Ataç, Ilker & Schilliger, Sarah (2022): Civil society organisations engaged with illegalised migrants in Bern and Vienna: co-production of urban citizenship in: Jørgensen, Martin Bak; Schierup, Carl-Ulrik (eds.): Contending Global Apartheid: Transversal Solidarities and Politics of Possibility, Brill.

Reprinted by permission of BRILL Publishers.

PAGE 324

Civil society organisations engaged with illegalised migrants in Bern and Vienna: co-production of urban citizenship

Ilker Ataç and Sarah Schilliger

In recent years, several studies have shown that, within Europe, innovative approaches towards migration emerge at the local level against the backdrop of increasingly restrictive and polarizing national and EU immigration policies (Agustin and Jørgensen 2019; Ataç, et al. 2020; Bauder 2019; Darling 2017; Spencer and Delvino 2019). The political space of the city has thereby become a "dynamic battleground" (Hajer and Ambrosini 2020) and a field of experimentation not only around the future of migration regimes but also for a fundamental democratization of urban life in the sense of a general right to the city for all. Looking at this "local turn" specifically in the field of illegalised migration, we observe a growing activism by both municipalities and local civil society actors calling for the inclusion of migrants without legal status in public service provision, for formal rights protections, and for democratic participation.

Various comparative studies indicate that policies and practices of solidarity towards illegalised migrants vary greatly, depending not only on place-particular circumstances and factors such as national and regional legal frameworks; varying institutional competences of cities; the constellation of political parties in power; the ethnic diversity of the electorate; as well as the financial wealth of the municipality but also on the presence and strength of civil society actors (Ataç, et al. 2020; Bauder 2021; De Graauw 2016; Kaufmann and Strebel 2019; Kron and Lebuhn 2020). In recent years, several researchers (such as Kreichauf and Mayer 2021; Lambert and Swerts 2019; Hajer and Ambrosini 2020; de Graauw 2021; Holm and Lebuhn 2020) have identified civil society actors as crucial in improving the precarious situation of illegalised migrants. Nevertheless, there is often little investigation and theorizing about the variety of civil society actors engaged in urban citizenship practices and their interplay with formal politics and municipal bureaucracies.

We argue that, for a more nuanced understanding of urban citizenship, we must take a closer look at the role of CSOs in urban contexts in relation to the provision of inclusionary services for illegalised migrants and the construction

of urban infrastructures of solidarity. Drawing on empirical data from two cities (Vienna and Bern), we therefore engage in an in-depth analysis of the variety of actors co-producing and negotiating local welfare arrangements for illegalised migrants within urban settings. We thereby examine the organisational structures and practices of CSOs who support illegalised migrants and how they differ in their relation towards the city and urban authorities. To do so, we use Agustin's and Jørgensen's (2019) typology of three types of solidarity (institutional solidarity, civic solidarity, and autonomous solidarity) and refine it in relation to CSOs in the field of illegalised migration.

The article proceeds as follows: We first present our theoretical framework (2.) and our methodological approach as well as the context of our empirical fields (3.). We then analyse the practices of multiple CSOs working with illegalised migrants and highlight some commonalities and challenges they face on the ground (4.). To draw a more precise picture of the landscape of CSOs in this field, we differentiate between three types of CSOs and discuss their organisational structures and their relations to municipal authorities (5.). In the concluding section, we summarise the results and discuss the relevance of our empirical findings for debates on urban citizenship (6.).

1. Theoretical framework

To elucidate the role of civil society actors in urban contexts, we refer to the theoretical debates around urban citizenship. The concept of urban citizenship highlights the socio-spatial dimension of solidarity and conceives the city "as both a context for struggles over citizenship, and a political actor to whom, and for whom, claims are made" (Darling 2017, 719). Its focus is on the engagement at the municipal level regarding the inclusion of migrants and the capacity of cities to challenge restrictive national citizenship regimes. One common characteristic of urban citizenship policies and practices is that access to rights and resources is derived from 'presence' (place of residence) rather than 'legality' (national immigration status). By linking membership in the urban community to being an inhabitant of the city, citizenship is derived from a relational perspective and is seen not only as a legal status but also as "a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding and losing rights" (Isin and Turner 2002, 4).

Accordingly, not only institutional actors but also a multiplicity of civil society actors are involved in the negotiation and realisation of urban citizenship practices. The civil society category includes a broad spectrum of bodies, ranging from formal, pro-migrant NGOs to religious institutions, trade unions,

migrant organisations, grassroots initiatives, and antiracist/urban social movements. Local CSOs not only represent migrants' collective interests and engage in political advocacy but they also establish offers of support and legal advice centres, provide expertise to city governments, create safe spaces, and develop relations of care and "transversal solidarities" (Ataç, et. al. 2021; Bauder 2021).

Scholars identify different urban citizenship practices in relation to the situation of illegalised migrants by both municipal actors as well as urban civil society organisations (Holm and Lebuhn 2020; Bauder 2019; Darling and Squire 2012; Delvino and Spencer 2019):

The *first* way of fostering urban citizenship includes initiatives and policy innovations of municipal governments and administrations to respond to the needs of people with irregular status. Through this "municipal activism on irregular migration" (Spencer and Delvino 2019), municipalities set up parallel structures to provide illegalised migrants with access to healthcare, or they treat people with precarious status as equal to co-inhabitants of the city and give them full access to local welfare services and/or subsidies (ibid; Schweitzer 2019). In some cases, cities issue municipal ID cards that allow illegalised migrants to identify themselves to frontline city officials, the police and other important local actors (de Graauw 2016; Kaufmann and Strebel 2020). More often, cities use their room to maneuver for modifying and weakening control strategies (Delvino and Spencer 2019; Schilliger 2019) or refuse to fully translate national requirements into official actions (Bauder 2019; de Graauw 2021). While some local authorities avoid political conflicts by keeping visibility of their pro-migrant actions low, other city officials go on the offensive and claim to be a "solidarity city" (Kreichauf and Mayer 2021; Kron and Lebuhn 2020).

A *second* way of expanding urban citizenship are those processes through which urban social movements and migrant's rights organisations claim from urban governments and administrations the expansion of social rights for illegalised migrants. In most cases, the engagement of municipalities in inclusive policies towards illegalised migrants is initiated and claimed from the bottom up by civil society actors (including illegalised migrants themselves). In fact, inclusive migration policies in many cases "are put onto cities' agendas only by social movement actors and through strong bottom-up mobilizations" (Kron and Lebuhn 2020, 92; Nyers 2019; Bauder 2021; Schilliger 2019; Nicholls and Uitermark 2016).

Not all CSO's strategies and initiatives are directed towards city administrations and legal frameworks, and not all are visible "acts of solidarity" (Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020, 407). As a *third* way of fostering urban citizenship, we identify CSOs engaged in organising practical support to realise the basic rights of illegalised migrants (Holm and Lebuhn 2020, 82). These practices by

PAGE 327

CSOs furthermore create opportunities for everyday encounters and relations of solidarity that are crucial for navigating life as an illegalised migrant within the city (Darling and Squire 2012, 191; Ataç, et. al. 2021; Hajer and Ambrosini 2020). These kinds of urban citizenship practices can be captured with the concept of "urban infrastructures of solidarity" (Schilliger 2020), which encompasses "solidarity work and alliance-building, the creation of (counter-)spaces on different scales, the production and sharing of (counter-)knowledge, and the formation of social relations of solidarity and mutual care" (ibid, 532). Infrastructures of solidarity are to be understood as a process through which practices may become sedimented in time and space and by which "ties are built between groups of people that are structurally located in very distinct social positions" (ibid.), such as between supporters with a legal status and illegalised, often racialised, migrants.

