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Ove Sutter

"Welcome!"*

The emotional politics of voluntary work with refugees

Abstract: Numerous volunteers throughout Europe participated in humanitarian aid activities for refugees during the so-called "European refugee crisis" in 2015, when growing numbers of migrants arrived in the European Union. I discuss the emotional politics of this form of civic engagement drawing on an ethnographic case study of self-organized voluntary activity that occurred at the main station of a medium-sized German town. I argue that the participants created a framework of meaning by employing objects, performative practices and media representations which provided emotionalized perceptions and interpretations of the events. In doing so, the volunteers were involved in the migration management of the public authorities, while simultaneously contesting migration policies and extremist right-wing politics.

Keywords: civic engagement, civil society, volunteering, political activism, emotions, migration, policy, welcome culture

Some 150 to 200 refugees travelling by train through Germany came to a forced halt at the station of a medium-sized town in early September 2015. The authorities had cancelled all departing trains on this day so that the newly arrived refugees were compelled to spend the following night at the station. Within hours, news of this together with photographs of people sleeping on the concourse floor had spread throughout the social media. Soon, a similarly large number of helpers gathered to provide the refugees with food and clothing. Over the subsequent days and weeks, volunteers set up a comprehensive humanitarian aid infrastructure that was self-organized and received donations from the local community and from local entrepreneurs. Their assistance consisted principally of providing the refugees with clothing, food, information, places to sleep and even free train tickets. Some of the volunteers came from local social, cultural and (party) political networks; additionally, though, new relationships were formed – albeit only temporary in many cases – between people from very different social milieus, many of whom had never been involved in this kind of activity before. Some of those who helped had themselves experienced

* German version in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 2017, 113 (1): 3–23. Translated by Kathleen Cross.

being a refugee, in some cases as recently as weeks before.[1] Over a period of months, the railway station became a place of almost continuous social interaction for the volunteers. For the refugees, it generally remained a place of transit: They arrived in a highly exhausted state and used the location for just a few hours to sleep and obtain clothing, food and information for their onward journey, while waiting for a connecting train. According to estimates given by the authorities and the media, 50,000 to 80,000 refugees went through the town's railway station between September and December 2015.

A fundamental characteristic of this support effort, on which my current research is focused, was the mobilization and communication of the emotions of those involved.[2] The volunteers created a framework of meaning in the way they interacted with certain objects, and through performative practices and media representations, that facilitated emotionalizing and emotionalized views of the events at the station. At the same time, this mobilizing of emotions meant that the helpers were also involved in the migration management conducted by the institutions of the state, as well as in collective expressions of critique and opposition to it.[3]

The support effort occurred during the course of migratory movements that took place in 2015, also dubbed "the summer of welcome" (Karakayali and Kleist 2016), in the course of which a large number of volunteers became involved in providing humanitarian assistance to refugees.[4] This effort was supported by the state authorities in Germany, particularly by the Chancellor, and by business-related interest groups; not least, it also received support in the form of widespread reporting which, during the first few months, was highly favorable. The tabloid "BILD" with its "Let's help!" campaign was foremost among the newspapers concerned. Pictures of emotional gatherings at German railway stations, with people cheering, clapping and weeping as they received refugees and handed them food donations made the rounds of the world's media and were seen as an expression of a new German "culture

1 I was not able to establish the exact number of volunteers who were or had been refugees themselves. At a guess, they numbered around 30 during the time I spent at the station.

2 This essay is an extract from an ongoing study, begun in October 2015, in which I have been looking at the aid campaign and follow-on voluntary aid projects for refugees in the local setting, using ethnographic and discourse analytic data. This includes participant observation of the activities, semi-structured interviews with volunteers, directors and employees of state authorities, local politicians, entrepreneurs and refugees from November 2015 onwards. My study also involves collecting data about the activities of the initiatives involved from social media, local and national press reports and policy documents. My focus is on the practices, subjectivities and cultural representations of civic engagement for refugees.

3 I am grateful to the editors and to the anonymous reviewer for their thought-provoking comments and constructive criticism.

4 According to a survey undertaken by the Social Scientific Institute of the Protestant Churches in Germany, more than ten per cent of people above the age of 14 were involved in such activities at the end of October (Ahrens 2015; cited in Karakayali and Kleist 2015: 7).

of welcome." Media and social scientific studies of these events have demonstrated the key role played by emotions in both the reception of the refugee crisis in the media and the voluntary work done by those providing humanitarian assistance. Farida Vis and Olga Goriunova have shown in their social media analysis how the picture of the three-year-old Kurdish boy, Aylan Kurdi, who was found dead on a Turkish beach at Bodrum on September 2, 2015, was disseminated throughout the world within hours, eliciting strong emotional responses and becoming an "iconic image" of the "refugee crisis" (Vis and Goriunova 2015). Serhat Karakayali and J. Olaf Kleist (2015, 2016) argue that volunteers who became involved in the events of 2015 often did so because of the media reports, unlike people who had been volunteering for longer. Additionally, they noted that the emotional experiences gained by volunteers who became involved during the migratory movements of 2015 played a prominent role, greater than among those who had been working as a volunteer for longer. Emotional factors, such as the sense of community they experienced, were especially important in this. Recent studies have come to divergent conclusions regarding the transformation in volunteers' motivations and practices. Some indicate that many of those currently active define their work in emphatically political terms and choose political forms of action. Others, by contrast, suggest that the spread of civic engagement brought with it a rather depoliticized understanding among volunteers of what they were doing (cf. Aumüller, Daphi, and Biesenkamp 2015; Daphi 2016; Hamann and Karakayali 2016; Hamann et al. 2016; Misbach 2015; Mutz et al. 2015; Speth and Becker 2016). According to Antonio Gramsci's definition of civil society, which is based on his theory of hegemony, people's voluntary and political engagement with refugees in the "integral state" of capitalist societies does not lie outside, but rather in a relationship of tension to the political institutions of the state (Gramsci 1991ff.). After all, it is on the terrain of civil society – from the family, industry confederations and the mass media to citizens' initiatives and social movements – that struggles are played out over the consent of politically significant sections of the population to competing sociopolitical projects and their associated ideas. That terrain is, simultaneously, the place where it will become clear whether Angela Merkel's "We can do it!" is in line with people's "everyday common-sense" (Alltagsverstand, Sutter 2016), that is, with their ordinary, apparently normal everyday views and interpretations – or whether it meets with rejection.[5]

5 From the perspective of an "ethnographic analysis of boundary regimes," it becomes clear just how significant this political engagement in refugee work is in the formation of state policy on migration (Hess and Tsianos 2010). Here, migration policies as components of "migration regimes" (TRANSIT MIGRATION Research Group 2007; Tsianos and Karakayali 2008; Tsianos and Kasparek 2015) cannot be reduced to the actions of state and institutional actors and policies. Instead, they are formed in dynamic relations of conflict and negotiation involving various institutional, state, transnational and civil society actors (Hess and Tsianos 2010: 248). From this kind of perspective, it is the boundary transgressing practices of the migrants themselves that crucially shape the way

Studies on social movements have particularly illustrated the role emotions can and do play in the context of civic political engagement. Fear, anger, panic and hatred, for example, can spur people to action and be transformed into affective-emotional solidarity during political actions.[6] Sieglinde Rosenberger and Jakob Winkler, for example, have shown in a study of protests against the deportation of asylum seekers how activists strategically mobilize emotions such as anger and outrage to win supporters (Rosenberger and Winkler 2013, 2014). Similarly, activists in social movements employ emotions to strengthen people's commitment, develop longer-term involvement or generate collective identities (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001; Jasper 2011: 294).

In asking how the volunteers infused their voluntary work with emotions and used these in their political actions by means of their interaction with certain objects, the performative practices they engaged in and the media representations they used, I am taking onboard a praxeological understanding of emotions as proposed most recently by Monique Scheer (Scheer 2012, 2016). Scheer defines actions that are associated with emotional experiences or have the aim of generating emotions as "emotional practices" (Scheer 2012: 193). Emotional practices always occur within "complexes of praxis," that is, they are associated with "other physical and discursive practices" (Scheer 2016: 24) and with material artefacts.[7] Following this performative approach in the sense of "doing emotions," "inner" experiences of emotion cannot be distinguished from their "outer" representation in words, gestures and actions (Scheer 2016: 16). In addition, both the production and reception of emotions are socially learned, discursively shaped and follow social and cultural rules, scripts and logics.

Helping using objects, bodies and pictures – emotional practices of voluntary work with refugees

Material and semantic changes to the railway station space

During the course of the volunteering I observed at the railway station of the medium-sized town, the volunteers made comprehensive changes, above all, to the entrance hall in terms of its use; these changes involved far-reaching additions and adjustments to parts of the building. They carried out these changes unilaterally and, initially, without any explicit approval from Deutsche Bahn or the local authorities. What proved advantageous for them was the fact that, being located in

in which a migration regime is formed. In addition to this, though, both state/institutional actors and civil society actors are involved in a continuous process of "doing borders." As the regime concept suggests, the practices engaged in by the heterogeneous actors involved, although related to one another, are not related in any systematic, logical way. Following this approach, the focus here is, above all, on newly "emergent" relationships and practices (Pott and Tsianos 2014: 118).

6 Collins 2001, cited in Juris 2008; Routledge 2012.

7 All quotations deriving from German language publications have been translated into English.

a very rural region, the station is not used by a lot of people and does not play a key role in the town's transport infrastructure. The station's entrance hall is also little used commercially: Apart from a room for ticket sales, it is adjoined only by a kiosk with a small café. The room itself is filled with just a few objects, such as ticket machines and benches, and is rarely used as a place to wait or sit. Other adjacent rooms in the station building were unused and stood empty.

The volunteers set up a wooden table in the entrance hall during the first few weeks of their activities, which they used as an information stand for refugees and for donors, taxi drivers and passersby. They also built a makeshift kitchen with a serving counter, work surfaces and shelves, which took up half of the hall. In addition, they placed tables and chairs in the middle of the room. They set up a well-stocked clothing store, filled with donations from local people and private companies, in an empty storeroom adjacent to the hall. The volunteers also laid electricity supply lines through the station along with multiple plug sockets so that the refugees could charge their smartphones and use the Internet. They covered the walls, ticket machines and entrance doors to the hall with posters showing, for example, maps of the region, along with notices containing various kinds of information, such as the price of train tickets, some of which was written in Arabic and some in Farsi.

Over and above their practical function, the objects used in these material changes and decorative adornments in the station were associated with semantic practices that led the helpers particularly, and also the refugees to give the space additional meanings. Those involved effectively created a "framework of meaning" through the material and semantic changes[8] made to the station building, which, as a "schema of interpretation" (Snow and Benford 1992), promoted certain ways of looking at what was going on at the station by emphasizing selectively certain present or past objects, situations, events and experiences and interpreting them accordingly (ibid.: 137). This framework of meaning communicated both inwards (towards participant users) and outwards (towards nonparticipant users) and suggested certain "readings" (Hall 1999, 2004) and certain ways of feeling to the recipients. Some of the associations between things and meanings were aimed – more or less intentionally – at mobilizing and communicating emotions. Other associations involved the recipients emotionally, without deliberately being intended to do so. The 'targets' of these emotional practices were usually vague and diverse – refugees, donors and passersby, and especially the volunteers themselves.

The notices, posters and cardboard signs reading "refugees welcome" or simply "Welcome to [name of town]," for example, put up on the walls by the volunteers, addressed the refugees in the first instance. The volunteers used these notices to

8 I use a "problem-oriented" and "lifeworld-ethnographic" approach to material culture in my analysis of this way of dealing with things (König 2012; König and Papierz 2013).

communicate their sympathetic welcoming attitude, thus, seeking to make the refugees feel at ease or even happy. Some of the refugees similarly hung notices on the walls on which they had written (in Arabic or Farsi) expressions of gratitude such as "We thank Germans for their support."[9] Another emotionalizing practice around the notices showed, however, that the framework of meaning did not go unquestioned and, in some cases, was undermined: Two volunteers reported an incident – independently of each other – in which one refugee had complained angrily to volunteers in English about notices stuck on the walls of the entrance hall that contained insults in Kurdish directed against people of Arabic origin. The notices were only removed once an interpreter had translated their content for the other volunteers.

Christmas star; Photo by Ove Sutter; 20.12.2015; identities concealed by Ove Sutter

The volunteers decorated the station entrance hall around Christmas time by hanging a large Christmas star above the kitchen's serving counter, draping a chain of Christmas lights around the information stand and pinning up various other kinds of seasonal decorations. With the help of the fire brigade, they also set up a Christmas tree on the square in front of the station. These changes to the station building were

9 The refugees had also painted many other pictures with national flags, accompanied by texts, such as "Afghanistan we love you."

intended, above all, to make the volunteers feel comfortable and to boost their motivation; as such, they were aimed at generating a sense of community.[10] This kind of community-building work was done for functional reasons, not least because many of the volunteers were physically and emotionally drained during their weeks-long involvement. In addition, though, conflicts arose periodically among the volunteers, some of which led to individuals ending their voluntary work at the station.

Finally, the space had been filled over time with many objects – along with other pictures and texts – that referred especially to children as being affected by forced migration. Volunteers, for example, helped refugee children paint the wooden table of the information stand and pinned up pictures and information about missing refugee children on an information board. They built a children's playpen with knee-high wooden walls, carpeted and filled with donated toys in one part of the entrance hall that was visible from all sides. Next to this, they set up children's beds where the refugees' children could sleep while the family waited to move on. They covered the adjacent wall with posters – pictures of horses, for example – and with children's drawings. These constructions and decorations were especially intended to help the refugee children feel at ease and to relax and keep occupied during their stay at the station. Beyond this, though, the symbolism they assumed in the specific setting of the railway station as a refugee support center also reflected socially hegemonic ways of viewing refugees. Karakayali (2016) refers to the key significance of the child as a symbol in the context of the refugee crisis. Media reporting, he notes, has focused not only on fleeing women and families, but above all on children, whereas their actual numbers were comparatively low compared to unaccompanied male refugees. These images were an important factor, he argues, in the heavily emotionally laden process of mobilizing volunteers. Drawing on work by Luc Boltanski (1999), Karakayali argues that the reason for this, among others, is the formation of a philanthropic or humanitarian relationship. This is characterized fundamentally by the fact that those receiving help must be framed as "deserving," as not responsible for their own situation and as grateful: Children are the ideal recipients of support in this context. The objects, texts and pictures installed in the railway station that related to children contained elements reminiscent of these widespread and widely received media images of fleeing children; as such, they also served to transpose the historically evolved interpretive patterns

10 Although it may seem natural, given such symbols, to interpret them as signals sent out by the volunteers to the refugees about integration or as a display of Occidental Christianity in the face of Muslim "Others," I observed hardly anyone directly expressing such intentions. The only instance of this occurred when, during a visit to a store room that had been turned into sleeping accommodation for refugees, a local authority employee responded to a query about ways of integrating refugees by laughing and pointing – not terribly seriously – to the fir branches hanging on the walls. It was not clear to me from this brief visit whether this Christmas decoration was aimed primarily at the volunteers working there or at the overnight guests.

associated with the latter, along with their capacity to mobilize emotions, into the spatial setting of the railway station. The emotionalized symbolism of the fleeing child came to occupy a significant position within the framework of meaning that accompanied the voluntary work at the station.

At the same time, the material changes – pictures hung on walls, Christmas decorations, toys and furniture for children and their associated meanings – recalled widespread everyday practices related to the emotions not only of the volunteers, but also of other users of the station. The framework of meaning generated by these things was, thus, also aimed at prompting acceptance of the voluntary activities among passers-by and, not least, sympathetic support from potential donors.

Self-painted information stand; Photo by Ove Sutter; 25.12.2015; identities concealed by Ove Sutter

Physical-performative practices

Given these material and semantic changes to the station building (especially the entrance hall), the space looked rather like a stage containing important props, a "theatrical space" (Juris 2008: 65) in which the physical-performative practices of civic engagement were being played out. The volunteers acted in various roles, which, in the first instance, were associated with activities and interactions defined by the functions they fulfilled. They prepared meals in the kitchen, served food and drinks, and took in food donations. Volunteers working in the clothing store took in clothing and furniture donations, sorted these onto the shelves or put them in the

storage space and helped refugees choose items of clothing. Volunteers at the information stand usually sat behind the counter and either talked with refugees, other volunteers and passers-by or else made phone calls or did research on a laptop. The interpreters moved through the whole space, providing refugees with information or helping them buy train tickets.

In addition to these functional activities, the voluntary activities at the railway station included other practices which were similarly intended (or ultimately served) to emotionalize events. These emotional practices adopted by the volunteers in their dealings with one another as well as with passers-by and refugees appeared on the "stage" of the station building as meaningful ritual performances of civic engagement.[11] As such, they were characterized by physical and linguistic actions, repeated themselves in similar ways, and were aimed at communicating and mobilizing the emotions of those involved. These ritual performances included, for example, mutual expressions of gratitude connected with the acceptance of donations, and birthday parties and a Christmas party organized by the volunteers at the station.

