MEDIA AND THE REFUGEE CAMP

The historical making of space, time, and politics in the modern refugee regime

PHILIPP SEUFERLING

SÖDERTÖRN DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS
MEDIA AND THE REFUGEE CAMP

The historical making of space, time, and politics in the modern refugee regime

PHILIPP SEUFERLING
Subject: Media and Communication Studies
Research Area: Critical and Cultural Theory
School of Culture and Education

Cover image: The image on the book cover stems from the activist zine “Splitter. Infos, Berichte, Erfahrungen unabhängiger, antirassistischer Gruppen aus Berlin und Brandenburg seit 91”. Originating in the early 1990s, the exact date of publication is unknown. The image (p.10) most probably depicts the refugee camp Hohenschönhausen in Berlin, which hosted a ZAST (Zentrale Anlaufstelle/“central contact point”). Courtesy of Bürgerinitiative Ausländische MitbürgerInnen e.V., Berlin.

Graphic form: Per Lindblom & Jonathan Robson
Printed by E-Print, Stockholm 2021

Södertörn Doctoral Dissertations 196
ISSN 1652–7399

ISBN 978-91-89109-82-7 (print)
Abstract
This dissertation explores media practices in and of refugee camps. In the wake of forced migration becoming ever more digitalized both in its experiences and its governance, this thesis historicizes media practices in refugee camps as a space of the refugee regime. In various historical contexts in Germany after 1945, this study analyses archival material in order to trace media practices in the making of refugee camps’ space, time, and politics, and thereby provides historical insights into circularities, ruptures, and continuities of media practices and their entanglement with being and being made a refugee.

Refugee camps spatialize the modern “refugee regime” (Betts, 2010) as a hegemonic mode of governing forced migration. Being paradoxical tools of both shelter and humanitarian relief and at the same time segregation and exclusion, refugee camps are “heterotopian and heterochronic spaces” (Foucault, 1967/1997): othered, paradoxical spaces and times, simultaneously inside and outside of society, a temporary limbo, withholding outcasts from nation-based, bordered societies while at the same time constituting these very societies.

The holistic concept of media practices (Couldry, 2004) describes how social practices of mediation and communication enable, shape, and condition socialities and materialities of the refugee camp: media as enabling environments, technologies, and techniques (Peters, 2015) construct, negotiate, and make the camp’s heterotopian and heterochronic condition. By way of media practices, camp residents, staff and authorities, NGOs and governments as well as activists, establish, maintain or alter the social relations of the camp heterotopia and heterochronia. Relating to the space, time, and politics of the camp, these media practices are conceptualized as heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices, which shape and negotiate the differentiation, other-ness and paradoxical inclusions and exclusions from time and space, which refugee camps thrive on.

Archival records from the post-war period of ca. 1945 to 1960, and the 1980s and 1990s, provide traces of historical media practices from camp residents, authorities within the refugee regime, and activists and other communities. Three analytical chapters explore heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices. Firstly, heterotopian camp space is produced, governed and controlled through media practices around media infrastructure, such as architecture, media-technological equipment, and administrative practices. Secondly, refugee camps are heterochronic limbos with multiple ruptured temporalities that are managed through media prac-
tices of memory and witnessing. Thirdly, heteropolitical media practices are forms of altering and challenging the othering politics of the camp space and camp time through forms of resistance and protest.

This thesis re-evaluates historical media practices in and of the refugee camp from the perspective of the digitized refugee regime and experience, and showcases trajectories of media practices that (regardless of media technological environment) have been employed in projects of negotiating and coping with being and being made a refugee. This thesis thereby challenges a rhetoric of newness around digital technologies and contributes theoretically, epistemologically, and empirically to the study of media and migration. By pointing out the complicitness and existentiality of media practices in making, differentiating, and relating space, time, and politics in bordered states, the thesis ultimately argues for an approach to media studies from the margins to help understand how seemingly peripheral spaces mirror and co-construct media practices in society more generally.

**Keywords:** refugee camp; media practices; media technology; refugee regime; forced migration; Germany; media history; heterotopia; space; archive; media infrastructure; memory; witnessing; resistance
Denna avhandling utforskar mediepraktiker i och som flyktingläger. I kölvattnet av en allt mer digitaliserad tvångsmigration, dess reglering och de erfarenheter den ger upphov till, avser denna avhandling att historisera mediepraktiker i flyktingläger. Studien analyserar arkivmaterial ur olika historiska kontexter i Tyskland efter 1945, för att spåra mediepraktikers roll i skapandet av flyktinglägrens tid, rum och politik. Därmed ger avhandlingen en historisk inblick i mediepraktikers cirkulering, avbrott och kontinuitet och på vilket sätt de är en del av tillståndet av att vara och bli gjord till flykting.

Flyktingläger förrumsligar den moderna ”flyktingregimen” (Betts, 2010) som ett hegemoniskt sätt att styra och reglera tvångsmigration. Flyktingläger är paradoxala verktyg som ger skydd och humanitär hjälp samtidigt som de segregeras och stänger ute. Därför är flyktingläger att betrakta som ”heterotopiska och heterokroniska rum” (Foucault, 1967/1997). De är ”det andra”, motsägelsefulla i tid och rum, på samma gång innanför och utanför samhället; en tillfällig limbo som håller kvar de som blivit uteslötsa från nationalstaternas avgränsade samhällen samtidigt som de på samma gång skapar och bekräftar dessa samhällen.


och organisationer. Tre analyskapitel utforskar heterotopiska, heterokroniska och heteropolitiska mediepraktiker i flyktingläger i Tyskland efter 1945. Analysen visar för det första att heterotopiskt lägerutrymme produceras, regleras och kontrolleras genom mediepraktiker som rör medieinfrastruktur, till exempel arkitektur, medieteknisk utrustning och administration. För det andra är flyktinglägret ett heterokroniskt limbo med avbrutna temporaliteter, som hanteras genom mediepraktiker som minne och vittesmål. För det tredje innebär heteropolitiska mediepraktiker, i former av motstånd och protester, en möjlig förändring och utmaning av den politik som konstitutionerar lägret som ”det andra”.

Denna avhandling omvärderar historiska mediepraktiker i och som flyktingläger, med utgångspunkt i en digitaliserad flyktingregim och de erfarenheter den ger upphov till. Avhandlingen visar på genealogier av mediepraktiker som, oavsett medieteknologisk miljö, har använts i olika situationer för att förhandla och hantera ett tillstånd av att vara och att göras till flykting. Därmed utmanar avhandlingen den retorik som framställer digitala teknologier som nya, och bidrar teoretiskt, empiriskt och epistemologiskt till fältet för medie- och migrationsstudier. Genom att peka på mediepraktikers roll i skapandet, särskiljningen och sammanbindningen av tid, rum och politik i gränslösa gränsbaserade stater, argumenterar avhandlingen för en medievetenskap från marginalerna för att bidra till en förståelse för hur till synes perifera platser speglar och med-konstruerar mediepraktiker i samhället i stort.
Acknowledgements

Even though academia often celebrates achievements of individuals, any research is indebted to collective support and the generosity of knowledge being shared. Therefore, I owe gratitude to a list of people for making this thesis possible.

First and foremost, I want to express a huge Dankeschön to my team of supervisors: Heike Graf, Anne Kaun, and Staffan Ericson. Never shying away from any opportunity to engage with my project, share insights and give support, you have gone above and beyond. Be it by extensively discussing media theory, pushing me and my project forward, helping me to navigate international academia, settling in Sweden, or solving my apartment issues. I will miss our inspiring meetings across three languages.

This thesis task force (of three and a half Germans) was embedded in the supportive environment of the Department for Media and Communication Studies (MKV) at Södertörn University. My gratitude extends to all colleagues for providing an exceptionally inclusive research and teaching collective, where helpful advice is only a knock-on-the-door away. I have learned a lot from each one of you, through feedback at research days, higher seminars, or informal conversations over lunch or drinks. I am especially proud to have transformed room PC205, together with Karin Larsson, into the “Walter Benjamin Ingrosso Intellectual Development Lab”, which promises to become an even more thriving research environment for doctoral students at MKV 😊. At Södertörn my gratitude extends to The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies for funding my salary within the project “The (dis)connected refugee” led by Heike Graf and Christine Farhan; the PhD student communities of CBEES and Critical Cultural Theory; as well as to Ewa Rogström for the caring support on the administrational side of things.

Throughout the formal steps of this thesis, I am extremely thankful to Marie Cronqvist and Saskia Witteborn for their excellent oppositions at my half-time and final seminars, significantly pushing the project forward into what it has become.

This thesis has a strong connection to Germany not only in its content. I spent my second year as a visiting fellow at the Leibniz Institute for Media Research (Hans-Bredow-Institute) in Hamburg, to whom I owe special gratitude. Thank you to the current and former members of the Research Centre for Media History, Hans-Ulrich Wagner, Alina Laura Just, Kirstin
Hamann, Hermann Breitenborn; as well as to Johanna Sebauer, Irene Broer, Lisa Merten and Cindy Hesse for welcoming me at the “Bredow”. During my stay in Hamburg, I was also able to complete the main parts of my fieldwork across Germany: no historical research without the dusty files of the archives. I thank all involved archivists for granting me access to the files and helping me to navigate their collections.

I furthermore direct a special thanks to the networks and research contexts beyond Södertörn, that I have been welcomed in, and which have helped me to better understand my own work and the academic world. Thank you to Annette Hill, Maren Hartmann and Magnus Andersson for bringing me into the “Mobile Socialities” network; as well as to Hans-Ulrich Wagner and Marie Cronqvist for introducing me to the “Entangled Media Histories” network. Magnus Andersson deserves a special thanks for never missing on a single opportunity to comment on my project drafts. Thank you so much also to Koen Leurs for sharing your deep knowledge and insights in our wonderful collaborations, and to Mirjam Twigt for engaging with my work and becoming an academic friend.

Finally, I am indebted to all the friends, peers, and colleagues, who I met along the way, and who have made the past four years into a unique experience. Thanks to Torbjörn Rolandsson and Chafic Najem for providing local peer support in Stockholm; Johan Farkas, Therese Hellberg, and Veera Virmasalo at Malmö (significant parts of Chapter Seven have been written during our Zoom writing sessions in between music quizzes); Nina Springer for all the afterwork debriefs over Mario Kart; Maria Brock, Natalia Durkalec, and Paul Sherfey for the fun times at CBEES; to the communities of TRAIN, the summer school “Media History from the Margins” at Monte Verità in 2018, and the ECREA doctoral student summer school of Tartu 2019, which have been vital support systems that I do not want to miss; and to Bertina Kreshpaj and Artu Breuer for becoming my Stockholm family.

When I started this thesis in late 2017, I drafted a project plan that included an introductory paragraph about the global situation of forced migrants. I quoted UNHCR’s numbers: 69 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide. That’s seven times the population of Sweden. Upon finishing the manuscript four years later, I found myself updating the very same paragraph. 82.4 million people are reported to be forcefully on the move in 2021. While I was gathering the information and material that have become this thesis – smoothly moving between countries, signing five different housing contracts paid for by a stable income, travelling to conferences and
archives on several continents just by showing an EU passport – an additional 13 million people ended up on the other side of this mobility regime. More than a whole other Sweden. While it is but a small gesture, this thesis is dedicated to everyone who is forced to become a migrant or subject to the multifaceted violence of border regimes.

Stockholm, August 2021
Contents

Sammanfattning (abstract in Swedish)..............................................................................................................................................7
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................................................................................9
Abbreviations ....................................................................................................................................................................................17
Figures ............................................................................................................................................................................................19

Chapter One: Introduction ...............................................................................................................................................................23
  A Diary..........................................................................................................................................................................................23
  Aims and goals: refugee and media histories ..............................................................................................................................27
  Images of history ............................................................................................................................................................................27
  Media, space, and time .....................................................................................................................................................................29
  Media history from the archive ......................................................................................................................................................32
  Research questions ........................................................................................................................................................................33
  Situating the research: context and previous research ................................................................................................................33
  Digital media and refugees: practices and infrastructures ......................................................................................................35
  Media and migration .....................................................................................................................................................................38
  Research gap ................................................................................................................................................................................40
  Structure of this thesis ...................................................................................................................................................................42

Chapter Two: Refugee Camp Space ..................................................................................................................................................47
  From military camps to refugee camps ..................................................................................................................................50
  Refugee camps in post-war Germany: from the Flüchtlingslager to the Gemeinschaftsunterkunft.........................................................52
  Camps and the spatialization of the modern refugee regime ....................................................................................................58
  “Absolutely other”? Refugee camps as heterotopian and heterochronic spaces........................................................................62

Chapter Three: Media Practices ..........................................................................................................................................................69
  Refugees and media ..........................................................................................................................................................................69
  Conceptualizing media and migration: a brief history ...................................................................................................................73
  Media and practice theory ...............................................................................................................................................................78
  From practice theory… .....................................................................................................................................................................79
  … to media practices ......................................................................................................................................................................82
  Change and continuity of media practices within the refugee camp ............................................................................................84
  Theoretical framework: media practices and the space, time, and politics of the refugee camp ..................................................86

Chapter Four: Archiving .......................................................................................................................................................................89
  When media practices are gone .........................................................................................................................................................89
  The historical-critical method .........................................................................................................................................................91
  The post-archival-turn archive .......................................................................................................................................................93
  Ethnographic additions .................................................................................................................................................................96
  Archives of media practices in refugee camps .............................................................................................................................97
  The institutional archive .................................................................................................................................................................99
Undermining media infrastructures: vouchers, chip cards and benefits-in-kind ................................................................. 259
(Im)perceptibilities of the body: hunger strikes and protest marches ................................................................. 264
Embodied subversion of the heterotopia: hunger strikes ........................................... 264
“Karawane”: marching into perceptibility ................................................................. 268
(Im)perceptibilites across time: documentation as resistance .................................. 274
“Schwarzbuch Asyl”: documenting and archiving the heterotopia ......................... 275
The “anti-racist telephone”: creating media infrastructures from below .............. 280
Heteropolitical media practices .................................................................................. 284

Chapter Eight: Media and the Refugee Camp ............................................................................. 287
Media practices and the refugee camp ........................................................................ 288
Media practices, heterotopias, histories ................................................................. 292
Histories of media practices: ruptures and continuities .......................................... 293
Desires for fixity ........................................................................................................ 296
Media studies from the margins .............................................................................. 299

References ...................................................................................................................... 303
Appendix: extended list of archival files ...................................................................... 319

Södertörn Doctoral Dissertations .................................................................................. 327
Abbreviations

AA Arolsen Archives
ASB B Archive for Social Movements, Bremen (Archiv für Soziale Bewegungen)
ASB FR Archive for Social Movements, Freiburg (Archiv für Soziale Bewegungen)
ASB HH Archive for Social Movements, Hamburg (Archiv für Soziale Bewegungen)
BArch Federal Archive, Koblenz (Bundesarchiv Koblenz)
DRA German Broadcasting Archive (Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv)
DRK Arch Archive of the German Red Cross, Berlin (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz Archiv)
LA NDS State Archive Lower Saxony (Landesarchiv Niedersachsen)
StA BY State Archive Bavaria (Staatsarchiv Bayern)
StA HH State Archive Hamburg (Staatsarchiv Hamburg)
UN Arch United Nations Archives, New York City

DM Deutsche Mark (German currency until 2001)
GDR German Democratic Republic (Deutsche Demokratische Republik)
IRO International Refugee Organization
NGO Non-governmental organization
NWDR North West German Broadcasting Channel (Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk)
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRRA United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
Figures

Figure 1 Listening opportunities of refugees in Bavaria. 35% never listened to the radio, 48% listened at home, 17% listened at friends’ and relatives’ places. Internal report “Broadcasts for expellees” May/June 1950 (DRA, A 53 2 BR 014A, page 2)..........................75

Figure 2: Theoretical approach to “heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices”.................................................................................................................................87

Figure 3: Result page for the keyword “Flüchtlingslager” (refugee camp) in the state archive of Hamburg. Single files appear as results, including title, time period, signature, and a description once the item is clicked on..........................................................104

Figure 4: Catalogue page for a single file (131-5_151/24) in the state archive of Hamburg. Title on top "Refugee camp, Nissen-huts, management of camps, barracks and accommodations (1945–1950)”, then archival structure in the drop-down view below, showing the structure of the archive, sorted according to specific authorities and topics of their operations. Below the structure are details about the specific file (no description apart from the title here)..................................................................................................104

Figure 5: Catalogue of the Archive of Social Movements, Hamburg, a community, volunteer-based archive, that collects what remains of various social movements. The archival systematics are explained on the webpage and a search field allows for keyword searches. Here, the result is shown for Aktion am Flüchtlingslager Horst (“Intervention at the refugee camp Horst”), which is a photo collection.................................................107

Figure 6: Archive desk with files, state archive Hamburg (top), files in the UN Archives New York City (below). © Philipp Seuferling......................................................................................................................107

Figure 7: UNRRA correspondence with US Forces, 1946 (UN Arch, S-0402-0001-12, “Displaced Persons – Newspapers”)...............................................................................................................................................112

Figure 8: “Routing slip for emergency admission procedure” in Camp Marienfelde in West Berlin, 1950s (DRK Arch 4750)..............................................................................................................................................113

Figure 9: Booklet entitled "That twists your head. Situation of underaged refugees in the FRG", Hamburg asylum circle, no year, ca. 1980s (ASB B, “Box Antirassismus”)...131

Figure 10: UNRRA camp Wiesbaden, Otto Bayer (right) and Frits Pijnacker Hordijk (left) (UN Arch, S-1058-0002-0001, “Germany Mission – Photographs #121–240”).......................131

Figure 11: Deutscher Ring building, Hamburg. Today’s Brahmskontor at Johannes-Brahms-Platz, opposite the Laeisz Concert Hall. Photo: UN Arch, S-1058-0003-0001, “Germany Mission – Photographs #241–362”.............................................................................................................................................134

Figure 12: Map of the camp Finkenwerder, 1962. Entrance on the left; the numbers of the houses, arranged in a circle on the right are “planned accommodations”, a sports court, and new gas and water pipes (StA HH, 321-3 I_239, “Baubehörde I, Neubau des Heimes der offenen Tür im Flüchtlingslager Finkenwerder, Heimatlosenlagerdienst CVJM”).137

Figure 13: Map of Valka camp in Nuremberg-Zirndorf, 1940s (BArch, B 115/5753, “Nürnberg, Valka-Lager”).........................................................................................................................................................140

Figure 14: Costs per person per 8 sqm. From a letter by Hamburg’s city authority for social benefits (Sozialbehörde) to the camps, 14 Oktober 1950 (StA HH, 131-5_151/24: “Wohnraumangelegenheiten; Flüchtlingslager, Nissenhütten; Bewirtschaftung von Lagern, Baracken und Wohnheimen; Staatskanzlei-Verwaltungsbeschwerden”) ..........142

Figure 15: DP-camp bedroom (UN Arch, S-1058-0003-0001, Germany Mission – Photographs #241–362)..............................................................................................................................................................................143
Figure 16: Plan of the “Baracke Typ RL IV/3”, 1936 © Museum Niesky Forum
Konrad-Wachsmann-Haus; Licence: CC BY-NC-SA, online: https://sachsen.museum-digital.de/singleimage.php?image=15118 ........................................................ 147

Figure 17: Nissen-hut, preserved in Camp Friedland © Philipp Seuferling ....................... 148


Figure 19: Radio station in DP-camp Berchtesgaden (UN Arch, S-1058-0003-0001, Germany Mission – Photographs #241–362) ........................................................................................................ 160

Figure 20: Educational lecture in DP-camp, Berlin, 1947 (UN Arch, S-0436-0006-04, “Area Team 1027 – Berlin – Reports – Publications – Photographs – Forms”) .......... 161


Figure 22: DP-camp newspapers. Left: “A Heim”, Yiddish paper (UN Arch, S-0436-0009-01, “Area Team 1062 – Augsburg – Copies of Newspaper A Heim Published in Leipheim Camps”). Top right: stapled pages, made as camp paper, probably Ukrainian DP-camp (UN Arch, Area Team 1062 – Augsburg – Publications and Photographs from Ukrainian DP Camp Somme Caserne). Bottom right: Jewish DP children reading a paper (UN Arch, S-1058-0001-01, “Germany Mission – Photographs #001–120”)....... 167

Figure 23: Registration card, fileable (alphabet on top) and documenting entry and exit (second to last row) (DRK Arch, 4750) .................................................................................................................................. 178

Figure 24: “Running slip for emergency reception procedure” documenting various stages: doctor, several check-ups, welfare, police (DRK Arch, 4750) ........................................................................ 178

Figure 25: “Certificate”, to be signed by a mayor, stating that the named forced migrant receives accommodation in this municipality. (StA HH, 131–1 II_1233: “Betreuung von Heimatvertriebenen, Flüchtlingen und Evakuierten, 1945–1956”).......................... 179

Figure 26: “Camp identification card”. Front (left): Registering name, birthday, marital status, admission date, room number, signature. Back (right): prolongations and receipt of goods (blankets, eating bowls, drinking cups, cutlery, knife, spoon) (DRK Arch, 4750) ..................................................................................................................... 181

Figure 27: Cover of “The Flüchtlings-Voice”, May 2001, No. 2. (ASB B, “Box Antirassismus”). Text: “Fight legalized racism!” .......................................................... 199

Figure 28: Title pages of Heim (UN Arch, S-0436-0009-01, “Area Team 1062 – Augsburg – Copies of Newspaper A Heim Published in Leipheim Camps”) and Polonia (UN Arch, Augsburg – Polish newspaper Polonia published in DPs Camp-infantry caserne) ........................................................................................................... 202

Figure 29: CDU campaign poster from 1947 (state elections in North-Rhine Westphalia). Text: “Expellees. Do not despair! For your living rights here! For the old Heimat! CDU”. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KAS-Vertriebene-Bild-5876-3.jpg ........................................................................... 209

Figure 30: Left: Photo of camp barber’s mirror with photos attached, Hersfeld, Germany, undated (1943–1948). (UN Archives, Germany Mission-Photographs #001–120, S-1058-0001-01). Right: Photos in report on DP-camp life in Ingolstadt, 1947. Captions: “National dresses of the various nations. Estonian, Kalmook, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian” and “Wood carvings” (UN Archives, Illustrated Histories, Daily Logs, etc. of Various Camps, S-0436-0016-01) ....................................................... 212
Figure 31: Friedland bell, “Heimkehrerglocke”. © Philipp Seuferling ..........................................................215
Figure 32: Photo album “Ukrainian D.P. Camp Cornberg”, 1946 (UN Arch, S-0436-0004-07, “Area Team 1023-DP Camp 566-Cornberg-Photographs and Copy of Newspaper-“For Liberty”-Ukrainian Camp Weekly”) ..........................................................216
Figure 33: Photo of DPs departure on train, undated (1945–1948) (UN Arch, S-0800-0034-0001, “Germany-Children and refugees”) ....................................................................................................................................218
Figure 34: Interview of Sofia and Janusz K. (UN Arch, S-1058-0001-01, “Germany Mission – Photographs #001–120, undated (1943–1948)” ) ..................................................................................................................224
Figure 35: DP registration record for Zofia K. (AA, 03010101 oS, 67602280, online at: https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/archive/67602280/?p=1&s=Zofia%20Karpuk&doc_id=67602280) ..........................................................................................................................225
Figure 36: Photos from International Tracing Service in DP-camps (UN Arch, S-1058-0001-01, “Germany Mission-Photographs, 1943–1948”) ..................................................................................................................................................226
Figure 37: CM1 envelope for Josef P. (AA, 32110000, 79606379, online at: https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/archive/3-2-1-1_32110000/?p=1&doc_id=79606379) ........................................................................................................................................228
Figure 38: Application for IRO Assistance. (AA, 32110000, 79607027, online at: https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/archive/3-2-1-1_32110000/?p=1&doc_id=79607027) ..........................................................................................................................228
Figure 39: Ukrainian DP-paper, search ads. Title: “Search”. (UN Arch, S-0436-0016-01, “Area Team 1062 - Augsburg - Publications and Photographs from Ukrainian DP Camp Somme Caserne”) ..........................................................................................................................231
Figure 40: Photos of Hotel Astoria, Göttingen, in activist zine, “Geschichte eines Sammellagers 1982–1991”, 1991 (ASB HH, 04.500) ..................................................................................................................................................252
Figure 42: “Buy Astoria grocery vouchers” (ASB HH, 04.500, “Geschichte eines Sammellagers 1982–1991”, p. 20) ..................................................................................................................................................260
Figure 43: Infra Card”, CC-BY-NC-SA @ Stadtmuseum Stuttgart, online: https://bwue.museum-digital.de/index.php?t=objetkt&suinin=4&suinsa=6&oges=278 ..................................................................................................................263
Figure 44: Screenshot from “thecaravan.org”, 25.2.2021. Logo of the “Karawane”, involved cities (sub-organizations) as menu on top ..........................................................................................................................269
Figure 45: Screenshot from the website of “Missing Migrants Project”, 23 February 2021. .....................................................................................................................................................................................279
Figure 46: Sticker from the Munich-based Anti-Racist Telephone (ASB B, “Box Antirassismus”, “Diskriminierung und Rassismus in München. Dokumentation. 1 Jahr Antirassitisches Telefon München”, p 7) ..................................................................................................................281
Figure 47: Reception form of the Anti-Racist Telephone, Munich, (ASB B, “Box Antirassismus”, “Diskriminierung und Rassismus in München. Dokumentation. 1 Jahr Antirassitisches Telefon München”, pp. 10–11) ..................................................................................................................282
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

A Diary

It made me incredibly sad to see my beautiful home being so devastated. At noon we still ate lunch with open windows, despite heavy bombing.

One morning at 7am, we heard shooting in the village and people were yelling, ‘They are coming!’ I ran back home to look for my mother. My mother was not in the house, I could not find her. The only thing we could do was to run, so we did and I had to leave without her. We could not take anything with us, there was no time.

Our boat did not belong to those that got stuck, but we had to wait for the others. All in all we spent 6 hours on the trip. At 2am we finally arrived, completely frozen and tired, the night was cold. Several boats with refugees had sunk.

10 different families in one room.

When we arrived, I said to my children, ‘It is so dirty’, and I told them we were not going to stay for a long time.

The school yard was 25x25 meters and we were 350 people. One was never alone for a single minute. That was absolutely the worst!

In our room we sang a lot, that was nice. But we still didn’t feel comfortable, even though we were only 24 people left. On a daily basis, children and adults were brought to hospital from the camp, all kinds of infectious diseases. Many children look frightfully pale and miserable. Better food and movement in fresh air are missing! We got deloused three times, not a comfortable thing, but really necessary for many people. Gossip and defamation were at large, everyone longed to get out of this camp.

When I had the baby and I went to the Centre, I got a big room and many women came together to live. But still I prefer to live in a caravan because there are not too many people. In the Centre, there will be 14 or 16 women all together in one room with the children.
We were accommodated in barrack 310, but there were few nice people in our room. We had to eat standing up, there was no space at the table!!! Two days later we moved into barrack 320, room 5, here were 7 people, we had beds, a table and space for ourselves.

I think, because we have come here, we are not human beings, we become animals, a new kind of animal. A new kind of animal that has developed at this time; it’s known as ‘refugee’.

We lived like stone age people, because nothing but everything was missing, and was produced by the simplest means.

I remember during the first week that I arrived in the camp, after two horrible nights, I went to the Dome, a place where physical exercises were being conducted by volunteers. People were singing songs and everyone was going on the platform in turn. I always hated my voice. I had never sung before, but that night, I went up, closed my eyes and sang a song. Everyone enjoyed it, and I won a prize. I realised it was easy. For doing this, I only needed to believe in myself and break the fear inside me.

So, we spend our short days with the infinite longing for home. Well, someday this misery will have to end!

This story is fabricated. It is not fictional, but it has not been written in its current form. Every other paragraph is from a different author, one of whom is Charlotte, who kept a diary in 1945 and 1946 during her escape from Gdansk, Poland (Danzig), via various camps in Denmark, to Germany. The other authors are Safia from Afghanistan, Africa from Sudan, Babak from Iran, and Ali Bajdar from Iraq. All of them had made their way to “the Jungle”, the notorious refugee camp structure in Calais, France. The stories of the “Calais

---

1 Charlotte’s diary entries are available in German (English translations above by author) in a collection of witness reports at the Federal Institute for History and Culture of Germans in Eastern Europe: https://www.bkge.de/Projekte/Zeitzeugenberichte/Ausgewaehlte-Berichte/Unsere-Flucht-Danzig-Daenemark-1945-46.php

2 I am aware of the problematic connotations and politics behind terminologies in the context of forced migration (cf. Zetter, 1991). In this thesis, the terms “refugee” and “forced migrant” will be used interchangeably throughout the text, denoting all people forcefully on the move or displaced and subjected to specific legal regimes labelling them as such. “Refugee camp” here stands for all institutionalized accommodations for this group of people. Chapter Two will provide a deeper conceptual history of the figure and construction of the “refugee” and the “camp”.

24
Writers” were written down in the late 2010s. About 75 years lie between the experiences of Charlotte and Safia, Africa, Babak, and Ali Bajdar, yet they could hardly be more similar. Immediate danger of war at home and a rushed departure. Life-threatening boat trips – across the Baltic Sea or across the Mediterranean. Miserable conditions in mass accommodation – in wooden soldier barracks in Denmark or in tents and caravans in the Calais “Jungle”. Waiting. Longing for home. The voices of these individuals are mere examples of the millions fleeing and being expelled, either in the post-war turmoil of Central Europe, or due to war, persecution, poverty and other conflicts in the Global South today. The process is strikingly identical: forced migrants securing their survival and claiming fundamental human rights by making dangerous trips, transgressing borders, and entering a condition of being steered, managed and governed by others, at borders, in the camp, or in any destination country. Modernity and bordered nation states have produced a “refugee regime” (Betts, 2010), a complex system of rules, institutions, regulations and borders, to take care of its outcasts. Hannah Arendt (1943/1994, pp. 115–116) in her classical essay *We Refugees* writes: “It is the same story all over the world, repeated again and again. In Europe the Nazis confiscated our property; but in Brazil we have to pay 30% of our wealth […]. In Paris we could not leave our homes after eight o’clock because we were Jews; but in Los Angeles we are restricted because we are ‘enemy aliens.’ Our identity is changed so frequently that nobody can find out who we actually are.” Systems make refugees (cf. Gatrell, 2013).

At the same time, the contexts of Charlotte from Prussia and the Calais Writers are different. Charlotte was an internally displaced person, subject to ethnic cleansing of Eastern Europe and paying the price for Nazi Germany’s war of aggression. Like 14 million other Germans, she had to move West, behind the newly-drawn borders. She was white and displaced within a country where she held citizenship, but still she could never return home. In contrast, the Calais Writers moved across continents, fought their way through the impenetrable borders of Fortress Europe, and found themselves lacking the right citizenships and statuses to build a life in safety. They are of colour. But in addition to all these contextual factors, one factor is parti-

---


4 In 1945, after losing the war, Germany’s Eastern border moved to the rivers Oder and Neiße. The Allied Forces decided that all ethnic Germans East of that border had to move West. This context will be elaborated on in Chapter Two.
cularly apparent, and has often been pointed out as a central shift in refugees’ experiences: Charlotte wrote her diary on paper, she received important news from a radio or a newspaper (if she could get hold of one), her most important documents and permissions were issued as paper forms, copied, stamped and signed in the camp, she got in touch with her lost and missing family members via long-awaited letters or search services based on paper indexes, and her food stamps were issued as small paper notes. In contrast, Safia and the other residents of the Calais camp use smartphones as key devices of their survival, navigate their trip with it, stay in touch with dispersed family and friends through digital media, get news and important information from social media and the Internet, and are subjected to digitized asylum systems in the European Union. Their biometric data might be saved somewhere they are not aware of; their fingerprints or social media data might be used against them at border crossings; algorithms or artificial intelligence systems might decide their future; they could be forced to pay for food from a digital benefits account with scans of the iris.

These media technological shifts have often been described as a revolutionary game-changer for the experiences of forced migrants today, both for media practices among refugees as well as for refugee governance. An emerging field of “digital migration studies” (Leurs & Smets, 2018) has started to critically and systematically assess the ways digital media intersect with migration phenomena and experiences: in other words, the ways that both media use and communication practices among migrants shape their everyday, and also how practices of governance, administration, and bordering draw more and more on digital technologies to construct and police borders, citizenship and humanitarian relief. But as Charlotte’s example demonstrates, none of these media practices come from a historical void. Instead, these histories reveal fundamental circularities and parallels from the perspective of the current moment. Media technologies, practices of mediation, and mediated communication have been part of forced migration before. Media have always provided frames, opportunities, connections, conditions, hindrances, dangers or borders for people who are forced to be on the move, and these practices continue well into the present day. At different historical moments, different media have been created and deployed to tackle refugee situations as either enablers or disablers of the refugee body and subject as well as the systems that both make and care for their outcasts. These constructed systems and media practices of dealing with moving populations have for a long time centralized themselves in a specific space and place: the refugee camp. The temporary (or maybe eternal?) home
for both Charlotte and Safia. This is what this dissertation about: media, the refugee camp, and historical continuities and ruptures. About the nothing but fundamental and existential role of media and communication in the spatial and temporal modes of being and being made a refugee.

Aims and goals: refugee and media histories

Images of history

Modernity, and especially contemporary history,\(^5\), which this thesis focuses on, is full of trajectories as well as ruptures and critical junctures of forced migration contexts as well as media technological developments and changes. The 20\(^{th}\) century has aptly been called a “century of expulsions” (Münz, 2002) and a century full of moments when migration history “happened”; where new imaginaries, practices, and discourses emerged; when new debates around diversity, solidarity and coexistence emerged; when the modern system of nation-states developed ever-new forms of coping with and managing movement across its borders; when new practices emerged of social interaction between new and old inhabitants, stakeholders and citizens. Laws have been changed, definitions revised, border protection strengthened, shelters built and torn down, fences erected and crossed. These historical trajectories become visible now, as flashes that contextualize the present moment. A moment, in which private sea rescue in the Mediterranean remains largely illegalized. Boats with rescued refugees are denied entry to harbours and staff face criminal prosecution and high fines. The Mediterranean is the most lethal sea in the world, with more than 22,000 (and counting) registered deaths since 2014 (Missing Migrants Project, 2021). Those that make it are kept in so-called “hot-spot” accommodations, such as the Moria camp in Greece. In 2020, residents of Moria asked to be granted animal rights, because animals have more rights in Europe than do human refugees in the camps of Moria and Kara Tepe (Mohammed & Obeed, 2020). The Western world is shutting itself off with ever more intelligent border technologies, bordering techniques, and legal deals with surrounding countries, such as Denmark’s plan to relocate asylum centres offshore (BBC, 2021). At the same time, the majority of displaced people and refugees do not live in the Western world, but in areas neighbouring crisis regions, in Africa,

\(^5\)Contemporary history is considered to be the history of the present, or of living memory. It usually denotes a subset of modern history, i.e. the period of 1945 until today (German: Zeitgeschichte, French: histoire contemporaine).
the Middle East, South Asia, and Central America. 82 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide, a number only growing, are subject to these global regimes, stripped of agency and freedoms (UNHCR, 2021a). According to some estimates, more than 20% of these people are accommodated in the largest refugee camps ever in Bangladesh, Uganda, Kenya and Jordan (USA for UNHCR, 2021).

History can relate to the present in two ways: on the one hand, historical research denaturalizes the present and foregrounds the contingencies of social processes, debunking eternal “progress”, and re-aligning the contours of the present moment with trajectories from the past. But this perspective can also be inverted. According to Walter Benjamin, images of history are also contingent from the viewpoint of the present. New critical junctures, contours and trajectories become perceptible when the present realigns them ever-anew. This thesis activates this perspective on history by seeking out different historical contexts of media in refugee camps and re-evaluating them in the light of the present moment. The contemporary situation of immense challenges of increasing forced migration paired with decreasing political will to intervene (which is the real crisis in the popular term “refugee crisis”) can be called in Benjamin’s words a “moment of danger” (Benjamin, 1940/2006, p. 391). What is at stake right now flashes at us and makes visible and recognizable a certain image of the past. Applying this historical lens to media and communication or to refugee studies is not an entirely new endeavour, yet, as refugee historian Peter Gatrell (2017) reminds us, “[i]t is striking how little attention is given to refugees in general histories of the modern world” (Gatrell, 2017, p. 175). And, “[w]here refugees do make an appearance in the pages of history books, there is still a tendency to portray them as miserable flotsam and jetsam – another watery metaphor – as inescapable ‘victims’ of war or revolution, not as agents of change” (ibid.).

One rather uncharted historical lens on this problem are the roles of media and communication and their entanglement with the refugee regime. Historicizing the present moment in a Benjaminian fashion, technologies and practices of mediation and communication urgently move into focus: fundamentally sustaining, co-constituting and shaping experiences and practices of being a refugee and being made a refugee. As Francis Leo Collins (2020, p. 8) remarks, “[w]hile much research on migration industries and infrastructure has to date focused on contemporary patterns, many of their functions and effects have substantial historical lineages that have yet to be sufficiently examined.” A more fundamental historical exploration of media as shaping structures and agencies for forced migrants is lacking. Moreover,
this perspective historically intervenes into current understandings of unprecedentedness, calling for ever more radical “measures” and “solutions” to “refugee crises”, more often than not by way of media technology. After all, Benjamin notes, “The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that accords with this insight. Then we will clearly see that it is our task to bring about a real state of emergency” (Benjamin, 1940/2006: 392). Uncovering such images of the past is the goal of this thesis.

Media, space, and time

Media can be seen as fundamental, existential, and inescapable enablers and disablers of forced migration. Ontologically, media are environments, enablers, ways of being in the world, as John Durham Peters (2015) outlines. Positioned in the middle of things, media are conditions and all-encompassing, leveraging environments and infrastructures. “Once communication is understood not only as sending messages – certainly an essential function – but also as providing conditions for existence, media cease to be only studios and stations, messages and channels, and become infrastructures and forms of life” (Peters, 2015, p. 14). Media, understood in this very broad manner, are the means, practices, techniques and technologies of mediation that condition and make possible communication and thus sociality and being in the world. They can be understood as “possibility-fixing […] bottlenecks” (Peters, 2015, pp. 21–22), through which meaning and communication pass and are leveraged to exercise power over the social and material world. In this sense, a broad notion of media emerges, ranging from mass media such as newspapers, radio, and film, to paper, card catalogues, registers, or materialities such as architecture or the body. From this perspective, with this thesis, I aim to articulate a perspective on refugee and media history alongside each other, exploring the entanglements of how media as practices (Couldry, 2004) – as sociomaterial artifacts, materialities, and technologies, as well as motivations and imaginaries that shape social practices of mediation and communication – historically constitute what it means to be and to be made a refugee. With this goal in mind, this thesis historicizes the relationship of media and forced migration in the specific spatial context of the refugee camp, by way of exploring material preconditions, social contexts and consequences of media practices, i.e. the roles of mediation and communication in making, unmaking and remaking the space, time, and politics of the refugee camp, and the ramifications of media
practices in the historical development of refugee experiences and the refugee regime.

Media practices, as will be seen, shape, condition and manipulate the spatial, temporal and political conditions for mobile subjects living in camps. Forced migrants are simultaneously kept inside and outside of specific spaces and times, torn between inclusion into humanitarian relief and exclusion from civic rights. This systemic, seemingly paradoxical, double logic of the refugee regime, borders, and humanitarianism is mediated and materialized in the space of the refugee camp. While this thesis contends that the refugee camp could hardly exist outside of, or without, media, a historicizing approach will nuance this relationship. The politics of the refugee regime, the project of making the refugee into a political figure and subject, and the camp as a space and time of refugees’ experiences, have ever again been realized in environments of media practices and technologies. In order to further conceptualize these mediated constructions of the refugee figure and the refugee camp, the camp is understood as a heterotopian and heterochronic space, which is Michel Foucault’s notion of an othered, upside-down, paradoxically inside and outside, inverted mirror of social space and time (Foucault, 1967/1997). While media practices are embedded and take place in such heterotopian counter-spaces, media and communication also fundamentally enable, construct and uphold heterotopian and heterochronic conditions in the first place. Media practices negotiate and configure the relations and differentiations of camp-space and non-camp-space, camp-time and non-camp-time, and refugee and non-refugee. In this sense, media are in a middle seat: “their definition is a matter of position, such that the status of something as a medium can fade once its position shifts” (Peters, 2015, p. 29). Media practices are hence deeply relational: as materialities, technologies, techniques and practices, their meanings and functions emerge in situated constellations, always already relating to and depending on their surroundings. Foucault’s heterotopias and heterochronias, as read in this thesis, define themselves as relational spaces and times: “they have, in relation to the rest of spaces, a function” (Foucault, 1967/1997, p. 356). Heterotopian and heterochronic spaces gain meaning and relevance when they stand in an inversive, mirroring, upside-down relationship to the surrounding socio-material environment. In differentiating and othering space and time, heterotopias always co-construct and make possible all spaces of society.

Taking these perspectives together, this thesis makes the refugee camp heterotopia and heterochronia a media theoretical concern. Refugee camps and their media practices mediate differentiating and othering relations of
space, time and politics. The concept of media practices is usually concerned with stabilizing practices and thus with the production of everyday life in and around media. Refugee camps disrupt, turn upside-down, and put on hold these stabilities in favour of new, heterotopian and heterochronic relations of space and time: an indefinite space and time of limbo, of being on hold, of being both inside and outside of society; overly visible, yet invisible; inside humanitarian relief, care and shelter, yet outside of unconditioned recognition, citizenship rights and full participation. This thesis will empirically and theoretically show how heterotopian, heterochronic, and heteropolitical media practices in and of refugee camps mediate the camp’s othered and inverted spatial, temporal, and political conditions. By way of media, in the ablative case as Peters (2015, p. 21) notes, media practices in and of the refugee camp position and relate subjects to each other in specific temporally and spatially manipulated settings, which create, foster and maintain conditions of always being inside and outside of social space and time, in a doubled and altered relationship to all surrounding spaces. Occurring in practices, technologies and techniques of mediation and communication, media practices in the refugee camp manipulate time and space of the mobile body by way of including the refugee subject into humanitarian realms of temporary shelter and care, while at the same time excluding them from full civic participation, unconditioned recognition, and stable and lasting belonging. In this thesis, I will explore the intersections of materiality and sociality of technologies, techniques, and routinized practices oriented towards media, asking how media practices in the refugee camp were imagined, materialized and enacted as existential positionalities of the refugee subject. As will be shown, within media practices of writing and recording, circulating and disseminating, identifying, speaking out, hearing and listening, building and planning, the refugee camp historically emerges as a medium between the refugee regime and the embodied, constructed figure of the refugee and their condition of experiencing and being. Heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices in the refugee camp make, unmake and remake space, time and politics: they build and plan its architectural forms, its modes and possibilities of communication inside and beyond, the administration and governance of the mobility of bodies and items within the camp; they also enable the management of the camp’s temporal limbo situation through mnemonic media practices of remembering and witnessing past, present and future; and they enable political mobilization and resistance, and an activist renegotiation of spatial and temporal conditions of the camp. These three non-exhaustive trajectories form the core of the analysis: Space and govern-
anc media (Chapter Five), time and media of memory and witnessing
(Chapter Six), and politics and media of protest and resistance (Chapter
Seven) will uncover spatialities, temporalities and politics of the refugee camp
as a space that lies outside of society, but not in a utopian or dystopian, non-
existent way: instead, heterotopias (like refugee camps) and their media
practices are always already inside and co-constitutive of what society is.
Ultimately, dissecting media practices in refugee camps will lead to a wider
perspective on media theory from the margins: seemingly peripheral spaces
(such as refugee camps) are in fact centres of those media practices, which
delineate and enable society in general.

Media history from the archive

The historicizing approach to media practices in the refugee camp turns the
work of this thesis into a project of tracing and excavating, and this
dissertation methodically departs from the archive. Situating the theoretical
concerns around media and the refugee camp within archival records, the
goal is to understand genealogies of media as practices and technologies of
the refugee regime and of refugees dwelling in camps. Trajectories will be
sought out from different periods in Germany’s contemporary history.
Contexts from both the post-war period of roughly 1945 to 1960, as well as
from the 1980s and 1990s, will be consulted to discern media practices
around the space, time and politics of the camp. After the foundations of how
camp space is built, administrated and governed, and how temporal rifts and
limbos are coped with and become prevalent in post-war camps (Chapters
Five and Six), the analysis will move to the 1980s and 1990s to explore the
political media practices of resistance and protest against an ever-more
segregating refugee regime and the dire conditions in neglected asylum-
seeker shelters (Chapter Seven). The goal is not to achieve exhaustive
chronological periodization, or a linear master-narrative of a history of media
and forced migration. Instead, this thesis considers archives and the
documents they hold – media practices themselves – as embedded in and
ettangled with the contexts of the refugee regime. Archives are powerful
institutions and spaces, offering images of the past, which will be dealt with
as traces of historical media practices in the refugee camp. The archival
documents are, hence, not dusty paper, providing evidence of a real truth of
“wie es eigentlich gewesen ist”, but instead can be understood as “docu-
ments”, a media genre in themselves, as Lisa Gitelman (2014) argues, that has
an epistemic function of simultaneously “knowing” and “showing” in its
historical context. By reconstructing them as media practices, documents in
the archive produced by different actors and subjects of the refugee regime will allow for reconstructions, excavations and dissections of historical media practices, their material preconditions and their social ramifications in the refugee camp.

Research questions

In what follows, historical media practices among forced migrants, detained and accommodated in refugee camps and asylum-seeker shelters in Germany since 1945, will be explored and analysed. Methodologically, my approach is situated at intersections of media and cultural studies as well as media history: an inductive exploration of situated, local, historical contexts of forced migrants detained in camps, with the aim to describe social practices, material preconditions and processes around media as practices. The methodical approach and empirical material on which this endeavour is based are formed by an analysis of documents collected from archives, in the context of refugee camps and shelters in Germany since 1945, focusing on the immediate post-war years (1945–1955) and the 1980s and 1990s. The goal is to excavate historical constellations and genealogies in order to see where relationships between media practices and the refugee camp came into being, and how these were negotiated and shaped, contested, made, unmade and remade.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What were the roles of media practices in refugee camps in Germany after 1945?
2. How did media practices shape the refugee camp space and practices of its residents and involved actors and how did the refugee camp shape media practices?
3. How are media historically entangled with the evolving refugee regime and which circularities, continuities, and ruptures do media practices showcase throughout contemporary history?

Situating the research: context and previous research

While other contexts would also be valuable for insights on media and refugee history, post-1945 Central Europe and specifically Germany can be regarded a critical juncture for starting the evolution of the global contemporary refugee regime. Between 1944 and 1949, between 12 and 14 mil-
lion German refugees and expellees as well as 8 million Displaced Persons (e.g. those liberated from prisoner, labour and concentration camps), Cold War refugees crossing the Iron Curtain from Hungary or the GDR, and more global movements from Vietnam, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Yugoslavia were the biggest groups that migrated into Germany. Key developments of shaping discourses, institutions, practices and norms of taking care of, repatriating, managing and governing refugees, not least within refugee camps, emerged in this context, especially in the 1940s and 1950s, but also in the 1980s and 1990s – the two time periods underlying the empirical chapters of this thesis. UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and the Geneva Convention of 1951 (which defines the figure of the “refugee”) are the most central institutions and documents emerging from the post-war context, not at least in the handling of forced migration in Central Europe. The (always problematic) terms “refugee”, “asylum-seeker”, “migrant”, and “refugee camp” stem from such historical contexts in which they were shaped and defined as discursive tools to denote specific individual human beings, and attach them to legal categories. Particularly in the second half of the 20th century, the devolution of the Nazi regime and the colonial era at large, as well as the surge of the Cold War, the Western world, and Germany, have created frameworks for “handling” forced migration that are in place even today. Therefore, this context arguably provides valuable insights into genealogies of media and the refugee regime.

Media have been part of all of these developments and experiences ever since. Academic interest in the connections of media, migration, and refugees specifically has varied throughout history. Particularly since 2015, media and communication studies have (once again) been intensely caught up in this interrelationship of media and migration. Empirical research charting the role of media in refugee and asylum contexts is a fast-growing field today, building on the established field of media and migration. Qualitative, quantitative, critical and action research frameworks have been employed to explore the intersections of media and forceful displacement. This boost in scholarly interest (and funding) reflects a renewed political and discursive realization of being in the “age of migration”. Migration scholars Stephen Castles et al. (2014) have attached this label to Western history since the 1600s, starting with the Westphalian peace of 1648 which consolidated the idea of sovereign states and resulted in borders around territorialized spaces.

In awareness of their constructed-ness, I will use terms interchangeably for readability’s sake, grasping people subject to various historically contingent legal regimes that define them as such.
and national citizenship, which, in turn, are the basis for migration and migrants as controllable categories and phenomena. This time, however, the renewed realization of being in the “age of migration” coincided with another realization: that the “information age” (Castells, 2009) and the “digital revolution” are rapidly unfolding in a new, fast-changing and under-analysed media environment. Probably more researchers than ever are trying to understand empirically and theoretically the present ramifications of digital media technologies and its effects on (forced) migration. The following section provides a short overview of the research field, situating this thesis in studies of refugees’ media uses, digital migration infrastructures, and media and migration as a more inclusive background.

**Digital media and refugees: practices and infrastructures**

In addition to a large field of critical studies of migrant and refugee representations in media (e.g. Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Georgiou, 2018; Berry et al., 2015; D’Haenens et al., 2019), practices around media technologies performed and experienced by refugees have also recently become the focus of media and communication scholars. Media as communication technologies have been shown to be multi-faceted, vital tools at all stages of forced migration (before, during, and after escape) which creates media experiences of surviving, escaping, difficult journeys, dwelling in camps, or arriving and settling in unknown societies that are often hostile and racist. A multitude of studies have mapped out how digital media affect and shape the refugee experience, especially in the context of 2015 in Europe and the Middle East. Usually separated into ‘before’, ‘during’, and ‘after’ experiences (Kutscher & Kreß, 2015; Ullrich, 2017), qualitative and quantitative studies have shown how smartphones are tools for “logistics from below” and participation (Arnold & Görlund, 2019), how smartphones serve as mobile “lifelines” (Alencar et al., 2019), how social media are vital channels for information and interpersonal communication, how trust is built both online and offline (Graf, 2018), and how “digital resilience tactics” are used in retreating, neoliberal welfare states (Udwan et al., 2020). At the same time, digital media can also convey false information (Emmer et al., 2016) and create “information precarity”, a phrase coined by Melissa Wall et al. (2017) in their study of Za’atari camp in Jordan, which they used to describe exposure to false information, lack of access to connection (technologically and socially, e.g. for women), surveillance by the Syrian state, and the lack of control of their own image and representation elsewhere.
Digital communication technologies are crucial for maintaining contact with left-behind loved ones, and social media messaging services rank highest in priority here (Emmer et al., 2016). One-to-one communication across borders and large distances is probably one of the most fundamental and historically continuous migrant media practices. Through an analysis of migrant letters, Bruce Elliott et al. (2006) have shown how the postal service as a media infrastructure and practice in the 19th and 20th centuries informed transnational migrants’ experiences: “So common was the personal letter exchanged between immigrants and family and friends in the homeland that this genre, more than newspapers, pamphlets, and books, became the source of wisdom about life in the new location” (p. 2). Similarly, smartphones are used to fight isolation and loneliness, but also for pastime. Facilitating contact with friends and family, digital media can ease anxieties, and smartphones act as a “companion” in coping with specific stress factors that forced displacement produces before, during, and after the journey, or in camps (Dekker et al., 2018; Kaufmann, 2018; Wall et al., 2017). In reaction to being stranded and stuck, digital media provide means of hope during the long experience of waiting, as Mirjam Twigt (2018) describes for Iraqi refugees stuck in Jordan. Media technologies “[t]hrough their affective affordances and their pervasiveness” constantly provide “digital connections [which] spur emotions and leave behind impressions” (Twigt, 2018, p. 8). Similarly, Kevin Smets describes this affective and emotional dimension of digital media as the creation of “ontological security” (Smets, 2018). Interpersonal networks of refugees en route and in the receiving society, supported by social media, like WhatsApp groups, are vital support systems for organizing the escape, exchanging relevant information, and giving tips and warnings. Thus, digital media can become spaces of “self-empowerment”, e.g. among queer refugees (Bayramoğlu & Lünenborg, 2018), or provide possibilities for “reclamant narratives” (Bishop, 2018) in opposition to excluding and racist mass media representations. Other more individual practices are the storing and digital creation of memories, often photos, representing a struggle for self-expression, information, cultural identity and family life through smartphones as “pocket archives” (Leurs, 2017). This practice encompasses refugees exercising agency and creating voice through media and communication. Saskia Witteborn’s (2012; 2014a; 2014b; 2018) extensive research in the context of German asylum-seekers explores accommodations, imaginaries and practices around digital media, demonstrating the imagined affordances of digital media for managing (im)perceptibility online (Witteborn, 2014a), for creating testimony and witnessing (Witteborn, 2012), while
pointing at structural factors of social arrest where emotions, like shame and fear, affect digital practices (Witteborn, 2014b).

Concrete information needs rely on media as technological infrastructures (Emmer et al., 2016; Borkert et al., 2018; Kutscher & Kreß, 2015; Van Liempt & Zijlstra, 2017; Gillespie et al., 2018). These needs range from general news and knowledge about refugee policies, to specific information about safe routes, smugglers, asylum procedures, reliable contacts in receiving societies, to localization through GPS. Certain affordances of media technology are of infrastructural importance for safely navigating time and space as a refugee, such as locating oneself, e.g. when tracking one’s position in a smuggler’s truck, saving scans of passports in cloud services, or knowing how and where to cross borders. National SIM-cards, signals, Wi-Fi networks and plugs or batteries are the necessary material dimensions of these practices, which are often hard to access, creating precarious situations and informational deprivation (Alencar et al., 2019; Van Liempt & Zijlstra, 2017; Kubitschko & Schütz, 2016; Gillespie et al., 2018; Wall et al., 2017). The heavy dependence on media infrastructures in individual uses of media fosters potential dangers. Alongside issues around trust, credibility and reliability of information, the spread of rumours and false or manipulated information through social media presents specific problems in undertakings of migration (Dekker et al., 2018; Wall et al., 2017; Borkert et al., 2018). Refugees’ exposure to misinformation, be it deliberate or accidental, can create severe problems. More all-encompassing, as Mark Latonero and Paula Kift (2018) point out, media infrastructures build impinging environments among all involved actors in what they call the “digital passage”: “Social media, mobile devices, and similar digitally networked technologies comprise this infrastructure of ‘digital passages’ – sociotechnical spaces of flows in which refugees, smugglers, governments, and corporations interact with each other and with new technologies” (Latonero & Kift, 2018, p. 1). Researchers in science and technology studies as well as media and communications increasingly call attention to the technopolitics of these ever-more digitalized and automated “migration infrastructures” (Dijstelbloem, 2020; Leurs, 2020) in spaces of migration, such as borders or refugee camps. Such developments emphasize the dangers of media infrastructures as inescapable modes of surveillance and control. Especially when subjected to persecution in their home countries, many refugees have developed tactics for maintaining safety online, using fake or anonymized accounts or codes to leave as few traces of themselves as possible (Wall et al., 2017). Avoiding traceability and obfuscating that one has crossed certain borders are necessary practices in
reaction to the refugee regime and its infrastructures. For instance, authorities can search smartphones when deciding on refugee status in order to check whether reported stories and identities of their owners are “correct” (Reuters, 2018). This entanglement of media infrastructures with the refugee regime, furthermore, includes the ever-growing automation and datafication of borders, such as saved and shared biometrics like fingerprints or other features, the use of algorithm-driven software to decide on refugee status or estimate integration potential, or the use of smartphone data as evidence in asylum hearings. Media technologies and databases about refugees thereby become part of “bio-bordering” processes (Amelung et al., 2021), where data practices enact migration and make and unmake refugees and borders (Scheel et al., 2019). Thus, data extraction and other technological “solutions” become ever-more popular in humanitarian projects of allegedly fair and efficient governance (Tazzioli, 2020; Macias, 2020; Iazzolino, 2021; Molnar, 2021). In general, migration and border infrastructures are heavily dependent on media technologies and practices, and are usually immersed in a humanitarian discourse of providing smooth, efficient and neutral solutions (Leurs, 2020; Metcalfe & Dencik, 2019; Vukov & Sheller, 2013) – a connection, which indeed goes far back in history, as this thesis will show.

Ultimately, the field points at tensions of affordances and infrastructures of digital media, forming “dialectical dynamics of opportunity and vulnerability” (Gillespie et al., 2018, p. 1) that refugees experience in and through media practices. Sara Marino (2020) provided deep insights into how digital technologies mediate the “refugee crisis” and Fortress Europe along the dimensions of surveillance and border regimes, but also how these technologies work for forced migrants in exile, including humanitarianism and solidarity. Taking cues from this core problem and the debate of “digital migration studies” (Leurs & Smets, 2018), in this thesis I will question the “digital” as a main factor and driver of these developments, and trace larger historical trajectories and circularities of imaginaries and practices of media technologies by both refugees and the refugee regime.

**Media and migration**

Digital media practices are a prism for refugee experiences and their entanglements with power structures and the refugee regime at large. A focus on the intersection of media and migration is however not particularly new, just as neither media nor (forced) migration are new phenomena. More than 25 years ago, Arjun Appadurai (1996) in his study of modernity had already identified electronic mediation and human movement across national,
cultural and territorial boundaries as being in a “deeply disjunctive relationship” (p. 35). This observation contextualizes a whole line of research and debates, from the 1960s onwards, that have been engaged with the meanings and potentials of “new media” for migrant and diasporic communities. The academic-discursive environment of cultural studies, debates around decolonization and increased labour migration with new migratory movements into the post-war Western world, in conjunction with emerging new media technologies (like transnational television) characterized this earlier understanding of mediation and migration as interrelated. Here, scholars like Stuart Hall, Homi K. Bhabha and Edward Said have made an impact on post-colonial media research into representations and experiences of global diasporas forming fragmented, hybrid identities, within and in reaction to media representational regimes (Hall, 1990). In this vein, a stream of research has been mapping how media affect diasporic and immigrant communities, the maintenance of contacts, ties and networks across borders, how connections and public spheres inside diasporic communities are built – in general, how media practices within these communities negotiate the diasporic experience and form the terms and conditions of migrancy (Gillespie, 1995; Naficy, 1993; Dayan, 1998; Aksoy & Robins, 2000; Morley, 2000; Hepp et al., 2011; Morley, 2017; Georgiou, 2006; Madianou & Miller, 2012; Hegde, 2016; Hegde, 2020). Various technological shifts have engendered new media experiences for migrants, usually widening the range of communication and intensifying transnational ties. These shifts start from letters and international mail service, and continue with diasporic or international newspapers and magazines, transistor/ultra-shortwave radio, satellite TV, video-cassettes shipped around the world, leading up to digital media (Athique, 2016; Elliott et al., 2006; Madianou & Miller, 2012). Steven Vertovec (2004) called the rise of cheap international phone calls “the social glue of migrant transnationalism” (p. 219), which is “connecting small-scale social formations across the globe” (p. 220). Based on this ongoing debate about the intersections of people and media on the move, this thesis re-assesses certain progressions and ruptures in mapping media practices in refugee camps.

In wider circles of society, debates around what refugees and migrants do with media has been a topic of political debate with quite some historical continuity. Media consumption and communication behaviour of transnationally moving people is often politicized and instrumentalized, for instance used as alleged proof of political statements about integration and immigration policies. On the one hand, migrant communities consuming media from their home country are blamed for avoiding contact with the
receiving society and refusing integration. This argument had already appeared in the 1980s and 1990s when satellite dishes popped up, symbolically marking and transforming multicultural neighbourhoods in European cities (Löfgren, 2020). At the same time, as mentioned above, in 2015 pictures of refugees carrying smartphones were distorted into political arguments about “bogus asylum seekers”, questioning whether they were “really” in need of protection if they could afford a smartphone, as being able to buy, maintain, and retain such technologies does not fit into the preconceived notion of the refugee (Leurs & Smets, 2018, p. 2; Arnold & Görland, 2019, p. 101). On the other hand, media use by migrants and refugees is often also hailed as a potential solution, as a way to foster inclusion and participation, of enabling communication between different groups and engineering social cohesion through shared mediated public spheres. When conveyed in the right channels, communication technologies can provide help for refugees, easing information difficulties, and guiding refugees on allegedly safe and right tracks. This argument is a common discourse of governmental actors like UNHCR or national institutions. Media practices in migration contexts are hence always under special scrutiny, surrounded by imaginaries and myths, seen as either useful tools or hindrances, or general terms and conditions: projections are made on their materialities and technological functions and the potential meanings that they can produce for all involved actors. This thesis aims to further historicize these assumptions and imaginaries around media. Focusing in the refugee camp, contested imaginaries and roles of media practices in migration contexts become visible as historically constructed and negotiated out of media’s sociomaterial dimensions and the meanings that they mediate and communicate.

Research gap

From reflecting on this research field of media and refugee experiences and mobilities, it is clear that two points form a lacuna that deserves deeper attention. Firstly, there are hardly studies of media practices in the specific space of the refugee camp. Apart from Saskia Witteborn’s (2012; 2014a; 2014b) study of German asylum-seeker shelters, Melissa Wall et al.’s (2017) study of Jordan’s Za‘atari camp, and fieldwork by Kevin Smets (2018) in Turkey, there have been no significant studies of camp-based media practices, especially that consider logics, operations, and infrastructures of the camp as space that has been socially constructed and produced by and through media practices and technologies. Refugee camps continue to emerge and grow as central locations of forced migration experiences, yet
they also have longer histories of being drawn upon as a tool in the refugee regime, which supports the relevance of an integrated study of media in the camp. Contributing to studies of refugee camps from different perspectives, such as anthropology or history, refugee camps focalize the under-researched role of media as practices, materialities and meanings, which spatialize the refugee experience and the refugee regime.

Secondly, there is a lack of research that concerns the historicizing perspective. What often remains overlooked is a specific perspective on the deeper historical processes at play. I am not aware of any study of specifically historical media practices among forced migrants (other than studies which are themselves historical, and once were contemporary). Thus, this thesis is a move to fill empirical blind spots, taking refugees seriously as historical actors and media users, embedded in, constitutive of, and reactive to contexts of evolving refugee regime and media technological environments. At the same time, it traces precisely those media practices within which authorities and the refugee regime have developed forms of refugee governance. The mentioned field of “digital migration studies” defines itself around one specific set of media technology: digital media, including online, internet-based communication, subject to processes of datafication and automation. So, if it is argued that a process of “transformation of migration toward an always already digitally mediatized migration” (Leurs & Smets, 2018, p. 2) is taking place, one needs a much more careful and nuanced screening of the specificities of digital media practices, and to investigate if and how it really is “the digital” per se that generates and shapes media practices in forced migration and the refugee camp, and defy the notion that digital media practices come from historical voids or present a force majeure. For example, Alice Marwick (2013) warned of discourses of “digital exceptionalism”, which assumes that the Internet has inherently different logics and ways of functioning that are unlike other media. Therefore, I want to argue for historicizing the present moment, which means decentering research on the role of media in forced migration from specific technological environments and reach greater historical awareness by discerning trajectories and circularities of media practices: the impacts and contexts of changing media technological environments as well as of evolving refugee regimes and political, cultural, and economic contexts in what people actually do around media in forced migration experiences and camps. This view means empirically leaving digital media practices as research objects and diachronically considering other, older media technological contexts and the media practices therein. In a Benjaminian perspective, the digital context flashes
images of the past trajectories, conditions and contexts of media practices in forced migration and refugee camps at us. As Radha Hegde (2016) noted in her conceptualization of media and migration studies, “[t]he preoccupation with the newness and the present often eschews complex histories, resulting in the tendency to both reify media objects and essentialize culture” (p. 22). Hence, this thesis seeks to contribute epistemologically, theoretically and empirically in assessing historical and contemporary media practices in forced migration and refugee camps alongside each other. Scholarship about the meanings, uses, and practices of media technologies by forced migrants before digital media is surprisingly scarce. Especially from today’s perspective, looking at historical contexts from the viewpoints, challenges, and questions of the digital media environment, its societal and conceptual debates, and from the current refugee regime and political context. Even though contemporary research can give insights, a larger historicizing perspective on junctures, ruptures, and continuities is lacking.