Based on this description of the three different ways of "strengthening urban citizenship" (Holm and Lebuhn 2020), we would like to emphasise that a simplistic dichotomisation between urban citizenship "from above" (by municipal governments) and "from below" (by urban civil society actors/movements) is not helpful. On the contrary, various empirical studies on solidarity cities show that a successful expansion of urban citizenship is rather achieved through a (cooperative as well as conflictive) interplay between the city administration and the manifold civil society organisations (Christoph and Kron 2019; Agustín and Jørgensen 2019; Lambert and Swerts 2019; de Graauw 2016; Kreichauf and Mayer 2021; Holm and Lebuhn 2020). This requires a more process-oriented and relational perspective in which the different solidarity practices and actors are not analysed in isolation but rather in their complex interplay. Inspired by the relational field approach by Bourdieu (1989), who avoids a dichotomous distinction of the state and civil society, we see urban migrant politics as a localised field in which various state and non-state actors influence one another. In order to obtain a nuanced understanding of urban citizenship and to analyse extensively the quality and scope of inclusive practices towards illegalised migrants in local settings, we must ask how inclusive policies and practices in urban settings are negotiated, contested, and co-produced between a wide variety of state/municipal and civil society actors. With our empirical analysis, we would therefore like to follow Holm and Lebuhn (2020, 97), who invite "scholars of urban citizenship (…) to open this 'black box' (…) and think about formats and processes of cooperation and co-production".

The progressive potential of the concept of 'co-production' is stressed particularly in urban studies (Mitlin 2008; Mitlin and Bartlett 2018) and has recently been used by scholars studying civil society participation in the

support of refugees (Gesemann, et. al. 2019; Kreichauf and Mayer 2021). It discusses how horizontal collaborations between civil society actors and municipal actors can make cities more democratic and inclusive. Researchers thereby address the fact that civil society actors are always moving in a field of tension while engaging in "co-production": On the one hand, there is the emancipatory potential to advance transformative policies and practices through, among other things, a general change of consciousness within urban institutions; the mobilisation of structural resources in favour of the work of CSOs; influencing public discourse and, if possible, legal adaptations at the city level. On the other hand, there exists the danger that collaborations may only serve to "fill the gap" left by neo-liberal mechanisms of outsourcing welfare services to private and non-profit partners – and not bring about the structural change needed (van Dyk and Misbach 2016).

To capture the practices and rationalities of the multiplicity of actors involved in urban citizenship struggles, we turn to Agustin's and Jørgensen's (2019) actor-centered typology of solidarity practices. The authors differentiate between "autonomous solidarity", that is, relations and practices produced in self-organised (mainly urban) spaces; "civic solidarity" as activities by civil society initiatives to include (irregular) migrants; and "institutional solidarity" or the formalisation of solidarity, connecting the civil society arena with institutional policy arenas (Agustín and Jørgensen 2019, 39-42). We use this typology, which refers in particular to solidarity practices with refugees, and adapt and refine it in our empirical analysis (section 5) in relation to solidarity practices of CSOs engaged in supporting illegalised migrants.

2. Methodological approach

We examine the practices of CSOs in support of illegalised migrants in the two capital cities Vienna and Bern. Bern has 143.000 (official) inhabitants, 24 percent without Swiss citizenship. Vienna has 1,9 million (official) inhabitants, 30 percent without Austrian citizenship. Although both cities lack reliable estimations of the number of illegalised migrants, our CSO interviews show that their services are widely used.

Both cities engage in policy activities in support of illegalised migrants. The city of Bern claims to be a "City for all" and, within this framing, views illegalised migrants as a target group. Since 2017, the city of Bern has been in the process of a project to introduce a municipal ID Card (Hürlimann 2021). The municipality of Vienna, by contrast, does not claim a public policy towards

illegalised migrants. However, the city calls itself a "City of Human Rights" and passed in 2014 a declaration aiming to establish a human rights approach in all the city's levels of government. It supports policies and CSOs enabling rejected asylum seekers access to welfare services in the form of shadow politics, meaning that it does not actively enhance the visibility of services. In both cities, we find an array of CSOs and social initiatives supporting illegalised migrants and advocating for their rights.

We selected our interview partners through a mix of theoretical sampling, following the typology developed by Agustín and Jørgensen (2019), and an inductive approach that enabled us to gain a broad overview of the field through expert interviews. Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) outline three types of solidarity movements (civic, institutional, and autonomous). Although our focus is not on solidarity movements but rather on practices of civil society organisations, their analytical differentiation and categories offer us a valuable lens for distinguishing "different ways of practicing, organizing, and articulating solidarity" (ibid, 39). In addition, the target group for practices is more limited in our case: We are concerned with migrants and refugees who do not have a regular residence status in the country in which they are residing, either because they have lost it (e.g., through a rejection of the asylum application) or because they never had a legal status in the first place (Triandafyllidou and Bartolini 2020).

In Bern, we draw on empirical material collected by the second author in the context of a study commissioned by the City of Bern in 2020 on the in-/exclusion of illegalised migrants from municipal services. While this study included semi-structured interviews with both municipal officials as well as CSO representatives, we selected for this article three CSOs to analyse in detail. In Vienna, the first field study was done in the context of the research project "Inside the Deportation Gap. Social Membership for Non-Deported Persons" supported by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) between 2016 and 2018. In 2020 and 2021, the first author made further interviews as well as follow-up interviews with the CSOs.

For our analysis, we employ a "thick comparison" approach (Niewöhner and Scheffer 2010), relating distinct research sites and actors to one another as a means of improving analytical clarity rather than of extracting generalizations. This allows us to identify similarities and convergences as well as to point out situated particularities. By employing a "comparative optics", patterns identified in one research site can serve as "a sensor for identifying and mapping (equivalent, analogue, conflicting) patterns in the other" (Knorr-Cetina 1999, 4).

3. Varieties of CSO solidarity practices in support of illegalised migrants

The CSOs engaged in supporting illegalised migrants are confronted with a group whose precarity is particularly grounded in irregular migration status but also often intersectionally linked to their socioeconomic status and their position as a racialised minority. While many challenges faced by illegalised migrants are similar to those faced by all migrants irrespective of migration status (such as discrimination at work, language barriers, or everyday racism), there exist specific vulnerabilities related to illegalised migrants' irregular status: Compared to refugees still in the asylum process or whose refugee status is recognised, this group is excluded from access to a wide range of social services and from the formal labour market. Furthermore, illegalised migrants live in a condition of "deportability" (de Genova 2002) and are confronted with the constant risk and fear of being removed if detected by migration authorities. Accordingly, CSOs engaged in solidarity with illegalised migrants face specific challenges: They have fewer institutional/formal margins and move within a limited "room de maneuver", compared to refugee solidarity. Additionally, the particular situation of illegalised migrants implies that the highest discretion is required. In the following, we elaborate on some characteristics and commonalities that characterize the solidarity work of CSOs in this field. While this section primarily concerns the practical work of CSOs, in section 5 we discuss their varying organisational structures, their form of political engagement and the way they relate to municipal authorities.

3.1 "Getting the basic human needs met": Offering services at low threshold and in a trustful environment

A substantial component of the CSO support on which we focused involves their central role in enabling illegalised migrants access to basic services. CSOs included in our study support illegalised migrants in "getting their basic human needs met" (*Ute Bock*) by "humanizing their everyday life" (*Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers*) and "trying to enable a decent life" (*Medina*). They deliver services for illegalised migrants in diverse areas and settings, offering support in accessing health care, accommodation, legal advocacy, language courses, financial support, and in-kind contributions such as food and clothes.

Some CSOs aim to provide structural and long-term support, such as *Ute Bock* in Vienna, which supports – free of charge and in a fairly professional manner – migrants in finding accommodation, gaining access to educational services as well as legal and social advocacy. *Ute Bock* seeks to provide homeless

migrants with "a home in order to start a new life free from fear" or to provide education "as a cornerstone to build a new life" (Ute Bock). With the similar aim of granting illegalised migrants a longer-term perspective, organisations such as the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* in Bern or the *Desserterursberatung* in Vienna offer legal support regarding regularisation of residence status.

These CSOs attempt to reach a broad range of illegalised migrants and offer services at a low threshold. For this purpose, all organisations offer drop-in consultations for everyone, and migrants are not required to announce their impending arrival or register in advance. To ensure migrants can access their services without fear, they are given the opportunity to seek counselling anonymously. Furthermore, illegalised migrants face the "fear that the alien police are waiting for them around the corner" (*AmberMed*). In this respect, most of the CSO representatives interviewed did not report police raids – despite the lack of direct agreements between the CSO and the police.