One ritual performance particularly suited to demonstrating how actions which arose initially in response to a certain situation took on a non-specific meaning over the course of events at the station was playing with soap bubbles. When playing with the bubble maker, the volunteers turned towards to the refugees' children and often kneeled in front of them to blow soap bubbles in their direction. Many of the children would respond by laughing and trying to burst the bubbles. The parents or other guardians of the children observed this from a short distance, rested or organized their onward journey. The extent to which this game, as a ritual performance of civic engagement, mobilized the emotions of the children and the volunteers alike became apparent, for example, in the interviews: Certain volunteers made repeated mention of these playful interactions and the emotional responses of the children and were themselves visibly moved when doing so. Furthermore, an occurrence at a semi-public event demonstrated that, for many volunteers, the bubble blowing game practically symbolized their volunteering *per se*. The volunteers organized a party on the square in front of the station to mark the first anniversary of the activities there in September 2016. It was attended by some 150 people, including not only volunteers, but also the mayor and local authority employees. One of the volunteers gave a speech at this event, during which he contrasted the bubble blowing game with the violence and rejection the refugees had experienced on their journey. At the climax of his speech he took out a can of the bubble maker from his pocket and called out toward the gathered crowd: "Do you remember this?" He then blew a few soap bubbles into the air, continuing: "Look at how a smile can change the world […]. The soap bubbles have totally changed the atmosphere at the station. People

11 Juris 2008; Juris speaks of "ritual performances" in relation to the protest practices of social movements.

have been able to rest and relax here and to take a breather after all the shit they've experienced on their way through Hungary!" (Observation log, 09.09.2016). The crowd responded with applause.

Media representations of volunteering

According to Jeffrey Juris, the purpose of ritual performances in the case of the protest practices he studied is not only to emotionalize and strengthen the sense of community felt by the activists who physically participate in them (Juris 2008: 62); they also function to mobilize and communicate with a wider public addressed through the media and are frequently designed in a specific form to spread awareness of political actions through the media (ibid.). The voluntary work undertaken at the railway station and the practices described above were also connected to producing and disseminating media representations. The local and national press, for example, reported on the voluntary activities in numerous articles and featured individual volunteers in biographical portraits, including photographs. However, the volunteers themselves did their own reporting as well. Local activists had already set up a Facebook page prior to the events at the station due to increasing movements of migrants through the town and announcements of demonstrations by extreme right-wing groups. During their activities at the station, this page became the volunteers' main medium and had attracted more than 10,000 "likes" by December 2015. Almost all the volunteers I encountered during my time at the station and in other initiatives had found out about what was going on at the station via Facebook and had decided thereupon to get involved.

The Facebook page was initially aimed at generating publicity and rendering the volunteers' activities at the station visible. This was especially important for gathering donations, for which purpose the volunteers had posted a list of needs at the start of the website, which was regularly updated and via which donors could obtain information. In addition, the volunteers took photographs of one another engaged in many of the activities at the station described above and also posted these on their Facebook page. Many of the photos posted show volunteers, either on their own or with others, smiling into the camera. These photos display the events at the station as a kind of "special event" at which the volunteers had a lot of fun together. The way the pictures of refugee children receiving help served to mobilize emotions was apparent here too: Photos showing only volunteers and those showing them together with children were a popular motif for the posts – visitors and users of the website posted emotional comments or clicked the "Like" button in response. This was also the case with photos that showed volunteers and children of the refugees blowing soap bubbles.

Facebook posting with comments; posted on 19.10.2015; Source: Facebook (last accessed: 13.12.2015); identities concealed by Ove Sutter

The ritual performances, such as playing with soap bubbles, by virtue of their media representation on Facebook, functioned as "image events" (Juris 2008) that were aimed at mobilizing the emotions of those involved and other recipients of the media images, promoting certain ideas about voluntary work and generating feelings of sympathy. By disseminating the pictures through the media, the volunteers created an image of their work that was characterized, among other things, by its emotional mode of representation. The image created here, although not conceived entirely consciously or strategically, nonetheless, served a purpose in relation to the work: It had a communicative and mobilizing impact on the volunteers by encouraging the formation of shared practices and emotions and, thus, promoting a sense of connection among those involved. Directed outwards, it was designed to legitimize the voluntary activities, helping to generate donations as well as more volunteers by projecting a positive image that ensured publicity and public support.

Emotional politics of civic engagement

Affective work in state migration management

Following the migratory movements of 2015, the key role played by civic engagement in the state's provision of assistance for refugees was emphasized and subjected to critique. The issue of the "neoliberal instrumentalization and appropriation of humanitarian aid" (Steinhilper and Fleischmann 2016: 67) for refugees by the state was raised. According to recent studies, most services provided to refugees in the more recent migratory movements to Europe were delivered by volunteers. The devolvement of humanitarian provision to volunteers has been seen as part of a comprehensive change in the welfare state towards one that activates rather than acts and in which the "the community-as-resource" is deliberately deployed, even while there is a simultaneous "underfunding of public infrastructure and administration" (van Dyk and Misbach 2016: 209). According to this view, state benefits (welfare payments) are "outsourced" to an unpaid voluntary sector as part of neoliberal welfare policy (Pinl 2015). This is accompanied, it is said, by emotional appeals to people's compassion, to their impassioned care for others (Bargetz and Sauer 2010: 151).

The emotional refugee support practices at the railway station were also included in the local authorities' integration management. Many of the volunteers' emotional practices, for example, were intended to generate a "positive atmosphere" among the various people involved – from the refugees and the volunteers themselves through to supporters addressed via the media and the local authority employees on-site. Generating a positive atmosphere was essential for the humanitarian effort at the station, as it helped to maintain the voluntary activities over an extended period of time. This is how the volunteers maintained a team spirit within their group, ensuring that the voluntary work continued. The media representation practices – the production of an emotionally charged image of civic engagement – were aimed at capturing and keeping the attention of potential supporters and donors by means of emotional appeal. In this regard, a leading local authority employee also referred to the voluntary work in positive terms:

> "Well, we wouldn't generate loads of donations, and we wouldn't have a Facebook page with appeals for donations. So we wouldn't collect and distribute the donations either – we simply wouldn't have the resources to do so. Someone or other has to organize all that, you know, and distribute it. Actually, that's what I think is really impressive about this whole thing, that so many people are being provided for, almost entirely from donations." (Interview with local government employee, 12/2015)

In addition to this, the emotional practices contributed to making the situation at the station more peaceful and relaxed: They were aimed at improving the emotional and physical well-being not only of the refugees and volunteers, but also of the local

authority employees. A leading police officer, for example, stressed in an interview the productive impact which the voluntary work, in his view, had had on the work done by the local authority employees. The volunteers, he said, had done some important liaison work with their communicative activities and had created a "chain of trust" through which they had strengthened the refugees' confidence in the police. Individual police officers and other local authority employees became emotionally involved in the activities at the station and expressed pronounced sympathy and respect for the volunteers. This was manifested, for example, in mutual embraces with volunteers, shared jokes and a familiar, largely informal tone in conversation. A few longer lasting friendships also developed between individual volunteers and local authority employees as a result of the activities at the station. Both sides stressed how positively relations between them had developed. This shared view was expressed in the narrative used by actors on both sides, namely, that some of the volunteers would have to find a new "hate figure."

Thus, the emotional practices of the volunteers functioned as a form of "affective work" (Hardt 2002; Hardt and Negri 2004) that contributed to making the local authorities' task of migration management easier. However, the volunteers' involvement in public migration management should not be misunderstood as the volunteers being included in an existing strategy on the part of the local authorities. Rather, they filled some gaps in provision which had arisen partly due to local authority staff shortages and partly due to these authorities being less flexible and responding more slowly. Moreover, some volunteers – not least on account of their own experience of physical exhaustion and stress – certainly had a critical, self-reflexive attitude toward their own role. Some argued openly with the local authorities when they felt that the latter were exploiting them and not giving them enough support. Despite this critical and self-reflexive stance, they continued to remain involved, some volunteers citing their empathy with the refugees as a reason for doing so. Thea, a 40-year-old volunteer, for example, described her ambivalence about checking the refugees' bus tickets as follows:

> "Yes, of course you think about it: 'I'm actually doing the train company's job here, not getting a single penny for it while they're getting the money.' But then again, it's the humanitarian aspect that counts: The most important thing is making sure they're sitting safely on the coach and will get to their destination. They've been waiting for so long, and it's such a short distance from here to where they're going, they've already managed the longest part of their journey. And these few hours that separate them from their destination – we at least want to help them get onto the right train or bus." (Interview with volunteer Thea, 11/2015)

Media contradictions, political subjectivities and affective alliances

However, the volunteers did not simply yield seamlessly and passively to the state's migration management with their emotional practices of civic engagement. Rather, they linked the latter to political demands, directing criticism at local authority practices and at broader developments in migration policy. This was manifested especially in the media representations of the events at the station displayed on the volunteers' Facebook page. They (the volunteers) established links between the image they had created of the voluntary work at the station, which was frequently presented in emotional terms (posts containing pictures of volunteers and children laughing and playing with or embracing each other), with texts in which they made political demands, criticized the behavior of the state authorities or sent out calls for action against right-wing extremism. In doing so, they challenged the state's administrative practices and regulations as well as notions of how refugees should properly be provided for and treated. These political articulations were also part of the framework of meaning created by the volunteers at the station through their material and semantic practices, through their physical-performative practices and through their media representation practices; they sought to establish certain views of the voluntary work going on at the station with this framework. They were, thus, seeking to change the "everyday common-sense" (Sutter 2016) of those members of the public reached through the social media. They attempted to change hegemonic – that is, ordinary and apparently 'normal' – views and interpretations of the voluntary work at the station and of related political issues to bring them into line with their own approach. Exemplarily, they used a photo of volunteers and children at the station playing with soap bubbles to illustrate a critical commentary on border controls in the European Union. This commentary was similarly characterized by a subjective-emotional mode of representation.[12]

The fact that these efforts to establish certain views did not go unchallenged and that they were subject to conflict was demonstrated to me at the literal margins of the activities at the station. During a brief break for coffee in the station café next to the entrance hall, for example, I overheard a conversation between two women. In the course of the conversation, one of them said of what was happening on the other side of the window pane, "Send in the water cannon, that'll give it a proper clean," to which the other responded by forming a revolver with her index finger and thumb and "shooting" in the direction of the entrance hall.

12 Although the Facebook page was updated mainly by just one person, the content of the posts was, nonetheless, agreed upon with the other volunteers or was tacitly accepted by them. The person concerned also received compliments and was thanked by the other volunteers and activists at joint meetings or face-to-face for her publicity work and for the way she formulated political statements about what was currently going on.

Facebook posting with comments, posted on 24.11.2016; Source: Facebook (last accessed: 7.9.2016); identities concealed by Ove Sutter

On another occasion, the elderly driver of a coach deployed to replace a train service initially refused to take two refugees on board because he thought they were terrorists. He had caught them trying to hide in the luggage compartment; they only bought a ticket after being discovered. It took considerable effort on the part of the police and an interpreter to convince him to calm down and let the two refugees travel on the coach.

The critical attitude adopted by individual volunteers also manifested in the process of their evolving political subjectivity, namely, by the growing significance of political frameworks of meaning at the level of their everyday common sense and by the way they came to associate themselves and their everyday lifeworld over the longer term with practices of civic political engagement. Some of the volunteers, for example, said that they had become much more politicized or had shifted more "to the left" of the political spectrum during their involvement at the station. Months after the activities at the railway station had come to an end, some volunteers participated in political discussion events or took part in demonstrations – against meetings organized by the far right-wing AfD (Alternative for Germany) party, for example. While some of these volunteers had already been active in party politics prior to their voluntary work at the station, others took part in political events for the first time in their lives.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that those volunteers who were still participating in political debates and activities months after the events at the station did not do so in an isolated way, but rather in the company of other volunteers and other participants they had met there for the first time. In other words, new social networks had emerged from the activities at the station, which not only

served the function of looking after refugees and engaging in political work, but also created and sustained friendships. People would meet at private events, such as birthday parties, and talk to one another about personal issues, such as problems at work or in their families. These personal connections can be understood – following Lawrence Grossberg – as "structures of affective alliances,"[13] in which affective relationships had become linked with civic political engagement.

Pitfalls and potential of emotional politics of voluntary work with refugees

In this essay, I have illustrated how the support effort I studied was characterized by the mobilization and communication of the emotions of those involved. I have shown how the volunteers, in the way they interacted with certain objects and through performative practices and media representations, created a framework of meaning that was suggestive of emotionalizing and emotionalized views of the events at the railway station. Finally, I have argued that the volunteers, by means of mobilizing emotions, were involved both in the state's migration management at an administrative level as well as in collective expressions of critique and rejection of it.

To conclude, the more far-reaching question arising from the connections analyzed here between humanitarian assistance and political action is whether the example of voluntary work with refugees presented here – a form of civic engagement evident in many places in Europe – is a sign of a changed form of political action. It is a form of political action that is possibly based much less than is the case with social movements on an ideologically coherent world view or a collective sense of being part of a movement, on longer-term engagement and on political demands aimed at fundamental social change in the distant future. Instead, this form of civic engagement may perhaps be characterized by a pronounced "hands-on" pragmatism, an ethic of "doing" and a form of action through which the actors attempt to preempt political demands for social change in the very activity itself, temporarily occupying physical spaces for this purpose. In this form, it would not be dissimilar to the tent camps and gatherings of the global Occupy movement, the "Movimiento 15-M" in Spain and the "Arab spring." This political praxis directs practical critique at state migration and border policies, as well as at society's racism, in some cases undermining legal regulations in the process.

The emotionality of this civic political engagement plays an ambiguous role in this context. On the one hand, critiques of humanitarianism have drawn attention, among other things, to the disempowering visual constructions of innocent, helpless and suffering victims as they appear in the colonial gaze of the western observer, designed to generate "moral shocks" and to mobilize compassion (Chouliaraki 2010;

13 Grossberg 2000: 192, cited in Bargetz and Sauer 2010: 150.

Kennedy 2009; Ticktin 2016). This gaze was, to some extent, also apparent – albeit in its positive form – in the images of refugee children described in my essay. In the context of Germany's "welcome culture" and with reference to the criticism levelled by refugee activist Bino Byansi Byakuleka, Silke van Dyk and Elène Misbach even speak of a "racism of helping," which "only" wants to help, but is not interested in eliminating the unequal relationship between helpers and recipients of that help at the political level. Instead, it is the "European helper identity" that is to be maintained, even while the recipients of help and refugees without rights are disparaged and marginalized (van Dyk and Misbach 2016: 215). Van Dyk and Misbach, like Karakayali, point to a further danger of help for refugees that is, above all, based on emotions and not on politics: Such help, they say, is heavily dependent on the "moods in society at large" and can tip into its opposite as soon as the image of the "deserving" and grateful refugee begins to crack, as occurred, for example, in the case of the New Year's Eve incident in Cologne (Karakayali 2016; van Dyk and Misbach 2016: 221).

On the other hand, voluntary support for refugees during the "summer of welcome" may also represent a counterpole to the emotional politics of right-wing populism. There has been much criticism in the debate about "post-democracy," for example, of bourgeois-parliamentary democracy, which, according to this critique, has established itself historically based on a rationalistic conception of politics, with a male, white European individual endowed with reason as its political subject (Bargetz and Sauer 2010; Boos and Opratko 2016: 34). The current boom in right-wing populism, so goes the argument, can be explained, among other things, by the fact that it offers ways for people to identify passionately with certain concepts and causes and, in this way, can mobilize emotions excluded from the discourse of parliamentary democracy (Bargetz and Sauer 2010: 147f.; Mouffe 2007). This subsequently gave rise, from a democratic point of view, to a call for opportunities for passionate civic engagement in the context of democratic institutions, as a means of countering the right-wing populist mobilization of emotions (Mouffe 2007). Others have illustrated the key role of positive emotions in the online communications of the left-wing party "Podemos," which emerged from Spain's 15-M movement (Sampietro and Ordaz 2015). With Podemos as an example, calls have been made for the political praxis of social movements to "create new narratives and political forms that make it possible to engage the emotions of broad sections of the population in relation to progressive political issues" (Boos and Opratko 2016: 34).

Notwithstanding the necessary critique of emotionally charged motivations and, in some cases, unthought through praxis of the volunteers, looking in detail at the emotional politics of voluntary work with refugees can help to stimulate fresh ideas in the debate about the kinds of civic political praxis best suited to counteract extreme right-wing movements currently evident in society. Or, as a Berlin

journalist said at a discussion event with local politicians and refugees, to which I accompanied a few volunteers in autumn 2016: "I've never experienced a meeting like this one today. I'm usually at meetings of 'concerned citizens.' Maybe we should be talking more about 'unconcerned citizens'!" (Observation log, 10.09.2016).

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Choreographies of clinical and urban everyday life. Results of a co-laborative ethnography with social psychiatry*

Abstract:

The aim of this article is twofold: Firstly, it is a methodological demonstration of an ethnographic mode of research that we call co-laborative. This mode enables new forms of reflexivity in European Ethnology and makes them analytically productive. Secondly, we use this form of co-laborative research with social psychiatry to argue that the dominant analytical dichotomies of the social and cultural sciences – namely normal vs. pathological or care vs. control – only describe today's psychiatric treatment processes insufficiently. Our ethnographic material shows how 'normal everyday life' is choreographed in hospitals for therapeutic purposes and how this choreographing becomes problematic in post-clinical everyday lives. Based on these findings, we discuss the extent to which a practice theoretical approach can extend the established critique of subjectification by focusing on the processuality of psychiatric treatment, thus problematizing the multiple embeddedness of the production of everyday life in clinical and urban environments.