Structure of this thesis
This thesis has seven further chapters. Continuing from this introduction, Chapter Two delves further into the context of refugee camps in Germany after 1945. Through a conceptual keyword history of the “refugee camp” as an institution of an evolving refugee regime in Germany, a spatial theory of the refugee camp as a sociomaterial space is developed. The chapter walks through the historical context of Germany’s refugee accommodations after 1945 and introduces the notion of the “refugee regime”, which gets spatialized in the refugee camp. Here, I further discuss Michel Foucault’s concept of “heterotopian and heterochronic spaces” (Foucault, 1967/1997), in order to capture the specific and othering spatio-temporal feature of refugee camps as inverted, mirroring spaces, simultaneously inside and outside of society.

In Chapter Three, I will move into the theoretical terrain of media practices in order to further conceptualize how practices of mediation and communication around media technologies – i.e. “media practices” (Couldry, 2004; Gießmann, 2018; Shove et al., 2012) – make, unmake and remake refugee camps as heterotopian and heterochronic spaces. Ending with the concepts of heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices, this chapter will draw on practice theory to outline the interrelatedness of materialities and socialities around media that shape social relations of involved actors, and thus the specifics of camp space, time, and politics.
In order to assess historical media practices, Chapter Four elaborates methodological and methodical avenues of analysing archival files and documents as traces of media practices. Deconstructing the institution of the archive and its position within the refugee regime, the chapter leads through the selection of institutional archives and community archives and the collected materials used in this thesis. These records are conceptualized and made analysable as “documents” (Gitelman, 2014), which “know and show” traces of historical media practices.

Three analytical chapters follow, delving into the (1) space, (2) time and (3) politics of media practices in the refugee camp. Three trajectories delve into different historical periods and camp contexts. The historicity of camp space (Chapter Five) and camp time (Chapter Six) will be traced to the immediate post-war years, around 1945 to 1960. Camp politics and trajectories of refugee protest and resistance will lead to the 1980s and 1990s (Chapter Seven), a time when the refugee regime significantly tightened and became more segregating.

Chapter Five discusses heterotopian media practices around the spatial construction of the refugee camp: that is, media practices of spatial planning and architectural styles, governance, administration, and media technological infrastructure in the refugee camp, all of which constitute a heterotopian space, its logics, and its control. It will be shown how camp space is constructed through practices around media infrastructures (Starosielski & Parks, 2015), such as camp architecture, building styles, media technological equipment and furnishing, as well as administrational media infrastructures of governing and making its residents. These form various dimensions of heterotopian media practices, which make, produce and control the heterotopian, othered, and inverted condition of the refugee camp, as well as subjectivize its inhabitants into heterotopian subjects. Characterized by mobility, impermanence, temporariness, fixedness, control, and absence of privacy, media practices construct and build refugee camp heterotopias. As will be shown, within these heterotopian media practices that make up the camp, cybernetic, utilitarian, and functionalist imaginaries are projected on media, materialities and technologies, such as building and arranging the camp, providing and withholding communication and connectivity, distributing relief and care, or registering, fixating, and controlling residents. Through these media practices, the refugee camp can become the paradoxical, inverted space at the margins (yet centres) of society, that manages and controls its outcasts. These processes are traced back to the immediate post-war years in camps for German refugees, DPs, and asylum-seekers in from ca. 1945 to 1960, a critical juncture and the onset of the modern global refugee regime.
Chapter Six moves to the temporal condition of heterotopias, the always-intertwined other side of the coin. Refugee camps are also heterochronias: limbos, waiting zones, interruptions and breaks between a lost past and a yet-to-come future, stuck in a definite temporariness, always meant to end and be impermanent. *Heterochronic media practices* create, deal and cope with the multiple temporalities clashing in the refugee camp, stuck between continuation and rupture of temporal flows. Media practices of remembering and witnessing are “managing” these temporalities in and around uses of media technologies (cf. Keightley & Pickering, 2017). Camp residents use media in hopeful ways, in order to remember the lost past, reinsert and bring these lost times and places into the camp present, keep up cultural memory, form new diasporic communities, or document the present and dream of new futures. At the same time, media practices of obligatory witnessing in administrative procedures create and negotiate the limbo situation, when refugee statuses depend on giving credible witness and inserting one’s story into mediated systems of registering and managing refugees. Remembering and giving witness and communicating about past events are media practices embedded in and constitutive of the experience of being and being made a refugee, responding to and managing the heterochronic “breach of time” (Foucault, 1967/1997). The trajectories of refugee camp temporality will be sought out in the context of post-war camps. As will be seen, camp newspapers, camp cinemas, photography, and even questionnaires and forms about the refugee’s past are historical trajectories to digital memory, remembering and witnessing in forced migration contexts today. Media practices dealing with heterochronic temporalities affect and shape both refugees, coping with ruptures in hopeful ways, but also the refugee regime, where biography and its mediation have become an obligatory features of refugee governance.

Chapter Seven, the last analytical chapter, circles around resistance and moves forward in time to the 1980s and 1990s, when the refugee regime had tightened and segregated the now mostly non-white asylum-seekers in mostly neglected shelters, and trajectories of contentious practices become discernible: of resistance, protest and activism in and around media practices, which seek to contest and alter the heterotopian and heterochronic condition. After all, heterotopias are highly ambiguous. Refugee camps are not non-existing, utopian places, but characterized by paradox of inside and outside. Camp residents relate to the heterotopian and heterochronic conditions, and as this third analytical chapter will demonstrate, can resist: overturning, questioning, challenging, and seeking to alter the space and time of the refugee camp through *heteropolitical media practices*, which had
emerged in a context of a tighter refugee regime and wider activist culture since the 1970s. Various media practices of resistance and media activism (Mattoni, 2012) were directed against the othered, neglected and forgotten space of the camp, and its media of surveillance and control sought to renege- tiate how heterotopias and heterochronias are paradoxes of imperceptibility, excluding and forgetting refugees, but also of hyper-perceptibility of administrated and controlled subjects. Refugee camp residents’ and activists’ heteropolitical media practices of protesting, marching, hunger-striking, documenting injustices, creating new communication flows across the camp’s fences, or undermining media infrastructures of control, aimed at altering and readjusting the camp’s and its residents’ relation to its surrounding spaces, articulate voice and a heteropolitical space and time.

Chapter Eight, the concluding chapter, will pull the strands of these chapters together. The chapter will ponder how historical media practices make the space, time and politics of the refugee camp, and the modern refugee regime at large. Mapping the findings of media practices around space, time and politics from the analytical Chapters Five, Six and Seven will lead to a media-theoretical discussion around the concept of heterotopian, heterochronic, and heteropolitical media practices to further understand the collusive role of media practices as modes of differentiation in the refugee regime and the border project, and how historicization can be a valuable approach for media and migration research today. Ultimately, this discussion will demonstrate the potential for media studies from the margins, in order to understand how seemingly neglected, peripheral spaces in fact reflect and negotiate central media practices for society in general.
CHAPTER TWO

Refugee Camp Space

Just three years after the end of World War Two, in 1948, Russian-American sociologist Eugene Kulischer published his study *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917–1947*, a book laying the foundations of refugee studies and refugee history. It was a continuation of his and his brother Alexander’s 1932 study *Kriegs- und Wanderzüge, Weltgeschichte als Völkerbewegung*, which proposed a systematic assessment of human migration across history by grasping that “[m]an’s history is the history of his wanderings” (Kulischer, 1948, p. 8) and, thus, that the history of humankind is fundamentally constituted by migration as a force of social change. With the dramatic events of World War Two and its aftermath right in front of his eyes, it is hardly surprising that Kulischer began to understand the 20th century (of the West and Global North) through its (forced) migrations. Born as a Russian Jew in Kyiv, he moved and fled various times himself, via Germany, Denmark, France, Spain and Portugal finally to the USA, exemplifying in person the refugee movements he described. While his brother Alexander could not finish the study with him (he was murdered in a concentration camp in 1942), Eugene’s research lay important groundwork for analyses of why and how groups of people are forced to move in relation to violent conflicts. This interest derived from the historical moment and geopolitical position Kulischer found himself in. Within roughly a decade, 1940 to 1950, Kulischer estimates that around 50 to 60 million people were forcibly moved in Europe, around 10 percent of the continent’s entire population (Bade, 2003, p. 205), which completely reshuffled political and cultural borders and populations. What Kulischer hinted at in the middle of the 20th century is a first attempt to grasp the “refugee” as a concept of the century, and paving the way to an understanding of (forced) migration, its processes, governance and experiences, as constitutive, rather than marginal exceptions of societies. This concept of the refugee also uncovers the often-neglected historical agency of the refugee figure (cf. Gatrell, 2017), who constitutes fault lines and borders of mobility and belonging by embodying tensions of being simultaneously an outsider and insider. From this perspective, history can highlight processes of the “making” of the refugee figure and the bordered state (cf. Gatrell, 2013; Stone, 2018). This chapter will outline conceptual histories of how the refugee and the refugee camp have
been historically “made” – a perspective guiding the subsequent media-theoretical explorations of how sociomaterial media practices are complicit in making the space, time and politics of the camp and the refugee regime.

Even though it was written more than 70 years ago, Kulischer’s work remains a key historiography charting the interconnection of forced migration processes in 20th century Europe (Ferrara, 2011). Subsequent studies have used Kulischer’s idea to explore the history of forced migration, putting the figurative concept of the refugee central to the past century, in the widest sense of Begriffsgeschichte (conceptual history/keyword history) (Gatrell, 2013; 2017; Bade, 2003; Naimark, 2001). This body of work not only uncovered moments and processes of “the refugee’s” construction and emergence in political projects of nation building, ethnic cleansing, or colonization, but also acknowledged refugees as often-forgotten agents of history. According to refugee historian Peter Gatrell (2013, p. 7), “the twentieth-century refugee, as a person and as a category, was shaped by changing legal doctrine”, a situated process of structure and agency, which “makes the modern refugee”. Such a historicized understanding of the refugee’s discursive construction puts into context and denaturalizes contemporary discussions and framings of “refugee crises” and imaginaries of their “management” and “solutions” – where instead these “managements” and “solutions” in the first place create “the refugees” and subsequent “crises” in modes of bordering, governance and administration. Today, looming statistics of rising refugee numbers often underpin calls for neoliberal, privatized humanitarian tech-solutionism, as well as ever smarter and more efficient borders, as ways to creatively tackle forced migration. Regarded historically, these moves depoliticize refugee governance and overemphasize the role of management via technologies and systems, like managing a natural disaster (cf. also Marino, 2020). Forgetting that significantly higher numbers of refugees were taken care of not too long ago in the middle of the Global North (around 10 percent of Europe’s population being on the move in the 1940s), shows the centrality of political will and state actors in imagining and constructing systems and structures of refugee administration – a political will which today focuses on building defensive border infrastructures of Fortress Europe. Juxtaposing the refugee regimes of different historical periods points at the changing constellations of politics, technologies, and governance forms, as well as refugees’ practices of dealing, circumventing or adapting to these legal doctrines, which continuously “make”, unmake and remake the refugee as a figure and concept, and condition the structures and agencies that affected individuals on the move.
must relate to. What has often remained a contextual sidenote in these historiographies of the “making of the modern refugee” is the space of refugee camps. While the 20th century has been called a “century of expulsions” (Münz, 2002) and a “century of refugees” (Kévonian, 2013), it has also been called a “century of camps” (Bauman, 2001; Kotek & Rigoulot, 2001). The camp and the refugee are strongly interrelated concepts in a broader history of biopolitics and demographic violence in and of the West.

In this vein, this chapter sets the scene and lays some conceptual groundwork. It defines the “refugee camp” as a sociomaterial space of the “refugee regime” (Betts, 2010). Reading it as a “heterotopian” and “heterochronic” (Foucault, 1967/1997) space, the refugee camp configurates and “makes” (Gatrell, 2013) space, time and politics of the refugee figure and the bordered state (a process which will be explored as heavily dependent on media practices in this thesis). This chapter starts out by exploring the “refugee camp” as a historical keyword of the 20th century. Foregrounding the historicity of meanings, constructions and practices around the figure of the refugee in relation to the space of the camp, this chapter situates the question in the context of Germany after 1945, and asks how the camp has emerged as an architectonical, social and practical phenomenon of managing, isolating, and administrating, but also sheltering and caring for, forced migrants. The chapter follows and traces the term “refugee camp” and its semantic siblings throughout the decades from 1945 up until today. Germany serves as an entry point for unfolding the historical construction process of refugees and spaces of their accommodation. This focus is strongly situated in the metropolis of the Global North and could clearly be complemented and critiqued by perspectives and studies in the Global South. While authors like Vigneswaran (2020) have shown how migration control has also historically emerged in colonial contexts and travelled to the West (rather than vice versa), this study traces key roots of the contemporary refugee regime in the history of Central Europe. As will become clear, Germany was arguably an incubator of today’s global forms of refugee governance. Germany’s post-war history of forced migration sets the scene for further understanding and studying the spatiality of refugee camps, and eventually their relation to media technologies and practices. The second half of this chapter therefore draws on social theory of space and its sociomaterial construction, in order to “spatialize” the camp and understand the actions of the refugee regime in the space of the camp. Here, I draw on Michel Foucault’s concepts of heterotopian and heterochronic spaces, as “counter-spaces”, mirrors and paradoxical places, inside and outside of socio-spatial arrangements, arguing that refugee camps are upside-
down, yet integrated spaces at the margins of modern societies, which reflect
and materialize wider social imaginaries and conceptualizations of belonging
and disbelonging. Camp heterotopias are at the paradoxical margins and
centres that are constitutive of society at large, where the refugee as a concept
negotiates and embodies this tension.

From military camps to refugee camps
In recent years, an increasing number of initiatives, including museums, have
recognized the pervasiveness and centrality of refugee camps as omnipresent
spaces and institutions in Germany’s history,7 a fact that migration historians
have been pointing out more and more (Gatrell, 2013; Beer, 2014; Thiel & Jahr,
2017; Hochmuth & Bispinck, 2014; White, 2018; Schießl, 2016). These
endeavours build on previous deconstructions of the “camp” as well as the
“refugee”, most centrally in the field of political philosophy, for example in the
works of Hannah Arendt and Giorgio Agamben. Looking further back, the
notion of the “camp” itself goes all the way back to standardized military
accommodations in Ancient Rome and Greece. Several European cities, like
Cologne and Augsburg, are originally built on top of ancient military camps
called castra, revealing a deep entanglement of urban history and camp history
as a technique of regulating, governing and delineating space and residents. But
its specific space-paradigmatic importance is a more modern phenomenon.
During the 19th century, the camp spilled over from military purposes and
colonized wider areas of social spaces as a modern institution. Starting with
“exercise camps” for soldiers in the 1700s and 1800s (Thiel & Jahr, 2017), the
camp assumed the function of education, forming, and social engineering, as a
socially secluded physical and social space, where individual bodies and minds
could be formed, educated, organized and disciplined by way of segregation.
Wooden barracks and tents became that camp’s characteristic architectural
form, representing its mobility, temporariness and exclusion from permanence
(we will return to this aspect of camp architecture as a media practice in
Chapter Five). With the evolution of camps into places for prisoners of war
during the US civil war and in France and Germany in 1870, the camp assumed
its distinctively modern, biopolitical function of managing, governing and
neglecting people, and was on its way to become the “fundamental biopolitical
paradigm of the West”, as Giorgio Agamben (1998, p. 181) concluded. He
argues that biopolitics moved from the city as a central cultural technique of

---

7 For example: Museum Friedland; Museum Notaufnahmelager Marienfelde; Virtuelles Migrations-
museum des DOMID
governance and coordination to the camp as a new, more violent extreme of demographic control. At the end of the 19th century and the start of 20th, the first “concentration camps” started to appear in colonial contexts in South Africa, Namibia, Cuba or the Philippines, as parts of military imperialist operations of ethnic cleansing, or quelling uprisings. The trajectories of how these colonial camps are historical predecessors of the Nazi death camps, which materialized the absolute break of civilization with the industrial murder in camps during the Holocaust, nurtures much scholarly debate ever since Hannah Arendt (1951) argued for this connection (see also Smith & Stucki, 2011; Gerwarth & Malinowski, 2009).

Different types of camps must be regarded as a spectrum. During World War One, a more systematic camp system first appeared across Europe, including unprecedented numbers of war prisoner camps and labour camps with deported workers, but also the first distinct “refugee camps” for civilians fleeing war or being expelled due to shifting borders, especially in Italy, Austria, the Netherlands and Belgium. These were the first mass expulsions to be systematically managed by and through the institution of the camp as a governed humanitarian space. As Mathias Beer (2014) outlined in his history of camps in Germany, especially during the 1930s, camps “intruded the everyday of Germans” (Beer, 2014, p. 48; author’s translation): besides early forms of the concentration and death camps, there were also *Wehrertüchtigungslager* (military training camps), and youth, leisure, and scout camps significantly grew in numbers in the Third Reich. What becomes visible here is the paradoxical, yet complementary function of the camp as a biopolitical endeavour of social engineering through simultaneous inclusion and exclusion: on the one hand, of utopian forming, shaping, and caring in opposition to dystopian practices of cutting off and exterminating; on the other hand, of excluding and withholding population “outside”, in a standby, a limbo, while being “inside” and constitutive of what society is in the first place. Ultimately, all these various modern institutions, from holiday camps to boy scout camps, migrant and refugee camps, all the way to concentration camps, form a continuum of biopolitical imaginaries and spatializations of population control and shaping (Hailey, 2009; Agier, 2011). Nazi Germany had erected a web of camps across Central Europe that eventually formed the material grounds for the emergence of refugee camps at the end and in the aftermath of World War Two. This web of camps, estimated to number several thousands, did not disappear after 1945, but became a basis for a camp infrastructure to accommodate refugees, expellees, displaced persons and others in need of housing after 1945. With this long history in mind, the
“refugee camp” was anything but far-fetched as one of the key concepts and tools of refugee governance, humanitarian accommodation and administration in post-war Germany. As a spatial imaginary for specific functions of caring, sheltering, and shaping as well as segregating and administrating, “the camp” was already deeply anchored in society.

Refugee camps in post-war Germany: from the *Flüchtlingslager* to the *Gemeinschaftsunterkunft*

World War Two and its aftermath displaced millions globally and in Central Europe. Swiftly, labels and categories were created for people that needed to be taken care of and administered, along with a system of specific camps for these new groups of people. Beer (2014) counted no less than 90 different names for different *Lager* in the German language. Unpacking these labels reveals the discursive and legal construction of the figure of the refugee, taking place at that time. As Zetter (1991) argued, refugee labelling is a process of “identity disaggregation” (p. 39), where bureaucratic procedures exercise material and social power upon the affected individuals. Emerging in the 1940s and shaping official notions until today, the forms of denoting people as “refugees” have been shaped as a negative caveat, an opposite to citizenship-based, territorialist, ethnic, nationalist organization and imagination of political communities and their boundaries of belonging: as the individual who fell out of the system of the bordered state because of shifting borders or internal persecution, thus becoming a non-citizen on hold, an agency-free victim needs humanitarian help and state governance, which can provide solutions to this crisis of the border. As refugee historian Dan Stone noted, it is important to “not simply [...] take ‘refugee’ as a pre-existing category that simply exists in the world” (Stone, 2018, p. 103), but instead deconstruct its social and material production, which refugee camps are fundamentally part of. Defining the specific circumstances of flight, expulsion, ethnic cleansing, evacuation or others, the naming practice of specific groups of forced migrants, and respective camps for them, aimed at creating legal categories, coming along with the rights, benefits, citizenships, or other welfare, and structures of administration. Three main groups characterize Germany’s contemporary history and the refugee camp landscape after 1945, and will be introduced here: *German refugees and expellees* from formerly German areas in Central and Eastern Europe and the GDR; *Displaced Persons* from liberated concentration, prisoner and labour camps; and *asylum-seekers* from foreign countries.
Towards the end of the World War Two, around 12 to 14 million ethnic Germans fled or were expelled from areas East of the newly drawn Oder-Neiße-border (today’s German–Polish border). At the Potsdam Conference in 1945, the Allied winners of the war had decided on this new border, incorporating a resettlement of all ethnic German populations living East of the new border to its Western side. With this decision, the events turned from Germans fleeing the approaching Red Army to a more systematic expulsion of inhabitants in Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Many migrated on foot, in trains, or on boats crossing the Baltic Sea, mostly during the freezing winter of 1944 and 1945, but roughly continuing until 1947. Within Germany’s new borders, which were occupied between 1945 and 1949 and divided into four occupational zones, the arriving people were quickly labelled “refugees” (Flüchtlinge) and “expellees” ((Heimat)Vertriebene) in West Germany, and “resettlers” (Umsiedler*innen) in East Germany. Their status came along with specific benefits. As an immediate response, refugee camps (Flüchtlingslager/Vertriebenenlager) were established in 1945, as a desperate attempt to accommodate the influx of arrivals from the East. In the hands of the Allied military governments, the re-installed German authorities on the local level (as well as other organizations such as the Red Cross) created camps that were administered as temporary housing solutions for people on the move. This group also included generally homeless people, evacuees from destroyed cities, or war returnees, given that housing in general was more than scarce due to large-scale destruction during the bomb attacks towards the end of the war. Some camps had the function of “transit camps” (Durchgangslager), forming hubs in registering and distributing forced migrants, most centrally the camps of Friedland and Uelzen-Bohldamm. Labelling forced migrants into legal statuses, in conjunction with spatializing their administration in specific refugee camps, thus became a basis for establishing a refugee regime, a form of governance envisioned to provide justice, order, and basic humanitarian care as well as repairing borders of belonging. Camps for German expellees existed well into

---

8 Occupied Germany was administrated by the Allied Forces in four zones: Soviet, American, French and British. In 1949, the two new German states were founded and occupation ended. The Soviet Zone had become the German Democratic Republic (GDR, East Germany), and the other three zones the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, West Germany). They united in 1990 to today’s Federal Republic of Germany.

9 The *innen suffix includes all genders in German terms for persons.

10 The connotations of these labels are highly political. The terms “refugees” and “expellees”, used in West Germany, imply an aggressor, which caused the forced migration, in this case the Red Army and Soviet Union. The term “resettler”, used in the GDR, instead does not imply coerced migration, and hence does not call out a specific aggressor and frames the migration as voluntary.
the 1950s because the construction of sufficient amounts of new accommodation took time. Often, camps turned into more permanent cities (e.g. the camp and city of Espelkamp), or into neighbourhoods and settlements (some of which still exist today) with newly built houses. In one of his earlier studies, ethnologist Hermann Bausinger et al. (1959) conducted an ethnographic study of such “new settlements” around Tübingen, where he worked at the university. These settlements had emerged out of previous refugee camp structures and have formed new urban environments as architectural forms of arrival. Given the immense number of 12 million (8 million in West Germany, 4 million in the East), these populations considerably reshaped demographics in many parts of the country, changing the geography of cities and whole regions. In the rural Northern state of Schleswig-Holstein, for instance, the population roughly doubled. In West Germany, camps were part of the initial effort to accommodate and later integrate the German expellees into the newly founded Federal Republic. In 1953, the West German government decided on specific benefits for this group in the form of an “equalization of burden” (Lastenausgleichsgesetz), which reimbursed the expellees for their losses in the ceded areas. In East Germany, the “resettlers” were included in the general Communist land reforms and redistribution of property. But with the division of Germany, refugee movements of German citizens continued beyond the 1940s: East Germans increasingly fled to West Germany (around 3.8 million in total), which were taken care of in “emergency reception camps” (Notaufnahmelager) in West Berlin (e.g. Marienfelde) and “transit camps” (Durchgangslager) (Friedland, Uelzen-Bohldamm, Gießen). These camps would also take in war returnees from the Soviet Union, who continued to arrive up until 1955.

However, in the post-war turmoil, German refugees were by no means the only group on the move in Central Europe. Around 11 million people were labelled “Displaced Persons” (DPs)\(^\text{[11]}\), around 850,000 of which were living in “DP-camps”. These were individuals who had been liberated from concentration, labour or prisoner camps. Having previously been deported by the Nazis, they found themselves far away from their homes after the fall of the Third Reich, often unable to return due to shifted borders and regimes. The most common nationalities and ethnicities of DPs were Jewish and Eastern European, such as Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, or Ukrainian. They were accommodated in DP-camps run by the Western Allies, and specifically UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration),

\(^{11}\) A common German term for this group was also “heimatlose Ausländer” (homeless foreigners).
preparing them for “repatriation” into their previous home countries or other migration elsewhere. UNRRA ended its operations in 1947, and became the IRO (International Refugee Organization), which in turn became UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) in 1951. Especially Jewish DPs longed to emigrate to Palestine/Israel, the USA, Canada or Australia. DPs were regarded direct victims of the Nazi regime, a recognition that came along with specific welfare programs realized in the camps, often with better standards than those provided for Germans. However, the “Harrison Report” of 1945, which investigated the DP-camps for the US-government, attested highly insufficient conditions, including lack of food and hygiene, as well as DPs being guarded by barbed wire that had previously been used in concentration camps. Often, concentration camps were simply transformed into DP-camps. In the Soviet Occupation Zone (later GDR), DP-camps did not exist, because the Soviet Union often forcibly repatriated DPs directly to Eastern Europe (for overview of DP-camps, see Köhn, 2012; DP history: Holian, 2011).

Furthermore, because the two German states were established in 1949 when occupation ended, asylum-based immigration to West Germany became possible – again, coming along with specific camp structures. The new West German constitution (Grundgesetz) defined asylum as a basic right in §16, simply stating “The politically persecuted enjoy the right to asylum.” This open formulation, in reaction to the horrors of Nazi Germany, is historically unique, even though it was step by step rendered more narrow through exceptions in subparagraphs and additional laws on asylum procedures and deportation (see for a history: Poutrus, 2019; Herbert, 2001). While several such reforms have altered the specific handling of asylum-based immigration, mainly in 1953, 1965 and 1993 (Kreienbrink, 2013), the camp has never disappeared from the picture. A main place of origin for the emergence of asylum-seeker camps was the “Valka-camp”\(^\text{12}\) in Nuremberg. Since 1947, it was used for registering all foreign asylum-seekers and heimatlose Ausländer (“homeless foreigners”) arriving in West Germany. When the numbers of incoming foreign nationals rose to numbers too high for the camp, their accommodations were eventually distributed across the country. The Valka-camp was situated on parts of the former Nazi party rally grounds in Nuremberg (Reichsparteitagsgelände), where it originated as a tent camp during the annual festivities. It then evolved into a prisoner camp.

\(^{12}\) Valka is a border town between Latvia and Estonia. After 1945, the “Valka-camp” housed mostly Baltic DPs, hence the name.
during the war, and eventually became a US-American DP-camp, and then became specifically a camp for asylum-seekers. To this day, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), the authority for all migration issues in Germany, is located in Nuremberg-Zirndorf (Kreienbrink, 2013). Spreading from Nuremberg, more camp accommodations for asylum-based immigrants were added to the German camp network, and refugee camps for asylum-seekers, like Hungarians fleeing the uprising in 1956 or Czechoslovaksians in 1968. In the following decades up to the present time, the number of asylum-seekers coming to Germany have never been close to the post-war situation of German refugees and DPs, nor has housing ever been as scarce as it was then.

The camp as an institutionalized shared accommodation has turned out to be a pervasive and sturdy basis for refugee governance that has remained a key tool of refugee administration ever since. German being an immensely bureaucratic language, dozens of new terms kept appearing to label these institutions. The federal states carry the main responsibility for coordinating refugee admission, which is why terminology and procedures greatly vary across the country. Roughly from the 1960s onwards, the word Lager (camp) was used less and less frequently to label refugee accommodations, largely because of the increasing linkage between the concept of “camp” with Holocaust memory and the concentration camp. Instead, a myriad of other names kept appearing: Zentrale Aufnahmestelle/ZAST (central contact point), Asylbewerberheim (asylum-seeker home), or the now-common Gemeinschaftsunterkunft (common accommodation), along with many more. These new labels often euphemized the continued spatialization of the refugee regime in the camp as a tool of separation and preparation of deportation.

Since the 1970s, the countries of origin for refugees have become more global and includes countries with various wars and conflicts, such as Vietnam, Turkey/Kurdistan, Poland, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Chile, Sri Lanka, and the (then) disintegrating Yugoslavia. Easier transportation possibilities meant that refugees could flee further away, including to (West) Germany. In 1986, the number of registered asylum-seekers for the first time hit 100,000. This rise during the 1980s intensified the political debate, which resulted in various tightening changes in the asylum legislations, mainly stripping asylum-seekers of specific rights, e.g. to work, and limiting benefits more and more, such as paying out benefits as goods rather than in cash. In 1993, during the Balkan wars and consequent high numbers of asylum seekers, the conservative Kohl government finally changed the asylum law drastically, making it possible to quickly deport individuals arriving from
“safe third states”. Camp accommodation never ceased to be the default form of accommodation and was actively sought by the authorities, in order to process applications and potential deportations faster and actively hinder integration.

Organized as a largely racist system of segregation, asylum-seeker accommodations in West Germany were hardly welcoming places, and the “Toscani report” issued by UNHCR in 1982 severely criticized the West German government for the horrific conditions in the facilities (Refugee Survey Quarterly, 2008). Ultimately, these asylum-seeker centres remained secluded spaces outside society, while being physically inside society, and thus a target for violent attacks. The arson attacks and violent occupations in Rostock-Lichtenhagen and Hoyerswerda in the early 1990s are only some of the most extreme cases of racist hate crimes against accommodations for forced migrants during these years. As the Toscani report asserted, “The FRG [Federal Republic of Germany] is a white society: its asylum policy is primarily oriented towards ethnic Germans and subsequently to other Europeans” (Refugee Survey Quarterly, 2008, p. 155). During the 1980s and 1990s, around 2 million “late settlers” (Spätaussiedler*innen) migrated to Germany, also called “Russo-Germans” (Russlanddeutsche); these were ethnic Germans who still lived in the Soviet Union at the time, and could claim German citizenship. While this group of white migrants (which were the ones being referred to in the Toscani report) had a relatively smooth migration experience, refugees camps shut off the unwanted, mostly non-white populations of asylum-seekers from other countries. Deportation was to be easily achieved by withholding the residents from work, hindering them from learning German, or and preventing them from settling down in their own apartments.

To this day, camps or centralized accommodations are an essential tool of refugee governance in Germany, Europe and the world. Institutions called Ankunftszenrum (arrivals centre), AnkERzentrum (anchor center)14, or Gemeinschaftsunterkunft (common accommodation) spatially structure the asylum procedures in contemporary Germany and maintain the border regime (Devlin et al., 2021). At the same time, this border regime has expanded, as German asylum policy is always European asylum policy and vice versa. The so-called “hot spot” camps and transit centres in Greece, on

---

13 Due to their citizenship, the immigration process was uncomplicated. However, the group still faced significant exclusions, often not knowing German and being regarded as “Russian immigrants”.
14 The acronym “Anker” means anchor, but stands for Zentrum für Ankunft, Entscheidung, Rückführung (center for arrival, decision and deportation).
the Italian island of Lampedusa, or in Spain draw just as much on the camp as a tool of immobilization and refugee management and are material expressions of Fortress Europe. These rigid borders produce further, highly precarious camp situations in the surrounding countries like Libya, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

Camps and the spatialization of the modern refugee regime

As this keyword-historical assessment of camps in Germany has shown, camps, “the refugee” figure, and Germany as a society at large co-construct each other. Devlin et al. (2021), in a critical analysis of refugee camp spaces as “practices of (im)mobilization” across the globe, argue that it is the spatial regime that unites these diverse places: a regime over (im)mobility and borders aggregated in materialities and socialities through objects and practices. These relations make up the refugee camp as a social space. Germany’s history of camps sheds light on historical processes of spatialization of emerging refugee governance, where imaginaries of handling forced migration materialize in specific spatial constructions and infrastructure-building. Therefore, as this section will elaborate, camps are spatializations of the refugee regime.

Arguably, Germany in the aftermath of World War Two can be regarded an incubator for the modern global refugee regime. In the post-war decades, camps were made part of a globally concerted effort to create a “set of norms, rules, principles, and decision-making procedures that regulate States’ responses to refugee protection”, as Alexander Betts (2010, p. 17) defines the concept of the refugee regime. The development and emergence of many institutions, practices, legal definitions and discourses that characterize global refugee governance up to today can be traced to the handling of forced migration in Central Europe in the 1940s. Organizations like the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, 1943–1946) and IRO (International Refugee Organization, 1947–1950) were established and employed during the 1940s in Germany to provide and come up with humanitarian interventions and “solutions” for the displaced populations. These organizations were UNHCR’s (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) direct predecessors, being subsumed in 1950 into this new United Nations institution. These organizations were entangled with larger political interests and movements in creating the post-war global order (especially the creation of the United Nations, strongly US-led) and they manifested contemporary ideas and imaginaries about how and by whom
“refugee crises” are to be “managed” and “solved”. The 1951 “Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees”, usually called the “Geneva Convention”, forms a first finalization of this process, in a definition of the figure of the “refugee”. This shared legal, political, and social definition of what a “refugee” is and what rights come along with it have been drawn up and imagined both in reaction to the persecution and genocide of the Jews in Germany in the preceding decade, as well as in the context of the burgeoning Cold War and refugees fleeing from Communist states to the West (Gatrell, 2013). Both of these contexts are crucially situated in Germany.15

The term “refugee regime” critically captures the assemblage of legal frameworks, actors, institutions and humanitarianist discourses that define the figure of the modern refugee and set the rules for how refugee movements are to be managed. Given that refugees themselves have no democratic say in their management, the term “regime” reflects the problematic power dynamics imbued in these systems. “Regime” does not necessarily denotate a form of state governance characterized as a dictatorship, but rather captures hegemonic modes, practices and discourses of handling a certain issue and population more widely. Manifesting in UNHCR and the Geneva Convention of 1951, the purpose of this institutionalized regime of human mobility and humanitarianism is to provide “international protection” to anyone who is

… owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, Article 1, A., (2); quoted from UNHCR, 2021b)

Grounded in a persistent, unquestioned global system of sovereign, territorialist nation-states, the goal of an attached refugee regime thus became to take care of and govern those who fall out of this system. Practices of governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental actors co-shaped the (il)legalities, rules and conditions for forcefully mobilized subject in “making the modern refugee” (Gatrell, 2013).

15 It should be noted that colonial legacies and trajectories have also influenced and affected the development of the post-war refugee regime and the definitions in the 1951 Geneva Convention (which is limited to Western contexts) (Krause, 2021).
The refugee camp (and all its conceptual siblings that have been mentioned above) can be understood as a tool, an instrument of spatializing this refugee regime: where practices of governance become emplaced, localized and inserted into a social space, but also where these practices become possible due to the spatial conditions in the first place. Reading the camp through theorizations of space unpacks a sociomaterial construction process of the refugee as its inhabitant, being assigned to a social and political space located inside and outside at the same time, withheld, and fixated on national and social borders. Social practices in relation to materialities, architecture, design and physical environments (and as will be seen, media practices) construct what makes the refugee camp a social space, historically rooted in the imaginary of the camp as a space of social engineering, shaping, preparing, disciplining, and segregating. Controlling physical and social mobility, while preventively excluding its inhabitants from the full rights to and membership of a political space, camps are spaces in a “state of exception” in Agamben’s sense (2005). But at the same time, in a paradoxical way, refugee camps also maintain social relations of care, shelter and humanitarian relief between institutions and forced migrants.

This thesis will argue that these relations and processes are inherently tied to media practices and technologies. Following Doreen Massey, spaces are “product[s] of interrelations […] constituted through interactions” and “relations which are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out […] always in the process of being made” (Massey, 2005, p. 9). This view not only brings together the social and material processes of “making” the camp, or as camp anthropologist Adam Ramadan puts it, “understanding the small moments and acts that negotiate and constitute broader geopolitical architectures in the spaces of the camp and beyond” (Ramadan, 2013, p. 67). It also highlights practices and experiences of refugee subjects and relations to other social actors in critically understanding forced migration, an aspect that is often given short shrift in conceptualizations of the refugee regime and its historiography. In situating and exploring media practices in this spatialization, construction, and experience of refugee camp space that conditions the structures and agencies, it becomes possible to further differentiate and politicize how forced migration has been spatialized and experienced in contemporary history, including practices around media from residents, authorities and other involved actors. Ramadan (2013) continues: “Camp space is produced out of the relations between and the practices of people (as individuals, families, institutions and organizations), and those subjectivities of refugee[s] in turn are produced by these inter-
relations and the space they are simultaneously constructing. This triad of camp, refugees and the relations between them continue to reproduce each other over time” (Ramadan, 2013, p. 70). Focusing on the interrelational media practices of different actors in the production of the camp space unfolds the ongoing politics at play, again echoing Massey’s (2005, p. 9–15) call to understand space as fundamentally characterized by multiplicity and the open-endedness of actors and their relational practices – not a predetermined, finished container of already-established interconnections, and thus with a linear history. Instead, camp space always reproduces itself within media practices.

Refugee camps are ambiguous spaces, contradictory and paradoxical, existing between segregation, deportation and exclusion on the one hand and care, shelter and inclusive protection on the other. Previous scholarship has showcased the complex facets of refugee camp spaces that create an ambiguity of exclusion, inertia and marginalization, but also of new identity formations, new practices, socialities, protest practices, cultural activities or forms of belonging and political participation. Liisa Malkki (1996) has studied how discourses of humanitarian actors and media often see refugees in camps as “speechless emissaries” who are mere victims, free of history, agency or identity, but there to be helped by a white saviour. Similarly, Sari Hanafi and Taylor Long (2010) have shown how Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are spaces of exception for their residents through Lebanese governance. Such scholarship necessarily sheds light on the problematic role of state actors, humanitarianism in general (cf. Duffield, 2018), and the “border spectacles” produced through showcasing illegality in confined spaces (De Genova, 2013). Other research, however, has also pointed out that radical interpretations of the “state of exception” in refugee camps can be all too deterministic and ignorant of forms of agency very much prevalent among detained refugees. Fully including all actors, and especially the residents themselves, shows performances of agency, which can include political action and decision-making (Tuastad, 2017; Sigona, 2015). Studying local camp life often reveals that camp residents initiate processes of community-building (McLaren, 2010), organize politically (Tuastad, 2017), or exercise what Nando Sigona (2015) called “campzenship” (camp citizenship). Of course, historical and legal contexts of the specific cases strongly affect the degrees of agency possible. Yet what becomes clear when unpacking these practices in more detail is that media and communication play a central role in performances and relations to both structure and agency. What studies like Melissa Wall et al. (2017) and Saskia Witteborn (2014) have started to
map out is precisely this role of mediation, media technologies, connectivity, and communication that refugees, as well as camp administrations, authorities and activists, engage with in navigating and shaping the constructed space of the refugee camp and its logics, relations, possibilities and boundaries, and its spatial, temporal and political regimes.

“Absolutely other”? Refugee camps as heterotopian and heterochronic spaces

What these conceptualizations of the refugee camp as space have shown is that materiality and sociality, the physical and the discursive/social, are entangled constructors of the camp, with an agenda of othering, marginalizing, and exempting, but also sheltering, managing and providing humanitarian relief. In different forms, camps materialize historically contingent refugee regimes and condition structures and agencies. The camp is characterized by the idea of a standardized, planned, governed, mobile and separated space for accommodating and withholding people in time and space. But they are also paradoxical spaces, excluded and included, creating impinging structures as well as agency and actual homes for people. So, instead of perpetuating a narrative of completely “othering” the refugee camp as an outside-space separate from its surroundings and a full “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005), I suggest adjusting focus to the historical processes of making, unmaking and remaking camp space, by residents as well as administrations and other actors. Refugee camps are located in the middle of society, often in city centres; they are not invisible shut-off spaces, but rather develop their meaning and function in relation to other spaces of society, in the process of differentiation, in turning rules and relations of the residents’ time and space on their heads. This aspect is essential to what Michel Foucault captures with the concepts of “heterotopian and heterochronic spaces” (1967): the sociomaterial construction of “counter-spaces” with a specific function in society, namely the othering of each other: heterotopias are assigned spaces for social processes and conditions, which mirror back and co-construct how society imagines social space and time as a whole. As will be argued throughout this thesis, this process of making, unmaking, and remaking, shaping and negotiating around the refugee camp as a space with heterotopian and heterochronic conditions, is fundamentally tied to media practices and technologies. Media practices enable and disable heterotopian and heterochronic conditions.
Foucault did not elaborate on the concepts of heterotopian and heterochronic spaces very much and mentioned them explicitly only three times in his works. The most important essay dealing with the concepts is the most recent, 1967’s “Of other spaces”/Des Espace Autres, which is based on a lecture he gave to a group of architects that year and which was published in French in 1984 in the journal Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité. The first English translation of this talk/essay (used for quoted material here) was published in 1997 in the volume Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory. In 1966, he gave a radio talk on the theme of utopias and heterotopias (published in German, Foucault, 2013). Foucault also made a brief mention of the concepts in the preface to 1966’s The Order of Things. As this publication history shows, the concepts were initially tied to the study of architecture, a field very much in line with the described processes of spatial and architectural construction of refugee camp spaces. (Chapter Five will present an empirical exploration of spatial media practices with the architecture of camps, which mediate its spatial and social set-up.) But architecture is only one aspect that Foucault extrapolates to a wider theory of space, of spaces and times that are constructed as inverted and mirrored, inside and outside at the same time. This thesis offers an interpretation of heterotopian and heterochronic spaces in order to make the concepts productive for analysing refugee camps as well as understanding the meanings of media practices therein.

Foucault coined the term “heterotopia” as a special category of spaces within hierarchies and orders of spaces in societies and cultures in general. Representing the spatial turn of social sciences at the time of writing, Foucault opens the essay by stating that the 20th century’s global processes speak to an obsession with space, and heterotopia as a concept is introduced to capture the “arrangement” of spaces. Spaces are about their relations to each other, not their separation: “space presents itself to us in the form of patterns of ordering” (Foucault, 1967/1997, p. 351). In the arrangement of different kinds of spaces that can emerge, Foucault describes the heterotopia as follows:

There also exist, and this is probably true for all cultures and all civilizations, real and effective spaces which are outlined in the very institution of society, but which constitute a sort of counter-arrangement, of effectively realized utopia, in which all the real arrangements, all the other real arrangements that can be found within society, are at one and the same time represented, challenged, and overturned: a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable. In contrast to the utopias, these places which are
absolutely other with respect to all the arrangements that they reflect and of which they speak might be described as heterotopias. (ibid., p. 352; italics in original)

Here, he relates heterotopias to utopias, which are unreal non-spaces, dreams about a perfected society. Heterotopias instead are spaces that attempt to materialize and visualize utopian imaginaries – through their otherness and differentiation in relation to surrounding spaces. Here, the first link to the refugee camp can be observed. The figure of the refugee as a disturbance, a fall-out of the national order, a person who is detained in this othered space with different rules. As Turner (2016, p. 140) described it, “while the figure of the refugee threatens the nation state, it also stabilizes it by being the ‘constitutive outside’ of the national order of things.” Heterotopias gain their relevance not only in hosting the disturbing elements, but also in constituting “normality”, and attempting to heal “epistemic instabilities” (De Genova, 2017, p. 9) and anxieties about the border, and thus maintain the non-disturbance in the rest of spaces within the bordered state. Withholding certain migrants in refugee camps stabilizes border regimes and utopias of ordered, territorialist, nationalist societies, and of condition-less belonging.

Throughout his essay, Foucault historically traces and gives examples of heterotopias in societies, distinguishing between different types and functions and carving out heterotopian principles. He states that “crisis heterotopias” are decreasing nowadays (i.e. 1967 when he was writing), to be replaced by “heterotopias of deviance” (p. 353). In more traditional cultures, he proposes, crisis heterotopias are places for individuals who experience specific temporary “crises”, such as women during menstruation, old or adolescent individuals, or the institution of the honeymoon for first sexual encounters. Instead, in contrast, the more modern heterotopias of deviance are increasingly “occupied by individuals whose behaviour deviates from the current average or standard” (p. 353). While Foucault gives examples like prisons, psychiatric clinics, or care homes (places for individuals who deviate from “normality” of society), it is obvious that refugee camps fulfil also this function: they are spaces for individuals deviating from the national order, to be saved from the crisis of non-belonging. Agamben characterizes the figure of the refugee as the “disquieting element in the order of the nation-state, this is so primarily because, by breaking the identity between the human and the citizen and that between nativity and nationality, it brings the originary fiction of sovereignty to crisis” (Agamben, 2000, p. 20). In a world where nation-based citizenship is a norm, refugee camps are heterotopias of
deviance for the shadows, the misfits in the system. They are not dystopias, neither non-existent nor meant to annihilate, but rather real, existing, slightly uncanny places for fixing, healing, and taking care. As elaborated above, the camp has become a biopolitical paradigm for these deviants (which is also a Foucauldian perspective: biopolitics are realized with technologies of governmentality, which will be seen are fundamentally exercised within media practices).

Foucault continues that every heterotopia has “a precise and well-defined function” (p. 353) that becomes clear once the refugee camp is understood as a tool of the refugee regime. The camp produces a space which stands in an othering relation to the rest of spaces around it, with a function of separating its occupants through control of mobility. Heterotopias incorporate “two opposite poles”, that of “creating a space of illusion” in their otherness, as well as forming a real space “as perfect, meticulous, and well-arranged as ours is disordered, ill-conceived, and in a sketchy state” (p. 356). Refugee camps offer an illusion of order, of humanitarian intervention, providing shelter, while simultaneously functioning to visualize newly instilled order in the national system in a cruel way, through borders, looming deportation, legal statuses and control of mobility. The perfect illusion of a national “us”, of full, condition-less citizens, becomes visible in the “absolutely other”, contrary, yet mirroring and co-constitutive space of the refugee camp and its residents.

This illusory contradiction further suits heterotopias’ characteristics of being spaces that juxtapose incompatible locations with each other. Foucault mentions cinemas, theatres or gardens as examples of spaces where different incompatible worlds are superimposed: play or movie worlds in rectangular halls, or concentrations of incompatible vegetation in small pieces of land. In this sense of superimposition of logics in designated, actively and artificially created physical spaces, refugee camps combine imaginaries of home as well as transience, belonging and disbelonging, inside and outside, mobility and immobility, arriving/dwelling and leaving, in one location. Various actors, like the administrators and the occupants of the heterotopia, project contradicting functions and meanings onto the space, and the heterotopian condition thereby reflects the aspects of structure and agency characterizing refugee camp experiences and the “state of exception” as well as “campzen-ship” and agency. Be it a place to prepare for deportation, hinder integration and belonging, or be a transitional home, a space of safety, shelter and care, it is always a liminal space for the refugee. It is this tension of refugee camp heterotopias that defines them: utopian projections on non-places, which in fact are real, existing, homes for people.
Heterotopias always include a temporal dimension, which Foucault calls “heterochronism”. Part of the spatial othering process is a “total breach of […] traditional time” (Foucault, 1967/1997, p. 354), an othering of temporality imbued in the space. While for Foucault the temporal dimension is listed as one of a heterotopia’s characteristics, I see spatiality and temporality – of hetero-topias and hetero-chronias – as always already intertwined, and neither of them as superordinate. The various temporal regimes of heterochronias can comprise an infinite accumulation of time, such as libraries, museums, or archives. The archive is a classic heterotopia, “making all times into one place, and yet a place that is outside time” (ibid., p. 355).

But refugee camps are ruled by a different kind of heterochronic condition. Politics of waiting, of limbo, withholding, and intermission underlie the temporal logic of the camp and of the refugee regime, or as Agamben (2000, p. 19) notes, “the status of refugee has always been considered a temporary condition that ought to lead either to naturalization or to repatriation. A stable statute for the human in itself is inconceivable in the law of the nation-state.” Immobilization during a definite temporariness defines the camp, yet through a cruel unknowingness of when it will pass. The camp heterochronia creates a temporal limbo, an in-between state, which camp residents have to cope with. Occupants are taken out of “normal” time, of a chronological and progressing lineage between past, present and future, over which they have autonomy; they are almost stuck in an eternal-but-temporary present, which becomes even more significant during protracted camp detainments. Legal constructions like “toleration” (*Duldung*) in asylum laws, which is a temporary suspension of deportation, create protracted limbo situations. Ramadan (2013) observes a “dislocated temporality” in Palestinian camps, describing its constant in-between-ness and liminality as “an enduring moment of rupture from the space and time of Palestine” (p. 73). In this way, the camp becomes a spatialized “time pocket” (Turner, 2016, p. 142) in between past and present. (Chapter Six will return to the temporal dimension in depth, seeing mediated memory and witnessing as heterochronic media practices of managing the camp’s temporalities.)

The moment of entering the camp is a moment of being assigned to the heterotopian and heterochronic space and its condition. “Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at one and the same time. Usually, one does not get into a heterotopian location by one’s own will. Either one is forced, as in the case of the barracks or the prison, or one must submit to rites of purification” (Foucault, 1967/1997, p. 355). These ideas obviously hold true for refugee
camps, where the refugee regime and its authorities, through decisions in registration procedures and asylum hearings, decide over the mobility, benefits and care, and the enactment of citizenship and human rights of people at large, through the entering and leaving, the opening and closing of heterotopian conditions applied to the individual in the camp. Attachment to the camp materializes these negotiations of inclusion and exclusion. In this sense, refugee camps are not fully closed-off and separated entities. Involved actors, residents and others both maintain and penetrate its boundaries through their practices. Here, media practices are communicatory forms of manifesting, stabilizing, and also of challenging, undermining and re-negotiating this spatial regime, of crossing its fences and the refugee regime. Refugee protest, activism, and forms of political engagement and resistance – which will be called heteropolitical media practices in Chapter Seven – always re-negotiate and work upon the heterotopian and heterochronic condition and its systems of opening and closing, drawing on media practices to voice concerns and try to alter heterotopian and heterochronic conditions, and redefine the refugee camp’s relations to its surrounding.

Ultimately, heterotopia and heterochronia as concepts can be understood as a condition of spaces, a condition that suggests an analytical perspective on power dynamics, logics, actors and construction processes of social spaces and their specific spatial and temporal conditions. Refugee accommodations have been read through this lens before (e.g. Pugliese, 2009; Witteborn, 2014), however, none of those studies unlocked the concepts in greater detail nor with an integrated relation to media practices. Conceptualizing the refugee camp as a deeply heterotopian and heterochronic project sheds light on the relational practices and actors involved in its creation, maintenance, subjective experiences, and potentials of undermining, subversion and resistance. Heterotopias and heterochronias are about the relationality to the rest of spaces; their othering becomes visible in this juxtaposition, and their differentiating, inverting and mirroring characteristic constitutes their function in society in the first place. Through being counter-propositions to their surroundings, heterotopias reveal imaginaries, practices, and discourses of the spaces and societies of which they are co-constitutive. These revelations put forward the refugee regime, with its rules, laws and practices, as a constructor and driver of the heterotopian and heterochronic condition in the camp, as an othered space from the “normal” surrounding – but also the camp residents, or activists and engaged citizens, all of whom have to cope with and relate to the paradoxes of camp heterotopias of being inside and outside time and space while co-creating them. In relation to this thesis’
interest in media practices and in approaching refugees and media historically, seeing the camp as heterotopian and heterochronic highlights the entangled roles and functions of media practices in this sociomaterial construction of space, time, and politics, where media practices both constitute the heterotopian and heterochronic condition and are drawn upon to subvert or undermine it: always re-negotiating the specific differences and relations of camp-space and non-camp-space, camp-time and non-camp-time, and refugee and non-refugee. Media as practices around technologies and materialities make the refugee camp, its space, time and politics, and thus enable and disable its heterotopian and heterochronic functions and conditions. Foucault understood heterotopias as places where ideal utopias are attempted to be realized by specific manipulations of spatial and temporal logics. But while refugee camps can appear to be cruel, uncanny heterotopias, and almost dystopian, they are also places where rules are overturned, and new unforeseen practices and forms of agency can emerge in response to the specific heterotopian condition. Thus, heterotopias (unlike utopias or dystopias) are intrinsically ambiguous spaces, almost contradictory and paradoxical – reflective (or constitutive) of the contradiction imbued in the figure of the refugee itself, caught between permanence and transience, past and future, old home and new home. An exploration of heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices will approach how camp media practices take place in the refugee camp: because of, in spite of, in response to, as well as in opposition to its heterotopian and heterochronic condition.
CHAPTER THREE

Media Practices

Refugees and media

Media coverage of the so-called “refugee crisis” of 2015 for the most part represented forced migrants in dehumanizing, often racist ways, denying them agency and voice, and thereby excluding them from proper participation and turning them into speechless victims (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Georgiou, 2018). Yet, one trope kept reappearing: the refugee, usually a young male, with a smartphone in his hand. A media technology, a material object, that was both a crucial infrastructure for refugees’ survival, but that also quickly became a focus of dispute. The “connected migrant” (Diminescu, 2008) of the digital age contradicts the common media image of the impoverished, emaciated refugee who has lost all her belongings. Various mass media outlets, as well as social media users in comment sections, raised questions about how allegedly “poor” refugees had the ability to buy and own phones (O’Malley, 2015). In response, academic researchers, along with people engaged and actually in touch with asylum-seekers, quickly started pointing out the fundamental vitality of the smartphone and practices with and around it. The media technology enables life-saving, existential media practices, ranging from physical geo-orientation to social orientation in unknown societies while staying in touch with dispersed and left-behind family and friends: “Smartphones are lifelines, as important as water and food” (Gillespie et al., 2018, p. 1).

Anas Modamani was 18 when he fled from Darayya near Damascus, Syria. He made his way through Turkey, boarded a smuggler’s boat to Greece, and continued across the “Balkan route” to Germany. This journey would probably have been unimaginable in 2015 without a smartphone, without mobile media technology becoming one’s “best friend”, like “food” (Graf, 2018, p. 149). But Modamani’s case became famous because of one specific media practice: taking a selfie, which became known as the “Merkel-Selfie”. The young refugee, his smartphone, and chancellor Angela Merkel gained iconic status, a media image encapsulating everything that Germany’s autumn of 2015 stood for. This selfie of Angela Merkel and Anas Modamani – or rather, a photo of them taking a selfie together – in a refugee shelter in Berlin on 10 September 2015 was widely circulated in the press and on social media. The image was interpreted as
everything from a symbol of Germany’s “welcome culture” and Merkel’s politics, to a personal invitation from Merkel for “mass immigration” of refugees to Germany. Either way, the photo evoked emotional responses from the entire political spectrum. Later on, the image was misused by far-right social media accounts, which photoshopped Modamani as one of the terrorists of the 2016 Brussels airport attack. These altered pictures resulted in the first-ever trial against Facebook in Germany, led by the refugee and his lawyer, who tried to get the platform to delete the pictures. Although the lawsuit was unsuccessful, Modamani and his story gained large media attention, with him ending up in newspapers and on talk shows (BBC, 2017).

At the centre of Modamani’s story stands the media technology of the smartphone, both symbolically and technologically, as a material object, and as a practice of creating and mediating social relations with it, as a technology with certain social preconditions and consequences. The phone puts into focus imaginaries, projections, and uses of a medium in the specific context of forced migration, where its potentials and dangers from the perspective of the forced migrant amount to at least three dimensions. First, for Anas Modamani, the smartphone was a technology that provided him with agency, a possibility of producing digital self-representation. Second, one specific media practice, a selfie, caused him severe trouble in the digital realm. The media technology turned out to make him vulnerable, through unwanted visibility and misuse of his identity that was out of his control, stripped him of agency and power over his representation, and fed into hostile discourses, a process Lilie Chouliaraki (2017) in her study of refugee selfies called “symbolic bordering”. And finally, smartphones of refugees are a digital technology highly entangled with enactments of border surveillance and asylum procedures; sucked into infrastructures of border and asylum administration, digital identities, such as social media data or movement profiles, can be seized from smartphones and used in legal asylum processes (Brekke & Staver, 2019; Metcalfe & Dencik, 2019). In only one example, these three dimensions unfold the complexities of practices around media technologies in forced migration contexts, emerging in constellations of media technology and their materialities, motivations, and imaginaries of using them, and skills and routines of making sense of them.

Let’s move to the 1950s, about 70 years before Anas Modamani’s smartphone.
The whole pride of Mr Brod was his radio. ‘In Russia it would have cost more than 1000 Rubles. And would have made more noise than music.’ […] Full of pride his wife showed us what they had bought already. The money they had received in Friedland got spent on the most necessary things only: beds, stove, essential furniture, an old but good sewing machine, a bicycle – very necessary in a remote village – and the radio.\textsuperscript{16}

This quote stems from a collection of “diary sheets” from the refugee camp Friedland, the largest structure for refugee accommodation in Germany, founded in 1945 and still in operation up to the present day. Dated to October 1958, this diary entry, probably written by the camp priest Johannes Lippert, reports voices and media practices of post-war refugees, in this case the Brods: Mr. Brod, an ethnic German from Ukraine, had been deported to a labour camp in Siberia, then released to Germany in the mid-1950s; Mrs. Brod from East Prussia had also been deported to Siberia, via Ukraine. “My husband simply cannot cope with the world being so contradictive. Suffering and misery over there. Abundance here. He wrote to his brother in Russia today. Then everything became vivid again. Reading is hard for him. He needs the radio, so he doesn’t drown in contemplation.”\textsuperscript{17}

Despite happening several decades before Modamani’s selfie, these media practices and technologies, the diary sheet, the radio, the letter, showcase similar interrelations of media with experiences of forced migration. Media practices of listening to the radio for escapism and entertainment, staying connected with the world – the radio was described as an essential object bought at the first chance, which gives the media technology an almost lifeline-like meaning. There is also a reference to staying connected with left-behind family through mail, which is a classic media practice of migrants and goes back to at least the 19\textsuperscript{th} century migrants crossing the Atlantic (Elliott et al., 2006, p. 2). Mr. Brod’s brother was the only family they had left, all the rest had starved to death. Writing letters across the Iron Curtain was the only media technology and practice that allowed them to stay in touch.

The story of the Brods is only preserved in two short pages of the Friedland “diary sheets”, filed in a folder about Friedlandhilfe, a charity organization for the Friedland camp founded in 1957. The diary sheet is an archival document, a snippet of history that leaves many questions unanswered, yet reveals meanings of media technologies and practices that are maybe not too different from more recent experiences with smartphones. Modamani and

\textsuperscript{16} BArch, 150/3304: “Tagebuchblätter”, translated by the author.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
the Brods were embedded in their contemporary media technological environments as well as in the discursive and material structures sustaining their refugee identities and experiences in the refugee regimes of their time, which provided contexts for how these media technologies were used. This diachronic juxtaposition points at the historicity of media practices as being subject to the refugee regime: of social acts and practices of dealing with technologies of mediation and communication that negotiate and shape refugee subjectivities, when certain imaginaries and uses are projected on media technologies and on practices around them. These media practices are informed by critical junctures and ruptures as well as continuities and stabilities: of available media technologies and practices around them at different points in time, as well as of structures, situations, and spaces that forcefully mobilized people are pushed into, of policies and laws within refugee regimes, of conflicts and refugee movements. There are circularities, repetitions, and non-change at play, as well as filiations, genealogies, and trajectories that become visible at the present moment in time.

In order to assess some of these historical meanings and trajectories of media technologies in the refugee regime and experience, this chapter takes cues from these observations of how technologies, materialities, motivations, meanings, and imaginaries intersect and configure what media can mean during forced migration. Here, a theoretical approach for grasping media as practice (media as sociomaterial acts of doing and making that are configured out of material and social elements, and which enable and condition being and being made a refugee) will be outlined. Conceptualizing the historical interrelations of media practices with refugeehood, the refugee regime, and the refugee camp will lead to a combination of media practice theory with seeing the refugee camp as a heterotopian and heterochronic space. Understanding media practices as fundamental components and enablers of the refugee camp’s space, time, and politics will lead to the concepts of heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices in and of the refugee camp, which are those media practices by all involved actors that create, differentiate, and negotiate relations between camp and non-camp space, camp and non-camp time, and refugee and non-refugee. Focusing on practices, on the acts, habits, and routines of what people actually do (or did) arguably shifts attention to the material and social elements, pre-conditions, and consequences of how media come to matter beyond accounts that are too functionalist, too techno-deterministic, or too socially deterministic. Furthermore, the identification of media practices will also enable historical
perspectives through tracing how media practices are diachronically con-figured across time.

To carve out this approach, this chapter will take three steps. First, a brief historical overview of studying media use among migrants will trace how conceptualizing the relationship of media technologies and refugees is itself a historically contingent undertaking. Second, this history will enable incorporation of the perspective of practice theory and the notion of media practices (Couldry, 2004; Dang-Anh et al., 2017; Gießmann, 2018; Shove et al., 2012) in order to capture configurations of material preconditions and social ramifications in social practices in and around media technologies and materialities. In taking this approach, I seek to mobilize media practice theory in order to capture the sociomaterial conditions of practices in and around media, including all involved actors in the refugee camp (refugees, authorities, and activists). These media practices will crystallize into structures and conditions, making up the heterotopian and heterochronic space of the refugee camp and the refugee figure. Finally, tracing such media practices diachronically conceptualizes the entanglements of media technologies, the space of the refugee camp, and the refugee regime across time, and will be the basis for the empirical exploration of heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices, as being those media practices that shape and negotiate the space, time, and politics of the camp through media practices of governance, of memory and of resistance.

Conceptualizing media and migration: a brief history

Theoretical conceptualizations are themselves historically contingent. Social theories enable specific explanatory or emancipatory views on society and culture, which produce value within specific historical contexts (but which also produce exclusions and limitations, as discussed e.g. in Butler, 1992). A look at early research in the field of media and migration demonstrates the roots of concepts and approaches in studying people moving transnationally and their media behaviour, and it also shows the historical contingencies in the motivations for pursuing this line of research in the first place. Before arguing for a media practice approach as valuable for current research concerns, the following section picks up some threads of the literature review in Chapter One and provides a brief history of theoretical takes on the media-migration-nexus: from functionalist, behaviourist and quantifying ideals to a more all-encompassing take on cultural practices around media technologies rooted in cultural studies and materialist approaches to mediation and
technology. This history helps to further situate the notion of media practices, which can arguably reconcile different viewpoints by integrating material and social dimensions in what refugees and refugee regimes do around media technologies, which will untangle structures and agencies in media practices, and the sociomaterial pre-conditions and consequences of media in crystallizing social relations and structures.

