (Conlon and Gill, 2013: 253). To produce oneself as a skilled worker in the timespace of the *Ausbildungsduldung* requires working on one’s temporal experiences. Sharif’s story might highlight this further.

### *“It’s good for the future, but people want to work right away”*

Some weeks before I met Nasir, I met Sharif in the camp’s activity room, where he volunteered. At that time, Sharif was awaiting his asylum decision for the second year, in a provisional camp meant to house migrants for their first six months. His negotiation of the *Ausbildungsduldung* adds to the understanding of how it asserts a “time control that



revolves around recalibrating” (Sharma, 2014: 96) the migrant’s body and their temporal dispositions to its particular timespace.

In September 2017, I joined Sharif for a counseling session at an organization working with asylum seekers and training. This was Sharif’s third appointment with the energetic supervisor, who inquired whether he had decided what training to do. When Sharif shook his head, the man became upset:

If you don’t know, I cannot help you. You don’t have much time. Your life is at stake. When I see you sitting with your head hanging down like that, you will never get into training. You have no motivation! You have to want it!

Silence followed. Then Sharif said: “But I do not know what comes after . . .” letting the sentence trail off. The meeting ended after an hour, with the agreement that Sharif should attend a course that, in Sharif’s words, “helps people find their motivation.”

The reference to “motivation,” “want,” and Sharif’s “hanging head” depicts an expectation that Sharif should orient affectively toward the future horizon of training. There is an urgency to this; his “life” hinges on it and time is short. Motivation appears here as a temporal orientation that might be reworked through counseling. In interviews with social workers, motivation was a recurrent theme. Many expressed a concern regarding finding the “true reasons” behind their clients’ desire to enter training. They considered that successful completion of training depended on inner motivation for training and not solely for residency.

Sharif completed the motivation course, passed his German exams, and joined a pre-training program. Then, in December, he quit training and found himself a full-time job. Important to notice here, is that while work might lead to a future residency permit, Sharif knew the path would be long and uncertain, and that he would still be deportable. Thinking about his situation, Sharif often returned to the topic of motivation and training. Reflecting on the difference between “interest” and “motivation,” he once explained, that while he surely found training “interesting,” he had no “motivation” because “Motivation has to do with your status, with your situation, how you live . . .” By drawing attention to uneven material conditions, he challenged the notion of motivation as a temporal mode abstracted from lived time and space that accordingly may be reworked through motivation courses. His answer to the supervisor, “I do not know what comes after . . .,” points in a similar direction. Sharif often talked about his difficulty in envisioning a life after training. He related his “lack of motivation”—“my biggest problem,” as he often said with a wry smile—to his limited knowledge of the practical and economic implications of vocational training for his future daily life.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that others found it easier to envision their life after training and to negotiate the temporal order of the *Ausbildungsduldung*. As one young girl said: “I do training now, and when I get my residency, I will study.” She saw training as a strategic step toward long-term studies and her temporal orientation reached beyond the five years of the regulation. Also, Sharif understood training to require a temporal orientation toward training’s end—an orientation, however, that he did not “want” to recall the supervisor’s words above. As he once said:

Germans have so much patience. My supervisor says, “in Germany you make a plan, and go there, step, by step.” It is a long time – three years. It is good for the future, but people want to work right away.

His reference to “patience,” to “make a plan” and to the conflict between temporal orientations to the “right away” (of the present or immediate future) and the intermediate future of accomplished training, highlights the temporal order of the *Ausbildungsduldung*. The motivation course appears as a technique of recalibration, that, recalling Sharma’s (2014) analysis of in-office yoga, works to produce a particular temporal comportment and outlook for subjects who are “stuck in otherwise confining spatial arrangements” (105), while acknowledging the different conditions of office workers and my interlocutors. It recalls Bagelman’s (2016) critique of how sanctuary spaces and practices in the UK work to govern migrants through inducing a more productive and positive conception of waiting time, thereby compelling them to “commit to the rules of the game” (Bagelman, 2016: 39). Sharif, however, did not want to “commit to the game”; that is, to bind himself and his present to the unknown future of training and endure years of suspension of income. He sought other ways to navigate the timespace of his present and to “do something against deportation,” as he said.

### *The danger of the present*

Finally, it is time to return to Alan, who managed to start training as a bricklayer. During his first year of training, he often pointed out how working and spending time with colleagues helped him deal with insecurity and fear. However, he also highlighted training as a timespace where dwelling on present longing and insecurity threatened his ability to study and thus his future. This may be illustrated by an encounter in Hamburg Central Library in December 2017, where we were meeting to study German. When Alan appeared, he greeted me without his usual smile. “There is war in front of my house,” he said. He picked up his phone to play me an audio recording from his wife and scrolled through their messages—colored speech bubbles of anxiety and comfort sent between Hamburg and Kabul the previous 20 minutes. Then the sound of shooting and airplanes mixed with the busy sounds of the library café. After a while, Alan pointed to the books at the café table: “I am sorry, but I cannot learn today. When your head is at peace, you can learn. Without a calm mind you cannot learn. I read and read but it means nothing.” He continued: “I can learn and wait, but how long must I wait? How long? I do everything: get up early, go to language course after school, but the problem is here,” he pointed to his head, “and here,” pointing to his heart: “They do not work.”

One argument in support of a long-term toleration permit was to provide better conditions for learning. As an employee in the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs told me: “The legislator intended to give people the possibility of good learning conditions, without the fear of deportation.” However, the scene above exemplifies how, for my interlocutors, the *Ausbildungsduldung* was a condition of uncertainty and anxiety. As Alan’s comment about the importance of a “calm mind” depicts, he, similarly to Nasir, found that longing and fear made it hard to learn. While he was “doing everything”—struggling to orient himself toward learning and structuring his days accordingly—his head and heart seemed to be affectively oriented elsewhere and “elsewhen” (Kafer, 2013: 3), to other spaces and times. As mentioned, the *Ausbildungsduldung* rules out family reunification, and Alan negotiated the longing for his wife and children with the temporalities of learning and the fear of deportation. As he once said: “I think about my midterm exam all the time,” highlighting a fear of failure and subsequent deportation, which was a common topic among my interlocutors. His comment makes the *Ausbildungsduldung* visible as a condition of stretched out border crossing, with the exams as crucial border crossing points.