Keywords: collaboration, choreography, psychiatry, theory of practice, everyday life, city

1. Psychiatry and an examination of social and cultural order

The role that psychiatric research and treatment play within the configuration of modern societies has been extensively discussed. Despite the fact that no articles on psychiatry have been published in the *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* in the past 14 years, we will restrict this paper to an outline of changes in the German psychiatric landscape that have taken place since the late 1960s. Furthermore, we will also briefly describe the dominant thinking in the social and cultural sciences during this period. Firstly, we would like to illustrate the extent to which ethnographic studies on psychiatric practice have been increasingly raising questions about the establishment of social and cultural order above and beyond hospitals. Secondly, we would like to note that social psychiatry has appropriated central parts of sociologi-

* German version in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 2015, 111 (2): 214–235. Translated by Julia Heinecke und Jessica Wallace.

cal criticism over the past 40 years. Psychiatry and the social and cultural sciences all now exist in a new constellation in which it is no longer possible to ignore a kind of double hermeneutics: The analytical concepts of the social and cultural sciences have been integrated into everyday social psychiatry. This development continues to require a dialectic form of critique that thrives on an analytical distance between ethnology and psychiatry. In this paper, however, we outline a different relationship between these fields, a relationship in which psychiatry becomes a productive ethnological research field in two senses. Firstly, it serves as a 'lifeworld laboratory' in which we analyze work on (re-)creating everyday routines, normality, ('healthy') sociality, or rationality under specific conditions; secondly, as a "co-laboratory," a place for experiments in which we examine our own epistemic foundations in close cooperation with partners in the field and adapt them for both sides.

People who are admitted into psychiatric institutions are in such grave exceptional mental states that they themselves, other close relatives or medical personnel have recognized that they require stationary treatment. Such acute psychological crises can mean many different things, but in every case, they demonstrate that everyday life and everyday routines, which seem self-evident to most people, elude these patients. Research into these crises and the 'treatments' for these situations can help to put the focus on (re-)establishing everyday life: how do people learn to once again participate in social relationships, to organize their everyday activities, to plan their lives? Various studies in recent years have determined that people must constantly invest time and energy in organizing their everyday lives after crisis situations (Amelang 2015; Charmaz 1991; Whyte 1997). However, since the event leading to the crisis is often still present, it can prevent everyday life from taking its unchallenged course, so that people continue to live in special circumstances. At the same time – and this applies to crises that arise due to illness in particular – patients can reestablish their everyday lives with the assistance of institutions and experts who have developed specific procedures and tools for this purpose.

In the field of psychiatry, these procedures are being heavily scrutinized for several reasons: Firstly, they are based on a diagnostic system that has been disputed since the late 19th century. There has been a great deal of controversy surrounding the recent publication of the fifth edition of the American *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, illustrating how the ontological status of psychological phenomena are being questioned in the field of conflict between psychoanalysis and molecular genetics. Secondly, the drug or therapeutic treatment of symptoms for most psychiatric diagnoses is not based on a clear understanding of the causes of the illness, which would facilitate a clinical intervention. Thirdly, psychiatric forms of treatment have a long tradition of massive infringements on the personal status and personality rights of those affected. Above all, the fact that psychiatry played a decisive role under the Nationalist Socialists has brought the discipline into disrepute not only

in Germany. Finally, many evaluations of psychiatric treatment methods have shown the extent to which patients act as "moving targets," adapting their way of life and their own self-concept to dominant methods of classification and treatment (Hacking 2007).

Sociologists and cultural anthropologists have, therefore, developed a justifiable skepticism of the psychiatric apparatus since the 1960s, a skepticism that is founded both theoretically and empirically. Arguments found in sociological and anthropological studies on psychiatry are inspired largely by the work of George Canguilhem, Erving Goffman, and Michel Foucault. Their perspectives on discourses and epistemes examine how behavior that is defined as 'ab-normal' is increasingly placed under the authority of interpretation and treatment of the medical professions and clinical psychiatry (Canguilhem 2000; Foucault 2003; Goffman 1961). The American sociologist Irving K. Zola addressed this perspective in the early 1970s and summarized it concisely in his "theory of medicalization," which has circulated widely since then:

> [Modern] medicine is becoming a major institution of social control, nudging aside [...] the more traditional institutions of religion and law. It is becoming the new repository of truth, the place where absolute and often final judgments are made by supposedly morally neutral and objective experts. And these judgments are made, not in the name of virtue or legitimacy, but in the name of health. (Zola 1972: 487)

This is the case, according to Zola, despite the fact that physicians do not have political power. Instead, this specific governing technique comes from an utterly undramatic development in the world in which the labels 'healthy' and 'ill' have become relevant for an ever-increasing part of human existence and everyday life.

Initially, these critical observations were made largely in reference to institutional psychiatry. Zola applied Goffman's theory of the "total institution" as a psychiatric institution whose treatment regime intervenes comprehensively in all fields of human existence and attempts to regulate and control them (Goffman 1961). Medicalization in this context is especially characterized by a confluence of regulation, standardization, discipline and institutionalization. While more recent literature particularly addresses the aspects of the theory of medicalization that criticize this power and have, thus, become a benchmark for psychiatric discussions, another aspect that was examined by Zola has been neglected in the social sciences. Zola understood medicalization as the consequence of a humanitarian, often philanthropic, impulse inherent in the modern age to resolve or at least relieve social and health problems. He believed that this humanist imperative was incorporated into the science of medicine and that the particular impact of this development is due to the specific way in which ethics and rationality are intertwined. According to Zola, people in the modern Western world believe that it is neither bearable nor rational to watch others suffer without intervening. His arguments are based on

the historical analyses of the British sociologist and criminologist Barbara Wootton, among others, who examined the role of psychiatry in combating "social deviance" and "antisocial behavior" in the 19th and 20th century (Wootton 1959). Zola stated that psychiatry in particular has played an important role in decriminalizing the mentally ill and freeing them – with the help of scientifically founded arguments – from the mechanisms of repression in a cruel, religiously rationalized penal system. He adds that the medicalization of the 19th century became a powerful instrument, which, however, always operated within the context of other equally powerful social institutions, leading to the development of contrasting dynamics and practices. In a similar fashion, a study conducted by Robert Castel and colleagues on psychiatrization, i.e. the expansion of psychiatric discourses and jurisdictions to include new public and private phenomena in the United States, describes how psychiatry became a natural component in the organization of everyday life (Castel et al. 1982 [1972]). The bottom line of the study was that a "psy-culture" had developed that extended beyond traditional psychiatric and medical institutions. Nikolas Rose focused on this aspect later in his analysis of the "psy-complex" (Rose 1985, 1998).

This interpretation of the medicalization theory illustrates that an expansion of the psychiatric authority of interpretation is by no means a simple linear process, but rather an intricate and controversial development. The theory of medicalization points particularly to contexts beyond institutions, without necessarily being the appropriate analytical instrument for this extended perspective. With reference to Ian Hacking, we are inclined to describe this as an extended looping effect: Not (only) does psychiatric classification have a direct impact on patients, changing their "way to be a person" (Hacking 2007: 296), but this form of circular power has also been institutionally and even culturally established and transmitted.

In this short review of sociological and anthropological analyses of psychiatry, we have so far omitted the special connection between sociological research and psychiatric practice in the second half of the last century. More or less parallel to the critical sociological and anthropological analyses mentioned above, psychiatric movements developed in the 1960s and 70s that were critical or decidedly opposed to psychiatry. These institutions were pushed forward by psychiatrists themselves, inciting considerable reform movements within psychiatric care systems in various countries. In addition to a critical analysis of psychiatric institutions, these movements were also characterized by an occasionally radical deconstruction of psychiatric claims to truth and authority (Basaglia 1974; Laing 1967; Szasz 1961). The link between the social/cultural sciences and psychiatry during this period is apparent in examples such as labeling theory, according to which mental illness is understood as the result of a social process of attribution (Becker 1963; Goffman 1963; Scheff 1975). This approach has been used as an explanatory mode – particularly in dif-

ferentiated further developments – in both the social sciences and psychiatry. This is just one example of how psychiatry – or at least many professionals in this field – reacted constructively to the critical analysis of power conducted by the cultural and social sciences and the mass media.

Above all, critical discussions changed the psychiatric care system permanently, including that of Germany where psychiatric reforms took place much later than in other countries. The reforms in West Germany were driven largely by the national enquiry into mental health care commissioned by the federal parliament in 1975 (*Psychiatrie-Enquête*) that took stock of psychiatric care at the time (German Bundestag 1975). The overall opinion was clear: The report declared the conditions in care facilities for the mentally ill to be "miserable and inhumane." Catastrophic overcrowding and a lack of personnel were among the problems it identified. The resulting reforms were essentially social psychiatric in nature[1]: the demand for community care, equal status for mentally and somatically ill patients, and the dehospitalization of 'chronically' *(chronisch)* mentally ill people who had been in the hospital for many years. The last demand was based partially on the belief that caring for mentally ill patients in large hospitals, which was often accompanied by a therapeutic nihilism, contributed significantly to the chronification of these patients. Returning the mentally ill to the community was deemed possible and 'beneficial' for the health of the patients. A reduction in the number of beds in hospitals was accompanied by the expansion of various community care facilities ('community psychiatry'). The psychiatric impact was no longer limited to the physical boundaries of hospitals or doctors' offices; through facilities such as assisted living, nursing homes, workshops or daycare, it was now extended to many spheres of life for the mentally ill. In addition to the psychiatric profession's self-defined position between the poles of social and biological psychiatry, these changes, the related shift in the professional attitude toward the mentally ill, and the resulting increase in the development and availability of psychopharmaceuticals modified the classification of 'chronic' and the possibilities of using the term in the late 20th century (Bister 2018).

Considering these developments, a one-sided continuation of a critical analysis of power 'from the outside' appears to be insufficient. Furthermore, the interlac-

1 We use the term social psychiatry (Sozialpsychiatrie) to describe the methods that were first used by a few individual West German psychiatrists in the 1960s. These led to the foundation of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziale Psychiatrie (German Association for Social Psychiatry) in 1971. In summary, social psychiatry, as the term is used here, describes three aspects: Firstly, the incorporation of social factors to explain the causes and treatment of mental illness. Secondly, the reintegration of the mentally ill into society and the promotion of equality and social participation through community psychiatric services. Thirdly, social psychiatry is described by many of its actors as a specific therapeutic attitude that is understood as a social, political and moral responsibility towards the patients (cf. Klausner 2015).

ing of many practices of psychiatric treatment with everyday urban life, which is characteristic of psychiatric care since the dehospitalization movement of the 1970s, cannot be adequately described using either a critical analysis of power or subjectification. Based on our ethnographical material, we develop here different kinds of instruments for observation and analysis.

2. Co-laborative ethnographic research in and with psychiatry

How do we conduct research in a field in which many actors read critical social scientific literature and in which the process of reflection has been institutionalized in various formats to respond to the core of this criticism, i.e. the problem of a subjectified normalization through treatment? In other words, what should be done if fieldwork does not produce any insights that were not already known to the "natives"? (Boyer 2008) This phenomenon is not unique to psychiatry, but it does occur particularly frequently in this field. Our answer to this challenge is co-laborative research. Co-laboration defines temporary experimental epistemic work carried out jointly by the ethnographer and the informant over long-term periods.[2] Co-laborative research does not aim at a shared outcome. Instead, the focus is on experimenting with the different thought styles involved in the co-laboration. The goal is to produce a specific reflexivity: Reflexivity in the sense of mobility between actors, ways of thinking, methods, and apparatuses as opposed to reflexivity that is understood as a reflection of one's own position in a systemically conceived field (Hirschauer 2008). In its final consequence, this reflexivity promotes a critical approach to one's own professional knowledge. Criticism is, thus, no longer achieved through a dialectic movement between proximity and critical distance but originates more in different experimental involvements in the field and the resulting challenges for one's own way of thinking. A process of this kind does not rely on criticism based on absolute criteria. Instead, psychiatry is understood as an ecology of practices (Stengers 2005) from which the criteria for its criticism must be developed.

We developed this mode of co-laborative research from and in cooperation with everyday psychiatric practice in a research project of several years' duration. This project was dedicated to the "Production of chronicity in everyday psychiatric care and research in Berlin" (project title).[3] Over the course of several months of repeated participant observation in various clinical contexts (psychiatric wards in two different psychiatric hospitals and a psychiatric day hospital), we followed the classification 'chronically mentally ill' (chronisch psychisch krank) from everyday

2 See Niewöhner (2016) for an overview of the work of Marcus, Boyer, Fitzgerald, and Roepstorff in this new mode.

3 The project was financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG) from 2010–2015 (GZ: BE 3191/3–1). It was headed by Prof. Dr. Stefan Beck and carried out by the authors of this article in co-laboration with partners from the psychiatric field.

clinical treatment and administrative procedures in community psychiatric care systems in the private everyday lives of patients diagnosed with mental illness and in the psychiatric research landscape to achieve an ethnographic understanding of the development, stabilization and effect of this classification as an everyday 'process.' Within this context, 'chronicity' is not a clearly defined medical diagnostic category, but rather an indistinct classification that is produced in a convolution of clinical, scientific, economic, legal and political practices, as well as the everyday lives of patients. At the same time, it gives patients access to medical, social therapeutic and financial resources.

Our research project focused on the classification 'chronically mentally ill' suggested by a psychiatrist working as a doctor in the hospital in which most of our field research was carried out. In addition to his medical training, he had also completed a Master's in Medical Anthropology at a British university and has since focused on establishing a productive cooperation between the field of psychiatry and the social and cultural sciences in his sphere of work. Over the course of our research, we encountered very different actors in psychiatric care who really believed that a cooperation with other disciplines and especially with social scientific methods was essential for a critical analysis of current problems in the psychiatric care system. It was decisive that we developed a kind of "epistemic partnership" (Holmes and Marcus 2008: 83) with this psychiatrist and other professionals in the field of psychiatry during the research project. This type of partnership extends beyond the exchange of information from field research and incorporates informants as partners from the development of the research design onwards. Thus, the roles of all participants change and they are no longer simply experts in their own discipline, they also encounter one another as "technicians of general ideas" (Rabinow et al. 2008: 68ff.). Our co-laboration, therefore, addressed the broad question regarding which of the current changes in our research and everyday practice were significant for an anthropology of the contemporary and which concepts we could curate to make these changes tangible analytically.

On the other hand, it was necessary to create our own forms of cooperation with the corresponding direct informants in our field research. In addition to the well-established exchange with members of the field during participant observation, we maintained continued contact with some of the patients treated in the hospital for several years after their release to see how they lived with a diagnosis in their post-clinical, urban everyday lives. Moreover, we developed a variety of feedback formats with which we were able to integrate various groups of people in the field into the research process. We, thus, presented and discussed our analyses during training courses outside the hospital and group discussions with patients and the staff on the psychiatric wards in which we conducted our research. It was essential that these feedback rounds took place during the research process and not *after* we

had completed our research and analysis. Our goal was to give the people whose everyday lives we were researching some insight into our questions, hypotheses and early analytical considerations. Since a critical analysis of treatment practices in the field was explicitly desired, voicing criticism was not a problem; the challenge was to offer a critical analysis that extended beyond a simple criticism of subjectification with which all participants were already familiar. As we will explain in this paper, it was essential for us to change our perspective and engage with a practice theoretical approach to the psychiatric field.

3. A practice theoretical approach to psychiatric choreographies

An anthropological approach based on practice theory (Beck 1997; Schatzki et al. 2001) emphasizes that heterogeneous social, technical or institutional orders as they are presented by clinical psychiatry must be conceived of as "interactive matters of doing" (Hörning and Reuter 2004: 10). This perspective does not explain developmental dynamics in a unidirectional way, for example, the institutionalization of psychiatry as an effect of the power of medical knowledge. Instead, psychiatric practices are principally addressed as hybrid and contradictory: These practices connect social, narrative–discursive, and material–physical dimensions with one another and feature very different social positionalities and normative orientations of different actors.[4] Habitualization, infrastructuring and the related process of 'becoming natural' that phenomena, attitudes and orientations undergo are the focal point of interest. The practice theoretical perspective had been established in international social and cultural anthropology and European cultural anthropology by the late 1980s at the latest (Ortner 1984). The term practice assumes a double explanatory role in this field: 'Practice,' in this sense, focuses on a bundle of specific terms, such as 'tradition,' 'routine,' 'normative orientation,' 'implied' or 'bodily knowledge,' with which regularities or the 'logic' of individual behavior can be described (Rouse 2001; Turner 1994). On the other hand, practice also stands for a collective dimension of these systematics of activities – and their political aspects. In the social sciences, this perspective is expanded again under the label "practice turn" (Reckwitz 2003; Schmidt 2012). At the core of current debates, lies the assumption that 'the social' – as well as the normative sphere, social institutions, etc. – is the 'result of practices.' To quote the American social philosopher Theodore Schatzki and colleagues:

> Practice approaches promulgate a distinct social ontology: the social is a field of *embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings*. This conception contrasts with accounts that privilege individuals, (inter)actions, language, signifying systems, the life world, institutions/roles,

4 For more details on the term "material-discursive practices," see Barad (2003).

> structures, or systems in defining the social. (Schatzki et al. 2001: 3; italics added by the authors)

The statement that practices are always embodied and, simultaneously, entangled in material environments is important. They are characterized by 'shared practical/pragmatic understandings.' Choreography is what we call locally observed practical patterns, i.e. the specific way in which people and things are brought together in a routinized fashion based on a local understanding of 'good' psychiatric care (Klausner 2015). A characteristic feature of a shared practical understanding of 'doing psychiatry,' as we determined in our research, is a high degree of adaptivity to the individual needs of each patient and everyday clinical requirements. Social psychiatric choreographies, as we will later demonstrate in more detail, use a controlled learning process to help people out of a crisis and onto a stable path.