All CSOs included in the study have in common that they unbureaucratically provide practical offers, thus building a parallel infrastructure through which the precarious situation of illegalised migrants is addressed. CSOs set up as few eligibility criteria as possible and thereby distinguish themselves from other established institutions in terms of their rationalities. As a representative of *Ute Bock* explains, "need" is the only criterion that counts: "Everyone gets food here. No matter whether they have an income or not. The main thing is that they need this food or donations in kind." The interviewees involved in health care refer to their professional ethos and emphasise that they "want to provide adequate health care to all people as professionally as possible – regardless of their status" (*Neunerhaus*). The *Caritas* interviewee emphasised: "That is our mandate as Caritas: That we somehow organise a place where people can sleep in an emergency. Or that we talk to a person for longer and try to find a solution" (*Caritas*).

Other CSOs with less established structures respond more to acute needs in the short term. The community centre *Medina,* for example, was confronted during the lockdown in spring 2020 with the situation that various welfare institutions closed their doors. With the help of volunteers (both residents and illegalised migrants themselves), *Medina* set up a meal service and erected a gift fence where people in need could get clothes and food bags. During the corona pandemic, they also created opportunities for illegalised migrants to get financial support by establishing a catering service: The migrants cooked the meals in the kitchen of a closed restaurant (whose owners sympathise with the project) and delivered it to homes of their "customers" within the city.

PAGE 332

3.2 "It is not enough to close the wound of a patient": Practicing an interdisciplinary and holistic approach

An important characteristic of the CSOs we studied is their all-round approach towards persons and the interdisciplinary way through which they deliver their services. Given the combined exclusion of illegalised migrants from both the formal labour market and many social entitlements, CSOs encounter people with vital and complex issues who are in difficult situations in various social fields. This becomes evident, for example, in the practices of medical drop-in centres such as those of *AmberMed* and *Neunerhaus* in Vienna or the *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* in Bern: "There are not only medical problems or only social problems. The whole thing is a holistic construct. (...) So the most sensible thing is simply to look at it from several perspectives at the same time." (Neunerhaus) and "Our nurses make medical consultations but at the same time, they also take care of social issues." (Health Care for Sans-Papiers)

Often migrants come with a clearly identifiable, urgent concern but behind this lies a series of other social problems that also need to be addressed in order to bring about a sustainable improvement in the living situation of the people with whom they interact. For this reason, many CSOs work with social workers whose role it is to obtain an initial impression of a person, including information about their housing situation, income, and mental health. This is impressively described by the social worker from the *Neunerhaus*:

> It is not enough for me to close the wound of a patient if he still lives socially isolated on the street. With no income and poor food. Or if he has a psychiatric illness that is untreated. Then it's not enough to close the wound. The wound will rupture again. (...) And I believe that the motivation is also very strongly anchored in this interdisciplinary approach. To learn from each other.

NEUNERHAUS

Cultivating an "interdisciplinary approach" to the needs of illegalised migrants requires working together in a collaborative process and developing a holistic response that relies on knowledge and skills of various persons involved. This integrated service is a relief for illegalised migrants, as it allows them to address multiple needs in one place and thus reduces the risks they face in public spaces. CSOs like *AmberMed, Neunerhaus* and the *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* therefore try to establish access to a comprehensive health system. *AmberMed* not only offers lab tests or x-rays free of charge but has also established a collaboration with a pharmacy in the same building where medical donations are delivered. The representative of the *Health Care for Sans-Papiers*

PAGE 333

"realized that dentistry is a huge issue and that we need to be able to offer help in this regard". Within the scope of their activities, they respond to individual needs and take on new tasks during the process. When migrant receive high hospital bills, they "try to intervene" by "writing off the claims" (*AmberMed*). *Neunerhaus* also offers debt counselling.

Another good example of this interdisciplinary and holistic approach is the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* in Bern. In a network of professionals and volunteers, the centre not only provides legal counselling regarding residency status and legalization but also offers support in labour rights issues (especially for domestic workers), helps migrants to obtain health insurance, accompanies them in the process of getting married, and helps enroll children in elementary school. This coordinated action enables illegalised migrants to access basic services and meet their needs in an unbureaucratic way.

Despite this all-round approach through which CSOs offer broad-based services, they also set certain priorities and focus on some specific services. This contributes to the professionalisation of services they offer and to a reasonable division of labour between the individual CSOs: In Vienna for example, *AmberMed* focuses on gynecology, hypertension patients and patients with chronic illnesses, while *Neunerhaus* is the only institution that runs a dental clinic for uninsured persons.

3.3 "Try to triage into regular systems": Creating pathways to social services

CSOs simultaneously build a parallel infrastructure for illegalised migrants while seeking to facilitate access to regular systems. Whenever possible, they attempt to explore possibilities for including illegalised migrants into existing public social services and welfare institutions:

> If possible, we always triage to regular services – that is one of our core ideas. We don't want to build a hospital next to the regular supply system, because we say that everything already exists. It's about access and admission, that's our main problem.
>
> HEALTH CARE SANS-PAPIERS

According to this interviewee, illegalised migrants face various challenges in obtaining access to health insurance and public subsidies as well as in accessing medical services. "They have many hurdles to overcome when dealing with authorities", also explains the representative of *Ute Bock*. In addition to language barriers, illegalised migrants face complex administrative procedures due to the lack of valid residency documents. CSOs help migrants to navigate

the tricky terrains of bureaucracy, which consists not only of public officials and service providers but also of private companies and welfare institutions. The representative of the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* reports that "such procedures are very time-consuming and can sometimes keep us busy for months". In fact, as many interviewees underlined, navigating the bureaucracy is a very labour-intensive process that cannot be accomplished without specialist knowledge.

CSOs thus take on an essential intermediary role in actualising the rights of illegalised migrants. On the one hand, CSOs seek to establish trusting relationships and an openness towards the situation of precarious migrants within the local street-level bureaucracies by constantly negotiating with authorities and institutions, as the social worker of the *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* reports: "Very much has to be looked at on a case-by-case basis and doesn't work smoothly". This is also stressed by the interviewee of *Neunerhaus*:

> Our aim is not simply to mediate. We try to clarify things well. Possibly with a telephone call beforehand with an appointment. Because our experience is that very often people come to us who have already been sent back and forth three times. And when we refer people to other institutions, (…) we just want to make sure that they are in the right place
>
> NEUNERHAUS

CSOs often facilitate connections between non-citizens and various state agencies, sometimes allowing for personalised relationships that would be impossible in direct interactions between state agents and illegalised migrants. As the social worker employed at the *AmberMed* in Vienna and the nurse working for *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* in Bern emphasise, they invest a lot in personal contacts to doctors, administrative persons at hospitals, and insurance employees – to build up awareness, to promote goodwill and to create relationships of trust: "When hospital entries are necessary, we act as intermediaries, making referrals to trusted medical professionals in hospitals when possible and guaranteeing funding." (Health Care for Sans-Papiers) The latter is needed because hospital administrations, which are increasingly driven by a business logic, often react with suspicion if they do not have a cost guarantee. For complex and expensive treatments, *AmberMed* liaise with mainstream hospitals and make deals to provide services to migrants, e.g., for women with a limited budget to give birth at a clinic. This shows that the CSO representatives must consider the different organisational cultures, norms and logics that guide the work of both local government officials and professionals in public institutions, such as doctors, social workers, or teachers. With their extensive experience, the CSOs know the rationales and moral frames of certain officials and

perform a work of translation between the people on the ground and the cultures of different bureaucracies, whose logics and rules are far from obvious.

3.4 "Because relationships are essential": Caring and creating social relations

We argue that facilitating access to regular systems for illegalised migrants not only involves specific knowledge and information but is also a process of building social relations and of (often invisible) care work. One important but often invisible aspect of CSO work is the creation of social and affective relations and the provision of care. This form of work is an important part of the solidarity practices of all the CSOs interviewed, although it takes different forms of relationships depending on the institutional context and the self-perception of the organisations.