Scholars have pointed out that deportability often enforces “orientations to the present” (De Genova, 2002: 427) owing to precarious material conditions and the absence of a promising future. The timespace of the *Ausbildungsduldung*, however, nuances this picture. I asked one interlocutor who trained in elderly care how he negotiated the insecurity of his situation. “I go on, I always go on. I keep my mind on the goal. I cannot think about the present,” he said. As suggested above, the *Ausbildungsduldung* seems to impose a temporal order that elevates an orientation toward the intermediate future of examinations and completed training. The man’s statement, however, also highlights the necessity of being oriented *away* from the present which also figures in Alan’s, Nasir’s, and Sharif’s negotiations of the *Ausbildungsduldung*. Indeed, Alan’s comment regarding a “calm mind” emphasizes how dwelling on present longing and anxiety is a hindrance to learning and performing well in training, on which deportability hinges. The men’s reflections furthermore illustrate how the expectation to recalibrate interweaves with sovereign and spatial forms of power, materializing through their precarious legal status and, in Alan’s case, the prohibition on family reunification. It should be noted, however, that while Alan emphasized the danger of orienting to the present, he often also expressed the view that thoughts of his family kept him going and ensured that he persevered with training. His situation recalls Bryan’s (2018) work with labor migrants in Canada, where she shows how feelings generated through family separation and waiting “ensure a high degree of productivity and loyalty” to legalization schemes (137). In a similar vein it might be argued that the German economy “capitalizes on the intensity” (Bryan, 2018: 137) of Alan’s feelings, producing an affective attachment to the future of being a skilled worker in Germany.

## Concluding discussion

Work on border temporalities and waiting has over the past years complemented spatial perspectives and broadened the understanding of how borders work to control, contain, and filter migrants. This work highlights the centrality of pace, deadlines, and deferral in the control and governing of migrants and illuminates how prolonged waiting saturates migrants’ everyday lives. Moreover, scholars have shown how borders operate through time to control the “speed of migrants’ movement into labour markets” (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013: 132). This article contributes to such research through an ethnographic investigation of a novel regulation: the German *Ausbildungsduldung*. The orchestrating of migrants’ bodies in space through delay and pace is central to the “temporalities of control” (Tazzioli, 2018: 14) of the *Ausbildungsduldung*. Indeed, my analysis of the political negotiations of the regulation or the role of the training contract highlights the centrality of temporal techniques in the German state’s efforts to synchronize migrants’ mobility with economic concerns.

In 2017, the predominant framing of the *Ausbildungsduldung* in public discourse was in terms of “hope” and “possibility.” Also, my Afghan interlocutors related affectively to the *Ausbildungsduldung* in terms of opening a future. As Alan once said enthusiastically, “In Germany, if you are useful, they appreciate that and let you stay.” His comment highlights that the *Ausbildungsduldung* produces structures for investment in migrants’ lives. Yet his reference to “being useful” also draws attention to the relation between capital and bordering. Analyzing the regulation and highlighting its underpinning demographic rationality, I show how the *Ausbildungsduldung* works as a tool for producing skilled workers and argue that it should be understood as a biopolitical mechanism for filtering and governing migrants. Furthermore, exploring the *Ausbildungsduldung* by highlighting the situated

gazes of my interlocutors makes their different positions in relation to its apparently open future evident.

This article started out by asking how Alan could make the *Ausbildungsduldung*'s promised future his own. To address that question, I have focused on the *Ausbildungsduldung*'s temporal dimensions. I show how the regulation, as a mechanism for producing today's future skilled workers, works through suspension, deportability, and "future giving." Exploring ethnographically Nasir's, Sharif's, and Alan's navigations of the German border timespace, I argue that the regulation works as a filtering mechanism by producing affective attachments to a particular future trajectory, and by elevating certain experiences and practices of time in support of this trajectory, for example through motivation courses. The lived temporalities of my interlocutors appear as the realm where "everyday borderings" (Cassidy et al., 2018: 139) are performed through micro-practices of synchronization or recalibration. In other words, how my interlocutors relate to the present and the future, and how they negotiate the temporalities of learning, waiting, suspension, and deportability, are crucial for their inclusion into the structures of training.

My analysis of the *Ausbildungsduldung* shows, I argue, that researching the temporalities of the biopolitical border timespace requires broadening the analytical lens beyond an occupation with tempo and bureaucratic and legal rhythms as ways of governing migrants through manipulating quantities of time. To broaden this lens involves being attuned to how biopolitical interventions work to govern and filter migrants through operating on their embodied experiences and conceptions of time. In the timespace of the *Ausbildungsduldung*, deportability hinges on performance in exams and apprenticeship, which makes it pertinent to "wait well," as Nasir puts it. The *Ausbildungsduldung* entails an expectation that migrants work on themselves and their embodied experiences of time while confined to a condition of deportability. "Waiting well" involves being "motivated" and oriented toward the intermediate future of training and away from present longing, material precarity, and violence. My interlocutors' negotiations of the *Ausbildungsduldung* highlight, however, that people's relationally lived presents cannot be suspended. They powerfully illuminate the violence produced by the interweaving of spatial and temporal techniques of bordering in the European border timespace, and the importance of critically addressing politics of "future giving" such as the *Ausbildungsduldung*.

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**Notes**

1. A “Dublin-decision” refers to the fact that another country is held responsible for their asylum application according to the European Union Dublin Regulation.
2. In 2017, Ghana, Senegal, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia.
3. Afghans were the third largest group of asylum seekers to Germany in 2017. In decisions on Afghan asylum cases in 2017, around 45% received some form of protection (*Gesamtschutzquote*) (Deutscher Bundestag, 2018).

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# Mo's challenge. Waiting and the question of methodological nationalism

Kari Anne Drangslund

## Abstract

Drawing on fieldwork with irregular migrants in Hamburg, this chapter addresses some epistemological challenges concerning the use of waiting as an analytical lens in ethnographic research on irregular migration. The chapter explores some possible ways to engage with these challenges, especially how the temporal logic of waiting, when used as an analytic optic, intersects with the territorial imaginary of methodological nationalism. Waiting, as a temporal imaginary, tends to be structured in terms of an orientation towards the awaited future (object), and to entail a conceptualisation of the present as a condition of lack in relation to this future. I argue that this structure makes the analytical lens susceptible to methodological nationalism. I suggest that to further the critical potential of waiting as an analytical lens, waiting should be conceptualised in terms of temporal heterogeneity and relationality.

## Introduction

A sunny afternoon in November 2017, Mo and I took one of our many walks in a park adjacent to the asylum camp where he was living in Hamburg. Mo, an Afghan man in his early twenties, had waited for 2 years for the answer to his asylum application. As we strolled along, he spoke about his longing to meet his family who lived in Iran and how he feared deportation to Afghanistan – a country he had never seen. He was ‘constantly thinking about the future,’ and about how he might ‘solve his problems,’ as he put it. ‘Kari, I believe I am slowly going crazy,’ he said. At that point, I feared for his life. ‘Do you have an advice for me?’ he asked. I felt a desire to provide some form of comfort, to give some advice. ‘What about vocational training?’ I said, albeit hesitantly. ‘You know ... there is this possibility ... with vocational training, you can stay.’ Walking next to me, Mo sounded upset as he said: ‘But I cannot do it. My mother needs money so badly now. I must work. I cannot wait three years.’