We adopted the term choreography from the science studies scholar Charis Thompson, who developed it during her studies on the production of parenthood in American fertility clinics (Thompson 2005). According to Thompson, the concept of ontological choreography describes the dynamic coordination of elements of different ontological status. This includes scientific, technical, relational, emotional, legal, political and financial elements that all contribute to making both parents and children. Unlike Thompson's descriptions of highly technologized reproductive medicine, a psychiatric ward in a district hospital in Berlin is a low-tech area in the field of medicine. Nevertheless, here too, matters of different ontological status participate in everyday practices: From the rooms and doors that open and close for patients, patient records and other paper technologies to specialized knowledge and medication that must be injected or swallowed or that is rejected and spat out. However, we believe another aspect of Thompson's argument is more important in this context: Her concept of ontological choreography refers to the variety and situatedness of *agency*. The forms of objectification that women particularly experience during the process of assisted reproduction do not simply make them passive recipients of reproductive technology (as traditional feminist criticism puts it). Instead, Thompson determined how *agency* is coproduced in these processes (Cussins [Thompson] 1996). Patients must not be seen simply as disciplined and passive; they participate actively in these ontological choreographies. As Thompson also points out, choreographies must always be observed in their specific local situations and corresponding arrangements and can thoroughly contradict a constitution of 'agency.' Choreographies, or rather the process of choreographing, thus, shifts the focus onto the specific social, narrative discursive and material-physical assemblage of practice, as well as on the effects of the (in)capacity to act that become possible or problematic in this flexible repertoire.

4. On the analysis of choreographies in everyday clinical practice

The hospital in which most of our research was carried out describes itself as one of the oldest social psychiatric hospitals in Germany. As part of a Berlin district hospital, the Mittendamm Clinic[5] is responsible for the mandatory care of a district and has the same responsibilities as other psychiatric hospitals in Berlin. What distinguishes this hospital is that it not only takes a decided social psychiatric approach 40 years after the *Psychiatrie-Enquête*, but also participates in the international development of corresponding methods. The focus of social psychiatric interventions is not on the patient as an individual or carrier of a disease, but on the "person as a social being"[6] who is embedded in social relationships inside and outside psychiatric care. The hospital in associating itself with social psychiatry is also indicating its position in contrast to the biomedically orientated psychiatric approach that is increasingly seen as the standard in the German psychiatric landscape. Social psychiatry today is seen by some as outdated and has lost some authority of interpretation to a psychiatric practice based on neuroscience, biomedicine and pharmaceutical therapy. This shift has hardly changed the number of illnesses that take a chronic course, but it has changed the way in which hospitals classify illness in everyday practice.

We noticed two things in particular during our research on the 'production of chronicity': Firstly, there was never any debate as to whether individual patients should be described as 'chronic.' Secondly, there was a striking lack of classification in direct conversation with patients. This absence of classification in clinical practice stood in a strange contrast to the relevance asserted by psychiatric professionals. The classification 'chronic' was, thus, absent and present equally in clinical practice. The first reason for this was a conscious and trained practice of avoidance on the part of the staff, which we call the 'deconstruction' of classification. There was a consensus – in both direct and indirect references to labeling or stigmatizing effects – that a label could have an effect on the person labeled. Accordingly, staff did not refer to patients as 'chronic' in direct interactions in order to prevent these patients from seeing their illness as untreatable and becoming even more ill instead of seeking the potential to improve their mental health. Secondly, the classification 'chronic' was present in numerous work practices among the staff and, thus, 'constructed' in daily life. The classification was sometimes used in formal and informal conversations when documenting treatment procedures, in medical discussions and in contact with health insurance companies. In these cases, chronicity was given different meanings in everyday treatment. Exemplarily, by using the term 'chronification,' classification was processualized and assigned to a chronological development. This led to a focus on chronic processes that addressed either the biographical or the symptomatic

5 All people and the hospital were given pseudonyms.

6 An excerpt from a patient description in an annual report from the Mittendamm Clinic.

illness of a patient or the increased frequency of hospitalization. 'Chronification' was considered to be a process that could be recognized and principally (still) counteracted. The phrases 'avoid chronification' or 'threatening chronification' were used especially when documenting treatments for health insurance companies to justify a required hospitalization, for specific therapeutic treatment or for recommending additional treatment after discharge.

Thirdly, during our research, we encountered – in addition to the two methods of dealing with classification mentioned above: deconstruction and construction – a 'modulation' of the classification, i.e. the use of additional terms that were given the meaning of the condition 'chronically ill' as a form of 'staying ill.' Expressions such as 'returner,' 'revolving door patients' or 'treatment-experienced' were used and could be found in medical and political documents and analysis papers on psychiatric care. The everyday use of these phrases oscillates between the wish to deal with the term 'chronic' very sensitively (creating absence) and the desire to make use of the potential of the term for professional work and to use the familiar process of classification (establishing presence) to deal with, explain, diagnose and treat the phenomenon of 'return–relapse.'

With this in mind, it became clear during our research that we could not place all of our focus on classifications as decisive moments in the production of chronicity. Instead, we needed to assume an ecological perspective that would allow us to understand the formation of path dependencies beyond classification. In this paper, we use the term 'paths' in a heuristic sense to problematize how the Mittendamm Clinic continuously included patients in treatment decisions by using certain kinds of therapeutic treatments, constantly requiring patients to participate in everyday therapy and offering feedback from medical personnel. It is important to us to distinguish between the term 'path' and the term 'track': Instead of presenting a predetermined track and attempting to literally put patients back 'on track,' the staff worked hard to sketch a 'path' for treatment which the patients then had to tread themselves. This mode of therapy was not aimed at teaching patients a specific modern self-realization as a foundation for (self-)intervention in their 'mentally ill self' and its normalization. Cognitive psychotherapies were only one of many important everyday treatments. Their efficacy was usually dependent on a much larger context than, for example, that of the ward. Patients were offered an everyday routine on the ward that was determined by a daily rhythm (meals and times for walks), the necessity to uphold and endure an increasing number of social obligations (therapies, ward responsibilities), an open-minded atmosphere, and a minimum of a stable self-image and foresight, which the patients were to adopt. Patients were expected to fulfill their obligations reliably with increasing frequency. The objective of this simulation of everyday life was not a 'cognitive' learning process which only led to recovery in the second instance. Instead, a mimetic learning in the sense of 'imita-

tion' and 'acclimatization' was the focus of daily life on the ward, for example, a re-routinization on a practical level of the patients' everyday lives which had veered off their previous paths.

The Mittendamm Clinic, for example, focuses on innovative treatment methods in the tradition of social psychiatry. One of these treatment methods, which illustrates the mode of choreographing in a special way, is the so-called conference treatment *(Behandlungskonferenz)*. This method, which was inspired by Scandinavian treatment models such as the need-adapted treatment and the concept of "Open dialogue" (Aderhold et al. 2003; Seikkula and Arnkil 2011), emphasizes the needs and resources of the patients. The goal is to promote the self-efficacy of patients by integrating them into the planning and evaluation of their therapy.

A treatment conference in the hospital consisted of several steps followed by a few variations of the following procedure: The previous and future therapeutic steps were discussed and joint goals defined in a conversation with several members of the medical staff, lasting about half an hour. The patient and the therapist who moderated the discussion sat in the middle of the circle. The chairs were arranged in a semicircle facing the two in the middle. Two to six other ward staff members participated in the treatment conference. The discussion usually began by asking the patient how the last week had gone and to what extent the goals of the last treatment conference had been achieved. These 'goals' and the 'next concrete steps' had been documented in the minutes of the last treatment conference, which were handed out to all participants of the treatment conference – including the patient. As an example, the goals of one patient, who we will call Ms. Siebert, were as follows: '1. Expand range of activities, 2. Go for a walk alone, 3. Meet friends.'[7] These goals were then translated into the following concrete steps: 'For 1. and 2.: Go outdoors several times a day (walk down to the streetlights frequently); find someone to go for a walk with; be conscious of the sounds outdoors and grow accustomed to them; for 3.: Call a friend and meet with them.' Ms. Siebert responded to the initial question about how the last week had gone by explaining in detail what went well and what was less successful. The moderator, often the patient's physician or ward social worker, asked questions in a specific way, repeating part of the previous statement ("So you made it to the end of Baumstrasse but on the way back, you had to fight your fears?"), requested more details ("Did you go along the front of the main building or along the back through the park near the rose bed?"), or tried to find out more about the emotion described by Ms. Siebert ("And why do you think you were afraid on the way back and not on the way there?"). After this review, the next steps were usually discussed ("What do you think could be the next steps for you?" or "What do you need to achieve this?").

7 These quotes are taken from the minutes provided by Ms. Siebert and the participating hospital staff.

This extensive discussion was followed by a team reflection, which the moderator introduced with the following words: "Now the two of us can lean back and hear what the others think about what we have just said." Often there was a period of silence until the first person voiced their thoughts. When speaking, this person did not address the patient or any of the staff but instead 'thought aloud': "I was impressed that, despite the setbacks of the last week, Ms. Siebert was able to motivate herself to go back to her training rounds in the park and wasn't discouraged…" Or: "I thought it was great how Ms. Siebert was able to show her feelings so openly in this group and that she trusts us to hear about her fears…" After this group reflection, the patient was given the opportunity to respond. Finally, the staff member who took the minutes summarized the treatment conference, stated which points had been noted as possible goals and the corresponding concrete steps for the coming week. The patient could and should respond to these points: Were these the goals that she had imagined, did she think these steps were realistic, or would she like to do something different or add something? These goals and steps were correspondingly added to the minutes, which were later handed out to all participants, including the patient.

Using the elements described here, the aim of the treatment conference was an ongoing analysis of the next steps of treatment. It was also intended to help achieve the goal of an increased 'self-efficacy' of the patient. In the therapeutic concept of the Mittendamm Clinic, self-efficacy primarily refers to the ability to reestablish a routine for everyday life that is as independent as possible, considering the conditions of the illness. As mentioned earlier, people in acute mental crises lose particularly the natural routines of everyday life: structuring their day (getting up regularly, eating, planning activities), maintaining contact with other people or moving around in the city. The example above of a treatment conference with Ms. Siebert demonstrated this aspect clearly: Moving around within the hospital grounds and the neighborhood or scheduling meetings with friends were everyday things she could no longer do with ease. Instead, these were tasks that she needed to work on as part of her therapy. The treatment conference was, thus, one building block in the treatment choreography practiced in the psychiatric ward. In addition to other forms of counseling and occupational therapy provided by doctors and psychologists, this choreography included primarily many routine tasks for which the medical staff were responsible: Opening and closing doors, setting times for medication and regulating which patients were permitted to pick up the medication themselves and which patients had medication handed out to them, negotiating agreements on leaving the hospital, noting on attendance and behavior, and providing a flexible use of rooms, including giving patients access to staff break rooms. These everyday practices, like the treatment conference, were not intended to lay down rigid rules for the patients

but were, instead, therapeutic measures that were aimed at activating the patients and helping them to shape their everyday lives as independently as possible.

Learning everyday routines: on the relationship between choreography and subjectification

Critics may note upon reading this analysis that all these practices could easily be understood as disciplinary techniques, although given a late modern appearance as instruments for normalization based on technologies of the self. Authoritarian discipline has given way to a governmentality regime, even in psychiatric hospitals. This may be so. However, research we carried out in the past few years in psychiatric hospitals and with psychiatric professionals allows us to offer a second complementary interpretation. This second interpretation cannot be sufficiently justified by emphasizing that psychiatric staff have also read Foucault and are attempting to consolidate control and care. Since, as Foucault stated: "people know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they do not know is what what they do does" (Dreyfus 1982: 187). We would also like to expressly emphasize that co-laborative research does not simply produce accomplices; we did not attempt to tilt the critical tone in favor of psychiatry.

The practice theoretical perspective has illustrated that the goal of treatment is not aimed primarily at the subject, in Foucault's sense of the word, but focuses instead on specific performative acts, embodied learning and the routinizing of practices. Of course, this kind of treatment also has a subjectifying effect. For this reason, we see our theorization as complementary instead of alternative. Foucault's fundamental problem, the field of conflict between care and control, does not disappear. However, treatment of this kind with its focus on everyday life is not accompanied by 'one' subject position. Regimes based on power knowledge are regularly criticized for propagating specific processes of interpellation and, thus, giving individuals only two possibilities: a commitment to the predetermined subject position or more or less open resistance (e.g. Foucault 1978). Third paths are generally not considered. The psychiatric method of creating paths discussed here develops its indisputably existent power knowledge with more caution. It does not convey a single subject position, but, to a certain degree, allows individuals to choose how they would like to respond to the everyday activities they are offered, thus, creating new "degrees of freedom" (Haraway 2008: 72ff.) for patients who generally use these paths in two different ways. Firstly, patients consider the routines provided without necessarily addressing or even problematizing them. Secondly, they use the degrees of freedom offered by these paths to help organize and negotiate everyday life on the ward.

The choreographies on the ward offer 'agency.' This perspective is very different from Foucault's concept. The goal here is not an authoritarian disciplining of individuals, nor the establishment of a regime based on power knowledge that offers

a single specific subject position or relies on the regulating effect of technologies of the self. Nor does everyday life on the ward correspond to the discipline of early modern institutions that were expected to improve the behavior of deviant individuals. Instead, daily routines at the Mittendamm Clinic are coproduced by both the therapists and the patients, as well as within a network of actors of differing ontological status. Daily routines in this context must be understood as material-semiotic practice. The shared choreographies of everyday life on the ward offer patients more than just one subject position; they give them degrees of freedom within the structure of everyday life.[8]

This analytical perspective focuses on choreographies as a process. While analyses of subjectification usually have teleological elements analyzing interpellation from its end point, i.e. the problematic subject position, the term choreography is aimed at more open-ended processes. We focused our attention in our research on the 'production of chronicity' on the development of path dependencies because it is also important for practice theory to recognize that chronification is an 'act-uality' *(Tat-sache)* in the psychiatric field. Path dependencies and degrees of freedom in this context exist in a field of conflict. This conflict was often resolved on the wards in favor of additional degrees of freedom. The reason for this was that psychiatric actors whose job it is to react professionally to conflicts in everyday circumstances played an important role in the choreography of everyday life on the ward. Conflicts were regularly addressed, making it possible to maintain degrees of freedom. This created stable everyday circumstances in which patients with formerly acute mental distress could live and experience their everyday lives in 'stability.' These alleged successes reached their limits in extreme cases of mandatory treatment when medical staff determined that a therapy was essential to avoid self-harm or to prevent a patient from harming others. Furthermore, the stability learned on the ward often began to waver when patients were released into everyday urban lives in which the distribution of agency and the degrees of freedom in everyday circumstances had to be obtained in very different manners.

On the failure of newly learned choreographies after discharge

Patients were often faced with the challenge of rebuilding stable post-clinical everyday lives and routines after their treatment in the Mittendamm Clinic. The number of 'returners,' on each ward demonstrates that many were unsuccessful. Psychiatric research and the wider public discourse state frequently that patients themselves and their individual genetic, neuropathological, mental or personality factors are the reasons for a lack of success in treatment and, therefore, the cause of 'setbacks'

8 For more details on a practice theoretical approach to the methods used in modern social psychiatric treatment in different hospitals in Berlin and Brandenburg, see Bister and Niewöhner (2014).

and an increase in the prevalence of chronicity. The opposing standpoint, that of social psychiatry, is seldom heard: Mental illnesses and their chronification are social phenomena; an individual's illness, for example, is a reflection of problems in society, therefore, society must also change and not only the patient. In our opinion, both lines of argument – radical individualization or radical collectivization – do not do justice to the current situation of mental illness and its treatment. Our analysis of the process of choreography and its failure emphasize the 'empirical' problem in identifying when and how specific path dependencies are produced.

In the research project discussed here, we had the opportunity to maintain contact with patients who had been treated on the ward and could analyze the 'production of chronicity' in contexts outside the hospital. We were able to accompany several patients in their everyday lives at home after their stationary treatment to varying degrees and over extended periods of time of up to several years. These people lived in their own apartments and were visited by a social worker once or more times a week to discuss problems and questions. Without exception, all patients were taking medication prescribed by a neurologist and most had a legal guardian for financial, health and administrative matters.

As in the clinical context, it is possible to criticize the effects of subjectification inherent in this kind of care infrastructure. However, the ethnographic material also revealed another dimension. Patients tried to reestablish the everyday routine learned in the hospital as soon as possible after they were released. In doing so, they could no longer rely on the rigid clinical context. Instead, they put together their everyday routines using selected elements from the urban contexts and psychiatric infrastructures. These elements were chosen based less on a learned and reflected process of selection than on a system of trial and error. In order for this task to be successful, the openness of the city had to be reduced to manageable everyday routines that also permitted enough freedom for personal differences. In addition to community psychiatric infrastructure, for example, these routines included parks, public spaces and cafés where people could just sit for an afternoon without others finding this somewhat unusual behavior disturbing. They also included authorities whose employees were flexible enough to talk through living situations and family relationships. Field research illustrated how the smallest degree of freedom enabled patients to continue to choreograph the open and often overwhelming life in the city after being discharged from the hospital. We assume that while this form of 'making the city bearable' is especially apparent or observable in post-clinical individuals, it is principally a universal process. It is important to note that successful post-clinical processes in the true sense are not the result of cognitive, mental learning or even healing processes. Instead, patients learn to establish everyday routines more or less mimetically. They follow the paths laid out for them in the hospitals, to use ecological analytics as introduced by the British social anthropologist Tim Ingold

(Ingold 2010). Patients rarely have maps and signs, like those they could use in the hospital, in the open wilderness of urban spaces. The capacity to act, therefore, cannot be meaningfully located in individual cognitive performance and learning alone. It becomes clear that choreographies are a distributed socio-material process. Only a few patients can find new paths quickly because important props are missing after their release from the hospital. In most cases, the post-clinical redistribution of the patients' capacity to act leads to a loss of freedom. In addition to everyday conflicts of interest and the lack of support in the public sphere, the cutbacks and restructuring of public spaces, public authorities and the health care system over the past 20 years play an important role. As a result, the newly acquired everyday routines have the potential to collapse quickly outside the hospital. Consequently, patients feel overwhelmed and return to everyday life in the hospital.