There has long been broad interest in how migrants and media relate: media producers are interested in producing suitable media content, politicians are interested in the “integration” of certain subpopulations, and critical academics are interested in deconstructing racism, post-colonialism, and multiculturalism. Various media and communication theories have posited ideas about what constitutes “media” and “communication” in migration contexts; which actors, systems and conditions affect, control and use them, what constitutes the very act or process of interacting with media technologies, and to what ends. The idea that people who cross borders perform certain patterns and practices around media technologies, and that knowing these practices has a specific value, dates back in academia to at least the 1940s and 1950s. The 20th century not only intensified the creation of migrants through large-scale (voluntary or involuntary) population movements, but also saw the emergence of modern welfare-states and mass media institutions increase their desires of knowing, predicting, policing and catering to population segments in terms of mediated communication. When new “niche” audiences appeared, such as diasporic or migrant communities, quantitative surveys on migrants’ media consumption became relevant for larger media institutions, and social sciences became interested in empirically measuring media use, understanding media’s social relevance, and capturing new migratory and diasporic groups in the Western world, especially displacements after World War Two and the post-colonial and labour migrations into the West in the 1950s to 1970s. In the context of post-war Germany, for example, in 1950 a survey was conducted by the Bavarian public-service broadcaster BR about their “refugee programs”, asking 750 refugees and 1,000 locals about these shows: their listening habits, technological equipment, the shows’ position in the daily program, and what refugees and locals thought about the content of their various shows (Figure 1).
Similarly, in 1953, the north-west German radio’s “listener research” department conducted a survey of 560 refugees from East Germany living in a transit camp in West Berlin. The station’s main motivation was to find out how Western broadcasts could be received in the countries of the Eastern bloc, and how their broadcasts across the Iron Curtain could be optimized to reach more people, e.g. if changing the time slots of the shows would be better. A survey from Radio Free Europe asked similar questions of Hungarians who came to Germany in 1956 as refugees from the revolt. “Measuring” and “quantifying” listening habits was very much in the interest of the broadcasters, less in economic terms (these were non-commercial, public-service broadcasting stations) than for political reasons. During the Cold War, refugees who fled to the West brought valuable information about media habits “on the other side”, which the media industry of the time was highly interested in. As time went on, these newcomers eventually formed growing segments of society, which public-service media was obliged to cater to. As Hilgert, Just and Khamkar (2020) have shown in the case of radio shows for post-war Asian migrants in the UK and labor migrants and
repatriates in Germany, public service media started to understand itself as an “agent of identity management and citizenship education” (Hilgert et al., 2020, p. 62). This development encompassed an ever-increasing interest in trying to assess media use and migrants. Extensive collections in the German Broadcasting Archive (DRA) and the archive of the DOMiD e.V. (Documentation Centre for Migration in Germany)\textsuperscript{18} show that empirical, survey-based, quantitative audience research among specific migrant groups continued with specific “guest workers” shows (Gastarbeiter*innen, i.e. labour migrants hired from Southern Europe) in the 1960s and 1970s. West German public service broadcasters offered various “foreigner programs” (Ausländerprogramme), which were the basis for systematic “listener and viewer research” by the producers, collecting information about their audiences and reacting to letters from viewers and listeners (see also Horz, 2014, pp. 99–132).

These examples from the early West German media industry unfold wider trajectories of conceptualizing media use among migrants and its contingency. Media – here understood mostly as mass media – were enwrapped with a spirit of functionalism and rationality: they assumed the migrant to be a specific, somehow different, rational media user, with specific communication and information needs that had to be catered to in the best way possible so that the moment of media use may result in the intended effect. This view was realized in methodologies and theories, building on media effects, uses and gratifications, utilitarianism, behaviourism, and the overall interest in statistical measurements of social groups. A premise that these early conceptualizations of media and migration research begin with is that migratory groups are characterized by different media practices in the first place, diverging from the “normal” media habits of the non-migrant population. This assumption arguably lies at the heart of much media and migration research up to today, even though the reason for assuming particularities in migrants’ media use have certainly shifted from ethnicity and origin to more substantial, critical accounts of structural conditions and experiences shaping how migrants relate to media and to what ends. However, these early cases of research have cemented a commitment to quantification, statistics, and utilitarianism of the media-and-migration-nexus, which extends beyond media producers or communication sociologists all the way into politics. Assumptions of migrants using media

“differently” feed into discourses that link media habits to alleged levels of “integration”, and encapsulate a view on media use as “measurements” for belonging, arrival and assimilation in receiving societies, and as “tools” to cater to and shape populations with specific effects (for a discussion of “media integration”, see Geissler & Pöttker, 2009).

Ensuing research has, of course, complicated such theorizations of “what migrants do with media”, moving from documenting “uses” and “consumption” of media content towards describing more complex media lives of diasporic cultures, and agency-filled constructions of home and transnational belonging through media and communication. Reflecting the “active media users” of the Cultural Studies turn and ethnographic audience studies, more context-embedded studies of the role of media technologies and mediated communication shaping migration experiences started to emerge (e.g. Appadurai, 1996; Morley, 2000; Naficy, 1993; Gillespie, 1995; Athique, 2016; Hegde, 2016; Madianou & Miller, 2012), signalling a move away from functionalist and behaviourist assessments to more integrated approaches to agency and identity performance among migrants. Capturing these conceptual moves in admittedly very broad strokes, one could see the often optimistic interest in identity, diaspora and global migratory culture of the early digital times as predecessors to current concerns of media and migration study, which has opened itself up to questions of materiality, infrastructure, and structural conditions in situating media technology in migration experiences. Radha Hegde (2020) saw media as setting the “terms and conditions” (Hegde, 2020, p. 3) of migration, arguing that processes of mediation cut across media technologies, materialities, and discourses and mediated communication practices. Media are sociomaterial sites where the frameworks and scripts of migration experiences are negotiated. David Morley (2017) also pointed out that media and migration studies should uncover “migrancy as involving differentiated forms of material practice” (Morley, 2017, p. 137), happening in and through forms of mediation, virtually and physically. These approaches situate media as both sites of identity and culture in local practices and formulations of agency, and also re-emphasize the material and infrastructural nature of media which undergirds and shapes the structures and conditions of migration, in for example the very material mediation of borders. In this sense, digital migration studies are reformulating the concerns of media and migration studies at a moment when digital media, including automation and artificial intelligence, are ever more consolidated and saturating lifeworlds, leading again to new questions of structure and agency, and materiality and sociality,
in migration. In understandings of the digital, the material traditionally tends to become disguised in seeming virtuality and ephemerality, and the emancipatory agency of users tends to be overemphasized over structures. In reaction, materialist and infrastructuralist approaches to media (also in context of migration) increasingly argue for making the consequences of the material structures built into digital technologies a concern.

I seek to situate this study and its theoretical approach in this field of debate. Here, I suggest an approach of media practices, which incorporates both material pre-conditions and social consequences, and makes visible how materialities and socialities of media co-constitute each other and become enabling environments and conditions for being and being made a refugee. Such a focus (which is fundamentally historicizing because it goes beyond specific single media technologies at specific times) can thus evaluate the material and social dimensions of media in imagining, experiencing, practicing and making forced migration across time, and can put concerns of digital migration studies in historical contexts. Media practices are materially and socially done: taking this perspective has the potential to pull together the various dimensions of media, focusing on their social and material pre-conditions and consequences for refugees and the space of the refugee camp, while being embedded in context and focusing on the experiences of different actors and media users.

Media and practice theory

In 2004, in his seminal essay “Theorising media as practice”, Nick Couldry suggested the concept “media practices” as a paradigmatic shift in audience studies, and social theory around media in general. Drawing on practice theory from sociology, this turn opened up the study of media users from a new angle: it put what people do with, around, and oriented towards media as the holistic starting point of theorization and analysis, and moved media studies away from texts, production, and reception as three distinct areas. While this shift sounds almost obvious and simple at first, this perspective comes along with deeper elaborations of how media and the moment of their use are to be defined and analysed. In this section, the concept of media practices will be elaborated in connection to an exploration of media in the refugee camp, and a specific focus will be placed on the material pre-conditions and social consequences of media practices, embedded in the broad, materialist understanding of media as enabling environments for communication, relation, and sociality.
It is mainly through Couldry’s later work (2010; 2012) that anglophone media and communication studies have engaged with the idea of media practices as a specific theoretical avenue, although this perspective also has roots in Latin American as well as Scandinavian and German scholarship that describe mediation processes beyond specific media technologies or texts, and as practices instead (Martín-Barbero, 1993; Drotner, 1993; Bolin, 1998; Dang-Anh et al., 2017; for discussion of and intervention with this neglect, see Rincón & Marroquín, 2020). Couldry starts from a definition of media “as the open set of practices relating to, or oriented around, media” (Couldry, 2004, p. 117). His central point is to move away from text-centered analysis of media use (e.g. away from a TV-show or specific discourses) towards an all-encompassing attendance to practices manifesting around media technologies, and how these order and coordinate social practices and meanings in the social world at large: “To sum up, ‘media’ are best understood as a vast domain of practice that, like all practices (in Schatzki’s view), are social at a basic level through the very acts that stabilize them as practices and distinguish specific practices from each other” (Couldry, 2012, p. 44). The relationships among media technology, text/content, and users is reconfigured to emerge within social practices that are directed towards any kind of media in stronger or weaker ways. Thus, media practices can comprise “acts aimed specifically at media, acts performed through media, and acts whose preconditions are media” (Couldry, 2012, p. 57). In the following sections, I will explain how a media practice concept can capture media and communication in the refugee camp space, and the materialities and socialities that make, unmake, and remake the camp heterotopias and heterochronias.

From practice theory…

Couldry refers to Theodor Schatzki (2001) and to the wider history of practice theory, which as a branch within social theory is occupied with locating and analysing the social within stabilizations of people’s actions. Practice theory roots in the works of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Martin Heidegger, and was later elaborated in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (“Outline of a Theory of Practice”, 1972/1977). Bourdieu’s endeavour of “praxeology”, in describing the “logic” and “habitus” of people’s everyday cultural and social behaviours, generated an interest in the preconditions of practice and what can be the principles of such systems (e.g. the notion of “habitus” states that how one is born and raised becomes embodied and thus informs one’s practices). In his review of practice theory in
sociology and philosophy, Andreas Reckwitz (2002) classified practice theory as a specific cultural theory, which was similar to work by scholars like Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens (1991) (who put forth the notion of “structuration”), and Judith Butler (1990) (who saw gender as performed and thus practiced). These thinkers used “practice” as the central manifestation and locus of the social, which comes along with new ways of understanding the structure-agency dilemma, a concern already encountered in media and migration research as outlined above. Unlike approaches implicit in other cultural theories (like “cultural mentalism”, “intersubjectivism” or “textualism”, as distinguished by Reckwitz, 2002), the social is neither innate nor manifested in text or interpretation only, but materializes itself and can be observed in stabilized practices, in the very acting and doing: the social is practiced by subjects in routines and depends on materialities and social constructions. Practices thereby become the “smallest unit of social analysis” (ibid., p. 249) emerging as configurations of materiality and sociality. Starting from these ideas, it can be stated that a refugee camp is a sociomaterial space and place, not only a pile of material, but also a social space and institution, and the refugee camp is always enacted and constituted through practices and routinized actions with and around materialities that shape and are shaped by social realities and meaning of what is the camp.

But what is a practice? This “first-generation” practice theory (Stephansen & Treré, 2020, p. 3) was elaborated in the 2000s and 2010s into a second generation (e.g. Schatzki, 2001; Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al. 2012; Hui et al. 2016; Dang-Anh et al., 2017):

First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between ‘practice’ and ‘practices’ (in German there is the useful difference between Praxis and Praktiken). ‘Practice’ (Praxis) in the singular represents merely an emphatic term to describe the whole of human action (in contrast to ‘theory’ and mere thinking). ‘Practices’ in the sense of the theory of social practices, however, is something else. A ‘practice’ (Praktik) is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249)

Central to this theorization of practice formulated by Theodor Schatzki and Andreas Reckwitz is the character of practices as routinized and stabilized, which distinguishes them from singular “actions” and delineates the dimension of structures. This feature makes practices social, connecting agency to
THREE: MEDIA PRACTICES

structure. While this very relationship of agency and structure has been seen as conflicting, and the question becomes whether practices are order-transforming or just the main activity of any human order (see Hobart, 2010), Reckwitz’s further elaboration of practices explains how these two dimensions meet:

A practice is social, as it is a ‘type’ of behaving and understanding that appears at different locales and at different points of time and is carried out by different body/minds. Yet, this does not necessarily presuppose ‘interactions’ – i.e. the social in the sense of the intersubjectivists – and nor does it remain on the extra-mental and extra-corporal level of discourses, texts and symbols, i.e. the social in the sense of the textualists. (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250)

Structures thereby emerge from stabilized, routinized practices, which through social coordination, order other practices and thus exercise power, even if the practice itself is not social (in the sense that it does not need to involve more than one actor). Schatzki (2001, p. 5) elaborates how local practices are the site of reproduction of social order, as they contain “organizing” properties, where “order should not be conceived of as regularities, but instead as arrangements of people, artefacts, and things”. This relationship of the human actor, technologies and artefacts such as media, and the abstract social order and power, hence, lie at the heart of practice theory – a point which centrally captures the relationship of media practices, the refugee camp, and the refugee regime. The refugee camp as a social, heterotopian space, as well as its resident subjects, are enabled and conditioned through practices and the productive power dynamics that practices mediate and constitute. The refugee camp heterotopia is “practiced” in the sense that it produces structures, routines and social relations that seek to differentiate and mirror between camp and non-camp.

In dissecting further what constitutes a practice, most definitions incorporate a stabilization of three or so different elements that create and routinize a practice, and also can explain change and dynamics of practices (Schatzki, 2001; Shove et al., 2012; Couldry, 2004; Reckwitz, 2002; Gießmann, 2018). Schatzki (2001, p. 16) names “practical understandings, rules, and teleo-affectivity” as elements sustaining practices, while Elizabeth Shove et al. (2012, p. 12) identify “materiality”, “competence” and “meaning”. Reckwitz (2002) also delineates bodily and mental features, know-how, material objects, and motivations and emotions. Without discussing the similarities and differences among these approaches, it can be stated that they come
down to a combination of ‘something material’ (technology, resonating with the notion of affordances, objects, and tangible entities), ‘something mental’ (knowledge, purpose, motivation, symbolic meaning, imaginaries) and ‘something structural’ (rules, know-how, constraints, skills). The configuration of these different elements characterizes specific practices, defines the relation of practices to each other, and underlies social change. In their assembly, they create stability of practices, they form “blocks” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249) which form wider complexes and constellations, becoming the “nexus” (Hui et al., 2016, p. 1) that makes up the social. Their repetition creates routinization and habituation (reflecting practice theory’s interest in the everyday and which habitual practices shape the mundane). In turn, if this configuration disintegrates and realigns, social change happens, new practices emerge and old ones disappear, become obsolete, or gain new forms and characteristics. In light of these observations, refugee camps can be seen as assembled out of such configurations of practice elements, where various actors (residents, authorities, staff, activists) negotiate their relations through materialities, imaginaries, goals, and rules, and through these practices produce its space, time, and politics, and make them heterotopian, heterochronic, or heteropolitical.

… to media practices

Applying this theoretical terrain to media entails various consequences for a concept of media practices in the heterotopian and heterochronic space of the refugee camp. The fundamental import from practice theory is to locate the social in people’s engagement with media technologies in the practices in and around media, and to de-centre text and discourse as the main site of meaning production. The question of how media condition and coordinate the social world is approached from an analysis of the elements of practices in relation to media. Of interest are “actions that are directly oriented to media, actions that involve media without necessarily having media as their aim or object; and actions whose possibility is conditioned by the prior existence, presence or functioning of media” (italics in original, Couldry, 2012, p. 35). Considering these actions creates the possibility for analysis and description of media practices at various scales, ranging from technology-specific concrete practices (e.g. “googling”) to more abstract, generalized practices (e.g. “creating presence”). Looking for the various material, mental, and structural elements constituting a media practice enables its identification. In the case of refugee camps, the analysis will show how media practices result from specific technologies, such as “registering” or “listing”
(practices around “registers” and “lists” as media), but also from structural and mental elements in camp space and time, such as “remembering”, “controlling”, or “protesting”. Media practices stand deeply embedded within other social practices, so that agency of media practices is always affected by structures of other practices: “practices related to media are shaped by basic needs for coordination, interaction, community, trust and freedom” (Couldry, 2012, p. 34). In turn, media practices can also shape, stabilize and influence other social practices, affecting “distinctive types of social process enacted through media-related practices” (ibid., p. 44). For that reason, specific media practices can gain “binding authority”, which explains the ritualizing, organizing dimension, and can be the locus of power (Couldry, 2010). In this sense, media practices both shape and are shaped by social practices that construct the refugee regime, the refugee camp, and the figure and subject of the refugee. Media practices crystallize the space, time, and politics of the camp. Residents, authorities, staff, and activists negotiate via media practices the camp heterotopia and heterochronia, where media become enablers, disablers, preconditions or sites of communication (and thereby refugee agency) as well as the structures of the refugee regime, in projects of differentiating the often paradoxical, doubled and inverted conditions of space, time and politics in the refugee camp.

Negotiating a balance between technological and social determinism, and structure and agency, media practices shift the focus to the social practices that manifest the moulding structural force of media technology and communication as well as the potential for their subversion. Stephansen and Treré (2020) see this shift as a welcomed move of media and communication studies in reaction to both the uses and gratifications approach, and later ethnographic audience studies researching the active audience, which in the end still remained focused on specific technologies or texts. Instead, “[p]ractice theory offers a propitious framework for studying […] multiple articulations” (p. 5), i.e. the diversity that media users encounter in media environments. Media practice theory has strong roots in media anthropology and ethnographic approaches and use the concept’s strength in capturing holistically the processuality of social life (see Bräuchler & Postill, 2010). In this vein, identifying media practices means examining both what people do as well as what people say in relation to media, which categorizations they make (Couldry, 2004), which imaginaries, motivations and goals are projected on media technologies and practices of communication – a helpful detail when engaging with archival material, which I will return to in the next chapter. This approach to media as an open-ended set of sociomaterial practices provides an open, contextualized,
local conceptualization of what different actors in social systems and contexts – such as the refugee camp – do with media, putting in focus the materialities as well as socialities of media practices from below and above that shape the camp heterotopia and heterochronia.

Change and continuity of media practices within the refugee camp

Finally, a media practice approach also lends itself to endeavours of historicization and observations of how media matter across time. Media practices involve technologies as a sociomaterial dimension and are entangled with cultural-historical meanings, knowledges, and rules affecting the practices around media technologies. Sebastian Gießmann (2018) argued that these components are mutually dependent:

Media can be captured as something, which is continuously reciprocally reproduced in action, as a practice, which is always becoming. On the other hand, media can be understood as those techniques and infrastructures, with which societies and cultures pass on and transform their media practices over longer periods. Both perspectives do not exclude each other, but condition one another: Practices cannot be researched without their infrastructures, infrastructures cannot be researched without their practices. (Gießmann, 2018, p. 96, author’s translation)

Hence, infrastructures and practices (or media technological environments, the material pre-conditions, and media practices) are co-dependent, which however does not mean that changes of media technologies (such as the emergence of digital media) by default come along with changes to practices or to the social relations and structures they create. Just because a refugee camp is now digital does not mean its media practices are all new. Rather, practice theory points out (as outlined above and being one of the central arguments Couldry (2012) makes about “digital media practice”) that it is the elements of practices that produce change, and just because a new media technology emerges, that does not mean that media practice automatically changes, and the elements need to be carefully examined. Certain elements might remain, showing that practices can be continuous, lingering, and full of historical trajectories. Rather, in turning the perspective around, and seeking out traces and circularities of media practices – of materialities, meanings, imaginaries, routines, habits – among forced migrants and in camps can make visible both historical and contemporary media practices in new ways, alongside each other.
Historicizing research, such as is performed in this thesis, can scrutinize these continuities, circularities contingencies and dynamics of media practices. Lisa Gitelman (2006) discussed precisely this question of how new media technologies have historically shaped experiences, perceptions and practices. Based on an analysis of phonographs and the Internet, she argued that “[t]he introduction of new media […] is never entirely revolutionary: new media are less points of epistemic rupture than they are socially embedded sites for the ongoing negotiation of meaning as such” (Gitelman, 2006, p. 7). In this view (which is also the view taken in this thesis), media practices change because of redefinitions of meanings around uses and practices, not due to the technology per se. Media practices of the refugee regime might change due to changing politics, such as an increased interest in surveillance, border control and impinging administration. But new media practices of resistance and protest among refugees might also emerge in opposition to racist and segregating camp accommodations. Supporting this argument further, Gitelman understood media “as socially realized structures of communication, where structures include both technological forms and their associated protocols, and where communication is a cultural practice, a ritualized collocation of different people on the same mental map, sharing or engaged with popular ontologies of representation” (Gitelman, 2006, p. 7). This definition resonates with media practice theory while opening up for a historicizing analysis: practices around media consist of protocols of inscription, rituals and cultural meanings of representation, as well as material preconditions, all of which can change, emerge or show continuities and be remediated. The refugee camp becomes a prism of such media practices, both changing and remaining, remediating and updating themselves, reciprocally between political and social change, such as border and asylum legislations, societal discourses, and also changing media technologies. Thus, media practices’ material preconditions and social consequences, their materialities and socialities, can demonstrate how historically the camp is ever and always made into a heterotopian and heterochronic environment of refugee subjects as well as authorities and the refugee regime, and in negotiating and shaping differences, inclusions and exclusions from humanitarian care and citizenship.

The next step is untangling the changes and continuities within media practices in the history of refugee camps, which will enable specific analyses of archival records. As will be outlined in-depth in Chapter Four, documents and files can be conceptualized as traces of media practices, thereby allowing for an excavation and reconstruction of media practices and observing them.
across time. By understanding the records through the lens of media practice theory, an analysis can excavate and historically analyse how the records both report about and manifest media practices, and how these practices have (re)produced social order and negotiated power over refugee subjects and over the space and time of the refugee camp. Through this diachronic observation of media practices within different historical contexts, these practices can be seen to be ever continuing and re-configuring themselves as constellations of technologies, materialities, contextual motivations, imaginaries, and skills, shaping specific relations of space and time for the forced migrant. This view aligns with media historical approaches that are interested in palimpsestic layers of media infrastructures (Mattern, 2017), or media archaeologies of practices (Kaun, 2016), which diachronically put into conversation what people do around media. In this sense, changing media technologies and materialities are always dialectically re-embedded into media practices. John Durham Peters (2015, p. 25) saw media infrastructures as different bottlenecks through which meaning has to pass, be it in ancient writing or digital data processing technologies – endlessly producing modes of world-enabling and leveraging power, and being able to manipulate time and space. Observing these deeply historical conditions of how media as sociomaterial practices shape the refugee camp, the refugee regime, and the refugee figure, hence becomes the concern of this thesis.

Theoretical framework: media practices and the space, time, and politics of the refugee camp

The refugee camp is an instrumental and administrational construction and materialization of the border and regulation of (im)mobility, but it is also as a temporary home and shelter, and is enacted through media practices. They make, unmake, and remake sociomaterial spaces, times, and politics, and in conjunction with the refugee regime, they are integral parts of the refugee camp and its experiences. In a reciprocal and dialectic relationship of media technological changes as well as political, discursive and legal changes, such camp media practices update, remediate and perpetuate themselves and showcase continuities, circularities, and ruptures. These relationships involves all actors: camp residents, camp administration staff, involved citizens, authorities, politicians, NGOs, humanitarian actors or government agencies, and society at large. All of these co-construct the camp. Media practices are emplaced in and constitutive of the refugee camp, which has consequences for structures and agencies of the various actors. Media practices of these
diverse actors negotiate the spatial, the temporal and the political conditions and relations of the refugee camp: between camp-space and non-camp-space, camp-time and non-camp-time, and refugee and non-refugee. Practice theory’s interest in individual actors and their relations to stabilized social structures thus sheds light on how media shape environments and specific spaces, times, and politics that refugees, authorities, and other actors have to relate to. In this sense, media practices are fundamentally complicit, co-constitutive, and relational to the refugee camp, refugee regime, and to refugee experiences. Here, to grasp the meanings and values of the relations that camp media practices enact and negotiate, I refer back to a conceptualization of the refugee camp as heterotopia and heterochronia, as elaborated in Chapter Two (heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices, as media practices that shape the specific heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical characteristics of the camp, its othered, inverted, mirrored space, time and politics).

The ensuing three empirical chapters will explore what this outlined mediation of the camp heterotopia and heterochronia through practices around media technologies entails. Three different, non-exhaustive trajectories will be teased out: three bundles of heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices, which excavate historical contexts of negotiating the (1) space, (2) time and (3) politics of the camp, in and through media practices of (1) governance, infrastructure and administration, (2) memory and witnessing, and (3) resistance and protest (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Theoretical approach to “heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices”](image-url)
The camp as a heterotopia is a sociomaterial space and time that media practices are embedded in, where media practices construct heterotopian and heterochronic conditions (and *vice versa*), and where heterotopias call for and shape specific media practices. Such heterotopian, or other, othering, and othered media practices become possible, but at the same time it is necessary to shape, maintain, and always re-negotiate the differentiations and relations of camp-space, camp-time and the refugee figure as its resident. A heterotopia is first and foremost a *condition* of a space, a type of spatial construction, *in relation* to other spaces around it. Refugee camps are real spaces (not utopias or dystopias) that thrive on paradoxical tensions of inclusion and exclusion, shelter and care, and segregation and withholding from full recognition. This ambiguous relation of inside and outside (refugee camps are both inside and outside society) characterizes the camp’s function in bordered states. As will be explained, media practices are part of this process of spatializing the refugee regime and camp, which is to say, it is the media practices that produce the heterotopian condition and space, time and politics as acts undertaken by the involved actors. Media practices and space are co-constructed through social and material processes: space is “*practiced* – not only through various forms of social and practical use, but also through the representational activities of users” (Despard, 2016, p. 40; italics in original). This theoretical perspective will focus the attention in the ensuing empirical analysis to the materialities, socialities, imaginaries, motivations and other contexts that constitute media practices, in order to understand further how the refugee camp creates and maintains social relations and thereby dialectically creates the figure of the refugee, the camp, and also society at large by mirroring and spatializing its “others” at the margins.
When media practices are gone

At first glance, media practices are ephemeral. Doing something is transitory, unless one does it forever. While media practice theory identifies the regularities, habitual features and stabilizations that make actions become practices – laying the groundwork for a temporal dimension of continuity that makes a practice into practice – what remains unclear is if and when a media practice ever stops being a media practice. At second glance, one could also see media practices as longer lasting and extending beyond singular incidents. After all, certain materialities and technologies that co-constitute practices can remain, or, as outlined in the previous chapter, media practices can appear in different constellations of material and social components. Media history has long been occupied with diachronically tracing modes of inscription with practices of mediation and communication, which are storing information, creating traces and marks across time, and make these things move across space. Famously, Harold Innis (1951) in his argument about the “bias of communication” claimed that media technologies are biased in either time or space, meaning that they are either durable but relatively immobile (stone, clay, or book manuscripts), or mobile and extensive but short-lived (radio, TV, newspapers). What this dichotomy leads to (as will be elaborated in this methods chapter) is that if this materiality of media practices and the technologies they draw upon are considered, they might not be so ephemeral after all. Historical media practices have left traces, durable and lasting into the present in some way, which can be reconstructed and excavated. Based on an analysis of these historical traces of media practices, one can then actively trace media practices backward and forward in time: Which historical media practices in refugee camps become visible from today’s perspective, and which current media practices can be readily traced historically?

The correct address for material traces of media practices is the archive. As a collection of documents, an archive has the potential to make media practices space-biased: archival material is often locked into strange buildings, accessible only by requiring a researcher to travel to distant places, but durable, still somehow there, many years later. However, what is really
there is a question for historical research and cultural theory: Is what is there the practice itself? Some remnant of it? How can it be accessed? Throughout this chapter, I will outline the methodological and methodical pathway taken in this thesis for answering these questions. In doing so, the archival records collected will be conceptualized as “documents”, a media genre and form of inscription, made for knowing and showing at the same time (Gitelman, 2014). In this sense, the documents know and show about historical media practices in refugee camps. At the same time, these documents are “traces”, which for Jacques Derrida (1976) is the difference between presence and absence, the actual origin of meaning, limited signifiers of something that was there. Interpreting these traces becomes the historian’s act of imagination, which is the writing of histories from the position of the present.

Archival material is used to excavate traces of media practices in refugee camps, inspired by an approach that Anne Kaun (2016, p. 30) in her historical study of activists’ uses of media technologies, called a “media archaeology of media practices”. While media archaeology per se is mainly interested in the materiality of technologies of mediation (Huhtamo & Parikka, 2011), the present study is instead rather non-media-centric. It is interested in an embedded exploration of media as practices, of the preconditions and consequences of media for space, time, and politics in the refugee camp, and study of the space, its occupants, and its construction through media practices and not primarily the media technologies per se. However, the spirit of media archaeology as an undertaking of excavation, laying bare historical trajectories and contexts, and relating and finding the present in the past, is translated into this study through the relationship to the archival material, seeing the documents as both physical and (re)constructable relicts and traces of media practices. In doing so, this chapter picks up the discussion about media practices, and modes of historicizing them, as already posited at the end of Chapter Three.

The traces used as evidence in this thesis (in total around 4,000 pages of copied pages) have been collected over the course of two years from 16 different archives in Germany and one in the USA. Hence, I have created an archive myself, collecting material from different archival actors and institutions. Susan J. Douglas (2011), in an essayistic reflection on her own archiving practices as a historian, points out that the basic advantage of this process of actively sampling documents from different perspectives and origins is simply that it makes visible the biases and systematics of archival institutions, and enables voices to speak against each other. Finding the
relevant archives hence became the first step of a methodical procedure for this project, which I will describe below.

Reflecting on these steps is a necessity of critical historical studies after the archival turn. What this chapter will therefore also elaborate on is not only the archives’ relations to media practice theory (and the consequences this relationship has for conceptualizing and interpreting the collected files), but also the archives’ relations to the refugee regime. Post-colonial historiography (and really any post-Foucauldian archive-based study) has long pondered these interrelations of archives as institutions of power. Here I am following Ann Laura Stoler’s (2009, p. 43) move from “archive-as-source” towards “archive-as-subject”. This move incorporates applying an ethnographic lens to both the behaviour of archives as institutions that are entangled with the refugee regime, as well as to the documents within the archives, which media practices they reveal in the fact of their being archived and media practices of institutions. The archives I have visited are classified as institutional archives (reflecting governmental and state authorities, and NGOs or other institutionalized actors of the refugee regime) or as community archives (established in opposition to institutional archives by activists, NGOs or refugees themselves, providing different voices of those experiencing the refugee regime). For Stoler, who studied Dutch colonial archives about Indonesia, the ethnographic entry point to archival research emerges in the “space between prescription and practice” (Stoler, 2009, p. 38) – that is, the space in-between the rules and structures that where the archive reveals and how people acted accordingly or not. In my composition of the archival sources and archival types, in addition to seeing them as traces of media practices, I try to make the sources productive and interpretable by analysing the archival documents both as media practices themselves, and by analysing what they report about media practices. Their form as well as their content, materiality and sociality, are considered together, always in reflection of how the archive has produced and conditioned the documents in the first place. In what follows, I will attempt to systematically outline this methodological pathway.

The historical-critical method

Walter Benjamin starts his essay on history with the metaphor of a chess-playing machine that always wins. He relates this machine to his suggested approach of “historical materialism” (which will always trump “historicism”, the traditional methodology and epistemology of historiography) and with Leopold von Ranke’s famous aim to get hold of *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*
(“as it actually was”). In Benjamin’s view, getting hold of this eigentliche past is only possible for the “redeemed mankind”, whose “past [has] become citable in all its moments” (Benjamin, 1940/2006, p. 390). In the subject matter of this thesis, there has been no total redemption (at least to the best of my knowledge), and therefore only snippets and images of the past are attainable for us, which offer ever-changing projections of the past from the viewpoint of the present. Yet traditionally (especially since German historiography of the 19th century), historical research draws on the “historical-critical method” (or historicism) that is connected with von Ranke, Johann Gustav Droysen and Ernst Bernheim, who formulated certain standard procedures for handling sources; this method is still in use in much historical research. Of course, historical epistemology and ontology have certainly been contested on multiple occasions since that time. Von Ranke’s dogma of an “actual” or “essential” past (the German “eigentlich” is ambiguous here) as the goal has been problematized extensively (as will be further elaborated in the next section). However, the very practical methodical approaches and heuristic guidelines for collecting, critiquing, and analysing archival material has remained relatively unchanged and continues to be part of many curricula. The historical-critical method itself usually consists of five steps. Heuristics deals with the identification, selection, and sampling of sources in archives and their catalogues according to the research interest. Study of sources (German Quellenkunde) then categorizes and typologizes the collected sources according to genres or forms of preservation. Source criticism is the next step and at the heart of the method, where each source is critically examined for its authenticity, explanatory power, completeness, provenance, etc. This step determines how valuable a specific source is in its context and to the research question. Interpretation is the fourth step, where the sources are read in their context, explained, and “understood” through the research questions and hypotheses. Lastly, presentation concerns the historian’s narrativization of histories read from the sources (see e.g. Brundage, 2017).

Much historical research is often called theory-averse, and remains utterly vague about concrete procedures, modes, and rationalities of interpretation. The social sciences, in turn, are almost obsessed with methodological discussions. To navigate between these approaches, this chapter will take the five steps of historical-critical method as a skeleton. The very practical procedural steps outlined by this method underlie the research process I have taken, and will guide the description and discussion of the collection and analysis of the material. Even in the context of post-modern/post-archival-turn media history, the questions the historical-critical method poses remain the same:
Which material has been collected? Through which criteria have the archives and the collections been selected? On what basis will they be interpreted?

The post-archival-turn archive

The point of departure (and arrival?) of this study is the archive, which is a physical and material space at the base of historiography and is therefore an object of study in itself. Much has been said about the archive, especially since post-modernist movements, and this discussion has been labelled the “archival turn”. The records that archives hold are not ultimate, objective truths, nor sources of origins and unquestionable facts about the “eigentliche” past. Arguments put forward by Walter Benjamin and Michel Foucault, for instance, have long dethroned the archive as the sole holder of historical truths and evidence. Moreover, the Holocaust and colonialism and their historiographical aftermaths have focalized these debates on how history can be written based on archival records, and strengthened sensitivities to the figure of the witness. Oral and vernacular histories have given insights to the past in opposition to potentially neglectful, biased and silencing administrative records. In this vein, post-modernism and post-structuralism have called out the flaws and pitfalls in trying to reconstruct history solely from archival sources and then representing those sources through narrative accounts. The notion of the archive has evolved from the locus of objective, authentic historical ‘Truth’ to being seen as a constructed place of power that is to be understood as a space of social memory producing histories, but not historical truth *per se* (Blouin & Rosenberg, 2011, pp. 4–7).

Two major factors delineate this minefield and ‘spoil the game’. First, Foucault has neatly described how the archive, rather than being the storage of all history, is an institution of discursive power; it is not an exhaustive space of all statements, but rather it “between tradition and oblivion, […] reveals the rules of a practice that enables statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification. It is the *general system of the formation and transformation of statements* [italics in original]” (Foucault, 1969/2002, p. 146). Similarly, Jacques Derrida (1995), in the introduction to his essay *Archive Fever*, deconstructs the archive through the etymology of the very word: *arkhe* in Ancient Greek means both ‘commandment’ and ‘commencement’, i.e. the beginning, first, original of something, but also the general rule or model of something (cf. ‘archetype’ or ‘archaic’). In his analysis of archives in Ancient Greece, he shows how the archive is built as a place for keeping these two meanings together: a place of law, government and power. This idea underlies his argument about the *Mal d’Archive* (translated to ‘archive
fever’): the obsession in Western culture and among historians to search for origins and the original. Second, the role of the historian, or rather the historio-grapher (literally “writing history” and thus mediating it anew), is neither neutral nor objective. Re-narrativizations of history are bound to the researcher’s positionality, and can never be an account of an inaccessible historical reality. Critically assessing how both the historian’s position and the construction of the archive shape historical narrativizations is key.

In his essay on historical methodologies, Robert J. Connors stated that “[t]he Archive is where storage meets dreams, and the result is history” (Connors, 1992/2016, p. 51). As a researcher with historical interest, one is full of dreams and ideas, questions one has developed, and imaginations one has about the past. As outlined in the introduction, and as Benjamin reminds us, the present forms the inescapable framework, but also motivation and relevance, for seeking images of the past. It determines the historian’s “dreams”, when entering the archive. What Benjamin described with the metaphor of an “angel” of the past with its wings spread and the wind of history blowing forward, or what Marshall McLuhan (1967) described through the metaphor of the “rear-view mirror” through which society drives into the future, while looking at the past, captures the representational connection of past, present and future, which the historian encounters in the archive: looking forward through the past, while also seeing a version of the past through the present. Re-narrativizing this history, or emplotting it (processes extensively discussed by Ricoeur, 2004), is then the task of the historian out of their positionality, aligning the images of the past in the clash of one’s dreams and turning the archive into an account of history, or at least one possible history out of many.

The fields most significantly affected by and embracing of the “archival turn” are post-colonial and feminist theory and historiography, having critiqued the notion of the archive, the sources it holds, and the process of historiography itself. Research based on colonial archives has led to a fundamental acknowledgement of the archive as not only being created within power structures of colonial systems, but being an instrument of colonialism in the first place in producing silences and the “othered” subject (Stoler, 2009; Axel, 2002). This idea holds true in a material definition of the archive as a physical place hoarding documents from specific contexts, resulting in silences through systematic non-documentation, destruction of sources, or non-participation of groups in archiving their own histories. The idea also holds true in the symbolic understanding of the archive as a locus of rules, discourses, and genealogies, resulting in symbolic silences in the
forms of non-narrativization and non-representation of marginalized groups and subjects (Decker, 2013).

The practice of “reading archives against the grain” emerged as a critical scholarly approach to colonial histories, most notably in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s (1988) and Edward Said’s (2003) classical works that discuss the structural limitations in the “subaltermn’s” voice, as well as the limitations to one’s representation when being “Orientalyzed”. This form of engagement with colonial archives turns them on their heads, uncovers the colonial logics of the archives, and lays bare their silences while attempting to highlight the missing voices. These processes enable historiographies, which can uncover otherwise forgotten and marginalized pasts, and reinsert specific histories into the larger social memory. The second feature of colonial archives is the production and subjectivation of the “other”. The colonial subject is constructed through the practices of the archive, fundamentally including media practices. Documenting, categorizing, controlling, making and unmaking of people are colonial projects that materialize in the paper of archives, as Ann Stoler’s (2009) study of Dutch archives about the colonies in Indonesia has shown in detail. What she called “lettered governance and written traces of colonial lives” (Stoler, 2009, p. 14) in the very first sentence of her book essentially captures the moment of control and the Foucauldian power-knowledge-nexus that archives collude with. “[F]iling systems and disciplined writing produce assemblages of control and specific methods of domination” (p. 37), she wrote. The colonial archive produces “social categories” of people, traceable though “social etymologies”, which are “not just about words. They trace practices gathered into intelligible forms” (p. 38). Commissions as actors, statistics, reports, and other media practices create common sense, epistemic reasonings, and state-power over the order of things.

As will be seen, these practices partly underlie the refugee regime as well: media infrastructures, ways of registering, knowing, and managing forcibly mobilized people in time and space, with the refugee camp as a locus for this process (traces of which end up in and comprise institutional archives). The administrative label of the “refugee” and its definitions and forms in national laws and the Geneva Convention are prime examples of social etymologies for “administrating” people; these were generated in order to provide protection, but also to “tame chances” and be able to predict behaviour, as Stoler (2009) pointed out. Uncovering the logics of the archive is what Stoler called reading “along the grain” as opposed to reading “against the grain”. 

95
The refugee regime has certain similarities to the archival treatment of the colonial subject. Of course, Germany and its refugee camps are not a post-colonial context. Nevertheless, the specific realm of refugee history, as Peter Gatrell (2017) notes, is missing from mainstream historical narratives, which are caught up in the nation state framework and reproduce silences. Moreover, refugee regimes and experiences of the bordered Other in the Western metropolis stand in genealogies of colonialist and fascist practices of population governance. Therefore, refugee historiography requires critical readings of archives, both along and against the grain, where the perspectives of forced migrants find little or no representation, while at the same time archives as institutions of bureaucracy show historical practices of categorization and management of displaced people. The archival landscape (including institutional archives and activist counter/archives by communities) presents itself as a field of institutions and actors in relation to the refugee regime: they must be read along their grain (in order to uncover media practices of making and governing refugees and camps) as well as against their grain (in order to see media practices, agency, and voices that make and unmake the refugee camp).

Ethnographic additions

The arguments made so far about engaging with archives have led some scholars to draw on ethnographically inspired methods to grapple with the consequences of the archival turn. What Ann Stoler described as the move from “archive-as-source to archive-as-subject” (Stoler, 2009, p. 43) incorporates a new focus on archival records within the “broader social life of an archive, what might be called ‘ethnography in an archival mode’” (ibid.). In Stoler’s reasoning about the necessity of applying ethnographic perspectives to critical archival research, she described how ethnography in and of archives “attends to the processes of production, relations of power in which archives are created, sequestered, and rearranged” (ibid., p. 37), which envisions “production and consumption of facticities as the contingent coordinates of particular times and temperaments, places and purposes.” In that way, what ethnographies within the archive make visible is how the document and its insertion into the archive per se is a (media) practice imbued with power, and how any given practice might have deviated from the norms and rules that it provided. Included in that view is “habit-taking”, which are processes of creating common sense and “conditions of epistemic choice and chance” (ibid., p. 39) – for example, in the case of colonial archives, the creation and assessment of “race” as a category. As a result, the interest of
ethnographic archiving lies in getting hold of “what counts as knowledge and who is in power to record their version of it” (ibid., p. 44). As will become clear in the next section, archives of the refugee regime as well as counter-archives (activist archives and community archives) also provide such ethnographic spaces for archival research in making prejudices, predispositions and actual practices visible, both within the regime and against it. Paying attention to the specific choice of archives and their position in an archival landscape is part of this archival ethnography (as also described by Ritter, 2012; Gracy, 2004; Decker, 2013). In addition, the combination of archival methods with media practice theory in analysis and conceptualization of the documents draws on this post-colonial, ethnographically-inspired angle on the archive, in the analysis of traces of media practices within the refugee regime, which are spatialized and localized in the refugee camp.

Archives of media practices in refugee camps
Returning to the historical-critical method, the first step a historian has to take is identifying and selecting archival source material. In the ethnographically inspired manner outlined above, this step includes assessing the archival landscape, which is relevant for getting hold of traces of the refugee regime and refugees’ media practices as well as understanding their logics of operations, systems of cataloguing, and the voices and silences emerging from these general conditions. Connors (1992/2016) explored the processes between historians and the archival material as follows:

It is not, cannot be, a forced march from hypothesis to support […] But neither is my examination of archival data ever a random stroll, turning pages without purpose […] Archival reading is, instead, a kind of directed ramble, something like an August mushroom hunt. There are various concurrent intentions in it: I am looking for information on my specific question; I am looking to increase my own general knowledge of various periods and persons; I am seeking, to be better acquainted with the sources themselves; I am looking for fascinating anomalies; I am hoping for unexpected treasures; and of course I am seeking those conjunctions of historical evidence with sudden perception or understanding that occasionally light up the skies for the lucky historian and reveal a whole world whose genesis and current realities have been subtly reshaped – the “Ah” of realization that is always the historian’s true payoff. (Connors, 1992/2016, p. 55)
In autumn in Sweden, picking mushrooms is a popular cultural activity. If the summer has been rainy enough, and one knows the good spots, and can tell the poisonous ones from the edible ones, success rates can be enormous; mushroom hunting is a combination of skill, knowledge, and luck. Metaphorically, archival heuristics and the selection of records is a similar endeavour. Informed by previous research and the formulation of a research problem, I have entered the archival forests, their search catalogues and files, with the preconception of a wide understanding of media, mediation, and communication, as well as refugee camps and the structures of the refugee regime. One challenge is to communicate this research interest to archivists, who hold a key position in unlocking certain collections and providing valuable meta-knowledge and hints. As a historian, one is by no means alone, but is also part of a knowledge infrastructure consisting of digital catalogues and archivists.

Refugee governance and administration in (West) Germany is distributed across federal, state, and municipal levels. These levels meet at the governmental institutional archives of the different federal states, whose legal task it is to archive the proceedings of all governmental authorities in a systematic manner. Because decision processes and documentations of state practices, policy development, and the administration of refugee camps and shelters at large have taken place in this institutional environment, the institutional archive is the first group type of visited archive: federal state government archives (some geographical distribution was achieved here, because laws and regulations of refugee management vary across the states), the national archive of Germany in Koblenz, the UN Archives in New York City, the German Red Cross Archive in Berlin, and the Arolsen Archives (online) represent different institutional actors in the conception and execution of the refugee regime.

Of course, the traces of governmental authorities also encompass silences, following their respective logics of the institutions. Therefore, the relevant archival landscape here also includes what can be called community archives, which are collections of other relevant actors or refugees themselves, such as activist groups or associations engaged with refugees and documenting their operations and histories through collecting and archiving material, or in producing smaller community-based publications. These types of archives represent counter-structures and voices that are often speaking against and filling out silences in the institutional archives. Being aware of these “good spots for mushrooms” is the first step.
The institutional archive
The first group of archives I describe as institutional archives (see full list in Table 1). Their main function is to archive the operations of specific organizations involved in creating and managing the refugee regime. This management involves political actors who create the general legal conditions (and the intermediate administrative and bureaucratic bodies) for executing the refugee regime, and administering on the ground level. This takes the form of public authorities, part of the federal state systems, and NGOs like the Red Cross and UNRRA, which operate as organizational actors within the camp spaces, partly having state funding, yet being independent actors. Finally, the public service broadcaster archive is a state-independent, organizational archive that represents power and does not include refugees at the centre of its operations. What unites these archives is the provenance of the files, following laws and practices of organizational archiving according to the legal requirements about how state actors have to archive themselves. These actors archived their own operations, including administrative files like correspondences, minutes of meetings, project planning files, reports, and outreach communication (public relations). Due to these logics of self-centred archiving of institutional operations, the perspective that these archives offer is not the one of forced migrants living in camps. Instead, they provide documents of the bureaucratic practices of the specific organizations while mostly remaining silent on the subjects of these practices. The collections have been scanned and filtered for files tied to specific camp structures or activities and services in or about camps at a specific time. The highest amount of context and cohesion of stories can be achieved where different collections create patches or oases of sources around a specific event or contextual story that has taken place, while leaving larger gaps undocumented and open. These gaps might be due to loss or destruction of specific files, or because specific files were uninteresting according to the archive. The applied logic of archiving is “provenance”, meaning that the files are grouped and catalogized according to the unit that produced them, e.g. a specific authority department; they are not ordered according to topic (like “refugee camp”). Thus, the catalogues and file descriptions have been searched for hints that indicate a relevance for refugee camp or media therein. Overall, this group of archives represents how the refugee regime in post-war Germany has archived itself; it stores its structures and voices of actors that created the conditions while remaining relatively silent from the point of view of people affected by these structures. Yet this type of archive gives
insights from behind the scenes into the operations of actors of the refugee regime, an insight which is unique to historical research and hardly accessible to the same degree today for contemporary operations.

Table 1: List of visited institutional archives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archive</th>
<th>Dates of visit</th>
<th>Identified collections</th>
<th>Time period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landesarchiv Niedersachsen (State archive of Lower Saxony)</td>
<td>5.2.2019</td>
<td>Administration files of camps in Lower Saxony</td>
<td>1945–1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundesarchiv Koblenz (Federal archive in Koblenz)</td>
<td>3.4.2019</td>
<td>Administrational files of camps and refugee media policies on the federal level</td>
<td>1945–1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archiv des Generalsekretariats des Deutschen Roten Kreuz, Berlin (Red Cross Archive, Berlin)</td>
<td>8.10.2019</td>
<td>Administrational files from Red Cross activities in refugee camps</td>
<td>1945–1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Archives, New York City</td>
<td>20–23.5.2019</td>
<td>Administrative files from UNRRA, DP-camp activities, “Germany” file</td>
<td>1945–1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv (DRA), Frankfurt (German Broadcasting Archive in Frankfurt)</td>
<td>Scans received, November 2018</td>
<td>Administrative files from broadcasting activities, audience surveys among refugees</td>
<td>1945–2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arolsen Archives (Archives on national socialist persecution, including the International Tracing Service)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Administrational files of UNRRA and ITS (International Tracing Service) and Child Search</td>
<td>1945–ca. 1960</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The community archive

The second group of archives can be called community archives (Table 2). They follow a fundamentally different logic than institutional archives,
independent from state actors, and emerging from civil society and communities. The creators and holders of these archives are engaged citizens or communal organizations like museums. The motivation behind the collection is, firstly, archiving a specific group’s activities, e.g. in the case of activist archives, the activities of activists. The archives are also motivated by a will to document and provide access to histories of marginalized groups, and document voices that are often not available in “mainstream” archives.

In the words of post-colonial critique, these archives collect material “against the grain” of historiography, allowing for “archival interventions” (Brunow, 2015) to historiography by holding and giving access to other voices of the past. Three “Archives for Social Movements” have been visited in order to collect documents of distinct societal counter-movements, such as feminist groups or anti-racist and refugee protest movements, which were of importance for this research. These archives gather activists’ own productions, all “leftovers” of social movements, which in relation to the files from the “institutional archives” often provide “counter-stories” to the administrative perspectives, by for instance including forced migrants’ voices. Run by volunteer activists themselves, the archives are sometimes less systematic (given they do not have to follow laws about what has to be archived and how), and are usually ordered by topic, following the principle of “pertinence” (not “provenance”, as per the institutional archives). I usually identified collections on specific topics, like “refugee activism” or “anti-racism”, and would then go through the file to identify relevant documents relating to media or camp experiences in general. The Friedland museum exhibition followed the logic of outreach and presented files in the context of the exhibition, and its purpose is to tell local histories about immigration to Germany from below. In the same vein, the DOMiD archive is a broad collection of immigration related documents run by an association collecting the history of immigration in Germany in preparation for a large-scale museum. Finally, one collection of transcribed oral history interviews with DPs (held by the Research Centre for Contemporary History, Hamburg) is included here, too. Ultimately, the community archive group represents how experiences and practices of subjects in opposition to the refugee regime have been archived. These types of archives offer insights “from below”, that is, perspectives and voices from within the structures, representing practices and agency within the refugee regime.
Table 2: List of visited community archives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archive</th>
<th>Dates of visit</th>
<th>Identified collections</th>
<th>Time period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archive for Social Movements, Hamburg</td>
<td>25.6.2018; 23.7.2018</td>
<td>Activist activities, anti-racist movements, refugee movements, press coverage</td>
<td>1980–2000 (many files were lost in a fire in 1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Centre for Contemporary History, Hamburg</td>
<td>17.9.2018</td>
<td>Interviews with DPs (oral history project)</td>
<td>1945–1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOMiD (Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über die Migration in Deutschland e.V.)</td>
<td>17–18.1.2018</td>
<td>statistical audience research in the 1960s to 1990s, grey literature about media and migration in Germany</td>
<td>1950–2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbruch-Bildarchiv</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Photo and video database from migrant and refugee protests</td>
<td>1990s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Catalogues and key words

Upon entering these physical archive buildings, I encountered the collection by searching based on a list of search words. These were keywords and concepts that reflect the research interest, like the “mushroom types” I wanted to find. Searches were applied in various ways in the catalogues of all
visited archives in order to identify the relevant collections. The list included, firstly, a word cluster around “refugee camp”, to retrieve records related directly to specific camp structures or the general handling of camps in an area. Given the bureaucratic detail, the number of relevant terms is vast: Flüchtlingslager, Flüchtlingsunterkunft, Asylbewerberheim, Zentrale Anlaufstelle, Gemeinschaftsunterkunft, Erstaufnahmelager, Notaufnahmelager, Durchgangslager, Asylbewerberunterkunft, Asylbewerberheim. Secondly, a word cluster around “media” was applied to retrieve documents that were somehow related to media, mediation, or communication: Medien, Kommunikation, Radio, Zeitung, Zeitschrift, Fernsehen, Telefon, Fernmelde-, Kino, Film, Post, Brief. These two search word clusters did however not exclusively define which records were ordered, but only served as an orientation in order to not be too deterministic early in the process, and to enable serendipity while familiarizing myself with the field. If the catalogue tree revealed other promising files, or the archivist recommended a specific collection, they were looked into. Whether additional files were available or found also depended on the specific archive’s focus, its accessibility to files (in some archives, files must be ordered far in advance and spontaneous orders are not possible; in some archives, anything can be immediately ordered and accessed). The archives’ catalogues were the tool for navigating the collections. These digital platforms allow access to the archive’s structure via drop-down menus and search fields for keywords leading to specific files. Good coverage of the relevant files then depends on how thoroughly the descriptions of the files were prepared, and whether all relevant keywords were assigned. My elastic list of keywords, therefore, was designed to retrieve as many relevant files as possible. Figures 3, 4, and 5 are screenshots that exemplify the structure of archive catalogues for the State Archive of Hamburg and the Archive of Social Movements in Hamburg.

19 Translations in order: refugee camp, refugee accommodation, asylum-seeker home, central contact point, common accommodation, camp of first reception, emergency reception camp, transit camp, asylum-seeker accommodation, asylum-seeker home (also including contemporary derogatory words used in the 1980s and 1990s)

20 Translations in order: media, communication, radio, newspaper, magazine, television, phone, telecommunication (prefix), cinema, film, mail, letter
MEDIA AND THE REFUGEE CAMP

Figure 3: Result page for the keyword “Flüchtlingslager” (refugee camp) in the state archive of Hamburg. Single files appear as results, including title, time period, signature, and a description once the item is clicked on.

Figure 4: Catalogue page for a single file (131-5_151/24) in the state archive of Hamburg. Title on top “Refugee camp, Nissen-huts, management of camps, barracks and accommodations (1945–1950)”, then archival structure in the drop-down view below, showing the structure of the archive, sorted according to specific authorities and topics of their operations. Below the structure are details about the specific file (no description apart from the title here).
Figure 5: Catalogue of the Archive of Social Movements, Hamburg, a community, volunteer-based archive, that collects what remains of various social movements. The archival systematics are explained on the webpage and a search field allows for keyword searches. Here, the result is shown for Aktion am Flüchtlingslager Horst (“Intervention at the refugee camp Horst”), which is a photo collection.

During the visits to the various archives, these searches were conducted and the list of keywords sometimes further refined as I developed a better understanding of the logics, relevant actors, and linguistic formulations revealing information about media and refugee camps in line with the research interest. This process of refinement allowed for an open-ended, circular familiarization with the archival landscape while being informed by certain pre-defined interests and parameters. Rather like a mushroom hunt, one knows that there are mushrooms out there, and one is able to recognize the right types based on previous knowledge – it just takes a bit of serendipity and support to encounter them. If one is especially lucky, maybe one even finds unexpected mushrooms, or a whole other forest. Similarly, some of the visited archives and file collections were identified along the way, based on personal recommendations from archivists, cross-references, and findings.
during the process. In the appendix, all identified files that have been viewed for this research are listed.

Creating an own archive

The two groups of archives offer a valuable sample, when set together – or when set against each other – as puzzle pieces. Ethnographically speaking, they constitute a “field” of institutions, practices, and voices, with different actors acting, speaking, and making truth-claims: here one finds the voices of politicians, authorities,administrational bureaucrats, activists, volunteers, welfare workers, and forced migrants and camp residents themselves. This combination of acting and speaking, of archiving and representations, manifests in the collected documents, which are as media practices both evidence of the archival processes and the refugee regime, as well as representations of the actors and subjects that comprise the refugee camp. Throughout the visits, my reading of the catalogue descriptions and selections of files (and knowledge about how much time to spend with them) with significantly improved. When the files were ordered, I scanned them for relevant parts. I took “field notes” about every file in my hands, and documented the content and how relevant it was to the central questions. I took photos (if allowed) of the pages I deemed relevant. Thus, a PDF collection of around 4,000 pages grew into being. Of course, one can easily end up with an abundance of material, especially in administrational files and activist media productions. To tackle the selection process, the main guiding principles for determining relevance were two questions:

- Does the file document any relation to media practices in the broadest sense?
- Does the file provide voices or viewpoints of forced migrants in the broadest sense?

These questions served as continual reminders during immersion into the archival records and were meant to keep the data collection in line with the research questions, refocus my attention, and still keep me open enough for serendipitous encounters with information previously unthought of. Below, Figure 6 shows the materiality of the files (exclusively different forms of paper or photos) and the typical set-up of a reading spot in the archive. The files are contained in folders; the order of the sheets inside is in the best case chronologically backwards; sometimes however snippets of unclear relevance appear, or parts are obviously missing, destroyed or physically damaged.
Figure 6: Archive desk with files, state archive Hamburg (top), files in the UN Archives New York City (below). © Philipp Seuferling
Through the visits, I created an archive on media practices in refugee camps in the context of Germany between 1945 and roughly 2000. A collection from two major parts of this landscape, the institutional and the community archive, has been shaped in this process, revealing voices and silences in their very compositionality and juxtaposition. As Susan J. Douglas (2011, p. 9) noted, “We know that all archives are incomplete, have their own biases on the basis of inclusion, omissions, and point of view, and the ones we make are no exception. However, the ones we create can be, and should be, a counter-balance to the ones created by institutions and political and corporate elites.” This notion captures the opportunities and limitations, the aggregating voices and silences, in order to reveal more voices and silences. Finally, the collection of information did not always end with the archival files alone. For additional background, novels, witness reports, documentaries, and contemporary media reports (newspaper articles or radio reports), not stemming from the archives but from other generally available sources, have been consulted and collected in order to contextualize the material and gain further voices.

**Document(ing) traces**

“The history of the archive is a history of loss,” stated archive scholar Antoinette Burton (2001, p. 66). Incorporated into this very process of loss is, however, the process of preservation, of leftovers, of remnants of the past. Remains or relicts are counterparts of loss and destruction, like imprints. This relation of absence and presence is what Jacques Derrida (1976) captured with the concept of “traces”, the place of difference between absence and presence, and thereby an origin of the construction of meaning. This notion of “traces” opens up the question of the last section of this chapter: How can the collected archival records be understood, conceptualized and interpreted? Before returning to Derrida’s “traces”, I first draw on Lisa Gitelman’s (2014) theorization of the “document” to make productive the mediality of the files within the context of the media practices in the refugee camp.

**The document as a media genre and a media practice**

Assessing the different types of files that have been collected is the first step to uncovering the practices that are incorporated within them. In the context of the archival landscape and its entanglement with the refugee regime, the files can be considered observations from the field that materialize in form of the media genre and media practice “document” (Gitelman, 2014). These
files are traces of practices undertaken by the archived subjects and archiving actors. Lisa Gitelman (2014) has historicized the document as an entanglement of genre and media technology: through reproduction and mobilization based on a combination of different media technologies, like paper, printers, copy machines, typewriters and many others, the document becomes affirmed in its intersecting function of “knowing” and “showing”. The document embodies an epistemic practice, intended as accountable evidence for something external, and something simultaneously materially processed and framed as such. Given that users can recognize documents through their know-show function, a document becomes a media genre, a mode of recognition. In documents like identification papers, death and birth certificates, and other administrative documents, but also documents like restaurant menus, the affordances of paper are entangled with a social function. By focusing on the various technologies producing documents (the paper provides historical case studies of job printing, typewriters, Xerox, and the PDF-file), Gitelman showed how “media and genre support each other” (2014, p. 10), so that various technologies and practices have across time (re)produced the genre of the document with its know-show function. This mutual relationship leads to an understanding of how power and control can emerge in media practices of documenting – documents “are integral to the ways people think as well as to the social order that they inhabit” (Gitelman, 2014, p. 5), and thus are integral parts in making and unmaking the refugee camp and its residents. In the case of refugee camps and regimes, and their archives, the relevance of files and documents for social order becomes practically inescapable and existential, e.g. in registration of citizenship, resident permits, and refugee IDs. In the US, authorities speak of “undocumented (im)migrants”, while in Europe the media technology of the paper gives the name for this group: sans papiers in French, papperslösa in Swedish, or Menschen ohne Papiere in German. In border regimes, documents are a vital epistemic practice of simultaneously producing knowledge and reality, and socially establishing (showing) those things.

For this study, I mobilize Gitelman’s notion of the “document” in order to broadly conceptualize all collected archival material. Seeing the files and records as documents unlocks them as media practices in and of themselves: as combinations of materiality and sociality with epistemic practices of knowing and showing how social orders in the refugee camp have been produced through media practices. They are reports, and evidences, knowing, showing and ordering other media practices, i.e. a heuristics of media practices in both the form and content of the archival material. In this sense,
archival material can both embody traceable media practices itself, and report about media practices that have taken place. Archival material both knows and shows traces of historical media practices in refugee camps.

If the conceptualization of the document is applied to the archive, all files, by being archived, become documents: materially mobilized, stored and reproduced in order to know and show; collected by me as a researcher, they attempt to provide me with specific evidences, and have been materially and socially constructed to give such evidences. They are not “true” per se, but are endeavours to construct accountable truths that are reconstructable to a certain degree. These attempts at truth-claims are media practices, which can therefore be dissected. Traditionally, historians distinguish files by their future orientation: is this file an arbitrary leftover, or produced for tradition and preservation (Decker, 2013, p. 166)? Some of the files collected here were produced internally, inside institutions and meant to be seen only by the included actors: these files included correspondences within authorities, notes, internal reports, letters, financial documents and accounting/administrational files, maps, and they are also self-documentations, e.g. among activists or refugee communities (photo collections, videos, or reports). Some of these files are highly ephemeral, only meant for a specific context in one short moment, in general not oriented towards the future. Other files were meant for external use, for distribution, or public communication and outreach, and naturally these are more oriented towards the future: these files included newspapers, zines, flyers, exhibitions, documentations, announcements, official public documents (such as “camp rules” for blackboards), novels, media reports, or external communications intended for publication or public relations. All these files thus fulfil different epistemic functions as documents, materializing in different forms and media practices. The following list broadly summarizes the types of documents identified in the archives: administrational files, correspondences, letters, instructions, reports, memos, press releases, blank forms, photographs, zines, flyers, posters, articles, newspapers, schedules for films or theatre, films and videos, recorded radio broadcasts, scripts for radio programs, invitations, maps, plans, blueprints, accounts and budgets. While it is impossible to account for all genres and media practices in the collected material, three specific examples (Figures 7, 8, 9) can further demonstrate (on different levels) how archival files are documental acts of creating and mediating facticities, how they communicate and demonstrate social realities through their mediality, and thereby become traceable embodiments and prisms of media practices.
Figure 7 shows a typical administrational document, a letter correspondence between UNRRA and the US Forces dated 21 August 1946. It refers to decisions about the licensing of DP newspapers in DP-camps, providing documented evidence of the administrational practice of organizing newspaper communication within a DP camp. Dates and names authenticate this practice of the camp administrator(s) as the actor in charge of this operation. At the same time, through its content, this document allows for a reconstruction of the media practice of newspaper production and consumption in camps, and it also documents which actors were involved in enabling newspapers in camps in 1946.

Figure 8 is a “Routing slip for emergency admission procedure” in a camp for GDR-refugees in West Berlin in the 1950s. This document is evidence of a migration infrastructure that the refugee regime had developed. The slip organizes refugees’ mobility in the asylum-process, by sending them from station to station: doctor, X-ray, accountability, welfare, police, and pre-selection, all documented neatly in the ID-like form, which ultimately renders “undocumented migrants” into “documented refugees”. The routing slip is thus a trace and reveals an administrational media practice of governance in both its materiality and textuality, managing the asylum process through documenting – through knowing and showing – personal information.
Figure 7: UNRRA correspondence with US Forces, 1946 (UN Arch, S-0402-0001-12, “Displaced Persons – Newspapers”)
Figure 8: “Routing slip for emergency admission procedure” in Camp Marienfelde in West Berlin, 1950s (DRK Arch 4750)

Figure 9: Booklet entitled “That twists your head. Situation of underaged refugees in the FRG”, Hamburg asylum circle, no year, ca. 1980s (ASB B, “Box Antirassismus”)
Figure 9 shows the cover of a small booklet, a zine produced by activists in the 1980s about the “situation of underage refugees in the FRG.” This media product is in itself a media practice: an activist media practice of documentation, of inscribing, storing and mediating experienced realities of refugees for circulation. In its archived form, it becomes a document, knowing and showing histories of media practices of various actors connected to the document, such as activists and forced migrants. Additionally, it also reports about media practices when it recounts in its content about how other media practices mattered in the context of refugee camps.