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, I wish to address some epistemological challenges that emerge upon using waiting as an analytical lens in ethnographic research on irregular migration. Second and consequent, I want to think about ways to engage with these challenges analytically. Particularly, I explore how the temporal logic of waiting as an analytic optic intersects with the territorial imaginary of methodological nationalism; that is, the assumption that the nation-state is the natural political and social form of the modern world (Glick Shiller & Wimmer, 2002: p. 301). Waiting, as a temporal imaginary, tends to be structured in terms of an orientation towards an anticipated and awaited future (object). Due to this temporal structure, I suggest, the imaginary of waiting risks enforcing a conceptualisation of the present in terms of lack. With ‘lack,’ I mean to capture how the present comes to be thought in terms of incompleteness in relation to the suspended and awaited future to which it tends. I argue that this structure makes the analytical lens susceptible to reinforcing methodological nationalism when it is used in ethnographic research on irregular migration. I suggest, that to further the critical potential of waiting as an analytical lens, waiting should be conceptualised in terms of temporal heterogeneity and relationality.

The scene opening this chapter took place during an ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in Hamburg, Germany, from 2017 to 2018. I moved to Hamburg in August 2017, as part of an interdisciplinary project, researching European border practices and the conditions of irregular migrants through the analytical lens of ‘waiting,’ thus forming part of a growing body of research on waiting and migration (Conlon, 2011; Andersson, 2014: p. 166; Bagelman, 2016; Jacobsen and Karlsen, this volume). In the autumn of 2017, German migration discourse was marked by the growth of the nationalist party (*Alternative für Deutschland*) and political

struggles in the aftermath of the increase in numbers of asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016. Between 2015 and 2017, the German Parliament issued around 20 bills in the field of migration legislation (Forum Menschenrechte, 2019), which to a large extent curtailed the rights of asylum seekers and raised the required threshold for granting asylum statuses. Young, male, single and healthy Afghans, such as Mo, had little possibility of being granted with asylum in Germany. However, Germany's migration policies have for years also been shaped through the state's concern with demographic change and labour shortage (Sekino, 2010; Castañeda, 2012; Schultz, 2018). In 2016, with the new *Integrationsgesetz* (Integration Act), the German government opened for the possibility that some categories of rejected asylum seekers could receive a long-term *Duldung*, that is, a temporary suspension of deportation, if they started *Berufsausbildung* (vocational training, in short: *Ausbildung*). The regulation came with the possibility of a temporary residence permit for those who manage to successfully complete training (usually after 3 years). The *Ausbildungsduldung* implies years of deportability, a standing prohibition against travelling abroad, and the ruling out of family reunification. However, in 2017, people working with asylum seekers whose applications were denied (including myself) began to understand the category of *Ausbildungsduldung* as a longed for, albeit tough, solution; a way out of the precarious condition of irregularity and deportability (Scherschel, 2016; Will, 2018; Drangland, 2020). It was within this context that I suggested *Ausbildung* as a solution to Mo's 'problems,' as he put it. Responding to his hardship, I reached out for and conjured up a trajectory to a future where he could 'stay' in Germany. However, Mo rejected my advice with a reference to an urgent 'now,' pointing out how training means a suspension of work-income: 'My mother needs money so badly *now*.'

My point of departure for this chapter is Mo's rejection of my suggestion that he started training. Our conversation prompts a critical question: From which awaited future do I envision Mo's 'now' and what are the ramifications of this temporal positioning to my understanding of his life?<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I first approach Mo's answer as a challenge to think through how methodological nationalism informs waiting as an analytical lens in ethnographic work. Importantly, my response to Mo highlights how spatiotemporal imaginaries, such as methodological nationalism, or indeed, waiting, are never solely a matter of thought or contemplation alone. Rather, they are performed and practiced in fieldwork as scholars observe and take part in migrants' struggles for their rights and the possibility to build a liveable life (De Genova, 2013b). Second, I approach Mo's challenge as a call to be attuned to the complexity and heterogeneity of the 'now' of the people whose lives researchers scrutinise through the lens of 'waiting.'

I will elaborate my argument and methodological prism in several stages. First, I will supply an account of the research on which I base my discussion and provide some methodological considerations. Afterwards, I discuss the critique of methodological nationalism in migration research (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002; De Genova, 2013b) in relation to some core conceptual features of waiting. I argue that the temporal structure of waiting, with its configuration of the present as a 'lack' in relation to an awaited future, might enforce a reductive understanding of irregular migrants' struggles and reinforce a notion of a benevolent state. In the subsequent sections, I tune into the stakes of Mo's answer, while also drawing on other fieldwork encounters. In that respect, 'Mo's challenge,' which was the starting point of this chapter, also stands for the general challenge of listening carefully to people. Drawing on the

work of historian Chakrabaty (2000) and geographer Massey (2005), I argue that the task of analysing the practices and experiences of my interlocutors requires opening the lens of waiting to temporal heterogeneity and relationality. Temporal heterogeneity, in this context, involves, on the one hand, an understanding of people as immersed in multiple and co-constitutive temporalities. I show in this chapter how such temporalities play out on different scales, such as the scale of international politics, and at the embodied, daily ‘microlevel’ (Mountz & Hyndman, 2006: p. 447) of migrants’ experiences. On the other hand, the lens of temporal heterogeneity involves recognising how the ‘now’ of things, places and peoples’ lives are imbued with change, in the sense of being, as Massey puts it, ‘a constellation of processes’ (Massey, 2005: p. 141). Such an approach opens the lens of waiting to multiple and interrelated futures and thus complicates any story of waiting as tending towards a foretold end that is spatialised as reinsertion into the nation-state. By showing how the experience of waiting is shaped through a sense of life as *not* waiting – that is, how the ‘now’ of waiting is relationally lived and imbued with change – I argue furthermore, that rethinking waiting in terms of temporal heterogeneity might further its potential as a lens for critique of present bordering practices.

## **Research context and some methodological considerations**

My analysis is based on 11 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Hamburg (August 2017 to June 2018), and on subsequent contact with eight of my interlocutors in the following years. I also draw on fieldwork conducted in southern Germany in April 2017.

I met most of my interlocutors in two asylum camps, or so-called *Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen* (EAE). EAE camps provide provisional housing, often barracks. In 2017, asylum seekers were obliged to stay in such camps during their first 6 months in Germany. Yet, Hamburg was coping

with the increase in the number of asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016, and the average time of residency in EAE camps in 2017 was longer (Zentraler Koordinierungsstab Flüchtlinge, 2017). At the time of my fieldwork, some of my interlocutors, including Mo, have been living in such camps for more than 18 months. The majority of my interlocutors in the camps were Syrian families or men with a Dublin decision or a *Duldung* status, as well as male Afghan asylum seekers who were either awaiting their asylum decision or holding a *Duldung*.<sup>2</sup> As this account may testify, the vast majority of the inhabitants in the camps were men. I also got in contact with people through two humanitarian organisations working with irregular migrants. The people I met in these arenas were mostly from Ghana or other West African countries and were either holding a *Duldung* or living unauthorised in Germany.