Our project was only able to give some first insights into why these degrees of freedom are lost so quickly. However, the project, thanks to its long-term ethnographic research on the everyday lives of the people affected, was able to show that the analytical view of the distribution of the patients' capacity to act enables an intermediate position between the individualization and collectivization of psychiatric phenomena

5. Conclusion

Our co-laborative research enabled two things: Firstly, it allowed us to carry out long-term ethnographic research into the clinical and post-clinical everyday lives of patients. This was achieved largely by establishing trust, which was facilitated by continuous communication in various formats. Secondly, a new kind of reflexivity that we were able to establish in joint discussions played a role: A reflexivity that resulted in mobility between different perspectives. One could even say that this type of close cooperation not only made it possible to shift perspectives, but also allowed us to see how different communities act and think in the world: their "worlding," as Anna Tsing would call it (Tsing 2010).

Consequently, co-laborative research prevented us from voicing criticism on subjectification, which was already fully known in the field. This led to a joint search for an analytical perspective that could do justice to the new clinical forms of treatment without ignoring forms of subjectification. In addition to a continuous exchange of information with individual patients over a period of several years, we held regular, analytical meetings with psychiatric staff and feedback rounds that accompanied our research in the Mittendamm Clinic. In this paper, we have presented the results of these multiple research processes on contemporary everyday lives in psychiatric facilities: the concept of choreography. The aim was to note, firstly, that treatment is negotiated as a concrete practice on the part of both medical staff and patients and in a specific environment consisting of the ward, administrative

staff, disciplinary knowledge and medication. Secondly, we used the concept of choreography to emphasize the distribution of patients' agency in specific material-semiotic practices. These practices were the objects of our research, which we saw as important because these new forms of treatment were used to choreograph everyday routines and were, therefore, aimed primarily at everyday practice instead of the individual and his or her cognitive and mental capacities. Shifting the objective of medical intervention away from the subject toward practice resulted in a degree of freedom for the patients in view of their self-image and potential futures. The fragility of these choreographies and the fact that they can only remain stable under the controlled conditions of the psychiatric ward is reflected in the frequent breakdown of these choreographies after patients have been released into their everyday lives in the city. The disappearance of redundancies and flexibility in urban spaces, brought on by the economic crisis of the last few decades, has exacerbated this situation.

Psychiatric practice attempts to avoid the path dependency it calls chronification, which, ironically, does not arise from stabilizing patterns of practice through individual (genetic, mental) or structural (society, medicine) factors. It comes from the repeated collapse of established routines when patients change environments from the clinical ward back to their urban everyday lives. The cause of a continued chronification, as demonstrated by the practice theoretical perspective which we have developed here, is, thus, neither the individual nor society, but rather a material-semiotic meshwork of relations in everyday practice.

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Networks, identity politics, and a narrative of distinction

On the knowledge-historical relations between "völkisch" and Swiss Folklore Studies*

Abstract: Folklore studies in Switzerland are considered to have played the role of a 'good' discipline in the existing narratives on the relationship between folklore studies (*Volkskunde*) and National Socialism. A discipline which is sharply distinguished from *'völkisch'* folklore studies and which, as a 'neutral science,' enabled the entire German-speaking discipline to continue to work after the Second World War. This narrative fails to recognize the possibilities offered by National Socialism to a young discipline and overlooks the close relations between Swiss and Nazi folklorists. Using the example of the network of Richard Wolfram, it is shown how intrinsic scholarly presuppositions, thematic affinities and theoretical concepts led to especially 'neutral Switzerland' playing an important role in the revival and 'rehabilitation' of representatives of *'völkisch'* folklore studies.

Keywords: Nazi past, history of knowledge, European scientific relations, revival, rehabilitation, transformations, networks, 1930–1970

A steady narrative has been perpetuated for decades in the history of German-language folklore studies: Folklore studies in Switzerland not only distanced itself very early from a nationalistic and racial-ideological *'völkisch* scholarship' (*völkische Wissenschaft*) in Germany and Austria. The discipline in Switzerland, it is maintained, also set a large-scale national project of independent research into cultural space, the *Atlas der schweizerischen Volkskunde* (Atlas of Swiss Folklore Studies) against the National Socialist alignment of 'culture and space' in a 'blood and soil' ideology. This is presented as having aimed at documenting a linguistic and cultural independence and, thus, establishing the political, territorial and, finally, cultural independence of the Swiss nation on a scholarly basis. Thanks to its safe position after the end of National Socialism and fascism in Germany in 1945, the discipline in Switzerland then served as a *'Rettungsanker'* (lifeline) (Schmoll 2010: 110) for a discredited subject and so made possible and legitimated the disencumbering and continued institutional existence and work of the entirety of German-language folklore studies.

* German version in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 2017, 113 (1): 42–63. Translated by Jonathan Uhlaner.

In accordance with this dominant narrative, Switzerland as a center of knowledge and its associated intellectual milieus play hardly any role in the numerous existing works on the subject of 'folklore studies and National Socialism'.[1] It is a facile observation that Switzerland failed to appear in the early works of the 1960s because it was not occupied by the Fascist powers and was a neutral country during the war; at the time, the chief concern was a reappraisal, focused on Germany, of the long-repressed personal, conceptual, ideological and epistemological relationships between folklore studies and National Socialism (Bausinger 1965; Emmerich 1971). Later scholarly historical investigations, however, also remained largely bound to an internal view of the Nazi sphere of influence, which, while discussing persons, institutions and concepts, almost never inquired about transnational networks (Dow and Lixfeld 1994b; Gerndt 1987; Lixfeld 1994). The authoritative work on the subject still today, *Völkische Wissenschaft. Gestalten und Tendenzen der deutschen und österreichischen Volkskunde in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts (Völkische Scholarship, Patterns and Tendencies in German and Austrian Folklore Studies in the First Half of the Twentieth Century)* (Jacobeit, Lixfield, and Bockhorn 1994), already blinds out the neutral state in its title, but nevertheless shows, using various institutional and biographical examples, the epistemological paths that led from a discipline functionalized for national purposes to National Socialist 'völkisch' folklore studies. Thus, it is only consistent that no reference whatever is made to Switzerland when drawing up the balance in discussions of the National Socialist past of the discipline (Gerndt 1995), and that the need for further research on the effect of folklore studies networks in the rapid 'rehabilitation' of the subject remains unmentioned. Corresponding to and congruent with this state of the research is also the scholarly development of the discipline in Switzerland between the 1930s and 1960s in various introductory works of, above all, only one theme when it was a matter of presenting the "morally unchallenged Swiss enclave" (Kaschuba 2006: 82) as a positive counter-example to the National Socialist past of folklore studies and assigning it a disencumbering function after 1945. Moreover, "a clearance certificate" was issued "on neutral soil" (Jeggle 2001: 67) in Switzerland after the war in the book *Volkskunde der Schweiz* (Weiss 1946) and so "provided German-language folklore studies after the Nazi period with the urgently needed support" (Trümpy 1983: 71).

This finding of a disencumbering function is also reflected in the existing scholarly works on the Swiss professional body, in which National Socialism is usually approached as something foreign and coming from outside, which affected neither persons nor institutions in any way – all the more so in a quadrilingual country whose cultural diversity rendered it "quite alien to the National Socialist dogma of a pure race" (Bendix 2012: 366). The chosen focus of such an immunizing story is

1 For a survey of the state-of-research, see Dow and Lixfeld (1994a), Gerndt (1995) and Niem (2015: 37–41).

then always the narrative of distinction pointing out a consistently and clearly distanced discipline: A "Swiss special path" (Hugger 1992: 17) which, though vacillating between "cosmopolitanism and provincialism" (Hugger 1994), stood steadfastly by Swiss democracy and, accordingly, never sought rapprochement with 'völkisch' folklore studies. On the contrary, here "representatives, who thought in humanistic and emphatically democratic terms, [exercised influence] without disowning their patriotism" (Burckhardt-Seebass 2011: 65). In fact, none in the then small and fragmented discipline can be found who was openly receptive to corresponding ideological approaches – although there certainly existed a comparable political force in Switzerland in the 'Frontenbewegung' (frontline movement) of the 1930s (Mattioli 1995; Wolf 2005). Consequently, it is, thus, a simple matter to describe the professional development of folklore studies in Switzerland at the time: "It was the political development in the Germany of the 1930s in particular that produced a strong distancing" (Schmoll 2010: 102). Swiss folklore studies has seen itself in this comfortable position to this day, especially since a stimulus 'from outside' to occupy itself with its own history has never been felt. After the rather heated debates of the late 1980s (Dow and Lixfeld 1994a), the discipline has in recent years, maintained within the now somewhat quieter research field of 'folklore studies and National Socialism'[2] the viewpoint often described from a "neutral ground" (Gyr 2009: 74; Jeggle 2001: 67), which "precisely did not engender that fundamentally national orientation" (Schmoll 2010: 101) which paved the way for National Socialism in Germany and Austria. This narrative of the history of Swiss folklore studies is also compatible with the (few) previous historical representations of scholarly disciplines in Switzerland, which similarly usually employ an argument based on a narrative of distinction: Scholarly disciplines in Switzerland, it is maintained, distanced themselves deliberately from the politically appropriated research in Nazi Germany and developed mainly in an autonomous manner. This picture of objective and politically neutral Swiss scholarship not only served purposes of disciplinary legitimation, but also furnished a narrative for research work during and after the war: The distancing from Nazi scholarship, it is argued, facilitated the connection to international research and allowed for new exchanges.[3] As plausible as this construction is, it nevertheless conceals two important contexts, which I shall now consider more closely.

2 This does not mean that important individual works (including Besenfelder 2002; Bozsa 2014; Niem 2015; Schmoll 2009a and Timm 2014) have failed to appear since the literature listed in Gerndt's interim conclusion (1995), but the focus of the scholarly discussion has shifted to the years after 1945 (cf., e.g. Braun, Dieterich, and Schönholz 2012; Moser, Götz, and Ege 2015).

3 The relationships between National Socialist Germany and Switzerland in the field of scholarship have generally (still) been little investigated, because the study of the economic and political interdependencies between the two countries has dominated the research since the 1980s. Cf. Germann (2016), a pioneer study on the field of racial research and human genetics, which (like that of folklore studies) was closely related to Nazi ideology.

On the one hand, the narrative of distinction overlooks the multifarious new possibilities of action for Swiss scholars that resulted from Hitler's rule in Europe. The "work of scholarship" (Hoffmann 2013) in Switzerland did not develop independently, but rather in interaction with the changing power relations in Europe. This is particularly true of a young discipline such as Swiss folklore studies, which used the burgeoning possibilities and proffered resources in very different ways. It was precisely the "intellectual defense of the country" ("*Geistige Landesverteidigung*") that made it possible for the still insecure and fragmented discipline to establish itself at the university through ethnographic research of "one's own national culture" and "cultural diversity" and to position itself in terms of identity politics (Kuhn 2015a, 2015b).

On the other hand, this narrative shuts out the various and long-standing networks that existed between Swiss folklorists and scholars within the Nazi sphere of power. These networks, whose existence was previously either unknown or forgotten, have been marginalized and overlain by the dominant story of distinction and distancing. The relevant scholarly relationships date back to the 1930s, outlived Nazism, continued after 1945 and led to close bonds in epistemology, methods and the conception of the discipline. If it is doubtless correct that these links were relaxed under the influence of the racial and Germanic-mythologizing folklore studies within the Nazi sphere of power, it is also true that the cross-border institutional connections to (West) German folklore studies continued to exist after 1945, even if now under the auspices of a "cautious distance" (Kuhn 2015a: 191).

It is useful to see 'scholarship' and 'politics' as areas between which a wide range of financial, cognitive, personnel, institutional, instrumental and rhetorical resources could be mobilized for a knowledge-historical analysis of the relations between '*völkisch*' and Swiss folklore studies, so that to speak of a simple "ideological exploitation" or "misuse" of scholarship is of little help (Ash 2002). "Scholarship" is more of a site where various actors are closely networked, where self-mobilization and "self-enforced conformity" (*Selbstgleichschaltung*, Emmerich 1971: 116) as the "self-surrender" (*Selbstauslieferung*, Gerndt 1995: 62) of scholarly actors and the increased integrability of a scholar's own research for National Socialist goals takes place. Thus, folklore studies could fulfil a "service function" for the regime and, at the same time, the cooperation with the Nazis could result from an "internal consistency" (Bausinger 1971: 63) following from premises and epistemologies of the discipline. This article, thus, ties in with a knowledge-anthropological and -sociological understanding of scholarly practice, which sees the social construction, production and circulation of anthropological and cultural-scientific knowledge (Barth 2002) as closely bound up with sociopolitical processes (Ash 2002, 2010). Such reflexive knowledge research poses explicitly the question about the relationship between the knowledge of folklore studies and its social and political

conditions (Boie et al. 2009; Davidovic-Walther, Fenske, and Keller-Drescher 2009; Dietzsch, Kaschuba, and Scholze-Irrlitz 2009; Fenske and Davidovic-Walther 2010), and, accordingly, is involved with bodies of knowledge that circulate between the area where research took place and the academic scholarship (Tschofen 2011). The interest in the 'knowledge production' of folklore studies and its related 'knowledge culture,' therefore, broadens the previous questions about 'continuities' in the form of rapid individual and institutional 'rehabilitation' and 'carrying on' to include the central dimension of epistemological transformations and the related positions of researching, publishing, networking and acting actors.[4] This article is based on the analysis of published and unpublished written sources from archives and examines these within the framework of a 'historical ethnography' (Keller-Drescher 2007; Lipp 2013; Wietschorke 2010). The chosen micro-perspective on specific actors, thereby, refers simultaneously to the tension inherent in every knowledge-anthropological investigation mediating between subjectivity and the sociality of knowledge.

The following will cast a look at the scholarly practice of Swiss folklore studies since the 1930s and show how it could establish itself as an agency of state-affirmative and national knowledge. Then, using the example of the network of the Austrian folklorist Richard Wolfram and his relationships in Switzerland, I sketch the stabilizing and normalizing function of Swiss scholars in the 'rehabilitation' of Nazi folklorists after 1945. That the hitherto hardly examined links between Austrian and Swiss folklore studies thereby come into view is not an accident: Regarding Germany, the two groups apparently shared (at any rate, at a first glance that requires a closer look) a perception of themselves (and were seen by others) as representatives of a 'minor folklore' (*kleine Volkskunde*); hence, by the way, the originally planned title of the later *Volkskunde der Schweiz* (Weiss 1946), which perhaps facilitated connections and, at the same time, exercised a stabilizing effect after the upheavals of the war.

The place of 'good' folklore studies – on the disencumbering function of Swiss folklore studies

Much has been written about how a tendentially ideological human science such as folklore studies not only offered its services, made itself useful and cooperated with the ruling powers during the Nazi period, but was also largely congruent during its interwar incubation with nationalist ideals, racist thinking and politico-cultural objectives (cf., among others, Gerndt 1995: 58–63; Jeggle 2001). This is apparent in the then central concepts of folklore studies, as in numerous examples of institutional, individual and epistemological links. The most extreme variants of this

4 Cf. Timm (2014), using the example of the folklorist Bruno Schier and his research on vernacular architecture.

'*völkisch* scholarship' are the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für deutsche Volkskunde* within the *Amt Rosenberg*, a bureau of the chief Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg (Lutz 1983), and the competing SS institution *Deutsches Ahnenerbe* (German Ancestral Heritage), in which many folklorists participated in leading roles and, consequently, brought Nazi ideology and folklore studies research closely together (Oesterle 1994). It was precisely ideology such as the so-called 'psychological knowledge goal,' that is, the question about a 'people's character' and the 'folk-like,' that made folklore studies, in collaboration with prehistory, 'racial science' and religious studies, useful for the scholarly bolstering of a 'German cultural space' growing out of 'Germanic foundation.'

Various exponents propounded the thesis of the "two folklore studies" (Bollmus 1987) to silence the increasing number of voices (most prominently the sociologist Heinz Maus [1946]) that pleaded after 1945 for a fundamental reorientation and theoretical revision of the discipline, which it is not difficult to recognize as a quite successful attempt at suppression and disencumbering any critique. According to this thesis, there was a 'good' folklore studies, "serious, industrious, scholarly folklore studies" (Peuckert 1948: 130), and a 'bad' folklore studies, which allowed itself to be politically appropriated, during the Nazi era.[5] This powerful narrative, which sought to affect a "detoxifying divorce" (Schmoll 2015: 39) aimed clearly at a justification and continuance of the discipline, assigned Switzerland an argumentatively central, if discursively rather implicit, function. Switzerland, in this construction, was, as it were, the place of and proof for the existence of 'good', 'objective' and scholarly principled folklore studies. The most prominent crown witness for this defense narrative was Richard Weiss and his *Volkskunde der Schweiz: Grundriss* (Weiss 1946):[6]

> "Need 'one' defend oneself against him [Heinz Maus; author's note] when a respected Swiss scholar has again wielded well-known and established concepts with which the former common association of 'community – ethnic community' might even be justified?" (Jacobeit, Lixfield, and Bockhorn 1994: 337)

It was Weiss, it was argued, who with his book "[set] new and valid international standards after the time of National Socialist folklore studies and their ideological aberrations" (Gyr 2009: 69). That "modern Swiss course" was articulated in Weiss and his works which also became generally effective as a "kind of rehabilitation" of a "much maligned discipline" (Weber-Kellermann, Bimmer, and Becker 2003: 139). Swiss researchers were (and are) given a central and functional role in this consolidated narrative. Thus, the philologist Karl Meuli, who taught "classical studies with a particular focus on ancient folklore studies" at the University of Basel,

5 This narrative may be found in various texts after 1945, prominently in Peuckert (1948), who personally consistently rejected National Socialism, and then frequently especially in the 1950s and 1960s; cf. Dow and Lixfeld (1994a) and Emmerich (1971: 12 and 112).

