at the accommodation centre" (Schwäbische Zeitung: 11/4/2014)[8]. According to a newspaper article, the local mayor and the council's chief administrative officer were "extremely upset" by the incidents and concerned about the "good cooperation and togetherness" in the town (Remszeitung: 13/4/2014). In response to these articles in the local press, the refugee activists set up an "info tent" on the town's market square and handed out leaflets to passing pedestrians explaining their version of the story, which, they claimed, differed significantly from the press' false accusations.

Eventually, the object of dispute – the camera – was stolen by unknown offenders. Neither the refugee activists nor the district council ever mentioned this incident in public nor claimed responsibility for it. According to a volunteer I spoke to, this apparent solution also went unnoticed by the local media, which had previously reported extensively on the camera conflict. Nevertheless, the sides remained unreconciled and conflicts only reached a symbolic ending in the court trial in May 2015.

6.3.   The Breaking of Relationships of Solidarity

The camera conflict substantially altered the relationships between refugee activists and local actors, including the citizens' initiative supporting refugees, the local media and the district council. Over the course of the dispute, these relationships became steadily more conflictive and, ultimately, remained irreconcilable. On the one hand, the refugee activists deliberately refused all support offered to them by local actors, whom they accused of "deceptive solidarity". On the other hand, citizens acting in support of refugees withdrew help and support and broke off all ties to the protesters. In the following section, I investigate in more detail how, as a result of the conflict, relationships of solidarity were broken by both refugee activists (first subsection) and volunteers supporting refugees in town (second subsection). In the third subsection, I then illustrate how the refugee activists, from the very beginning of their struggle, reached out in order to forge alternative relationships of solidarity that went beyond the boundaries of Schwäbisch Gmünd.

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8   See: https://www.schwaebische.de/landkreis/ostalbkreis/schwaebisch-gmuend_arti kel,-tumult-in-der-asylbewerberunterkunft-_arid,5625635.html (last accessed 1/8/ 2020).

6.3.1.   Breaking with "Deceptive Solidarity"

Three months after the district council had installed the camera at the accommodation centre in Schwäbisch Gmünd, the refugee activists staged a protest at the state parliament of Baden-Württemberg in Stuttgart, demanding to speak to representatives of the state government. As they explained in their Facebook group, they aimed to raise awareness of the "repeated acts of repression" they had been facing in Schwäbisch Gmünd (Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd: 11/6/2014). Their anger had been exacerbated by a letter from a representative of the district council addressed to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). This document listed the activists' full names and asked for their "inappropriate behaviour" in Schwäbisch Gmünd to be taken into account when deciding on the renewal of their residence permit. For unknown reasons, the letter was leaked to the activists, who published it in their Facebook group.

It was in this context that the activists accused local actors of "deceptive solidarity" and broke off all ties with them. This is illustrated strikingly in a post in their Facebook group informing on their protests at the state parliament. In it, they criticized various actors in the town and accused them of complicity in their stigmatization and discrimination, as stated in the following quote:

> "We denounce the continuous act of stigmatisation and splitting of refugees with the dubious justification of compromises to further isolate and persecute refugees in the district. This form of institutionalised discrimination and stereotyping engineered by the district Authorities through the local conservative press "Rems Zeitung" and the local initiative "Bürger Innitiative" both element that project the repression of the State with *deceptive solidarity*" (Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd: 11/6/14; English original, emphasis added)

The activists thus blamed local actors for their perceived "stigmatization", "isolation" and "persecution" in Schwäbisch Gmünd. They directed their dissent towards the district council, the local press and the citizens' initiative ("Bürger Innitiative") supporting refugees and denounced them collectively for collaborating in the "repression of the state". In the eyes of the activists, the relationships with these actors were characterized by "deceptive solidarity". This is added by the activists' recurring accusations against the citizens' initiative over its "false credibility" in the remainder of the Facebook post

(ibid.). They claimed that the initiative was "not in solidarity with" their struggle since its members had "obviously distanced themselves" from the activists' demands and protests. Instead, all the volunteers did was "negotiate compromises" with the district council at the expense of the refugees.