Since I contextualise my discussion in relation to the German *Ausbildungsduldung*, this legal construct needs some explanation. The *Duldung* is not a residence permit but prescribes a temporary suspension of deportation (normally 3–6 months), due to legal, humanitarian or factual reasons. It can be renewed, and many live in this condition for years. Studies have highlighted the *Duldung* as a condition of rightlessness, uncertainty and social stigma (Castañeda, 2010; Mitrić, 2013; Drangland, 2019; Herbert Brücker, 2019). As opposed to this finding, state and humanitarian actors have tended to frame the 2016 *Ausbildungsduldung* as providing migrants with future prospects (Drangland, 2020). Its novelty was that it prescribes that appropriate training might provide the ‘tolerated’ (*geduldet*) migrant with a legal right to a suspension of deportation for the full duration of training. Furthermore, upon successful completion of the training period migrants acquire the right for a 2-year work-related residence permit, with the possibility of renewal. However, the 2016 *Ausbildungsduldung* was not given to

Dublin migrants, or (with some exceptions) to people from so-called secure third countries. Thus, it excluded most of my Syrian and Ghanaian interlocutors.<sup>3</sup> My conversation with Mo highlights young and able Afghans as a target group for the *Ausbildungsduldung* in Hamburg.<sup>4</sup> Germany had, with some exception, stopped most deportations to Afghanistan in 2017 (Pro Asyl, 2019). Afghans, when receiving their deportation decision would thus also receive a *Duldung*. As was the case for Mo, this form of *Duldung* would (with some exceptions) give the right to a restricted work permit (Voigt, 2020).

Before I move on, two clarifications are required. First, to secure their anonymity, I have changed my interlocutors' names and slightly altered features of their biographies, including the spatiotemporal markers of our encounters. Second, there is a need to be clear about the different situations for people waiting for an asylum decision and for those outside the asylum institution. On the one hand, my interlocutors in the camp, including Mo, commonly used the German verb *warten* (wait) to describe the exhausting situation of awaiting the asylum application decision. My West African interlocutors, on the other hand, seldom referred to their situation in terms of 'waiting' but rather described it as a condition of 'struggling,' thereby narrating their present situation as part of a life-long struggle for a viable life.<sup>5</sup> The majority had years of migration behind them, often in precarious material and legal conditions.

These differences highlight 'waiting' as a diverse condition. Importantly however, also the Afghans with whom I spent time often described their lives in Afghanistan or Iran in terms of struggling to make do in the context of an uncertain future. A topic of our conversation was how, for some interlocutors, the present condition in Hamburg formed part of a generalised condition



of uncertainty. As Ali, a young Afghan man, once said: 'My problem here is the same as in Afghanistan: An uncertain future.' This sense of generalised uncertainty recalls Vigh's (2008) argument regarding the Western conception of 'crisis' as an exceptional condition. Drawing on fieldwork in Guinea-Bissau, Vigh describes how crisis becomes a context of life, which forces people to 'make lives in fragmented and volatile worlds rather than waiting for normalisation and reconfiguration' (2008: p. 8). By reading the notion of waiting through a lens of relational space and temporal heterogeneity, I seek to nuance the understanding of how waiting is experienced and practiced and, furthermore, the conceptualisation of waiting as a state that tends towards 'normalisation,' which, when the research object is irregular migration, often is spatialised in terms of reinsertion into a territorial, national order.

### **Methodological nationalism and waiting's 'not yet'**

In their seminal text on methodological nationalism in the social sciences, Glick Schiller and Wimmer contend that 'nation building, the control and restriction of immigration and the rise of a social science preoccupation with migration are interlinked processes' (2002: p. 302). They argue for the need to scrutinise the epistemological ramifications of the predominant assumption within migration research 'that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world' (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002: p. 301). Additionally, they criticise migration research for inattentiveness to nationalism and its effect on nation-building processes and argue that empirical research tends to be circumscribed by the territorial boundaries of nation-states. Within the German context, Hess (2015) has shown how methodological nationalism operates in research on 'guest workers' and migrant integration to essentialise migrant identities and naturalise national (and racialised) policy concerns. In a similar vein, De Genova (2002, 2013a) has shown how methodological nationalism works to naturalise migrant

illegality and conceal its political and legal production. In this often-unexamined spatial imaginary, the refugee and the irregular migrant are positioned as a problem and denied, as Arendt (1967) argues, rights and protection. Through writing and fieldwork practices, De Genova argues, researchers participate, unwittingly or consciously, 'in the very same socio-political processes and struggles through which the "national" configuration of "society" (or, the social field) is reified' (De Genova, 2013b: p. 251). He calls for a self-reflexive critique of how research 'contributes to the ongoing nationalisation of "society"' (De Genova, 2013b: p. 252).

One researcher who has taken up the call to think critically about how methodological nationalism informs research that takes migrants' waiting as its object of study and analytical lens is the anthropologist Ramsay (2017). Exploring humanitarian and policy discourses on migrants' protracted waiting in refugee camps, she argues that these discourses narrate migrants' displacement and waiting as a story that 'begins at exodus, when refugees lose the national identity of their origin country, and is resolved when the refugee is once again re-inserted into a context of national identification' (Ramsay, 2017: p. 18). This one-directional temporal logic, she argues, also pervades research literature, with consequences for how policy and migrants' experiences are analysed. Drawing amongst others on Vigh's (2008) critique of the exceptionalism that pervades scholarly work on crisis, she argues that displacement tends to be conceptualised, as a 'a juncture in time, as a condition of temporal liminality in which refugees and other kinds of irregular migrants are seemingly permanently suspended in the immediacy of the present' (Ramsay, 2017: p. 18). To her, the metaphor of 'liminality,' used in anthropology to capture transitional rites, signals a logic of temporal linearity and transition. It might, she suggests, reinforce a conception of migration as a crisis in relation to the normal (national) social

fabric. Through ethnographic work with migrant displacement and resettlement programs to Australia, she (2017) shows how this logic reduces the complexity of migrants' lives and reproduces instead a notion of a benevolent state as the redemptive endpoint to waiting (see also Drangsdal, 2019).

Ramsay's argument recalls the work of scholars such as Salih and Richter-Devroe (2018) and Malkki (1995, 2012) who, through empirical work with Palestinian refugees and with Hutu refugees in Tanzania, show how the organising logic of territorial nation-states informs thinking about displacement, statelessness and dispossession. All these three scholarly works highlight how methodological nationalism functions, in thinking and writing, as a 'chronotopic' (Bakhtin, 1981) imaginary; that is, an imaginary that performs and 'project[s] premises about' (Kelly, 1998: p. 843) ways of thinking space and time, including people's presents and futures. In other words, to paraphrase Kelly's discussion of the large-scale chronotopic imaginaries of modernity and globalisation, methodological nationalism 'establish[s] space-time possibilities' (Kelly, 1998: p. 843; see also Klinke, 2012). In relation to migrant displacement, methodological nationalism operates to conjure up a trajectory that tends towards a future 'that already is foretold' (Massey, 2005: p. 68) as reinsertion into 'the national order of things' (Malkki, 1995: p. 495).