6 On Richard Weiss (1907–1962), cf. Gyr (2009), Kuhn (2015a, 2016) and Schmoll (2009b).

was positioned as a steadfast democrat and scholar.[7] Symbolic events, such as the transnationally organized (in cooperation with John Meier) "German Folklore Studies Conference" held in Basel and Freiburg in 1939, were assigned an evidential function, because Meuli, in a dinner speech in Basel, expressed himself critically on Nazi politics, referring to the necessity of "natural free exchange" in scholarship and praising the Swiss government, "[...] even if it is of a different color from that of yours," as he sharply observed.[8] With reference to corresponding events, Meuli has ever since been presented as having had a disencumbering effect on the German-speaking branches of the discipline: "That thanks to such efforts by figures like Meuli Swiss folklore studies remained scholarly has proved of use in countries far beyond Switzerland itself" (Jung 1975: 1167). The narrative of distinction handed down by the Swiss folklore studies, thus, complemented a comfortable and disencumbering point of view that imagined a scholarly practice so unimpressed by social conditions and political processes as to make the continuity of the discipline possible. It, thereby, blanked out the extent to which Swiss folklore studies also became effective in a very similar manner for state purposes if under, as it were, ideologically reversed auspices.

Identity politics and ideology production – Swiss folklore studies as an agency of state-affirmative knowledge

The anthropological-ethnological knowledge produced by folklore studies made culture an important argumentative resource in Swiss political debates from the 1930s onwards. Knowledge about 'Swiss folk culture' now formed a demarcating element in relation to the political threats represented by Nazism and fascism, and, at the same time, stabilized folklore studies as an academic subject (Kuhn 2016). In this way, the young field of study legitimized the politically desired view of Switzerland as a culturally diverse country in contrast to ethnizing racist ideologies.

The most important scholarly project carried out by Swiss folklore studies was the *Atlas der schweizerischen Volkskunde*, an attempt started in the mid-1930s to collect knowledge at the national level about a 'folk culture' soon to be lost. Although the Swiss atlas project was closely related to other similar national projects in this objective, it was, at the same time, conceived of as a counter-project to the German folklore studies atlas (Frei 2010; Müske and Eggmann 2014; Schmoll 2009a, 2010: 106–108). The aim was to map the diffusion of cultural forms in Switzerland

7 On Karl Meuli (1891–1968), cf. Jung (1975) and Burckhardt-Seebass (2011).

8 The Folklore Studies Conference was organized as a deliberately transnational double event by John Meier, who taught in Freiburg, drawing on his excellent relations with Basel; cf. also Schmoll (2009b, 24–25, 2010, 108–110). The "Ansprache am Bankett der Volkskundetagung vom 19. September 1938" (Address at the Banquet of the Folklore Studies Conference of September 19, 1938) is reprinted in Meuli and Gelzer (1975: 541–542; here 541).

and to include thereby all four language regions. The atlas, thus, fitted ideally into the politico-cultural program of the "intellectual defense of the country" (Mooser 1997) precisely because a central debate could be conducted with the concept of 'folk culture' (Volkskultur): namely, about the relation of linguistic boundaries to 'cultural boundaries.' Using research material containing numerous examples of "Swiss-peasant-rural-Alpine folk culture" (Gyr 2009: 68), Weiss could undergird the thesis that linguistic boundaries are not determinate for cultural boundaries – a quite explosive finding at the time (Geiger and Weiss 1937; Weiss 1947; Burckhardt-Seebass 1993/94; Gyr 2009, 67–69). Folklore studies research, thus, corroborated the idea of a pluralistic Swiss nation, multicultural, quadrilingual and with different religions. That this conclusion was bound up with a programmatic position opposed to racially oriented folklore studies may be seen in Meuli's pointed formulation on the occasion of the Swiss National Exhibition of 1939: "The unity of the Swiss nation is a prime example of the proposition that nations are not simply given by nature through blood, race and language, but rather always and everywhere grow organically out of history and fate [...]" (Meuli and Gelzer 1975: 487). The knowledge production of Swiss folklore studies was, therefore, always synchronized with ideology production: The Alps were the linking element of 'Swiss folk culture'; they stood at the center of knowledge and research practices, which, for the time in question, meant primarily Alpine field research (Gyr 2001; Kuhn 2016: 70–78). In this way, folklore studies research into folk culture established the ideology, bound up with the Alps, of an autarkic, self-sufficient and resistant cultural region that had shaped Switzerland in the past and would also guide it into the future. Here is not the place to discuss the extent to which this discourse is still effective today. Two observations are important for our purposes: on the one hand, folklore studies, thanks to the application of its knowledge to the nation, gained a new status, which may be seen in both state funding of research projects and the creation, after 1946, of a Chair of Folklore Studies at the University of Zurich, whose first occupant was Richard Weiss:

> As a science that has set itself the goal of studying the tradition rooted in the ethnic community, a civic-minded folklore studies will also make it its concern to foster the consciousness of the forces that flow into our Swiss state community from the common root-soil of a genuine folk tradition; and, in fact, Swiss folklore studies scholarship reckons the underpinning of the consciousness of home and state as its most noble educational duty.[9]

On the other hand, if folklore studies knowledge served the ideological-cultural demarcation against fascist and Nazi claims, its research methods and epistemic goals

9 Application for the establishment of associate professorships for folklore studies and for prehistory, Dean's Office of the Philosophical Faculty, University of Zurich, 27 January 1945, in Universitätsarchiv Zürich AL.7.100. Cf. A similar formulation in Trümpy (1983: 70–71).

were very closely bound up with German-language folklore studies. It is important to note in this respect that Weiss acquired his methodological tools during his stay at the "Atlas of the German Folklore Studies" project in Berlin between 1933 and 1934 (Schmoll 2009b: 18–22). He worked there together with, among others, the folklorist Adolf Spamer, a politically ambivalent researcher whose theoretical position was quite compatible with National Socialist policy in scholarship. While it is true that the aims of German and Swiss atlas research differed in ideology and because of the war, Spamer's ideology of "folk psychological" questions and interpretations continued to exist after 1945 and may be found prominently in the work of, among others, Weiss (Assion 1994: 75; Jeggle 2001: 58–59).[10] This professional, theoretical and epistemological connection hardly underwent a real rupture, but rather persisted in a normalizing continuity well into the 1960s. Central to this effect were those "social networks not broken by war's end" (Bendix 2012: 379). The quality of the relations was various, ranging from sporadic exchange and practical cooperation in research to close professional and personal ties. A typical example of the never interrupted epistemological and personal bonds between folklore research in Switzerland and that in the sphere of former Nazi power is the Austrian folklorist Richard Wolfram, who, like many others in the corrupt professional landscape of the German-language discipline, carried out an ultimately successful strategy of internationalization with the aim of "self-exculpation and self-rehabilitation" (Schmoll 2011: 431). In this strategy, 'neutral' Switzerland was a central element; or, as Wolfram himself gratefully put it in 1953, "The voice of Switzerland carries considerable weight."[11]

"Hopefully, everything else will also now return to normal …" Networks of 'rehabilitation' and the comeback

When Richard Wolfram habilitated in 'Germanic folklore studies' at the University of Vienna in 1934, he had already been a member of the NSDAP, then banned in Austria, for two years.[12] In 1938, he was appointed by Himmler to head a research and

10 Cf., e.g. Weiss (1948). Weiss was obviously also influenced in his positions (and his formulations) by the work of Heinrich Harmjanz (cf. Gyr 2009: 70), Director of the Department of Ethnic Research and Folklore Studies at the SS Office of Ancestral Heritage (cf. Schmoll 2008), although the connections here remain unclear. For a critique of Weiss's "functional approach to thought", cf. Metzen (1970) (cf. also Gyr 2009: 72–75 and Kaschuba et al. 2006: 38). It would also be worth investigating Weiss's diverse contacts to the sociologist Wilhelm Brepohl (cf. Gyr 2009: 78; Kuhn 2015: 192), who was a member of the NSDAP and director of the Forschungsstelle für das Volkstum im Ruhrgebiet (Research Center for Folklore in the Ruhr Region) (cf., among others, Wietschorke 2011).

11 Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram, 0022263-N: Richard Wolfram to Karl Meuli, 04.06.1953.

12 On Richard Wolfram (1901–1995), cf., among others, Bockhorn (1988, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 2010), Höck (2012), Köstlin (2014), Nikitsch (2014, 2015) and Schmoll (2011: 431). Personal reminiscences in Bockhorn (2006: 321).

training center within the framework of the SS Office of Ancestral Heritage, so that Wolfram conducted his folklore studies research mainly for the Cultural Commission of South Tyrol as a member of the SS. In 1939, he became Professor of 'Germanic-German Folklore Studies' (germanisch-deutsche Volkskunde) at the University of Vienna; in 1942, he founded his own institute and in 1945, he was removed from his position during denazification. Wolfram retired to Salzburg and continued to work on his research, but found himself isolated in the world of scholarship. In this situation, he activated specifically his international network of foreign scholars, including the Swiss classical philologist Karl Meuli, with whom he developed a lively correspondence:

> "My dear colleague! Your letter has again given me great pleasure, for in our isolation we hunger after every human voice. That your life too has become harder and more time-consuming I can well believe. Nothing has been left untouched by these times. […] And on our ration of calories, with the peace and everything that we have experienced, we are not exactly resilient. To cap it all, I was lately afflicted by a gastric complaint that lasted three weeks and put me on the narrowest of diets, so that I saw everything only as if in a fog and was able to do only what was absolutely necessary with a great effort of will. […] I could serve wonderfully well as a model for a concentration camp inmate. Every anatomy student would delight in me as I now look."[13]

Wolfram, who often also complains in other letters, betrays not the slightest reflection about his activity as a Nazi, but rather sees himself, in a grotesque reversal of the facts, even as a victim of 'the times.' This justificatory amalgamation of constructs of innocence and victimhood is well-known from the postwar biographies of many other Nazi scholars (Bozsa 2014: 133–135). Wolfram could evidently count on his pre- and postwar network amongst Swiss folklorists to help make this construction plausible. His aim was always the "international recognition and confirmation […] of his scholarly existence" (Schmoll 2015: 41), which was (still) threatened and insecure at the time in Austria. His Basel colleague, Meuli, was already an admirer of Wolfram's works on Männerbünde in the 1930s; they agreed with his own similarly heavily mythologizing research on mask customs. (Meuli 1943).[14] Meuli, for example, uses approvingly an article by Wolfram on *Julumritte im germanischen Süden und Norden* (Wolfram 1937) and expressly thanks "R. Wolfram" for his "excellent and meritorious work" (Meuli 1943: 63). After the war, Wolfram, in turn, thanked Meuli for sending him his book on wooden masks:

13 Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Handschriftenabteilung: NL.45.F.972.1: Richard Wolfram to Karl Meuli, 16.03.1947.

14 Karl Meuli was in close contact with the Tübingen folklorists (and National Socialists) Gustav Bebenmeyer and Hermann Kolesch, cf. Besenfelder (2002: 387).

> "Your friendly intention of sending me your book on masks fills me with pleasant anticipation. I did not dare ask for it. But burned to do so. For first of all every one of your works is a gain for the reader, and then too I am particularly interested in the subject. I have also thought a little about someday writing something about our masks. If one gets the chance."[15]

It was also Meuli who, in 1947, afforded Wolfram the opportunity of publishing a work in the *Schweizerischen Archiv für Volkskunde* based on the latter's "ancestral heritage" research in South Tyrol on "spiral mowings," replete with clichéd mythologizing interpretations, without the journal shrinking from the citation of Nazi works in the footnotes (Wolfram 1947).[16] This publication was all the more important for Wolfram, because, for reasons of professional-political and personal conflicts, above all with Leopold Schmidt,[17] he had no access to the *Österreichischen Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, which reappeared in the same year:

> "I would also very much like to thank you for being given the opportunity to publish the article on spiral mowing in the Korrespondenzblatt [accurate would be: the Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde; author's note] and in this way to be able to raise my voice again, and perhaps also to learn something about the Swiss customs of this kind. I do not know whether you can imagine what it is like to receive again a sign that one has not been completely thrown on the scrap heap and that all the scholarly work carried on so lovingly and with such enthusiasm for so many years does not lie useless and shattered on the ground. And one also sees no lifting of the fog. […] And now most cordial greetings and with fondest memories, Your, R. Wolfram."[18]

Meuli, for his part, apparently mobilized his Swiss colleagues; Richard Weiss, at any rate, sent Wolfram his work *Volkskunde der Schweiz: Grundriss* (Weiss 1946), for which Wolfram thanked him cordially:

> "Dear colleague Weiss! As a real Christmas present, your big beautiful book Volkskunde der Schweiz arrived quite unexpectedly in the mail three days ago. The publisher's note said that it was sent at your request. […] Conditions deprive us of the

15 Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Handschriftenabteilung: NL.45.F.972.1: Richard Wolfram to Karl Meuli, 16.03.1947.

16 "For the Vienna journal is blocked to me by L. Schmidt. And Festschriften are not so frequent. I am therefore doubly grateful that, thanks to your intervention, the Schweizerisches Archiv again wants to take something from me." Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram, 0022269-N: Richard Wolfram to Karl Meuli, 26.10.1948.

17 After 1945, Leopold Schmidt, himself unencumbered, was the professional representative in Austrian of a rigorous, if, in the end, not altogether lasting, personal and professional policy towards former Nazi folklorists, and, thus, accepted the consequences of resultant conflicts, especially with Arthur Haberlandt and Richard Wolfram; cf. Johler and Puchberger (2015: 219–221), Liesenfeld and Nikitsch (1994) and Nikitsch (2005).

18 Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Handschriftenabteilung: NL.45.F.972.1: Richard Wolfram to Karl Meuli, 16.03.1947.

> possibility of buying foreign books, since there is no foreign currency. Otherwise your book would already have enjoyed a large sale in Austria. As it is, one is dependent on the kindness of colleagues in other countries, or one must, with a heavy heart, resign oneself to not being able to take part in the progress of our subject in the rest of the world."[19]

Wolfram clearly points to the necessity of personal connections that enable him to continue his research, to regain his position as a scholarly authority and, thus, to obtain again his position as Professor of Folklore Studies in Vienna. In these academic-political and strategic positionings, his Swiss colleagues, like, by the way, his Scandinavian colleagues,[20] assumed an important role; as respected and (presumed) independent professional authorities, their supportive verdict, which neutralized all political reservations, was keenly sought after. Richard Weiss, for example, served as a highly regarded and approving referee for the continuation of the *Atlas der Deutschen Volkskunde* (Schmoll 2009b: 24) and wrote a letter of support (in addition to Meuli's euphoric evaluation[21]) for a new edition of Wolfram's habilitation thesis *Schwerttanz und Männerbund* (Wolfram 1936/1938), previously published only in parts (and which eventually did not appear).[22]

In the case of Wolfram, reinstatement to his positions and offices was then brought about swiftly through the use of relationships and ideological old-boy networks: Wolfram regained his *venia legendi* at the University of Vienna in 1954, on which Weiss in a letter delightedly congratulated him as a sign of professional rehabilitation. Wolfram's scholarly position had evidently never been questioned in Switzerland:[23] "Dear colleague! We are delighted for you and your wife that you can begin the new year in your old apartment and in your old sphere of activity. Hopefully, everything else will also now return to normal […]."[24] The further 'normaliza-

19 Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram, 0022935-N: Richard Wolfram to Richard Weiss, 23.12.1947.

20 Wolfram had been in close contact with Swedish and Norwegian colleagues since the 1930s. These relationships are documented in the Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram; cf. also Nikitsch 2015: 230.

21 Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram, 0026069-N: Evaluation by Karl Meuli of the "sword dance book", undated (about 1953).

22 Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram, 0027520-N: Evaluation by Richard Weiss of the "New Edition of the Sword Dance Book by Richard Wolfram," 16.06.1953.

23 As early as 1951, Wolfram could see himself as rehabilitated in his profession (Köstlin 2014: 327–328); he gave a lecture at the 7th Deutscher Volkskundetag in Jugenheim, Germany; cf. Dow and Lixfeld (1994a: 350), Schmoll (2015: 41) and Verband deutscher Vereine für Volkskunde (1952: 25–26). Richard Weiss and Karl Meuli likewise gave lectures at this very conference; cf. (ibid., 33–34).

24 Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram, 0027519-N: Richard Weiss to Richard Wolfram, 02.01.1954. Omissions in the original.

tion' of the former Nazi took place in the following years determinedly and without a break: In 1959, Wolfram was appointed Associate Professor of Folklore Studies. In 1963, he was promoted to Full Professor, on which he received from Switzerland, this time from Basel, a note of congratulations completely blind to the lessons of history and adopting the victimization discourse promulgated by Wolfram and other former Nazi functionaries: "On your Full professorship I congratulate you whole-heartedly. This is a kind of reparation, if a late one, which of course cannot make up for everything."[25] Wolfram continued to be professionally active until his retirement in 1971, heaped with national and international honors.

The friendship between Wolfram and Meuli that began in the 1930s was, on the one hand, of a private nature. In the postwar years, for instance, Meuli sent many generously stocked food packages to Wolfram, who complained about the state of supplies in Salzburg, and on his lecture tour in Switzerland in the spring of 1949, Wolfram even lived with Meuli in Basel. This trip – Wolfram called it pathetically a "journey into peace and scholarship"[26] – not only gave him the opportunity to appear again in scholarly folklore studies contexts, but also served to cultivate his relationships to other Swiss folklorists.[27] The close bonds rested on the kindred content and themes of corresponding research interests within a supportive network, to which the Germanist and former National Socialist Otto Höfler ("friend Höfler,"[28] as Meuli called him) also belonged.[29] This "Vienna School" treated "cultic male bands (*Männerbünde*)" and a presumed "continuity problem" (Höfler 1937) pertaining to the relation of the use of masks and death rites in a mythologizing manner, often enough marked by the diffuse idea of a Germanic-Nordic influence.[30] The Basel-based historian Hans-Georg Wackernagel was closely connected with Meuli and with

25 Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Handschriftenabteilung: NL.45.F.972.9: Karl Meuli to Richard Wolfram, 15.08.1963.