These three samples of files exemplify the analytical steps I applied in order to unlock media practices in different ways from archival material conceptualized as documents: the archival records are documents, which know and show about historical media practices, both by being media practices and reporting about them. Gitelman (2014) argued that mobilization and power make paper into documents. In this sense, all “things” in the archives have been mobilized by the archival researcher at a different point in time to provide evidence of knowing and showing practices, which they once served, and hence, making historical research possible. Ann Stoler (2009) similarly reflected on the “documentality” of archival files in the colonial context. She argued that archival research becomes about the “efforts to track the production and consumption of facticities as the contingent coordinates of particular times and temperaments, places and purposes” (p. 37), which takes place in documents:

If every document comes layered with the received account of earlier events and the cultural semantics of a political moment, the issue of official ‘bias’ opens to a different challenge: to identify the conditions of possibility that shaped what warranted repetition, what competencies were rewarded in archival writing, what stories could not be told and what could not be said. Such queries have invited a turn back to documentation itself, to the ‘teaching’ task that the word’s Latin root, docere, implies, to what and who was being educated in the bureaucratic shuffle of rote formulas, generic plots, and prescriptive asides (Stoler, 2009, p. 37).

As I will extensively demonstrate in the analysis, files and documents as media practices have worked to create and shape realities within the refugee camp and regime at large (the same process Stoler traced for the colonial archival system). For uncovering and reconstructing these practices, a holistic view needs to be applied that involves the file’s materiality as a media technology, the actors behind its production and circulation, as well as the
speech acts and textualities in the content of the documents. The units of analysis can be multi-layered: they move from the type of archive, to the file, and then to the single sheet of paper that constitutes a document. Here, the level of text, sentences and words on a page, or the content and pictorial elements of a photo, are included. These layers form the various locations of media practices and their traces and relicts, both in the content and in the materiality of the records, being media practices themselves or reporting about media practices. These layers are analysed in a combination of immersive reading that is guided by the research questions and theoretical concepts, comparison and complementation, and contextual research from other sources.

Investigating the creators of documents and the text and content they produce, their materiality as well as sociality, positions the documents in relation to the making of the refugee camp and its residents. Some files clearly stem from “within” the refugee regime, from authorities and state actors that represent powerholders and decision-making in the administration of forced migration. Some are more “bottom-up”, that is, made by actors that stand outside these positions of the refugee regime, even try to undermine or fight it, or are more widely independent, e.g. activists. Thus, understanding the documents as media practices – extracting the media practices from the documents – includes an analysis of the actors behind the physical sheet of paper, asking who the intended communication partners of files were, and asking also whether the open-ness, honesty and manipulated-ness (authenticity) of the file can be critically questioned in the original spirit of source criticism. A short internal memo might be more open, direct and unmanipulated than a long-prepared external publication.

Methodically unlocking media practices from archival documents demands a wide notion of practice. After all, the analytical procedure is based entirely on written textual material, namely the archival material – how can practices, which according to practice theory are framed precisely as some kind of opposite of text, be grasped, excavated and studied? However, seeing the archival documents exactly as documents, as media practices in themselves, shifts the analytical and methodical focus from media practices as located around technologies and texts to their manifestation also in specific materialities and genres of text, in both form and content. The document both knows and shows media practices and their elements (such as materiality, motivation, skill, preconditions, consequences, which were outlined in Chapter Three). In this way, from within archival documents as texts, like newspapers, zines, reports, or photos, media practices can be
excavated beyond the material production and circulation of content. The production of files, and the different genres of media texts therein (photographs, administrative documents, newspapers, magazines, leaflets, etc.) unite the concept of media practice, because the files manifest different sociomaterial elements of practices: (1) the means and ends to other social practices, (2) the storage, documentation, and reporting of media practices, and (3) the very implementation and embodiment of a media practice and communicatory circulation of symbols and meaning in the first place. In this way, media practices can be incorporated and implemented both in the very text, as well as in its materiality. Media practices can be identified on these different levels, in different units of analysis, depending on the genre of the material. For this reason, the social processes, and their stabilization through practices, do not only happen “oriented towards media” (Couldry, 2004, p. 115), but can also happen within the very text, making the document into a sociomaterial practice in the combination of its content and materiality.

Traces and ends
Once media practices can be conceptually unlocked from the archival material, a final question after this media-theoretical discussion remains of how a historical narrative can be woven from and about the unlocked media practices. Media historian Jonathan Sterne introduces the next step of the analytical process: “A text, a trace, makes possible the writing of the past (after all, no history can be written where there are no traces), but that past is only an imagined past. The conceit of the historian […] is the conceit Derrida called ‘the metaphysics of presence’, the idea that the [historical] signifier, whether a text, artifact, or some other trace of the past, ultimately refers back to a signified which is fully present in itself” (Sterne, 2011, p. 84). In this debate about the ways in which the collected documents enable the researcher to write histories, the question becomes: What media practices made and unmade the refugee camp, and how can one say so? Sterne refers to Derrida’s notion of the trace in his discussion of what constitutes historical “evidence”. In Derrida’s deconstruction of language and text, the trace is the difference between absence and presence, the origin of sense:
The trace is not only the disappearance of origin, […] it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a non-origin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin. From then on, to wrench the concept of the trace from the classical scheme which would derive it from a presence or from an originary non-trace and which would make of it an empirical mark, one must indeed speak of an originary trace or arche-trace (Derrida, 1976, p. 61).

Traces hence produce signification in the difference of absence and presence: they are not self-evident, but have in fact been constructed through practices of inscription and documentation. Instead of a trace leading the historian to a comforting end, like in a relation of signifier and signified, the trace is itself the practice “about the possibility for meaning to emerge, for sense to be made” (Sterne, 2011, p. 82). This view aligns with the method of unlocking media practices in and of the archival documents: they are traces themselves, practices of inscription, which can be reconstructed and excavated not as origins, but in their attempts of sense-making. The archival documents are traces of media practices, revealing as such how they were made to create meaning through their form and content.

Sterne continues his argument about evidence, that the interpretation of archival files ultimately means writing history based on traces: “If there is no answer to the question of how one interprets historical documents as something other than ‘evidence’, does that not still leave ‘evidence’ as the default interpretation and some variant of positivism as the default epistemology? What does it mean to ‘interpret’ (or to struggle with interpretation) when the referent of historical writing and the historical document is supposed to be something different than fiction?” (Sterne, 2011, p. 81). He continues that transversely combining files, twisting and turning, as well as creating regularities and order in the files, is the process of turning traces into forms of history. This process is not fiction, as Steedman (2001, pp. 142–156) elaborates: the difference between fiction and historiography is namely the question of the end. When the historian puts traces into narrative structures, while being as critical and reflective as possible, the traces lead to ends: points at which the sources do not give answers anymore and the plot falls apart. Fiction authors instead work with “endings” (not “ends”): the plot is set from the beginning, the point of a complete ending can be reached, and has been intended from the beginning. An “ending” is inherently impossible in historiographical writing, and stands counter to any scientific research processes. The final end, that the historian is caught in, is the present. The
present’s perspectives are inescapable, yet the most productive heuristics of creating historical narratives. Returning to Walter Benjamin, this study is driven by today’s events and debates around media and forced migration, a particular historical-political context, which guides and makes visible images of the past, which determines the values and meanings of traces of media practices in refugee camps.

Lastly, it can be questioned out of which positionality these images of the past come into being. Blouin and Rosenberg (2011, p. 100) argue that when historians became aware of the fact that not everyone’s perspective is possible to find in archives to the same degree, “[i]maginative approaches were needed to document the stories of those whose place in history did not warrant archival attention.” Including these voices means sampling archives and collections in ways that reveal voices and silences in their juxtaposition, as is the approach taken here. Institutional archives both provide and hide certain voices, which in the community archives appear the other way around. In the reconstruction of media practices based on the archival traces, perspectives from above and from below, from centres and margins, should be applied as much as possible: which media practices were involved in the context of a specific file? What was the perspective of the forced migrants? What was the perspective of the refugee regime? How did the actors in and around the refugee camp relate to one another, via this specific document? Interpreting the archival files – that is, seeing them as documents and traces, forms and content – means to extract these contexts as far as possible by putting the perspectives of all included actors against each other. Moving between margins and centres of power, of practices, of actors, and in the interpretation of the archival documents can unfold media practices and make visible the meanings that actors have contributed to media and communication, rigorously imagining and uncovering the voice of the subaltern in the construction of knowledge that the document provides as well as silences. What media and other social practices does the document hint at or report about (or fails to hint at or report)? What media practice is the document itself? Which practices were necessary and involved? How were media technologies (made) part of these practices? Who are the actors connected to the media practice? Who remains silent or is silenced?

These questions guide the identification of traces of media practices that are rendered visible by the archival documents and lead to specific ends, but also lead to routes and genealogical connections of how media practices have mattered in refugee camps. This chapter has outlined a methodological and methodical approach to making the archive a point of departure
for studying media practices: unlocking media practices from documents enables observations of traces of historical media practices that can be a basis for historical analysis and narratives. The next three analytical chapters will take several journeys through refugee camps in Germany since 1945 and depart from the archival material. Uncovering the spatial, temporal, and political meanings of media practices in refugee camps will situate the traces found in the archives and reveal how they connect to today. While media practice theory is also a conceptual endeavour of retracting media as the assumed centre of the social world (Couldry, 2012), following the traces of media practices in the archives will function as a node to hold together the subsequent historical narratives.
CHAPTER FIVE
Space, Governance, Infrastructure

How to build a heterotopia?21

In October 2020, The Guardian reported that former military barracks were being converted into refugee housing in the UK:

Images of the ‘unsanitary and unsuitable’ living quarters inside the disused army training camps show crowded dormitories where it appears challenging to socially distance. The British Red Cross said that the Ministry of Defence sites, surrounded by barbed wire and high fences, were not fit to house vulnerable and traumatised asylum seekers who had fled conflict. (Townsend, 2020)

The use of old barracks caused outrage among activists and human rights groups, who questioned how the Home Office could revert to such rundown, detention and prison-like buildings from the defence forces, which after all are buildings erected for a completely different purpose. “We are not army, we are civic people. We are an engineer, a doctor, a nurse, a teacher,” one of the affected asylum-seekers told the BBC (BBC, 2020b). Protests started to form. As a reaction, the responsible County Council of Pembrokeshire, Wales, published an FAQ-statement:

The accommodation is safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped in line with existing asylum accommodation standards contractual requirements. […] The accommodation is fully catered. Options will be provided which cater for special dietary, cultural or religious requirements and additional meals will be provided as required. All the basic needs of residents will be met on site and entertainment and pastoral support will be arranged by Clear Springs Ready Homes. Additional support items such as toiletries are being provided, along with access to laundry facilities. Televisions are

---

Activists and protesters were not equally convinced that the premises were up to humane standards. Reputable organizations kept begging the Home Office to find better accommodation, especially criticizing privacy, hygiene, and safety. The counter-argument was that the barracks were but a “temporary solution” and that managing and administrating the cases, while people are centrally on site, was “both less expensive and more effective.” In return, activist Ali McGinley, director of AVID (Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees), argued that the barracks are “replicating the worst injustices of this system in the barracks accommodation” (Grierson, 2020).

The heterotopian condition of the refugees being simultaneously inside and outside of society is built into the very architecture and set-up of the space. While the conflict in Wales was about asylum-seekers and their human rights, in its essences, it was a conflict about space – that is, about the character and condition of physical and material space, which inseparably creates and represents a social space and its dwellers within arrangements of architecture, material equipment, and modes of using this sociomaterial space for administration and governance of refugee subjects. As this chapter will argue, these negotiations are in fact media practices – heterotopian media practices – which enable and negotiate specific manipulations of space and thus create and control refugee camp space and its specific functions. The refugee camp army barracks in Wales are an existing utopia. Foucault (2013, p. 9) argued that “all societies have utopias, which have a precisely determinable, real place that can be found on the map, and also a precisely determinable time that can be set and measured according to the everyday calendar. Probably every human group cuts out utopian places from the space it occupies, in which it really lives and works, and uchronic [sic!, analogous to “utopian”] moments from the time in which it develops its activities.” Pembrokeshire fulfils these criteria, and thus becomes a heterotopia. The refugee camp spatializes and materializes conflicts, systems, procedures, and imagined solutions, as well as tensions between segregation and humanitarian relief, temporariness and permanence, mobility and stability, and regimes of border control and administration. Implemented in specific

---

architectural forms, design, equipment, and amenities of the facilities, carried by underlying logics and goals of why this accommodation was necessary in the first place: effective administration and control in a centralized, concentrated space, tackling a crisis of the border, mobility and belonging, as well as providing shelter and care. Goals and spatial logics, which are conveniently congruent with those of army casernes, which are often used in Germany as refugee camps to this day (Devlin, 2021; Keshavarz, 2016, pp. 229–294). In this sense, building, equipping and administering the camp as a disciplinary institution becomes media practices, and bottlenecks of enabling and steering communication and conditions: heterotopian spatial conditions, “cut out” (Foucault, 2013, p. 9) from surrounding spaces and put into new relations that differentiate camp-space from non-camp-space and its inhabitant, the refugee, from the non-refugee. Thus, the heterotopian space of the refugee camp – its arrangement, construction, equipment, and inverted condition – becomes a medium in itself: by socially and materially enabling, negotiating and representing how to deal with forced migrants, their human rights and their political subjectivity, withheld at the margins of society, while physically in the midst of it.

Interestingly, some of the Pembrokeshire barracks are shaped like a half-barrel, with corrugated tin roofs, two windows and a door on the front side. In fact, this is the old model of Nissen-huts, used since World War One for soldier accommodations as well as for refugee camps, especially after World War Two in Germany (see image of Nissen-huts in Figure 17 on page 148). The architectural entanglement of military and refugee lodging is anything but new: mobile barracks, huts and tents have been used at least since World War One to systematically and centrally house forced migrants in makeshift, mobile and temporary camps, just as soldiers have been housed in military camps.

But not only architectural forms and shapes showcase such strong historical continuities. As will be explored in this first empirical chapter, mediations and materializations of the refugee camp space, and conflicts around it, go far back in time. Building, equipping and administering refugee camps are sociomaterial media practices of imagined and aspired governance and control, which have historically shaped the refugee experience and the refugee regime at large. In tracing the predecessors of the Pembrokeshire barracks (both literally of their material forms, as well as of the sociomaterial practices of creating and maintaining a refugee camp space through media practices of equipment, administration and governance), this chapter moves into Germany’s post-war years and its refugee camp structures, in order to
trace historical media practices of space-making governance and control that have made the refugee camp as a heterotopian space.

Any refugee camp is built, constructed, assembled, in various ways. Like any social space, the camp has to be *made* out of materials, which in turn mediates how the space “works” and is experienced socially. The refugee camp is not just a given environment, but a process, a media infrastructure for circulation and distribution, enabled by media practices of planning, negotiating and executing the arrangement and control of material objects, as well as refugee bodies, in time and space. As will be shown, refugee camps in Germany in the late 1940s and early 1950s were often established in abandoned concentration camps, or created in *ad hoc* barrack villages, abandoned army billeting, gym halls, hotels, and even castles. What made these spaces into refugee camps? How were they made into the heterotopian social institution that characterizes the camp, mediating and communicating a certain level of temporariness, impermanence and mobility to its residents, while fixating them in a highly controlled, humanitarian system of care and shelter?

What will be discussed in this chapter is how practices of socially and materially building, equipping and administering refugee camps as spaces are always already fundamentally media practices, and more specifically, heterotopian media practices that create an othered spatial condition. The analysed material will reveal imaginaries of media and communication around steering and optimizing communication and the distribution and circulation of subjects, objects and information in the refugee camp by way of media practices. To theorize space-making media practices, the chapter takes theoretical cues from the notion of *media infrastructures* (Starosielski & Parks, 2015), interrogating how materialities of media as “the stuff you can kick” (Parks, 2015, p. 355) undergird and construct socialities and relations, and form preconditions and enabling environments (Peters, 2015) for constructing the refugee camp as a sociomaterial, heterotopian space. Media practices, because they are techniques and technologies of mediating and thereby taming and controlling space, have historically helped to construct refugee camp spaces, and materialized social practices of the refugee regime therein. In exploring these dimensions, the chapter will focus on moments of mediation and technology use by both camp residents and administration staff, which unfold across three dimensions:

1) The spatial and architectural construction of the camp, i.e. building types like the Nissen-hut, and maps. These media practices of planning and building the camp represent both temporariness and mobility in their spatial
inception through architecture, as well as create an always already-controlled, administered, and public space: in other words, a communicative space, which is tamed so that there are no unplanned events, atomized according to functions, and optimized for its purposes.

2) Media practices of equipping and furnishing the camp space with media technologies, such as radios, cinemas or newspapers are predecessors of Pembrokeshire’s promise to provide Wi-Fi and television. While highly appreciated by camp residents, these media practices steer and control connectivity, communication, and information in the camp, and became projection sites of seeking to steer behaviour and possible futures.

3) Media practices of refugee administration and governance conducted by camp employees, i.e. media infrastructures of forms, registers, and files that steer the arrangement, mobility, and distribution of refugee bodies and material goods, such as beds and food, in the camp space. Again, the aim is to tame and predict processes, and these media practices envision media to take over and optimize translation and communication processes of the refugee regime and humanitarian care in the camp, in filiating bodies with categories and respective care and relief.

These three dimensions are what I describe as heterotopian media practices. Building, equipping and administering the camp are sociomaterial articulations of governance and control in camp spaces. These articulations enable a manipulation of the camp space as a heterotopia and create a place that is specifically segregated, yet connected and controlled spatiality with subjectivized inhabitants. Media practices matter in the construction of the camp space as a tool of the asylum regime and create experiential environments for refugee subjectivities. These media practices matter so much that media infrastructures, as will become clear, have historically been made into targets of cybernetic, functionalist, and utilitarian imaginaries, imagined to provide apt solutions for maintaining control and order over a societal space as a whole, its borders, and who belongs in it. Imagining control, order, and justice (as humanitarian and cybernetic ideals), media infrastructures create paradoxical, heterotopian spatial conditions of humanitarian inclusion and political exclusion, physical mobility and fixated-ness, temporariness and permanence. Arguably, such imaginaries fundamentally undergird refugee governance up to this day.

This chapter delves into the context of refugee camps in the immediate post-war years of Germany, roughly between 1945 and 1955. Through this historical period, the chapter zooms in on a critical moment in the history of the modern refugee regime, and the evolution of practices, discourses, and
imaginaries in handling, “solving”, and managing large-scale population displacement. An exploration of this historical context aligns and historicizes debates about media infrastructures governing migrants and refugees from today’s perspective. In the spirit of diachronic excavation, historical media practices, technologies, and materialities will reveal trajectories of how media not only enable, materialize, and facilitate practices of governance and control, but also vice versa: how governance and control (as imaginaries of the refugee regime in the first place) enable and shape media practices in the camp. It will be shown that desires and fantasies of steering, predicting, controlling and taming communication, information, and mobilities of bodies and objects, projected on media in refugee governance, do not come from a historical void, but are central elements of heterotopian media practices. These media practices and imaginaries have hardly vanished in the present day. The Pembrokeshire barracks in Wales are relatively old-fashioned – in other contemporary camps, digital media technologies have long seeped through refugee camp design and governance. Compulsory iris scans for payment in Za’atari camp in Jordan, camps being administrated through blockchain, the mapping of camps through GIS (Geographical Information Systems) by refugees (Tomaszewski et al., 2019), by drone, or by camera surveillance, and datafied, automated, biometrics-based asylum systems are only some examples of this trend towards highly media-technologized migration infrastructures (Dijstelbloem, 2020; Macias, 2020; Metcalfe & Dencik, 2019). Petra Molnar (2021) has recently argued that the infamous camp Moria in Greece is a “sandbox for surveillance technologies”, in other words, a testing ground for solutionist technologies. This chapter aims to trace the predecessors, preconditions, practices, deployments, and consequences of such space-making and space-controlling media practices, to identify moments of technophilia in refugee camps several decades before digital and AI-technologies. First, a more theoretical reflection will discuss further how media as infrastructures of governance and control construct the heterotopian refugee camp space, and make the encamped resident a subject of that space. Then, three empirical sections will delve into Germany’s post-war camps and uncover how (1) architecture and maps, (2) media-technological equipment, and (3) administrative practices were media practices that characterized the heterotopian camp space. An array of media, ranging from building styles and design, to cinema projectors, radios, newspaper, paper files and forms, will be articulated as the technophilic ideologies of governing and controlling contemporary forced migrants, and these historical practices and imaginaries appear well into the present day.
“Homo barackensis”: media infrastructures and forced migrants

In 1952, the national daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) was worried. The authors of an article warned of the emergence of a new pathological type of sociopath which they named Homo barackensis.

The 20th century has taught humankind a dreadful truth: progress, humanity, and self-esteem exist only in the context of an unbroken world. When law and order disintegrate, the camp arises – that most gruesome and cruel expression of human capabilities – and with it rises a breeding ground of nihilism. (FAZ, 1952, quoted in Ackermann, 1995)

Seven years after the end of the war, refugee camps had become an omnipresent feature in Germany’s urban and rural landscapes, which had also made them a continuous topic of public and mass media discussions. As this example shows, the overall image of and opinion about the camps was anything but positive (see Ackermann, 1995; Schießl, 2016). Refugee camps were regarded as hubs of social problems, containing social misfits, “dirty antisocials”, and general misery. Camps stood in stark contrast to a progressivist ideology of rebuilding welfare, housing infrastructure, and society at large in West Germany. The quote even describes the camp as a symptom of a “broken” modernity, which produces outcasts, i.e. Homo barackensis. This biologist term is highly reflective of the moral panic existing around refugee camps in post-war West Germany. It pathologizes the camp and its inhabitants as a disease, ill-fitted to the desired West-integration of Germany into an individualistic, nuclear family, house-owning, conservative model of ideal living (cf. Ackermann, 1995).

During the immediate post-war years, conditions of camp life were tough. Witnesses like Ingrid Berlik, who was a child at the time and a German refugee hailing from Eastern Europe, were interviewed in a documentary (Gerdes, 2011) and recalled conditions like 18 people sharing a barrack. The space was extremely limited: beds were stored away during the day so there was at least a small space to move around. During the daytime, the tables were often used by women to make and produce all kinds of items and goods (scarves, furniture, kitchen equipment, clothes). Children would have to do their homework on the beds. Blankets, bedsheets or thin paper were used to separate spaces and create more privacy. The reporter in a West German radio show from 1951 asked “Have you ever been to a refugee camp? I don’t know, if that seems remarkable to you, but in some refugee camps they only have curtains with a small string as shutter. You know, that depresses the
people in the camp the most: life under the gaze of strangers, the non-stop existence in the masses during the day and at night” (Greuer, 2016; translated by author). While heating and electricity existed in maps and administrative documents, in reality these things were often deficient. The extremely cold and snowy winter of 1946 and 1947 is particularly remembered as traumatic: frequently, the wooden barracks lacked insulation (previous residents might have burnt it for heating), making the buildings even more prone to drafts. Literally everything was burned for heating, while even food like bread had to be defrosted over the fire. For light, usually few light bulbs of 15 Watts were in place. Often electricity was sanctioned after certain hours in the evening. When a bulb broke, or when anything was missing, you had to go “organize” help (organisieren gehen), a term used for using connections and contacts within the camp to get hold of goods. Stolen bulbs were exchanged for food, extra rations, or material for some handiwork.23

These are just some of the remembered lived experiences and contexts that forced migrants found themselves in, and serve as approximations to what it meant to be (or be made) homo barackensis, and a subject of the moral panic and derogatory reports from the other side about “nihilist anti-socials”. But what this absurd term captures is a view about how humans become one with their spatial environment. These humans are seen as the inevitable results of the camp, which was originally an instrument to solve the disease of displacement. The homo barackensis is literally “of his/her space”, “of the barrack kind”, defined and determined not only by where s/he lives, but produced by the material form of habitation, the barrack. The concept captures an interplay of sociality and materiality, namely the assumption that physical environments affect and form social beings. Recall that in reaction to their housing, the protesting asylum-seeker in Pembrokeshire said, “We are not army, we are civic people” (BBC, 2020b), meaning “we don’t fit into this space, this space is wrong for us.” Still, he had been assigned to it, inserted into its logics and forms, and thus made into a governed and controlled asylum-seeker subject, a camp resident, allegedly catered to with humanitarian shelter and care by the refugee regime and its techniques and technologies. Within this deeply entangled view on camp spaces and their residents – place equalling body – the heterotopian conditions of the camp become clear: camps are “othered”, peripheral spaces, cut out by the way they are designed, governed, imagined, and perceived, while also being centrally

23 This summary is based on various sources (but primarily Jakobsen, 2011; documentary, Gerdes, 2011). These are memory accounts of witnesses, and thus have to be regarded carefully as subjective accounts, often focused on extreme, traumatic memories.
FIVE: SPACE, GOVERNANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE

constitutive of refugee subjects, negotiating their status in society as simultaneously sheltered and included but also excluded from full recognition and participation. But refugee subjects still deal with and relate to the camp space, with a potential to appropriate and co-shape the making of *homo barackensis*.

Arguably, these are deeply mediated processes. Heterotopian media practices, media technologies, and media materialities are deployed and imagined to spatially produce the refugee camp and camp residents. Media practices and technologies are enablers and disablers of the camp space, of social practices that shape the heterotopian condition through making possible certain forms of communication in mediated and mediating environments. As a wider materialist turn in media studies, and studies in anthropology, and science and technology studies have pointed out, the design, architecture, setup, equipment, and uses of media as technologies and devices have political consequences and rationalities. As media infrastructures, these practices and materialities have “technopolitics” (Larkin, 2013, p. 328), which enables certain political projects, but they are also “concrete semiotic and aesthetic vehicles” (ibid., p. 329) when the form of infrastructure stores and represents certain desires, imaginaries, and fantasies. Hence, media form specific *media infrastructures* (Starosielski & Parks, 2015), enabling media environments and structuring being in the world through communication. Media technologies produce “situated socio-technical systems” (ibid., p. 4), which distribute and arrange content, meaning, and material goods; shape communication; and exert governance and control in their very existence as material objects and devices. Media can attain infrastructural meanings both as “matter that enable the movement of other matter” (Larkin, 2013, p. 329) and, in their “poetics”, symbolically mediating a “sense of desire and possibility” (ibid.). In understanding the refugee camp historically as an assemblage of media practices as “operative” (Peters, 2015; Ernst, 2016; Andrejevic & Volcic, 2021), “logistical” (Case, 2013), and “enabling” (Forsler, 2020; Peters, 2015) materials and practices, media practices make and unmake the heterotopian space and its residents. As will be shown, the space of the refugee camp is in fact highly reliant upon media infrastructures that shape spatial conditions and relations, and thus enable its operations of distribution, circulation, and organization. Media practices have historically become imagined and projected sites of refugee governance and control, as well as enablers of the distribution and alignment of bodies and goods in time and space – by *way of* media and communication. Zooming in on a critical period of the refugee regime “in the making”, it will become clear how media practices have both been part of building and
equipping the camp as a space, and in constructing the refugee subject as a camp resident through these same media infrastructures. The “poetics”, imaginaries and fantasies enacted in these media infrastructures (as will be demonstrated) emerge in an environment of cybernetics, functionalism and utilitarianism, and of ideas around media and communication, which see media’s and communication’s potential for steering and controlling processes, taming possible futures, and optimizing the relations of atomized members as administrable units of the refugee camp system.

The metaphor of *homo barackensis* raises the question of how media practices intersect with space-making, governance, and control within the production of refugee subjects in the camp. The camp is a multi-layered, media-saturated space, and architectural arrangements, building types and set-ups, furniture and fences and borders, documents, paper notes, posters, loudspeakers, radios, television sets, passports and IDs, Wi-Fi networks, algorithmic and digital systems are media environments that express leverage and enable the refugee regime and its logics and workings, and also enable the figure and subject of the refugee and her media practices in the camp. All of these media have to be dealt with, coped with, related to, maintained, used, brought or undermined, evaded or circumvented by the social actors in and around the camp. In a way, these media become boundary objects between refugees, authorities, local camp administrative or facility staff, activists, and other engaged citizens.

Of course, one can argue that any social space is media-saturated in this way, in that any space always depends on the historical and situated cultural context. However, the refugee camp unequivocally exposes a process of spatial and media-infrastructural construction at extreme margins of societies, making the camp at the same time centres that deserve attention. Camps as heterotopias turn rules and logics upside-down, invert imaginaries of mobility and national belonging, and in those very acts, construct these norms in the first place. That media are complicit in projects of spatializing and constructing the forced migrant in camp heterotopias by way of media infrastructures therefore reflects the fault lines of how society at large constructs its boundaries of belonging, and its imaginaries of time and space. Peters argued that media history must unravel the “mischievous ratios of time, space, and power, and the blind spots and bottlenecks of infrastructures that earlier operators had figured out how to leverage” (Peters, 2015, p. 21). Hence, how refugee camps are built, equipped, and administered with media technologies advances a critical project of denaturalizing how media practices unfold in contexts of migration governance and control up to this day.
Building the camp: mobile homes and spatial-temporal exception

Figure 10: UNRRA camp Wiesbaden, Otto Bayer (right) and Frits Pijnacker Hordijk (left) (UN Arch, S-1058-0002-0001, “Germany Mission - Photographs #121–240”).

This photograph (Figure 10) was taken around the year 1946. A note on the back of the photo, which was archived in the UN Archives in New York City reads:
Director Bayer and his assistant, Frits Pijnacker Hordijk, discuss allotment of space in the camp. Fritz, formerly a DP, was routed from his native Holland by the Nazis and imprisoned for working in the underground. Rather than return home, which he is now free to do, Fritz has chosen to stay on and help his fellow refugees.24

The camp they are planning and running was a Displaced Persons (DP) camp in the city of Wiesbaden, Hesse, housing around 7,500 forced migrants at this point, from Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Italy and Yugoslavia (usually people who had been forcefully displaced by the Nazis). The photo shows two administrative workers, dressed officially in the army-like uniforms of UNRRA25, standing in front of a map and holding further paper documents in their hands – it shows practices of spatial planning, of arranging the camp space, and practices of governance. “The camp consists of the usual German Army barracks surrounding upon court-yards and situated immediately on the outskirts of the city. The UNRRA staff under its Director Otto Bayer, a Czech, is ably assisted by the displaced persons themselves.”26 These descriptions stem from UNRRA themselves and are typewritten on the back of the archived photographs. The photos and descriptions were produced for PR purposes and were ready for press releases and journalistic coverage of the camps, and intended to ensure public support among the population and report successes back to the central superiors in the US and UK, and drive donations for UNRRA’s operations in Germany. The photo has a clear communicatory intention of advertising, showing that UNRRA has things under control: camps are well-managed and governed, humanitarian relief is provided professionally, everything is in order, the crisis of displacement of post-war Europe is taken care of and being solved. In doing so, this photo leads to the premises of the refugee camp: the photo is a source, a visual and textual medium that documents both the camp’s composition and design out of wooden barracks, and how this spatial arrangement is composed of media practices of planning, mapping, managing, and ordering the camp. Running a good camp starts with building, planning and governing its physical space.

Wiesbaden was one of thousands of DP-camps, and of even more camps for forced migrants in Germany after 1945. Authorities were confronted with extreme housing needs: large-scale destruction of buildings meant that

24 Written on the back of the photograph. UN Arch, S-1058-0002-0001, “Germany Mission – Photographs #121–240”.
25 United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
26 UN Arch, S-1058-0002-0001, “Germany Mission – Photographs #121–240”.

132
around 21 million people needed accommodation, and refugees as well as evacuees and homeless people who had been “bombed out” of the cities (Ausgebombte). Intervening in these population movements, individuals and authorities quickly turned to existing structures, that could make for cheap mass accommodation: camps. Specifically, military barracks and concentration camps. The Wiesbaden DP-camp was established, as quoted above, in a former German army barrack. Likewise, liberated concentration camps, and their vast number of satellite camps, or billetings for German Wehrmacht soldiers, SS or SA, were often simply reused immediately to house forced migrants. This procedure could result in the absurd situation that liberated Jews from concentration camps simply ended up staying in the exact same camp, just now reorganized as a DP-camp. The place had a new social order, yet very few, if any, changes were made to the original physical environments and infrastructures of the camps.

Pre-existing barrack camps were not the only architectural form in which refugee camps were established after 1945. As a law made possible, literally any intact building could be seized and repurposed as a refugee camp: theatres, barns, gym halls, castles, or office buildings, such as the Brahmskontor building in central Hamburg (Figure 11), an iconic office structure used by the Deutscher Ring insurances until UNRRA opened a DP-camp inside it in 1945.

These examples comprise fundamentally different styles of architectures, or forms, within which the same institution, the refugee camp, was to be established. As Doßmann et al. (2007, p. 220) point out, there is no default building typology for the camp (unlike for example with schools or prisons). The “infrastructural prerequisites” for camps are “minimal... an area, whose delimitation to its exterior through fences or walls is clearly marked and controlled through a guarded entrance and exit” (ibid., p. 221). These conditions are sufficient to create a social space of exception, in Agamben’s terms, of exclusion from political spaces, and of systematic order, governance, and control over subjects. But camps were not totally shut-off, dystopian non-places. They were very real, existing places in the midst of urban and rural environments. Once you entered the camp area (usually through a designated, controlled entrance), you made your way through the material design of the heterotopian world: the long barracks, numbered and assigned to its dwellers, sub-divided into small booths, maybe by wood, maybe by a blanket, the shared facilities for showers and toilets, laundry, large kitchens serving hundreds or thousands, schools, kindergartens, churches, chapels, theatres, cinemas, assembly halls and courts, factories for manual labour, offices,
hearing rooms, and archives filled with paper files and card indexes. Entire
cities and worlds unfold in mass-produced wooden barracks, abandoned
office buildings, or castles. In a paradoxical way, camps could turn these
spaces on their heads, and fit whole other social universes inside them, almost
reminiscent of Foucault’s description of heterotopias, where children “in
their parent’s bed […] discover the ocean, as they can swim between the
covers, and the bed is also the sky, or they can bounce on the springs; it’s the
forest as they can hide there” (Foucault, 2013, p. 10; translated by author).

Figure 11: Deutscher Ring building, Hamburg. Today’s Brahmskontor at Johannes-
Brahms-Platz, opposite the Laeisz Concert Hall. Photo: UN Arch, S-1058-0003-0001,
“Germany Mission - Photographs #241–362”.

Approaching the refugee camp from this contradictive variety of architectural
types opens up a sociomaterial perspective on the media practices that
construct camp space. This perspective encompasses genealogies of physical
environments and how they mediate and communicate the camp as a social
space, how they are constructed by media practices and actors, and who works
and acts upon the space, develops it further, changes, maintains and negotiates
it. How do barracks and huts socially construct a refugee camp, and, in turn,
how is an office building made into a refugee camp? In order to access this interrelation of socialities and materialities of the camp space, the two instants from DP-camps in Wiesbaden and Hamburg point in two directions, namely considering both mapping and planning and architectural styles as media practices. Mapping and architecture both mediate a mobile, flexible, temporary yet governed, fixated, controlled space, and create respective subjectivities inside it. The built, mapped, and planned space is always already public: it conditions communication, tames unplanned events and processes, and envisions the camp as a functional system. Considering the actual buildings as well as the planning processes that made them as media, as communicating artefacts within an “architecture parlante”, an architecture which speaks to its functions and intentions, unfolds the powers of representation and the impacts of housing, and maps as media infrastructures in the process of making a camp a camp: namely, in making a heterotopian space built for accommodating and holding mobile individuals temporarily, while also separating and excepting them from other social spaces.

Studies of architecture as media (see e.g. Ericson & Riegert, 2010; Colomina, 1996; also Mattern, 2017; Martin, 2003) have highlighted mechanisms of representation of buildings, where architecture materializes and communicates social processes and relations, ideologies, myths and cultures. In the tradition of Walter Benjamin’s *Arcades Project* and urban history at large, architecture can ultimately be seen as a medium, a form of mediation, in itself, storing and disseminating knowledge and meaning. Seeing architectural history as media history carves out how “high culture”, avantgarde, or flagship styles of architecture, ranging from medieval cathedrals to 20th century modernist office structures, skyscrapers, and the Google complex, materialize and articulate specific socio-spatial ideologies, such as distinctions or blurriness of the public and the private, the interior and the exterior, the sacred and the profane, and hierarchies and modes of organization (as shown by Ericson & Riegert, 2010 and Mattern, 2017). Hence, when modernist architecture mediates ideologies of functionalism and transparency, the camp is probably the 20th century’s darkest shadow-extreme of architectural modernism. Intended to make invisible, exclude, and separate, it seemingly stands against progressivist see-through architecture, while at the same time it makes its inhabitants hyper-visible and transparent, governed, and controlled inside an “architecture parlante” of temporariness and unsettled impermanence, yet thereby included in humanitarian relief and care. Camps as heterotopias produce modernist placelessness and transparency, aspire to make invisible and solve the glitches of the territorialist
nation-state, while (and in doing so) putting their inhabitants in a hypervisible and controlled spotlight. In this sense, camp architecture not only organizes and enables modes of refugee governance as an underlying infrastructure, but is itself a medium and expression of how the refugee regime operates and imagines solutions to its undertakings. In making possible certain forms of communication, camp architecture (and the moments of its planning and mapping) become heterotopian media practices. An analogy can be gleaned from Markus Krajewski, who has studied corridors and mansions as architectures of the servant, arguing that “[t]he corridor not only organizes the ‘routes of communication’ within and beyond the service wing. More important, it becomes a mirror of sorts, reflecting the division of power” (Krajewski, 2018, p. 68), in the way it horizontally and vertically arranges the relations and communication between servants and masters. This reading of the refugee camp will be exemplified in the next two sections in the case of refugee camp maps, as well as building types, as media practices.

**Mapping and planning the camp**

There is no architecture without planning, mapping, blueprinting and designing. The two administrators in Figure 10, Director Bayer and Frits Pijnacker Hordijk discussing allotment with the map of the Wiesbaden DP-camp, exemplify the indivisibility of material media forms with social practice. In the words of Bernhard Siegert (2011) in his essay “The map is the territory”, these camp maps are not just representations of a pre-existing camp space: “maps contain less information about a territory than about the way it is observed and described” (Siegert, 2011, p. 13). Maps do not only tell about their authors, but they are future-oriented operations themselves, media practices which “produce a subject, which correlates to them. [...] The map is the territory inasmuch as, for instance, map-making is a cultural technique that, in the service of the state, produced the territory as a political reality” (ibid., pp. 13–15, Italics in original). The Wiesbaden map in Figure 11 is only one of plenty in the archival material. Maps, blueprints, and site plans were a central media technology of administrating, controlling and planning refugee camps, or at least were attempts at these practices. In their function, they simultaneously constructed and documented a social and spatial reality, in storing and disseminating information on how refugee camp space, and the bodies of forced migrants therein, were to be arranged.
Figure 12 shows a site plan of the transit camp Finkenwerder in the harbour of Hamburg. This camp was located on the Rüsch peninsula on the south side of the River Elbe, surrounded by docks and harbour industry. Before 1945, the camp was associated with Neuengamme concentration camp as a satellite camp, around 30 kilometres to the southeast of Hamburg. It was probably used as a barrack camp for German soldiers (the exact history is unclear). In 1945, the remaining barracks were repurposed into a refugee camp for arriving German migrants from the East and later from the GDR, and after 1956, it was predominantly used for Hungarian refugees fleeing the violent anti-Communist revolt. It usually housed several hundred refugees at the same time. The map shows the camp plan in 1962, when an “open-door house” (Haus der offenen Tür), probably a community centre, was to be built on site, marked in red on the document. The open-door house was a new member in the building arrangement making up Finkenwerder camp. The camp had three natural boundaries, water canals. On the short, land-faced side, there was the entrance (marked on the left) with access to the ferry
station below. Inside this perfectly confined space, the numbered barracks structured the core of the camp itself: some were for living and sleeping, and some served communal functions, such as kitchen, laundry, or administration, in between a sports field or a yard (on the right).

This map is not only a representation of the composition of the specific camp territory, but its systematic, functional division is quite typical for refugee camps, and similar to the small-scale urban planning of neighbourhoods or cities. Maps as imperfect translations of the real terrain emphasize certain aspects of the space at the cost of others: in this case, emphasis was placed on the clear functionalist character of each building and space, ordered according to its purposes of structuring camp life, and the clear administered character through numbering and naming. The site plan in itself also uncovers a moment of spatial planning of the camp. Associated files include the application for the construction of the “open-door house”, suggested by the by YMCA’s “Heimatlosen-Lagerdienst”\(^{27}\) as an extended space for their youth and social work in the camp, including communal spaces and a library. The city authority agreed to and partially funded the construction, mentioning that the building was “highly needed also after the events of 13 August 1961”\(^{28}\), the date that the Berlin wall was built. The city authorities expected further refugees from East Germany to be accommodated and taken care of in Finkenwerder. Hence, mapping and planning as space-oriented media practices lead to the imaginaries of the involved social actors, and the cultural and historical contexts they acted within. City authorities, NGOs, local camp administrators, and sometimes camp residents were for example heard at camp assemblies, or could make suggestions, apply, or petition for architectural changes or additions.\(^{29}\) These actors all negotiated and decided (to different degrees) upon what the camp should look like in the first place. The real execution of actually building what had been planned was then mostly realized by the labour of camp residents themselves (cf. e.g. reports by Jakobsen, 2011). Via the medium of maps and the media practice of planning and mapping, these relations were negotiated and material realities of what the camp would look like were cemented.

Figure 13 shows parts of a site plan of the Valka camp in Nuremberg. Established in 1946, the camp housed non-German forced migrants,  

\(^{27}\) The “Heimatlosen-Lagerdienst” (Camp Service for the Heimat-less) was an educational community and youth programme run by the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association, CVJM in German).  
\(^{28}\) StA HH, 321-3 1_239, “Baubehörde I, Neubau des Heimes der offenen Tür im Flüchtlingslager Finkenwerder, Heimatlosenlagerdiesnt CVJM”  
\(^{29}\) StA HH, 442-7_219, „Finkenwerder Ungarnflüchtlinge”.  

138
heimatlose Ausländer*innen, and was for many years the first reception site for foreign asylum-seekers in West Germany. The map neatly delineates the structure of arranged housing barracks and buildings with other functions in between. Numbered, sectioned, and classified, the space is put in order so that the bodies inside it can roam according to the functions to which the camp is presumed to cater: eat, sleep, work, and be “taken care of” and administrated efficiently within the laws and rules of the refugee regime. A well-planned and arranged camp tames and prevents any other unforeseen and unplanned possible future events. On the right of the map appears a specifically separated area, marked as the Ausländersiedlung, the “foreigner settlement”. Whether the blue square around it represented a physical fence or separation is unclear. But the act of marking it on the map reveals at least an imagined administered and constructed segregation of this part of the camp territory and its inhabitants. In fact, the Valka camp incorporated a so-called “quarantine station. The inmates of this camp section are separated from the other inmates by a high fence, in order to guarantee a strict political examination.”

Here, camp architecture and neat planning both provided a media infrastructure for the administrational functions and processes of the refugee regime, such as determining eligibility through communicating separation, exemption, and heterotopian subjectivity to its residents.

---

30 BArch, B115/5753, 8-Uhr Blatt Nürnberg Nr 16, 21.1.1953: "Valkalager wird zum Bundes-Auffanglager"
These subjects, the camp inhabitants, were envisioned to roam in the camp space and occupy the heterotopia according to planned and controlled, modernist architectural visions. The division of camp space according to functions defined the boundaries of this (im)mobility, and defined the desire of efficiently and without glitches accommodate, take care of, and administer
the formerly displaced people through re-spatializing them within the order of the camp space. In post-war camps, the subdivision of camp space according to functionalities usually also included rooms for e.g. nurseries, health centres, post centres, cinemas/theatre barracks, churches/chapels, classrooms, shops, kiosks, and workshops. In camps that were not built in the barrack-hut-structures, but for example were located in an abandoned castle, this functionality-based spatial distinction was also achieved by separating spaces with linen or paper, or repurposing rooms. Post-war camps often became miniature city spaces, some of which later on were permanently incorporated into cities as new neighbourhoods. It is of course at first glance not surprising that camps, just like any other space (like a home, or a city), are sub-divided and planned according to different functions, purposes and imaginaries. It is in the detailed planning of every square meter of the camp that its specific heterotopian condition is unleashed: planning and mapping makes hyper-visible and surveills the camp’s inhabitants in a highly administered, systematized, controlled, crammed, privacy-free space. These media practices are specifically envisioned as “possibility-fixers” to use Peters’ (2015) term, and condition routes for communication while already communicating a specific relation of actors (cf. Krajewski, 2018). A relation based on control tames the chances of chaos and the functionalist execution of specific administrative and humanitarian processes. This imaginary started in media practices of mapping and planning and extended to controlling and subjectivizing camp residents through technological equipment and administrative documents, such as IDs and other forms.

Spatial planning of refugee camps in the 1940s started by making space itself into a scarce good that needed to be administered and justly distributed to those eligible. Because intact housing was highly limited in a destroyed Germany after 1945, especially in the cities, emergency accommodation became a strictly surveilled service to be distributed. Following this trace leads closer to the imaginaries and motives of camp spatial planning, as well as the consequences of mapping practices for refugee subjects. Authorities quickly started defining rules and categories, such as the number of square meters allotted per person, which led to a calculation of the accommodation costs per person (paid by authorities); categories were developed for individual camp sections, such as “families”, “single men”, “single women”; equipment like furniture and amenities per person were counted and assigned (e.g. cutlery, lamp, chair, table, oven). For example, the administrative file in Figure 14 defines the costs of a Hamburg barrack settlement in 1950 comprising cabins of 8 square meters, depending on the number of
people inside. Included in the fee is “light and cooking electricity”. This intertwinement of planning, mapping, and monitoring space through media practices of documentation also took place in DP-camps, where part of UNRRA’s administration system was a “Billeting Office”. Responsible for the set-up and distribution of camp space, designated “block leaders” or “housemasters” from each building had to report to the Billeting Office in order to support the maintenance and administration of the buildings by its inhabitants. Duties of the housemasters also included “surveying and drawing of camp, building etc. plans”, i.e. mapping, stocktaking, checking, and accommodating newcomers. Inventory forms supported the administrative workers and helped them keep track of everything from furniture items to people, and cleaning and maintenance.  

Figure 14: Costs per person per 8 sqm. From a letter by Hamburg’s city authority for social benefits (Sozialbehörde) to the camps, 14 October 1950 (StA HH, 131-5_151/24: “Wohnraumangelegenheiten; Flüchtlingslager, Nissenhütten; Bewirtschaftung von Lagern, Baracken und Wohnheimen; Staatskanzlei-Verwaltungsbeschwerden”)

31 UN Arch, S-0436-0016-01, “Illustrated Histories, Daily Logs, etc. of Various Camps”, 1945–1947
Figure 15: DP-camp bedroom (UN Arch, S-1058-0003-0001, Germany Mission – Photographs #241–362).

Figure 15 shows how a room in what seems to be an average residential building can be made part of a DP-camp, immediately recognizable as such, through a reorganization of a small space through tightly packed beds allocated systematically to each inhabitant (there seem to be signs on the foot ends of the beds) in a moment of controlling governance and creating socio-spatial order. Every object in relation to every subject in the camp was administered in time and space. Maps sought to tame the seemingly chaotic camp terrain into a controlled, foreseeable space, and tame epistemic uncertainties about where and how refugees could live and roam, by inserting the space of the camp into an ordered set of communicable items, and thus subjectivizing the inhabitants as residents of the emerging heterotopia. Imagining the camp as an arrangement, allocation, and connection of bodies, services, and items, following a humanitarianist dogma of fair, just, and efficient distribution, these historical camp maps encapsulate heterotopian media practices operating at the onset of the refugee regime: they develop, negotiate and enable ideas of an effectively monitored and functioning camp, where all objects and subjects relate to each other smoothly. The detailed planning of the crammed space and its distribution is a key characteristic of spatializing the camp to this day and shapes its media practices. Perhaps the
anxiety about distribution of space lies at the very heart of refugee and border regimes themselves: both are shaped by an uneasy struggle around allegedly scarce space and territory whose borders have been crossed. The refugee camp as a medium and as an infrastructure emerges, imagined to surveil and monitor the occupation and distribution of the space that has been declared scarce, be it about the right to a bed in a refugee camp, or the right to enter a national territory.

Exceptional homes: architectural styles of a heterotopia

Mapping practices mediate and materialize a functionalist and utilitarian taming of the camp space, and the relations and interactions of its residents and interior. These practices make evident how (on the level of architectural and spatial planning media practices) conditions and probabilities of communication and social relations are shaped and take form. Understanding spatial design as a media infrastructure based in media practices of mapping leads to uncovering how architectural styles themselves incorporate “mechanisms of representation” (Colomina, 1996) and represent ideologies, which have, again in the words of Peters (2015), “leverage” as material mediators, ways of affecting and shaping social experiences, communication, and pre-conditions of media practices. Shannon Mattern (2017, pp. 5–25) in her study of urban architecture as media noted the tradition of “architecture parlante”, or “speaking architecture”, as architecture that literally explains its own function and identity through its form.

The maps and allotment protocols show that post-war camps were cramped, tight spaces by design. Historical reports about experiences of camp-based refugees give witness to how camp architecture inverted and blurred distinctions of public and private, and enabled and disabled sociality and communication in the space (e.g. Jakobsen, 2011). The built environment of the camp eliminated privacy and created forced sociality. Sharing rooms (sometimes even beds), common bathrooms, public and common food distribution, community spaces for leisure activities: all space essentially became public space. Even if inhabitants could improvise self-made privacy, e.g. by separating rooms with blankets or thin paper, ultimately all space had been made administered, assigned with a function from a superior actor, and was therefore public. Space is on the map: planned, documented and decided upon by authorities. Space’s mediation becomes a moment of control, where maps become documents, both giving evidence of and creating a spatial reality, oriented towards controlling and taming the future. At the same time, the map clearly delineates the borders of this public space as ending with the
borders of the camp. The camp is a separated space, different, and to a certain degree even hidden from the outside. Hence, maps document the heterotopia, putting on the map its hypervisibility and public-ness, as well as its segregated invisibility.

But the creation of administered, documented crammed-ness is not only mediated within maps. The very architectural styles of barracks and huts (or today tents and containers) speak to, represent, and shape a heterotopian condition of the space characterized by mobility and temporariness, or by impermanence and make-shift-ness, which can be seen as a central ideological underpinning for the spatial design of camp institutions. Nothing in the refugee camp is ever fixed, neither in time nor in space. It has been built to be torn down. You move in to move out. The camp is located in a “semi-permanent zone of expected, and by some measures planned, obsolescence” (Hailey, 2009, p. 325), materializing the spatio-temporal state of exception (to use the words of Agamben, 2005), while actually existing in a real place: a heterotopia. While there is no default architectural type of the camp, and literally any building or even area of natural landscape can be transformed into a camp, the barrack and the hut have been demonstrated to be central forms and building types of the 20th century’s camp history. In the context of post-war Germany many different building types were used as camps, but however this use was usually very short-term. The more permanent structures (meaning months or years) and places built as refugee camps from scratch relied on specifically mobile-temporary building types that were never designed for permanence. The following paragraphs take a short tour through the genealogy of these architectural forms in German refugee camps, whereby it will become clear how architectural path dependencies affect camp spaces and their inherent mediating powers of spatio-temporal exception.

The RAD-norm-barrack was the most common barrack type in post-war German refugee camps, but not only there. The acronym RAD stands for Reichsarbeitsdienst (“Reich Labor Service”), the compulsory labor service of the Third Reich. The barrack type was used as a mobile accommodation for construction workers who had to move regularly, e.g. during the construction of the Autobahn. The RAD-barrack were standardized and could be mass produced, quickly assembled, and swiftly moved. The blueprints and prototypes for the barrack were developed by the Forschungs- und Konstruktionsgemeinschaft der Reichsleitung des Reichsarbeitsdienstes und der Deutschen Holzbau-Konvention (FOKORAD; Research and Construction Association of the Reich leadership of the Reich Labor Service and the
German Woodwork-Convention), a research authority founded in 1933 in the city of Niesky in Saxony. It is not a coincidence that in the same town the company “Christoph & Unmack” was located and became a main test producer for the new barrack types. This company was a key player in the mass production of wooden housing, including the “Doecker norm barrack”, which was the archetype of barracks developed in the 19th century for field hospitals and military purposes. Christoph & Unmack was at the forefront of developing dismantlable wooden architecture. In 1929, their lead architect Konrad Wachsmann built Albert Einstein’s wooden summerhouse in Caputh, Potsdam. Apart from such fashionable modernist products, the different types of RAD-barracks coming out of Niesky also became the infra-structural and architectural basis for the Third Reich’s concentration, labor, and prisoner camp system. In addition to Autobahn construction, they were applied in Wehrmacht and SS caserns, Hitlerjugend and Bund Deutscher Mädel camps, and ultimately in prisoner and concentration camps. Christoph & Unmack delivered its barracks (produced by imprisoned forced laborers) directly to Auschwitz. The RAD-barrack was assembled out of wooden modules that could be cheaply and quickly made in factories, and these modules could be attached to each other, allowing for a variation of the barrack’s size. They were put on top of a concrete foundation and assembled through screws and plug-ins. Figure 16 shows a construction plan for a RAD-barrack. Type IV was the main type for accommodation; other types were developed for specific functions, such as administration, laundry, toilets, etc. At the end of the war, the barracks did not disappear, but were simply reused for emergency accommodation. “Barrack villages” began to characterize refugee living in post-war Germany: by design these were mobile, temporary accommodations, yet they often became protracted and permanent homes for millions. Some were used until well into the 1960s, for example for housing the Gastarbeiter*innen (“guest workers”), that is, the hired labour force from Mediterranean countries. Within this architectural style, the idea of ad hoc constructability, swiftness, and efficiency are inherent; arguably, the idea of ad hoc governmentality is represented as well, realized through mobility and temporariness imposed on the administered subject by design of the barrack. Built and planned by someone else, its inhabitant is always already subjected to the barrack’s socio-spatial regime of being in a mobile, impermanent, unsettled limbo solution, even if the barracks in reality became protracted homes for many years. While dismantlable wooden houses were built for recreation for people like Albert Einstein when this airy, modular living became a modernist life-style trend, no one had ever built an RAD-
barrack as a “home” for themselves; instead, such a camp architecture became a dark shadow of modernist aspirations of the ultimate, transparent, placeless, functionalist, governed and controlled mobile-temporary space.

Figure 16: Plan of the “Baracke Typ RL IV/3”, 1936 © Museum Niesky Forum Konrad-Wachsmann-Haus; Licence: CC BY-NC-SA, online: https://sachsen.museum-digital.de/singleimage.php?imagenr=15118

A similar form of lingering architectural forms that bridged military and refugee living was the Nissen-hut (or also Quonset hut), and this form was just as characteristic of post-war German migrant accommodation as the RAD-barrack. As Swiss journalist Ré Soupault wrote in 1950 about camp Friedland, “Before the train stops at the station, the traveller catches sight of countless rows of barracks, which with their half-round corrugated tin roofs, and poorness close to neglect, disturb the peace of the landscape” (Soupault, 1950, in Metzner, 2016). The Nissen-hut’s characteristic shape was the half-round tin roof (see Figure 17), giving it the nickname “half-barrel” (halbe Tonnen).
While the hut derives its name from its inventor, Canadian–British engineer Peter Norman Nissen, who designed this hut in 1916 for soldiers during World War One, interestingly many contemporaries suspected the name to originate in the German word *Nissen*, which is the word for eggshells of head lice, feeding into the hostile stereotypes that refugees were chronically infested with lice in these crammed huts (cf. Carstens, 2020, pp. 11–12). The Nissen-hut found widespread use in World War Two. Just like the RAD-barrack, it could be cheaply mass-produced and quickly moved. It was designed to be erected by six people within four hours. One hut offered 40 square meters of space, originally for soldiers. Through the British Allied Forces, this type of barrack arrived in occupied Germany, delivered by the authorities to house forced migrants. Up to four families were accommodated in one hut. In Hamburg, up to 42,000 people lived in hastily erected Nissen-huts in the late 1940s. In Friedland, the Nissen-huts were replaced with wooden barracks in the late 1940s in a mission to consolidate the camp.
structure and include for example proper streets, given that it was realized that the transit camp was going to exist for some time to come (and in fact has never ceased to exist up to the present day). Again, conditions in the huts were dire: often the interior was divided in two by paper or wood, so that more families could live there, sometimes up to 10 people sharing one half. Certain improvements, such as making front walls out of stone, insulation of the corrugated sheet roof, proper floors, and heating were only added later on when these materials were available (for a short history of the Nissen-hut in Northern Germany, see Carstens, 2020). Again, not only the lack of privacy and crammed-ness were inherent in the Nissen-hut spaces, but the very simplistic design of makeshift-ness embodied a heterotopian impermanence, mediated to its inhabitants.

Briefly stepping away from the post-war period, and tracing mobile forms of refugee accommodation in later decades and up to today, it becomes clear that makeshift temporary building styles are still being used in refugee governance. In the 1980s, the shipping container was first used as housing. While the number of incoming forced migrants to Germany was much lower than in the post-war decade, and financial resources and general availability of housing definitely much higher, refugee accommodation in the 1980s and 1990s did not particularly differ much from previous periods, in that it continued to rely on emergency makeshift accommodations. The refugee camp barrack-village of the 1940s and 1950s had turned into an asylum-centre container-village. International trade and shipping of goods had standardized the size of container with the ISO standard defined by 1970. These measures started to be used for the production of residential containers as well, which could be assembled and attached as modules into “container houses” and “container villages”. Replacing the RAD-barracks and Nissen-huts, containers became (and are to this day, at least in part) go-to solutions for authorities in providing accommodation for refugees quickly (as well as for construction workers or other temporary living conditions).

Yet, in its features of movability, temporariness, impermanence (and again, with built-in governmentality and administrability), the container perpetuates logics of the barrack. A letter dated 5 August 1980 by the company “Mense-Home GmbH, Mobile Bungalows” to the Federal Ministry of the Interior, articulates this imaginary:

As we hear daily in the news, accommodation for asylum-seekers is highly limited. Maybe our mobile homes are an opportunity to solve this problem. It would be possible to use our mobile homes to give the asylum-seekers
housing and potentially establish a settlement that could also be moved in a couple of years, because our mobile homes, as the name states, are mobile.32

Mobility and temporariness were sold as an asset, as an administrational advantage of efficiency for authorities. “Container villages” or “pavilion villages” (wooden modular buildings, more barrack-type) appeared in German cities as the number of asylum-seekers rose in the 1980s and 1990s. Another layer of architectural camp history perpetuated imaginaries of cheap, mobile, temporary functionality that “emergency” housing needs to comply with.

This quite direct genealogy of how refugee camps and asylum-seeker shelters were and are built, reaching all the way back into concentration camps and military camps, undergirds infrastructural imaginaries within architecture constructing the camp and the inhabiting refugee subject until today. RAD-barracks, Nissen-huts, containers, and tents (such as the “UNHCR family tent” used today) are designed with built-in ideologies and imaginaries of movability, temporariness, and cost-efficiency through mass production, becoming dark shadows of modernist architectural styles. Through these characteristics, camp architectures extend into being media infrastructures and media practices, or “mechanisms of representation” (Colomina, 1996), an “architecture parlante” of heterotopian governmentality, administration, and subjectivation of the resident into an othered condition, withheld from permanence and settlement, fixated into immobility while being kept mobile. Architecture symbolizes, and thus becomes a medium, but it also organizes, and thus becomes an infrastructure. It is a shaper and condition for communication and interaction. Refugee camp architecture leverages a function-oriented “handling” of forced migrants, seeking to steer the inhabitants according to these necessary processes. The inhabitant of the barrack is always planned and managed in and through the very design and form of the space. Media practices of mapping and building architectural environments construct heterotopian spaces of spatial-temporal exception, but also of inclusion into the mechanisms of the refugee regime and humanitarian care. In a paradoxical fashion, mobile-temporary housing detains and mobilizes the subject inside at the same time, lifting them out of permanence, stability and belonging in society, into a fixed limbo

32 BArch B106/90316, "Verteilung der Asylbewerber allgemein, Bd. 4 und 5; Durchführung der Vorprüfung in den zentralen Anlaufstellen der Länder". Author’s translation.
state. Barracks, huts and containers are placeholders for allegedly “real” homes: arrival and living in one’s own home are replaced with a hyper-controlled, governmental, administered practice of exception, mediated by architecture, spatial design, and mapping and planning.

Taming space through media infrastructure: cybernetic imaginaries

At this point in my thesis, I have drawn on a vocabulary to describe the meanings and imaginaries of media practices, and the “poetics” of the camp media infrastructures, that hails from a discursive environment of the mid-20th century, loosely around notions of cybernetics, functionalism, and utilitarianism. The ways architecture, planning, and mapping appear as media practices and media infrastructures in post-war refugee camps pertain to imaginaries of ordering people and things and their communication, which can be recognized in contemporaneous discourses, rephrasing mediated communication as taming and predicting possible interactions in the future, avoiding nuisance, creating feedback loops, and optimizing these transmissions of atomized, networked individuals. In particular, the theoretical terrain of cybernetics (most famously propounded by Norbert Wiener, the MIT Media Lab, and the Macy Conferences) laid the groundwork for a historic shift in understanding and developing communication and technology that undergirds the present digital media landscape. While this is not the place for an extended discussion of cybernetics and its entanglements with media and communication development, or even potential entanglements with refugee governance (see e.g. Chaar López, 2019), I want to draw attention to and use the broader conceptualizations of cybernetics to further analyse the meanings and consequences of media infrastructures and the surrounding media practices in post-war camps.

Cybernetics shifts communication away from the realm of essence, representation and referentiality to a matter of process, prediction, and adjustment of the future in a noise-free feedback loop in order to reduce complexity. Mediation hence becomes a matter of control, of probability and optimal selection (Halpern, 2014). As seen thus far, and as will be shown throughout this chapter, refugee camps establish spaces that are saturated by media infrastructures that seek to leverage and fix possibilities (Peters, 2015) of communication and interaction in the camp. In a humanitarian ideal of providing care through eligibility, order, and justice, the space of the refugee camp mediates a cybernetic imaginary of functionalist and utilitarian management and administration, producing as a functioning system the best
possible results for everyone. As Orit Halpern (2014) traced cybernetic sociotechnical imaginaries, cybernetics is “a science of control and prediction of future action” (Halpern, 2014, p. 41), driven by an “aspiration for the perfect and unadulterated transmission of information as control of the future within a self-referential and contained space [that] impacted everything from post-war architectural movements to genomics to politics” (ibid., p. 47). It is thus not surprising to recognize these conceptualizations in media infrastructures of refugee camps, as described here. By monitoring the arrangement of spaces, their functions, movement, and potential communication within the infrastructure, the refugee camp becomes a media infrastructure of taming: of cybernetic limiting the chances of chaos, and surveilling the flows and feedback loops of information, of utilitarian distribution of care and shelter aiming for the best possible outcome for everyone, and of functionalist operations as a system that views the camp as enclosed and composed of functioning components. As a wider theory of social communication, cybernetics highlights how the camp is envisioned as a social system aimed at reducing complexity, avoiding disturbance, and functioning through feedback loops of information among various actors. Of course, the camp is experienced differently by its involved actors, and fundamental disturbances occurred, not at least revolts, resistance and activism against the camp (as will be demonstrated in Chapter Seven). Ultimately, the camp however is seen to function in the entire system of society at large: as a paradoxical heterotopian outpost, for fixated yet mobile, temporary yet partly permanent people who represent a crisis of the nation and the border, and who need to be administered. Achieving these goals are fundamentally embodied in media infrastructures, starting at the level of architecture and maps, and as will be shown also in media equipment, control of communication, and administration through forms, IDs and registers.