It is thanks to long-established relationships that illegalised migrants build trust to CSO staff and turn to them in the first place. Often, because of fear of being noticed by the immigrant authorities, illegalised migrants would not dare to go to a hospital or enroll a child in school. CSOs encourage illegalised migrants to do so and even travel with them to the offices and institutions, as the representative of *Medina* reports: "When we do triage, we accompany people all the way to the door. Because the distrust is huge, especially toward the authorities." (Medina) This close companionship and the establishment of trusting relationships is also essential for the preparation of a regularisation application, as the legal advisor of the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* explains. She emphasises that it should not be the case "that a sans-papiers feels like he or she is being interrogated as part of an asylum procedure by the immigrant office". Rather, as an advisor of the *Ute Bock* explains, they are claiming rights on behalf of the migrants and, accordingly, are clearly taking sides with them.

In addition to practical matters such as medical and administrative support and basic service delivery, the CSOs offer psychosocial support and provide illegalised migrants the opportunity to talk about the difficulties (e.g., fear of deportation, lacking perspectives for the future, or issues such as caring about a family left behind) that directly stem from their irregular residency status. They engage in "the so-called atmosphere management (…) to make people arrive well", as the interviewee of *Neunerhaus* explains:

> It is also about helping illegalised persons who actually have no prospects and where there is not much you can do. What you can always do is offer the relationship and the conversation. That doesn't sound like much. But sometimes it can be a lot.
>
> NEUNERHAUS

PAGE 336
A member of the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* reports that the opportunity to "speak out" is already a great relief for many migrants: "It is central for the people who often have to live as hidden as possible, that there is a place for a 'coming-out', and that they finally can tell their story to somebody, without fear." (Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers) This emphasis on active listening and showing compassion is evident in all interviews with CSOs. At the same time, the nature and intensity of interpersonal encounters differs by CSO. Organisations that work in a more institutionalised setting often tend to maintain more professional and less personal and intimate relationships with migrants.

4. The landscape of civil society organisations engaged with illegalised migrants in Vienna and Bern

In the following analysis, we discuss for each type of CSO (civic, institutional, and autonomous, Agustín and Jørgensen 2019) the organisational structures, the human and financial resources they can mobilise, their form of political engagement and the way they relate to municipal authorities. We thereby also address the potential, challenges and limits that arise in the respective organisations in terms of building an urban infrastructure of solidarity and fostering urban citizenship.

4.1 Civic CSOs

The organisations we conceptualise as examples of civic CSOs are *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* in Bern, *AmberMed* in Vienna and the refugee project *Ute Bock* in Vienna. What characterises these three CSOs is that they are "receptive to the idea that the vulnerabilities, which prevent people from participating on equal terms, must be eliminated" (Agustin and Jørgensen, 2019, 41). The vulnerabilities that CSOs address through their engagement are rooted in the restrictive migration regime that excludes people without residency status from basic rights. In the case of the three CSOs portrayed here, the right to health care (*AmberMed* and *Health Care for Sans-Papiers*) and the right to housing *(Ute Bock)* are addressed. With their commitment, the CSOs set up a parallel infrastructure outside the institutions of the welfare state to guarantee a substitute to regular structures of the social system. In this sense, they mobilise resources to mitigate the social consequences of denied rights.

The three organisations have in common that their creation as well as their current practice is rooted in a charitable logic. *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* was founded in 2007 and is part of a large, established welfare organisation, the Red Cross Switzerland. At their drop-in centre located on the outskirts of Bern,

PAGE 337

Table 14.1 Types of different civil society organisations in support of illegalised migrants

	Civic CSO	*Institutional CSO*	*Autonomous CSO*
Main activities	Medical support, shelter, educational services, provision of basic assistance	Welfare services as well as juridical and social support,	Provision of legal and social advice, sharing resources and knowledge, creating a space for encounter
Formalisation	Middle to high (in close relation with welfare associations; embedded or independent)	High (some commissioned by the city)	Low (self-organisation), participative in a non-hierarchical way
Human resources	Professionals and volunteers	Mainly professionals, volunteers as supplementary	Mainly volunteers
Financial basis	Mix of donations and support by municipal institutions, precarious financial base	Support by public institutions, donations, stable financial base	Only by donations – no funding from state/city
Political engagement	Humanitarian orientation and advocacy for illegalised migrants	Advocacy for illegalised migrants, campaigns	Protest, claim-making, empowerment, transformative orientation
Relations to municipality	Claim-making towards municipalities for getting more resources	Rather cooperative, acting as intermediaries to expand outreach, claim-making directed to the municipality	No/selective relations

they currently provide health services to 300 patients a year, a number that is growing annually. About half of the patients are rejected asylum seekers, the other half consists of illegalised migrants who are not known to the authorities. *AmberMed* was established in 2004 and consists of a volunteer team of doctors, therapists, interpreters and assistants providing medical care "to all people who, for whatever reason, do not have health insurance". They also face growing demand and currently treat around 3.300 patients per year, a large proportion of which are people with uncertain or irregular status. *Ute Bock* has its origins in the humanitarian commitment of a retired social worker named Ute Bock, who began in 2002 organising housing and support for refugees in need. In the meantime, numerous employees, social workers and volunteers keep Ute Bock's vision alive. They offer accommodation for about 300 people, 90 of which reside in the *Ute Bock* facilities and about 200 of which live in separate flats supervised by the *Ute Bock* staff. Most of the migrants supported by *Ute Bock* are illegalised persons who don't have legal access to housing and who are at risk of becoming homeless.

The work of civic CSOs is characterised by a simultaneous reliance on and contribution to "collaborative relations within and between different social groups" (Agustin and Jørgensen 2019, 41). The involvement of volunteers plays a major role in this. In *AmberMed* and in the *Health Care for Sans-Papiers*, the health care services are provided by volunteer doctors who work unpaid during certain days of the month. As the interviewee from *AmberMed* explains, in addition to "loving their job" and "finding meaningful activity", volunteers are motivated by the opportunity to "immerse themselves in a world of life they wouldn't otherwise know". The representative of *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* emphasises that the doctors appreciate the rare opportunity to work outside the highly rationalised health care system.

At the same time, this arrangement with volunteers also brings with it various challenges, as reflected in statements made by our interviewees. One limitation is the reliability and sustainability of their service-provision due to voluntarism, which may have a negative impact especially on the quality of health care services: As most of the doctors are volunteering during their spare time, the CSOs are dependent on their limited availabilities. The result for patients is that they are usually treated by a different doctor each time. In addition, their commitments may not always be very binding, as the interviewee from *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* problematises:

> A big challenge for us is to maintain the offer, and to be able to provide our services as constantly as possible, despite the fluctuating volunteers. Because suddenly a volunteer doctor jumps off again. (…) With some it

> takes very little and then they are already gone. This can happen even if the parking space in front of the house is not ready for them.
>
> HEALTH CARE SANS-PAPIERS

In addition, during the Corona pandemic, limits also emerged regarding the sustainability of the services through volunteering, as many of the volunteer doctors were no longer able to offer their services on the spot due to their age (which placed them into a risk group).

Another difficulty emerges in terms of the nature of the relationships between volunteers and migrants: Even though the interviewees emphasise the value of these interpersonal encounters between people in very different life situations, doctors seem not always to have the sensitive diversity-conscious attitude the organiser of the clinic would wish:

> These doctors don't necessarily bring with them transcultural sensitivity – which is quite a challenge. After all, the doctors are not necessarily people who are easily trainable. Sometimes they assume that they can just do everything.
>
> HEALTH CARE SANS-PAPIERS

Thus, it can be an obstacle that the service providers are not sufficiently sensitive to the asymmetrical power relations that shape the encounters between patients as aid-receivers and volunteers as aid-providers. Despite efforts of volunteers to provide non-discriminatory care, questions of deservingness may shape a patient's performance in the humanitarian space of migrant health care (Huschke 2014).

A further challenge to the work of civic CSOs – and which results in limited resources – is their dependence on financial donations. *AmberMed* relies on donations from individuals and institutions for half of the funding of its services and mobilizes the other half through a mix of official subsidies, such as health insurance, state and municipal funds, as well as through cooperation with established welfare institutions. *Ute Bock* also relies heavily on donations, especially for services for illegalised migrants, while those for asylum seekers are funded by the City of Vienna. The *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* is fully financed by the Swiss Red Cross, which in turn relies heavily on donations. Thereby, fundraising for illegalised migrants seems to be more challenging than for other people in need of aid.