This quote clearly illustrates how the activists regarded the solidarity offered to them as a deceptive façade that ultimately contributed to their very repression and stigmatization. To them, the citizens' initiative and the district council represented two sides of the same coin, both of which were complicit in their discrimination. In consequence, they deliberately rejected all relationships of solidarity with local actors.

In his writings on community, Bauman acknowledges the possibility for solidarity to 'dissolve':

> "Ghetto experience dissolves solidarity and destroys mutual trust before they have been given a chance to take roots. A ghetto is not a greenhouse of community feelings. It is on the contrary a laboratory of social disintegration, atomization and anomie." (Bauman 2001: 122)

Instead of producing "community feelings" or fostering social bonds, Bauman argues, experiences of isolation lead to social disintegration and atomization. Quite connectedly, the refugee activists in Schwäbisch Gmünd experienced the camera and the responses to their protests as symbols of their isolation, discrimination and repression, what eventually led to the dissolving of solidarities with local actors.

It was Jens Küffner, a leading member of the local citizens' initiative supporting refugees, who became the symbol for the refugee activists' accusations of "deceptive solidarity". The activists published various Facebook posts that explicitly denounced the long-term volunteer. For instance, they depicted him as a "refugee spy" who had been installed by the district council in order to monitor refugees in the town (Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd: 25/3/2015). During my interview with the refugee activists in March 2015, I was personally struck by the great anger the activists felt towards this volunteer. In the course of our conversation, I asked them about their relationship with the local citizens' initiative and mentioned that I had scheduled an interview with Jens Küffner. This remark triggered an unexpected reaction and a sudden change of mood among the activists. They were extremely upset that I was going to meet the volunteer in order to talk about their protests and repeatedly let me know that they considered him to be a "traitor" who "blackmails" refugees and "always comes in between" (Interview with refugee

activists: 11/3/2015). When I asked them about the reasons for these accusations, they told me that Jens Küffner had publicly criticized their protests in the local press. He had thus clearly sided with the district council instead of supporting their struggles. In the remainder of our interview, the conversation repeatedly came back to my scheduled meeting with Jens Küffner. I had the impression that, with my intention to talk to the volunteer, I myself became complicit in the very oppression they were fighting against. Moreover, the activists let me know that they regarded him as a "symbol" of the patronizing help and support that charitable volunteers offered to refugees (ibid.). Such help did nothing more than keep refugees in a marginalized and powerless place, my interlocutors asserted. This illustrates how the refugee activists clearly rejected to be receivers of help and instead emphasized the importance of self-organization and self-representation in their protests.

These insights suggest that, to my interlocutors, 'genuine' solidarity consisted of the unrestricted support of *their* specific demands and ways of protesting. Criticism, in turn, signalled an attempt to patronize and infiltrate their activities via "deceptive solidarity". In the following subsection, I will outline in more detail how the citizens' initiative, in response to the activists' accusations, withdrew all help and support, while clearly distancing itself from the group's behaviour.

6.3.2.   Refusing to Help

I met Jens Küffner for an interview as scheduled. We had arranged to meet at the premises of the accommodation centre in Schwäbisch Gmünd, the site where the object under dispute, the camera, had been installed in 2014. I was greeted by a friendly, smiling middle-aged man. In his day job, he worked as a carer for the elderly and since he had no family, he told me, he dedicated most of his spare time to refugees and asylum seekers in the town. He supported them in legal or administrative matters, gave advice concerning their asylum case and organized joint leisure activities. Jens Küffner was one of the most experienced volunteers I encountered in the course of my entire field research, having been actively supporting refugees in Schwäbisch Gmünd for around 20 years. He was also a leading member of "Arbeitskreis Asyl"[9] ("Asy-

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9   The local citizens' initiative supporting refugees in Schwäbisch Gmünd was extraordinary in many regards. Most of the groups and initiatives I encountered in the course of my field research were founded no earlier than 2014 or 2015, when the topic of asylum

lum Work Group"), the local citizens' initiative supporting refugees. Due to his long-term commitment, he was known and respected by many in town. For instance, he told me, the mayor of Schwäbisch Gmünd regularly asked him for advice on matters relating to the local reception of refugees and asylum seekers.