26 Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram, 0022267-N: Richard Wolfram to Karl Meuli, 29.12.1948.

27 Cf. the report at the Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram, 0022265-N, Richard Wolfram to Karl Meuli, 23.04.1949. Besides Karl Meuli, Hans-Georg Wackernagel and Richard Weiss, Wolfram also had close contact with the Swiss Paul Geiger, Alfons Maissen and Walter Escher, as may be seen from the correspondence in the Wolfram Nachlass at the Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde. On the friendship between Alfons Maissen and Richard Wolfram, cf. also the Nachlass Maissen at the Staatsarchiv Graubünden, A Sp III/13z.

28 Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Handschriftenabteilung: NL.45.F.972.10: Karl Meuli to Richard Wolfram, 12.12.1966.

29 On the close friendship between Höfler and Wolfram, cf. Nikitsch (2014). According to Burckhardt-Seebass (2011: 63–64), the connection of Meuli and Wackernagel to Weiser-Aal and Wolfram, and the common interest in boy lodges (Knabenschaften) and warrior groups as forms of male bands, dates back to the 1930s.

30 Not only the Germanist Rudolf Much, but also Michael and Arthur Haberlandt were defining influences on the 'Vienna School'; among their most important students were Lily Weiser-Aal, Otto Höfler and Richard Wolfram; cf. Bockhorn (1988, 1994a) and Hergouth (1967).

Wolfram and Höfler. It is clear from Wolfram's correspondence with Meuli and Wackernagel that the Swiss scholars were well aware that Höfler and Wolfram had been active Nazis.[31] It is, therefore, obvious that Wolfram's past was in no way "evidently unknown" to the Basel colleagues (Burckhardt-Seebass 2011: 64).[32] Wolfram himself characterized this transnational scholarly "male band," which formed a powerful network between Basel and Vienna, in a letter to Meuli in which he thanked him for the material and, above all, intangible aid he had received from Switzerland:

> "By the same post I can send at least as a witness to our kindred research the work that I dedicated to Otto Höfler. A direction of research that is also so closely related to your own. I was very touched and moved by what you wrote in your letter about my work and that it has been important for you. For my part, I can roundly say the same about your work. My God, where would we be in so many things without your results and those of Wackernagel! It is very comforting and bucks one up amidst the many tribulations of the time to know that there are like-minded people pursuing the same things, especially in matters of scholarly knowledge and conduct. In the generation before ours I revere my former teacher Rudolf Much and Viktor von Geramb, two guiding stars. Of those active today I am closest to my old friend and former fellow student Otto Höfler. And also in personal relations I owe you and Prof. Wackernagel infinite thanks. I shall never forget how you invited me to give lectures in Switzerland in 1949, in direct response to Leopold Schmidt's attempt to blacken my name. This was my first trip abroad again at the time. And out of the oppression of an almost despondent situation into free, humane air. I came home from Switzerland almost like a new man. I was then able to bear and cope with much far more easily."[33]

Wolfram was well aware of the importance of Swiss folklore studies in his smooth reinstatement to his positions and offices and often spoke of this directly and outright:

> "[…] I especially remember your and Prof. Wackernagel's help and friendship after 1945. That I […] was invited to give lectures in Switzerland in 1949 first broke the ice in which I had been encased, and I returned from Switzerland as a new man. I

31 Wolfram reports extensively on his past in the SS Ancestral Heritage Office, the (politically inspired) conflicts with Leopold Schmidt and the difficulties of cooperating with other former Nazis within the Austrian Folklore Studies Atlas project. Cf., e.g. Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram, 0022267-N: Richard Wolfram to Karl Meuli, 29.12.1948.

32 Cf. Wolfram (1980: 7–13). In view of these close ties, it is doubtful that the distancing judgement is true that "in neighboring Switzerland … important historians and folklorists had clearly developed the connections between youth bands [Burschenbünden], honoring of the dead and the use of masks without falling into hypotheses of continuities with the Germanic past" (Weber-Kellermann, Bimmer, and Becker 2003: 117). On the contrary, formulations such as this provide evidence for the sustained effect of the perpetually renewed narrative of distinction.

33 Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Handschriftenabteilung: NL.45.F.972.8: Richard Wolfram to Karl Meuli, 11.07.1962.

> seek to give my mite of thanks for this through my two-semester lectures on folklore studies in Switzerland every four years. Therein I have the opportunity to speak about everything I saw and experience during my trip to Switzerland, and also about some of my feelings for this country and its people. […] It is unlikely that there is another foreign university at which the folk culture of Switzerland is treated as extensively as it is here."[34]

In critical retrospect, Wolfram is surely a Nazi folklorist who enjoyed one of the most astonishing 'rehabilitations' after 1945. Networks that protectively and supportively affirmed his political innocence played an important role in this comeback, including and especially in Switzerland. The gratitude expressed by Wolfram and the close ties to Switzerland attested to by his publications (Wolfram 1980) cannot help but leave a bad taste in one's mouth.

"With fondest memories" – ambivalences and personal relationships

The relations between '*völkisch*' and Swiss folklore studies, thus, show themselves to have been more intertwined than was previously known. This entanglement by no means ended in 1945, just as former '*völkisch* folklorists" continued to adapt their Nazified stock of knowledge with sometimes only marginal semantic shifts and made it useful in new contexts. It has been shown how effective collegial networks were in regaining professional positions, especially for the former Nazi sphere of power, achieving 'rehabilitation' and bringing about a return to the circle of reputable scholarship. Previously less well-known is that it was precisely 'neutral' Swiss colleagues who played an important part in these personal networks. It was they who made possible the quite deliberate strategy of internationalization with the purpose of "returning to scholarly 'normality'" (Schmoll 2011: 434). It is because Swiss folklorists, thanks to the narrative of distinction which is effective to this day, were regarded as 'good folklorists' that they could mobilize a wide range of resources to safeguard the discipline in terms of scholarly politics as well as in society. Here, at the personal level, are also probably to be sought the motives for specific help and continuous scholarly exchange: Even Swiss folklorists who were themselves far from representing Nazi ideas shared positions with numerous German and Austrian colleagues critical of modernization, which manifested themselves in an emotional attachment to Alpine peasant life and a conservative skepticism towards the city, a vague 'folk ideology' and the conviction of taking part in an important national project. Presuppositions immanent to scholarship, thematic affinities and theoretical conceptions, often cutting across political positions, acted as links between active representatives of the discipline after 1945. Many Swiss folklorists shared knowledge

34 Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Handschriftenabteilung: NL.45.F.972.11: Richard Wolfram to Karl Meuli, 30.12.1966.

interests with active German and Austrian colleagues during the interwar and Nazi period that allowed them to carry on research devoid of almost all source criticism, guided by 'meaning-interpretative' (*sinndeutend*) perspectives and a very specific understanding of what constitutes an empirical basis. Weiss put these shared epistemological-methodological positions in a nutshell in a letter to Wolfram, and with reference to his research for the Cultural Commission of South Tyrol done for the SS: "In the high regard for empathetic experience, I am fully in agreement with you [...]. I am very eager to see your work in South Tyrol. I admire the achievement of a personal reception of the material by the researcher and editor himself."[35] The strongest bond was probably a shared scholarly-political goal: securing the future of specifically German-language folklore studies. This desire for an "international professional family peace" (Schmoll 2015: 42) not only blocked an admission of the close ties to *'völkisch'* folklore studies, but also fostered a dominance of those (purported) connecting aspects of a common legitimation strategy which were, simultaneously, elements of an elaborate disencumbering and self-exculpation narrative. In this, the narrative of distinction of a 'Swiss folklore studies' had its functional and central place; it was both compatible with the ambivalent and selective reading of the Nazi past of the discipline and effective for the strengthening, mobilizing and establishing of a small discipline new to Swiss universities.

The dictum for many prominent representatives of the discipline in Switzerland at that time would probably be true according to which "work and personal fate [exhibit] all the possible contradictions of a folk ideology" (Emmerich 1971: 119). It can, therefore, not be the purpose of this study, also not regarding Swiss folklorists, to use their statements retrospectively "as evidence for exoneration or for incrimination" (Bausinger 1965: 200). Wolfgang Kaschuba's formulation of about ten years ago remains true: "Today we need still further reappraisal and discussion, not to pass judgements on persons, but to judge their positions and understand better what happened and how something such as that could happen" (Kaschuba 2006: 75). Such an understanding judgement of the intimate entanglements of Swiss folklore studies with National Socialism – whereby the maxim "to understand is not to exonerate" (Jeggle 2001: 66) always applies – also calls for a revision of previous points of view and the formulation of an adequately or more adequately informed knowledge-historical narrative. Swiss folklore studies from the 1930s until the 1970s was a profoundly contradictory discipline, whose themes and careers reflect that fundamental ambivalence between sudden departures and simultaneous conservative persistence in which postwar Swiss society found itself.

35 Salzburger Landesinstitut für Volkskunde (SLIVK), Nachlass Richard Wolfram, 0027523-N: Richard Weiss to Richard Wolfram, 31.12.1947.

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Sebastian Mohr, Rolf Lindner

Learning to get involved with people*

A conversation with Rolf Lindner about the ethnographer's fear of the field

Abstract: Rolf Lindner argues in his essay *Die Angst des Forschers vor dem Feld* from 1981, that the ethnographer's first meeting with the field might cause anxieties that, when reflected upon as part of ethnographic knowledge production, might hold important insights into the field itself, on the one hand, and into ethnography's implicit normative frameworks, on the other. In this interview, Rolf Lindner talks, 34 years on, about how the essay came about, how it connected to and intervened in dominant academic discourses at the time, and what the essay's legacy is regarding methodical and methodological teaching in contemporary cultural anthropology.

Keywords: embodiment, emotions, ethnography, fieldwork, participant observation, methodology

Methodological training in European Ethnology has undergone enormous changes throughout the development of the discipline. Participant observation, for example, has not always been an unquestioned part of methods courses in *Volkskunde* (the German term for what could be called a hybrid version of folklore studies, ethnology and cultural anthropology). That this is different today is partly due to the influence that debates about methods and methodology in American cultural anthropology had since the 1980s, but can also be understood as a result of the reorientation of *Volkskunde* as an empirical cultural science since the late 1960s, in which the researcher's experiences and their closeness to the research field play a central role. Rolf Lindner published his article *Die Angst des Forschers vor dem Feld: Überlegungen zur teilnehmenden Beobachtung als Interaktionsprozeß* ['The Researcher's Fear of the Field: Thoughts on Participant Observation as an Interactive Process'] in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* in 1981. Ever since, this article has had an unquestionable influence on methodological debates and training in European Ethnology. In the article, Lindner discusses the social and interactive foundations of research in *Volkskunde* and cultural anthropology. Lindner's argument, that understanding of and insight into the field are directly dependent on the researcher's personal involvement and engagement with the field and that this involvement should not be avoided as often proclaimed at the time, has certainly left its mark on the training of students and

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on research practice in European Ethnology. *Die Angst des Forschers vor dem Feld* has become part of the methodological canon in *Volkskunde* and its basic argument now often figures as a methodological starting point in discussions about knowledge production in *Volkskunde* and cultural anthropology. But how did this article actually come about? Which reflections and personal experiences as well as disciplinary discussions influenced Lindner's argument? And what relevance does *Die Angst des Forschers vor dem Feld* have in contemporary discussions about the relationship between research field and researcher? Rolf Lindner, Professor Emeritus of European Ethnology at Humboldt University in Berlin, and Sebastian Mohr, Assistant Professor of Educational Sociology at Aarhus University in Denmark, met for a conversation on November 9, 2015, to explore these questions, and the following text is an edited version of this conversation.

Mohr: Your article *Die Angst des Forschers vor dem Feld* was published 34 years ago in 1981. However, it is still relevant today, especially when it comes to the methodological training of students in European Ethnology, and that's also why I would like to talk to you about how the article came about, how it was received and what impact it had, and, of course, also about the main arguments of your article. Do you remember how it came about that you wrote this article for *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*?

Lindner: I had originally written the text for an introductory seminar on research methods when I was still a lecturer in Sociology at the Free University of Berlin. At that time, I always contributed to my seminars with a text of my own, either at the very beginning as an introduction, or at a point where we were summarizing important themes. And that is how the text came about. It was intended for students who were taking part in that particular seminar, and it had never occurred to me that I could publish it. It was thought to be a practical teaching tool. About the same time, that would have been the winter semester of 1979/80 if I remember correctly, a colleague of mine from the journal *Ästhetik & Kommunikation* and I visited Tübingen to interview some of the cultural studies researchers there. We had done an issue about the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham four years earlier, and we wanted to continue with one about the Ludwig-Uhland Institute for Empirical Cultural Studies. In connection with this visit, I of course got to meet Hermann Bausinger. After our meeting I gave him a copy of the paper, which was just a simple typewritten text at the time, to follow up on our conversation and as an example of what I was working on in Berlin. And then something happened that I did not expect: Bausinger cited my paper in his next article (1980). And I don't remember exactly how anymore, but I contacted Bausinger, because he was the editor of *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, and asked him whether it would be possible to suggest the paper for publication in the journal, since he already thought it was

worthy of citation. And he wrote me that he liked the idea. Yet, the funny thing is that the paper was never written for publication and now, nevertheless, has almost become a classic text in our discipline. And that's what I really like about this story, this circumstance.

Mohr: Was there a particular reason why you wanted to discuss the problems of fieldwork with sociology students at that time?

Lindner: At the time there was almost no qualitative research being done in sociology. The custom was to conduct empirical social research with standardized questionnaires, and statistic courses with final exams lasting several hours were mandatory. Because of this focus on quantitative research, I was very interested in learning more about the kind of cultural studies that employed ethnographic research, or, in other words, 'empirical cultural studies,' since I felt somewhat unhappy among the sociologists at the time. Participant observation, fieldwork and so on were basically unheard of in sociology back then. The institute at the Free University was extremely political at the time, and you basically spent all your time on an exegesis of *Das Kapital* rather than doing empirical research on everyday life. It was, therefore, important to me to provide an impetus in that direction. I basically used the paper as a sort of midterm summary during the course.

Mohr: How did you come up with the title?

Lindner: I was inspired by Peter Handke's story "The Goalie's Fear of the Penalty Kick." (1970) And I have to admit that my own past is, of course, also reflected in the title. Before I became a student, I had worked as a copywriter for an advertising company, something which I had not shared with colleagues for a long time. My job there was to create headlines, and I think that the title should also be seen as part of that tradition. I have a tendency to capture a central theme or argument in my titles. That is probably most obvious in my book *Walks on the Wild Side* (Lindner 2004), because the core argument about the motives of early urban researchers is basically captured in the title. But I also simply enjoy coming up with titles that have more of a literary style. At the time, you probably would have used the subtitle – *Thoughts on Participant Observation as an Interactive Process* – as the actual title. I think that would have been the "normal" sociological title, but not *The Researcher's Fear of the Field*. However, that title captured precisely the main idea of the article.

Mohr: Did you rewrite the paper after it was clear that it was going to be published in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*?

Lindner: I kept a copy of the original version and, therefore, can retrace what I changed. The editing basically consisted of reducing the sociological touch of the manuscript, so to say, which had given me a bad conscience regarding Bausinger and *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*. Therefore, I wrote "*volkskundliche*" research instead of

sociological, for example. However, I did not change anything about the argument itself, and Bausinger had also written to me, and I quote, that the predominance of ethnological and sociological examples was not actually a drawback at all, since they would signal to researchers in *Volkskunde* the fundamental importance of the argument.

Mohr: What were immediate reactions to the publication?

Lindner: The most noticeable reaction came from Ina-Maria Greverus. She sent me an encouraging letter, but most importantly, she then published an article with the title *Die Sehnsucht des Ethnologen nach dem Feld* ['The Researcher's Longing for the Field'] (Greverus 1982), in which she focuses on the positive emotions associated with doing fieldwork. That was, of course, the best compliment one can give: writing a second article with a title that is a clear reference to the original paper. Other than that, I don't really know how the article was received in the discipline at the time. But, of course, you have to consider that the article also could have been looked at as an affront from people within the discipline, since I was a sociologist and, therewith, foreign to their discipline. That kind of reaction would not be so much about the article's argument, but rather about me as a person: "Who is he, this Lindner guy from Berlin?" And Berlin (or to be exact, the Free University) was looked at suspiciously to begin with from within conservative circles of *Volkskunde* because they assumed sociology in Berlin was comprised only of Marxist-Leninists. But since I wasn't part of the discipline (*Volkskunde)* at the time, I also wasn't really aware of those internal voices. It is very likely that the paper itself was more or less positively received since it filled a gap in the methodological literature. Students picked up on the text rather quickly, I think.

Mohr: After the introduction, you begin your article with a clear reference to non-European ethnology. Why this sort of reference in an article for *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*?

Lindner: I always had transdisciplinary interests. I wanted to look at specific cultural figures from different fields and how their habits and mentalities overlapped. I was, for example, interested in what the commonalities were between a detective, a reporter and a field researcher, and that is how I came across the story of Robert Park in the first place (Lindner 1990). I am not interested in a 'banal' disciplinary history, but I instead want to explore to what extent disciplinary history gives us insights into societal thinking and patterns that are also articulated in other cultural figures outside the discipline. And then you see parallels between the ethnographer, who is perceived as a missionary, a governmental bureau agent or a salesman by indigenous groups in South America, and the researcher, who is identified as an efficiency

specialist or a management spy by industrial workers. These sorts of perceptions in the field hold important social insights.