This link of functionalist, utilitarian thinking and refugee governance was most directly articulated in Romanian–American psychologist and social scientist Jacob Levy Moreno’s book “Who Shall Survive” (Moreno, 1934/1978). In this psychosocial study, Moreno outlined his theory of “sociometry”, a schematic method of studying social networks and therapeutically improving human relations. “Sociograms” were suggested by him as graphical representations of atomized individuals and their relations and values attributed to each other.33 In the preface to the third edition of 1978, Moreno

33 This model of network analysis underlies early developments of computing, and the logic of algorithms as ascribing values among atomized data points. Therefore, this model can be considered a conceptual-historical root of algorithmic and digital media technologies.
reported that the origin of his theorizations was the refugee camp Mitterndorf, near Vienna, Austria, between 1915 and 1917. Moreno had worked as a doctor in this camp for Italian refugees during World War One. In observing the situation of encampment, he identified problems among the camp population which could be solved by better organization. As he wrote in a letter to the Department of the Interior of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1916, “the positive and negative feeling streams within every house and between the houses, within the factory and between the different religious, national and political groups of the camp can be uncovered by a sociometric analysis of the relations between the residents. A reorganization by help of the sociometrical method is hereby recommended” (Moreno, 1934/1978, no page). The refugee camp became tamed by breaking it down into social atoms, and their relationships, objects and subjects to be administered – ideas that would come to be recognized in cybernetics and the “black boxes” of atomized networks (Halpern, 2014). Moreno even added plans and maps for how the camp should be reorganized to “socially work better”. For Moreno, the refugee camp turned out to be a perfect and manageable test and experimental space for his theoretical deliberations. For camp administrations and actors in the emerging post-World War Two refugee regime, designing, planning and spatializing the camp through this mindset proved to be a practical solution that offered an imaginary of striving towards effectively taming and managing forced migration, by way of media infrastructures and the control and leveraging power of communication. Heterotopian media practices, such as mapping and spatial planning, and as will be further demonstrated, equipping and administrating the camp, enabled and sustained such imaginaries of manipulating media and communication and thus ensuring a smooth, technology-driven, efficient taming of the space and its residents – a taming that others residents into a heterotopian condition of being made “administrable”, and therefore mobile, temporary, and always public. By way of such media practices, the refugee camp becomes a heterotopia that is othered from uncontrolled, free, serendipitous, potentially chaotic realms around it.

**Equipping the camp: media-technological repertoires**

Reading architecture as a medium of the heterotopia, as both representative and constitutive of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, has provided a first approach to the media infrastructures and practices that make up the space of the refugee camp: here, camp design becomes a media infrastructure of a
mobile-temporary, heterotopian spatial condition. But planned and administered spaces that were built and materialized out of barracks, huts, containers, or some random house were also pre-conditions of how communication and other media practices would take place inside. Shannon Mattern, in her historical explorations of urban media infrastructures (2017), has argued that the ways spatial environments are built condition communication. and that speaking, hearing, writing, disseminating and storing content and meaning are shaped by physically made surroundings. Refugee camps are very much like small cities in this sense: they are designed environments that impose certain possibilities and impossibilities, opportunities and inconveniences on mediated and communicated sociality. Apart from structuring spaces of communication (e.g. as public and private, or according to functions and enabling certain activities), refugee camps are also media environments in the sense that they have always been furnished and equipped with a variety of media technologies and devices, and places where residents create their own media environments and repertoires for communication. This section assesses these media-technological repertoires in post-war camps, investigates which media were available and how they furnished and shaped the camp space, and served as another level of pre-conditions for media practices. As will be seen, the equipment of the camp with media became a moment of control in itself, in negotiating the heterotopian condition through camp furnishment.
The archival sources offer different ways of tracing and reconstructing the media technological equipment of camps. Firstly, contemporary maps show that there were designated spaces made for media consumption or provided for media technologies and their use. Post-war camps like Wiesbaden, Friedland and Valka (see maps in previous section) typically had community rooms for spending free time and socializing, e.g. for reading newspapers (to be bought from camp kiosks) or listening to the radio; camp cinemas existed in designated barracks, also called “theatre barracks”, and these hosted all kinds of cultural entertainment; sometimes camp libraries are documented. The 1940s and 1950s were in the middle of what historian Axel Schildt called a “century of the mass media” (Schildt, 2001). Cinema, radio broadcasting, and print (newspapers and magazines) were the key institutions and technologies that made up the mid-century’s Western mass media system, just at the brink of the arrival of television in the mid-1950s. Therefore, it is anything but surprising to find all of these technologies present in the refugee camps of that period. Here, equipment lists provide a second valuable documentation of how administrations and refugees themselves fitted out the camps with media technologies (or did not). Usually all objects provided by the camp authorities were documented, all the way down to the level of
individual spoons and forks, tables in the right size, the number of chairs and lamps. This inventory could include radio devices, newspapers and magazines, or cinema services, and also writing paper and a post office. As an internal administrational memo shows in Figure 18, sent from the UNRRA headquarters to all local teams in December 1945, media were often seen as “welfare amenity supplies” in the realm of entertainment, leisure or psychological well-being.

Permanent stores such as radios, table tennis sets and draughts will be kept in the camp recreation room. Writing paper as it is [sic!] a short supply will not be issued in packets but will be held by the Welfare Officer and issued to DPs on request.34

Just as beds and tables, media were often regarded as functional objects that had to be procured and provided in order to fulfil specific utilitarian purposes for the refugees using them, while at the same time being regarded as welfare amenities and thus highly controlled. Paper was of course essential for enabling interpersonal communication and keeping in touch with family and loved ones, who were often dispersed across the country or the continent. Therefore, post-war camps would often have their own post offices that could process mail traffic, both for inhabitants and, of course, administration. In the immediate period after the war, paper was in general a scarce good. Thus, as the document above shows, it was rationed and distributed by authorities to the inhabitants. But camp residents could of course also bring, purchase, or make their own media, be it to the like or dislike of administrations, and subjected to their control. As the case of paper demonstrates, media infrastructural equipment and furnishing with media technologies and devices became sites of desired control and regulation of media practices in refugee camps, which made the media-technological equipment of refugee camps a stage for utilitarian imaginaries of controlling and managing people and their communications in the camp. In the following subsections, I will explore these practices, negotiations, conflicts and desires of furnishing the camp with media using the three primary mass media of the time: radio, cinema, and print/paper.

Radios

In the post-war decade, radio kept its central position as leading mass media institution and technology. As Schildt (2001, p. 201) noted, radio devices often survived the war to a higher degree than other household goods, because they were so important that they were even taken into bunkers. Moreover, the radio production industry got a quick lift as early as 1946, at a time when paper was still scarce, and thus radio dominated the press as a key medium for information and entertainment. So it did in the camps as well. Radios were regarded as satisfying the need for news and connection to the outside world, and also offering entertainment and relaxation. In 1953, government official Willi Eichler, a social democrat in West Berlin, working with the local refugee camps for incoming GDR-refugees, wrote a letter to the northwest German public service broadcaster NWDR, in which he asked for a donation of radio devices for the camp residents:

Besides their almost unavoidable deficiencies in care, the refugee camps in Berlin first and foremost demonstrate a lack of newspapers and radios…Being cut off from the outside world hits the inmates of the camps especially hard. They are used to being informed about the events in Germany very extensively […] Providing radios […] would be an act of utmost philanthropy.35

Eichler in this letter describes communicative needs of camp inhabitants that emerge during an experience of being cut off, resulting in an historical predecessor experience of “information precarity”, a term that Wall et al. will later use in their study of refugee camps in contemporary Jordan to describe “the condition of instability that refugees experience in accessing news and personal information, potentially leaving them vulnerable to misinformation, stereotyping, and rumours that can affect their economic and social capital” (2017, p. 240). In the case of post-war Berlin, at least the problem of accessibility could be solved. Files attached to Eichler’s letter document that 65 radio devices were distributed among the Berlin camps, facilitated by the broadcaster NWDR. One device was even handed over to the mayor of Berlin in a symbolic public act, broadcast and televised live.36 This project was part of larger ongoing operations by NWDR, collecting donations for East German refugees, through e.g. charity concerts, or the possibility for people to participate in “refugee godparenthood”. In this case, media technologies

35 Letter from Willi Eichler (SPD Berlin) to Adolf Grimme (director of NWDR), 18 February 1953. StA HH. 621-1/144. NDR. 11_712, translated by the author.
36 Ibid.
had also become a symbolic site of charity, and media infrastructures of
camps became a symbolic gesture of refugee support and a political will that
is hard to imagine in the current time, when even Wi-Fi has to be provided
by activists or camp inhabitants themselves (Kubitschko & Schütz, 2016).

Radios as relatively mobile devices, especially transistor radios, were and are
central media technologies and ideal infrastructures for forced migrants,
because these radios could be easily domesticated into the surroundings and
conditions of being on the move or living in a camp. In Chapter Three, the
example of Mr. and Mrs. Brod who lived in the Friedland camp demonstrated
the importance of the radio for them. Listening to the radio became a media
practice of diversion and escapism, connecting and grounding them in the
current environment, in opposition to letters from Russia, which seem to tear
them out. Radios were ideal infrastructures for these purposes. They were small
and mobile, were often traded among camp inhabitants, could be taken along,
if one had to move between rooms or camps. And finally, transistor and short-
wave radios made it possible to receive broadcasts across national borders.

In 1950, the Bavarian public service broadcaster BR carried out a
“listeners research” project about their specific programs for the expellees
from Germany’s ceded areas. While this survey did not distinguish camp-
based refugees from others, it showed that out of 100 refugee households,
48 had a radio at home, and 17% would also listen at the homes of family
and friends,37 as communal listening was common at that time. West
German radio, newly established in the form of six regional public service
stations in 1950, quickly started catering to German-speaking refugees and
expellees as a significant sub-group of their listenership. The above-
mentioned charity program was included in this line of operation, and
other programs specifically aimed at refugees appeared in their broad-
casting schedule. These programs would typically include cultural pro-
grams in dialect, folkloristic music, or practical information specifically for
expellees (see Just, 2018, on a program history of radio for refugees and
expellees in West Germany). Radio institutions quickly started claiming the
symbolic power to facilitate “integration” and societal communication
between locals and newcomers to West Germany. I will return to radio
broadcasts and their content in Chapter Six in a discussion of the relevance
of cultural memory and remembering through broadcasting programs.

Combining these perspectives on radios as important devices in camps,
their uses by refugees to fight “information precarity” (Wall et al., 2017), as

well as their imagined role by broadcasters, one can assume that the “radio years”, as Axel Schildt (2001) described Germany’s 1940s and 1950s, was an appellation that also applied in refugee camps. Indeed, radio as a technological media infrastructure can be understood as a central, omnipresent component of the camp space. In particular, the administrational perspectives documented in institutional archives foreground how radio technology was seen, in utilitarian and effect-assuming manner, as a useful infrastructure for managing camp organization and forced migration processes by way of the ether and its sound. The initiatives by public service broadcasters mentioned above as well as also refugee authorities saw radio as an apt infrastructure that could facilitate a smooth flow of information, and radio was imagined as a tool that could influence behaviour. Documents from the British military government in 1945 reported recommended “radio-propaganda” to steer the movement of refugees across occupied Germany, making sure they move to places where accommodation capacities were sufficient. They admitted however in the files that they were not convinced of the effectiveness of this initiative.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{38}StAHH, 131-1 II_1233, "Betreuung von Heimatvertriebenen, Flüchtlingen und Evakuierten, 1945–1956"
Figure 19: Radio station in DP-camp Berchtesgaden (UN Arch, S-1058-0003-0001, Germany Mission – Photographs #241–362).

Inside DP-camps, sources also documented the existence of internal radio stations. Figure 19 shows “Richard Harjess, head of the camp communication section, and formerly an engineer [...] who lives in the camp with his wife and five-year old son, is shown checking the broadcast apparatus in the center’s minute radio studio. He formerly lived in Riga, Latvia, until sent to Koppeldorf, Thuringia, as a slave worker in August, 1944.” Unfortunately, no further records are preserved to document what was broadcast from this radio studio and whether the camp inhabitants produced shows themselves. However, judging from the general rules, manners, and procedures of DP-camps at the time, most likely the camp leadership controlled what could be broadcast (we will see the same situation in the case of camp-produced newspapers in the next section). While the Berchtesgaden camp had its own radio studio, another DP-camp, in Wentorf, even installed a full-blown “camp broadcasting system” throughout the entire camp. In their annual chronicles the administration proudly reported:

39 UN Arch, S-1058-0003-0001, “Germany Mission – Photographs #241–362”
The 2nd of July saw the inauguration of a camp broadcasting system which by means of 200 loudspeakers, carefully placed to cover the whole camp, allowed the benefits of outside as well as internal news and entertainment programs. As this department grew older so it gradually depended less for entertainment on the retransmission of external broadcasting elements and so improved its own home-made entertainment value that it was able to satisfy all sections of the community.”

According to this report, camp-produced radio broadcasts existed, and the program was a mixture of repeated external shows and in-house productions. In a camp in Berlin, a photo (Figure 20) shows how “[a]n educational lecture [is broadcast] over the camps [sic!] public address system.” These broadcasting systems exemplified a very specific media infrastructure, developed and adapted into the socio-spatial condition of the camp. Covering the entire camp, the loudspeakers materialized the collapse of the private-public boundary, almost forcing media consumption upon the residents. Both news and entertainment were broadcast, most probably curated and chosen by the

41 UN Arch, S-0436-0006-04, “Area Team 1027 – Berlin – Reports – Publications – Photographs – Forms”
camp leadership, at least the programs that were not live. The broadcasting system separated and demarcated the camp heterotopia from its surrounding and held it together at the same time, creating a designated community through the very media technology. And at the same time, radios connected the heterotopia to its surroundings, in getting information from beyond its walls. Ultimately, acoustic media were once again seen as a utilitarian tool for affecting behaviour and attitudes in the camp, and enacting and mediating a form of management upon the camp residents, by way of media technological equipment that is assumed to have direct effects on its receivers.

**Cinemas**

Similar to radios, camp cinemas also supplemented refugee camps’ mass media repertoires and became sites of media infrastructural negotiation and control, while being popular places of entertainment for residents. Usually, camps had a “theatre barrack” at their disposal, a specific communal space for cultural events and screenings of films. Apart from having dances, theatrical performances, exhibitions, religious services, and so on, these barracks regularly hosted mobile cinema services. Travelling cinemas (Wanderkinos) offered rental of projectors and films, and were hired by the camp administration, which then organized screenings for a small entrance fee. Travelling cinemas screened films not only in camps, but were a common media service in smaller villages and towns in post-war Germany. Haidee Wasson (2013) connected the emergence of portable cinema devices to the US–American military, arguing that wartime needs catalysed the development of small, mobile projectors, which then became part of the media-technological arsenal in the field. It is thus not surprising to find this technology in occupied Germany, and in American-run UNRRA camps; neither is it surprising which imaginaries administrations had around film screenings, which were thought to be useful, utilitarian technologies of affecting camp residents’ behaviour and mood, mixing education and entertainment.

Records reveal that such screenings were highly popular and frequent, happening sometimes on a daily basis. In 1946, the YMCA noted that “425,468 people have attended 1,221 cinema shows, theatre performances, concerts and sports competitions, which have been organized by the teams.”42 To make screenings possible, the theatre barracks needed a fire-safe room for the projector: 8mm cine film projectors easily caught fire because the film was

42 UN Arch, S-0405-0019-04, “Z-181-Story Material Used”
inflammable, which of course posed a danger to wooden barracks, and theatre barracks would therefore usually need a small stone room for the projector. For Nuremberg’s Valka camp, a well-preserved collection of administrative records demonstrates the process of enabling cinema services.\textsuperscript{43} Valka had a theatre barrack with 450 seats, for which the leadership hired different cinema services. From 1949 to 1950, the US army ran the “German Youth Activities” (GYA) program in their occupied zone, which offered free screenings in the Valka camp also. The YMCA also organized screenings, and as mentioned, travelling cinemas run by private individuals were often hired. Internal correspondence of camp authorities shows how these offers were navigated, mainly through the selection of the films.

For some time, we have tried to bring order into the schedule of our camp cinema. We want to offer a selection of films that does not oppose our efforts to moral enhancement. Difficulties are big, as we hear that the film distributors tend to combine respectable and artistically valuable films with several inferior ones, so that these also have to be screened – a principle that in my opinion infringes upon good morals.\textsuperscript{44}

Once again, the cinema services were considered a functional tool in the imagined ecology, or cybernetic system, of the camp. From the perspective of camp administration, films could boost morale and be used for democratic and “cultural value” education, as well as soothe and entertain the inhabitants in order to prevent camp fever. To achieve these ends, administrators needed to keep the upper hand in designing the schedule. When two camp residents in the Valka camp applied to install their own stationary projector, the reply was: “As much as I support the private initiative by the camp inmates, on the borderline of cultural service and business this is unwanted.”\textsuperscript{45} The camp leader was clearly afraid of the inhabitants taking over film selection. Camp residents, namely, as requests show, often preferred light entertainment movies, while the leadership was rather keen on educational content. Ultimately, the Valka camp ended up having a quite busy schedule put together by the various cinema operators:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{43} StA BY, “Gewerbebetriebe im Sammellager für Ausländer und Kantinen Allgemein” (Reg. v. Mfr. Abg. 1978, Nr. 19856)
\item \textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Our camp cinema is operated as follows:

Monday: 19 o’clock GYA
Tuesday: 19 o’clock Wägner
Wednesday: 19 o’clock YMCA
Thursday: 19 o’clock Wägner
Friday: 19 o’clock GYA
Saturday: 17 and 19 o’clock YMCA

One of the most elaborate cinematic infrastructures at that time was developed by UNRRA for their DP-camps. As will be elaborated more in Chapter Six, UNRRA systematically used film screenings to retain cultural memories and connections to homelands in order to facilitate migration “back home”. Figure 21 shows the title page of a refined “movie service” designed for Schleswig-Holstein’s and Hamburg’s 92 DP-camps with 50,000 inhabitants. Walter Daugull, himself an Estonian DP, put together a mobile film service moving around the different camps (see map in the drawing on the right). He hired more DPs who would tour the camps in teams with five projectors and make possible screenings about every other week throughout all the camps. UNRRA was very engaged in providing cinematic entertainment and offered films in the various mother tongues of the DPs. Dragging the equipment around the state of Schleswig-Holstein was a laborious endeavour. Daugull knew that, and noted in his instructions that the camps would “have to take care that the operator and driver get their meals in the team or camps and especially in winter will get a warm cup of tea or coffee.”

46 StA BY, “Gewerbebetriebe im Sammellager für Ausländer und Kantinen Allgemein” (Reg. v. Mfr. Abg. 1978, Nr. 19856)
Print media and paper

The third omnipresent mass media of the time were print media, such as newspapers and magazines, but also paper notes and blackboards. Photographs from for example Friedland show walls in camps, often improvised and self-made, which were used for paper-based information exchange and as public notice boards (for a photo, see: Seuferling, 2019, p. 212). The range of media practices on camp blackboards was wide. Search ads in order to trace, find, and reunify people was an essential need in the post-war turmoil. These information platforms started appearing not only on camp walls, but also in cities, e.g. on the walls of the building of the German Museum in Munich, as there was hardly a family in Germany not missing a relative or friend (Chapter Six will explore in greater detail search services). General news and other important information could also be found pinned to camp walls, often of relevance to the camp or a specific refugee group living there.

These classic media practices of reading the news as a form of public connection to some kind of public sphere (Couldry, Livingstone, Markham, 2010) took place not only through newspapers and magazines coming into the camps from the outside (usually camp kiosks would sell them). Many camps, specifically many DP-camps, also produced their own camp newspapers. The UN Archives holds an impressive collection of preserved DP-camp papers produced in the 1940s and 1950s. Paper was generally a very scarce material after World War Two, and thus rationed. Rationing affected not only writing and sending letters (as mentioned above, stationery was distributed in shares), but also the printing of self-made newspapers had to follow this regime. Many of the early papers were simply sheets of roughly A4-sized paper stapled together. The text was written with typewriters, often squeezed to the extreme onto the individual pages, so that no precious paper space would go to waste. Typewriters must have been available in the camps in Latin as well as Cyrillic alphabets, as the presence of some Russian or Ukrainian newspapers allow to conclude. Later on, the material form of these papers appeared more professionalized: papers could be printed in larger sizes in off-site printing shops, making them look more like regular newspapers. A larger format and off-site printing would allow for the printing of pictures as well; up to this time, there either were no illustrations, or they were drawings copied by hand.
Figure 22: DP-camp newspapers. Left: “A Heim”, Yiddish paper (UN Arch, S-0436-0009-01, “Area Team 1062 – Augsburg – Copies of Newspaper A Heim Published in Leipheim Camps”). Top right: stapled pages, made as camp paper, probably Ukrainian DP-camp (UN Arch, Area Team 1062 – Augsburg – Publications and Photographs from Ukrainian DP Camp Somme Caserne). Bottom right: Jewish DP children reading a paper (UN Arch, S-1058-0001-01, “Germany Mission – Photographs #001–120”).

Figure 22 shows two examples of these media productions as well as a group of Jewish DPs reading a paper. In general, the newspapers were rather short, sometimes only a few pages, as can be seen in the picture on the right. Usually, camp residents would form editorial teams themselves, as some DPs were former journalists, but correspondences reveal that this endeavour was however not completely free and independent. Between 1945 and 1949, i.e. during occupation, Germany did not have a free press, but general censorship, so these camp papers needed to be licensed. In DP-Camp 543 Fritzlar, Jewish camp inhabitants applied for such a permission in 1946: “We ask permission to publish a camp-bulletin once a week. The name of the bulletin would be
’Lagerbilotien’. We won’t write about politics and will also not write against the American government. The bulletin will have a strict [sic!] local character.”48 The camp director then had to forward this request to the Area Director, who in this case was sitting in Kassel, who would grant permission. Especially telling in this example is the promise to safeguard the US government from bad coverage, which makes obvious the political dependency and power negotiations taking place around access to media infrastructural equipment, practices and licenses, and also the anxieties and potentials projected on mediated communication that had to be controlled. Consequently, the title pages would usually read “approved by UNRRA team”. Accordingly, most of the newspapers occupied themselves with camp and refugee group-related content: anniversaries, holidays, religion, literature, and also search ads and sometimes larger political news of relevance. The newspapers were written in the various languages of the DPs (Yiddish, Ukrainian, Estonian, Latvian and many more). This fact raises the question of to what extent censorship and content monitoring actually surpassed the infrastructural level of licensing and access to paper and printing, given that most UNRRA personnel were British or American and most probably could not read these papers. Chapter Six will discuss in more detail the content of these newspapers.

Controlling the heterotopia via media infrastructural equipment

This section’s descriptions of radio, cinema and print as typical contemporary mass media encapsulate different analytical aspects of how materially equipping camps with media infrastructure were also media practices of control and negotiation of the heterotopian condition in the camp space. The small moment of control around a newspaper license in the Fritzlar camp opens up a wider perspective on how media-infrastructural equipment of camps can be understood in the sociomaterial construction of the camp heterotopia. The examples show that the act of furnishing the camp, and therefore of providing, withholding and regulating the inventory of media technologies, was surrounded by a desire and imaginary of control, documentation, and cybernetic, functionalist, utilitarian technophilia. Of course, reading the documents as a complete surveillance and monitoring of every item in the camp would fall into the trap of this very imaginary, and suit the purpose of the document existing in the first place. In fact, it is impossible to tell which devices (and practices) actually took place – maybe some items were smuggled in as contraband, traded, or kept under the radar of official

48 UN Arch, S-0436-0018-02, “Newspapers and Publications”
documentation. After all, camp residents were, as many sources show, highly appreciative of communication, connectivity, and media consumption, generally fighting against and dealing with “information precarity” (Wall et al., 2017). Instead, the files showcase the multiple attempts and neatly planned endeavours of (and conflicts around) making and shaping media technological environments so that the camp would become a site of infrastructural control and regulation of the heterotopian space that included radio devices, radio studios in camps, film projectors, screening schedules, paper, newspaper licenses. The material side of media could be controlled relatively easily and allowed administrations to realize (to a certain degree) desired practices of monitoring and steering communication and its content. Even though media technologies were usually administrated under administrative sections with names like “Welfare” or “Cultural Life”, seemingly at the periphery of the real humanitarian project of providing relief and ensuring survival, their implementation and arrangement was far from being left to happen completely by chance. Rather, they were seen by authorities as useful devices for exploiting the levering characteristics of media technologies, and for exercising moments of control over communication and behaviour via media infrastructures. In a cybernetic mindset, communication was a future-oriented process that should be controlled, adjusted, and avoid unwanted effects. Embedded in the camp space, neatly designed and planned as seen in the previous section, media repertoires could provide temporal and spatial boundaries for the camp, its residents, and their communication practices. Moments of using, consuming, and taking part in specific technologies were moments of synchronizing and collectivizing residents in the camp. Be it a camp cinema schedule, the issuing of newspapers, or a camp-wide broadcasting and loudspeaker system, these technologies enabled practices of unifying and demarcating the camp space.

While this argument is not at all new in media and communication studies (historically, media, and specifically mass media, have always been understood as means of aligning people in time and space through communication, cf. Peters, 2015), these examples from the camp context reveal an extremely localized and heterotopian version of this process. Camp residents were put on the same page within the boundaries of a distinct heterotopian camp space that was separated through controlled media technologies and practices that were at the same time connected to its surroundings, included in specific forms of communication going on around the camp, and in German society at large. Authorities and camp leaders imagined these media devices to fulfil utilitarian purposes of instilling certain information, opinions and attitudes
into camp residents, such as democratic education, and also the purpose of entertainment to soothe camp populations, largely following popular media theoretical approaches of the time. Cybernetics and media effects or hypodermic-syringe-imaginaries seem to shine through these media practices and the handling of material media technologies in the camp space: arranging technologies and refugee bodies and minds in the camp, making the camp a controlled, efficiently governed heterotopia of people and things in the larger project of dealing with the border crisis. By regulating media infrastructural equipment, “epistemic instabilities” (De Genova, 2017, p. 9) in the forced migration process are further tamed, including the aversion of imagined risks (chaos, camp fever, rebellions, uncontrolled migration) to the camp structure by having the upper hand over communication. But, of course, these desires by the authorities do not necessarily mean that camp residents were fully coerced and constricted: as has been shown, media practices around technologies like radios, film screenings and newspapers were highly treasured, even existential in many contexts, and I will demonstrate these dimensions from below even more clearly in Chapters Six and Seven. Different projections and uses emerge around these media technologies, which create and mediate the social relations of the camp. Perhaps it is exactly for that reason that media have become such central, existential and inescapable boundary objects between different actors, of maintaining the heterotopian, paradoxical inside-outside space of refugee camps.

Administering the camp: from paper to iris scans

The idea of media technologies as convenient, logistical and operative helpers and tools of creating camp space and camp time did not limit itself to supplying the camp and its residents with specific devices, like traditional mass media. As a third and last dimension, I want to highlight probably the most far-reaching creation of homo barackensis via media infrastructure and media practices: refugee camp administration. Making the camp a tool of migration governance, of ordering subjects in territorialized time and space – i.e. the fundamental goal and function of the border and the refugee regime – is always entangled with a complex administrational infrastructure and based on a variety of media technologies. Registration, documentation, and mobility control, become a third layer of heterotopian media practices, of othering and segregating yet including and fixing refugees into camp spaces. Media infrastructures of administration negotiated the paradox of assigning
and granting access humanitarian care and shelter with an excluding control and othering of the refugee body fixed in time and space.

Having arrived in the camp, I go to the police shack. Where ‘unclear’ cases are investigated. When I enter, I hear a hard voice of a German policeman: ‘You’re lying! This photograph depicts yourself. Just younger. And it’s ominous that you have a birth certificate in your bag, but no other papers.’ […] On the bench outside countless ‘unclear’ cases are waiting. Their downcast faces reveal their fear. ‘Will the police believe me? Will they register me?’ They fled fear and now encounter the same spectre: fear. […] A ‘registered’ enjoys strong advantages to the ‘illegal’. He can register with the housing authority and receives a room. Worst case a sleeping lot in a camp or a bunker. (Soupault, 1950 in: Metzner, 2016, pp. 18–20; translated by the author)

This report by journalist Ré Soupault describes the admission procedure in Friedland, based on her observations in 1950. As a transit camp, Friedland accommodated incoming arrivals and also prepared for their further distribution to other camps across West Germany. In this function, Friedland’s place in the larger camp system was to swiftly register and administrate refugee bodies into structures, and enable distribution and allotment of benefits while monitoring border crossings. Ré Soupault’s report described the process and experience of forced migrants taking place millions of times in post-war camps and authority offices: the insertion of bodies and identities with their individual experiences into classification systems, realized in media infrastructures. The bureaucratic procedures and systems growing in response to the overall situation of mass displacement in 1945 can be regarded as laying the groundwork for imagining and realizing governance over refugee bodies through administrational media practices to this day. What Bowker and Star (1999, p. 315) called the “filiation” of classifying categories (but with real-life bodies) connected millions of forced migrants to a specific “status” or label, and only via that, to food, housing and social benefits. Being made a “refugee”, “expellee”, “Displaced Person” or “war returnee” became a complex logistical media practice dependent on documents, passes, files, and acts of registration. To this day, naming and labelling forced migrants is a deeply political enactment of border regimes (see Zetter, 1991), and it is worth keeping in mind the deep historicity of this practice, as well as its entanglement with media infrastructures of classification ever since. Media assume operative and logistical functions in refugee governance when they “order and arrange people and objects” (Case, 2013, p. 379), in this case managing the bodies of forced migrants in time and space by inserting
them into categories and administered subjects. As Puumala et al. (2011) note, “[a]sylum processes are moments of inscription, where the applicant’s body is read, recognized and located in terms of prevailing legislation and officials’ interpretations of it” (Puumala et al, 2011, p. 85). Providing a media materialist and infrastructuralist perspective on how such management and administration systems emerged in post-war camp structures in Germany, this section further unfolds how heterotopian camp spaces and their subjects were produced and controlled via media of administration. This section will demonstrate the collusion of media practices with utilitarian administrative imaginaries, the realizing of political and humanitarian aspirations and desires of managing and controlling the mobilities and agencies of refugee bodies, and thus the shaping heterotopian conditions of being administered as simultaneous insiders and outsiders.

Trajectories between present-day tech-solutions of migration management and post-war media practices of administration reveal the deep historicity of imaginaries and practices around media technologies of documentation, administration and management. Present day migration and border infrastructures are characterized by techno-solutionist desires to develop ever more “innovative”, “efficient” and “effective” technologies, while the realms of registration, asylum procedures, border control, and camp management increasingly rely on digitized and automated technologies of control. For example, in present-day refugee camps in the Middle East, biometrics of residents, managed within digital media infrastructures, become obligatory management devices in the form of iris scans as enforced verification for refugees to access social benefits and buy personal goods. Visa and determination of refugee status increasingly involve personal and private smartphone and social media data; AI is driving predictive analytics assessing the “integration likelihood” in certain municipalities; border control is increasingly automated (see Macias, 2020; Molnar, 2020; Tazzioli, 2020); the so-called “hot spot” camps on the Greek islands are being turned into “Multi-Purpose Reception and Identification Centres (MPRICs)” that are surveilled like prisons (The project will include “integrated digital system of electronic and physical security management placed inside and around the facilities using cameras and a motion analysis algorithm (AI Behavioral Analytics) […] the new camps will have a double, military-grade fence. Their residents will only be allowed to enter and exit the facility at certain hours of the day and will be monitored by Centaur”, Petridi, 2021).

These examples reflect a current political moment of refugee regimes in which media technological development and testing is embraced by an ever
more rejective and surveilling humanitarianist politics. These examples show how media practices are employed to delineate, control, monitor and surveil the heterotopian spaces of refugee camps and their inhabitants. But arguably, manifesting in different media technologies, these practices can be traced back in time, going back from iris scans and motion algorithms, all the way to paper forms and ID cards in post-war camps. Opening up a historicizing perspective unfolds the often uncanny relationship between media practices and utilitarian technophilia of administration and migration management in refugee camps, imbued by technological solutionism and visions of population control in heterotopian spaces. In line with the previous two sections, zooming in on media practices of administration and governance further dissects perpetuated imaginaries projected onto media as technologies and practices that are seen as apt to create, manage and control the refugee camp space. I will explore these media practices through three dimensions: (1) lists and registers as filiation of bodies and the refugee regime, (2) IDs and passes as media for spatial and temporal control over the camp, and (3) other media of documentation that exercises moral and social control over camp inhabitants.

Lists and registers

In Hamburg in mid and late 1945, thousands of forced migrants arrived in the city every day. Being just one exemplary site of a “Europe on the move” at this time, preserved documents from Hamburg’s state archive give insight into the concerted bureaucratic efforts in the immediate post-war period of administering and governing mass population movement and accommodation. The responsibility lay in the hands of the military governments (Hamburg lay in the British zone, the others were American, French and Soviet) acting alongside restructured local authorities and international agencies such as the Red Cross and UNRRA. Hamburg’s authorities were forced to answer and solve “the refugee question”, a problem description that implies a teleological thinking around the undertaken actions. Using this phrasing (that is, speaking of a Flüchtlingsfrage) runs through administrative files as well as societal discourses of that time. Not only is this metaphor inherently solutionist, as it naturally implies a resolution of the “question” with respective, well-developed “answers”, but this wording is also reminiscent of other historical “questions” across German history, such as the “German Question” in the 19th century about the achievement of national unification, or the “Jewish Question” debating the treatment of Jews in Europe during the 1800s and 1900s, leading to the “Final Solution” to the “Jewish Question”, the genocide of the Jews.
during World War Two. All of these questions and answers were biopolitical endeavours of social engineering. In 1945, the main problem to be dealt with was first and foremost the extreme housing shortage, since large parts of German cities were destroyed or too damaged to be inhabitable. Allocating accommodation to people displaced for any reason thus motivated the design of a system aimed at smoothly “steer[ing] the housing shortage.” Simultaneously, social benefits like food and clothes were to be distributed in a somehow fair and just manner. And finally, all of the policies and actions undertaken should lead to “durable solutions”, an idea that is still in UNHCR’s goal formulation today.

In creating order among the arrivals (German refugees and expellees from Eastern Europe, war returnees, Displaced Persons, generally homeless people, evacuees), the authorities drew on the usual bureaucratic administration systems of the time, namely paper in the form of files, lists, forms, certificates, passes, ID cards, running slips (a description of these will follow), or reservation cards. Paper-based public administration was shaped and reformed specifically in the 19th and 20th centuries as media forms, enabling the functioning of the modern welfare state. As Cornelia Vismann (2000), Charlie Järpvall (2016), and Markus Krajewski (2011) describe in great detail, paper as a medium of official communication enabled modern cultural techniques of ordering and administering subjects in time and space. Particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, technologies such as the standing folder and the standardization of paper sizes were the sociomaterial pre-conditions of bureaucratic infrastructural aspirations and dreams of efficient state administration. The Nazi regime pushed these imaginaries to their horrific extreme: Hans Adler’s (1974) famous study, “The Administered Human”, re-understands the Holocaust from a bureaucratic, administrational and infrastructural perspective, and Hannah Arendt’s famous description of Adolf Eichmann as a “desk murderer” / “desk perpetrator” (Schreibtischtäter) captures the entanglement of industrial genocide with paper administration (for history of the term, see: van Laak & Rose, 2018). Vismann (2000) specifically emphasized the media historical magnitude of the list and the register. Tracing this media form back to cave writings in the stone age, she makes the point that the list is a medium of transfer, interaction and controlling power, a logistical medium with leverage, free of content, and ephemeral once its purpose has been fulfilled: “Lists do not communicate,

49 StA HH, 131-5_151/24: “Wohraumangelegenheiten; Flüchtlingslager, Nissenhütten; Bewirtschaftung von Lagern, Baracken und Wohnheimen”, 1945–1950
they control transfer operations [...] individual items are not put down in writing for the sake of memorizing spoken words, but in order to regulate goods, things, or people. Lists sort and engender circulation” (Vismann, 2000: 20). Registers, as she describes for medieval kingdoms, become devices of power and population control: dates and matching acts constitute events that are documented and make the state into a permanent entity (ibid., pp. 137–147).

The refugee regime’s administrative aspirations and practices of governance are unimaginable without the media technology of lists and registers – neither today, nor in 1945. Hamburg quickly established a centralized operational headquarters for “refugee admission”, the Bieberhaus, located downtown next to the central station, where the housing office was based. Through lists and “reservation cards” (Vormerkungskarten) provided by the different city districts, the civil servants in the Bieberhaus distributed the refugees into camps established across town. In October 1945, as authority correspondences report, the British military gave 2,600 Nissen-huts to Hamburg, wishing “that all Nissen-huts are used to full capacity and occupied with 18 individuals per hut.” Accordingly, instructions for the civil servants ensued on how to prioritize, choose and report the “cases” to move into the new camps, based on their lists and registers. One third of the huts were for families, two thirds for singles; people not fitting into either of these two categories, or those deemed to be “living in unworthy circumstances”, were to be listed on reservation lists. Furthermore, “at registration it must be reported if the person is suitable for accommodation in Nissen-huts or if they are not suitable due to illness or other specific reasons. For singles it moreover needs to be reported if and where they work, and if their current accommodation is furnished.” Little remained undocumented in the lists, registers and case files and their operations of circulating and regulating bodies in time and space. In these media practices, bodies became “filiated” to categories (Bowker & Star, 1999, p. 315), which in the next step created a mediated bottleneck of arranging and connecting the forced migrants with benefits, such as an assigned bed in a camp, or food stamps. In Hamburg’s Bieberhaus and across the entire country, especially in transit camps,
registers and case files became a foundational network for refugee governance in the 1940s based on mobility and immobility, and on being circulated or fixed. Being listed and registered into the right category fundamentally shaped one’s life and granted access to housing, food, donations, or eventually a permit to stay, or an opportunity migrate onwards and cross certain borders. For the German expellees and refugees from the East, the condition of “listed-ness” even meant access to citizenship: in German-occupied Poland, the Nazis had created the “German People’s List” (*Deutsche Volksliste*) in 1939 through which they classified the inhabitants in the occupied areas. In order to be classified in category 1, “usable as German” (*als Deutsche brauchbar*), individuals had to prove their German ethnic descent, as well as their political and cultural commitment to “the German people” before the war. This list became both the ground for expulsion of ethnic Germans from East and Central Europe when the Red Army proceeded through those areas, as well as for assessing the right to German citizenship in the Federal Republic after 1949.

Ideas and practices of listing and registering individuals of a certain territory, of course, goes even further back in history, especially in histories of population census and colonialism, making the respective media practices highly entangled with state power and the development of the modern nation and welfare state at large. The context of the emerging refugee regime in post-war Europe and Germany, however, unveils the centrality of media infrastructures and practices of listing, registering, and administering individuals in specific heterotopian projects of control and bordering of populations at the margins of society. Filtering and assessing eligibility created the paradox of heterotopian inclusion and exclusion that the refugee regime thrives on; these practices are enabled by media technologies and their capacities of manipulating time and space, through recording, transmitting and enacting information.

**Spatial and temporal control through forms, IDs and passes**

Lists and registers subjectivize people into administrable categories and data points, realizing a desire to avoid and control potential chaos, as “[t]hings, which without lists would wander around uncoordinatedly, are put into order during the brief moment of writing down” (Vismann, 2000, pp. 20–21). In the case of refugees, the fear of “things wandering around uncoordinatedly” is taken literally by state authorities. In controlling and curtailing forced migrants’ mobility, technologies like a list become a “medium of transfer” (ibid.), enabling distribution and arrangement of people and goods.
Digging deeper into which information was actually documented in various types of lists and case files shows the imagined functions and modes of operation made possible by the technology. Registration forms in camps, such as in Figure 23, were the entry point into the administrative machinery, usually collecting name, date of birth, family status, profession, as well as reasons of escape, and received items of social benefits (e.g. food, clothes, furniture, kitchen equipment). The registration card has a fileable alphabet structure on top, creating a searchable database of registered camp residents. (Chapter Six will come back to the content of the case files and the implications of registering biographical and biometrical data.) These files are first and foremost media infrastructures with heterotopian spatial ramifications for the forced migrant in which their mobility got regulated on two levels: firstly, in terms of the wider migration process, getting access to the territory of a country, or being transferred to further accommodation, and secondly, very concretely within the camp and between authorities, enabling mobilities inside and outside of a camp and society at the same time. Figure 24 shows a “running slip” of a West Berlin “emergency reception camp” in the 1950s. These slips were meant to structure the process after one had already arrived in the camp. The refugee had to check all the various stations: medical check, jurisdiction check, welfare service, police check. Literally documenting every step of the asylum process, such paperwork systems became the material ground for structuring the media practices of forced migrants as well as civil servants, of negotiating the position, movement ranges and social status of refugees within camp heterotopias. In Foucault’s (1967/1997) description, heterotopias have points and rituals of entry and exit, which in the case of camps are materialized and mediated through such forms that connect bodies with the spatial regime and logics of the refugee camp, and negotiate the refugee’s larger relation to national communities, territories, and borders. Navigating the complexities, contradictions and rapid changes in these document jungles became vital and existential for any forced migrant (a situation that has not changed much to the present day). Access to food, clothes and accommodation relied upon having the right forms of documentation. In August 1945, Hamburg introduced
[tighter control over the issue of food cards. Issue of food cards in Hamburg is dependent on previous grant of permission to stay in the city. This is already managed on such strict lines that in Hamburg food cards are issued only to individuals entitled to stay.53

Figure 23: Registration card, fileable (alphabet on top) and documenting entry and exit (second to last row) (DRK Arch, 4750).

Figure 24: "Running slip for emergency reception procedure" documenting various stages: doctor, several check-ups, welfare, police (DRK Arch, 4750).

53 StA HH, 131-1 II_1233: "Betreuung von Heimatvertriebenen, Flüchtlingen und Evakuierten, 1945–1956"
Mobility among municipalities, and specifically between occupational zones, had become more and more restricted as the Allies sought to calm down the general movement and distribute migrants across the country more efficiently. Of course, the permit to legally stay in Hamburg was tied to a document as well. Those travelling through the city and wanting food cards were required to provide a certificate from a mayor of a town “showing permission of the burgomaster of the community into which the refugee desires to move.” Figure 25 depicts the slip that gave this right to pass through. To navigate the complexity of these systems, eventually an “information sheet for eastern refugees” was issued, explaining the bureaucratic procedures, accompanied by “press and radio propaganda” undertaken to influence potential movement and discourage migration to specific places.

Figure 25: “Certificate”, to be signed by a mayor, stating that the named forced migrant receives accommodation in this municipality. (StA HH, 131–I II_1233: “Betreuung von Heimatvertriebenen, Flüchtlingen und Evakuierten, 1945–1956”)

Once arrived and registered in a specific camp, camp IDs and passes continued to structure the residents’ lives. Figure 26 shows a camp ID for a Red Cross camp in Berlin-Tegel, noting personal information on the front side, and prolongations, family contacts, and the receipt of donated items in

54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
the back, again filiating people with the space of the camp, as well as with objects such as “blankets, eating bowls, drinking cups, cutlery, knives, spoons” (Figure 26, below).

A further example demonstrates that the monitoring of mobility through such media infrastructures included dimensions of age, gender and sexuality. An internal UNRRA document from DP-camps Greven and Reckenfeld reports about Polish troops visiting the camps “for the purpose of taking Polish girls out to ‘dances’. On some occasions these so-called ‘dances’ have lasted two and three days.”56 The angry “Major R.A.” then emphasized “that all applications to take girls to dances from the camps should be made to the UNRRA Welfare Officers at the camp who will issue late passes up to midnight” and “that all DPs must observe curfew.”57 Here it becomes obvious that refugee camps became institutionally gendered through media infrastructures like “late passes” and the practice of surveilling resident mobility, and entries and exits by visitors. While exact documentation is of course lacking, “Major R.A” most likely accommodated patriarchal norms of Polish soldiers having control and ownership over Polish female refugees through administrative measures.

Paper-based systems of documentation became structures and frames of spatial and temporal control. Administrative media practices aimed at capturing, filing and coordinating subjects while keeping them inside (though fixed and controlled), as well as outside (segregated and mobilized). The “where” and “when” of the heterotopia and its residents are negotiated and leveraged by way of media practices and technologies, such as camp IDs. But as especially the last example about “late passes” for male visitors demonstrates, such media technological solutions of surveilling the camp heterotopia via documents were never neutral, even if imagined as means of just and ordered distribution of bodies and goods. Their implementation and uses were always already imbued with power dynamics, cultural assumptions, and a paradoxical othering of the space and its inhabitants as heterotopian. Thus, as will be seen in the next section, camp media practices of administration not only aspired to spatial and temporal control of the inhabitants, but also to a wider social and moral monitoring of behaviour, communication, and information flows.

57 Ibid.
Figure 26: “Camp identification card”. Front (above): Registering name, birthday, marital status, admission date, room number, signature. Back (below): prolongations and receipt of goods (blankets, eating bowls, drinking cups, cutlery, knife, spoon) (DRK Arch, 4750).

Social and moral control through total documentation

Documenting, and thereby affecting temporal and spatial positionings of forced migrants, to this day structures the mediated subjectivation and creation of the refugee figure. In the historical examples, it becomes specifically evident how camp inhabitants were turned into ‘hominès barackenses’ by means of media technological solutions that materialized first and foremost in paper. Digging further into which realms and social relations were colonized by such media practices of documentation, the archives reveal that spatial-temporal ordering extended into forms of social and moral
control. These modes of almost total documentation – invasively seeking to
document all aspects of camp life – reveal historical sociotechnical imagi-
naries (still salient today) of which services and functions migration infra-
structures could and should deliver. While paper has mostly been replaced
with digital files and automated media technologies, aspirations, attempts
and practices of controlling heterotopian subjects can be traced inde-
pendently of the specific technologies in use.

As some of the IDs and forms presented so far indicate, documentation
far exceeded name and date of birth. Practices of disciplining and gathering
data about camp subjects were enacted in an all-encompassing manner. In
contemporary digital asylum systems in Greece, Martina Tazzioli (2020)
identified a tendency of “data abundance”, arguing that authorities collect
data about asylum-seekers that are effectively “leftover” (Tazzioli, 2020, p. 5)
and disregarded. Even though the extensive storing opportunities of today’s
digital media were not available in post-war Germany, the invasiveness of
information collected generated abundant documentation there as well, and
just like the modern day Greek program, it is unclear for what ends this data
were even being collected in the first place, and what the humanitarian
purpose really was. A first area of interest for administration in 1945 (similar
today) was health and hygiene. Obviously, crammed mass accommodation
comes with a high risk for spread of infectious diseases and insect infesta-
tions. Medical examinations were therefore usually obligatory and had to be
documented. These exams could include X-rays, vaccinations, delousing and
general health checks. Delousing was often a degrading process: DDT-
powder\textsuperscript{58} was sprayed under clothes, or directly on naked bodies in bulk in
specific delousing rooms. Such practices of tight, privacy-invading control of
health and hygiene appear specifically unsettling, if put into the discursive
context of the time.

Camps were not only notorious hubs of medical illnesses, but also
considered prone to problems with “social hygiene”. Lingering opinions and
imaginaries about the camps from before 1945 (concentration, prisoner, and
labor camps) supported public perceptions of refugee camps as “dirty” places,
full of “antisocials” and “outcasts” (see also Ackermann, 1995). The medi-
calization and pathologization of camp residents becomes directly obvious in
Nuremberg’s Valka camp, which, according to a newspaper article from
1953, set up a part of its camp as a “quarantine station. The inmates of this

\textsuperscript{58} DDT is an insecticide that was widely used during and after World War Two. Later, DDT’s effects on
environmental and health became known, and its use has been widely forbidden since the 1970s.
camp section are separated from the other inmates by a high fence, in order to guarantee a strict political examination.” Cold War anxieties about Communism as a political “disease” meant that refugees from the Eastern bloc were put into political “quarantine” in Nuremberg. Refugee camps in West Germany until the 1960s were often framed in state and media discourses as places of “social hygiene” problems. In 1954, the Academy for State Medicine in Hamburg was even commissioned by the government of Schleswig-Holstein to conduct a study on the “social-hygienic problems” in North German camps, a wording and research practice reminiscent of behaviourist notions of human sociality, where just the right measures can eradicate unwanted behaviour (and camps are the perfect laboratories to test that idea).

Coming back to the media practices involved in surveilling hygiene, a tiny note in a Red Cross file reveals the remarkable pervasiveness of this documentation: “Experience: Women are reluctant to shower (one camp introduced stamps on food cards for that).” It does not take much imagination to understand why women were not eager to shower in mixed-gender public bathrooms, exposing them to potential security risks, the male gaze, and sexual violence. Implementing forced documentation of showering as a solution to this problem gives a deep insight into what is identified as the problem and what is the adequate solution. While e.g. rape in refugee camps results from institutionalized “latent conditions” of man-made “organisational failures” (Olsen & Scharffscher, 2004, p. 377), such a media infrastructure of enforced documentation clearly fails women and reproduces gender-based violence.

Hygiene and health were not the only sites of moral and social control. In Hamburg’s Finkenwerder camp for Hungarian refugees in the mid-late 1950s, a collection of preserved reports reveals the intrusion of administration into everyday life. The camp administration and Hamburg’s police kept extensive lists tracking the Hungarian residents’ general behaviours and performances at their jobs. A camp employee report about a leisure program reads:

While the old refugees [Altflüchtlinge, probably Germans after WW2] participated in the program with full enthusiasm and behaved in a disciplined manner, this cannot be said about the Hungarians. The Hungarian participants had much higher education than the others […] But education was

59 Federal Archive Koblenz (BArch), B115/5753, 8-Uhr Blatt Nürnberg Nr 16, 21.1.1953: “Valkalager wird zum Bundes-Auffanglager”
60 DRK Arch, 530
not of importance here, but origin and upbringing, specifically social and political upbringing. The Hungarians can be considered pure products of communist upbringing. Everything in the West is bad and ridiculous. Lack of discipline, ignoring orders, no respect for furniture, stubbornness etc. were the features of the youth […] we could not teach the Hungarians to be on time for food, to not smoke between table prayers during Bible hour.  

Another “report about the behaviour of the Hungarians”, dated 21 January 1958, goes even further in its xenophobic down-grading and behaviourist tone:

The Hungarians have appeared in a manner unintelligible for Germans. Already in December 1956 the authority for expellees and war victims announced that the Hungarians appeared in an unpleasant manner through alcohol excesses and fights […] It is further told that 30–40% of the Hungarians are so resistant, that they endanger the public.

The document contains a list of names of certain camp residents who had been identified as specifically dangerous troublemakers, and notes their misdemeanours. The document further notes that a potential danger is that Hungarians might return to Hungary and write negative articles about their treatment in Germany, which is deemed ridiculous in light of their “disgusting behaviour”. Police files document and list the registered offenses, including several bar fights and stealing. The police did not refrain from racist comments either, which raises questions on their impartiality in the matter:

Since the allocation of Hungarian refugees to Finkenwerder, violations, offences and crimes have been committed to an extent unknown to the history of this old fishing island. The inhabitants of Finkenwerder perceive the assignment of Hungarian refugees to their island as a punishment by the authorities. Only thanks to their lower-German level-headedness no open hostility has erupted yet.

These snippets of administrative documents give insight into contemporaneous discourses, language and practices of policing and disciplining the residents of the Finkenwerder refugee camp. While it is impossible to judge
in retrospect the exact events of the time, and the voices of the Hungarians are completely missing, the mere media infrastructures and respective media practices around the documents reveal telling moments of subjectivation, and imaginaries about how a camp heterotopia was to be run and controlled through media practices of control and surveillance. Not only were lists of allegedly notorious troublemakers kept, the administration also kept registers of their employment and educational situation, assigning them to workplaces and schools. Reports on “care”\textsuperscript{64} of the Hungarian refugees included lists with short notes on how the individuals conducted themselves at work, often describing them as ungrateful and lazy when they got fired. Some of the residents were sent to work for “Blohm & Voss”, a shipyard in the harbour very near the camp. Another group was employed to build the Finkenwerder airport, which today is the German headquarters of and production site for airplane manufacturer Airbus. Again, while concrete circumstances are unclear, probably many of the highly educated Hungarians did not picture themselves as construction workers in Hamburg harbor, but rather wanted to migrate further to the US or Canada. Limited motivation for assigned work can be understandable. Here, administrative media practices around lists and documents run in the background, hidden from the refugees, appearing as the technological attempts and instruments of exerting social and moral control over camp populations through gathering and storing an abundance of data and information.

Heterotopian media practices

This chapter has drawn an arc across rather different media practices, more precisely across different materialities and technologies, that became sites of media practices in the refugee camp: architectural styles, mapping and planning practices, equipment and furnishing of the camp with media devices, and administrative media practices of documenting, filing, managing and controlling mobility and behaviour in the camp space. All of these are practices that, in their combination, constitute the heterotopian camp space, and to make this space, draw on media infrastructures ranging from building materials and media devices to paper in the form of maps, IDs, and card indexes. Such media environments, whether in the form of today’s bits and bytes or yesterday’s paper, screen, and radio, create pre-conditions, and

\textsuperscript{64}The German word used here, Betreuung, is a somewhat patronizing expression and can be used in the sense of guidance or counseling. The word is used to refer to treatment of prison inmates and hospital patients.
realize and communicate specific imaginaries and aspirations. These environments envision modes of making the refugee camp in its heterotopian spatiality, and producing *homo barackensis* as the administered, heterotopian subject residing in the camp. As such, media practices of building and planning the refugee camp, and practices of equipping and furnishing it, and administering, managing and controlling every single body and item within it, are not only media practices that are embedded within the camp: they are *heterotopian media practices* in themselves. Without them, neither the camp space, nor the encamped subject, would exist as such – as othered, included yet excluded, segregated; kept mobile, yet fixed in place. As the examples have demonstrated, media practices are employed to delineate and demarcate the boundaries of the heterotopia and manage its rituals of entry and exit and its belongings, e.g. through administrative media and negotiating its relation to the surrounding space. Media practices relate the camp to its surrounding, and the refugee to the receiving society. Camp equipment (radios, cinemas, newspapers) incorporates media practices of controlling communication within and beyond the camp, and also negotiate the heterotopia’s paradoxical inside-outside characteristic. Similarly, architectural styles and mapping are media practices of bordering and of creating a spatial and temporal mobility and impermanence in an excluding (yet at the same time detaining and fixating) manner. All of these practices together attempt to shape the heterotopian camp subject, *homo barackensis*, always already administered, public and documented, kept mobile, but detained, inside society, yet kept at bay and outside society. Heterotopian media practices manipulate the spatial relations of the camp and its surrounding society. They seek to tame potential communication and interaction in the camp, eager to provide humanitarian care and fix the crisis of the border and belonging.

This chapter has put a strong emphasis on media practices as modes of governance, focusing mainly on authorities, camp leadership, and administrative staff as the social actors, realizing these practices (more perspectives from camp residents themselves will ensue in the next two chapters). The archival records, which mainly draw on collections from institutional archives, have led to a critical historical moment of creating, imagining and planning out systems of refugee governance that underlie today’s global refugee regime. The archives, simply by being traditional archives and thus heavily paper-biased, have led to the materialities of media and insights into the very graspable “stuff you can kick”-condition of techniques and technologies, which are media infrastructures that realize the camp as a tool of refugee governance: architecture, media devices, paper slips, camp IDs,
card catalogues, lists. But rather than remaining within a media archaeological approach and uncovering the workings of media artefacts themselves, the examples have extended the analysis and showed how heterotopian media practices through these media infrastructures create existential socialities (access to vital benefits and safety), and condition communication and information in the project of camps and refugee governance, and therefore in providing care and shelter as well as maintaining control over borders and belonging. As has been shown, the refugee camp was saturated with media technologies long before digital media. Excavating the media practices around previous media technologies, materials, and devices has led to pre-conditions, imaginaries, motives, skills, consequences, social relations and imbued ideologies in moments of mediation and social practices in and around media, their leverage as “the stuff you can kick” that shapes what being a refugee means. Enquiring what mapping (instead of maps), film screening (instead of films) listing (instead of lists), or registering (instead of registers) have meant for the refugee camp and its residents shifts the focus toward the historical complicity and collusion of media practices with political projects, imaginaries, and aspirations realized in and through media practices; these aspirations were to tame, control, and govern the “epistemic instabilities” (De Genova, 2017, p. 9) of and around forced migrants, and (seemingly) create order, justice, and durable solutions in humanitarianist ideals intersecting with political ideals of nationalist-territorialist border control.

This connection, collusion or complicity of, on the one hand, media practices using the inherent leverage of media infrastructure, and, on the other hand, the aims and goals of refugee governance and the reason that the camp existed in the first place, leads to the imbued characteristics of the mediated camp, the camp media heterotopia. As can be argued based on these examples, this double nature is historically driven by imaginaries of technophilia, which then projects cybernetic, functionalist, and utilitarian imaginaries on media technologies and media practices. Refugee camp space is established as a heterotopia in order to both include forced migrants into the shelter and care of humanitarian ideals, as well as to control and maintain borders, to withhold from full belonging. To govern these instabilities, cybernetic imaginaries of prediction, probability management, and steering control, and of establishing nuisance-free, future-oriented interactions and transmission between data points, appear in the media practices that enable the camp heterotopia. By way of media, camps became enclosed functionalist
entities, seeking to control communication, tame serendipitous behaviour, filiate bodies with categories, and provide service and care in a utilitarian manner. Susan Leigh Star (1999) claimed that infrastructural systems have a “master narrative”, a “voice [that] speaks unconsciously from the presumed center of things” (Star, 1999, p. 384), which is a metaphor for ideology by design, or sociotechnical imaginaries where media technologies are never neutral, but always already imbued with the politics and power dynamics of their designers, shapers, and users. The context of media infrastructures in post-war German refugee camps has unfolded some of these voices and narratives, and let be heard the voices of actors that have established media practices that, to this very day, order, shape, and affect the governance of forced migration and population movements of millions. Efforts to create effectively and efficiently administered humanitarian solutions, while maintaining nationalist-territorialist border orders, drew on media technologies and practices of various kinds. A desire for taming space, uncertainties, and mobilities of bodies therein, and of taming the arrangement of people in time and space, fostered a utilitarian and technophilic, solutionist thinking around media and communication. The described heterotopian media practices in the camp can be understood as exploiting the levering and logistical powers of media technologies (be those technologies maps, building types, radio equipment, cinemas, or paper, lists, and registers as governance media) that seek to manipulate and steer communication, in order to negotiate the relation between camp and non-camp, as well as between refugee and non-refugee. Practices of registering, identifying, documenting, categorizing, ranking, rating, and controlling bodies within camp and national spaces at large became not only possible, but actively wished for via media.

Historically and even now, ever newer, more efficient and effective “innovative” technologies are sought and valued highly in refugee governance, in order to produce allegedly useful knowledge about refugee subjects and thereby exert control. Tom Scott-Smith (2016) argued that infrastructural “solutions” to “refugee crises”, ranging from the camp itself as an instrument to all kinds of technologies of border control and asylum administration and governance, are characterized by “humanitarian neophilia”, or an ideology of market-driven techno-solutionism, keen on constant innovation for ever-more “effective” and “efficient” management of forced migrants. In the historical examples of media infrastructures and media practices, I have demonstrated how notions of media and communication (such as cybernetic relations between humans and objects) have historically undergirded such neophilia and technophilia. In other words, there has been a cybernetic, functionalist, and
utilitarian master narrative around media that has assumed that media technologies have distinct purposes and effects, which, if only steered right, enable useful media practices for bordering, managing mobilities, administering refugee subjects, and maintaining coherence of the nation state, while at the same time providing fair and effective humanitarian relief. Today, refugee camps are ever more technologized, digitized, automated, and saturated with media following this technophilic, progressivist imperative, where media technologies inevitably provide solutions. Recalling (media) practice theoretical reflections, namely that social practices emerge in combinations of materiality, competence, and meaning (cf. Shove et al., 2012), and that media practices are assemblages of these elements aggregating in orientation to media, one can observe the historicity and temporal circularity of media practices in refugee governance. In moving the focus from the technology to the practice, genealogies and trajectories appear: genealogies of how media practices replace and perpetuate themselves in changing media environments, ever again realized and re-shaped by new technologies like iris scans, electronically-readable cards, and movement algorithms that are remediating paper files and card indexes and catalogues. Containers and tents are different forms for barracks and huts; Wi-Fi access has become a site of controlling communication instead of camp cinemas or radios. Such media archaeologies of practices (cf. Kaun, 2016; or also Marvin, 1988) diachronically untangle the existentiality of media practices for the refugee regime, and for the experiences of forced migrants. Certainly, this chapter has been biased towards the perspectives of the authorities and leadership, which does not mean that camp inhabitants themselves are to be seen as complete victims of such media infrastructures and practices. While it is methodically difficult to get access to historical experiences from below, and the archives mostly remain silent about the experiences and agency of forced migrants, several examples have still shown that camp residents had certain agency, for example by lobbying for and asking that media to be provided in the camp; in petitions or camp assemblies, including sometimes through elected representatives; through the tweaking or circumventing of administrative media practices to their favour, such as forging papers, or lying on forms; by modifying the space, e.g. by creating privacy with blankets or paper walls; and finally by actually building the camp, doing the labour, which often even included administrative labour, which refugees were often trained for. Ultimately, however, no camp resident can completely evade these media practices or stand outside them. Refugee camp media are existential, and the mediated heterotopian condition is compulsory and inescapable.
The paradox of, on the one hand, providing humanitarian relief, and, on the other hand, upholding borders (of inclusion and exclusion) imbued in these media practices precisely characterizes them as heterotopian. The mediated refugee camp is an inverted mirror space, attached yet secluded from its surroundings, and it becomes in itself the solution to the nation state’s and border’s crisis of belonging. Media practices become the shapers, scenes, and sites of this paradoxical situation. After all, what is happening today is a paradox of what could be called simultaneous media infrastructural build-up and tear-down: ever-more impinging technologized systems of refugee camps, migration control and borders are constructing “Fortress Europe”, which stands in stark contrast to a systematic tear-down of safe routes of travel, safe and secure accommodation, secure asylum processes, and secure communication infrastructures. Sea rescue on the Mediterranean and Wi-Fi connections in asylum-seeker shelters have fallen into the hands of activists, with the state systematically retreating and building tech-systems of rejection and surveillance instead. Thus, it is never inevitable or pre-determined which media infrastructures should be provided for forced migrants, or how media are to be used. But media can become part of heterotopian political projects. What critical media and migration scholars identify as “techno-colonialism” (Madianou, 2019) or “extractive humanitarianism” based on “data abundance” (Tazzioli, 2020) can hence be observed in a wider historical context of how media as practices and technologies have been mobilized to make the administered, forced migrant in the heterotopian refugee camp space. The challenge, then, becomes finding ways of unmaking such oppressive systems, while maintaining and establishing key existential, vital, missed, or longed-for media infrastructures from the point of view of refugees themselves.
CHAPTER SIX
Time, Memory, Witnessing

A “temporary kibbutz”: the camp as a heterochronia

On 19 February 1946, the first edition of the newspaper Heim was published. “Heim” means “home” in Yiddish and became the title for Displaced Persons camp Leipheim’s newly-founded camp newspaper. On the title page of the first issue, UNRRA employee and camp manager J. Stott wrote some greeting remarks:

To-day [sic!] marks another step forward in the life of our Camp with the first edition of Leipheim’s newspaper ‘Home’. We of UNRRA are hoping that each and every person will do his or her part to make in our Camp just what the title of the newspaper implies, namely Home. None of us know just how long our stay in Leipheim will be, but be it a short stay or a long stay, let us all work together for the common good of the Camp that we may look back in future years and be able to say that Leipheim was a good temporary home. To the people of our Camp who have put so much time and effort to bring this first edition of “Home” into being I wish to say “Thanks” and to wish them all good things so we may have a bigger if not better newspaper in the future.66

A Yiddish translation of the same text was printed immediately below and was the primary language of Heim. The big editorial in the center of the title page, however, was written not by camp management, but in Yiddish by the producers and editors of the newspaper themselves, namely the Jewish DPs. It is an emotional text, calling the newspaper a “sprouting flower” on the “brown earth” of the camp, a new beginning materializing in the medium of the newspaper after a troubled past. The text indicates what later became a key narrative in Jewish memories of the Holocaust: traumatized by the unspeakable experiences of surviving the Shoah and displacement, the task was to find one’s place in the world again, connecting to the Zionist move-

65 The arguments and material from this chapter have been previously published as: Seuferling, P. (2020). Hopeful and Obligatory Remembering: Mediated Memory in Refugee Camps in Post-War Germany. Mediální studia, 14(1), 13–33.
66 UN Arch, S-0436-0009-01, “Area Team 1062 – Augsburg – Copies of Newspaper A Heim Published in Leipheim Camps”
ment that envisioned an independent state of Israel. The camp newspaper was introduced as a key platform for this re-negotiation of Jewish identity, and as being a voice of the camp inhabitants. *Heim*, in their words, became a unifying platform in the “temporary kibbutz” that the Leipheim camp represented for them, assembled from people of diverse origins, but with a common goal of creating a new future outside the camp. *Heim* became a home for stories, for witness accounts, and for the mediation and inscription of biographies. It became a medium in a spatial and temporal limbo situation where liminal and temporary identities and statuses needed to be negotiated and coped with. Many long pages of camp newspapers were filled with search ads and short biographical accounts and other personal information to help residents trace and find missing loved ones. To help try to find those belonging to home, again. This example of just one DP-camp newspaper opens up a range of perspectives on media practices in refugee camps, touching upon their temporal dimensions as practices of memory and witnessing, of experiencing the specific, multiple temporalities of the camp, and of being a refugee.