For the CSOs, these limited financial resources mean they lack the funds to facilitate the full range of services they wish they could (and should) provide. For example, all CSOs interviewed report having too little money to work

with trained interpreters. Therefore, they must overcome the difficulties of communication and lack of language skills with the support of volunteers and migrants' family members. The CSOs must also cut back on their offerings in other areas: The two medical drop-in centres report that severe and expensive diseases like cancer are a big challenge to treat, which shows that the parallel health system they put up necessarily lags behind the one accessible to legal residents. Thereby, for uninsured patients, examinations and treatments are limited to the strictly necessary, unless some professionals and donators are willing to enable more. *Ute Bock* also faces a capacity bottleneck: Although the organisation offers accommodation for 300 people, they have so many requests that they cannot accommodate them all.

To sum up, our analysis of the civic CSOs shows that, while they are making every possible effort to include illegalised migrants, inclusion remains partial and precarious, and exclusion is an ever-present threat. The civic CSOs we studied compensate for the absence of regular health care and accommodation by developing structures in which the services take place outside the regular system. In this sense, their "engagement is not transformative of the state's legal framework but can rather be seen as a necessary supplement or alternative social framework based on the collaboration with the authorities, municipalities, and schools as well as diverse range of voluntary activities" (Agustin and Jørgensen 2019, 73). CSOs compensate for a structural inappropriateness that can be observed within public systems. This makes these CSOs equally actors of inclusion and exclusion: they maintain a parallel structure and, through this, relieve the mainstream health or accommodation system. Leerkes (2016) discussed such arrangements as "poor house policies": He argues that in "the shadow of the Western welfare states, we now find elementary and, in many cases, rather archaic practices of poor relief and anti-pauperism measures for certain categories of unauthorised immigrants" (ibid, 140). From this point of view, CSOs do not tackle structural inequalities nor the roots of these inequalities. The result of their practices is thus far from realising any form of universal citizenship right with the possibility of participation by the migrants themselves.

We support to some extent this critical assessment of the role of civic CSOs: Our analysis of the practices of civic CSOs shows that they alone cannot compensate for the lack of social infrastructure for illegalised migrants and cannot guarantee universal rights. The risk is high that illegalised migrants turn into passive recipients of charitable aid and are dependent on there being people "with a good heart". This aspect has also been discussed in the literature in relation to volunteering for the newcomers: van Dyk and Misbach (2016, 209) argue that volunteers are called upon to take care of refugees and thereby assume a "gap-filler" function in the context of austerity policies. According to

them, this goes hand in hand with "a reinterpretation of the social question into one of a caring community" (ibid, 210), whereby "social rights are replaced by a culture of charitable helping" (ibid, 222).

In line with these considerations, in our case civic CSOs perform a "gap-filler" function, whereby illegalised migrants, compared to recognised refugees or asylum-seekers, can hardly claim services from the state. As the representative of the *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* says herself: "I would say that we are taking quite a burden off the hospitals and especially the emergency services. And, of course, we're thereby also relieving the welfare state." This shows that CSO actors are aware of these structural gaps and their role therein. In this sense, we argue that civic CSOs cannot be reduced to the role of simple "charitable helpers", as they simultaneously struggle with this role in various ways and are involved in a form of work that points beyond the status quo (as we presented in section 4):

First, in contrast to a restrictive governmental approach, civic CSOs unconditionally recognise migrants as being entitled to services and as being de-facto part of the society. Although the activities of the CSOs are often described primarily as practical support, both the intentions and implications of CSOs' engagement in our examples transgress a humanitarian-only approach. For example, although the interviewee from the *Health Care for Sans-Papiers* states that they are not engaged in "political activism" and "are clearly doing humanitarian work", she argues at the same time for an "unconditional right to good health care, regardless of residence status", aiming to produce better conditions for illegalised migrants by means of their concrete actions.

Second, through their dedicated way of collaboration with professionals and through awareness raising about the situation of illegalised migrants, civic CSOs participate in building an urban infrastructure of solidarity. The example of *AmberMed* is instructive in this regard: As a humanitarian organisation, they do not claim to be 'neutral' but rather demonstrate a political stance by pointing out its budgetary limitations and the political responsibility of the municipality to mobilise more resources to provide sustainable services. They argue that, by providing basic health services to so many people without health insurance, they are making an essential contribution to the city's well-being. In this regard, they ask the municipality to fund them more generously and cover their entire budget. However, since the municipality did not respond to their request for an appointment, they recently launched a public campaign to reach the politicians and build up public pressure to bring them into negotiations.

4.2 Institutional CSOs

The organisations we see as manifestations of institutional solidarity are the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* in Bern and *Caritas* in Vienna. Institutional

solidarity refers, according to Agustín and Jørgensen (2019, 42), to "the formalization of solidarity relations" and describes "the capacity of enabling (infra)structures" to connect the civil society arena with the arena of policymaking. CSOs that perform this type of institutional solidarity try to use their power, networks, and alliances to develop an impact on public institutions on different scales (municipal, federal, international). Based on collaboration with authorities such as municipalities and established welfare organisations, institutional CSOs aim to challenge exclusionary policies and practices and advocate for a more inclusive approach.

We see two different organisational characteristics of institutional CSOs in our field: While some, like *Caritas* in Vienna, are directly commissioned by the city, others like the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* in Bern do not have a direct mandate but maintain close relations to the municipal authorities. The two CSOs have in common that they act as intermediaries to expand outreach: CSOs enjoy a higher level of trust from illegalised migrants than the authorities, and they are able to mediate between migrants and local social or migration authorities. Of significance in this regard in Switzerland is the fact that CSOs (in contrast to most municipal authorities) are not subjected to the "duty to transmission" (Meldepflicht), a federal law that requires that information about 'illegal residents' be shared with national migration authorities.

In Vienna, The *Caritas Asylum Centre* is an operative partner on behalf of the welfare department of the municipality (Vienna Social Fund FSW) in providing services such as accommodation and social counselling both for asylum seekers and rejected asylum seekers (Ataç 2019). At the central service point, the counsellors from *Caritas* meet with migrants, including with those holding no or only precarious legal status. Although the *Caritas Asylum Centre* is not commissioned by the municipality nor officially responsible for supporting illegalised migrants, they have other service points such as *Caritas Sozialberatung Wien,* where they consult persons who are not eligible for social benefits. At this service point, the organisation uses its knowledge and networks to provide services to people who would otherwise fall through the net. In some cases, the counsellors may act as gatekeepers when they are pushing hardship cases to influence local administrative decisions. In other cases, they use their limited budget, derived from donations, and their links to the church to offer services. In this example of institutional solidarity, *Caritas* uses its infrastructure acquired through providing services on behalf of the municipality to expand the services to illegalised migrants.

The *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* in Bern was created in 2005 in the wake of a series of church occupations by illegalised migrants. It is an independent association, supported by churches, humanitarian organisations, trade unions

and engaged individuals. Although the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* has no contractual relationship with the city, it maintains close - but not always conflict-free - relations with different municipal authorities. This is manifested, for example, in its geographical location: the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* has its office and meeting rooms in a municipal building, where the city's *Office for issues of migration and racism* is located. The *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* benefits from 'short routes' to authorities with whom they are in contact for their support of illegalised migrants.

Institutional CSOs orchestrate complex interactions between various actors in order to facilitate access for illegalised migrants to social resources and municipal services. The professionals of these organisations are not only familiar with the various legal frameworks but also know who in the city might be receptive to which issue and can "pick up the phone and discuss the concern directly", as a representative of the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* puts it. In both organisations, counsellors find ways of traversing the gaps between officials and (non-)citizens and translate complex life circumstances into persuasive cases framed in terms of legal definitions. They try to establish a culture of mutual trust between legal advisers and local authorities – although, as the counsellor of the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* points out, this does not work equally well in every department and office of the city administration. Therefore, they try to sensitise urban authorities to the fact that they have leeway and can mitigate the control strategies derived from national policies in their concrete practice. From the perspective of the counsellors at *Caritas*, their influence on the municipalities' decisions exists on a more informal level and they can use their position and knowledge to push cases of hardship to influence administrative decisions: "It's always a case-by-case decision, it's a point of argument" (*Caritas*).