What I want to draw attention to in the following, and thus changing the gaze somewhat, is how the analytic optic of waiting carries with it some conceptual features, which, I argue, make it susceptible to reinforcing methodological nationalism. This focus is important, because while waiting often is deployed to investigate the *temporal* dimensions of borders and migration, how

time is thought is often left implicit. Consequently, waiting's chronotopic functions remain unexplored. Since I am unable to provide a thorough analysis of the conceptual 'baggage' (Desjarlais, 1997: p. 11) of waiting in this short essay, I will merely point to two interrelated features that tend to characterise waiting as a temporal imaginary to make my argument. These are the orientation of waiting 'towards' (or, perhaps rather 'from') an awaited future; and a related conceptualisation of the present in terms of lack and incompleteness in relation to this future.

### **Waiting as a chronotopic imaginary**

Tracing the etymology of the verb 'to wait' from the German meaning *to guard* and the French meaning *to watch*, Bissell shows how the verb suggests 'a sense of anticipatory preparedness – a lying-in-wait-for' (Bissell, 2007: p. 282). Drawing from this, he argues that an understanding of waiting as some form of anticipation is common within Western thought. Waiting, he contends, is often seen as brought about and necessitated by 'the promise' of an 'event-to-come' (Bissell, 2007: p. 282; see also Rotter, 2016). This temporal configuration, he notes, is visible both within eschatological conceptualisations of waiting (see also Vanstone, 2006) and within research literature that is underpinned by the linear temporal model associated with capitalism. Within the latter temporal model, waiting generally, as Lahad (2017) observes, carries negative associations and is understood as a 'wasted' time that should be eliminated or minimised for the sake of a more productive time.

Visible here, I suggest, is how waiting, as a chronotopic concept, tends to be oriented towards a still absent future (its anticipated end). This temporal structure also underlies Bourdieu's thinking about waiting and power on which many (migration) scholars have fruitfully drawn

(Jeffrey, 2008; Hage, 2009; Auyero, 2011; Bagelman, 2016). Waiting is a relation to time where 'we anticipate the future as too slow in coming,' Bourdieu (2000: p. 209) argues, quoting Pascal. Bourdieu's work on waiting highlights that intrinsic to conceptualisations of waiting's 'now' (the state of anticipation) is its configuration in terms of some form of lack in relation to, absence of or distance from the awaited future. Indeed, when Bourdieu, discussing waiting as form of power, notes that destroying hope implies 'killing the waiting itself' (Bourdieu, 2000: p. 228), or when Crapanzano states that in waiting the world's 'only meaning lies in the future – in the arrival or non-arrival of the object of waiting' (in Rotter, 2016: p. 81), they highlight an imaginary that posits the 'now' as analytically meaningful solely in relation to the awaited (hoped for) object or future. In other words, waiting's 'now' becomes legible as the 'not yet' of the awaited future (waiting's end).<sup>6</sup>

It should be noted here that thinking the present as a relation to the future means different things for scholars, such as Bourdieu and Crapanzano, given the underpinning conceptualisations of time (Hodges, 2008; Pedersen, 2012). Bissell's work (2007), for example, highlights that while 'waiting' within mobility studies is thought in terms of temporal linearity, the concept also often implies a messianic temporality (see also Vanstone, 2006). Often however, as Ramsay (2017) notes, the underpinning conceptualisations of time are left implicit in work on waiting. My concern is that, as far as its temporal structure and chronotopic function are left implicit, the analytic optic of waiting risks enforcing a reading of the present in terms of lack when applied in ethnographic research. This is so, because while the awaited future (waiting's 'end') already figures in its 'now,' it has still not 'arrived.' In other words, in the chronotope of waiting, the 'now' remains a condition of incompleteness in relation to the awaited future that it tends

towards. When waiting is used as lens in empirical research, it thus matters how the future is imagined *and* spatialised.

### **Practicing the spatiotemporal imaginary of waiting in fieldwork**

My interest here is what happens when the chronotopic imaginary of waiting is deployed as a lens in empirical research. In order to answer this question, I believe, we must acknowledge how researchers not only practice their (our) spatiotemporal imaginaries when writing up the analysis (Massey, 2005). Indeed, spatiotemporal imaginaries are also practiced in embodied and affective fieldwork encounters in contexts where (political) nationalism materialises through law and policy. As De Genova argues, ‘the dilemma of methodological nationalism is never simply a matter of not *thinking* critical enough’ (2013b: p. 251, my italics). Faced with irregular migrants’ struggles in conditions of deportability and violence, researchers reach out for and temporalise time in relation to available futures (Bourdieu, 2000). Such futures are currently possible, as Hage (2003: p. 15) has noted, primarily within national societies that work as mechanisms for the distribution of a dignified and meaningful social life. In this context, waiting, as a chronotopic imaginary, is spatialised in particular ways, and concepts such as delay, immobility and movement acquire normative meanings.

My encounter with Mo might illustrate this point. When I conjured up the future horizon of training, I took part in a broader societal discourse on the *Ausbildungsduldung*. As I have detailed elsewhere (Drangslund, 2020), the predominant discursive framing of the *Ausbildungsduldung* in 2017 was as a possibility and hope for tolerated migrants. In public and humanitarian discourses, it was coded as future oriented and in terms of activity (training) and movement towards a secure and viable life in Germany. As Mitrić (2013) argues, the *Duldung* is

more than a regulation. It is a form of chronotopic ‘storytelling in which the state narrates itself’ (2013: p. 166) to constitute certain meanings and scenarios of belonging. However, while Mitrić shows how the *Duldung* as such has functioned to ‘map’ (Mitrić, 2013: p. 134) the tolerated migrant as outside to, or rather, as ‘suspended in’ (Mitrić, 2013: p. 134) the space and time of the German nation-state, the *Ausbildungsduldung* is structured, in public discourse, as a time of transition, through training, towards *Aufenthalt*. Illustratively of its temporal structure is how the Social Democratic Party (SPD), in the context of policy discourses on labour shortage and demographic change, has framed the *Ausbildungsduldung* in terms of *Spurwechsel* (lane-change) for (rejected) asylum seekers, that is, as a change of lane or tier from asylum to work on the journey towards the imagined end-station of *Aufenthalt* (residence permit) (SPD, 2018; Starzmann, 2018; Voigt, 2018; Walter, 2019).<sup>7</sup> The future is, as Massey puts it, ‘inscribed into the story’ (2005: p. 68). This was also the story in which training could appear as solution to me. I seemed to have already known the future that was ‘too slow in coming’ for Mo. I approached his now, and his ‘problems,’ as he put it, as the ‘not yet’ of this (awaited) future: Training will enable him to move towards a secure future defined and spatialised through *Aufenthalt*.