In the course of our intense interview, which lasted several hours, my interlocutor shared his personal views on the camera conflict in Schwäbisch Gmünd. From his emotional reactions during our conversation, I could tell that the refugee activists' accusations and insults weighed heavily on him. There were several moments when he appeared close to tears. He repeatedly emphasized that it was hard for him to take that the refugee activists had turned against him, despite his long-standing commitment to improving the situation of asylum seekers in the town.

When I asked the volunteer about his recent relationship with the activists, he pulled out a small letter, unfolded it and read it aloud to me, saying:

"I jotted it down here, just for myself, but I haven't done anything else with it … So, I could not support the activists of the Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd any further, either last year or in the current conflict because, in all past conflicts, their strategy has been based on four strategies. Firstly, verbal attacks on their counterparts. Secondly, intimidation and threats. Thirdly, humiliation of their counterparts. Fourthly, propaganda. And this makes it impossible to find solutions to disagreements, even with manageable problems."[10] (Interview with Jens Küffner: 12/3/2015)

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attracted rising media attention. Founded in 1991, the initiative in Schwäbisch Gmünd was thus a rare example of an initiative dating back to the early 90s, when the influx of asylum seekers to Germany also increased sharply due to the arrival of large numbers of asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia and Romania. In the course of the long summer of migration, the initiative experienced major changes, as my interlocutors Jens Küffner and Kristin Böhm told me, with more local residents than ever seeking to help and wanting to join. In consequence, the number of members rose sharply.

10   Translation by LF. German original: "Hier habe ich das mal zusammengeschrieben, also für mich selbst, und habe das jetzt nicht weiter … Also ich konnte die Aktivisten von der Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd nicht unterstützen, im letzten Jahr und auch jetzt im aktuellen Konflikt, weil ihre Strategie bei allen bisherigen Konflikten auf vier Strategien aufgebaut ist. Erstens, Beleidigung des Gegenübers. Zweitens, Einschüchterung und Drohung. Drittens, Demütigung des Gegenübers. Viertens, Propaganda. Und das macht es bei Meinungsverschiedenheiten unmöglich eine Lösung zu erzielen, auch bei überschaubaren Problemen.".

The note that my interlocutor had written to himself clearly illustrates how he refused to support the refugee activists any further. In it, he listed four patterns of behaviour that prevented him from siding with them and, from his perspective, made it impossible to respond with dialogue and constructive solutions to disagreements.

A similar perspective on the refugee activists' actions was offered by Kristin Böhm, another leading member of the citizens' initiative. A self-confident and outgoing woman in her late 20s who had been volunteering with refugees for several years, she agreed to meet me for an interview in Schwäbisch Gmünd in February 2016. In the course of our conversation, she asserted that the camera conflict had altered the relationships between the activists and the initiative substantially: "The breakdown came with the camera protest"[11], she remarked (Interview with Kristin Böhm: 15/2/2016). From that point on, she told me, the activists lost all sympathy with the members of the initiative. She thus distanced herself from their behaviour, as was illustrated in the following remark:

> "Me personally, I share their ideas, I share their attitudes towards the system, really, their political background … but their methods […] if they really want to reach people, then they have to use different methods."[12] (Interview with Kristin Böhm: 15/2/2016)

Like Jens Küffner, she denounced the activists "methods" of protest, although she acknowledged that she held sympathy for their "ideas" and "attitudes towards the system".