After having delved into the spatial construction of refugee camps as heterotopias and the media practices of governance emplaced therein (Chapter Five), this chapter shifts the focus to *temporalities*. The newspaper *Heim* hints at the historical meaning of time, memory, and witnessing in refugee camps in a variety of ways. The newspaper articulates how the experience of being (made) a refugee includes a temporary suspension, a break from the past leading to an uncertain limbo in between the past and the future, and hence a break from an imaginary of temporal continuity. This break is materialized in the refugee camp as an exceptional space, not only in spatial-physical terms, but also in temporal terms, because time in the camp is taken out of the social normality of continuous time, of permanence and stability, and of planned, chronological progression in one’s biography. It is this very aspect that Foucault (1967/1997) captured with the notion of *heterochronia*, as the temporal dimension of heterotopian spaces: the “total breach with […] traditional time” (p. 354), where time gets “sliced” from the surrounding spaces. He distinguished between two different modes of heterochronic conditions: the eternal accumulation of time (for instance in libraries or archives), and absolute temporariness and impermanence (for instance in festivals and vacation villages). The refugee camp clearly falls under the latter version of heterochronias, where time is “futile, transitory, precarious” (p. 355). In a more oppressive and forced way

---

67 Term for a collective community, village- or commune-like, in Israeli-Jewish settler culture.
than a festival, the refugee camp creates a temporality of definite temporariness, built on a promise of impermanence. The camp is imbued with the humanitarian promise of sheltering accommodation until a permanent solution is found, while being kept in the limbo, on hold, paradoxically both inside and outside, in a waiting zone, by the refugee and border regime, which meanwhile is figuring out what to do with the inhabitants of the camp heterotopia and heterochronia. The camp is intrinsically transitory, even though this temporality is often shown to be a hollow promise when camp accommodation instead becomes protracted and quasi-permanent. As a material, spatial environment, the camp thus “slices”, others, and alters not only space, but also time for its inhabitants, through for example architecture that mediates a specific mobility and temporariness. The heterochronic slices are characterized by a cut from the past, as well as from the future, delineated by the moments of entering and exiting the camp. In this sense, the refugee camp is a medium in itself that spatializes temporality, but also temporalizes space, for its residents. This process can be observed in *Heim*, but also in a range of other media practices relating to temporality, which will be the topic of this chapter.

The editors of *Heim* and the camp manager described the Leipheim DP-camp as a “transitory kibbutz”, a temporary home for a “shorter or longer stay”. Jewish DPs in the late 1940s, like most other groups of forced migrants, found themselves in this limbo, facing questions of when this situation would end, where to go next, and how to relate to the past from which one has been broken off. While many other DP groups could be repatriated within a few years, for the Jewish population, quick repatriation was often not an option, and resettlement or onward migration to a new home (preferably Palestine/Israel, the United States, Canada or Australia) the proclaimed goal, which was a more complicated undertaking. *Heim* presented itself as a media platform for coping with and shaping this temporal, heterochronic experience. As a site of media practices, the newspaper was part of building a temporary camp home, a task set in between a traumatic past, a negotiation of the present, and dreams of a better future. The *Heim* project was entangled with cultural, social, and mediated memory taking place in and through media practices. It becomes a media technology of actualizing and negotiating memory in hopeful, future-oriented ways; of re-managing past, present and future after experiencing a cut in time; of being pushed into a heterochronia and having to deal with the multiple temporalities of the camp. *Heim* became a platform for camp inhabitants to practice voice, and thus of giving witness to one’s history. Stories of oneself, of one’s group and kin,
became the content of this camp media production. It was through this mediation of one’s biography, through the media-dependent material process of sharing experiences, that a refugee identity was negotiated among the producers and readership in the camp community. Ultimately, media practices of remembering and witnessing thus become key sites of making oneself and being made a “refugee” (and these practices still serve these functions today). The figure of the refugee is fundamentally tied to a heterochronic multiplicity and exception of temporality, characterized by a cut, moments of being withheld and waiting, and by the mediation of a specific witness account that attempts to re-connect the cuts between past and future.

This chapter explores historical trajectories of these dimensions of refugee camp temporalities and their ties to media practices. As will be shown in the context of post-war refugee camps, material and symbolic aspects of media practices have enacted and negotiated temporality, memory, and witnessing. This chapter activates the concept of heterochronia by seeing the refugee camp as a spatialization of exceptional temporality, as well as temporalization of exceptional space, creating a spatio-temporal limbo, inside and outside, in between. I will show how media practices of remembering and witnessing, or heterochronic media practices, have historically been part of refugee camps, part of refugees’ media practices, and have contributed to the evolution of the refugee regime. Drawing on memory studies, the entanglement of heterochronias with memory practices shows how media have become sites and tools of “managing” these multiple temporalities of being and of being made a refugee in the cut-out camp space. What Emily Keightley and Michael Pickering (2017) have called “management of change” as a mediated memory practice becomes a management of the heterochronia, of the limbo state in the camp that takes place in media practices of remembering and witnessing. In mapping mnemonic media practices, I draw from the strands of memory studies to describe practices and negotiations of individual and collective/cultural memory through media technologies. Questions guiding this enquiry are: How did historical media technologies shape media practices of managing limbo? What were the material preconditions for these media practices, and how did media practices affect and characterize refugees’ experiences in the heterochronic temporal limbo of the camps?

Two major empirical sections of this chapter will explore historical dimensions of what I call hopeful and obligatory memory. As suggested in a previous publication (Seuferling, 2020), these forms of mediated remembering and witnessing describe two facets of how media technologies are
employed and articulate temporal relations in refugee contexts. Travelling through empirical contexts of post-war camps for expellees and DPs, I will demonstrate how media practices around newspapers, cinemas, home-building, cultural and religious activities, handicraft and dance, hopefully negotiate a new relation of past, present and future, in situating the “home” in troubled, heterochronic temporalities. Secondly, mediations and inscriptions of one’s biography, in interviews, registers, forms, lists, or search ads reveal how being (made) a refugee means being obligated to give credible witness, mediate and communicate a specific biography and individual past, and inscribe this biography into registers and administrative media, in order to be successfully inserted into the statuses and categories of the refugee regime, or in order to find missing family members. Media technologies have historically been central to these heterochronic practices, as material and social processes, preconditions and articulations of managing the multiple temporalities, and the limbo of the sliced-out camp space and time. The final section summarizes historical dimensions of such heterochronic media practices, discussing how refugees’ media practices as well as evolutions of the refugee regime – of being and of being made a refugee – are historically tied to practices of remembering and witnessing, which have put center stage the mediation of refugees’ biographies. Heterochronic media practices are in the business of differentiating camp-time from non-camp-time by managing the multiple paradoxical temporalities of the camp heterochronia.

People and media in limbo: memory and media technologies

Fleeing is not only an experience and practice taking place in space. Fleeing also fundamentally incorporates time: a temporal cut, resulting in a challenge of being stuck between “here and now” and “back there and then”. Anthropologists and migration scholars have described the ramifications for refugee subjects that these experiential temporalities entail: forced migrants are “making homes in limbo” (Brun & Fábos, 2015), saddled with general uncertainty about the future (El-Sharaawi, 2015), and “out of time” (Griffiths, 2014). This experience of being taken outside of “normal”, naturally progressing temporality is reflected in asylum procedures, which often create protracted experiences of waiting because of the temporal regimes of speed and slowness of authorities, leaving uncertainty about one’s future (Leutloff-Grandits, 2019; Bathia & Canning, 2021). Mette Sagbakken et al. (2020) showed in an interview study how these experiences of time are characterized by lack of continuity and predictability, and can have severe consequences on
mental health. Among asylum-seekers accommodated in centres in Norway, the authors described how loss of future directedness, entrapment, disempowerment, unpredictability, and difficulties in orienting oneself in time and space are common temporal experiences of refugees in shared, institutional accommodations. Anthropologists and migration scholars have similarly pointed out the temporalities as key experiential features of refugee camps: camps become “a time pocket where time grinds to a halt inside the camp while normal time continues outside the camp” (Turner, 2016, p. 142), or “zones of temporal holding” (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013, p. 150), where camps also function as temporal manifestations of borders.

Time also becomes strongly controlled in daily camp life. Defining the duration of one’s stay, beginning and end, is a manifestation of border control exercised through time: spatializing temporality, as well as temporalizing space. During the stay, inhabitants also lose autonomy over rhythms, time planning, appointments, and dates. Often in camps or asylum-centres, food would be provided centrally, meaning that not only was the menu dictated, but also the time. A source from an asylum accommodation in Lübeck in the 1990s even reported about organized time slots for inhabitants to be taken grocery shopping, accompanied by an employee who would also administer their bank accounts and check that no one bought alcohol or cigarettes. After a stay of one year, benefits would be paid out in cash. The inhabitants also successfully fought for a “tea room”, which however was only open from 2:30 to 4:30 pm and only tea prepared by the kitchen staff could be drunk.68 (Chapter Seven will return to the situation in the 1990s, and mobilizations against these specific camp regimes of spatiality and temporality.)

While camps exert their oppressiveness via their temporalities, in his study of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, Adam Ramadan (2013) argued for a shift in perspective on the “politics and material practices of refugees in the camp”, which negotiate “the constrained temporality of the camp, its enduring liminality, and the Palestinian time-space from which it draws meaning” (Ramadan, 2013, p. 67). He argued that in practices of camp inhabitants, the left-behind temporality of Palestine was constantly present and re-presented in objects like books, posters, images, photos, and cultural activities. What Ramadan (2013) did not bring up were two central dimensions undergirding these practices, namely media technologies and memory. Camp heterotopias and heterochronias are not pre-determined, static modalities of exception, but emerge and are created and maintained (as well

68 ASB HH, 04.210, "Flüchtlingsleben, Beispiel Lübeck", p. 4
as subverted) in practices in and around media technologies. Memory, in turn, as a cultural reference to and representation of past experiences, cannot exist without media as technologies of mediation and storage. Media can even most fundamentally be understood as enabling devices of memory, and as aids for elusive memory of humans. Earlier forms of inscription, be they wall carvings or emerging writing and printing systems, were continuously remediated up into the digital age as techniques and practices of memory. Systems of recording sound (phonography, sound recordings, CDs and MP3s) and images (photography, cinema and television) made elusive, ephemeral impressions of hearing and vision memorable. For forced migrants, media practices of recording, storing, activating, and recirculating one’s past, present and future can thus be understood as specific ways of healing and coping with ruptured heterochronic temporalities. As such, media practices become entangled with managing these memories in a productive way ridden by hope, and become obligations of the refugee regime.

Representing this performative as well as material turn in cultural memory studies, Keightley and Pickering (2012; 2015; 2017) have produced one of the most extensive accounts of the intersection of media and memory as practices, which they call “management of change”:

> [W]ith memory as our starting point, we strive to manage the shifts and turns, disruptions and shocks that are integral to our experience in the long term. We strive to manage such change within our own lives and in relation to the lives of those who are close to us. We also manage such change within the contexts of the social formations, institutional structures and cultural media in which we have, in myriad ways, a participatory involvement, and we do so as these formations, structures and media are themselves in continual, although variably paced, processes of change. (Keightley & Pickering, 2017, p. 3)

Media practices, thus, become intertwined with conditions of heterochronia produced by refugee contexts. While Keightley and Pickering put a stark focus on progressive “change” as the central modern temporality, the refugee camp is paradoxically characterized by simultaneous change and non-change, by being put on hold in the in-between stage of the larger change (which was the forced migration). As will be seen, in media practices, refugees attach meanings and practices to mnemonic constellations and situations, making vernacular memory, and witnessing practices key to refugee identities. Media practices in refugee camps fundamentally address and shape heterochronic temporalities, not so much through “management of change” as through “management of
limbo”; that is, managing, producing and coping with the multiple temporalities of being and being made a refugee. Keightley and Pickering (2017, p. 123) foreground how through mnemonic media practices “we continually manage these transitions through everyday practices of remembering in order to establish and re-establish a coherent and continuous sense of ourselves in relation to others.” Forced migrants can be argued to “hyper-value” such mnemonic reconstructions in what Arjun Appadurai (2019, p. 561) called the “migrant archive” in order to tackle an “anxiety surrounding the status of what is lost.” But, as I will show, these hopeful mnemonic media practices are only one form of managing this change, as in refugee contexts memory can also be managed from the outside, for instance in witness accounts, asylum interviews, registries or search services. The two following sections explore these two intertwined dimensions of mediated managing and being managed in the heterochronic camp limbo as hopeful and obligatory remembering. The historical context of post-war refugee camps in Germany, including DP-camps and camps for German refugees and expellees, exemplifies the deep historicity of how media practices, memory and the refugee regime are entangled.

Hopeful remembering: reconciling past, present and future

Before returning to DP-camp Leipheim and seeing what happened with its newspaper endeavour *Heim*, the genre of refugee newspapers can also be traced many decades later. In March 2001, the monthly paper *The Flüchtling-Voice* was established by refugees and activists across Germany. As the cover page of the second issue in 2001 shows (Figure 27), the paper was a multilingual activist-radical magazine, claiming to provide a platform for voicing concerns on topics of interest and relevance for refugees, while being committed to an anti-racist struggle, to educating the readers about their rights, and to informing about protests. The editorial of No. 2 is a call to action: “Freedom! Freedom! We have all one day dreamt of YOU! What a precious thing to move free, to talk free, to choose free… Europeans came in our countries and there they were free, they were not accused of being criminals though they killed most of our leaders.” This invocation of colonial pasts summons the antiracist struggle against oppressive German asylum legislations, made concrete with an invitation to a national protest in Berlin.

During the 1980s and 1990s the situation in asylum-seeker accommodations had toughened. Protest movements, anti-racist groups, radical groups, human rights activists, and refugees were organizing throughout Germany, only to be interrupted and reignited by violent and racist hate-
crimes of far-right groups (particularly in the early 1990s, including murders and arson attacks). In the segregated, shabby accommodations of the late 20th century and early 21st century, a camp newspaper peacefully co-produced and supported by both inhabitants and official administrations – à la *Heim* – is hard to imagine.

Accommodations had become centres of segregation, control, and preparation of deportation. Still, media productions took place, no longer supported by administration, but by activists instead. And some of the purposes are surprisingly similar: the print medium of newspapers remains a central platform for dealing with one’s situation as a forced migrant, and specifically with “managing” the limbo, the multitude of changes in space and time, changes of past, present and future. Like with *Heim*, *The Flüchtlings-Voice* was about all of these dimensions: about colonial pasts, the trauma of leaving and losing a home, finding and rooting oneself in the present, dreaming of the future, and about protest against German asylum laws and anti-racist political change.

**Newspapers: printing past, present and future**

Camp newspapers are one of the media practices presented in this chapter that negotiate and manage camp temporalities as mnemonic media. Owain Jones and Joanne Garde-Hansen (2012, p. 4) wrote that “[m]emories of who
we are now, who we were, who we wanted to become, are wrapped up in memories of where we are, where we were, and where we will be (would like to be). Thus, media practices negotiate, reconcile, and work through past, present and future, and tie together space (where), time (when) and identity (who). Similarly, Astrid Erll (2011, p. 5) called for “understand[ing] the different ways in which people handle time, and this refers not only to their ‘working through the past’, but also includes their understanding of the present and visions for the future.” Newspapers in refugee camps present a site of media practices, where this “handling” of time is taking place: these papers are symbolically and materially tied to the space of the camp, circulate mainly inside it and thus can constitute camp communities.

As seen in the previous chapter, camp newspapers in post-war camps, such as Leipheim and Heim, can be deemed quite common, given rather large amounts of archival records. In addition to Yiddish/Jewish products, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Polish camp papers are also preserved in the UN Archives. In DP-camps, these papers could rely on a certain degree of financial, material, and even moral support. UNRRA, led by the Americans and the British, had a political interest in providing a certain level of welfare to the liberated former inmates of concentration, prison and labor camps, with the goal to eventually to get the residents into a physically and mentally fit enough state to be repatriated or migrate elsewhere. “Care, eligibility, and repatriation” were the three self-defined main tasks of UNRRA. As will be seen, this project also included media practices of remembrance and keeping up cultural memories and connections, to encourage migrating back home.

Browsing through the different kinds of DP-camp newspapers provides a colourful glimpse into issues, daily life, debates and events in the camps. Heim and other examples became platforms for creating a more stabilized public sphere within the camp, reporting about current events, elections of camp representatives, global political news, and cultural or sporting events in the camps. That these papers reported news is not very surprising, as news is the basic content of any newspaper. What makes these camp newspapers more special and unique is reading them as media practices of memory, of managing the temporal limbo situation of the camp. These papers are uniquely tied to a specific place and even more to a specific time; after all, they would lose their relevance as soon as the camp was closed, or if specific camp communities completely changed through people moving in and out. Incorporating this transient state, the papers are heterotopian and hetero-chronic from their very inception and attain specific meaning only within the
boundaries of a very specific place at a specific time. Moreover, these newspapers are saturated with layers of mediating and communicating past, present and future, and rearrange narrativizations about them in meaningful ways. *Heim* regularly memorialized and commemorated events of importance to the Jewish community and specifically survivors of the Shoah. The left-hand side of Figure 28 shows a full page commemorating the first anniversary (in 1946) of the liberation of concentration camp Buchenwald on 11 April 1945. In addition to visual illustrations, approaching some form of trauma coping and mourning, the lyrics of the “Buchenwald Song” are printed next to the full statistics of the victims murdered there. In many instances, this very early form of Holocaust memory, of negotiating a Jewish position after the Shoah, emerged on the pages of Heim and other Yiddish DP-papers. The right-hand side of Figure 28 shows the title page of a Polish DP-camp paper in Augsburg, which here commemorates the Polish Army’s uprising against the German occupational forces in 1944. In general, commemorations of important events during the war, stories of partisans, or dedications to victims were typical genres for articles, appearing in the form of personal reports, poems, pictures or drawings, or more traditional articles.

In addition to these practices of working through an immediate traumatic past of a group, Heim, Polonia and other productions would also activate broader cultural memories and references to a common past as a national group by celebrating religious and national holidays, printing lyrics of folkloristic songs, and in sections about literature and art. Through reactivating these cultural references in a mediated camp public sphere, it was hoped that national communities would be maintained. These groupings also reflected the very deliberate national separations of DP-camps, which UNRRA was striving for. In the very classical sense of Benedict Anderson’s (1983) “imagined communities” and their creation by way of newspapers, Heim and others provided platforms for such practices: invoking a common past, in the Assmannian sense of activating a cultural memory (Assmann, 1995), reassures stable origins within one’s disturbed life trajectory, and specifically the many commemorations of anniversaries seem to provide a ritualistic repair of rhythm and stability.

---

69 On the same page, a short text reveals the origins of the song. Concentration camp inmates in Buchenwald were encouraged by the commander to write a “camp song” to be sung on demand: “When the sing command came, our eyes focused on the crematorium, its chimneys spitting flames into the sky. We put all our hate into the song. From our croaky throats we yelled the word ‘free’ in the rhyme, so it echoed from the forest.” The author of the lyrics was murdered in Auschwitz.
Figure 28: Title pages of Heim (UN Arch, S-0436-0009-01, “Area Team 1062 – Augsburg – Copies of Newspaper A Heim Published in Leipheim Camps”) and Polonia (UN Arch, Augsburg – Polish newspaper Polonia published in DPs Camp-infantry caserne)
But the papers managed temporal changes and limbo beyond using and invoking the past, by simultaneously working on and through meanings of the present and the future. Functioning as public sphere vehicles in the camps, newspapers embodied media practices of documentation and of capturing experiences of the present. Mediating and storing the “now” of the camp included more than the usual reporting of “current news”, as every newspaper would do. It is striking to see sections like “camp chronicles”, “our camp life in pictures” or a full page of photos showing people working in the camp, entitled “work makes life sweet”.70 In particular, photos and their publication in page-covering collages become hopeful-appearing monuments to communal camp life, being narrativizing documents of the experience the camp space and time have produced. Photos taken inside the camp document experiences in real-time. In the case of the newspaper, the photos become part of media practices that communicate the heterochronic characteristics of the camp space: camp chronicles or photo collages create and narrate the present time as a situation of the camp, a unifying experience to be fixed through mediation. I will return to the media practice of photography in the next section, as what Keightley and Pickering (2014) call “vehicle of memory”, a mnemonic technology of transporting and re-imagining past, present and future.

Such genres not only narrate the present, but also connect to imagining the future. The camp heterochronia, after all, is not only characterized by a one-time slice out of time, but it promises another slice, namely the departure out of the camp, the resumption of another “normal” life outside of the limbo, continuing an imagined progression of time. The assignment to heterochronias is not always voluntary and comes with exclusions, which creates a fundamentally hopeful condition – even if, as Mirjam Twigt (2018) described in her study on Iraqi refugees stuck in protracted stays in Jordan, these “spaces of hope” appearing in uses of digital media technologies can be characterized by “cruel optimism” in Lauren Berlant’s words: hopes and desires that can be unrealistic, unachievable and an obstacle in themselves (Berlant, 2011). The camp newspapers, as a mnemonic media technology and practice, also negotiate such hope in mediating and communicating a narrative outlook into the future. *Heim*, as a Jewish paper, especially exemplifies this negotiation of hope. Articles about the emergence of “Erec-Israel”, clearly envisioning a Zionist future in Palestine, were plentiful. These articles

70 UN Arch, S-0436-0009-01, “Area Team 1062 – Augsburg – Copies of Newspaper A Heim Published in Leipheim Camps”.

203
were often accompanied by photo collages, like “our children – our future”, or photos about work in the camp, subtitled “learn a profession – secure your future”. Telling stories that re-connect and re-imagine one’s own biography toward some kind of future also leads back to refugee papers produced in the 1990s, or even today. Productions like The Flüchtlings-Voice are driven by fundamentally hopeful imaginations of a future for asylum-seekers in and beyond Germany, of leaving the holding zone of camps and asylum processes, an imagination that supports and drives political struggles (as I will show in Chapter Seven).

Keeping cultural memory warm: cinema and other cultural activities

In dealing with the multiple temporalities of past, present and future, while being stuck in the time pocket of the refugee camp, mnemonic media practices can be an agency-promoting form of “managing” the breaches and breaking points of heterochronic temporality. But “management” can also be understood more literally as something steered from the outside. In the case of DP-camps, UNRRA had a considerable political interest in maintaining certain national and cultural affiliations and fostering future aspirations for onward migration, especially for repatriation. In number 25 of Heim, the camp director wrote: “I wish that ‘A Heim’ may continue its activity in the same spirit and that it may be able to appear in its own country, read not only by our future free Palestine citizens coming from Leipheim, but also in the whole Jewish world.” Offering a clear plan for the future, and the role of this newspaper therein, she therefore highly appreciated Heim as “an instrument which enables the UNRRA-workers to speak to the camp-people about different questions in which we are interested.” To what extent UNRRA-staff were involved in the editorial processes of the paper remains unclear (records are simply lacking), but as the previous chapter has demonstrated, UNRRA exercised a significant amount of control over the licensing of publications and granting access to production facilities. On top of every title page is written “printed with the permission of UNRRA”.

In order to prepare and encourage eventual repatriation or further migration, controlling (or at least influencing) communication and cultural activities for DPs in camps was a welcomed opportunity. Following utilitarian

---

71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
logics and imaginaries, the camp media productions demonstrate how “keeping warm” cultural memory and mnemonic affections to nationality and cultural heritage became a key practice to facilitate willingness through securing a connection to the “homeland”. Aleida Assmann described cultural memory as a “framework for communication across the abyss of time” (Assmann, 2008, p. 97), a contract that communities made between past, present and future, which are “built on a small number of normative and formative texts, places, persons, artifacts, and myths […] meant to be actively circulated and communicated in ever-new presentations and performances” (Assmann, 2008, p. 100). A media turn in memory studies has emphasized the centrality of media technologies and practices in circulating and negotiating these traditions and myths, and thus being a site where cultural memory materializes and takes place. In particular, in forced migrations, these “migrant archives” become “hyper-valued” in a state of spatio-temporal confusion: “This confusion often leads to a deliberate effort to construct a variety of archives, ranging from the most intimate and personal (such as the memory of one’s earlier bodily self) to the most public and collective, which usually take the form of shared narratives and practices” (Appadurai, 2019, p. 562). This “confusion” that Appadurai is talking about could also be understood as a state of heterochronia. In this sense, the strong prevalence of cultural memory in the camp newspapers that has been shown so far in the material can be explained by a high interest in repairing and maintaining these cultural roots and imagining a subsequent future. Yet in the hetero-chronic condition of the camp specifically, maintaining and “keeping warm” cultural memory is an ambiguous project of the individual “migrant archive” on the one hand, and actively steered “management” of memory from other actors on the other hand.

We have seen how camp newspapers, especially in post-war DP-camps, became sites of mnemonic media practices. In addition to printed media products, cinemas and film screenings also entered refugee camps in the post-war period. A look into film schedules and the titles reveals the role of the moving image as another medium of cultural memory, both in the case of DP-camps and in camps for German refugees and expellees. Camp cinemas screened a wide range of educational and entertaining films, often American. But the schedules would also include films with a specific relevance of cultural memory and historical references for specific national and ethnic groups living in the camps. UNRRA had an elaborate system of film screenings in the camps: mobile cinemas toured the camps, managed by regional officers distributing the films and projectors. Administrative correspondences from the British
Zone showed how a “Film Librarian” was employed in the headquarters to take care of the film stocks and enable their distribution. A range of (quite unexpected) actors offered specific films. For example, the Hamburg office of the petroleum company Shell (October 1946) offered films for “vocational training” to be screened in the camps. The Polish Army also offered films. An often-changed system of hierarchies and responsibilities, including a “Regional Care Officer”, the “Film Librarian”, the “Information Control Unit” and the “Repatriation Unit”, all subsumed under the Headquarters of the British Zone, handled film distribution. Through these offices, UNRRA tried to systematize the screenings in the camps in order to provide comprehensive coverage. Detailed schedules of the mobile film units show that specific film types, such as e.g. “Polish repatriation films”, were circulated between the camps. Here, the specific genre of “Repatriation Films” gives a strong hint for speculating about the actual content of the films, which is unfortunately lost. Given that repatriation was a proclaimed goal (the aspired-to other side of the camp heterotopia and heterochronia), these films most likely employed forms of cultural memory as forms of re-connection to this other space and time. Films were supplied specifically for each of the different nationalities: Estonian, Latvian, Polish, Ukrainian, etc. These films were catering not only to the various linguistic capabilities among the national groups, but also reinforcing national groupings and encouraging feelings of belonging and heritage via the form of film and the media practice of organized, communal screenings. Again, films about national pasts, revisiting recognizable and well-known memory sites and topoi, served to “keep warm” cultural memory and can influence re-imaginings of not only the DPs’ pasts, but also support imaginations of futures “back home”, actively re-weaving the imagined, cultural “memoryscapes” (Phillips & Reyes, 2011) in order to neither lose ties, nor build too-strong new ties to the temporary in-between places, and re-connect past and future.

Such practices not only included cinema operations, but also extended into other cultural activities within the “welfare” programs. Compared to camp accommodations in the 1980s or today, DP-camps and expellee and refugee camps for Germans hosted an astonishingly lively array of cultural life, both of more sophisticated and folkloristic kinds, including exhibitions of folkloristic handicraft and art, performances of dance and theatre, and religious services for specific denominations in improvised but carefully built and decorated camp chapels. Specifically designed invitations to these events

74 UN Arch, S-0406-0003-18, “BZ/HQ/EC – Eligibility and Care – 476 – Film Services – Parts I and II”.

206
can be found in the archival records, showcasing the importance of documenting activities, like ballet performances or Ukrainian embroidery exhibitions for higher ranks of UNRRA, who would be distinguished guests.\textsuperscript{75} One can only speculate about the role of these activities: while these activities were certainly popular among camp residents, a vital cultural camp life was also a proof of success for UNRRA-officials, a series of feel-good-events, ticking the box of providing “welfare” and ultimately welcomed as a way of preparing DPs mentally and physically for repatriation. In the case of a Polish theatre group, “Regional Repatriation Officer M. Krysz” argued for engaging them further because “such a Theatre Group, working for our repatriation propaganda, will render very good service because they were the only group of Poles capable of bringing back in the minds of Polish D.Ps. recollections of Polish life, Polish traditions, Polish folk-lore, etc. which Poles abroad for long years have almost forgotten.”\textsuperscript{76} Together with another group, M. Krysz planned a “propaganda tour” of all Polish camps in the region (despite the fact that the performance had instigated a heated debate between different UNRRA-officers about the quality of the theatre group).

In contrast to such utilitarian imaginaries of cultural memory among camp authorities, for DPs such cultural activities also simply provided things to do, escapism, making time pass – managing the tedious, monotonous temporality of the present, the uncertain waiting in limbo. While everything seems to be on hold, cultural memoriescapes are being reworked in between places: in building and re-imagining continuities and ruptures, on entangled levels of individuals and groups, by way of working with and through media like embroidery and stitching needles, paint and brush, a play script, a religious text, or a dancing body. Annette Jakobsen (2011) described in fictional diaries, based on extensive oral history research, the experiences of German refugees living in camps in Denmark in the mid-late 1940s;\textsuperscript{77} cultural activities, film screenings and religious services were extremely appreciated by the diary authors:

> What a joy is offered to us on the cabaret stage and how heartily we could laugh, when we get the opportunity. From our barrack leader, whose son seems to fancy me, we got tickets for this colourful evening … Yesterday, Pentecost Sunday, at 4pm it premiered, then again at 8pm and again this

\textsuperscript{75} UN Arch, S-0436-0018-02, “Newspapers and Publications”.

\textsuperscript{76} UN Arch, S-0406-0003-18, “BZ/HQ/EC – Eligibility and Care – 476 – Film Services – Parts I and II”.

\textsuperscript{77} German refugees and expellees from the ceded eastern areas were also transported to Denmark on boats from Gdansk to Copenhagen in early 1945. The Allies decided that Germans should remain in camps in Denmark until repatriation into the occupational zones would be possible (in the late 1940s).
morning twice and the day after tomorrow a final show at 8pm…I especially liked the miss on the stairwell, her stage number was called ‘tapped on the stairs’ … almost better than Marika Rökk [a popular singer, dancer and actress during the war]. (Jakobsen, 2011, p. 50; author’s translation)

Shows and events like these inserted memoryscapes into the camp life, embodied by someone they called “our local Marika Rökk”. By bringing and integrating such cultural references to the past into the present space of the camp, such media practices contributed to creating temporary homes in the rather un-homey camp limbo.

Mnemonic media practices managing the various temporalities of the camp heterochronia, in these cases, are an entanglement of (on the one hand) various actors and their motivations and projected meanings and (on the other hand) various media technologies and practices: managing memory to encourage repatriation, as well as managing and reworking continuities and ruptures as individuals belonging to national communities, and managing the present, by finding escapist entertainment, and make waiting time pass. A similar situation emerged among post-war German expellees in West Germany (a distinct group from the DPs, see Chapter Two, yet in this regard similar) where memory politics early on became a key dimension of experiencing and managing the socio-spatial change. After both German states were founded in 1949 and the new borders became even more fixed, hopes to return to the ceded areas decreased. But West Germany’s leadership of the 1950s not only rejected the new borders, but actively encouraged and formulated a claim to owning the ceded land, fuelling hopes to be able to return one day among the 8 million expellees (and potential voters, see campaign poster by CDU from 1947 in Figure 29).

As multiple studies on the emerging memory politics among German expellees have shown (for an overview, see Scholz et al., 2015), these initial hopes to return only very slowly turned into a wider acceptance of German guilt in the war, making it politically impossible to claim the ceded territories any longer, and making return impossible. Gradually, after the 1970s (when chancellor Willy Brandt recognized the new border officially as part of his new, more reconciliatory “East politics” (Ostpolitik)), claiming that the territories would belong to Germany became a right-wing, revisionist political position (even more so today). But earlier (1949–1969), the handling of

78 The central tension in memory politics of German expulsion is that between Germans as victims and perpetrators. Narratives of German expellees as victims of the Red Army clash with German guilt in starting the war, occupying areas, and committing genocide.
expellee issues was centralized in the “Federal Ministry for Expellees, Refugees and War Victims”, which conjured up hopes for an eventual return, in line with societal discourse. In this undertaking, one can again observe that memory and mnemonic media practices are central. As Alina Laura Tiews (2017) in her study on cinematic representations of flight and expulsion of the Germans after 1945 has shown, films became central platforms for social negotiations of this memory culture early on. Movie productions and (later on) TV films and series became sites where imaginaries about this experience and its causes and consequences were negotiated, and the storyline of “Flight and Expulsion” was woven into a national memory of post-war Germany. Several actors had an interest in affecting these discourses: expellees themselves, especially those organized in “expellee associations”, in order to find representation; media producers and institutions, in order to cater to large audience segments; politicians, in order to cater to potential voters.

Figure 29: CDU campaign poster from 1947 (state elections in North-Rhine Westphalia). Text: “Expellees. Do not despair! For your living rights here! For the old Heimat! CDU”. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KAS-Vertriebene-Bild-5876-3.jpg

79 There were associations (Landsmannschaften) for the different regional groups, e.g. Sudeten, East Prussia, Silesia etc. These were subsumed within the Federation of the Expellees (Bund der Vertriebenen) on a national level. The association exists today, but has long lost its strong position and representation of the expellees, and now holds conservative, revisionist, right-wing political positions.
In this context, another archived example for concerted mnemonic media practices was the film program run by the expellee ministry in the 1950s. The ministry had a stock of *Heimatfilme* that could be rented and screened all across the country. Like a pre-digital video-on-demand service, the 16mm optical sound films could be ordered for “associations, schools, education centres, army barracks”, and one can strongly assume also in camps, given that large refugee populations lived in camp structures well into the 1950s. The purpose of these films was to

… show the expellees and refugees their old homes. But at the same time the films serve to make the locals familiar with the cultural monuments and landscapes in East and Central Germany. Today we have historical documents in the form of black-and-white as well as colour films from almost all areas of expulsion and from Central Germany.

By “Central Germany” the authors referred to the GDR, given that “East Germany” meant the ceded territories in what is today Poland, Russia and Czech Republic. The movies were accompanied by slide film collections about the specific areas. The lists of film titles and slide film stocks are very telling: “Unforgotten German East”, “Memories of East Pommerania”, “Mother East Prussia”, or “Paths of Returning Home”. Very deliberately mediated cultural memory was offered to the viewer in these productions. Their circulation and thus activation and “keeping warm” of mnemonic connections to the left-behind lands was organized at the highest level, very similar to UNRRA’s cinema operations. In a wider context of mnemonic practices, this film operation is only one of many puzzle pieces that started to emerge in post-war West Germany: memory cultures of German refugees and expellees were in the making. Expellee organizations (*Landsmannschaften* among others) were eager and busy in documenting, archiving, performing and circulating their specific cultural identities, be it in form of *Heimatstuben* (“homeland parlours”) as miniature museums and cultural meeting places, or in collections and publications of music, songs, stories or the like (Eisler, 2015). The expellee press (mainly a paper called *Deutscher Ostdienst*) was a central platform for circulating mnemonic meanings in the respective communities.

---

80 BArch, B150_3377, "Einsatz von Heimatfilmen und Diareihen".
81 Ibid.
Camps as homes: building and dwelling

The examples of newspapers, cinemas, exhibitions and cultural events have carved out mnemonic media practices as forms of the hopeful memory work taking place in camps and managing the multiple heterochronic temporalities of encampment and forced migration. This memory work revolves around situating oneself and being situated in time, in a perceived rupture and intermission between past, present and future. Negotiating temporality through media practices is however always also intertwined with spatiality, namely through practices of home and homemaking. The concept of “home”, of dwelling in a built and maintained spatial arrangement, is one of the most fundamental ways and modes of being in the world, both temporally and spatially. Martin Heidegger (1954/1999) in his essay ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ [Bauen, Wohnen, Denken] traced the interrelationships of constructing houses to live in and the cultural practice of dwelling (wohnen). He drew on the etymologies of the German words to argue that building and dwelling are actually the same thing, or rather, that building is per se already a form of dwelling (the modern verb bauen originally meant ‘dwelling’, cf. Scandinavian: att bo ‘to dwell’) and that the concept also includes tending and cultivating (cf. Latin: colere/cultura). The modern verb wohnen, on the other hand, originally meant ‘being at peace’, as in ‘protected’ and ‘spared’. This history of the concepts of building, dwelling, and homemaking as important cultural techniques in Western contexts provides interesting hints in further understanding the traces of media practices that have informed and shaped refugee camps as a home, as a built space, as a construct made into a home to dwell in. This connection of building and dwelling sheds light on the material surroundings discussed in Chapter Five: architectures of camps are the built environments that sociomaterially define the conditions of dwelling, and were built and cultivated to be “protected” and “at peace” as places of temporary care and shelter. This interconnection of the concepts of constructing a home-space and dwelling in it has a temporal dimension, too. Home, homemaking, and dwelling are practices that require time, and include not only a hopeful assumption about longer-lasting stability, but also about one’s place in life trajectory, history and biography. These practices and notions face challenges in the heterochronic condition of being a refugee and living in a camp. “Home” becomes a complicated concept, imbued with multiple possible meanings: home can mean the left behind, lost Home with a capital H, so to speak, the temporary, maybe protracted home of the refugee
camp, or an envisioned, hoped-for home, somewhere else, at another point in time.

Picking up the inquiry of refugee camps, mnemonic media practices are revealed to be practices of homemaking. Newspapers, cinemas, and exhibitions serve to transfer homes inside the fences and borders of the camp, while at the same time creating homey feelings and connections in the present situation of the camp. Practices of bringing history into the camp, whether it be one’s individual biographical history or national/community history, can be found in different camps, connecting the ideas of building and dwelling.


Figure 30 depicts photographs from a DP-camp in Hersfeld. It shows the camp barber shaving a customer, another camp resident. The description on the back of the photo reads: “With the mirror framed by pictures of his native town, the barber thinks of the time when he will be home again.” Photos especially are perfectly mobile “vehicles of memory” (Keightley & Pickering, 2014) that are just as mobile as their owners, and can mediate and transport

82 UN Arch, S-1058-0001-01, “Germany Mission – Photographs #001–120”.

212
“travelling memories” (Erll, 2011) during migration experiences. Pictures became snippets of the left-behind home that could be inserted into the camp, function as decorations, and realize media practices of homemaking by giving the camp a history, bringing one’s own history inside, and thus making it one’s home (at least a temporarily, as the photo can always travel along to the next place). The camp barber’s photos depict cityscapes and landscapes of his left-behind home and thus mediate an attachment to home as a place, a cultural landscape. Maybe he kept photos of home as people, family and friends, privately. Or maybe these photos were actually postcards, because individual photography was a rare luxury. Either way, the barber’s pictures enable a melding of the “cultural/spiritual home” and the “everyday home” (Eastmond, 2006), being “memories of different places that come together in the practices of homemaking at the place of a present dwelling” (Brun & Fabós, 2015, p. 8). Similarly, in early 21st century, Koen Leurs (2017) has described young refugees’ smartphones as “pocket archives”, as storage places of narratives and identities, saved in video and picture files or social media profiles. The camp barber’s photos show a trajectory of such media practices: mnemonic media of and for the “migrant archive” (Appadurai, 2019) realized in diverse media technological environments.

Equipping this “migrant archive” by bringing things into the camp, or creating objects there, and imbuing them with mnemonic meanings, extended beyond photos. Post-war German refugees, for instance, took along cultural artefacts like house keys and church bells. In the case of house keys, it becomes especially evident how context-dependent memory media can be: as a plain artefact, a key has no specific mnemonic meaning, it is a functional object or tool. Yet when fleeing with its owner, when leaving behind the house it operates for, the key gains a new, extra-objectual meaning. It only then becomes a carrier of memories and emotional attachment to a lost home, a meaning that can never be read, felt or fully understood from this object by an external observer. The key becomes the ultimate symbol and storage of hope and resilience: hope to return one day, and resilience to cutting that last material tie, literally the access to one’s home. Today, museum exhibitions about Flight and Expulsion of the Germans still host collections of keys to abandoned houses,83 and in 2016, Caritas International launched a campaign for forced migrants called “Keys of Hope” featuring the stories of individual Syrian refugees based on their house keys.84

---

83 E.g. in the Schlesisches Museum Görlitz (https://www.ausstellung-angekommen.de/heute).
of the Palestinian people in Washington D.C. also has artwork with keys as symbols for the Nakba.85

Church bells also became important mnemonic media of the home. One of the most characteristic and well-known symbols of camp Friedland is in fact its bell, the “Friedland bell” or *Heimkehrerglocke* (“returnee bell”) (Figure 31). The bell was donated in 1949 by expellees and refugees and its ringing became a symbolic call for peace, *Heimat*, and German reunification (Schießl, 2016). Among German expellees, bells were important cultural objects with deep meanings and became sonic reminders of the lost home. Other church bells also became sound-based media objects of remembering, transferring, and rebuilding home in West Germany. These bells were sometimes recorded and replayed on the radio and in expellee meet-ups, and in this way, as Annelie Kürsten (2010) pointed out, the specific ringing of the hometown’s church bells became a memory site.

Of course, the bells were not transported during the actual escape. During the war, bells across the entire German Reich were confiscated and collected to be melted down as material for the weapon industry. Despite this treatment, many bells survived to the end of the war and others could be rescued from the “bell graveyard” in Hamburg’s harbour, and these were then reinstalled in new hometowns, often settlements emerging out of camps. A radio show from 1956, an annual Christmas program, broadcast some of the bells ringing, while the reporter said “The bells greet the Germans on the other side of the newly built barriers; they greet the Sudetenland and Silesia.”86 Bells, hence, transferred the sound of home: being able to ring across borders, and cover and delineate the land of the home through their sound, they connected those that could hear it, and also contributed to the building of a new home. As another radio broadcast from 1955 put it, “[the bells] ring mightily […] also in the new reality, where the Silesian has saved his ‘inner Heimat’.”87

---

85 Online at: https://mpp-dc.org/gallery/keys-of-the-right-of-return/ (last access: 30 July 2021).
87 HA WDR 2829, radio program manuscript „Alte und neue Heimat – Schlesische Weihnacht”, by Hans Niekrawietz, 17 December 1955, p.2.
Some home-like components of (eventual) new homes were also built within DP-camps: for example, camp chapels for specific denominations and religions were designed and installed in barracks. Other barracks hosted mnemonic, cultural artefacts that were not brought, but made and created on site, like pottery, dresses, embroidery, wood carvings and the like. Creating exhibitions and events heavily based on national and cultural memory, putting cultural roots on display, and emphasizing heritage and “Home” also happens today. There are plenty of records of photo and handicraft exhibitions in activist archives of the 1980s and 1990s. Local initiatives and events were often articulations of such mnemonic media practices, and continue to be so today: in my hometown in Bavaria, an “intercultural summer party” in 2017 featured the diverse cuisines of residents of the local asylum-seeker camp, dance performances, photo exhibitions about Afghanistan, and sales of folkloristic handicraft. Be it in post-war DP-camps or asylum-seeker camps in 2017, practices of Home-ing find media to
articulate themselves. Yet while such events might promote appreciation and understanding, they are also always displays of the Other: carefully arranged in pre-defined mnemonic frames, leaving little room for alternative practices of remembering, telling stories, or providing critical perspectives on migration and refugeehood that do not start from performing gratitude for hospitality by showcasing exoticness. Oftentimes, such events were and are welcomed as opportunities for authorities to demonstrate the smooth and successful operations of both the DP-camp leaders back then and refugee camp officials today.

Figure 32: Photo album “Ukrainian D.P. Camp Cornberg”, 1946 (UN Arch, S-0436-0004-07, “Area Team 1023-DP Camp 566-Cornburg-Photographs and Copy of Newspaper-“For Liberty”-Ukrainian Camp Weekly”).

Homemaking in the heterochronic camp limbo incorporates complex media practices of creating, mediating, displaying and arranging objects and memories. Building and dwelling become enmeshed with mnemonic media practices of both giving the camp itself a history, and of inserting one’s own history. These histories are also linked to the present by way of documenting the new home and memorializing it. The archives show extensive practices of documentation, such as photo collections of camp life, photo albums, or camp chronicles. Back in the newspapers of the DP-camps, such memorializing documentations of camp homes could be observed. In the files about DP-camps, one can even find entire photo albums about camp life. These albums from Ukrainian DP-camp Cornberg and DP-camp Hersfeld (Figure 32) give insight into various activities undertaken in the camp, and they are also mnemonic media practices in themselves, revealing how photography, acts of documentation, and arranging memories became a practice of the “migrant archive” of the community and the experience of dwelling in the camp. It is unclear who the exact authors of these albums are, but substantial influence of camp staff can be assumed, simply because of access to the materials of an album and photography. The photos usually depict specific
events: recreational activities like skiing, playing ping pong, swimming, or reading; but also cultural events like raising national flags, religious holidays, and festivities. The album from Cornburg even documents camp protests, such as a hunger strike against forced repatriation. Similarly, “camp chronicles” (usually written by camp authorities) would carefully document all these events, writing down “the History” of specific camps. Interestingly, these were not strict reports of undertaken operations, but were often written in more prosaic style as immersive stories about how the camp and its population were doing. Finally, there are photos of move-out day: DPs posing in front of trains carefully decorated with flowers, flags and chalk messages written on the trains (Figure 33).

The day of leaving the temporary camp home becomes a mediated event in these photos, making sure it is not forgotten. The heterochronic limbo of the camp – at least preliminarily – comes to an end at this moment in time. Building a new home and dwelling in it will have to start all over again. The people in this photo look hopeful. What happened to them in their further lives is not answered by the archive. But the traces of their media practices provide a glimpse into the complex attempts and laborious endeavours of managing difficult changes, ruptures, and temporal situations in their lives. These heterochronic temporalities have been worked upon and managed, been mediated in newspapers, cinema operations, exhibitions, photo albums, handicrafts and camp buildings, reconciling pasts, presents, and futures.

88 E.g. in UN Arch, S-0405-0019-04, “Z-181 – Story Material Used”, or UN Arch, S-0436-0016-01, “Illustrated Histories, Daily Logs, etc. of Various Camps”.

Obligatory remembering: inscribing biographies in the modern refugee regime

In the second part of this chapter, I will delve into a different dimension of mnemonic media practices. At several points so far, it has become clear that management of temporalities, limbo, and the heterochronic condition are performed not only in hopeful, agency-filled, bottom-up media practices. It has been shown how media practices were steered, managed and employed by more powerful actors in the camp context, especially staff and other authorities representing the refugee regime. History and memory (be they individual, cultural, national or diasporic) were dependent on, and actively influenced and affected by, a variety of actors, up to and including the fact that it became compulsory to give witness to one’s history in order to obtain refugee status. This aspect will be elaborated upon and explored in this section under the notion of what can be called obligatory remembering. Here, it becomes clear that the inscription of biography, through media practices of remembering and witnessing, plays a central role in the making of the modern refugee. The management of heterochronic ‘camp time’, hence, also
extends to individual ‘refugee time’, and its mediated management in the systems of the refugee regime.

As a complement to the hopeful mnemonic media practices described thus far, this section moves on to an entanglement of media, memory, and refugeehood that approaches the heterochronic condition from media practices of refugee memory in direct connection to the refugee regime. As will be seen, being encouraged (or forced) to remember, give witness, recount and inscribe experiences, identities and biographies, is fundamentally tied to being – and being made – a refugee. This making of refugees via memory, witnessing and remembering is historically tied to media technologies and mnemonic media practices, that is, in mediated spaces and genres (like asylum interviews, registers, reunification and tracing services), and in newspaper and radio interviews. Giving witness to one’s “refugee story” is connected to (per)forming and mediating a refugee identity. This process unfolds for instance in mnemonic registries that store refugee stories in attempts to trace and reunite families and friends in forced migration situations, exemplified by the International Tracing Service and the Red Cross’s Suchdienst (search service) after World War Two, and demonstrates evolutions of the asylum interview and the refugee regime’s push to inscribe biographies and memories into legal frameworks. While the previous chapter delved into administrational media practices (demonstrating how media infrastructures of governance have shaped media practices of making and managing the camp space and its inhabitants), the examples in this chapter will further open up historical trajectories in the temporal dimensions of such media practices, and the content of administrational media infrastructures: in other words, of how media practices of inscribing “documents” create the reality of the refugee figure (Gitelman, 2014), and thus how these practices point both forward and backward in time. Such heterochronic media practices of inscribing biographies, memories and witness accounts undergird the refugee regime to this very day.

Witnessing: the refugee story

“Where are you from?” and “How did you end up here?” are tricky questions. They preclude inclusion, while starting out from the addressed being already in an othered position. Any answer will be a performed testimony to being foreign, hailing from “back there” and “back then”, and a legitimization of
being here and now. In a radio broadcast from 1946, a reporter visited a refugee camp in the town of Stedingen, close to Bremen. Every time he interviewed one of the camp residents (who had migrated from the ceded eastern areas), he started with the same question: “So, where are you from now, coming from this transport here?” The refugees respectively get a few seconds of air-time to tell “their story”.

I’m coming from Russian captivity. I was in a camp in Kraudensk [the audio is hard to understand and the real name is unclear] and was lucky to be released now, to Breslau [Wrocław], which is my home. But I found my home burnt down, no family, no one. I joined the trek to find my family again here in the Reich. They are apparently in Bavaria, but how to find them…

I’m from Breslau [Wrocław]. We were also forced to leave our homes, it went quite fast, we couldn’t take much luggage. But the trip so far was very good, we got food, which we didn’t expect, everything was quite organized.90

These are two ‘vox pop’ snippets from the radio segment, with original voices from 1946. But their set-up and narrative structure is timeless and almost interchangeable with narratives from the present day. Like in this activist zine, interviewing camp residents in Lübeck in 1996:

Can you tell us about your escape? – We fled from the villages in Mardin. I came with my sisters in 1993. Our mother came only in 1995. We had difficulties in school already. We were punished for speaking Kurdish in the breaks […] Also otherwise, repressions were tough. Raids could happen all the time, you couldn’t prepare. They just suddenly opened the doors, during the day or in the middle of the night. They just came and took people. We came to Germany the four of us, by help of escape helpers, who we had to pay. We then registered in Itzehoe.91

There are thousands, perhaps millions, of these refugee stories told, saved and archived in the world, and it is not the purpose of this chapter to delve deeper into their narrativities. Rather, these two examples from different times and contexts, yet strikingly similar in what and how they are telling, are also media practices. They are mnemonic media practices of witnessing: of

90 Ibid.
performing, recording and mediating experiences into discourse, in these cases oriented towards media institutions. All three interviewed refugees relate themselves to the interviewer and the media, and thus some kind of public sphere, in a practice of sharing, circulating and performing a refugee identity. All of them emphasize the plight as a legitimate, necessary reason for escape, the loss of the home, a cumbersome trip and an eventual arrival. It is this plot, remembered, witnessed and mediated, that discursively makes them “refugees”.

John Durham Peters (2009) understood witnessing to be the transferal of seeing into saying, from those who were present in time and space, to those who were absent. Witnessing is therefore essentially mediated, having to rely on media technologies and materialities. Günther Thomas (2009) has historicized media witnessing as a cultural form, arguing that “[p]hysical co-presence is central to witnessing, and the possibility of substituting such bodily presence with media is crucial for the development of the cultural form” (Thomas, 2009, p. 97). Thus, refugees transfer embodied experiences of forced migration processes into discursive, mediated, technology-based structures, making their experiences available second-hand to others.

Managing temporal and spatial ruptures and the heterochronic condition thus naturally comes along with witnessing, with giving testimony to a past before the rupture and the onset of heterochronia. Testifying, and thereby creating the breaches and breaking points in one’s biography, opens up the heterochronic condition that the refugee has been inserted in. Witnessing becomes a media practice of communicatively othering and differentiating temporalities, a form of management that becomes visible in the interview snippets and in the selection of narrative structures and experiences to tell.

Encounters with mass or activist media are however not the only instances of witnessing as a mnemonic media practice. Giving accounts of one’s history and experience, testifying to it in the present, stretches across media forms and technologies. In camp newspapers, protest leaflets and zines, memoirs, social media posts, and even in the asylum interview, in search registries and tracing platforms for finding lost family and friends, the repetitive re-telling and remediation of one’s refugee history, memory, and experience is crucial. Myria Georgiou (2018) studied the voices and speaking positionalities of refugees in digital Europe today, critically assessing how the “refugee story” being told and put forward by different initiatives remain limited in a political struggle of recognition, “on occasions challenging hegemonic power structures but most often digitally reaffirming bordering power and its symbolical articulations” (Georgiou, 2018, p. 45). Similarly, Tammas (2019)
critiqued the tokenizing of refugee stories today, following expectations to “inspire sympathy” and follow an “implicit narrative logic to the questions: ‘tragedy’ to ‘success’, ‘hell’ to ‘paradise’”. Thus, these stories become less about the actual refugee subjects and tend to “marginalise or oversimplify the complex context surrounding these stories” (Tammas, 2019). As the historical examples show, witnessing and telling one’s refugee story stretches across time and media technologies, well beyond the digital context. As will be elaborated further, the refugee regime has in fact historically incorporated media witnessing and remembering (or the mediated “refugee story”) as media practices that refugees cannot avoid or circumvent, because claims to any identity, status, care, and sheltered protection would then become practically impossible. Remembering and memory’s ties to media practices and technologies are obligatory in the first place.

Mnemonic registries: tracing and registering stories

The refugee regime (and border regimes on the whole) have always resorted to media technologies to facilitate an administrative system of governance that systematizes bodies in space and restricted movement. Forms, passes, and IDs are examples of inescapable technologies of identification (for a history of identification since the Renaissance see Groebner, 2007). In addition to regulating and controlling space and mobility, regulating temporality has been equally important to the emerging refugee regime. Not only bodies and physicality are administrated through media, but also biography and temporality of life trajectories have become paradigms of categorization, once again revealing the entanglement of spatialized time and temporalized space. Forms of administration, as well as services for tracing and reuniting lost family members and friends, became mnemonic registries, systematically collecting, storing and circulating individual memories, biographies and stories – registers where memories become and make refugees, and where refugees make memories.

The International Tracing Service

The Central Tracing Bureau (CTB) was founded at the end of the war under the name, and it was connected to the operations of UNRRA and IRO (International Refugee Organization). The Allies started to foresee the immense amounts of displacement and forced migration unfolding in Europe and thus first commissioned the British Red Cross to establish a service to find, identify, and reunite missing people in the aftermath of World War Two
and the Holocaust in Europe. Starting in 1945, the CTB was in the hands of UNRRA, and in 1947 it was taken over by IRO and renamed to International Tracing Service (ITS). The service was originally based in Versailles, and then moved to Frankfurt am Main, and lastly moved to Bad Arolsen, where it still exists and is now called Arolsen Archives. The small town of Bad Arolsen in Northern Hesse was conveniently located in the middle of the various occupied zones. At first, former SS-barracks were used to host the massive number of paper files that were aggregating, but the archives were soon moved to a new modernist building, as the archive had vastly outgrown the barracks. In 1955, the International Committee of the Red Cross took over administration of the archive (in order to not leave the archive solely in the hands of Germany).

In the beginning, the collections included concentration camp registers, lists and transportation documents, and all kinds of confiscated Nazi documents that were collected with the purpose of helping to trace and find lost victims. This operation included a significant amount of detective work (even including reconstructions of the ‘death marches’) employed to enable reburials of victims (giving them back an identity), and document the Shoah and confront Germans with the crimes (Ulbricht, 2012). The operations of ITS were fundamentally concerned with people on the move, displaced from their homes, liberated victims of the Nazi regime, and often living in camps afterwards. Soon, ITS also started to produce files themselves, with the DP2 and DP3 files and the CM/1-forms at the center. These forms were used to identify and register Displaced Persons, and they were collected in index boxes in order to enable tracing, reunification and repatriation. Through these forms (which were first and foremost gathered and produced in refugee camps and added to the archival collections in 1948), ITS had a vast stock of files about displaced people, including their biographies and all kinds of personal data about them. The documents materialized, mediated and managed the heterochronic limbo situation of transition: in between persecution, imprisonment or enslavement and any form of future in a reshuffled world. In addition to the CM/1-files, ITS had indexes of millions of individuals, including DP2-cards for claiming DP-status, and these forms helped make individual ITS-files for each registered person. Ultimately, the goal was to make these files searchable, all coming together in the “Central Name Index” (CNI), and the “Tracing and Documentation files” (T/D), which were opened for every individual upon whom a tracing request had
been made. Eventually, ITS became a Europe-wide media infrastructure of grappling with the forced migration movements, which the war had caused.92

The workings of ITS as a media infrastructure entangled media practices of remembering and witnessing with migration infrastructures of distributing and providing care and enabling mobility and control. ITS’s operations inserted the “refugee story”, the witness account, into structured forms. Figure 34 is a picture from UNRRA’s photo collection, and it gives insight into what the concrete media practices under the umbrella of ITS would look like.

Sofia and Janusz K., sister and brother aged 10 and 6, two of the ‘unaccompanied children’ who are being cared for in the UNRRA assembly centre at Kloster Indersdorf. Picture shows children being interviewed by officer of UNRRA’s Tracing Bureau, whose job it is to establish the children’s identity if possible. The K. family came from Pensk, Poland. The parents died in exile in Germany.93

Figure 34: Interview of Sofia and Janusz K. (UN Arch, S-1058-0001-01, “Germany Mission – Photographs #001-120, undated (1943–1948)”).

92 For the history of ITS, see Arolsen Archives (AA), 6.1.1./ 8323001, “Documents on the administrative history and the activities of the ITS, 1945 – 1951”; Stone, 2017.
93 UN Arch, S-1058-0001-01, “Germany Mission – Photographs #001-120, undated (1943–1948)”.

224
The children’s memories and stories were collected, noted, and inserted into the millstones of the Tracing Service. A cross-check in the (widely digitized and publicly available) Arolsen Archives retrieves Sofia K.’s DP2-card (Figure 35). Maybe it was filled out when the photo above was taken. A small note on the bottom says “sent home 2.6.46”. Her brother’s documents are missing. But concentration camp documents from Buchenwald can be found for the name of most probably their father, offering some corroboration for the children’s story that they had lost their parents.

Millions of stories like these shaped the media practices of remembering, witnessing, and becoming media infrastructures in post-war refugee and DP-camps. Filling the media infrastructures with actual content, witness accounts became the sociomaterial grounds of refugee governance. The media work of sorting these life stories was rather extensive (see photos in Figure 36). After all, a complex system had been established and had to be kept in order: there were paper files, forms, hand-written, typewritten, index cards, envelopes, numbers, names, stamps, and more. As the photo in the lower left of Figure 36 shows, tracing included channels and networks of communication, not only in paper, but also in telegraphy, and later on radio, and moving these data around the continent. Inside these media technologies were the individual stories, the memories and accounts, actually filling the
media with meaning, giving the data obtain real-life referents, creating data points and connections, and delineating the administered refugee figure.

Figure 36: Photos from International Tracing Service in DP-camps (UN Arch, S-1058-0001-01, “Germany Mission-Photographs, 1943–1948”).

The CM/1-form

One of the most central files for ITS was the “CM/1-form”. In 1947, when the IRO took over the ITS and the administration of the DP-camps, one of their first efforts was to investigate the eligibility of all encamped individuals to UNRRA’s services, following UNRRA’s slogan of “care, eligibility, welfare”. Before this time, UNRRA had often been more lenient in accepting DPs without further checks, simply providing shelter during the most chaotic years. The key instrument for IRO’s inventory was the “CM/1-form”, where the letters stand for “Care and Maintenance”. The forms were filled out by hundreds of thousands of DPs, not just in Germany, but also other countries.
where IRO was operating. The filled-out form was then registered and pre-checked by “registrars”, often DPs being employed for that task in the camps. Then an “eligibility officer” (these were also called “control center officer” or “area welfare officer”) conducted an interview and noted their decision on the form. All positive forms (“eligible for care”) were checked once again by a “chief eligibility officer”.

The Arolsen Archives host the most extensive collection of registered refugee and DP stories in the world, including an impressive stock of 196,000 CM/1-files referring to 578,000 names, all fully available and searchable online. The CM/1-form was essentially a questionnaire for an “Application for Assistance”. Its shape, size, language, colour and details varied across the different zones and countries where it was used. The standard form consisted of a cover envelope (Figure 37) which noted the name, birthday and origin of the individual in question, and was connected it to an ITS-number. Inside was a pages-long questionnaire form, the actual CM/1 application for assistance. Figure 38 shows a randomly chosen page as an example. The answers were filled either by hand or with typewriter. The layers of writings, typed text and stampings on the documents reveal the various stages the files went through: layers of registration, checks, corrections and decisions – the labour of making a biography fit the form, so that the individual could become a “refugee”, and so that their biography, mediated witnessing, and remembering could become the basis for “eligibility”, a media practice still fundamental to the global refugee regime of today.

94 E.g. Italy, Austria, Greece
95 See for history and function of the CM/1-form: https://eguide.arolsen-archives.org/archiv/167/ (last access: 7 June 2021).
Figure 37: CM/1 envelope for Josef P. (AA, 32110000, 79606379, online at: https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/archive/3-2-1-1_32110000/?p=1&doc_id=79606379)

Figure 38: Application for IRO Assistance. (AA, 32110000, 79607027, online at: https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/archive/3-2-1-1_32110000/?p=1&doc_id=79607027)
To show eligibility, layers of remembering and witnessing filled the media form with content. The different question sections of CM/1 had to be filled with past, present and future of the individual. The form included personal data (including religion, ethnicity and citizenship), information about family members (when applicable), information about places of residence and employment/professions in the past 10–12 years, obtained education, skills like languages spoken, financial resources, and plans for the future, including why repatriation was not desired, and desired destination countries for emigration. Often fields for supplementary information or added documents were used to document smaller biographical accounts, histories of persecution, and wishes for the future. Transcripts of hearings could further complement the file, as well as previous employment contracts, other IDs from camps, health records, confirmations of eligibility in other welfare procedures, photos, correspondences, or other memos. All the documents in the envelope comprised the folder (thus the individual) for the ITS.