Mo challenges such a reading of the *Ausbildungsduldung* in terms of movement. Defining training as a condition of *waiting*, his answer enhances and rearticulates the *Ausbildungsduldung* as a condition of delay and immobility. Importantly however, he does this by referring to a ‘now’ that ‘cannot wait.’ In other words, it is by highlighting how his ‘now’ is relational and configured in terms of movement and change that he makes the *Ausbildungsduldung* visible as a condition of waiting. Thereby, while his answer challenges an understanding of the *Ausbildungsduldung* in terms of movement, it at the same time complicates a reading of his waiting in terms of stasis

and immobility. The challenge he posits to ‘thinking waiting’ recalls Chakrabarty’s (2000) critique from a very different field; the critique of historical discourse. Arguing that academic historical reasoning positions contemporary people and places in a developmental process towards a foretold future ‘whose theoretical subject [is] Europe’ (Chakrabarty, 2000: p. 34), Chakrabarty shows that to read people’s lives from the perspective of a foretold (known) future is conditional on an occlusion of the plurality of forms of belonging and temporalities people are immersed in. His work opens for an acknowledgement of the plurality of futures people envision for themselves, and that are practiced and produced as people live their lives in a web of spatiotemporal relations – relations that are, as Massey (2005) argues, always relations of power. Inspired by this critique, I address the challenge Mo poses as a challenge to read waiting against its ‘one story’ structure, forged within the nation-state frame – a story that might easily be creeping into writing. To paraphrase Vigh, what is at stake is a matter of ‘freeing the concept from its temporal confines and thereby putting it to analytical use’ (2008: p. 9).

### **A method of temporal heterogeneity**

Scholars have taken different steps to ‘de-naturaliz[e] the national in research methodologies’ (Amelina & Faist, 2012: p. 1707). This includes, for example, different forms of transnational methodologies (Mountz, 2011; Casas-Cortes et al., 2015; Hess, 2015) and relational approaches to space (Amelina & Faist, 2012). In relation to the spatiotemporal imaginary of waiting, this critique requires, to paraphrase Chakrabarty (2000: p. 45) again, displacing the nation-state from the centre towards which the time of waiting gravitates. This could be done in different ways. Ramsay’s analytical move attempts to undermine the conception of citizenship as waiting’s end. Studying her interlocutors’ encounters with the Australian state, she shows how a sense of displacement and exclusionary practices endure after resettlement (Ramsay, 2017). Ramsay’s



move takes on salience in relation to Germany's extensive use of temporary residence permits, renewal of which, for some legal statuses, requires economic self-sufficiency. As one Nigerian man said, reflecting on the difference between his temporary residence permit and the previous *Duldung* (with a work permit): 'When you are recognised, it's also another race, it's like, you have to chase the paper, you know, like proving to them you want another year, by working...'. By referring to his struggle for papers as a 'race,' which awakens associations of competition, speed and exhaustion, he highlighted the continuous struggle to find work in a racialised labour market, and the precariousness of his inclusion (Karlsen, 2015), temporally, legally and materially, into the German state. It should be mentioned here, however, that when he talked about his life in Germany, he also stressed how his experiences formed part of a life-long struggle to make a viable life for himself in different locations. He narrated his life in Hamburg as part of a longer and open-ended journey: From struggling to find work as a young man in Accra, through years in Libya where he earned good money, to his flight to Europe in 2011 and subsequent years without secure work, legal status or family in Italy. While my focus in this chapter is on the future, this is a reminder of the meaning of the past for how people experience waiting (see, e.g. Hage, 2018). In that regard, a reductive reading of waiting's 'now' might not only be related to a conception of citizenship as waiting's end but also to an equation of waiting's beginning with the migrant's 'arrival' on a state territory.

I will, however, make another move to tune into the stakes of Mo's now – stakes that, as Mo's answer indicates, evade understanding if his life is imagined primarily as tending towards an awaited future of *Aufenthalt*. This move implies rethinking the temporalities or temporal structure of waiting. As a response to 'Mo's challenge,' the questions I address in the rest of this

chapter are: What is the potential for knowing if we address Mo's 'now' through an analytical lens (waiting) that starts out with its relational character, that is, how his now is also his mother's now? What happens if we address waiting (object of study) through a notion of temporal heterogeneity and how might this move challenge methodological nationalism? Asking these questions, I am inspired by Chakrabarty (2000) and Massey (2005), who from their different perspectives within postcolonial history and feminist geography, argue that questioning teleological narratives, such as modernity or globalisation, necessarily implies questioning the underpinning conceptions of time. While their respective objects of study were history and space, their works are useful for my purpose to think through the analytical optic of waiting in relation to the chronotopic function of methodological nationalism. This is so because in different ways these authors show how thinking time in terms of temporal heterogeneity and relationality challenges the tendency of scholars' analyses to, and here I paraphrase Chakrabarty, 'sum up [the] present[s]' (2000: p. 251) of people's struggles from the perspective of a foretold future, be it modernity, globalisation, or – as in the present case – a re-established national order. Their work is also a reminder that thinking about colonial others as 'waiting' to arrive in a future forged in the imaginary of the European nation-state carries racialised and essentialising normative assumptions (Chakrabarty, 2000: p. 8).<sup>8</sup> If I am right that waiting easily entails a reading of migrants' now as a condition of lack in relation to a future of politico-legal inclusion (a future where the researcher often already is situated), their critique has relevance for my discussion: It is a reminder to question one's own 'speaking position' (Massey, 2005: p. 87) when telling stories about people waiting to 'enter' Europe.

### **Mo's challenge: rethinking waiting's 'now'**

I first met Mo in August 2017 and then continued to see him on a weekly basis throughout my fieldwork. Although he hoped for a positive answer to his asylum application, his fear of deportation was intense, and he nervously followed news on German deportation flights to Afghanistan. Walking in the park that November day, when he said he feared he was 'going crazy,' I was worried by the pitch and tone of his voice. I knew he had stopped volunteering, stopped drawing, which he loved, and that he did not eat much. The young man, who had always lived with his family and from childhood worked long hours in a carpentry, was tired and exhausted by the 'cumulative stress' (Mountz, 2011: p. 388) of unemployment, loneliness and fear. To respond to his despair, I decided to point to the possibility of training, and, thereby, to conjure up a path to a future in Germany.

My response to Mo was surely affective and embodied. Nevertheless, as I have suggested to posit the *Ausbildungsduldung* as a solution presupposes a reductive reading of his now. At the least, it presupposes what Hage has called a 'labour of disentanglement' (2018: p. 204) of the different waiting(s) producing his condition. As Hage notes, when researchers 'produce one form of waiting as an ethnographic example, they surely must have already disentangled it from other forms of waiting it coexists with' (2018: p. 204). Thus, he argues, it is crucial that researchers make visible their analytical labour of disentanglement. What I want to point out here, however, is that the labour of disentanglement that make the *Ausbildungsduldung* appear as a solution, simultaneously implies an act that 'envelops other kinds of times' (Chakrabarty 2000: p. 16) and future horizons in the time of the *Spur* – the time defined through the German state and its economic interests (Mitrić, 2013; Drangland, 2020). Mo's answer demonstrates that for him

waiting for *Aufenthalt* was ‘fused’ (Hage, 2018: p. 204) with his mother’s own waiting for him to send money. It was fused in ways that make full-time training (no work-income) undesirable as a solution.