Jens Küffner and Kristin Böhm were among the rare volunteers I encountered during my field research who had started supporting refugees long before the summer of migration. I met them both several times at the regular Refugee Council conferences that I attended in Stuttgart as part of my field research. Their participation in these events suggests that they were among the more politically informed of the volunteers. However, they explained their practices of refugee support with quite distinct motivations.

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11   Translation by LF. German original: "Der Einbruch kam mit dem Kameraprotest".
12   Translation by LF. German original: "Ich persönlich teile ihre Ansätze, teile ihre Haltungen gegen das System, wirklich, ihre politischen Hintergründe, aber ihre Wege, um wirklich Menschen damit zu erreichen […] wenn sie die wirklich erreichen wollen, dann müssen sie andere Wege bestreiten.".

While Jens Küffner told me that it was his Christian faith and a desire to contribute charitably to the public good that inspired him to act, Kristin Böhm claimed it was her critical, left-wing political attitudes that mobilized her to volunteer with refugees. Despite these differing motivations, both eventually withdrew their help and support for the protesting refugees.

My interlocutors also recalled that there had been times when the relationships between the citizens' initiative and the refugee activists were still characterized by mutual understanding and solidarity. They told me about instances when they had worked together with the refugee activists and offered them support. Jens Küffner acknowledged that, when the activists staged their first public protest in 2012, the relationship with the activists had still been "really harmonious" and that "everyone tried to achieve improvements together" (Interview with Jens Küffner: 12/3/2015). They also both told me they had felt "responsible" for the activists when the protests against the camera arose in March 2014 and offered help and support in articulating solutions to the situation. Kristin Böhm recalled that she had formulated a position paper that she handed over to the district council. In this paper, she sided with the protesters, demanding that the camera be removed, and offered to help mediate a solution. As a leading member of the citizens' initiative, Jens Küffner felt a need to be present as "independent observer" at the protests that occurred at the accommodation centre (Interview with Jens Küffner: 12/3/2015). When the district council refused to remove the surveillance camera by arguing that a majority of the accommodation's inhabitants, families in particular, had felt safer since its installation, the citizens' initiative conducted an "independent survey" at the centre. My interlocutors thus asked all inhabitants of the facility whether they felt a need to keep the camera or whether they would like it removed. According to Jens Küffner, the results were very close. I would argue that these examples clearly illustrate how the two volunteers felt a need to engage in relationships of solidarity and offer support to the activists when the camera conflict began to unfold. These support actions ranged from a clear backing of the activists' demands, as is the case in Kristin Böhm's position paper, to a role as "neutral observers" seeking to articulate an acceptable compromise for both sides. The latter, Jens Küffner assured me, would have been easy to achieve.

Yet, the refugee activists deliberately rejected all of their offers of support and solidarity. Jens Küffner recalled with apparent frustration how the citizens' initiative had organized a mediation meeting with an external mediator and representatives of the Refugee Council of Baden-Württemberg. This talk

aimed at articulating a compromise between all sides involved in the conflict. The refugee activists, however, withdrew their agreement to participate in the meeting two hours prior to the scheduled start time, which meant that the invited external mediators had travelled to Schwäbisch Gmünd in vain. Kristin Böhm recalled the volunteers' frustration at this uncompromising stance as follows:

> "I told them back then, we, the citizens' initiative will stand by you. Therefore, we offered to start a dialogue and create a platform for them to discuss things sensibly with the district council [...] but they did not want that either. Then we sort of ran out of ideas, with them being so completely uncompromising and saying: 'We don't want anything to do with you. We don't want anything to do with them. And don't want any dialogue."[13] (Interview with Kristin Böhm: 15/2/2016)

Kristin Böhm thus described with frustration how the refugee activists had deliberately turned down whatever support and solidarity the citizens' initiative offered.