We also consider organisations as institutional CSOs that offer services for a specific category of 'vulnerable persons', including migrants who are not legally entitled to these services. *Neunerhaus* is a social organisation in Vienna that offers services such as medical care, housing, and counselling to homeless people and people at risk of poverty. *House Frida* is a housing project for homeless migrant women and their children in Vienna. Financed by the *Caritas*, it offers a mother-child residence and acute places that provide accommodation for mothers in distress and their children. Both organisations allow non-status people in cooperation with the municipality to 'slip in' and find ways to give them access to their services. The same is the case with the *Women's Shelter* in Bern, where women affected by domestic violence and their children receive protection, counselling, and temporary shelter. This organisation, which is partly financed by public funds, makes no distinction regarding the residence

status of women and their children seeking refuge. However, it is important to mention that not all these organisations have the capacity to offer sustainable services for vulnerable illegalised migrants.

Institutional CSOs such as the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers, Neunerhaus* or *Caritas* use their status as established NGOs with expertise to draw the attention of policymakers and the public to the situation of illegalised migrants. The *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* in Bern, for example, has designed a public city tour that leads to various places and institutions in which illegalised migrants experience exclusion or danger, such as medical emergency centres, public places, prisons, or schools. Illegalised persons themselves participated in the design of this city tour and give testimonies about the internal borders they experience in their everyday life. Furthermore, the *Neunerhaus* as well as the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* address various issues in the lives of illegalised migrants at the political level, making political campaigns in order to raise social awareness among urban residents. An effective strategy in this sense is the annual 'sponsor run' organised by the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers.* At this fundraising event, illegalised migrants run through the city together with city council members or local celebrities. In this sense, it is also powerful in terms of channelling urban solidarity.

One goal of institutional CSOs is to formalise both discretionary practices within the municipal bureaucracy as well as collaborations between civil society and municipalities. In this respect, the initiative for the introduction of a municipal identity card (ID) in Bern is an illustrative example in which the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* took a leading role: They organized workshops with illegalised migrants and other civil society actors on their visions for a municipal identity card and then approached the city government and municipal parliamentarians. As a consequence of these mobilisations, the concept of a municipal ID was introduced into the city's 'Integration Priority Plan 2018-2021' (City of Bern 2018). Since then, a movement to campaign for the municipal ID has emerged under the slogan "We are all Bern". A working group including various municipal officials as well as representatives of the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* set up by the city is currently concretising the project of a municipal ID. In addition to their involvement in this municipal working group, representatives from the *Advice Centre for Sans-Papiers* collaborate with activists from 'We are all Bern in forming an alliance of migrant organisations and urban social movements to advocate for a 'City for all'.

Through both their dedicated way of collaborating with city officials and their efforts to build a common political terrain within civil society, the institutional CSOs we studied are crucial actors that co-produce an urban infrastructure of solidarity (Holm and Lebuhn 2019; Kreichauf and Mayer 2021).

PAGE 345

However, there is often much more focus on the municipal representatives of cities where inclusive policies towards illegalised migrants are established, while the work of institutional CSOs is less visible and often also less recognised. The municipality is enabled to act beyond its formal role and expand its outreach and impact through its collaboration with CSOs that act as intermediaries between local authorities and illegalised migrants (Delvino and Spencer 2019). Urban authorities are thereby dependent on the CSOs; on their skills, networks as well as the outcome of their work.

However, the power hierarchies in which these collaborations between institutional CSOs and the municipality take place should not be overlooked. Indeed, the relationship between municipality and CSOs is shaped by an asymmetrical power balance. As Nicholls and Uitermark (2016, 32) emphasise, local governments are selective in their relations with CSOs and prioritise those with whom they can build reliable relations. Some municipalities aspire to have civil society acting as an extension of local government and becoming part of a web of governance "rather than an uncontrollable and tangled site that nourishes multiple resistances" (ibid). This makes institutional CSOs dependent of the decisions of urban authorities. A change in policy may decrease their sphere of impact as gatekeepers, as the example of Vienna shows: In our interviews in 2015 and 2016, counsellors of *Caritas* were more optimistic and brought many examples of how they can bring back into basic services migrants who are not eligible. During follow-up interviews in 2020, they reported that this had become much more difficult due to a change in policy, through which the criteria for accessing basic services became much narrower and the number of positive responses from the municipal welfare actors became fewer. In Bern, too, much about openness towards CSOs and about illegalised migrants' fate in the city depends on the political power relations in the municipal government and on some progressive leaders, who may also at some point be replaced.

4.3 Autonomous CSOs

The organisations we describe as autonomous CSOs are the Deserteur's and Refugee's Counselling Centre (*Deserteursberatung*) in Vienna and the mobile community centre called *Medina* in Bern. According to Agustín and Jørgensen (2019, 40), autonomous solidarity "is based in forms of horizontal participation such as direct democracy and assemblies" to enable equality between citizens and non-citizens in self-organised (mainly urban) spaces. In line with the understanding of autonomous solidarity, our examples take more activist rather than charitable forms and aim to create community spaces that are potentially transformative, providing an alternative to established forms of support.

PAGE 346

In Vienna, there exist several organisations such as *Asyl in Not*, *Helping Hands* and *Deserteursberatung,* which offer independent legal counselling, especially for illegalised migrants who are otherwise not entitled. The *Deserteursberatung* was founded in 1992 and offers free legal counselling made possible through volunteers and donations. The organisation consists of a young team of mostly students or graduates of law, social work, and social sciences, as well as of recognised refugees. *Medina* was founded in 2019 and is committed to "low-threshold inclusion of people in the city who find themselves in difficult circumstances". Both organisations are self-organised and focus on building horizontal relationships within these self-organised structures. The activities are aimed at people who fall through the gaps of the social system. Rather than simply stepping into the gap, however, they are instead engaged in creating "infrastructures of dissent", aiming to work against exclusion and injustice, as well as producing dissent (Agustín and Jørgensen 2019, 40).

Collaboration at eye-level between illegalised migrants and citizens is considered by the representatives of the *Deserteursberatung* the best way to challenge the precarious position of illegalised migrants in society. Establishing trust with them and treating each legal case confidently is a foundational principle of the *Deserteursberatung.* They offer counselling for persons "who are sent away by other organisations", "who are labelled as illegal", asylum seekers with a negative decision, people in detention pending deportation, as well as people in "hopeless procedures" (*Deserteursberatung*). As reported by the counsellor of *Deserteursberatung*, migrants often do not know what legal status they have during the procedure, nor what may be the consequences of certain steps in their legal procedure. Rather than simply instructing migrants on what to do, *Deserteursberatung* has an inclusive approach and seeks to incorporate an empowerment perspective. Their aim is:

> to give the people as much knowledge as possible about their own situation or about the procedure or further steps and strategies. So that the people are as self-determined as possible (…). They should be able to decide for themselves what paths they want to take. That is the basic idea behind it (…), to let them decide. We only consult. Or we try to show the consequences of different decisions.

The counselling takes place according to the "four-eyes-principle", which means they "never conduct counselling sessions alone but always in teams of two counsellors – which distinguishes us from other organisations" (*Deserteursberatung*). The idea is to share responsibility and knowledge but also to counterbalance the disadvantages of volunteering, such as lack of

professionalism or reliance on a single person. With this collaborative way of working, they contribute to sustainable commitment, improve performance, and strengthen relationships of trust.