When Mo rejects training on the grounds that ‘he cannot wait,’ he clearly refers to the obligation to provide for his family *immediately*. Mo’s family, who at that time lived in Iran, struggled to make a living in the context of poverty and a precarious legal status (for research on Afghan migrants in Iran, see Christensen, 2016; Khosravi, 2017). Mo’s obligation to send money highlights a general obligation prevalent amongst my Afghan and West African interlocutors and underlines the usefulness of remittance as a lens from which to grasp migration as a transnational phenomenon (Nieswand, 2014). Mo’s mentioning of his mother, however, captures a broader concern for his family that fused with his fear of deportation and the uncertainty regarding his legal status.

In 2018, two of Mo’s siblings in Iran married. The expectation on Mo to contribute economically to their weddings became a core topic of our conversations, as did the sense of frustration and longing since he could not attend their weddings. Furthermore, their marriages implied that his aging parents would now be living alone, which raised his concerns. Then, in the spring of 2018, international occurrences gave a new dimension to his waiting. Mo used to show me his family pictures or newsfeeds of Taliban killings of Hazara people, the ethnic group to which he belonged, on his phone. In the spring 2018, he started showing me newsfeed articles quoting the president of the United States of America, Donald Trump, threatening Iran, in relation to Iran’s nuclear program. Rising food prices throughout 2018 and 2019, in the context of the USA

sanctions, affected Mo's family and put a pressure on him, affectively and economically, that fused with his navigations of awaiting the asylum decision and later (in the autumn of 2018) receiving the *Duldung*.

Mo's situation illustrates how 'the self is ultimately tied to the social,' as Vigh (2008: p. 15) puts it. Furthermore, his embodied condition of waiting appears as produced through relations spanning (and producing) spaces and spatiotemporal scales (as the scale of international politics, life course). Important to the argument here is Massey's (2005) insight that to acknowledge space and people's lives as produced through interrelations, that is, through 'interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny' (2005: p. 9), opens up for thinking the 'now' (be it of a place, a thing, a subjectivity) as a constellation of a multiplicity of forms of living and temporalities 'which puls[ate] at different beats' (Massey, 2005: p. 158). The 'now' thus appears as heterogenous and as imbued with change. Drawing on Massey (2005), Mo's condition (of waiting) might be approached as a constellation of interrelations, that are biological, material, legal and affective. Importantly, these are also relations of power (in which the researcher is situated). To start understanding Mo's movement towards 'crazy,' which importantly involves more fully grasping the effects of waiting as a bordering technique, one must, to put it simply, understand that his now is also his mother's now. Furthermore, one must understand that this heterogenous and relational now *cannot* wait, as Mo says. While, as mentioned, he surely refers to the urgent needs of his family, I suggest that his statement prompts a more general consideration of the role of time and change when thinking of waiting. The urgency of his *now* points towards manifold futures, appearing in his struggle in Hamburg as, to paraphrase Chakrabarty 'a movement of existence, whose direction is futural' (2008: p. 251). This futural

direction is visible in his will to work and to be a good son, his siblings' marriages, his mother's possible exhaustion. By grasping the relational character of waiting, the analytical optic might be opened for a consideration of time in terms of change and becoming in ways that complicate a reading of migrants' now from the perspective of a foretold future.

### ***'I cannot wait'***

In ethnographic research on irregular migration, waiting is often described as a condition of immobility and slowness (Griffiths et al., 2013; Andersson, 2014). Such a sense of slow time and existential immobility (Hage, 2009) was tangible in my fieldwork, especially in the camps and for people without a work permit (Mitríć, 2013; Drangsdal, 2020). However, this temporalisation of time was deeply entangled with a sense of life *not* waiting. Indeed, an experience of the world's uncontrollable movement shaped my interlocutors' negotiations of spatial and existential immobility.

This entanglement of stasis and change, which also comes across in Mo's story, was forcefully present in my work with people from West Africa. With the exception of one older man, all were in the age of childbearing, as defined biologically (especially for women) and through gendered and heteronormative norms. A common theme in our conversations was a painful sense of time passing in terms of 'age going,' as one Ghanaian man put it, without having children because of an insecure legal and material situation. Their considerations recall Clark's (1999) research amongst Asante traders who, she argues, 'consider parenthood an essential element of both male and female gender and of personhood in the deepest sense' (1999: p. 417). I often discussed these issues with John (36), a Ghanaian IT-engineer who had lived unauthorised in Hamburg for 2 years, working two hours daily washing dishes. Reflecting about his own and other Ghanaians'

situation as ‘undocumented’ (his words) in relation to the importance of parenthood, he once said: ‘You have to be careful or else you can stay three or four years in this situation. You are not growing any younger. If you do not watch out, age will catch up with you.’

John’s description of competing with the uncontrollable passing of time, of struggling not to be overhauled, but without the necessary means to do so, illustrates a common topic when my interlocutors described their (gendered) situation. It recalls Bourdieu’s theorisations of waiting as a relation to time that occurs when people ‘feel directly the breaking of the tacit collusion’ (2000: p. 209) of their socially grounded life expectations and the course of the world (astronomical, social and biological processes) over which they have no or little power. Indeed, for John, the condition of waiting and ‘watching out’ in Hamburg, was in some sense a break of his ‘normal’ life in Ghana, where he had enjoyed a high rank in his congregation, and in periods earned good money from selling fish. However, for many people I worked with, who had been unemployed or worked in precarious conditions in Ghana or elsewhere, their situation in Hamburg formed part of ‘a persistent circumstance’ (Vigh, 2008: p. 9) of fragmentation and ‘somatic, social and existential incoherence’ (Vigh, 2008: p. 9), as Vigh puts it in his endeavour to rethink crisis away from its analytical association with rupture. Interestingly, after he had returned to Ghana and was struggling to find work and rebuild his life there, John told me: ‘Life in here is no different from being undocumented in Hamburg. You still struggle to make a move; the only difference is you do not fear deportation,’ subsequently explaining that to ‘make a move,’ means to become a parent/have children.

To highlight and question waiting's analytical association with a 'break,' is indeed important in the context of irregular migration, where, as already mentioned, this break easily is spatialised as a break with the territorial order of nation-states. There is however another aspect of this association of waiting with a break or rupture, that is important to my argument. John's practice of 'watching out' in Hamburg – which illustrates a general sense of alertness to the stakes of being 'undocumented' amongst my interlocutors – points to how his condition of waiting, rather than a break with, is *imbricated* in the 'course of the world' (Bourdieu, 2000: p. 209) in terms of biological processes and social, normative and material relations (Massey, 2005). What fuels John's statements with such urgency – indeed, what defines his 'relation to time,' to use Bourdieu's words – is the embodied experience that life, when waiting, does *not* wait (see also Povinelli, 2011). When age 'catches up with him,' the future he has envisioned for himself (defined through fatherhood) will not be obtainable. The insight he conveys for thinking of waiting, I suggest, is that to grasp the stakes of people's struggles, the conceptualisation of waiting's *now* in relation to a future that is 'too slow in coming' (Bourdieu, 2000: p. 209) must be fused with an image of the future, or rather, *futures*, as always in becoming (Massey, 2005). This insight, furthermore, implies also recognising how people envision different futures for themselves; futures that are also differently spatialised (Vigh, 2008).