While these forms were part of large-scale administrative efforts to control mobilities and borders, the CM/1 forms specifically point to the role of memory, witnessing, and biography that become mediated in the heterochronic situation of the DP-camp and the limbo state. These application forms are extensive documents of individual refugee histories, and the rupture that has to be managed in regulated systems. As Arolsen Archives themselves note in a discussion of these documents,

> the information in the CM/1 applications comes from the applicants themselves. It therefore comprises the details that they could remember, that they wanted to share or that they did not deliberately hide. For any number of reasons, there may be discrepancies when the CM/1 files are compared with other documents for the same person. For one thing, many applicants no longer had any of their own documents, either because they had lost them during their years of persecution or because the documents had been taken from them. The applicants therefore often had to provide information from memory. Furthermore, applicants sometimes deliberately left out certain details on the CM/1 form because they feared they would otherwise not receive support from the IRO.97

The role of memory and its mediation becomes very tangible in this example, showing not only how biographies and witness accounts became obligatory features of obtaining mobility and access to goods and benefits, but also how refugees themselves tweaked the stories, and remediated them countless times according to the various media at hand, and the expectations that these media imposed on them, whether in a form, in a hearing, or in a written account submitted as supplement file. Managing the heterochronic situation has become highly material and media-dependent, obligating certain forms of remembering and witnessing for the refugee subject – a connection that fundamentally undergirds digital asylum registration systems to this day, though now consisting of shareable digital case files circulated among authorities.

The Red Cross Suchdienst

In addition to applying for care and refugee status, media practices of witnessing and their inscription into registers also extended into mediated search services. Tracing people who were missing was a very common media practice in post-war years in general. Camp newspaper usually included many pages of search ads, as people looked for any sign of their missing loved-ones, like in this Ukrainian DP-camp newspaper (Figure 39). Such search ads could also be found as self-produced paper notes pinned on walls in the camps, or on the walls of the building of the German Museum in Munich, i.e. in public urban spaces.  

---

98 UN Arch, S-1058-0001-01, “Z-181 – Story Material Used”.

230
In parallel with ITS, the German Red Cross also started operations of tracing missing people in 1945. The Allies could not agree on a common system, and ITS in the hands of UNRRA and IRO was strongly American and British dominated and focused on the victims of Nazi violence. Therefore, the Red Cross Suchdienst (search service, which still exists today) was established just after the war, focusing on tracing and reuniting Germans. The German Red Cross had already undertaken similar operations during the German–French war of 1870/71 and World War One. In 1945, the Red Cross professionalized and systematized these endeavours and made them into Suchdienst, which originated in refugee camps and in the context of immense refugee movements in April and May. Two Wehrmacht lieutenants, Kurt Wagner and Helmut Schelsky, founded the “German Red Cross, Refugee Relief Organization, Investigation Service, Central Search Index” during the last days of the war in Flensburg, where for a short time the post-Hitler government under Admiral Dönitz was residing (see DRK, 2015). From Flensburg, the two main offices were quickly established in Hamburg and Munich, where they stored millions of search ads and were administered by volunteers: usually these were German refugees and expellees from the Eastern areas, returning soldiers, prisoners of war who had been released, evacuees from cities, and so forth. In May 1945, every fourth German was either looking for someone or being looked for (Wagner, 2014). Again, a large-scale archive of stories, memories and witness account started to accumulate, circulating stories and
identities, in order to circulate the respective bodies appropriately. Refugee camps were hubs of such stories, of media practices of documentation and registration, and of the need to find family and friends.

The Suchdienst relied upon file indexes based on the “encounter procedure” (for further explanation, see: DRK, no year). The index cards from “searcher” and “searched-for” were supposed to meet in the index boxes. “Master cards” and “search cards” were filled out front and back with personal data on the searcher and on the people s/he was searching for. These cards were then sorted into the same index boxes alphabetically, so that searcher and searched-for would meet, when both searched for each other. The workers also simply filled out cards for people from e.g. local camp registers, even if they did not actively apply for searches. The key to this operation was that the identical system was applied everywhere, and that the indexes were more and more centralized, exchanged and circulated across the country. Hamburg and Munich ended up being centres for the Suchdienst, with index boxes being regularly transported and exchanged between the cities.

A special branch of the Suchdienst was the tracing of children. While the search for adults could rely on personal biographical information provided by the individuals themselves, giving the required evidence proved difficult for smaller children, who often would not even know their full name, let alone address or city of origin. The search cards used for children reveal shifts and continuities in drawing on both biology and biography for registering, sorting and identifying refugee subjects. While physical biological features (biometrics) had vanished as modes of identification for adults (biometrics had been used in concentration camp files, as can be seen in the Arolsen Archives), for children, the search cards included estimated age, body length, weight, hair and eye colour, special bodily features marked in a body drawing, scars, birth marks, dialect, clothes, or toys they were carrying (for image, see: DRK, 2015, p. 6). Short biographies could be added, including anything the child could remember: family members, illnesses it might have had, animals back home, or the like.

What distinguishes the Red Crosses’ Suchdienst from ITS is its remarkably strong focus on the mass media of the time to support and achieve its goals. Even beyond camp newspapers and paper notes in public spaces, search ads became ubiquitous. After late 1945, radio channels started to systematically broadcast search ads. As Hans-Ulrich Wagner (2014) reported, in October 1946, the North-West German channel NWDR broadcast 11.5 hours of search ads, amounting to 2.3 percent of the entire program. After 1953,
NWDR even broadcast the special children’s search ads on television, a new medium that had only just started to arrive in German homes. But visuals, especially photos of the missing people, could already be circulated, for example in newsreels in cinemas, or on posters spread across cities. As correspondences between NWDR and the Red Cross show, the radio broadcasts were free of charge. The public-service broadcaster was in general very engaged in refugee support at the time. NWDR donated radios to refugee camps and ran various charity initiatives on their program. One of them, in 1949, was called “registry of misery”, which was a collaboration with the social ministry of the state North-Rhine-Westphalia. The ministry had compiled a collection of refugee fates and stories across the British occupational zone. A script from a radio show featuring the initiative reports:

It is hard to grasp why no one should be found, who could for example help the couple Sch. [sic!] in Kall in the Eifel mountains. These people, who used to live in Tilsit, who used to own a farm, called six to eight cows their own, and had a happy family life, these people now spend their miserable existence in a refugee barrack […] It is now possible to identify for practically every city in our broadcasting range a ‘hub of hardship’ in their neighbourhood, which you can take on yourself personally.

Many more short refugee stories were featured in this broadcast and became the basis for calls for “neighbourhood help”, donations and general solidarity that were however exclusively geared towards German expellees and refugees, not DPs, for example. Apart from this humanitarian charity vision, radio, newsreels, and later television remediated and circulated registered biographical refugee stories from search services or official registries. Refugee memories and witness accounts fed these mass media practices, which could be called early forms of the speechless, victimized refugee subject (Malkki, 1996), shaping humanitarian discourses and charity campaigns up to this day. The Red Cross also compiled a “photo archive of fates”, in which photos of families, usually living in camps, were supplemented with short descriptions of their plights, histories, and current living situations, always written in the third person, as texts about them, not by them. Below the photo would be a short list of “special wishes” for goods, which thus were

99 StA HH, 621-1/11_712, “Flüchtlingsaktion des NWDR”.
100 StA HH, 621-1/11_712, “Flüchtlingsaktion des NWDR”, program manuscript “Streiflicht”, 30 December 1949, Werner Baecker. Title: “Registratur des Elends”.
101 DRK Arch 2291
encouraged to be donated. Thus it can be seen that victimization and the muted refugee, which contemporary research often identifies in discourses (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017), were already included in these historical efforts of registration, family reunification, and tracing. Hence, obligatory remembering not only includes being pushed to remember, but also extends to the forms and positionalities of speaking, and into the conditions of refugee stories that are widely circulated and mediated for humanitarian purposes. Ultimately, thinking about these dimensions of registration, governance, and humanitarian initiatives together raises ethical questions of these mnemonic media infrastructures: in which contexts do registration, categorization and sorting of individuals by way of media technologies serve the interest of the refugee subject? Inclusive participation was extremely low – none of these biographical accounts included proper authorship of the involved forced migrants, and usually accounts were formulated in the third person as stories about refugees. Reductionist registration systems of making individuals legible to systems (cf. Scott, 1998) are often eerily close to previous fascist and colonialist forms of governance and administration. On the other hand, the systems and structures of the Red Cross and ITS were the only ways of finding relatives, and these means were often quite successful – millions were reunited through these processes. In order to achieve the reconciliation, one simply had to accept the rules, forms, and procedures as they were, again demonstrating the obligatory nature of remembering as media practice of refugeehood.

Inscribing biographies

Registration and tracing were key media practices that systematized refugee witnessing and remembering within media infrastructures. The whole array of actors within the refugee regime – so far tracing services and humanitarian actors as well as registering authorities have appeared – used these techniques and technologies, which made biographical features the grounds for refugee governance. Witnessing, remembering, and mediation of the refugee story have moved center stage in the performance of managing forced migration. Following Nicholas De Genova, media witnessing and remembering has become a prop in the script of the “border spectacle” (De Genova, 2013). Heterochronic media practices of managing the limbo of one’s life and one’s legal status have become vital and existential. The inscription and translation of biographies into media has become a technique that enables the authentic, credible, evidence-based account of legitimacy that any refugee is forced to prove to find eligibility or recognition.
“Decision-maker Müller ordered the refugee to put the content of his pockets on the table during the hearing. The private notebook that appeared was added to the file, despite objections.” This situation is reported in an activist zine for refugees in 1994, but it is in no way a unique, extraordinary account of an asylum hearing. The entanglement of media, the refugee regime, and practices of witnessing, remembering, and testifying diachronically seep through diverse media technologies, both historically and today. In post-war camps like Friedland, media practices of witnessing and testifying colluded with logics of an emerging ad hoc refugee regime. While the reports by journalist Ré Soupault (1950, in Metzner, 2016) described the refugees’ obligations to testify to their biography in order to be registered (“You are lying! This photo is of yourself. Just younger. And it’s ominous that of all things you carry your birth certificate in your pocket and no other papers”, Soupault, 1950, in: Metzner, 2016, p. 18), the registration processes in the early, immediate post-war days and years have also been described as rather chaotic and loose. Schießl (2016, pp. 119–125) in his study of Friedland’s history mentioned that refugees were admitted without documents and instead were registered under oath. Either way, as spatialized institutions of border control, refugee camps hosted and often developed the nitty-gritty media practices of sorting, ranking, and labelling refugee individuals in an emerging legal system. As Soupault tells us, this registration of “cases” was an often emotional, stressful situation, produced by the pressure of giving witness and testifying to a credible story that fitted the descriptions and categories while also providing sufficient proof of it. These are clear historical predecessors of what Martina Tazzioli (2020) called “data extraction” among refugees, with the help of digital systems on the Greek islands today. Similarly, data from smartphones and social media accounts are sometimes forcefully extracted as “evidence” of biographical information (Brekke & Staver, 2019), perpetuating the invasive collusion of media practices of obligatory witnessing, media technologies, and the refugee regime.

Scrutinizing the legal history of asylum hearings in Germany further unfolds the dimension of obligatory witnessing and inscription of biographies in the refugee regime. Soupault’s story is from Friedland, a “border transit camp” (Grenzdurchgangslager), a first address for incoming forced migrants to be registered and distributed to more permanent housing across the country. The exact legislations and regulations for this entire administration were complex and subject to change, especially in the years im-

mediately after 1945. New special refugee authorities were assembled using local municipal and regional civil servants under supervision of the Allied occupiers. In this period, a moulding process took place that shaped the key procedures and definitions of refugee governance not only in Germany, but arguably also internationally in the years before Geneva Convention of 1951. At the centre of any definition – be it for German refugees and expellees, Displaced Persons, or asylum-seekers from other countries – is a description of criteria that have to be met in order to qualify for the status. While the German refugees and expellees were covered by their German citizenship, and later on the ethnicist definition of “belonging to the German culture” in §116 of the constitution (Grundgesetz) was also used, foreign asylum-seekers and their immigration relied on stricter measures of control. An asylum regulation from 1953, the Ausländergesetz (foreigner law), was the first attempt to dictate how the asylum-seeking procedure should take place. The Ausländergesetz was reformed in 1965 with the first real asylum law, and then again in 1982. Apart from a definition of the criteria for refugee status in Germany, these laws require a moment of witnessing in the procedure. A recognition committee has to decide on the credibility of the evidence produced: “The recognition committee has to clarify the facts and collect the respective evidence” (§13, Ausländergesetz, 1953). In the contemporary legislation, the individual responsibility to give witness is stated even more clearly: “The foreigner must himself [sic!] present the facts, which give rise to his fear of persecution or the threat of serious harm, and provide the necessary information” (§25 Abs. 1 Satz 1 AsylG, 2013).

Of course, every law (including those outside the context of asylum) has always been built on the figure of the witness. The cultural history of the witness in Western culture has roots in legal philosophy and religion (amongst others). As Günter Thomas (2009) traced the term, the invention of the witness is a significant step toward empiricism and objectivity [...] The witness enters into a hotly contested and unstable reality [italics in original]. Moreover, this instability has resulted from some severe deviance from a (divine, social, legal, or political) norm or from a crucial transition (marriage, new contract, and so on). It is this complex situation of contested and unstable realities in which the knowledge of a privileged observer makes him or her a witness. (p. 93).

In this constellation, the refugee has been forced to take the role as witness in a trial that s/he never applied for or actively evoked. Giving witness account
for one’s past, the media practice of testifying becomes the mediator in negotiating the “unstable reality”, the heterochronic limbo situation of being in between legal statuses, in between homes, in between lives, and in between times, and being in between is considered a “deviance from a norm”. Knowing about past and future of these mobile bodies become criteria that underlie decisions about how this deviance – the border crossing and crisis situation of national belonging, producing “epistemic instabilities” (De Genova, 2017, p. 9) – and the “transition” are to be handled and managed. These criteria, such as persecution due to political views, race, religion etc., have to be credibly substantiated – and this dimension circles back to media technologies becoming inescapable tools for obligatory witnessing.

At the roots of the post-war global refugee regime, the refugee story and biography (and specific features and events inside this biography) have been made central, legal nodes and bases for being, and for being made, a refugee. Witnessing and remembering as a practice in and through media technologies attain a compulsory, uncanny role: the inscription and mediation of biography and experience becomes the basis for survival. Media practices of asylum governance “filiate” (Bowker & Star, 1999, p. 315) bodies and their biographies with categories. This process is tied to a moment of inscription and witnessing, of managing ruptures and the heterochronic limbo situation, by reinserting oneself biographically into a stable system and category. Media like photos, certificates, passports, letters, and written-down stories of witnesses are the necessary materializations and externalizations of these memories and biographical features – literally writing down one’s life, which is what the word ‘biography’ means (bios = life and graphein = write). Media technologies become accomplices of this epistemic practice, which is based on an idealized imaginary of objective, authentic evidence that legitimizes the provision of humanitarian relief and the protection of fundamental human rights, which the refugee is seeking. These media practices embody an almost scientific imaginary of witnessing and evidence, which, drawing on Joan Leach (2009), is driven by a machinic-technological belief along the lines of the slogan “data cannot lie”: “scientific testimony (and its popular representation in various media) is viewed as using mediation in an instrumental manner; that is, scientists can use the media to ‘get their message out’ much in the way that they can use laboratory instrumentation to get information in. It is this instrumental sense that informs a common view of testimony that is begotten from machines” (Leach, 2009, p. 191). Machines (and media technologies like standardized CM/1 forms) are “excellent witnesses” (ibid.). In this sense, the mediated inscription of biography, of memories and the
past, turns the situation around: media, paper, and data have become the better witness, with more authority than the refugee herself.

Tying these observations to the present-day situation, the historical centrality of biography and its media-centric inscription as evidence in the refugee regime’s logics and imaginaries perpetuates itself in datafied and automated asylum systems, border technologies, and digital modes of refugee registration. Realized in digital media technologies, the collection of personal, biographical information reaches new extremes, as does the eternal quest for authenticity, true evidence, accountability, which is to be achieved through ever-more surveillant, inescapable technologies. Smartphone data, social media profiles including GPS locations, photos, chat histories, and other private information can be seized by authorities or forcefully accessed as part of asylum hearings and procedures. Digital data are constantly extracted from refugees in allegedly humanitarian operations, the age of young refugees is forcefully assessed by X-rays and other bodily checks, and the UK even tested a DNA-based system for assessing the nationality claims of refugees (Brakke & Staver, 2019; Metcalfe & Dencik, 2019, Marino, 2020; Tazzioli, 2020). Mnemonic media practices of witnessing and testifying, of performing refugeehood, are outsourced into surveilling media technologies, problematically impinging on human rights, while rendering machines the ultimate, authentic, neutral witnesses of eligibility – an eligibility for shelter and benefits, which was to be avoided if at all possible in Fortress Europe. Fingerprints in European databases can trace one’s path across the continent, social media data disclose every detail of one’s biography. But just like paper, these technologies per se were not designed and developed to fulfil this function – it is rather the media practices and imaginaries by authorities that have in long historical trajectories made the mediated inscription of biography, and the technologies of memory and witnessing, accomplices of refugee governance.

**Heterochronic media practices**

This chapter has travelled through various media practices of time, memory, and witnessing in order to explore entanglements of these media practices with the refugee camp, refugee governance, and the heterochronic experiences and conditions of time that refugeehood impinges upon fleeing and encamped individuals. The refugee camp is a spatialization as well as temporalization of the refugee regime and of the refugee experience, “uchronic moments”, to use Foucault’s temporal analogy to utopian spaces (2013, p. 9),
creating multiple temporalities around past, present and future, all of which have to be dealt with. This heterochronic condition of temporality is simultaneously inherent in, created by, coped with, and worked upon by media technologies. The list of media and their practices encountered here is long: newspapers, cinemas, theatre plays, keys, church bells, paper index cards, administrative registration forms, interviews, digital fingerprints, smartphones and social media data – all materializations, components, and pre-conditions of mnemonic media practices needed to “manage” (Keightley & Pickering, 2017) the temporal limbo, backwards and forwards in time.

The historical trajectories between mnemonic media practices reveal the shaping and making of the refugee camp’s temporalities, and the refugee experience, identity, and status, by way of media technologies and practices of remembering and witnessing. Temporal consistency and stability in refugee contexts are sought and hoped for. Media practices become preconditions for these healing and managing efforts by refugees and camp-residents who seek to reconnect past, present and future in hopeful practices of making homes, remembering comforting pasts, and dreaming of the future. Administrators and humanitarian actors also find ways of registering, sorting, and inscribing biographies and witness accounts in order to create statuses in the limbo, reunite lost individuals, and document pasts, presents, and futures of mobile bodies and lives. These media practices of obligatory remembering are inescapable and predefined for refugees. In negotiating and managing the multiple, often paradoxical temporalities, these media practices can be understood as heterochronic: as being in the business of differentiation between camp-time and non-camp time, making and unmaking temporal relations between the camp and its surrounding, and the refugee and the non-refugee.

The context of post-war German camps has unfolded the historicity of these processes and shown how central remembering, witnessing, and the inscription of biography have been made in the “making of the modern refugee” – how these things are at the very roots of the contemporary refugee regime’s imaginaries. The mediation of ‘camp time’, or of ‘refugee time’, builds on a heterochronic limbo that is imposed on the individual refugee. In the instability of the camp as a space, and also in its impermanence and temporariness, dealing with time and memories are hopeful as well as obligatory media practices. This “hyper-value” (Appadurai, 2019, p. 561) of migratory memory, produced by the refugee situation, hence becomes reproduced in media technologies and practices around them. Becoming a refugee has become a memory project, that is, a project of mediating time and experience
in “time-biased” media, or to use the phrase of Harold Innis (1951), in making durable information about oneself. These mnemonic media practices either provide hope and forms of well-being or they provide survival, a refugee status, a roof, or the rediscovery of one’s family.
CHAPTER SEVEN
Politics, Resistance, Activism

Refugee camps – protest camps
Heterotopias and heterochronias are double spaces and times, ridden by conflicting, sometimes paradoxical relationships to their surroundings. Media practices take part in constructing and negotiating these relations by incorporating an inherent potential of media technologies not only to establish and maintain, but also to subvert, enabling media practices of resistance, mobilization, protest, and emancipation. Media theorist Wendy Chun (2016) contends that new media, and media change in general, are ridden by tensions of habit and crisis, coercing individuals into an eternal mode of updating. Where the habitual makes bodies into machinic infrastructures of people’s acting and being in the world (Chun refers to Bourdieu’s *habitus* here) it is moments of crisis and update that transform (media) practices, be this transformation through slow, hardly detectable adaptions, or large-scale reforms and revolutions. Similarly, practice theory points at the crumbling of materiality, competence, and/or meaning as necessary to effect adjustments, transitions, and evolutions of the ritualistic, habitual social practice (Shove et al., 2012). The previous two chapters have portrayed trajectories of the creation, stabilization, and maintenance of media practices that historically make and seek to uphold the specific space and time of the refugee camp. I have shown how moments of mediation and materialization in media technologies both construct the sociomaterial heterotopian space of the camp and the refugee subject, as well as how media are entangled with negotiating the heterochronic, often multiple temporalities of the camp and the refugee figure. But heterotopias are double spaces, with a potential of re-negotiating relationships with their surroundings. In this last empirical chapter, I will move on to moments when these spaces and times of the camp are subverted, questioned, challenged, and attempted to be altered; when camp residents seek to reinsert themselves into times and spaces outside of the camp, and alter the heterotopian and heterochronic conditions; in other words, when heterotopias and heterochronias are unmade and remade, when their relations to their surroundings are modified. Addressing the politics of the refugee camp, this chapter will further explore how media practices are complicit enablers and disablers, environments and
leverages in practices of contention, destabilizing and resisting against the refugee regime – these media practices will be called heteropolitical media practices because they are forms of undermining spatial and temporal logics of camp heterotopias, and of formulating alternative politics of space and time in the refugee regime. As will be demonstrated, refugee camps are ridden by paradoxes of perceptibility and imperceptibility: they are over-heard and hyper-visible on the one hand, and invisible and silenced on the other hand. Camp residents and activists have challenged these conditions, and in turn have developed heteropolitical media practices to alter and subvert the camp’s spatial and temporal conditions in relation to its surroundings.

The historical context for this exploration is in the 1980s and 1990s of West Germany and the newly reunified Germany, and leaves behind the refugee, expellee, and DP-camps in order to seek out historical trajectories elsewhere. By this time, wooden barrack camps had disappeared, or been rebuilt into new permanent neighbourhoods; DPs had been resettled; German refugees and expellees had evolved into more and more imperceptible members of post-war German society. But the refugee camp had proven to be a resilient space and institution, and the post-war Western refugee regime, mainly catering to Cold War migrants from the Eastern bloc after a relatively calm phase in the 1960s and early 1970s, soon faced challenges beyond its intentions. Conflicts in the Global South and improved modes of transportation had started to globalize asylum-seekers claiming rights in West Germany, for example from Vietnam in the late 1970s, and later on from Turkey, Poland, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, as well as Yugoslavia in the 1990s. In 1981, the number of asylum applications in West Germany had climbed to 100,000 per year, leading to long-lasting societal debates in which asylum legislation became a prism for negotiating national identity and the place of human rights in a reunifying Germany (Poutrus, 2019). Habit and crisis met in this context: while the refugee regime received several updates, especially in 1982 and in 1993 (the biggest reform of asylum law in Germany since 1949), one feature did anything but disappear: refugee camps and asylum-seeker shelters. These persisted as central instruments deployed to actively segregate and control forced migrants, enact and administer a tightening border regime, prepare deportation, and hinder arrival

103 I realize that during these decades especially labor immigration was at its peak in West Germany, when the so-called Gastarbeiter*innen (“guest workers”) from mainly Turkey, Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia and Greece were hired and resettled to Germany. While this group was often also accommodated in problematic shared housing structures (Gastarbeiterwohnheime, which sometimes were also wooden barracks), this migration process was subject to different legal regimes and is not the focus of this thesis.
and integration (see Chapter Two for the bureaucratic creativity in naming and labelling these shared accommodations, which for the remainder of this chapter will be called refugee camps). Although the severe and acute lack of housing in the post-war years had long vanished, camp accommodation for forced migrants had become a habit, with the refugee camp usefully realizing the goals of the two big reforms of the asylum laws made in 1982 and 1993. These two law changes significantly curtailed the rights of asylum-seekers, included mandatory camp accommodation for asylum-seekers, banned working and leaving the municipality and the distribution of cash (and resulted in benefits-in-kind, which will be explained later in this chapter), and finally in 1993, allowing for a denial of asylum-seekers arriving from “safe third states” (which due to Germany’s geography affected almost everyone). Preparing deportation and hindering integration and arrival were main purposes of the camps. The white refugee bodies that World War Two had produced and who were administered and cared for in camps (which were themselves there to save and uphold the system of nation-states and borders that shaped the post-war global system) had now become bodies of colour, in new ways unsettling the sovereign nation state and its ongoing identity crisis of who belongs and who does not. In this chapter, I will not delve further into how the space and time of these refugee camps were enacted. Instead, the context of a tightened refugee regime will reveal different images of history. Refugee camps of the 1980s and 1990s have spawned new relations of media practices to the camp space and time, and to this day these practices undergird experiences of refugeehood, and media practices of resistance, protest and contention at large. As I will show in this chapter, the tightening of the refugee regime, in conjunction with a wide dispersion of protest culture in West Germany since the 1960s – creating the figure and social actor of the “activist” – brought to the fore media practices in and around refugee camps, which openly and subtly question, subvert, and resist the camp as a spatial enactment of the refugee regime at large, because these camps are ultimately mediated articulations of citizenship-in-limbo and negotiations of visibility and perceptibility of refugees as political subjects.

As this chapter will demonstrate, the 1980s and 1990s offer productive insights into trajectories of refugees’ media practices of resistance and contention, which are ever so prevalent in today’s context. In the autumn of 2020, the refugee camp Moria on the island of Lesbos, Greece, made the

---

104 The “third state rule” in German asylum law (1993) stipulates that if an asylum-seeker arrives from a country without political persecution (not their home country), they can be denied asylum in Germany. This principle also translated into the Dublin regulation of the European Union, making the member state of first registration responsible for the handling of the asylum-seeker.
global headlines when it burned down (BBC, 2020a). Refugees had set the camp on fire in protest of its unbearable conditions and the impossibility of quarantining after an outbreak of Covid-19 among camp residents. Attacking and destroying one’s own shelter articulates a desperate act of citizenship from below, of resistance against the necropolitics that Greece and the European Union were enacting in the camps at the so-called “hotspots” of migration. The protests and acts of resistance were highly mediated. A Twitter channel, @MoriaMediaTeam, for example, reported from inside the camp (now called Moria 2, erected immediately after the original camp had burnt down). Reportedly the conditions were even worse than in the first camp. At the same time, visibility was produced by journalists entering the camp, such as Isabel Schayani’s who reported for German television and brought the voices of the camp residents to TV screens (ARD, 2020). At the same time, what Anna Feigenbaum (2014) calls “other media” also characterized the “protest camp” of Moria, which used bodily tactics, such as the practice of sewing one’s mouth shut and hunger strikes, and using fences and tents as canvases for protest slogans. These are arrays of “repertoires of contention and communication” (Mattoni, 2012), media practices, technologies and materialities, that mediated negotiations of citizenship and resistance from inside the camp. As media practices born out of the heterotopian and heterochronic condition of the camp (of being outside the “normal” time and space of having citizenship rights), such acts of subversion politicize the very space, time and logics of the refugee camp, debunking its paradox of being inside and outside at the same time, and making this paradoxical relation a site of political struggle. Burning the camp down made it imperceptible, simply gone; but at the same time, tweeting about the fire made the refugees perceptible, pushing themselves as physical and social beings into public visibility and recognizability. By drawing on the materials and media of the camp, media practices ultimately can turn the refugee camp into a “protest camp”, “as a place-based social movement strategy that involved both acts of ongoing protest and acts of social reproduction needed to sustain daily life” (Feigenbaum et al., 2013, p. 12). At the same time, refugee camps as protest camps – and this is what I will demonstrate throughout this chapter – produce contentious, heteropolitical media practices, that are characterized by exactly this tension of heterotopias, of making its residents both invisible and hidden, and also hyper-visible and exposed.

In this chapter, I will circle back and investigate roots and trajectories to contentious media practices of coping with and subverting the politics of the camp heterotopia and heterochronia. Mainly based on material from activist
and social movement archives, the chapter will delve first into the relationship of media and resistance (i.e. the media of contentious practices) and unpack the dialectics of how media technologies and media practices of the camp are both resisted and used to enact resistance. On this basis, the empirical context of Germany’s 1980s and 1990s unfolds how the tightened refugee regime and emerging protest cultures brought to the fore contentious media practices in and around refugee camps. Like the case of Moria, these practices were ridden by a two-fold characteristic of becoming perceptible as well as imperceptible: media practices of resistance fight the camp heterotopia and heterochronia, its media technologies of surveillance, and aspire to a condition of imperceptibility outside of the gaze of the refugee regime. At the same time, protest and resistance can be geared towards creating new spaces, spaces of visibility, citizenship, and perceptibility as a recognized subject with voice, struggling for new relations of the spaces outside the camp heterotopia. This chapter will present various cases and examples, and outline hetero-political media practices of resistance and protest.

Resisting media

The imbedding of refugee mobilization, asylum protest, and anti-deportation demonstrations within the anti-racist struggle at large (in Western contexts) is usually traced back to the 1980s and 1990s (Rucht & Heitmeyer, 2008; Ruedin et al., 2018). Of course different forms of political action among forced migrants took place well before this time. In particular, the political actions of German refugees and expellees in the post-war years and the 1950s can be regarded as an example. The group quickly ascended to become an important political force in the young West Germany, most centrally of course due their status as citizens and potential voters. Parts of the group self-organized in associations and refugee newspapers, such as the Deutscher Ostdienst founded in 1954. Protests carrying out political conflicts were also part of their communicatory repertoire: for example, the Treckvereinigung (trek association) formed themselves in 1951 in protest against uneven distribution of expellees across Germany. In total, 34,000 refugees enlisted in the group after reports and calls by the organizers on the radio, and the group threatened to physically march from northern to southern Germany where the ratio of refugees was lower, and thus housing and work would be easier to obtain. In the end, the pressure put politicians turned out to be high enough to find alternative solutions, making a “protest migration” unnecessary (Tiews, 2016).
Demonstrations and hunger strikes also took place in refugee camps and DP-camps of the post-war years, however, these protest were often solved within political structures (councils, elected barrack leaders, or assemblies). In a wider sense, these events were the predecessors of what today is called activism, or social or resistance movements, keywords that are historically-discursively connected to the 1960s and its protest culture and emancipatory movements. While German refugees (and also DPs) enjoyed a significant level of political recognition as citizens, and often even quasi-democratic influence in the camp, the changes in asylum policy after the late 1970s led to tightening shifts in asylum legislations, and, thus, to new practices, actions, and movements critiquing and challenging the refugee regime. Political participation and visibility as civic subjects had been largely smothered in the segregated camps. In this context, the 1960s and 1970s had left their mark, and many (especially local) organizations and initiatives started to emerge in the 1980s and 1990s in and around the refugee camps, which were filling up more and more.

A historiography of such social movements is relatively extensive in critical refugee studies after the 1990s (see e.g. Rucht & Heitmeyer, 2008). As an alternative, this chapter approaches these cases through the lens of media practices, looking at media practices as a prism of resistance and the politics of refugee camps, and thereby shedding light on trajectories of contemporary mediated refugee protest. Research on media, activism and citizenship has long foregrounded the crucial role of media as technologies and practices in shaping and enabling contention and political subjectivity (for a current overview, see Stephansen & Treré, 2020). Media practices can be considered elemental shapers of performances and acts of contention, embedded in media ecologies of technologies as well as media systems, and in which citizens have to relate in their communicative repertoires of contention (cf. Mattoni & Treré, 2014). Media technologies, in turn, are subject to historical change: “Media practices potentially open up spaces of critique, while activists have to navigate specific properties of media technologies in terms of temporality and spatiality that do not necessarily support criticality” (Kaun, 2016, p. 30). What Kaun (2016) calls “media regimes” are those properties and characteristics of media technologies and media materialities, which have to be dealt with in articulating resistance and citizenship. (Re-)appropriations of media technologies, as research on media practices embedded in vernacular communities has shown (e.g. Horst, 2011; Treré & Magallanes-Blanco, 2015), hold the potential for agency in media practices of resistance, not only dealing with the pre-conditions of media at hand, but
also enabling “complicit forms of resistance that work through ‘repair’ politics oriented towards correcting” media (Velkova & Kaun, 2019, p. 1), or through “obfuscation” of media as a “vernacular resistance to data gathering and aggregation” (Brunton & Nissenbaum, 2011, no page), i.e. changing, subverting, circumventing and adapting media technologies as a contentious practice. In these ways, media are drawn on by activists to shape resistance, and in turn resistance is shaped and formed by the media technologies at hand. In the camp – the refugee-protest-camp, so to speak – media, materialities and objects shape the “media and communication infrastructures” that resistance is embedded in (cf. Feigenbaum et al., 2013). As Feigenbaum (2014, p. 16) further argued about protest camp media, it is this “materiality of particular objects [that] turns them into intended or unintended elements of communication systems.” As the following examples will demonstrate, various materials and media in the camp can be turned into communicators of resistance and politicize the camp, and renegotiate its heterotopian space, heterochronic time, and media practices. Contentious media practices include both resistance to media infrastructures and to media technologies themselves, as well as resistance by way of media practices and using media (in other words, both resisting against media, and resisting through media) for voicing critique and enacting citizenship.

But what does such a citizenship actually mean in the case of refugees – subjects who are in legal and political limbos, who are citizens of heterotopias, inside and outside of political rights at the same time? Agamben’s famous concept of the “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005) is often mobilized to capture the oppressed, excluded position of the refugee’s “bare life” outside political realms, encompassing the bio- and necropolitics articulated and materialized in borders and refugee camp heterotopias. At the same time, refugees are subjected to legal regimes: they are physically present in a place and thereby express political subjectivity. By way of being in a camp, and by relating to its logics and media of documentation, articulations of existence and voice can and do take place. Refugee camps and their residents do actually exist, they are not othered into non-existence. It is this paradox of the heterotopian condition, the invisible and hyper-visible, unheard and overheard, silenced and forced to speak, being inside and outside, being there and not there, that becomes apparent as a productive site of political struggle and of contentious media practices. So, what can a resistance to/via media look like out of this subjectivity? Papadopolous and Tsianos (2007) outlined a political philosophy of the migrant and refugee
subject that starts from her autonomy and a constant process of becoming and appropriating:

Nomadic motion is not about movement but about the appropriation and remaking of space. What characterizes the nomad is not his/her passage through enclosures, borders, obstacles, doors, barriers. The nomad does not have a target, does not pass through a territory, leaves nothing behind, goes nowhere. The nomad embodies the desire to link two points together, and therefore s/he always occupies the space between these two points. (Papadopolous & Tsianos, 2007)

This state of becoming in a space of in-between echoes the spatio-temporal configuration of the refugee camp as a heterotopia and heterochronia, as an inside-outside space, into which the refugee figure is cast. Migrants are caught in systems of sovereign states and border control, yet at the same time they end up in a constant state of autonomous aspiring, negotiating, and creating perceptibilities and imperceptibilities, as well as visibility and invisibility, in order to reclaim social spaces and make these heterotopias porous. “[M]igration challenges and reconstitutes the sovereign population control which functions solely through the identification and control of the individual subject’s movements”, Papadopolous and Tsianos (2007) asserted, capturing the autonomy of the migrant in roaming border regimes as a starting point of understanding resistance. In the previous chapters I have shown how these mediated modes and technologies of identification deploy enforced and enacted hyper-visibilities and perceptibilities in the refugee regime. In turn, focusing on resisting media practices reveals the subversive practices and experiences of the heterotopia and heterochronia: “Becoming imperceptible is an immanent act of resistance because it makes it impossible to identify migration as a process which consists of fixed collective subjects. Becoming imperceptible is the most precise and effective tool migrants employ to oppose the individualizing, quantifying, and representational pressures of the settled, constituted geopolitical power” (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2007). Hence, imperceptibility is not the same as invisibility, but rather it implies an inclusion into other spaces of citizenship where one can roam without being hyper-visible to systems like border regimes. Similarly, as Didier Bigo (2007) noted, research of migration and borders and their control mechanisms often neglects the practices “of the weak … to subvert the illusory dream of total control” (Bigo, 2007, p. 12), hinting at a wider need for complementing research on oppressive systems by incorporating the
agency of those affected and relating to these systems. Refugee camps as heterotopias and heterochronias are spaces where such negotiations of relations take place, from above and from below. Papadopoulos and Tsianos’ (2007) perspective on (im)perceptibility as the autonomy of migration and prisms of migrant resistance leads to media practices, which not only manipulate the time and space of the heterotopia and heterochronia, but also its politics. As will be seen, the paradoxical heterotopian condition of camps create heteropolitics, which translates into struggles of achieving perceptibility and imperceptibility. Resisting the media of the camp and its hyper-perceptibility, and at the same time mediating resistance to the camp, demonstrate an aspiration to be heard and seen but also not to be heard and seen, a dialectic that shapes what will be called heteropolitical media practices.

As Saskia Witteborn (2015) has shown in the case of digital media in asylum-seeker shelters in Germany, media practices and technologies navigate tensions of perceptibility and imperceptibility, imbued in being and being made a refugee. Using this perspective, this chapter will further emphasize how resisting media – both in the sense of resisting against the media of the refugee regime, as well as using media to articulate resistance – are practices of coping with the heterotopian and heterochronic condition from below, questioning and inverting it. In what follows, I will delve into different dimensions of resisting media practices, unfolding in (1) mediated resistance against the camp space, its insufficient standards and its surveillance, tutelage, and excluding control via media infrastructures; (2) hunger strikes and protest march mobilizations as a way to gain perceptibility as citizens beyond the camp, using the body as a medium; and (3) activist archiving as resistance against invisibility, documenting dire conditions in camps as well as racist and oppressive incidents.

Fighting the space and media of the heterotopia

In the search for media practices of resistance, for the “voices from below”, I ended up in archives of social movements, and this material will serve as the core source for this chapter. Activists and protest movements born out of the cultural-political environment of post-1960s social movements have been diligent in documenting and archiving their activities, including a plethora of movements with, for, and by refugees in refugee camps reacting against deportation, racist and oppressive structures in the refugee regime, and far-right, xenophobic attacks. My visits to the archives for social movements in Hamburg, Bremen and Freiburg revealed an impressive number of leaflets,
info-sheets, self-produced zines, newspaper clippings, posters, photos, and grey literature, which opened up a wide array of traces of activists’ and refugees’ media practices of resistance.

These media practices emerged within a constellation of a tightening, segregating and ever-more racist refugee regime on the one side, and on the other side, an increasing cultural logic of networking, and activist epistemologies of creating and spreading emancipatory knowledge in horizontal, networked structures from below (cf. Castells, 2015; Juris, 2008). With reforms in asylum laws, the situation inside refugee camps (now officially named with terms like “central reception points” or “collection centres”) worsened to such a critical degree that in 1983 UNHCR published an investigative report about conditions in West German refugee accommodations. The “Toscani-report”, authored by Candida Toscani (Refugee Survey Quarterly, 2008), was based on seven visits to “transit and accommodation centres established for asylum-seekers”, to ascertain “deteriorating conditions” (ibid., p. 150) and whether “measures appear excessive and denote an exaggerated concern” (ibid., p. 156). The report did not mince words in calling out racist structures of refugee governance, including forced detention in isolated camps, no right to work, no right to move outside the municipality, lack of access to lawyers, no family reunions, severe mental health issues, and in general no engagement with asylum-seekers in terms of language courses, vocational trainings, or leisure programs. At the same time, violent and racist attacks on refugee camps and migrants in general increased drastically.

Emerging activist networks, with and by refugees, started to regularly and often confirm, call out, and counter-act this picture painted by Toscani. Just to quote one example, an article from 1992 (nine years after the Toscani-report!) reports about complaints by refugees in camp Vinckehof close to Dortmund: “not enough food and drinks […] no respect for cultural or religious customs […] reception of food has to be confirmed with a stamp […] they cannot lock their rooms […] with 2,30DM/day they cannot make a phone call home, buy a bus ticket, fruit or water or anything for their kids […] they live in a ‘rights-free space’ […] they have lived for three months in Vinckehof, without having even had their first hearing.”105 The report from the Vinckehof camp is documented in a brochure called Deutschland, Einig Lagerland (“Germany, united camp land”), which is a typical example of an

SEVEN: POLITICS, RESISTANCE, ACTIVISM

activist zine from that time: self-produced, copy-and-pasted together from newspaper clippings, computer-written and printed pages. The little booklet includes reports about changes in the asylum laws, reports from inside camps, and documentation about protest actions. Zines like this are at the same time a product and document of activism and mobilization (afterwards), as well as a mode and practice of mobilizing itself (during). As a media practice, the booklet both represents and embodies practices of protest and contention. It emerged out of a network of actors who produced knowledge within cultural logics of meeting, connecting and disseminating horizontally, and between activists surrounding the camps and the refugees living inside them. Thereby, media practices both mediated formations of resistance themselves, sustained and held together networks among activists and refugees, and expressed resistance and protest in their content, messaging and communicatory aspirations to the outside.

This methodical approach of uncovering media practices and their traces from the archival material opens up pre-conditions and consequences of media in critical relations to the heterotopian and heterochronic condition, in aspirations to undermine and alter camp space and time. Part of exposing the refugee camp heterotopia is of course to make visible its hidden insides by reporting and documenting injustices, inequalities, racism, and oppression. Sources like the Toscani report and the activist brochure carry these experiences beyond the fences and walls of the camp and make its segregating function porous. But beyond achieving documentation, visibility, and voice (which will be explored further in the latter parts of this chapter), these documents of protests, activism and resisting media practices also point towards forms of contention and critique against the space and mediation of the camp heterotopia itself: against the othering, control, surveillance, and hyper-visibility of the refugee regime, against the camp’s spatial regime, its media infrastructures, and against the enforced perceptibility of its residents as administrated, alien, isolated others. The next two sub-sections will present two examples of struggles against the patronizing, controlling and surveilling character of refugee camps, namely protests in the “Hotel Astoria” camp in Göttingen of the 1980s, and mobilizations against voucher, chip-cards and benefits-in-kind media infrastructures.

Unmaking camp space: media repertoires of protest
A name like “Hotel Astoria” conveys the feeling of a luxurious heterotopia, a temporary home for the rich and an escape from everyday reality. But Hotel Astoria in Göttingen of the 1980s became a different kind of heterotopia.
Located in a grey industrial area in the outskirts of the city, the “hotel”, a post-war concrete structure (Figure 40), housed around 150 asylum-seekers from 18 different nationalities from 1982 until it was torn down in 1991. During this decade, the hotel became, as activists described it, “a trouble spot, from which the virus of resistance spread across all of Lower Saxony.” The initiatives and practices of resistance are well-documented, e.g. in zines, newspaper articles, interviews with residents, and reports and commentaries by activists. Reconstructing these media practices of resistance in and around Astoria provided a first case-study-like prism of how the heterotopian space of the camp and its mediation were counteracted by residents and activists. Hotel Astoria was certainly not a unique or special case, but because of the relatively exhaustive documentation of its practices, it serves as a good first example for mapping out the “repertoires of contention” (Mattoni, 2012) and material and social preconditions and consequences of media practices that subvert, reject, and defy the camp heterotopia as a neglected space with dire conditions of controlling, patronizing, and surveilling its residents.


Hotel Astoria was saved from bankruptcy and destruction in the early 1980s when the owner was given the opportunity to house Vietnamese quota refugees, who would be fully paid for by the authorities. When the Vietnamese stopped arriving in 1982, the authorities transformed the hotel into

106 ASB HH, 04.500: “Geschichte eines Sammellagers 1982–1991”, p.2; Lower Saxony is the state where Göttingen is located.

107 Quota refugees are forced migrants who are resettled from areas of crisis and conflict in international agreements. In this example, West Germany had agreed to take in a certain number of Vietnamese refugees per year.
a “central accommodation” (Zentralwohnheim) for all groups of asylum-seekers. New residents started moving in and receiving a small pocket money allowance, while the owner got paid per resident (who could occupy at least 5 square meters, maximum 7.5 square meters) in addition to a daily fee for food catering. The condition of the building, according to descriptions, was horrendous: broken windows, missing or broken furniture, dirty and unhygienic bedrooms and bathrooms. Residents suffering from mental health issues contributed to the destruction of the interior when having violent breakdowns. An inspection by the local health authority in December 1982 noted severe deficiencies. The structure of camp life was strict. Food was given out at specific times; the municipality could not be left; taking up work was prohibited. The camp manager changed seven times through the decade of Astoria’s operations: one of them left after a case of proven sexual assault on a camp resident, one resigned in protest against the horrific circumstances in the camp, and one was fired supposedly for complaining too much at the higher authorities. The camp residents unsuccessfully tried to have him re-employed by writing open letters. Hotel Astoria was a frequent topic in newspapers and television due to its constant scandals, which is itself a form of visibility and perceptibility that resulted from resistance. Out of this situation, the residents of Astoria, in collaboration with the newly established Göttinger Arbeitskreis zur Unterstützung von Asylsuchenden ("Göttingen’s working group in support of asylum-seekers"), started to push back. Lacking any form of democratic influence or decision-making power about camp life (things that had been more common in many camps of the immediate post-war period), the crumbling, dirty space of the camp and its logics and regimes were regularly challenged and resisted against by a repertoire of media practices of resistance. These practices were ridden by a tension of becoming more perceptible and visible, exposing the insides, as well as with unmaking the heterotopia’s characteristic of othering control and tutelage, becoming imperceptible to an excluding regime of spatial administration.

The two biggest issues of constant dispute were food and the payment of social benefits in kind (i.e. not in cash). Beyond (or because of) food being

---


253
the most vital component of everyone’s life, the composition of meals is
ridden with complex social and cultural identities and their politics. In the
context of refugee camps, these specific politics of food intersect with politics
of hospitality and humanitarianism, where food supply becomes a site of
power and conflict. Issues like frequent disregard of religious and ethnic
preferences in meal composition, or the sheer insufficiency of quality and
quantity, stand against expected performances of gratitude to provided
catering by refugees. In humanitarian logics, refugees are expected to be
thankful for being literally kept alive. However, for encamped forced
migrants, food often provides an important social and cultural site of enact-
ing “normality” in the unfamiliar limbo, a feeling of “home”, and autonomy
as independent individuals (Vandevoordt, 2017), again fuelling conflicts
when this autonomy of nutrition and cooking was limited, policed, or dis-
respected. In refugee camps like Hotel Astoria, food was centrally provided
from large kitchens, or in frozen ready-made packages, portioned exactly per
person according to the guidelines by authorities about calories and budget
per person, realizing the “benefits-in-kind” principle, where social benefits
could no longer be paid out in cash, but in limited vouchers or goods (for a
longer description of this principle, see page 267). This principle had gained
more and more popularity in asylum legislation since the 1980s. Very often,
religious or ethnic food preferences were hardly taken into account, quality
was sub-standard, or portions too small. Food distribution was tied to a time
regime, so that if mealtimes were missed, there was no chance to get food.
Given that food was provided, other benefits were cut, because for instance
the cash allowance did not need to cover the purchase of groceries. “Before,
we had someone who cooked for us and we went there to eat […] We were
from many different countries, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Nigeria, Iran, Pakistan etc.
And when she cooked for us, then it was only German food, we cannot eat
that,” reported a Ghanaian refugee in an interview in an activist zine.110

Unsurprisingly, these circumstances fuelled a range of counter-actions
and practices of undermining the spatial regime of the Astoria camp, events
that took place throughout the entire 1980s. The first boycott against
“German food” happened only two days after its opening. The result of the
boycott was that basic ingredients (rice, flour, meat, vegetables and so forth)
were handed out twice a week, to increase some autonomy; however, there
were neither enough refrigerators nor kitchens to store and prepare the food.
The situation seemingly improved when a small grocery shop opened directly

inside the hotel, enabling some relief and autonomy for the residents. But soon, the shop turned out to become a site of conflict itself:

For two years we had the shop. You go there, take what you want, to cook it in your room […] the worst was that they also sold rotten food. Once I bought tuna that had gone bad. The milk was also bad. I took the things back to the shop and said, look, what is this? I told them that the date had passed two months ago.111

In January 1986, this conflict escalated with a boycott of the shop and a hunger strike. An open letter from the refugees themselves reads:

We, the asylum-seekers from different nations are forced to leave our home countries due to suffering, oppression, and inhumane treatment […] We equally do without the most simple and natural rights in the ‘civilized federal republic of Germany’, which by law apply to every human here. Though our life is not in danger here, our most simple and natural rights are trampled underfoot. […] We have to live in a ‘home’ that in no way equals a humane accommodation: we live in small, dirty and unhygienic rooms, where several persons are accommodated. Many of us suffer from skin diseases. We do not receive cash and are thus forced to shop in the camp shop, where they note our expenses. There are no hygiene products, the groceries are insufficient, partly gone bad and expensive, etc. We have protested against this inhumane situation to the authorities several times, without result. […] In protest against this unbearable situation we demand a monthly allowance, to be able to shop according to our needs. […]

To enforce our demands, we boycott the grocery shop in HOTEL ASTORIA from Tuesday 28 January for the following reasons:

1. Some groceries have gone bad, the best before date has passed.
2. The goods are very expensive.
3. The goods have substandard quality.
5. Scarcity of groceries compared to demand.
6. You can only shop on certain days and certain times.
7. Long queues when shopping.
8. The receipts are usually wrong.
9. Lacking hygienic and sanitary products.”112

111 Ibid., p. 29
This letter is one of many official open letters and announcements of the shop boycott and protests. Independent of what exactly transpired in Astoria, this case demonstrates in great detail the playbooks, preconditions, and consequences of media practices of resistance, of how protest directed against Astoria’s heterotopian spatial regime of both neglect and invasive control was performed and mediated. Again media practices appear to fundamentally shape experiences of the camp and of its residents, in this case geared towards undermining its oppressiveness. Enacting voice and reclaiming power over how the space and time of the refugee camp was to be handled took place by way of media practices like the open letter, or organized and documented protests and boycotts. Residents and collaborating activists (mainly the Arbeitskreis Asyl in Göttingen) formulated their demands, like in the example above, in open letters and leaflets directed to authorities and responsible politicians, the local press, and even television. These “relational media practices” (Mattoni, 2012) are a typical component of activists’ media repertoires towards mass media as well as to politicians, civil servants and decision-makers, to make sure to garner wider attention, communicate and circulate hidden experiences and increase pressure to change on the authorities.
Of course, media practices like posters, leaflets, and open letters relied upon certain material infrastructures, which, given the lack of access or resources among camp residents, usually had to be provided by German activists. As a newspaper article reported about another camp in 1987, “the money is not even enough for a sheet of paper,” and although the refugees were allowed to use the photocopier machine of a neighbouring school, the letter box was
broken, so that communication by mail was ridden with obstacles. Thus, simply acquiring the necessary materials and building up a repertoire of media practices of resistance had to rely upon networks of activists. On a regular basis, Astoria’s dire spatial conditions and an oppressive regime of governance and administration drew residents and activists to engage in media practices, that called out, undermined, subverted, and actively resisted against the heterotopian logics of the camp space. These repertoires of communication and contention (Mattoni, 2012) usually followed the typical playbooks of contentious action, drawing on an array of media including open letters signed by refugees, targeted letters to authorities, protest leaflets and posters, hunger strikes, sit-down strikes, boycotts. These media practices realized and communicated degrees of political agency among residents, but were usually enabled and realized by activists with the necessary skills and equipment.

This wide media repertoire of contentious action, from the letter to the concerted boycott, exemplifies how camp residents, in collaboration with (and certainly often directed by) activists attempted to inscribe themselves, actively take part in, and alter the power dynamics within and around the heterotopian camp space, and reformulate the relations of the camp and its residents to the refugee regime and to the camp’s surroundings. Beyond the aim to achieve a certain level of citizenship rights through gaining visibility as political subjects (very literally by signing one’s name under an open letter for example), such media practices of resistance aspired to modify power relations in the camp, struggling against its hyper-policed and hyper-perceptible condition. The actions of boycotting food regimes and protesting the lack of hygiene and the dire conditions of interior furniture and equipment expressed dissatisfaction and opposition to the neglected and othered state of the camp, and aspired to a moment of unmaking the heterotopian camp space into a more autonomous state of imperceptibility to the heterotopia’s rules and gazes. The examples from Astoria demonstrate that media practices of resistance emerge from constellations of the specific political and social conditions under which the camp is run and that produce causes and motivations to resist (e.g. food regimes, surveillance and control), to skills, playbooks, and forms of organizing and communicating resistance (e.g. open letters, strikes), and of making specific materialities into protest media (e.g. the body in hunger strikes or sit-ins, posters and letters, signatures).

Undermining media infrastructures: vouchers, chip cards and benefits-in-kind

We have seen so far how a repertoire of media practices can be directed in opposition to the “othering” of space and time that is inherent in heterotopias and runs counter to the hyper-perceptibility of its subjects. These forms of questioning and modifying the politics of the camp space, as the residents of Astoria did, incorporate media practices specifically directed against the media technologies, infrastructures, and practices of the refugee camp itself – that is, against the media of perceptibility, policing, disciplining, and inscribing, that constitute the refugee regime and through which authorities run refugee camps. While Chapters Five and Six have demonstrated the histories of administrational media practices and media infrastructures of refugee governance in terms of time and space, such media technologies were not left unchallenged and un-resisted against. The term “media activism” has been defined in multiple ways (see Pickard & Yang, 2017), usually pertaining to various activist communication strategies and tactics in and through media, or activism trying to reform the media industry. What can be observed in forms of resistance against perceptibility of the camp regime is that media activism directed against media technologies and infrastructures is against unjust, violent mediations, and materializations of the camp heterotopia that take the form of surveilling, disciplining, and policing technologies.

Today, voices critical of the detrimental effects and problematic ethical consequences of tech-based, highly digitized and AI-driven refugee governance systems emerge more and more in academic and activist circles (e.g. Petridi, 2021; Molnar, 2020). The examples from the 1980s and 1990s demonstrate resistance against and subversions of preceding forms of camp technologies, underlining the continuity of struggles against the imposed perceptibility of the refugee regime as something not necessarily tied to digital media alone (in the case here, through voucher and chip card systems, surveilling the pay-out of social benefits). During the 1980s and 1990s the “benefits-in-kind” system took root. This system moved from providing social benefits in the form of cash towards a pay-out in goods, thereby essentially articulating a form of surveillance and disciplining. By removing the medium of money, the heterotopian othering of camp residents was mediated via the distribution of basic goods like food and toilet paper. In turn, getting back the medium of money instead of goods (i.e. social benefits in cash), as desired by many refugees, would promise a larger degree of freedom, autonomy, and ultimately imperceptibility. This situation led to
activist practices of subversions or obfuscations (Brunton & Nissenbaum, 2011) of these media infrastructures.

In Hotel Astoria, the benefits-in-kind system was realized in the camp-based shop, which did not live up to standards, and was heavily neglected by the authorities. Consequently, in February 1986, the refugees living in the Astoria at that time started a hunger strike that was announced and publicized through various media, including a telegram to the authorities. Next, a number of strikers and members of the activist group paid a visit to the local government in Hanover and started a sit-down strike in front of the offices. The authorities were forced to react. But instead of ending the benefits-in-kind system altogether, they introduced a voucher system. Every other week the refugees would now receive vouchers of 56 DM (Deutsche Mark), valid in ten different shops, but not for alcohol or tobacco. The vouchers were however not broken down into single 1 DM slips, but in larger units, and receiving change was not possible. The effect was that the refugees often paid far too much.114


The reaction of the angry refugees and activists was quick. A “voucher campaign” was swiftly organized, turning this new media infrastructure on its head. The campaigners asked locals to buy the vouchers or the groceries from Astoria’s residents, and use the vouchers themselves, thus allowing the refugees the same imperceptibility and autonomy coming along with cash that local Germans (or any full citizen) enjoyed. In an ironic tone, the activists’ call for action (Figure 42) wondered:

The local government has recognized that the German currency is insufficient as a means of payment for asylum-seekers in the camp Astoria. So, they introduced a progressive voucher system, so the asylum-seekers can sustain themselves with what they really need! Why only asylum-seekers? We also want to enjoy this care of the state! Vouchers for all!115

The heterotopian boundaries and their realization through media infrastructure like food vouchers are subverted here, ridiculed and debunked by activists calling out the inherent contradictions of the media technologies of camp governance. The idea of a voucher strike was not new: already a year before these protests, around 50 citizens of Göttingen participated in a similar campaign to buy the groceries from the refugees so they would have cash.116 Brunton and Nissenbaum (2011) defined obfuscation of media technologies in a digital context as “producing misleading, false, or ambiguous data to make data gathering less reliable and therefore less valuable.” While the voucher campaigners did not actively produce false data, they obfuscated the media infrastructure by actively extending its realm and overusing it in non-intended ways, thus making it effectively unreliable and useless. Its purpose of othering and upholding a heterotopian condition of excluding from full autonomy (while including specific humanitarian care) had been made pointless, once the “wrong” people started using the vouchers. Ultimately, this media practice of obfuscation renegotiated and altered the camp’s relation to non-camp-space, redefining the politics of the heterotopian condition.

The voucher system mostly disappeared in the late 1980s due to various protests and mobilizations against it, only to be reintroduced and even more systematically and vigorously employed in the 1990s. In 1998, the “asylum-

seeker benefits law” (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz) was changed to officially allow voucher systems. In several German states, this change led to a reintroduction of either vouchers or the “Infra Card”, an early digital solution for allegedly effective administration and governance of asylum-seeker benefits (Figure 43). This computer-readable chipcard system digitized existing migration infrastructures of controlling mobility and benefit-related activities like shopping. The Infra Card was supplied by the French company Sodexho (later changed to Sodexo), which is a global corporation offering facility and catering management for e.g. for asylum-seeker shelters, and also for prisons. In the wake of neoliberal approaches to “new public management”, Germany outsourced more and more of such services through public-private-partnerships. In Berlin, where the system was first tested in 1998, the authorities would pay 1.56% of the revenue to Sodexo, which arguably made the service more expensive than simply handing out the actual money.117 The Infra Card had to be topped up monthly by the authorities with the specific sum of benefits, and could then be used for shopping – but only in specific, pre-approved shops, and for specific goods (e.g. excluding tobacco and alcohol). Not every shop was included, and often the cheaper discount chains did not participate in the system. Hence, this media technology enabled yet another step in policing and disciplining mobility and enabling surveillance in refugee governance. Feedback and storage of information (who can and did buy what, when, and where) was made possible by the media technology, which created new moments of control.

Activists reacted quickly against the Infra Card, tackling the media infrastructure by subverting it and exposing its exclusionary function. Records in activist archives (one record is a short film) document the organized actions and initiatives against the chipcards and vouchers (in some cases Sodexo also issued paper vouchers).118 In these staged mobilizations, refugee camp residents went grocery shopping together with activists with cameras, and banners were put up in the parking lot, forming a small impromptu demonstration in and around the supermarket. Just like in Hotel Astoria, the activists would then trade the vouchers for cash, and then document what happened when the German activists tried to pay with the refugees’ cards and vouchers. Another tactic was for refugees to pay for the

---


activists’ own groceries with their Infra Cards, and then be reimbursed in cash by the activists. While the larger goal was again to achieve imperceptibility of the refugees in the surveilling media infrastructure, the activist tactics of exchanging cash and vouchers actually created moments of hyper-visibility in and of the media infrastructure itself, and focused public awareness on the media technologies of encampment and refugee governance. These tactics become media practices of resistance, which undermined the entanglement of media technologies with the refugee regime’s goal of othering and withholding. Replacing the medium of a voucher with the medium of money made visible the functions and contours of exclusion and inclusion created by the Infra Card and food vouchers.

Ultimately, such forms of resistance against media infrastructures of refugee governance articulate a struggle for autonomy and imperceptibility, similar to those seen in the previous section. The repertoire of contentious media practices, resisting against the heterotopia by unmaking the camp space and its media, unfold across a spectrum of challenging the hyper-perceptibility that the refugee regime imposes onto refugee subjects. Boycotts, protests against insufficiencies of the camp space, and mobilizations against food regimes for autonomy over benefits, grocery shopping, and mobility also configure a wide media repertoire that aspires to articulate an ambiguous subject position of increasing visibility and perceptibility outside of the camp.
heterotopia (but beyond the radar of the camp’s desire for absolute perceptibility). In this sense, becoming imperceptible extends beyond Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2007) view in that it not only captures the “playing of systems” and their obfuscation, but also always includes a wider desire for autonomy and visibility that lies outside the othered, excluded situation that the camp space produces of surveillance, policing and disciplining such basic, existential parts of human life and freedom like food and mobility. Media practices of resistance against space reflect the heterotopian logics and become heteropolitical: they emerge out of the paradox of being included and excluded at the same time, and seek to rework the relationship between camp and non-camp, and refugee and non-refugee, to become both less and more perceptible at the same time.

(Im)perceptibilities of the body: hunger strikes and protest marches

Arguing with the distorted perceptibilities and imperceptibilities of the heterotopia also extend into media practices around the body. As already seen, media practices of resistance are dependent on the materialities of the camp, which leads to the emergence of “other media” (Feigenbaum, 2014) as the materialities that eventually become enabling environments of mediation and communication of protest. When there is lack of access to media technologies and power, the body can become such a medium as a radical last resort of political communication. In this second section, I turn to cases of hunger strikes and protest marches as media practices of resistance, which turn bodies into media of renegotiating the perceptibility and imperceptibility of refugee camp residents.

Embodied subversion of the heterotopia: hunger strikes

On the most fundamental level, migration as a social phenomenon emerges from the movement of bodies across space – space that has been territorialized and the boundaries of which are policed. The migrant’s body then becomes the site and object of political projects of delineation and bordering, realized through rendering it perceptible, legible, policeable, and disciplinable. Puumala et al. (2011, p. 83) argued that the very body of the migrant can “move beyond the reach of sovereign power and […] communicate itself and its relations to others.” Beyond the case of Hotel Astoria, hunger strikes were a regular means of articulating protest in German refugee camps of the 1980s and 1990s (and continue to be so up to this day). Using one’s body as
the most existential tool for pressuring political change ultimately makes the body into a medium of resistance. The hunger strike becomes a media practice around the body as a media infrastructure of last resort, and for fighting the excluding condition of refugee camps to which this very body has been assigned in the first place. Puumala et al. (2011, p. 85) further argued that “[t]he asylum procedure, as a moment of inscription, can never close and seal the body totally. In other words, the sovereign quest will never be complete, as there is always potential in the body to reach towards others and exscribe itself.” As theorized about the body in prison hunger strikes, the body is turned into a medium for insisting on and enforcing communication: “…political urgency is mapped quite literally onto the body as an insistence on dialogue when other means of communication have been foreclosed […] [T]he very telos of hunger strikes centers on a demand for dialogue, the connection between a subject and the structures of power surrounding her” (Lingel & Sinnreich, 2016, no page). Thereby, hunger strikes can become a heteropolitical media practice of altering relations of time and space inscribed on the body. The asylum procedure, state practices of bordering, and finally the refugee camp as the refugee regime’s spatial materialization—all these things undertake biometric inscriptions of refugee bodies into an excluded, surveilled condition, bodies which are often already ridden with projections of racialization and xenophobia. At the same time, contentious practices like hunger strikes can politicize the body as a medium of resistance against inscription and encampment, and realize a radical aspiration of becoming autonomous and imperceptible to the refugee regime’s inscription practices. Hunger strikes as a body-based media practice of protest turn the heterotopian paradox of inclusion and exclusion around: the body becomes an enabling medium for communicating an alternative politics of enforced visibility as an embodied subject, but the body also become a site of self-destruction and imperceptibility to the surveillance regime.