The mobile community centre *Medina* in Bern, which involves Swiss citizens, refugees and EU migrants, places a strong emphasis on the creation of an environment for personal exchange and even friendships. They have created a self-organised space within the city, where everyday encounters can take place. According to the representative of *Medina*, it is important that "we do not simply hand out food for people who are hungry but cook together". She continues:

> What else we do with people: Go hiking, take a walk. Cut each other's hair, have movie nights. We also have a party together quite often. It's about us doing something together. Because relationships are essential.
>
> MEDINA

The shared "off-topic" time and the creation of "a home for those who do not belong" (*Medina*) is not only a side effect but a central goal of *Medina's* activities. Thereby, they are helping "to undo dichotomous categorizations" between citizen and non-citizen, as they "define their members by doing, like in the idea of 'activist citizens'" (Agustín and Jørgensen 2019, 40). By doing so, they aim to enable empowerment processes and to facilitate the autonomous agency of illegalised migrants.

For the development of interpersonal affiliations and caring relations, Medina stresses the importance of their "presence on the square". Since there are frequent controls by the cantonal police on this central square, suggesting it is a 'safe space' misrepresents the reality. However, the activists of *Medina* try to counter the police authorities with civil disobedience, for example with collective actions like encircling the police officers and attentively observing the controls assessed as racial profiling. Another strategy, according to the interviewee of *Medina*, is "to involve the cops in a conversation, until the people the [illegalised migrants] could disappear". *Medina* also has an additional safe space in a more protected setting where volunteers and migrants can retreat for consultation sessions.

Both organisations aim to produce a new imaginary and a practical alternative as a micro-example on how solidarity work can provide alternatives (Agustín and Jørgensen 2019). Instead of "taking or challenging power, new forms of communities are created as a strategy to slip away from power" (ibid, 40). *Medina* and *Deserteursberatung* take decisions on a grassroot level in weekly plenary sessions and aim to work with as little hierarchy as possible. As

the interviewee of *Deserteursberatung* mentions, they also question their own privileges from a perspective of critical whiteness:

> But most of our counsellors are white people. Many of them are academics and we are in this class-knowledge-structure. For this reason, we are not in a hierarchy-free space. At least we try: If it is not possible to make it hierarchy-free during the counselling, then we try it in our internal structure, through decision making on a grassroots level.
>
> DESERTEURSBERATUNG

Another commonality among both autonomous CSOs we studied is that they explicitly see themselves as anti-racist organisations and not as charitable institutions. As activists from the *Deserteursberatung* emphasise, their main principle is economic, political, and organisational independence. The interviewee of *Medina* explains that they have a clear political commitment: "We are anti-capitalist, anti-racist, we criticise our society." At the same time, they distance themselves from political organisations that are merely "verbally anti-racist": "We do political work but on a practical level." By creating a self-organised space, they "try to change structures and thereby make a difference in the everyday of migrants' realities" (*Medina*).

Zamponi's (2017) concept of "direct social action" describes these rather 'in-between' actions, that is, "actions that do not primarily focus upon claiming something from the state or other power-holders but that instead focus upon directly transforming some specific aspects of society by means of the action itself" (97). Direct social actions can be political and humanitarian at the same time. Given the amount of hands-on support, however, some CSOs regret that they often have limited time resources for political work. The interviewee of the *Deserteursberatung* reports:

> It comes up again every other month, I'm sure, in our plenary sessions: 'We should do more and could do more. What is there right now (at the policy level) that can be supported?' But independently, it's often difficult for us.
>
> DESERTEURSBERATUNG

Autonomous CSOs insist on their independence from the city, even though they sometimes interact with the local government and cooperate with municipal agencies beyond their efforts to push the local setting for more inclusive policies. Although they are outside of municipal governance mechanisms, they

are an important part of the city's infrastructure of solidarity for illegalised migrants and are engaged in what Belloni (2016) calls "welfare from below".

5. Conclusion

In this article, we highlight the importance of the practices of CSOs engaged with illegalised migrants in urban settings. Our interviews with representatives of local CSOs in Vienna and Bern have brought to light a diversity of more and less visible solidarity practices towards illegalised migrants. CSOs are central actors in building-up an urban "infrastructure of solidarity" (Schilliger 2020). They are well connected, work collaboratively, and have an interdisciplinary approach to meeting the vital and complex needs of people without legal status. They not only establish offers of everyday support, provide legal advice to migrants as well as expertise to city governments, but they also engage in political advocacy, create safe spaces, and develop relations of care. Given the scope of the CSO's solidarity practices towards illegalised migrants, we can confirm what other researchers have analysed regarding support initiatives for refugees: The boundaries between humanitarian volunteerism, often described as 'apolitical', and self-organised projects by activists critical of the state, are shifting and contested (Kreichauf and Mayer 2021: 10, della Porta/Steinhilper 2021). The organisations we examined seek a middle ground between providing social services ('deliver') and political mobilisation ('demand'), fostering forms of solidarity that aim to strengthen communities against injustice (de Jong and Ataç 2017). We argue that, in light of the particular context in which illegalised migrants are mainly produced and governed through political decisions of actors of the nation-states, CSOs and their solidarity practices are inevitably linked to political dissent, even if they are mainly engaged with humanitarian reasons (which aligns with what Vandevoordt 2019 terms 'subversive humanitarianism').

In our in-depth analysis of the multifaceted landscape of CSOs, we identified differences between the organisations in terms of their organisational form, the funding structures, the composition of the staff, their (political) self-conception as well as their relationships to the municipalities. Agustín and Jørgensen's (2019) typology, which has been developed in the context of solidarity practices towards a broader category of refugees, is also valuable to specify the in-/visible politics of solidarity towards illegalised migrants and to analyse the CSO's connections to the arena of urban institutional politics. While most CSOs are engaged in some forms of negotiation with urban

authorities and municipal bureaucracies, we find diverging practices of their entanglements with urban governments: Institutional CSOs establish a collaborative interplay with city officials to formalise solidarity practices; civic CSOs, in contrast, engage more in (often invisible) advocacy and awareness-raising within the municipal bureaucracy. Autonomous CSOs, in turn, aim to provide self-organised alternatives to institutional forms of support and prefer to establish limited/no direct relations with the municipality.

In contrast to the context of Agustín and Jørgensen's research on refugee solidarity initiatives, the civil society organisations we studied operate in an even more restrictive political context that structures the conditions under which they work: often they have few public resources at their disposal, which results in requiring a lot of energy for mobilising financial resources in order to be able to act at all. Since the group of illegalised migrants has fewer social entitlements than asylum seekers, it is necessary to simultaneously build a parallel infrastructure to cover basic needs and promote access to the regular system. Consequently, the relationships with municipal departments are multi-layered and marked by tensions, as CSOs are to varying degrees dependent on the decisions of the city government. At the same time, CSOs are not simply passive objects. They find ways to realise their aims and broaden their impact by developing alternative sources of funding, campaigning and politicising the issue, as well as using and constantly deepening their networks of solidarity within the city. The latter – the capacity to network and build political alliances among civil society actors – is, according to our analysis, a crucial component of a productive and sustainable interplay between municipalities and civil society actors.

The solidarity practices of CSOs we have analysed are often less spectacular and far more invisible than city official's public declarations of inclusive migration policies or political claims by grassroots movements. We argue that the CSO's contribution and role has thus far not been sufficiently explored and recognised in debates on urban citizenship, as their practices are not adequately conceptualised in a simplistic dichotomisation between urban citizenship "from above" versus "from below". In our view, the perspective of "co-production" is promising here, as it enables a deeper examination of negotiation processes between different actors on the municipal level. Co-production can thereby be understood as a political process that strives not only for a material improvement in terms of meeting the basic needs of all city residents but that also builds knowledge and relationships. These conflictual but also consensual relations between local actors form the dynamics in which the conditions of urban citizenship emerges and transversal solidarity unfolds.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our interview partners in Bern and Vienna for their willingness and time to tell us about their work. We are also thankful to Hannah Kentouche for her support in the research and to Martin Bak Jørgensen and Carl-Ulrik Schierup for helpful comments.

References

Agustin, Ó. G., and M. B. Jørgensen (2019). *Solidarity and the 'Refugee Crisis' in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Ataç, I. (2019). "Deserving Shelter: Conditional Access to Accommodation for Rejected Asylum Seekers in Austria, the Netherlands, and Sweden." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 17.1: 44-60.

Ataç, I., T. Schütze, and V. Reitter (2020). „Local responses in restrictive national policy contexts: welfare provisions for non-removed rejected asylum seekers in Amsterdam, Stockholm and Vienna." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43.16: 115-134.