My two interlocutors also denounced the personal attacks on volunteers during the camera conflict. In spite of their support offers, the citizens' initiative became a central target of the refugee activists' accusations in the course of the conflict. Jens Küffner recalled how he had engaged in a conversation with the protest group and, while offering to help find a joint solution, had criticized their threatening of the social workers during the protest at the accommodation centre. It was this criticism, together with his interview in a local newspaper, my interlocutor told me, which led the refugee activists to turn against him. In consequence, Jens Küffner became one of the primary targets of their dissent and accusations, something I became aware of myself during my interview with the activists. Kristin Böhm criticized the way the activists had personally attacked and threatened Jens Küffner in the course of the camera conflict:

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13   Translation by LF. German original: "Ich hab ja damals gesagt, wir als Arbeitskreis, wir würden euch auch beistehen, also das haben wir ja angeboten, wir haben ja angeboten den Dialog zu suchen und auch eine Plattform zu schaffen, wo sie sich mit dem Landratsamt auch vernünftig auseinandersetzen können [...] aber auch das wollten sie ja gar nicht. Und da ging uns dann auch so ein bisschen der Ideenreichtum manchmal aus, wenn man so komplett kompromisslos ist und sagt: ‚Wir wollen mit euch nichts zu tun haben, wir wollen mit denen nichts zu tun haben, wir wollen auch keinen Dialog.'".

"They really laid into Jens, really personally laid into him, and, it has to be said, threatened him … 'We know where you live Mister Küffner' and this and that … These are threats and, Jens, who is really really sensitive in his manner and has been supporting refugees for years, it hurts him, you know, he doesn't just shrug it off. But even Jens said 'Okay, that is just not on.'"[14] (Interview with Kristin Böhm: 15/2/2016)

As Jens Küffner likewise remarked during our interview, when the activists personally attacked a highly dedicated long-term volunteer, they lost any credibility in the town. Even the left-wing youth centre Esperanza, which had backed the refugee activists from the very beginning, became "very cautious" over supporting further protests (Interview with Jens Küffner: 12/3/2015).

From this point on, my interlocutors broke off all relationships of solidarity with the refugee activists, while the citizens' initiative never again offered help and support to them. This break appeared to be mutual, since the refugee activists had been rejecting all support offers from the volunteers. The camera conflict thus resulted in the breaking of all ties between refugee activists and local actors in Schwäbisch Gmünd. While the activists accused the volunteers of "deceptive solidarity", the citizens' initiative clearly distanced itself from their protests. However, in parallel to this deliberate breaking of "deceptive solidarities" with local actors, the refugee activists reached out beyond the boundaries of the Swabian small town in order to forge alternative relationships of solidarity that might prove more beneficial to their cause, something I will investigate in more detail in the following subsection.

6.3.3.   Forging Solidarity beyond the Local

"Solidarity" was one of the most frequently used words in the Facebook group of the Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd. A majority of the hundreds of posts, which members of the group had shared between 2012 and 2016, came with a call for solidarity. By doing so, I would argue, the activists sought

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14   Translation by LF. German original: "Auch Jens, der wirklich hart angegangen wurde, auch persönlich hart angegangen wurde, auch dem dolle gedroht wurde von den Flüchtlingen, dass muss man einfach so sagen, „Wir wissen wo du wohnst Herr Küffner" und dies und jenes … das sind Drohungen und gerade Jens ist sehr sehr sensibel in seiner Art, der jahrelang für Flüchtlinge dasteht, das tut dem weh, weißte, der steckt das auch nicht so einfach weg, aber das war auch für Jens, der ganz klar gesagt hat, also das geht doch gar nicht.".

to build supportive relationships online, relationships that were neither confined to the local boundaries of Schwäbisch Gmünd nor to the activists' physical presence in the town. At the same time as they deliberately rejected all support offered by local actors, they thus forged supportive networks that promised to be more in line with their imaginaries of solidarity and community.