Mohr: What still seems so interesting about your article today is its focus – the researcher's fear of the field – a topic which is relatively private. Aside from what could be called confessional literature in ethnography, very little is written about the topic. What personal experiences of yours formed the background for your article?

Lindner: It was actually a way of processing my own experiences in the field, where I behaved similar to what I later generalized in the article: I walked up and down the street and so on, before I rang a doorbell or even introduced myself. In other words, my own experiences contributed to it, and that is the strength of this kind of writing, that it is not just based on random abstract reflections, but rather on concrete anxieties and fears which then played a central role in the drafting of the text.

Mohr: But we read nothing about your own personal experiences in the article itself.

Lindner: I did not try to hide it on purpose; instead, I just did not want to make a big deal out of it. I did not want to compare my own research with the great works in the field. So, it was more like an act of humbleness.

Mohr: I was actually thinking more about the academic environment at the time. An article that focused on the interpersonal aspects of social relationships in the field and the personal challenges connected with that probably also challenged the so-called ideal of objectivity affective in the social sciences in 1981. You refer to this dynamic as the "methodological lie" in your article: the academic silence about how social relationships develop in the field, how they contribute to specific perspectives and experiences, and so on. An article that went beyond that by using the author's personal experiences as a starting point might not have been publishable?!

Lindner: The signs of the times are definitely present in the text, though more in connection to an interest in scholarship on working class culture, that is actually the historic context of the article. My research in the Ruhr valley, in working class neighborhoods, makes up the experiential background that I discuss in *Die Angst des Forschers vor dem Feld*. Because to simply walk into a mining town was a rather delicate thing to do for someone who is not a smooth salesman type. Some of these neighborhoods were rather enclosed territories. And in that situation, you are as foreign as you possibly can be. These are not cities, not even villages where you would meet some openness. Instead, you are in an enclosed settlement, where literally everyone knows everyone and where people recognized you as a stranger from 100 meters away. This field experience, that is in the text. My research about punk (Lindner 1978a, 1978b) was much easier in that regard, although in that field I was also asked: "What are you doing hanging out with punks at your age?" or

was accused of being a hippie, their symbolic adversary. My experiences with these moments of initial contact in the field form the background of the article. And, of course, as a researcher, you would love to be invisible in these moments. And that kind of initial contact, those are rather delicate situations. But in those moments, you are also – and that is the important methodological argument of the article – in those moments of contact, you can gain very important insights. I still remember a specific, for me, quite embarrassing scenario rather well. I was trying to establish rapport in a pub in a working-class neighborhood, and, as a way of trying to act 'natural,' I simply played a slot machine. However, something happened that had never happened to me before: I hit the jackpot. And, of course, after that, I could forget about talking to anyone in the pub: here comes this guy who had never been here before, puts one Deutschmark in the machine and hits the jackpot, something which people have probably been trying to get for weeks. Looking back now, it is actually a wonderful memory, but in that particular moment, I would have loved to have been able to turn back the slot machine. And I put all the money back into the machine, so I would not leave the pub with the winnings. But that made me probably seem even more strange in their eyes, so that I truly looked suspicious.

Mohr: These kinds of dynamics of a researcher's fear of the field can even extend beyond the initial encounter. From my own experiences, I know that anxiety about fieldwork can accompany you permanently. I have, for example, noticed some form of internal resistance before meeting people for interviews: "I don't really feel like interviewing right now." And that feeling doesn't disappear until I'm in the middle of an interview.

Lindner: There are certainly individual differences in that respect. There are also people who find it less difficult. Maybe I am romanticizing too much, but some people have no problems with that at all; they can talk to anyone. And that is definitely enviable, because these people have an openness that doesn't bother people in the sense of "Look out, here I am," but rather an openness in the sense that they enjoy approaching people and meeting them. I think in order to do qualitative research, you have to have a certain openness and natural interest in other people. That was also my experience with students when teaching methods courses at Humboldt University. There were students who were simply better suited for the archive, they just ate it up, so to say, and then there were students for whom interviews and participant observation were a much better fit. And you can't force that. It doesn't make any sense to say to someone: "You have to do this now." I am convinced that that just ends badly.

Mohr: Maybe that is part of why the paper still seems so relevant today, especially regarding teaching methods: it speaks to contemporary themes. Demands that the researcher should involve themselves in the research process are repeatedly dis-

cussed, currently especially in connection with emotional and affective experiences, and so on.

Lindner: In that sense, the article is certainly still relevant. Dialogic research, autoethnography, the role of emotions, of affects, of fears, those are all topics that are immensely popular right now.

Mohr: Right at the beginning of your article you write about the reciprocity of observation, that is, when the researcher realizes that they are also an object of observation. What is the epistemological potential of thinking through the reciprocity and sociality of fieldwork?

Lindner: It would be naïve to think that we observe, but that the people we observe do not. Of course, they are evaluating us from the first moment on. It could be that they have a completely wrong picture of us, just as we can also have a completely wrong impression of them. But nonetheless, this kind of assessment is reciprocal: "Who am I dealing with?" When a stranger enters a room, they are immediately evaluated based on their clothing, manner of speaking, their gestures and so on, allowing a social and cultural classification. And that is an age-old methodological phenomenon. For example, the first undercover researchers in factories were always recognized by the workers because of their hands (e.g. Göhre 1891). They had smooth hands and had obviously never worked hard. This kind of assessment happens, of course, all the time. If you don't know someone, naturally you want to be sure about who you are dealing with. And that's also what happened to me during my research on soccer (Lindner and Breuer 1978), where an interviewee scrutinized me in a rather likeable way. He said to me: "Oh, you know, Court Street, if you go down Court Street, you then come to… Oh, I can't think of it right now. You come to…?" And he was, of course, expecting that I would know the street that he was looking for. In that way, I was being tested to see if I really was from Bottrop and whether I had told the truth. And if you were from Bottrop then of course you know that Court Street leads to Friederich Ebert Street or something like that. If you fail in these kinds of situations, they will not rub it in, people are too polite for that, but it may make them a bit more reserved regarding what they will tell you. And these kinds of experiences of reciprocal observation, of assessment, we all live with these kinds of experiences. They are part of urbanity and life in the city, these quick assessments; who am I really dealing with here. And as an intellectual, at least at the time when I was doing my research, you were especially met with a certain amount of distrust: "What kind of guy is this? Can we trust him? Will he misuse our information?" and so on. This kind of mistrust needs to be understood as part of the encounter and should be met with the kind of openness that I was talking about. At the time, some colleagues partly criticized this standpoint and claimed that openness was not the right research strategy, that, instead, some kind of scholarly

secrecy should be preserved. But my reply to that kind of critique would be that openness is the only thing that ever helped me to learn more about my fields. Any other approach would have meant failure. For me, this has always been self-evident, and I was astonished about people's naïveté when they assumed that it is them who are in control of the situation and that they always knew how things worked and what to do. But the others, from whom they wanted to learn something, they were supposed to be stupid or dumb somehow. At the time it struck me that this kind of intellectual arrogance was the rule rather than the exception.

In that respect, times are different today. Today, it is not as unusual anymore to be approached by someone. Almost everyone knows what fieldwork is by now, and everyone also knows what an interview is. At the time though, that was different and these things were new and unknown, and a recording device caused distrustful glances: "Are you recording this?" Nowadays, people are more likely to check whether the device is the latest model, and a recording device will, thus, say something about how professional an interviewer really is. Today, in many cases, it will be more important to find out what kind of sources an interviewee referenced as part of their narrative. Here, the interesting question then is to what extent media and second-hand experiences are mixed together and presented as one's own position. My most fascinating experience in that regard was during a student research project at Humboldt University about the settlement movement in Berlin between the time of the *Kaiserreich* and the time of the Weimar Republic (Lindner 1997). Apparently one of our interviewees, somebody who had lived through the 1920s, had prepared themselves for the interview and read through some of the material from back then. And when we read through the interview transcript I realized: "Hey, I know that passage!" And we could then show which book the interviewee had read before. That too is a part of fieldwork.

Mohr: So, the question of symmetry and asymmetry that you address in your article is a completely different one today.

Lindner: The method handbooks of the time were rather positivistic, even within qualitative research. One always had the impression that the ideal form of research proclaimed in these books, which was 'sadly, sadly' not always attainable, was actually invisibility, to be able to simply observe what the research subjects are doing without involving yourself in any way, as if you were behind a one-way mirror, which of course was still normal at the time in psychological research. And even in books which reflected on this dimension, the focus seemed to be on the discomfort of being caught while making your observations. In my opinion, the handbooks were catastrophic. That only began to change during the 1970s and after American discussions about dialogic research had arrived here. But up until then, there was a tendency to pretend there was a symmetrical relationship. Yet, implicitly, the entire

field was conceptualized as an asymmetrical relation, as part of which the researcher was supposed to control everything. And this, in fact, causes the researcher's fear of the field, which, as I described at the time, was paradoxically the result of anxiety avoiding strategies.

Mohr: I also meet this kind of thinking among many students today; students who are afraid that if they speak with someone or do participant observation, they will influence the situation and that exactly that intervention would be unscientific.

Lindner: There are no encounters that do not change the situation. The encounter itself is already the first big change, and that is exactly what I wanted to get across in my article.

Mohr: In your article, you connect the question of reciprocal observation and symmetry/asymmetry with questions regarding scientific legitimacy: it is not only the individual who is constituted in and through social relations, but also sciences in general and the researcher or scholar in particular.

Lindner: That was also due to my encounters in the field. At the time, researchers would normally explain the purpose of their research by saying: I am writing a book about the topic x,y,z. But that was extremely hard to convey back then, because for most people, a book was a completely abstract thing. When I was asked about what the purpose of my work was in the context of my research on industrial workers, I used to say that it was for a graduate thesis. That kind of explanation was always met with sympathy, because people then wanted to help me pass my exam. Working-class people had a particular kind of respect for studying: "Yeah, if I can help you by having a conversation, I'd be glad to do it. If that helps you pass your exam," or something of that nature. The way they understood it was that I had to write a paper as part of getting my degree. But a book, that was too abstract.

Mohr: This kind of confrontation then also raises questions about the legitimacy of ethnographic research in general: do we have the right to explore the lifeworlds of people and ask them questions? Do ethnographic researchers have the right to enter people's private lives?

Lindner: I also have serious doubts about that sometimes, about whether we should do everything that we do. It is not for nothing that field researchers were sometimes compared to spies by people. But I think that the question of legitimacy is also connected to whether one can tell a story with an emotional depth, that it touches protagonists as well. That, of course, doesn't mean that you should approve of everything that is confided in you. Franziska Becker wrote about that once in an essay (Becker 1989): can you understand too much? And I thought that was a central question. Yes, there are limits to what we can understand, and those limits generally lie where 'understanding' would be the same as justifying protagonists'

(mis-)deeds. It would be problematic and rather dangerous to think that everything our protagonists do in the field is great, or trying to excuse yourself by saying that you cannot criticize something a person does because you are too close to them, when what they actually did should be criticized. Based on his fieldwork among members of a drug gang, Philippe Bourgois, for example, problematized one of the fundamental methodological premises of ethnographic work, that one may not pass moral judgments on one's protagonists (Bourgois 1996).

Mohr: The negative side of the researcher's fear of the field is just one aspect of fieldwork. This anxiety is accompanied by many other emotions and feelings and goes along with the researcher's hope to get along well with the people they meet in the field, to potentially even develop friendships, or it is connected to the fear of actually meeting people that you don't get along with, but with whom you, nonetheless, have to work somehow for the duration of research. One is really faced with a mix of emotions in the field.

Lindner: Well, I believe that people pick fields to which they somehow have an affinity. That doesn't necessarily happen consciously, but probably rather unconsciously; fields to which you have some sort of biographical or some other kind of affinity. Just as we pick certain research fields, the fields pick us as well in some way. We can talk about this today, but in the 1960s and 70s it was totally taboo to talk about it, particularly in the case of sexual identity. The early studies about lesbians and gay men were almost all done by gays and lesbians themselves. But no one articulated that back then, because it could have meant losing your academic standing or position. Those times are thankfully over. Today, this dynamic seems almost reversed, so that one sometimes gets the impression that only people who are affected by something are subsequently also allowed to do research in that particular field. I find that problematic as well. I would advocate doing research in teams, maybe a team of two or something like that. But, of course, this whole discussion was a completely different one in the 60s and early 70s. Back then, you were more or less condemned to silence and secrecy.

Mohr: That is, in fact, a central question: how is scholarship legitimized? On the one hand, the legitimization of scientificity/scholarliness through social relationships in the field; on the other hand, an analysis of and reflection about those relationships and thinking about how to ascribe meaning to them analytically and in the sense of gaining scholarly insight through them. Only specific empirical material, specific relationships and specific emotions are considered legitimate in that process, if emotions are considered legitimate empirical material at all. How this construction of scientificity/scholarliness functions, that is indeed an important question.

Lindner: Back then you couldn't write about choosing a specific field of research also because of personal reasons. Typically, this concerned doctoral theses or, in other words, work that qualified you for an academic degree. And, in the very worst case, that could have led to you losing your academic title if people had found out that you had gone native in that sense. That would have meant to break with the so-called ideal of objectivity.

Mohr: The American cultural anthropologist Esther Newton, who conducted fieldwork among so-called female impersonators for her doctoral research in the 1960s (Newton 1972) at the University of Chicago with David Schneider as supervisor, and who then wrote an ethnography about a gay and lesbian community on the East Coast in the 1980s and 90s (Newton 1993a), made a similar argument in an article in 1993 (Newton 1993b). She writes about the erotic dimension of fieldwork and about how an erotic relationship with one of her protagonists gave her the energy to complete her research. So, for her, the production of knowledge was closely connected to this personal erotic relationship. At the same time, Newton also talks about the fact that one was not allowed to write about those kinds of things in cultural anthropology, because there was a culture of secrecy and silence around that (Mohr 2016).

Lindner: If we apply a very broad definition of the eroticism, then the erotic of the field is an extremely important aspect, allowing yourself to become completely involved and to take things seriously, you know, the love for the field, if you will, devoting or surrendering yourself, as Kurt Wolff described it. And I mean, if you are using it like that, then I could say that I, of course, did research on soccer because I loved soccer, and my research in the Ruhr valley had to do with the fact that I was from there and that it was important to me to represent this landscape, this industrial landscape, in a way that was not about soot and filth. And it was similar with the punks. To me, punk was a new movement that had a similar rebellious character as the scenes that I was familiar with as a young person. And it was that characteristic that made me curious.

Mohr: Right at the beginning, your article contains something like a sexual metaphor: "In this way, establishing rapport has the characteristics of flirting ('to be amiable'), to reach penetration. The field researcher intrudes into the living space/environment of a group of people." This means that if we were to take the erotic of the field in this broad sense seriously, that the researcher's fear of the field is connected to this erotic play with the field.

Lindner: I did not see it quite like that at the time. Today, that kind of reasoning would make more sense to me. But at the time, my intention was more to criticize the sort of language which methodological literature made us use. "I have to penetrate the field," I understood that more as, say, a rape metaphor than as erotic play.

Mohr: From a queer-feminist perspective, this would then raise the question whether the erotic dimension of fieldwork and this whole fetish about the field are not fundamentally connected to a heteronormative logic?! But maybe we can, in closing, also talk about the use of *Die Angst des Forschers vor dem Feld* in teaching. You taught introductory courses on research methods for many years. How do you convey and communicate the researcher's fear of the field to students as part of that kind of course?

Lindner: By incorporating personal experiences into the course itself. I think that is also the strength of other researchers, known researchers such as Howard S. Becker. He is wonderful at incorporating his own personal experiences. He would not be afraid to talk about how he felt here or there and what he did here or there. So, I think it is only possible to teach something like this, at least for me, it is only possible through personal engagement and by getting personally involved, which should encourage people to allow the personal into their work from the start.

An interview experience of mine might make this point clearer. I once had the possibility to interview a soccer player for the TV channel *Arte*. They had a series called *Rencontre*, where an academic met a person whom they had always dreamed of interviewing. And I had chosen a soccer player as my conversational partner: Willi 'Ente' Lippens (Dutch-German soccer player known as 'Ente' or duck due to his peculiar way of running which reminded people of a duck), who you have probably never heard of (Arte 1993). In any case, he was very skeptical at first when we arrived with the TV crew, you know, something along the lines of: "Oh, one of those sociologists who don't like soccer anyway," or something like that. And in such a moment, you must engage and involve yourself to win the other person's sympathy, to win them over, so to say. It all depends on the very first question. So, you hear the word 'action' for the first take, the interview begins, and then your task is to let the other person know that you are an interested person and have no plans of making a fool of them. And my first question in that situation was: "Do you remember your first soccer ball?" And with that, I had won him over immediately and he began to talk about his life. That's how we found a way into each other, so to speak, and could also talk about more delicate topics. I used those kinds of examples as part of my teaching. I think it is very important to find something of relevance to the interview topic that wins people over, that engages them. That usually happens when you show the other person that you actually know something about the topic that you want to learn more about from them. It is completely ridiculous to play naïve in the field, to more or less say: "Oh, I have never heard of that," or something along those lines. Instead you must show that you already know something about the topic you would like to talk about with them, but that you regard your own knowledge as insufficient and, therefore, want to talk with someone who is able to qualify that knowledge, to fill in the gaps, so to say. To act naïve in those situations, that won't work. I believe

that is complete nonsense. Taking your counterpart seriously also means informing yourself about the topic ahead of time and proving yourself to be a competent, but curious conversational partner. And taking someone seriously in this sense then also means to allow yourself to become involved with people on a personal level.

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