Ataç, I., K. Rygiel, and M. Stierl (2021). "Building Transversal Solidarities in European Cities: Open Harbours, Safe Communities, Home." *Critical Sociology* 47.6: 923-939.

Bauder, H. (2019). "Urban Sanctuary in Context." In Darling, J., and H. Bauder (eds.) *Sanctuary cities and urban struggles: Rescaling migration, citizenship, and rights.* Manchester University Press: 25-49.

Bauder H. (2021). "Urban migrant and refugee solidarity beyond city limits." *Urban Studies* (2021). Pre-print. https://doi:10.1177/0042098020976308

Belloni, M. (2016). "Learning How to Squat: Cooperation and Conflict between Refugees and Natives in Rome." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29.4: 506-527.

Bourdieu, P. (1989). "Social Space and Symbolic Power." *Sociological Theory* 7.1: 12-25.

Christoph, W., and S. Kron (eds.) (2019). *Solidarity Cities in Europe: Charity or Pathsways to Citizenship – A New Urban Policy Approach*. Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.

City of Bern (2018). *Schwerpunkteplan 2018-2021 zur Umsetzung des Leitbildes zur Integrationspolitik.* Online: https://www.bern.ch/mediencenter/medienmitteilungen/aktuell_ptk/stadt-fuer-alle-mit-fokus-migration-die-ziele-sind-definiert/dokumente/schwerpunkteplan-2018-2021.pdf/download

Darling, J. (2017). "Acts, ambiguities, and the labour of contesting citizenship." *Citizenship Studies* 21.6: 727-736.

Darling, J., and V. Squire (2012). Everyday enactments of sanctuary. The UK City of Sanctuary movement. In Lippert, R., and S. Rehaag (eds.) *Sanctuary Practices in International Perspective. Migration, Citizenship and Social Movements.* Routledge: 191-204.

de Genova, N. (2002). “Migrant ‘illegality’ and deportability in everyday life.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* vol. 31: 419-447.

de Graauw, E. (2016). *Making immigrant rights real: Non-profits and the politics of integration in San Francisco.* Cornell University.

de Graauw, E. (2021). “City Government Activists and the Rights of Undocumented Immigrants: Fostering Urban Citizenship within the Confines of US Federalism.” *Antipode* 53.2: 379-398.

de Jong, S., and I. Ataç (2017). “Demand and Deliver: Refugee Support Organisations in Austria.” *Social Inclusion* 5.3: 28-37.

della Porta D., and E. Steinhilper (2021). “Introduction: Solidarities in Motion: Hybridity and Change in Migrant Support Practices.” *Critical Sociology* 47.2: 175-185.

Delvino, N., and S. Spencer (2019*). Migrants with Irregular Status in Europe: Guidance for municipalities*. Oxford: COMPAS. URL: https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2019/migrants-with-irregular-status-in-europe-guidance-for-municipalities/

Gesemann, F., A. Seidel, and M. Mayer (2019). *Entwicklung und Nachhaltigkeit von Willkommensinitiativen*. vhw (Bundesverband für Wohnen und Stadtentwicklung)

Hajer, M., and M. Ambrosini (2020). “Who help illegalized migrants? Supporters of illegalized migrants in Amsterdam and Turin.” *REMHU: Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana* 28.59: 199-216.

Holm, A., and H. Lebuhn (2020). “Strengthening Citizenship in Berlin. Three Modes of Claiming and Expanding Rights and Resources at the Local Level.” In Turner, B., H. Wolf, G. Fitzi, and J. Mackert (eds.) *Urban Change and Citizenship in Times of Crisis. Vol. 3: Figurations of Conflict and Resistance*. Routledge: 81-101.

Hürlimann, B. (2021). “Ein Ausweis für die Unsichtbaren.” *Republik* 31.08.2021, https://www.republik.ch/2021/08/31/ein-ausweis-fuer-die-unsichtbaren

Huschke, S. (2014). “Performing deservingness: humanitarian health care provision for migrants in Germany.” *Social Science & Medicine* 120: 352-359.

Isin, E. F., and B.S. Turner (2002). “Citizenship Studies: An Introduction.” In Isin, E. F. and B. S. Turner (eds.) *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*. SAGE Publishing: 1-10.

Kaufmann, D., and D. Strebel (2020). “Urbanising migration policy-making: Urban policies in support of illegalized migrants in Geneva and Zürich.” *Urban Studies*. Pre-print. https://doi:10.1177/0042098020969342

Knorr-Cetina, K. (1999). *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge*. Harvard University Press.

Kreichauf, R., and M. Mayer (2021). “Negotiating urban solidarities: multiple agencies and contested meanings in the making of solidarity cities.” *Urban Geography* 2021. Pre-print. https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2021.1890953

Kron, S., and H. Lebuhn (2020). “Building solidarity cities. From protest to policy. ” In Feyzi B., and K. Rygiel (eds.) *Living with others. Fostering cultural pluralism through citizenship politics*. Routledge: 81-105.

PAGES 353

Lambert, S., and T. Swerts (2019). "'From sanctuary to welcoming cities': Negotiating the social inclusion of illegalized migrants in Liège, Belgium." *Social Inclusion* 7.4: 90-99.

Leerkes A. (2016). "Back to the poorhouse? Social protection and social control of unauthorised immigrants in the shadow of the welfare state." *Journal of European Social Policy* 26.2: 140-154.

Mitlin, D. (2008). "With and beyond the state – Co-production as a route to political influence, power and transformation for grassroots organizations." *Environment and Urbanization* 20.2: 339–360.

Mitlin, D., and Bartlett, S. (2018). "Editorial: Co-production – key ideas." *Environment and Urbanization* 30-2: 355-366.

Nicholls, W., and J. Uitermark (2016). *Cities and social movements: Immigrant rights activism in the US, France, and the Netherlands, 1970-2015*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Niewöhner, J., and T. Scheffer (2010). "Introduction: Thickening Comparison: On The Multiple Facets Of Comparability." Scheffer, T., and J. Niewöhner (eds.) *Thick Comparison. Reviving the Ethnographic Aspiration.* Brill: 1-15.

Nyers, P. (2019). *Irregular Citizenhip, Immigration, and Deportation*. Routledge.

Schilliger, S. (2019). "Ambivalences of a Sanctuary City." In Christoph, W., and S. Kron (eds.) *Solidarity Cities in Europe.* Rosa Luxemburg Foundation: 95-110.

Schilliger, S. (2020). "Challenging who counts as a citizen. The infrastructure of solidarity contesting racial profiling in Switzerland." *Citizenship Studies* 24.4: 530-547.

Schweitzer, R. (2019). "Health Care Versus Border Care: Justification and Hypocrisy in the Multilevel Negotiation of Illegalized migrants' Access to Fundamental Rights and Services." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 17.1: 61-76.

Schwiertz, H., and H. Schwenken (2020). "Introduction: Inclusive solidarity and citizenship along migratory routes in Europe and the Americas." *Citizenship Studies* 24.4: 405-423.

Spencer, S., and N. Delvino (2019). "Municipal Activism on Illegalized migrants: The Framing of Inclusive Approaches at the Local Level." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 17.1: 27-43.

Triandafyllidou, A., and L. Bartolini (2020). "Understanding Irregularity." In Spencer, S., and A. Triandafyllidou (eds.) *Migrants with Irregular Status in Europe. Evolving Conceptual and Policy Challenges*. Springer: 11-31.

van Dyk, S., and E. Misbach (2016). "Zur politischen Ökonomie des Helfens. Flüchtlingspolitik und Engagement im flexiblen Kapitalismus." *PROKLA. Zeitschrift für Kritische Sozialwissenschaft* 46.183: 205-227.

Vandevoordt, R. (2019). "Subversive Humanitarianism: Rethinking Refugee Solidarity through Grass-Roots Initiatives". *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 38.3: 245–265.

Zamponi, L. (2017). "Practices of Solidarity: Direct Social Action, Politicisation and Refugee Solidarity Activism in Italy." *Mondi Migranti* 11.3: 97-117.