From the very beginning of their struggle, the refugee activists reached out to other places and areas in order to build supportive networks and alliances. This was illustrated both by their Facebook posts and via concrete actions. For instance, in March and April 2015, roughly one year after the camera conflict, the refugee activists organized a Germany-wide tour entitled "Solidarity Call for Civil Disobedience". The group visited various cities across Germany, including Wuppertal, Erfurt, Hamburg, Berlin and also Konstanz, where I myself attended one of their talks. At these events, they shared insights into their struggles in Schwäbisch Gmünd and aimed to foster alliances with groups in other towns. The activists provided extensive coverage of their tour via their Facebook group, posting updates with photos or films on almost a daily basis. One of these posts strikingly revealed the significance of "solidarity" for the activists. It bore the following title, written in capital letters: "SOLIDARITY IS THE KEY!" (Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd: 15/4/2015).

With these repeated calls for solidarity, the group clearly aimed to foster alternative alliances in their fight against discrimination and exclusion in Schwäbisch Gmünd. They identified themselves as part of a wider community of interest that went beyond the boundaries of the Swabian small town. Instead of being determined by their spatial embeddedness, these supportive networks were based on shared interests and shared experiences and thus transcended locality as the defining feature for relationships of solidarity. This connects to Mayo's (2017) work on the "slippery concept of community". In it, she distinguishes three analytical perspectives on community. In addition to an understanding of "community as locality", she identifies two further conceptions: "community as identity" and "community as shared interests". I would suggest that the first of these three understandings of community often played a central role for those who sought to help refugees in the course of the long summer of migration – as illustrated in the previous chapters of this book. Yet, it was the second and the third conception of community that became the focus of the activists' efforts to forge solidarities. This also connects to something identified by Taylor and Wilson (2016 cited in Mayo),

namely that people have multiple attachments and 'the local' may be only one of them.

How the Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd sought to forge solidarities based on shared experiences and interests in the course of their protests is best encapsulated in the following quote from a Facebook post on their 'Solidarity Call for Civil Disobedience' tour in March 2015:

> "Now is the time to mobilize Refugee's solidarity and empower networking within our communities through the intimate understanding that we all face the same problems – even though the situations might appear to be different." (Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd: 19/3/2015, English original)

With this call for solidarity, the refugee activists positioned themselves as part of a greater community of refugees facing similar problems, such as discrimination and exclusion, despite their seemingly different local circumstances. Most of the posts on their protest actions were coupled with such an appeal for solidarity. Many times, these appeals explicitly called for "nationwide solidarity". For instance, when the camera conflict escalated on the ground, they called for "nationwide solidarity to our struggle in Schwäbisch Gmünd" in their Facebook group (Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd: 11/4/2014). In the same post, they asserted that "our solidarity knows no distance and sees no separation" (ibid.). Thus, while breaking supportive relationships with local actors, the refugee activists deliberately reached out via Facebook in order to forge solidarities based on shared experiences and interests.

In order to create relationships of solidarity that went beyond the local, the refugee activists also expressed solidarity with protests in other places and repeatedly posted links to other self-organized refugee campaigns across Germany and Europe. For instance, they expressed solidarity with asylum seekers at a Greek reception centre who had sutured their lips in order to raise awareness of their situation (ibid. 10/5/2013). They also repeatedly voiced their support for other refugee protests across Germany, including a protest camp at Weißkreuzplatz in Hannover and refugee protests in Berlin. In several posts, the refugee activists also called for donations to the group 'Lampedusa in Hamburg', which had staged protests for the rights of refugees (cf. Fontanari 2015).

Through these efforts to build networks of solidarity beyond the local, the refugee activists forged supportive relationships that, to them, appeared more useful to their cause. In his book *Social Solidarity and the Gift*, Komter

(2005) outlines how relationships of solidarity depend on calculations of reciprocity and utility:

> "Solidarity clearly has a selective character: people seem to choose – probably mostly not in a conscious way – those social partners in their gift relationships who are 'attractive' to them, because they can expect them to give in return at some time." (Komter 2005: 138)

I would argue that this is echoed by the way the refugee activists – consciously or unconsciously – forged solidarities beyond the local in the expectation that these would be more beneficial to their own cause.