### **Concluding discussion: 'to read "lack" otherwise'**

Starting out with 'Mo's challenge' to my thinking, as he counters my quite-hesitant suggestion regarding *Ausbildung*, this chapter's objective has been to investigate the analytical optic of waiting in relation to methodological nationalism, and to unpack some ramifications of these imaginaries for how researchers understand migrants' now(s), their lives and struggles. Such an investigation, which involves being reflexive about one's (my) own research practices, is



important in the context of a growing literature addressing migration through the analytical lens of waiting, and, furthermore, in relation to the prevalence of techniques of deferral in the bordering practices of Germany and the European Union (Bagelman, 2016; Will, 2018).

A core argument in this chapter is that the temporal structure of waiting, when used as an analytical optic in ethnographic work on irregular migration, makes it susceptible to methodological nationalism. I have identified this temporal structure as an orientation towards an (awaited) future and a related reading of the now in terms of lack in relation to this future. Employed in research on irregular migration, the analytical lens of waiting easily, I suggest, conjures up a story about migrants' now(s) as tending towards a future (waiting's end) that is spatialised as reinsertion into a nation-state.

Such a reading entails a reductive understanding of migrants' lives and might reinforce the nation-state frame. Stating this, I do not intend to divert attention away from how migrants' lives are conditioned by the absence of legal rights. Indeed, waiting gains analytical power exactly from its ability to capture how borders operate through deferral and tenuous future promises (Andersson, 2014; Bagelman, 2016; Barber & Lem, 2018; Drangland, 2019). In other words, as an analytic optic waiting enables ethnographers to see how insecurity and absence of legal rights materialise in migrants' lives as poverty, deteriorating health and legal and material obstacles for pursuing life projects. This context exhausts people, such as Mo. On the contrary, it is the acknowledgement of the importance of exploring the predicaments of those who are *made* waiting (Bourdieu, 2000) that makes it pertinent to thinking through waiting's temporal structure when putting it to analytical use.

I have suggested that one possible move to strengthen the analytical usefulness of waiting, by way of wrenching it out of the ‘one story’ structure, is to rethink the ‘now’ of waiting in terms of relationality and heterogeneity.

In some ways, to think waiting through a notion of relationality and heterogeneity could be framed as an act, to quote Chakrabarty out of context, to ‘read “lack” otherwise’ (2000: p. 34). In this chapter, I have used the notion of ‘lack’ to capture how the analytical imaginary of waiting, when used in migration research, might enforce a reading of migrants’ ‘now’ as incomplete in relation to a future nation-state reinsertion. In ethnographic work with irregular migrants however, ‘lack’ also manifests materially in irregular migrants’ ‘nows,’ in the sense that their lives are shaped through violent techniques of suspension, immobilisation and spatial confinement. To read lack otherwise in this sense, thus, would involve more fully grasping the predicaments of those made to wait. Indeed, to rethink the time of waiting in terms of temporal heterogeneity and relationality furthers the concept’s analytical purchase for grasping the temporal dimensions of borders. It opens the analytical lens for the stakes of Mo’s answer. This approach conjures into sight that *because* Mo’s relationally lived now ‘cannot wait,’ the *Ausbildungsduldung*, with its suspension of work-income and prohibition to travel, implies for him not movement, but immobility. His life is made up of other trajectories than the ‘lane’ of the *Ausbildungsduldung* and of other futures than its foreseen end-station. In other words, Mo’s answer makes visible that narrating the *Ausbildungsduldung* in terms of movement, not only works to conceal its effects of stasis and deferral, but that this imaginary paradoxically also occludes movement and change, in the sense of occluding the other trajectories, ‘lanes’ and movements that form his life.

This leads me to another meaning intended by my suggestion to read lack otherwise. For Chakrabarty (2000), to 'read "lack" otherwise,' was part of his critique against how historicism situated the Indian subject in terms of failure or lack in relation to modernity. To him, to read lack otherwise was certainly *not* a quest for better grasping lack and absence. On the contrary, it was a quest for an inversion; to read 'plenitude' and 'creativity' instead of lack (Chakrabarty, 2000: p. 34). In relation to waiting, to read lack otherwise in this sense, implies rethinking the now; from its conceptualisation as a 'not yet' of reinsertion into the national order, to a lived, relational and spatially embedded 'now.' To start understanding Mo's challenge, in other words, involves grasping the various ways he and other people struggle to make a life for themselves, in relation to violent border practices.

In different ways, both Chakrabarty and Massey highlight that to think time in terms of relationality and heterogeneity opens for questioning stories that posit people and places as heading towards an already defined, foretold future. To acknowledge (places and) people's lives as produced through interrelations and the now as inherently heterogeneous is, Massey (2005) argues, a condition for thinking politics at all, because it entails thinking the future as open (see also Chakrabarty, 2000; Grosz, 2011). Recalling this argument here, I am not making a claim for approaching irregular migrants' waiting in terms of becoming or potentiality in any celebratory manner. Indeed, Mo's condition of moving towards 'becoming crazy' shows how waiting is a 'corrosive' (Mulhall, 2014) and exhaustive condition. Peoples' ability to create liveable futures for themselves is unevenly distributed, and the relations through which people's lives are shaped are, as Massey (2005) argues, always relations of power. Yet, to acknowledge that things could

be otherwise and to open up for the multiple ways of living and practicing futures is a prerequisite for a critical engagement with methodological nationalism (De Genova, 2013b). Here lies also a critical potential of opening the lens of waiting to temporal heterogeneity and relationality.

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘now’ is problematical. My choice to use ‘now’ comes from my effort to figure out what is at stake in Mo’s reference to a ‘now.’ At the outset, I define it loosely as a lived present. My discussions of temporal imaginaries will add substance to this definition.

<sup>2</sup> A ‘Dublin decision’ refers to the fact that other European Union countries are held responsible for their asylum applications according to the European Union Dublin Regulation.

<sup>3</sup> In 2017, Ghana, Senegal, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia were defined as secure third countries.

<sup>4</sup> Afghans were the third largest group of asylum seekers in Germany in 2017. However, in the same year only around 45% of Afghans received some form of protection (*Gesamtzuschutzquote*; cf. (Deutscher Bundestag, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> All conversations with Afghan and Syrian interlocutors were held in German, while my conversations with West-Africans were held in English.

<sup>6</sup> My thinking here is inspired by Chakrabarty’s (2000: p. 8) discussion of waiting and the ‘not yet’ of historicism.

<sup>7</sup> The (politically contested) notion ‘*Spurwechsel*’ was used by politicians, humanitarian actors and public media in relation to Germany’s first Skilled Immigration Act (*Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz*), which was ratified by the Bundesrat in June 2019 as part of a package of migration laws (*Migrationspaket*). The notion describes more generally a policy that facilitates a transition from asylum to work as a path to a German residence permit, of which the *Ausbildungsduldung* is one of several measures (see e.g. Bojadzije et al., 2016: p. 269, Will, 2018: p. 173).

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of such mechanism in Germany, see Mitrić (2013) and (Niess, 2018).





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