From the very beginning, such a notion of being part of a wider refugee movement that went beyond the local played an important role in the actions of the refugee activists in Schwäbisch Gmünd. Numerous posts in their Facebook group illustrated that they were closely linked to nationwide left-wing networks. For instance, the activists' reports on the situation in Schwäbisch Gmünd were simultaneously published on the website of the group "The Voice Refugee Forum Germany", a left-wing activist organization that "supports and promotes the empowerment of refugees and the self-organisation of refugee groups nationwide" (The Voice Refugee Forum: 2017) [15]. The Facebook group also indicated that the activists were connected to the left-wing activist group "Caravan – For the Rights of Refugees and Migrants", which was founded in 1994 and claims to be "a nationwide network made up of refugees, migrants and antiracist groups" (Karawane: 2004)[16]. As I discovered in the course of my field research, both groups deliberately positioned themselves in the left-wing activist scene and not only comprised refugees but also a network of German "supporters". These strong ties to a German-wide network of left-wing activists are also illustrated by the fact that the refugee activists first took a public stand in Schwäbisch Gmünd after returning from the "Break Isolation Camp" in Jena. The official call for participation for the ten-day summer camp in 2012 described its aims as follows:

> "We want to usher in a new era – by creating a Germany-wide network of activists from refugee communities that will enable us to keep each other informed about refugee struggles in isolation camps. We also call on ac-

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15   See: http://www.thevoiceforum.org/node/1676 (last accessed 1/8/2020).
16   See: http://thecaravan.org/about (last accessed 1/8/2020).

tivists to join us at the 'Break Isolation' camp of international solidarity in our communities." [17] (The Voice Refugee Forum: 29/3/2012) [18]

The camp was thus motivated by a desire to foster "international solidarity" and a "Germany-wide network of activists from refugee communities".

Scholars working on refugee protests have scrutinized how, in the run-up to the long summer of migration, a loosely connected (trans)national movement of self-organized refugee groups had been building up across Germany and beyond (Jakob 2016; Steinhilper 2017). For instance, Ataç et al. (2015: 4) provide an overview of the various instances of refugee protest between 2012 and 2014, arguing that they represented "a movement that is a novelty for Germany". The activist group in Schwäbisch Gmünd clearly formed part of this movement. Although this particular case has not been considered by previous studies, relationships of solidarity with a nationwide alliance of refugee groups played a critical role for the Refugees Initiative Schwäbisch Gmünd from the outset.

Summing up, I would suggest that the breaking of solidarities with local actors in the course of the camera conflict was strongly influenced by the activists' self-perception as being part of something 'greater', something that extended beyond the boundaries of the small Swabian town in which they found themselves. The break with all local actors might have even formed a necessary part of their protests, symbolizing a deliberate rejection of a social membership that is centred on spatial embeddedness. As I illustrate in the next section, the protests in Schwäbisch Gmünd are therefore also telling in regard to romanticized imaginaries of 'local community', imaginaries that played an important role in the mobilization of refugee support during the long summer of migration.

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17   Translation by LF. German original: "Wir wollen eine neue Ära anbrechen lassen, indem wir ein deutschlandweites Netzwerk von Aktivisten von Flüchtlingsgemeinschaften schaffen, um uns über den Kampf von Flüchtlingen in den Isolationslagern hinaus gegenseitig zu informieren. Weiterhin laden wir Aktivisten ein, um am ‚Break Isolation'-Flüchtlings-Camp der internationalen Solidarität in unseren Gemeinschaften teilzunehmen.".

18   See: http://www.thevoiceforum.org/node/2488 (last accessed 1/8/2020).