As stories of refugee camp hunger strikes show, these protests turn the inscription of the refugee body and figure into an exscription – acts of becoming imperceptible to the control of the refugee regime, but also visible as bodily citizens asking for rights and voice in a physical political space. In the early 1990s in Köln-Niehl, a suburb of Cologne, once again a conflict escalated about insufficient social benefits: 16 DM per week could be used to buy toiletries, but also the necessary bus tickets to the respective shops. Once again, other issues were the lack of autonomy to cook food, deficient equipment in the camp (e.g. telephones and heating), and the immobility of being restricted to the camp in general: “We respectfully demand to be
brought from this horrible camp to any other place.” When a “camp assembly” could not resolve the issues or improve conditions, the refugees on 13 February 1992 resorted to the means of a hunger strike to put the pressure on. After handing in their catalogue of demands and organizing a press conference, the refugees refused breakfast. An activist report summarized: “At 9am a group of 20 refugees with posters comes to the gate […] They walk through the camp twice as a little protest march, and each time bring more people to the gate. They say that almost no one accepted breakfast. The group of supporters with time grows to 30–40.” The playbook of protest performance had begun, or what Puumala et al. (2011) called a “choreography” in the alignment of bodies in time and space, creating “spaces for political agency and political community [which] do not simply pre-exist, but are articulated through bodies’ movements” (Puumala et al. 2011, p. 86). “For a long time nothing happens. The refugees are standing inside, we outside. There is a thick fence in between us. […] With increasing waiting time in the cold, two demands arise. The camp management should come to the gate and comment on the refugees’ demands, and the security staff should let us all in.” Representatives from the authorities arrived but refused to comment. As the activist zines and newspaper articles further revealed, a group of new camp residents arrived by bus (on this of all days). The new arrivals ate lunch in the camp, which led the authorities to declare the hunger strike ended because refugees in the camp had consumed food. On the next day, the initial group of hunger-striking refugees ended their protest, apparently due to disagreements about how far individual participants wanted to go. A curfew was issued for the camp, which further complicated the collaborations and support between activists and camp residents. A few days later it turned out that large parts of the Köln-Niehl camp residents would be relocated and be dispersed across other camps in the entire state of North-Rhine-Westphalia. The authorities had reacted to this embodied protest with a punishment, by moving and policing their bodies once again.

Hunger strikes like this well-documented one in Köln-Niehl happened on multiple occasions in German refugee camps during the 1980s and 1990s,
often incited, prepared and supported – as in this case – by activist groups.\textsuperscript{122} While it certainly needs to be critically acknowledged that often the actual refugees in such initiatives were “in the best case underrepresented” (Welkmann, 2009), the concerted action of protests against the tightening refugee regime and the space of the camp gained a certain momentum during these decades. Preparing eventful actions like a hunger strike required careful planning and regular contact between activists and refugees inside the camps. As reports showed, this coordination was often complicated by the spatial regime of the camps themselves, which could be guarded and policed, and could deny visitors (e.g. by registering IDs or issuing visitor bans), and also due to the fact that the refugee populations in the individual camps were not stable over time. Residents could be quickly relocated, such as after the strike in Köln-Niehl, move out or get deported, and new ones would arrive. Thus, structures and networks beyond the camp’s fences were destroyed as quickly as they had been established, becoming just as temporary, heterochronic and limbo-like as the camp itself.

Hunger strikes as an articulation of contentious action in the refugee camp provide yet another lens on the mediated subversion of the camp heterotopia, in this case through an embodied undermining of the camp space and the policing of mobility. The documentation and publicity of the protest action, the moment of shock, scandal, and visibility that a hunger strike causes, take center stage in the choreography and playbook of the activist repertoire. The body becomes a radical projection canvas and a last resort for communicating and articulating the desire for imperceptibility. Subverting and refusing the radar of the camp’s control of food and mobility (where the refugee regime impinges itself onto the migrant body) calls attention to bodies as necessary infrastructures of the camp’s functioning as an institution, and turns them into media of protest. It is more than telling that the reaction of the authorities in Köln-Niehl was a relocation of the very bodies that protested into new refugee camps. This moment becomes another of policing and inscribing the body and its mobility into a camp structure, making it perceptible again, which is precisely what had been protested against. The term “hunger strike” itself reveals the attempt to communicate a different politics via the body. Strikers refuse to work; in a hunger strike, refugees refuse to allow their bodies to work for the refugee regime and the

\textsuperscript{122} A larger hunger strike happened in 1999 in Berlin-Pankow, where more than 100 residents of a camp run by the Red Cross went on hunger strike for 19 days (https://www.neues-deutschland.de/artikel/783684.hungerstreik-der-fluechtlinge-geht-weiter.html; http://www.ari-berlin.org/archivalteseite/aushungern_1999/991209_boykott_und_anzeige.htm)
refugee camp, and refuse any inscriptions and controls placed on them, and instead use the body as a means of empowerment, seeking to turn it into a reversed medium of control.

Many documented hunger strikes took place not only in “usual” refugee camps, but specifically in deportation prisons. Refugees who were to be deported were (and are) often incarcerated prior to deportation. At this threshold stage of increased segregation and the threat of being forcibly moved out of the country, the hunger-striking body becomes the last resort of available media for expressing autonomy, which in this case is communicated through self-destructive behaviour. While of course hunger strikes as such have a long history as a non-violent protest practice and are not specific to prisons or refugee camps (Scanlan et al., 2008; Lingel & Sinnenreich, 2016), it is in these contexts that the policing of the body and its mobility (and its inscription into heterotopian and heterochronic conditions) becomes the very target of practices of resistance by way of using the body to communicate protest. Undermining, subverting, and refusing to work for the camp space becomes an embodied media practice (usually embedded in a wider array of media practices to announce, make public and document the strike itself) that uses the rejection of food’s vital function as leverage to express the dire conditions that encampment impinges. Ultimately, hunger strikes can even be regarded along with other cases of destruction, such as burning the camp (as happened at Moria) or one’s self as the most radical forms of rejecting and unmaking the camp space, and unassigning oneself as a complicit infrastructure of the refugee camp heterotopia and the refugee regime altogether. The hunger strike enforces communication between the refugee and the refugee regime, and seeks to alter their relationship of perceptibility and imperceptibility – hence, making the hunger strike a heteropolitical media practice.

“Karawane”: marching into perceptibility

The contexts of activism, protest and political mobilization around the refugee camps encountered so far are saturated with struggles of achieving visibility and invisibility, attempts to be seen and heard, but also to escape the panopticon of the refugee regime, and being imperceptible to its intrusive gaze. The hunger strike examples demonstrated the double nature of perceptibility and imperceptibility in articulating different politics around the migrant body, and I now turn to protest marches as yet another form of embodied mobilization with aspirations of becoming more perceptible as citizens.
The argument that media are central components of activism geared towards articulating civic voice and visibility is not new (Kaun, 2016; Mattoni, 2012). Specifically in cases of the political self-organization of migrants and refugees, media provide crucial tools for “strategic self-representation” (Witteborn, 2015), or articulate “reclaimant narratives” (Bishop, 2018) and thereby form a political voice of those who are excluded from formal citizenship. Beyond mass media and information and communication technologies, materials and objects of the camp can also become media that shape and negotiate repertoires contentious action, making refugee camps into protest camps: spaces from where and within which protest, political mobilization, and media practices of resistance are coordinated and organized (Feigenbaum, 2014; Ataç, 2016). One such example where refugee camps and their residents connected voices and bodies across Germany in order to march into a different form of political perceptibility was the “Caravan”.

Western activism, grassroots and protest movements of the 1980s and 1990s had produced new epistemic cultures that put high value on networks and the democratization of knowledge and information flows through these networks as idealized structures of organization (Juris, 2008; Castells, 2015). In this environment of network culture (which at the same time crucially shaped the emergence and modes of operation of the Internet), struggles for recognition and perceptibility for and among forced migrants in Germany increasingly used networked coordination of becoming visible in social and civic spaces. Pursuing exactly these goals, one of the biggest networks of political mobilization by and for refugees was “Caravan for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants” (Karawane für die Rechte der Flüchtlinge und MigrantInnen), which was established in 1998 and consisted of a variety of members in a nation-wide network. The name and the logo (Figure 44) imply their imagined mission: a remobilization of refugees, overcoming the detainment of being refugee bodies and subjects in camps, and becoming
physically and socially visible in public spaces, connected and networked beyond the camps and shelters, across the entire country.

To enact this mobility and visibility, the involved groups toured the entire country and held marches, demonstrations, and conferences. Caravan started in the late summer of 1998 in the midst of the federal election campaign, which in the end would be won by the Social Democrats, shifting the Conservative government after 16 years to a Left–Green coalition. The initiative connected refugees, migrants, and human rights activists so that they could speak out against racist treatment of forced migrants in Germany and Europe, and specifically about the bad conditions in camp detainment. Over 35 days, they visited 44 cities in Germany under the slogan: “We don’t have a choice – but a voice” (Wir haben keine Wahl – aber eine Stimme). At the time, Caravan consisted (it still exists today as a network of organizations) of many sub-organizations and local initiatives and associations that collaborated under this umbrella network, streamlining some of the emerging social movements in solidarity with refugees in the 1990s. But while the histories of these movements are relatively well-documented (Karakayali, 2017; Rosenberger et al., 2017), Caravan also unravelled media practices and aspirations of resistance and protest, and sought to leverage perceptibility and political subjectivity as citizens in news spaces, dissolving the camp heterotopia as a separated and differentiated space into wider society. In these cases, the residents wanted to alter the relations to the surrounding spaces by making their voices heard.

The desire to relocate and re-spatialize communication and information outside of the camp’s borders and surveillance is frequently uttered in activist records. Refugees and activists often strove to establish rooms and spaces separate from the camp, such as an “info café … to simply have an external distance to the camp, and own premises to speak with the refugees.” Another group petitioned for a separate space (though within the camp) in the form of a “tea room”, where refugees could be provided with information and media in their native languages, while the room would also function as a meeting room for activists and refugees. The initiative was denied. As a

123 A possible catalyst for refugee solidarity movements during the 1990s could be a reorientation of the Left after the end of the Cold War in 1989/1990 towards a more global focus on social injustice and anti-racism (Karakayali, 2017, p. 17). This change in focus coincided with intense debates about asylum legislations, resulting in the “asylum compromise” in 1993, when the topic was high on the agenda in societal discourses (Poutrus, 2019).

124 ASB HH, 04.500, „Wir leben hier wie im Gefängnis“, p. 34.

report from activists around the camp Blankenburg (near Oldenburg, Lower Saxony) noted, getting access to the encamped refugees was actively prevented, and thus the creation of new, separate spaces could be seen as a solution: “It is to be prevented that conversations can take place, and thus a different understanding for the situation of the refugees cannot be achieved, no matter if it is about their home country or the Blankenburg camp.”  

A physical and social separation and outsourcing of spaces was seen as an important step for reclaiming autonomy over communication, providing safe spaces to discuss, voice and share problems, as well as plan practices of protest out of the reach of the camp’s security guards or administrative staff, (which policed visitors and could issue entry bans). Particularly during the 1990s, when there were an increased number of violent racist attacks and citizen mobilizations (e.g. in local neighbourhoods) against refugee camps, it was perceived as helpful to acquire new, safer spaces of communication beyond the camp. Before Facebook or WhatsApp groups were an alternative to virtually create separate spaces, the physical outsourcing of communication was highly pertinent, or the other way around: virtual, digital spaces today remediate practices of creating communication beyond the camp.

On a macro level, Caravan was an example of how the establishment, appropriation, and reclaiming of space extended beyond local initiatives, namely through networked, coordinated media practices of becoming perceptible in public and political, civic spaces, like streets and city squares, as well as in news media, across the entire country. A wide range of media practices constituted what Caravan was about: meetings, assemblies and conferences, protest marches, chants and songs, public speeches, posters, banderols, flyers and leaflets, stickers (like the famous Kein Mensch ist illegal, “No human being is illegal” motif), zines and activist film documentaries, and a homepage. Getting the bodies, voices and stories of refugees out of the heterotopian shadows of camps into more perceptible public spheres was and is a fundamentally mediated endeavour. Like the protests encountered in the previous sections, the key point that was resisted against was the policing of mobility through encampment, detention centres, and enforced deportation, thus once again overcoming specifically spatial regimes of refugee govern-

126 ASB HH, 04.500, “Geschlossene Gesellschaft”, p. 7
127 For example, the state archive Hamburg holds collections of citizen complaints and letter campaigns against the establishment of refugee camps in certain neighborhoods (StA HH, 442-11_273, “Schaffung und Ausstattung von Wohnunterkünften und Gemeinschaftsunterkünften für Asylbewerber”; or StA HH, 442-3_1046, “Unterbringung der Asylwerber, Band 3, 1999–2006”).

271
ance over the body. As one of the participating organizations, “The Voice”, wrote on its homepage:

Central to our political activity has always been the protest against deportation, for the abolition of Residenzpflicht [that is, obligation for residency in one municipality] and for the closure of refugee isolation camps in Germany. Our forms of action include protest rallies, vigils, demonstrations, internet activism and public events as the Caravan nationwide tours 1998 – 2007, the Caravan Refugee Congress 2000, the Caravan Festival on Colonial Injustice 2010 (both in Jena) and the Caravan Break Isolation – Refugee Camp 2012 (Erfurt).  

A protest participant speaking in a self-produced film documentary about the Caravan protests in 1998 explained the goals as follows:

I think there are natural human rights. Some of these human rights have been put aside in this country, and we want them back on the agenda. To say: right to residency, right to settlement, right to travel. Live where and how the human wants, stay there where the human wants. That’s what we fight for.

According to this voice, Caravan was a struggle about space and the relation of spaces: of the relation of the camp heterotopia to the society around it. Caravan aspired for refugees to be perceptible as participants in the polity of Germany, meaning that one could decide autonomously about how and especially where to reside. Protests would take place on the site of refugee camps, with gatherings in front of their entrances with banners like “We are not even asking for 60% of the rights that dogs have”, or, as documented in a video, banging on the gates of the camp or chanting in different languages through megaphones until the refugees inside joined the protest groups outside. Besides critiquing obligatory camp detainment, branches of the protests were also directed against deportation flights, e.g. organized by a group called “deportation.class”. Lufthansa, the airline carrier executing such flights, was often the focus of protesters, with demonstrations at airports after

128 Online at http://thevoiceforum.org/about (last access: 7 June 2021).
129 “Die Karawane für die Rechte von Flüchtlingen und MigrantInnen 1998”, Youtube, uploaded by akkraakantiquariat, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xI5nQdjtpU (last access: 7 June 2021).
incidents where deportees had died on the flights after being seriously mistreated by the police security staff.\footnote{For example, the Sudanese refugee Aamir Ageeb died in May 1999 while on a Lufthansa deportation flight to Cairo (see: http://www.noborder.org/archive/www.deportation-class.com/lh/aktionstag.html, last access: 7 June 2021).}

While Caravan might classify as a typical case of grassroots political mobilization, drawing from the usual highly mediated repertoire and playbook of contention, I want to foreground the aspect of space and media practices of aspiring to perceptibility in the political here and now by means of protest. One of the key features that Caravan members identified as a catalyst and game-changer was the ability to network and gather forms and organizations of mobilizations beyond the local level of one camp or one city.

Now we can think local and national. Because we don’t have to just think about dealing with a case in Bremen, or dealing with a case in Konstanz, or dealing with a case in Berlin. It’s gone beyond that now.\footnote{“Die Karawane für die Rechte von Flüchtlingen und MigrantInnen 1998”, Youtube, uploaded by akkraakantiquariat, avalaible at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xI5nQdnjtpU (last access: 7 June 2021).}

For example, we have never made a demonstration with Africans, and that’s happening for the first time in the Caravan. ‘The Voice’, in which many African countries are organized, doing Caravan together with them. Or Tamils, I have never seen them next to me in a demonstration, now I’ve been marching with them for four weeks!”\footnote{Ibid.}

Networking beyond the camp or local town and achieving connections between the separated heterotopias dissolved the secluded and segregated socialities of singular camps into larger networks, organized by and for refugees themselves. Marches and several refugee conferences organized by Caravan formed a moment of political mobilization that was held together by a mixture of zines, homepages and personal contacts. Caravan literally mobilized the detained bodies and formulated a different politics of being inside and outside, a new political space of perceptibility and visibility, ultimately making the (re-)migrating body into its medium, occupying a space that refuted heterotopian logics of othering, exclusion, and policing of mobility, and instead creating other heterotopian, heteropolitical spaces of diverse belonging. Linking oneself via media practices to others who are separated into other heterotopian bubbles challenges and undermines the

\footnote{Ibid.}
very logic of the refugee camp. These practices still shape refugee activism today: aspirations to achieve visibility and do away with efforts to separate and silence, which are incorporated in modes of detainment and communicatory seclusion.

It can certainly be discussed how much influence Caravan as a movement actually had, being still on the fringes of public awareness. Nevertheless, as a case, it provides a relevant entry point to gauge the role of media practices as leverage and enabling attempts to struggle with the heterotopian condition in favour of producing new connected knowledge beyond invisibility and separation by way of creating and shaping networks and perceptibility. Practices of mobilizing and mediating bodies and voices in Caravan, enabled by a wide array of media, from the body to a self-made film documentary, show how media practices provide orders, structures and possibilities of resistance, aspiring to new spaces, which dissolve and renegotiate heterotopias, and are driven by visibility and perceptibility of refugees as political subjects and citizens. In aspiring to the condition of political perceptibility, heteropolitical media practices are fathomed that “do not unfold in a vacuum”, as Feigenbaum et al. (2013, p. 72) elaborated on protest camp media practices: instead, they emerged within a complex ecology of the politics of the camp and social movements, of mass media, and of available media technologies and media materialities of the camp, creating “the place-based dynamics of the protest camp” (ibid.). In marching into visibility, Caravan deployed media practices that turned the seemingly hidden backstage of refugee camps into centre stage.

(Im)perceptibilties across time: documentation as resistance

Initiatives like hunger strikes and Caravan have used the body as a medium for altering the politics of the heterotopian space, and renegotiating imperceptibility and perceptibility. However, heterotopias also have temporal dimensions and the heterochronic condition of being assigned to different temporal regimes, in the case of the camp, the limbo and interruption of linear chronology. In this last section, I now move to media practices of resisting the heterochronic state of neglect and forgetting that refugee regimes and camps impose on their residents, namely through initiatives of documenting and archiving from below: for example, by making sure that injustices, violence, and experiences of refugee subjects from inside refugee camps did not remain in the heterochronic limbo, but would be made
durable, visible, and perceptible outside the camp, and beyond the “end” of the refugee camp.

“Schwarzbuch Asyl”: documenting and archiving the heterotopia

Besides creating spatial centre stages, other media practices also reveal aspirations of gaining temporal perceptibility through documentation across time. The German word Schwarzbuch (“black book”) is the name of a genre of publications or archival document collections that gather distinctively negative examples on a certain topic from the viewpoint of the author or editor. One of the oldest “black books” (with that specific epithet) is Das Schwarzbuch. Tatsachen und Dokumente. Die Lage der Juden in Deutschland 1933, documenting the life of Jews in Germany, published in 1934. Over the course of the years, many black books appeared on a variety of topics like politics, economy, or religion.

The urge to record and store histories in different media forms, like black books, was particularly felt in the social movement and activist-archivist cultures of the 1970s and onwards. Looking at the history of emancipatory social movements of the 1960s and 1970s shows that community archives emerged as media practices around “archive materials […] used as sources documenting and memorializing past struggles and violations of rights, as resources supporting ongoing claims for justice and healing, and as tools for understanding the past in order to influence the present and the future” (Flinn & Alexander, 2015, p. 330). This backward and forward temporal orientation of documenting injustice and hardship as well as activism and struggle was used by “archivist-activists and activist-archivists both as strategies of resistance and contestation, and as the basis for subsequent curations which serve as agents of political authority” (ibid., p. 331).

In 1986, a black book about refugees, Schwarzbuch Asyl: Lager, Verteilung, Abschiebung (“Black Book Asylum: Camps, Distribution, Deportation”), was published by a Hamburg-based refugee solidarity organization (Hamburger Arbeitskreis Asyl, 1986). In 102 pages, the book hosted a collection of incidents, information about asylum policies, photos and reports from outside and inside camp accommodations in Hamburg. In articles, interviews, newspaper clippings and short summaries of laws, regulations, and stories from certain camps, the Schwarzbuch represented an attempt to collect, archive, and document realities in a spirit of resistance, aspiring perceptibility, and thereby recognition, justice and accountability. The Schwarzbuch pertained to a media practice that documented the camp in a different way than administrative files and forms. It sought to counter-
document, counter-archive, and counter-record these supposedly hidden experiences from below, the inherent injustices and dire material and social conditions. The book listed and depicted all asylum-seeker homes in Hamburg, reprinted newspaper articles about the situation in refugee camps, such as sub-standard medical treatment, broken furniture, racist attacks or hunger strikes, and also reprinted legal files and decisions by authorities.

Seeing this *Schwarzbuch* as an instant of such archivist media practices of documentation – as a form of resistance – opens up the possibility of seeing activist efforts in and around refugee camps as struggles for perceptibility across time by and through media, to overcome the forgetful invisibility of the heterochronia, and also to provide a different visibility than the hyperperceptibility produced by the refugee regime. The book is a form of “activist archiving” that chronologizes and systematizes what the authors deem to be salient to document about the camp. It tells stories and provides perspectives that are perceived to be missing, identified as relevant components of a counter-narrative to a hegemonic narrative ridden by imperceptibility, bias, and silencing in the heterotopia and heterochronia.

Publications like these are anything but rare in social movement archives that were visited for this study. In fact, these archives are themselves active parts of media practices of documentation in the spirit of resistance, as they archive the proceedings of social movements, understanding themselves not as neutral record-keepers, but as actively involved creators and shapers of history and memory. The collections therefore host plenty of media products that can be understood as resistant media practices aimed at documentation and memory in the form self-produced zines or books about camps (e.g. Kauffmann, 1986), photo collections and exhibitions, systematized newspaper article collections, interview collections, and so forth. An “anti-racist initiative” in Berlin (*Antirassistische Initiative e.V.*), for example, has been active since 1993 and has regularly published critical reports about deportation and death in German camps under the title “Federal German refugee policy and its deathly consequences”. Other groups offer local collections of violence in deportation prisons and camps, listings of police violence or raids, and systematic documentations of “racism in the media” as a form of media critique.134

In the act of mediation itself, the practices of copying and pasting, of writing and taking photographs, of illustrating or collaging, of typing and printing, reproducing and circulating, storing, and in listing and system-

---

atizing lies the act of resistance and the aspiration of perceptibility. Cornelia Vismann (2000, pp. 20–22) identified the list as one of the most ancient media technologies and practices, in which an act of transfer is temporarily stored in the scripted medium of the list, coordinating objects in time and space. Yet while she mainly argued that lists lose their meaning immediately after a transfer of objects has occurred, she also noted that “the more extensively something is written down, the more it lends itself for prolonged storage” (ibid., p. 22). In this sense, activist-archivist media practices of listing injustices and experiences of hardship in the refugee camp invert the alleged ephemerality of lists as a medium, and use these systematic documentations as media practices of resistance through durability. Hence, media practices of documentation resist against the imperceptibility of the heterochronic camp in a different way than a protest march and its media of leaflets and banners: listing, documenting and storing is less space-oriented (visibility of bodies and subjects outside of the camp) than it is time-oriented (being perceptible in history and memory). Reminiscent of Harold Innis’ (1951) classic distinction of the bias in media technologies towards either time or space (i.e. the inherent durability or transportability in media), such efforts of becoming perceptible not only extend into visibility in space and in real-time, but also across time, through chronologizing events and saving and securing them diachronically, so they are attainable in a long-term struggle for accountability and social justice, running counter to the heterochronic limbo condition of being withheld from any lasting temporality.

Activists have always had to deal with the temporal regimes of media technologies as inescapable pre-conditions of media practices that co-shaped what contentious action could look like (Kaun, 2016). Documentation, lists, and activist-archiving in general shape the precondition for media practices that are oriented at reclaiming narratives and discourses about refugee camps and their residents. Of course, amateur-produced productions, in the spirit of taking communication into one’s own hands, or providing alternative communication, often fall short of the ambition of reshaping public discourse. Activist media productions, at least to some degree, also often serve the purpose of establishing and reinforcing the community itself. The analogue media of 1980s and 1990s could not spread content nearly as fast and widely as digital media can today. Nevertheless, what can be observed in these historical cases is a trajectory of media practices that seek to make critical knowledge emerge from the camp heterotopias and heterochronias endure, and thus provide material to articulate what Sarah Bishop (2019) called “reclaimant narratives” in more widely mediated discourses about
refugees, camps, and immigration. Bishop gauges the role of narrative activism among undocumented immigrants in the United States, defining “reclamant narratives” as “the experiential, partial, public, oppositional, and incondensable stories that the narrators use to assert their right to speak and to reframe audience understanding” (Bishop, 2018, p. 159). In this sense, the extensive practices of refugees and activists of storing oppositional experiences in media are preconditions of making those experiences narratable to a wider public. Thus, articulating voice, and storing and mediating witness accounts contributes to alter the heterochronias’s imperceptibility, a process that is once again heavily dependent on media practices and technologies.

Two contemporary examples illustrate how such media practices of documentation shape debates about asylum and borders to this day, and extend beyond the milieu of activist circles into informing discourses about accountability and human rights, where documentation from below is relied upon. In 2020, a new black book was published, the “Black Book of Pushbacks” (Border Violence Monitoring Network, 2020), extensively documenting 1,500 pages worth of violence and illegal pushbacks135 at the EU’s external borders. As the authors point out, the purpose behind registering and storing witness accounts is “to hold [governments and institutions] accountable for the tortures, the inhumane and degrading treatment, and the violation of the right-to-life that people seeking safety in the European Union are faced with” (Border Violence Monitoring Network, 2020, p. 4). Ninety-two group testimonies from 12,654 individuals are put forward in the book as evidence. It is this witness-based claim (or re-claim) to truth that is inherent in struggles for perceptibility and becoming visible, again realized through the media practice of documentation against ephemerality and forgetting.

135 “Pushbacks” are defined as “a set of state measures by which refugees and migrants are forced back over a border – generally immediately after they crossed it – without consideration of their individual circumstances and without any possibility to apply for asylum or to put forward arguments against the measures taken. Push-backs violate – among other laws – the prohibition of collective expulsions stipulated in the European Convention on Human Rights” (European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, online at: https://www.ecchr.eu/en/glossary/push-back/, last access: 7 June 2021).
A second example, the “Missing Migrants Project”, is similar to the black books and to registers of racist violence from the 1990s, and aspires to justice via documentation and perceptibility. This activist registry “tracks incidents involving migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers, who have died or gone missing in the process of migration towards an international destination” (Missing Migrants Project, 2021). Based entirely online, the project maps migrant deaths and thus stores and archives them in a systematic manner (for example, Figure 45 shows a sample Mediterranean record from this project). Meticulously researched and archived to great detail, the website becomes a resource for activists and a media practice that uses documentation and the storing within media as a tool of resistance.

These are just two of many contemporary examples showcasing how media practices have been centrally employed to create different forms of perceptibility and visibility in heterotopian and heterochronic conditions, and how they have overcome the hidden-ness of being a refugee assigned to forgetful and silencing camps. These media practices not only insert camp residents and individuals into other space, but also into other time, when media practices of documentation and listing essentially become practices of media memory. To this day, critical discourses often rely on knowledge produced systematically, chronologically and durably “from below”, and these knowledges and media practices undermine the systematic imper-
ceptibility and forgotten-ness of refugee experiences and bodies that have been assigned to heterochronias. Ultimately, making realities and experiences inside heterotopias visible and perceptible opens up the moral dimension of these stored witness accounts, for example, occasionally such documentation can push for trials, or even become supporting legal evidence. At the time of this writing, the scandals being revealed about illegal, violent actions of the European border agency Frontex, such as pushbacks that have been made visible by activists’ media practices have resulted in hearings and potentially trials (Politico, 2021). After all, perceptibility as a human subject has moral and ethical consequences, and perceptibility is existentially tied to media practices. Moreover, these struggles for perceptibility once again unfold the paradoxical character of heterotopian spaces: being excluded and forgotten, but at the same time being a very real, constitutive part of society that can be made perceptible and remembered.

The “anti-racist telephone”: creating media infrastructures from below

In the final part of this section, I will move from the acts and practices of documentation and making of perceptibility to the pre-conditions of these media practices: namely, to the media infrastructures behind the collection of injustices, making them visible and perceptible. Being visible and perceptible also comes with risks and dangers. Being perceptible to those who fundamentally reject one’s social and spatial co-existence can in the worst case be deadly. Racist, far-right, and violent attacks on refugee camps in Germany were not rare in the 1980s or early 1990s (most famously the attacks in Rostock-Lichtenhagen and in Mölln in 1992). But for racism, xenophobia, and violent exclusion to become witnessed, noted, visible, and thus inserted into discourse and able to be fought against, media technologies are necessary. One example is the establishment of “anti-racist telephones” by activist groups, a system that can be understood as “civic media infrastructures”, a “communication infrastructure that constitutes a resource or specific communication opportunity structure for civic engagement” (Kaun & Uldam, 2019, p. 123). Kaun and Uldam understood Facebook as an infrastructure for refugee volunteerism, but the anti-racist telephone unfolds media practices around a media infrastructure that is shaped from below, appropriating media technologies in order to create ad hoc archives of racist violence.
Anti-racist telephones were often part of the activities of activist groups for refugees, a branch of their services, so to speak. Figure 46 shows a sticker for an anti-racist initiative in Munich, advertising their multilingual hotline: the voicemail is promised to be checked once a day. A self-description of a Berlin-based telephone line summarized its tasks as follows:

We document incoming reports, e.g. activities of racist groups of people, organizations and parties. We strive to achieve the greatest possible interest in the public media. We arrange for lawyers and counselling centres upon request. We inform about possibilities of action together with other institutions, initiatives and political groups.136

The Munich-based hotline also saw its goal as providing an “evaluation of the incoming reports, showcasing the single areas affected by attitudes and

136 Anti-rassitisches Telefon Berlin, online at: http://ari-berlin.org/archivalteseite/wir_ueber_uns_telefon.html (last access: 7 June 2021).
behaviour,” which then can be used to argue for better legislation against racist violence.\(^{137}\) The “ART”, as they abbreviated the service, followed a structured protocol consisting of the reception, answering, and evaluation of the complaint, public relations work, collaboration with similar initiatives, and a wider analysis of public discourse on racism. To systematize their work, the group relied on a carefully developed form in order to register the single incidents. Figure 47 shows one of these forms, which asks for personal data about the caller and the accused offender, and registers details on the incident, like which help was offered, as well as a code for what category of discrimination the case falls under (on the side of both victim and offender).

Figure 47: Reception form of the Anti-Racist Telephone, Munich, (ASB B, “Box Antirassismus”, “Diskriminierung und Rassismus in München. Dokumentation. 1 Jahr Antirassitisches Telefon München”, pp. 10–11).

The anti-racist telephones shaped media practices through a media infrastructure from below (consisting of telephones and paper forms), which can be said to combine ideas of providing acute mental health support, legal counselling, and emergency help, such as calling the police. In this sense, the anti-racist telephone both constituted an alternative to existing infrastruc-

\(^{137}\) ASB B, “Box Antirassismus”, “Diskriminierung und Rassismus in München. Dokumentation. 1 Jahr Antirassitisches Telefon München”.

282
tures of support that were maybe seen as less accessible or “not meant for us”, and also created a new infrastructure for needs that had not previously been taken into account by authorities. The telephone lines circumvented and undermined the heterotopian condition, and built new alternative bridges over the camp’s walls and fences. The telephone as a media technology was employed as a key tool for these purposes, suited well to the logic and value of fast, uncomplicated, and un-surveilled, networked communication. In another activist info-sheet, the authors highlight the role of “telephone chains”:

From the refugee meeting, 3 June 1989. Why do we need a functioning telephone chain? The telephone chain is an important component of the circle of confidants. The telephone chain should guarantee the following points: Quickly reach confidential people. Quickly pass on information. Quickly organize spontaneous meetings during deportations. Quickly set up a demonstration […] Also indicates if the person has a vehicle.138

The fast circulation of information in time and space was seen as valuable for organizing ad hoc interventions and support, especially necessary in cases of surprise deportations from camps or during racist attacks. The telephone could offer these affordances and react to the real-time of the refugee regime and of the camp, where dangerous incidents could happen spontaneously. Furthermore, telephone calls ensured a certain degree of anonymity and required a low threshold for use, perhaps even lower than a support group on a social media platform today would be able to maintain.

Beyond the practice of documentation, these examples demonstrate the material preconditions and the systematization of media practices that foster what might be called activist or civic media infrastructures of perceptibility. Finding ways to witness and make visible and perceptible instances that were pushed under the heterotopian carpet in refugee camps, deportation prisons, or at border hotspots, was a highly media-dependent practice, realized by communication and media technologies while at the same time dependent on their affordances. Again, trajectories of these aspirations and practices extend well into the present. For example, a service called “Alarm Phone” provides emergency boat rescue in the Mediterranean. The activist service is a “Hotline for boatpeople in distress. No rescue, but Alarm,”139 which means that they facilitate sea rescue but they cannot provide it themselves.

139 Alarmphone online at: https://alarmphone.org/en/ (last access: 7 June 2021).
Juxtapositions like these demonstrate that media infrastructures established by volunteers, activists, and involved refugees are also an attempt to realize and take over vital media practices and services that had actively been denied or dismantled before: such services include security and safety from racist violence, safe accommodation, and basic sea rescue, that latter of which has been largely criminalized by European governments.

**Heteropolitical media practices**

This chapter has taken a tour through refugee camps of the 1980s and 1990s starting from the premise that they were hubs and spaces of resistance, protest, and contentious action. As could be seen in a number of examples, practices of arguing with, subverting, countering, and re-negotiating the heterotopian and heterochronic condition of refugee camps were intrinsically tied to media practices and media technologies. Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) suggested seeing contentious practices as “diagnostics of power” (Abu-Lughod, 1990, p. 4). Instead of falling prey to a romanticized celebration of resistance as agency, acts of resistance are to be considered litmus tests of power dynamics – in this case, showcasing entanglements of the histories of camp media practices and the refugee regime at large. Coming along with a significant tightening of asylum legislation and deteriorating conditions in refugee camps, as well as an established activist social movement culture, especially in anti-racist milieus, media practices resisting the spatial and temporal regimes of the refugee camp started to form themselves and gained foothold. This is the reason that the 1980s and 1990s provide crucial historical contexts for seeking out trajectories of protest media practices of refugees today.

The media practices of resistance are just as paradoxically multi-faceted as the heterotopias and heterochronias of the camp. Refugee camps and their residents are not othered into complete dystopian agency-free non-existence. Instead, forms of autonomy and agency, as Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2007) remind us, emerge within these very contradicting conditions of space and time. It is this double nature of the heterotopian and heterochronic condition – the invisible and visible, perceptible and imperceptible, unheard and overheard, being inside and outside, remembered and forgotten – that becomes a crucial context in which contentious media practices unfold and aspire to perceptibility and imperceptibility at the same time. Encamped refugees attempted to both evade the gaze and enforced hyper-visibility of camp regimes while also striving towards perceptibility as political subjects – thus,
the mediation of these practices pertains to a “diagnostics of power”, where the refugee subject finds herself caught in this paradox. Heterotopias are spaces that gain their meaning through their relationship to other, surrounding spaces; they cannot exist independent of the wider society. For this reason, media practices of resistance in refugee camp heterotopias argued with and renegotiated these relations to the society that the camps are embedded in. By striving for and enacting different politics of perceptibility and imperceptibility than what the refugee regime envisions, refugees and activists developed heteropolitical media practices, readjusting different modes of becoming perceptible as well as imperceptible by and through media practices. Heteropolitics is not a term that Foucault himself mentions, but was logically derived from heterotopia and heterochronia in order to capture those media practices that politicize and negotiate the manipulated space and time of the refugee camp and formulate alternative politics.

In the empirical examples, the refugee camp’s space and time were called into question through boycotts, hunger strikes, subversions of its governance media infrastructures, marching out of the camps in big protests, or documenting and archiving the hidden and forgotten experiences of the camp and the refugee subject. Aspirations to perceptibility and imperceptibility characterized these media practices like two sides of the same coin. In the heterotopian and heterochronic positionality, where these refugee-centred contentious actions take their starting point, media practices provide essential preconditions for circumventing the excluding fences and surveilling gaze of the refugee camp. Here, activists around the camps, who are often driven by a cultural logic of networking, became central actors in facilitating these media practices, which shaped the struggles for (im)perceptibility. On the other hand, media become almost inescapable: even in acts of undermining media infrastructures, such as refusing to use or misusing vouchers or chipcards, the goal was never to completely undo media, because media practices are the vital link between the heterotopia and its surroundings, a lifeline that provides the necessary level of perceptibility to survive. After all, the camp is also a shelter, providing care. The heteropolitical media practices observed and analysed here are rather attempts to alter, re-make, and provide different modes of perceptibility and imperceptibility in the heterotopia and in its relation to Germany as a society around it.

Finally, this chapter provided insights into the necessary material preconditions of media practices for resisting the refugee camp’s spatial and temporal regime, and also the preconditions identified by protesters and resisters in and around media to unmake, circumvent, and fight oppressive structures
in the days before digital media. In the examples historical trajectories appeared of how media mattered in reshuffling the mediation of refugee camp spaces and times from below, in unmaking the media of hyper-perceptibility like benefit vouchers and chipcards, and in re-making civic spaces of perceptibility, such as the group Caravan, the activist archiving projects, and telephone hotlines. Othering the politics of the camp through heteropolitical media practices thus diagnoses and calls into question the power structures of refugee camps and regimes by resisting the media of the camp and creating media of resistance. However, heteropolitical media practices also seem to be an almost necessary consequence of the refugee’s heterotopian and heterochronic political position in the first place, a logical result of being caught in a state of inside and outside, a state that, returning to Papadopolous and Tsianos (2007), oppresses and disciplines the modern migrant, but might also provide a hopeful ounce of autonomy.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Media and the Refugee Camp

This thesis set out as a project of excavating and aligning. Anchored in a research interest to understand the entanglements of media practices with the refugee camp in the project of making (up) the refugee and forced migration at large, the aim of this thesis was to address a specific research gap: to excavate historical moments, constellations and genealogies where relationships between media practices and the refugee camp came into being, were negotiated and shaped, contested, made, unmade and remade. In a short reflection entitled “Excavating and Remembering” (Ausgraben und Erinnern), Walter Benjamin (1932/2011) pondered how digging for the past is not a project of instrumental access to the past, but rather a project of undoing the inescapable layers between the digger’s position today and the sought-after past. As Benjamin argued, “the images [of the past], broken loose from previous contexts, stand as treasures in the sober chambers of our late insight” (p. 351, author’s translation). Our “late insights” of today, that is, society’s current positions and perspectives, determine the value and meaning of the identified images of the past, when they are include them into arrangements of the present. In his almost disillusioned, regretful relation to history, one of always recognizing its meanings too late, Benjamin stated that “he [the excavator, the historian] cheats himself of the best, who only makes inventory of the findings, and cannot designate in today’s soil the place where he keeps the old” (ibid.). This view on history has guided the investigations of this thesis. Today, forced migration, ever larger refugee camp structures, and ever more pervasive media technologies and media practices saturate the experiences of refugees and form a perspective that urges for “insights” of history in the form of discernments which might be too late, but which can re-evaluate, contextualize and liberate challenges of the present moment. From this perspective, this concluding chapter will discuss the main findings of this dissertation. How can histories of media practices and refugee camps be “designate[d] in today’s soil”?

The alignment of histories of media practices and refugee camps with concerns of the present has guided the endeavour of understanding how media practices have mattered in the refugee camp, for its residents, for authorities, and for the refugee regime. In doing so, the historicizing perspective has aimed at contributing to ongoing discussions in the field of
“digital migration studies” (Leurs & Smets, 2018) and media and migration research at large, by tracing historical lineages in the relations of media practices and refugee experiences, and thereby opening up a wider, historically informed, media-theoretical discussion of how media practices are made complicit in producing the space, time, and politics of the refugee camp, the figure of the refugee, and social orders at large in bordered states. This chapter will summarize these conclusions and formulate empirical, theoretical, and epistemological contributions for research, and discuss implications of the proposed perspectives for the fields of media and migration, media history, and media theory.

Media practices and the refugee camp

The inquiry has been guided by three research questions: 1) What were the roles of media practices in refugee camps in Germany after 1945?, 2) How did media practices shape the refugee camp space and practices of its residents and involved actors and how did the refugee camp shape media practices?, and 3) How are media historically entangled with the evolving refugee regime and which circularities, continuities and ruptures do media practices showcase throughout contemporary history? The answers to these questions have unfolded empirical as well as theoretical explorations of how media and the refugee camp have historically intersected. An approach to media practices in and of the refugee camp furthered an understanding of how media as practices (Couldry, 2004) are historical enablers (Peters, 2015) of what it means to be and to be made a refugee. The camp has been conceptualized as a heterotopian and heterochronic space (Foucault, 1967/1997) where media practices by all involved actors condition and shape communication and thereby produce relations to each other, by manipulating and negotiating the space, time, and politics of the camp. From this perspective, media practices – understood around a broad notion of media – have been demonstrated to be historically existential and vital in making, unmaking and remaking the refugee camp and the figure of the refugee. Media practices in and of the refugee camp negotiate matters of material and bodily survival in enabling shelter and care, and become matters of “existential security” (Lagerkvist, 2017) when identities, positions and relations are inescapably negotiated, arranged and sought to be fixed by way of media as practices, technologies and infrastructures. In shaping these relations, refugee camps are heterotopian and heterochronic spaces that are sustained by media practices manipulating and inverting space and time,
thus creating differential relations of refugee and non-refugee, camp-space and non-camp-space, and camp-time and non-camp-time.

The situated context of refugee camps in post-war Germany after 1945 (arguably a key historical root site of today’s global refugee regime) has served as an empirical environment for excavating, observing and developing these theoretical conceptualizations through analysing documents from archives. Based on a collection of archival records, historical media practices have become visible while seeing the documents per se as media practices (Gitelman, 2014), as traces, material enactments, and reports of media practices. The context of how refugee governance in Germany was structured after 1945 has led to a collection of archival records from institutional and state actors, such as governments, authorities, supra-state organizations like UNRRA and the Red Cross, and community archives of social movements, like anti-racist organizations and citizen movements. Assembling records from these diverse actors and acknowledging the focuses and biases of the respective archives as institutions of knowledge and power led me to identify and carve out the roles of media practices in refugee camps. These media practices were categorized along the dimensions of space, time, and politics: 1) heterotopian media practices, making and controlling the specific relations of refugee camp space through media infrastructure and mediated governance of space; 2) heterochronic media practices, managing the specific temporal limbo of camp life through media practices of remembering and witnessing; and 3) heteropolitical media practices, re-negotiating and challenging the paradoxical, othered conditions of visibility and perceptibility in the refugee camp through media practices of resistance, protest and activism. In identifying these media practices, this thesis drew on media practice theory (Couldry, 2004) to focus on the social practices (i.e. what people do or did) around media technologies and media materialities. Media practices taking place in and around a broad range of media technologies and media materialities in the refugee camp were seen to condition and enable (or enable certain disablings of) mediation and communication (cf. Peters, 2015), and thus become part of making, unmaking and remaking the space, time, and politics of the camp. In various contexts of Germany after 1945, this thesis mapped these media practices – not in a chronological, strictly historiographical or exhaustive fashion, but rather in identifying exemplary contexts of refugee camps in the immediate post-war years (e.g. for Displaced Persons, German expellees and refugees, or asylum-seekers from East Germany or Hungary), as well as in asylum-seeker camps of the 1980s and 1990s (mostly for forced migrants from the Global South).
Empirically, this exploration first led to space-making media practices, specifically around media infrastructures. Chapter Five demonstrated that architectural building styles, practices of building, mapping and planning the camp, as well as equipping and furnishing the camp with media devices and technologies, and administrating the camp with lists, registers, forms, and IDs, were media practices in the immediate post-war years for creating and maintaining the space and the residents of the refugee camp and its heterotopian characteristics. Media infrastructures (Starosielski & Parks, 2015) and practices around them became sites of control, often imagined as cybernetic, utilitarian, and functionalist helpers and solutions to running a refugee camp: these practices and infrastructures controlled physical and social mobility, affected possibilities for public and private communication and connectivity, monitored behaviour, administered and distributed humanitarian relief, and filiated bodies with administrative categories and statuses. Such media practices, appearing as fundamental techniques of the emerging refugee regime, historically undergird today’s techno-solutionist imaginaries around media in refugee governance and humanitarianism. Media practices are part of upholding the heterotopian spatial conditions of the refugee camp in distinguishing between camp space and non-camp space, in constructing its residents as figures that are othered, administered and monitored (always simultaneously public and excluded), and in administered care, shelter, and inclusion in humanitarian protection and relief.

Second, roles of media practices extend into features of time-making, of negotiating and handling the multiple, paradoxical, heterochronic temporalities of the refugee camp, which is stuck in between a lost past and an aspired future. Chapter Six identified these heterochronic media practices in the realm of mediated remembering and witnessing. The ruptured temporalities of the refugee camp and its residents were characterized by an unstable limbo between a lost past and old home and an aspired future and new home, and were dealt with and managed through media practices. In the context of refugee camps in the immediate post-war years, this “management” (cf. Keightley & Pickering, 2017) of the heterochronic limbo firstly incorporated media such as camp-produced newspapers, film screenings, exhibitions of dance, theatre, art, and photography as sites for media practices of hopeful remembering: a management of the camp’s temporal limbo in a hopeful way, maintaining a connection to the lost homeland while dreaming of a new future and thereby making the camp into a temporary home with a collectively mediated past and present. Secondly, media practices of remembering, and especially witnessing, also incorporated obligatory remembering. The coerced
re-telling and mediation of one’s past and biography is what makes up and legitimizes the refugee identity, and gives access to status and care in the refugee regime. Media practices of witnessing, such as telling one’s “refugee story” and inserting it into registers, survey forms, and documents of search services with card catalogues are built on media practices of inscribing biographies and obligatory witness accounts, which make refugees into refugees, and thus become existential. These forms of heterochronic media practices make and negotiate the othered, limbo-like temporality of continuation and rupture, which the refugee camp encapsulates.

In addition to the groundwork laid in the post-war years that made media practices a part of the making of heterotopian space and heterochronic time of the refugee camp, media practices were also sites of challenging and reworking precisely these spatial and temporal conditions of the camp in practices of resistance, protest, and activism. In Chapter Seven, an exploration of the context of asylum-seeker shelters in Germany’s 1980s and 1990s has, lastly, led to the discovery of these heteropolitical media practices. The move to the highly segregated, deportation-oriented asylum regime of the late 20th century emphasized the role of contentious media practices. Organized public protest, demand lists, hunger strikes, protest marches, subversions of surveilling media infrastructures (like voucher cards), and activist registers of racist incidents (like the “anti-racist telephone” as an emergency hotline for discrimination) showcased a broad range of media practices of resistance, protest and activism. Often in collaboration with local activists around the camps, these media practices sought to re-negotiate certain conditions of the camp, to challenge its unjust power relations, and to formulate alternative politics and relations of time and space to the wider society. Camp residents aspired to become perceptible, heard, and visible as recognized humans and citizens, as well as imperceptible to the surveilling refugee regime and its invasive media infrastructures of hypervisibility. Heteropolitical media practices both seek to communicate and make public the invisibility, hidden-ness and neglect of the camp, while fighting its enforced hypervisibility and surveillance of administration and exclusionary governance.

The empirical exploration of media practices in Germany’s refugee camps after 1945 has led to the identification of various historical sub-contexts, and moments and constellations in which media practices emerged in various ways as vital to the history of the modern refugee regime and refugee experience. The context of Germany in the mid and late 20th century offers a contemporary-historical perspective with key moments that shaped the
modern Western refugee regime. Many institutions, definitions, and legislations from this context underlie global, European, and German refugee governance to this day (e.g. UNHCR and the Geneva Convention). While the context of Germany could certainly be exchanged for others, by mapping out local, contextual historical media practices, the research of this dissertation makes an empirical contribution to refugee historiography as well as to media and migration studies. First, refugee history can be enriched by foregrounding the dimension of media practices as an often-neglected part of refugee history (along the lines of e.g. Hilgert et al. 2020; Mannik, 2011). By applying new perspectives to previously unscreened and unpublished archival material, it could be shown whether and how media practices in space, time, and politics have historically contributed to refugee regimes and their experiences, and made visible the meso-levels in-between refugee historiographies, which often focus either on political processes from above or on cultural, local experiences from below. A distinctive media practice perspective, beyond media as merely focusing on content, text and representation, could contribute to historical studies of forced migration and specifically refugee camps (e.g. White, 2018; Schießl, 2016). Second, media and migration studies have large empirical blind spots and historical media practices in context of forced migration (e.g. emphasized by Collins, 2020) are not well-known. Excavating and documenting such historical media practices in refugee contexts provides important empirical evidence, which of course can and must be further enlarged and systematized with the help of more source material and different empirical contexts. This need for further work applies to studies of media uses, practices and infrastructures during displacement at large, and also specifically studies of refugee camps.

**Media practices, heterotopias, histories**

The identified media practices, both of authorities and the refugees themselves, have shown the historical existentiality and vitality of mediation and communication for making the spaces, times, and politics that enable, frame, and condition forced migration, its governance, and experiences. This frame extends beyond specific media-technological environments and has strong historical continuities of the very media *practices*, their surrounding imaginaries, and communicative enactments of social relations that define what it means to be and be made a refugee. These findings have further

---

140 In the 20th century, several other contexts could be of interest here, such as the Middle East (especially Palestinian refugees) and the forced migrations during the Pakistan/India partition.
theoretical and epistemological implications. In the following subsections, three notions that this thesis has pointed towards will be elaborated:

1) Studying media historically as practices provides an epistemological avenue for shedding light on continuities and ruptures of media in forced migration contexts.

2) Media practices in refugee camps are saturated with wider desires for fixity, permanence, and connection, and thereby shape sociomaterial pre-conditions for voice and participation of forced migrants.

3) Heterotopian, heterochronic, and heteropolitical media practices point at projects of differentiation, which form the basis of media and migration at large. Studying media practices in refugee camps allows a wider epistemological approach to media studies from the margins, and this approach matters for social order at large.

Histories of media practices: ruptures and continuities

Both the empirical and theoretical perspectives and contributions summarized so far have been conveyed though historicization. The distinctively historicizing perspective on media practices in forced migration has certain implications that can be further discussed. The deliberate choice of non-contemporary contexts determined the choice of the empirical material, and also widened the theoretical gaze on intersections of media and migration through inclusion of temporality. Trying to discern continuities, circularities, and ruptures of how media matter for forced migrants, therefore, also becomes an epistemological (and to a certain degree methodological) concern.

The exploration of media practices in refugee camp contexts in Germany for roughly the past 75 years has revealed how central, continuous, and stable certain media practices are in making and being made a refugee, in space-making, time-making, governing, controlling, mapping and planning, connecting across distances, remembering lost times and places, being documented, documenting oneself, registering, administering care and benefits, or enacting voice and resisting. At the same time, changes can be observed (in local and geopolitical contexts and other drivers of migration, in legislations and politics of immigration and asylum, in countries of origin, in institutions), all of which refugee historians are meticulously excavating and documenting (Gatrell, 2013; White, 2018). Moreover, media technologies are changing, emerging and being developed and inserted in contexts of forced migration, either by being used by people on the move to manage their lives and find ontological security, or by being used for controlling and governing such people or speaking about them. Here, this study has
investigated a broad range of relevant media, from paper in different shapes and forms (printing, card catalogues and registers), film projectors, radios, loudspeakers, chip cards, telephones, and in a wider sense also architecture or bodies. Some of these media have of course not vanished from contemporary contexts, while some have been replaced or joined by digital media (smartphones, digital files and databases, algorithms and artificial intelligence). Rather than tracing in detail how single media practices appear across specific changing media technologies (many concrete examples and connections of past and present can be found in the analytical chapters), I want to discuss the wider media-historical, epistemological and methodological implications of historicizing media practices. To do so, I will return to Walter Benjamin’s approach to history as those images that become visible in the present, and connect his view to the study of media practices as ever newly enacted, practiced and “done” constellations of media technologies, motivations, imaginaries and meanings (Couldry, 2004; Shove et al., 2012), and how these practices can be observed in the archive.

From a Benjaminian perspective, appearances of history and its trajectories, values and meanings are always bound up in the present. The present moment is characterized by media technology experiencing deeply shifting ruptures through digitalization and automation, as well as by the ever more urgent problem of forced migration and its handling, which are pressing on the global agenda and causing societal fault lines. These conditions produce a specific historical lens through which I attempted to observe media practices in refugee contexts. Deeply continuous, yet contingent media practices of making space, time and politics in the modern refugee regime became visible. The archives and their document holdings created moments for me as a researcher of almost surprising recognitions of the present within the images of the past (I remind you here of the fabricated diary texts of the introduction). Applying a reading to archival records, and looking for traces of historical media practices, specific acts, doings, and routines regardless of specific technologies, makes the archive a useful reservoir of traces of media practices, as was discussed in Chapter Four. The next step is to try to make sense of these parallels and alignments, a conceptualization and identification of media practices which, I argue, makes it possible to observe circularities and adaptations across time. A Benjaminian historicization of media practices in refugee camps re-evaluates past and present alongside each other and shows how media practices appear in specific contexts at different times, and within specific technologies and materialities, yet always entangled with the evolving politics of the refugee regime. For example, the media practice
of registering can be observed in papers and card catalogues, emerging in the political context of post-war displacement, but can also be observed in digital systems in a Greek “hotspot” camp today. In this sense, media practices (as constellations of technologies and materialities as well as contextual motivations, imaginaries and skills) continuously re-configure themselves according to context, and uphold specific relations of space and time for forced migrants.

The approach taken in this dissertation uncovered and aligned some of the most central media practices that make, unmake and remake the refugee camp and the refugee figure across time. In this way, this dissertation is similar to media historical approaches concerned with continuity and change of media as practices and materialities, describing for instance palimpsestic layers of media infrastructures (Mattern, 2017), media archaeologies of practices (Kaun, 2016), or how media as protocols are always already new (Gitelman, 2006). Changing media technologies are always dialectically re-embedded into media practices. Peters (2015, p. 25) described media infrastructures as bottlenecks through which meaning has to pass, be it in ancient writing or digital data processing technologies: all of these produce modes of world-enabling and leveraging power, and are able to manipulate time and space ever anew. In contexts of forced migration, and the refugee camp as an epitome of the “border spectacle” (De Genova, 2013) featuring the crisis and anxiety of mobility in nation-states based on bordered territories, media practices realize, re-structure, and re-imagine the condition of the refugee figure and subject, and become bottlenecks of mediated power over the mobile subject, riddled with changing, re-configured materialities and technologies, though at the same time often characterized by stable and continuous media practices. Refugees, camp staff, authorities, organizations, activists, and states always reproduce, perpetuate, and update media practices in and around technologies. In this way, media become (perceived as) necessary elements of working upon and trying to solve and heal these crises and rifts of mobility, time, and space that forced migration presents. Ultimately, today’s seemingly so new data-processing, highly automated, and time- and space-compressed digital media environments for refugee experiences and their governance turn out to be deeply historical media practices, which, as this thesis has shown, materialized differently yet ever again across place and time. So, neither digital media practices, nor refugee experiences and the challenge of governing people on the move, come from a historical void, but are instead reiterations of imaginaries around media
and communication, through which relations, differences, and borders are being built and re-configured.

Delving into the archive as an institution that holds traces of these media practices, a temporal, historical dimension can be added to media practices by identifying changes and continuities in material and social pre-conditions, motivations, skills, imaginaries, technologies and techniques, i.e. the different elements that constitute media practices, following Couldry (2004) and Shove et al. (2012). The archive becomes a methodological entry point for materialist media histories of practices, and for finding contemporary media practices in the past and historical media practices in the present. Conceptualizing archival collections as traces of media practices, as documents (Gitelman, 2014), renders them images of the past, constructed through the viewpoint of the present, embodying media practices and their trajectories across time, so that they can be “designate[d] in today’s soil”, to use Benjamin’s phrase (1932/2011, p. 351).

Desires for fixity

Radha Hegde (2020) described the link between media and migration as a “scripting” of the “terms and conditions” of the “migrant saga”. This view guides attention to the theory behind that politics and power dynamics imbued in those media practices, which, as shown in this thesis, are in the business of differentiating and negotiating relations and orders. The “possibility-fixing” nature of media (Peters, 2015, p. 21) is always entangled with certain imaginaries and ideologies. Migration emerges as a project of handling tensions of stability and instability, stasis and motion, belonging and disbelonging. Building on the empirical findings, it can further be theorized how these “epistemic instabilities” (De Genova, 2017, p. 9) are reflected in media practices, which are themselves deeply shaped by desires for fixity, control, stable connection, and permanence. Evaluating media practices in contexts of forced migration from this perspective makes visible historical assumptions around media, communication, and technologies; these assumptions are not often paid their due attention, but they underlie how media practices unfold. Looking again at the empirical material, such desirable, solutionist imaginaries could for example be observed in the controlling media infrastructures of refugee camp architecture, equipment and administration, driven by cybernetic, functionalist and utilitarian ideas of streamlining communication, information and bodies in time and space. The navigation of biographies (with their individual and collective pasts, presents and futures) through media practices of remembering and
witnessing seeks to fixate temporality and work on senses of permanence and (re)connection. Finally, contentious actions challenging exclusionary practices and intrusive surveillance of refugee camps aim at connecting, fixating, and finding permanence in political recognition. Ultimately, media practices are in the business of negotiating these tensions of camp space, time, and politics by mending certain ruptures and upholding senses of fixation and permanence. Heterotopian, heterochronic and heteropolitical media practices, which in particular are about mediating differences and relations, demonstrates how such desires for solutions, fixity and permanence (desires that might sound so familiar in digital technologies today) are deeply historical. Dissecting the elements of media practices – the materialities, but also skills, motivations and imaginaries – makes visible how meanings of media (or the “protocols” (cf. Gitelman, 2006) of how materiality and sociality meet, in other words, of how media are actually used) are embedded in contingent cultural and social configurations and imaginaries. This approach can contribute to and contextualize ongoing academic (and societal) debates about how media technologies are to be deployed in matters of migration, borders and refugeehood: critical studies of digitization and automation of asylum systems, border infrastructures, and migration governance often build on debunking techno-solutionist assumptions, biases and ideologies built into media practices. If it is further understood that media historically seek fixity, control, connection and permanence in biopolitical projects of bordering and state-making, a critical vocabulary can be nuanced for discussions about artificial intelligence and automation or other digital innovations in migration, refugee governance, or humanitarianism (e.g. Molnar, 2020; Tazzioli, 2020; Latonero & Kift, 2018). At the same time, understanding how media practices are always pre-shaped by certain assumptions and motivations also extends into the viewpoint of refugees and migrants themselves. The angle of communication needs and media practices by people on the move drives a wide research field on connectivity, transnational networks, and media usage among migrants and refugees, and has crucially demonstrated the vitality of mediated communication in migration experiences (e.g. Alencar et al., 2019; Graf, 2018). Understanding further how desired connection, permanence, and fixity are not only potentially oppressive, reductionist and dehumanizing sides of media practices, but also matters of “existential security” (Lagerkvist, 2017) or “ontological security” (Smets, 2018), fundamentally enabling and vital in specific contexts of the migration and refugee experience, and these matters can equally advance critical studies of media and migration from below.
Moreover, in this dialectical shaping of forced migrants’ structure and agency through media, the media practice perspective outlined here makes visible the preconditions of voice, participation, and recognition. A wider contribution can thus be formulated in the realm of media and migration studies, and any field interested in “migrant voices” of “the subaltern” (Georgiou, 2018) and the frameworks, terms, and conditions that delineate how speaking and being heard are possible. While potential for further research lies in taking a systematic oral history approach (i.e. interviewing and capturing voices of forced migrants from historical contexts – the lack of such histories is a limitation of this thesis), the analysis of the material preconditions of media practices presented here instead contributes to understanding how various complex power dynamics (starting from infrastructural access to media technologies, moments of control and coercion, and structures of being able to speak and communicate) shape how “migrant voices” can unfold. These dynamics can be historically observed in dimensions of how refugee camps are built, how public and private spaces are created, how media devices are accessible or controlled, and in media practices of remembering and witnessing that are shaped by various infrastructures of media technologies and administrational governance. These media practices also enforce a voice in protest-oriented actions of resistance, such as marches, hunger strikes, or protest letters. This thesis has drawn attention to the inescapable material pre-conditions to participation-oriented media practices: historical conditions of “information precarity” (Wall et al., 2017) show how voice, representation, and recognition can and cannot play out, and how these constellations and negotiations of participation through communication are always dependent on surrounding media practices and their materialities. While access to media technologies is one factor in making oneself heard, and being able to re-negotiate heterotopian and heterochronic relations between camp and non-camp or refugees and non-refugees is another, media practices are not entirely determined by technology. The visibilities and invisibilities (and hyper-visibilities and systematic silencing) produced by the refugee camp and the refugee regime structure possible media practices of communication. In this way, the terms and conditions can be historically understood around media practices that enable and disable symbolic spaces of appearance and recognition in contexts of forced migration, both in terms of achieving voice and in being obligated to witness, and become a migrant or refugee through mediated speaking (for more on these ideas, see: Georgiou, 2018; Horsti, 2016; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017).
Finally, this thesis expands the possibilities for wider theoretical discussions about the relationships of media and migration and about media theory at large. Media practices are crucial producers and shapers of space, time, and politics, which is in itself not a very surprising observation at first glance. Nevertheless, at extreme margins and supposed peripheries of society, such as in refugee camps, media practices gain specific, potentially more consequential meanings that reflect back on the very centres of social orders at large. A combination of media practice theory with seeing the refugee camp as a heterotopia and heterochronia, and the subsequent identification of heterotopian, heterochronic, and heteropolitical media practices, opens up an analytical space for evaluating how refugee camps are made into marginal, often excluded spaces, yet highly reflective and co-constitutive of society as a whole, and in particular of its borders and questions of belonging. Refugee camps thrive on an inherent paradox of providing shelter and humanitarian care, while at the same time spatializing temporary exclusion and separation, often denying permanent citizenship rights and full condition-less recognition. For these reasons, refugee camps appear as inverted, mirroring, othering, a counter-proposition to permanent belonging and to freedom and independence from invasive control and inescapable administration. Camps thereby become an enactment of the border, an attempt to heal the eternal border crisis of modern, nation-based, territorialist states and their anxieties around belonging. The media practices in and of the camp and of all involved actors (authorities, staff, residents, activists, NGOs, and the state) realize and maintain these double relations of inclusion and exclusion. These actors engage in these behaviours in an attempt to control, condition, and steer communication in specific media technologies and media materialities (for example, in architecture and maps, as well as in papers and documents that make truth-claims about identities, biographies and bodies, or structure places, perceptibility and mobility). The plethora of media practices around space, time and politics always delineates camp-space and non-camp-space, camp-time and non-camp-time, and politics around refugee and non-refugee. Refugee camps are not utopian or dystopian, they are places that exist in the real world where media practices condition communication in specific, heterotopian and heterochronic ways, and thus mediate spatial, temporal, and political relations of refugees and non-refugees.

The identification of these historical media practices, their material and social pre-conditions and consequences in refugee camps, can support a wider,
histrorically-informed articulation of how the role of media in migration is configured and assessed. Media practices, as the sociomaterial doing and making, can further embed the role of mediation and communication in the “making of the modern refugee” (Gatrell, 2013), which itself is a historical-discursive process that has been well-described in refugee studies. In the critical investigation of why refugee regimes are as they are, this thesis has pulled the question into a media-theoretical terrain and looks with a historiographical lens at how “media within an assemblage of social and political vectors of meaning [...] are scripting the material experiences and politics of mobility”, as Radha Hegde (2020) put it in capturing the link between media and migration: as fundamental, infrastructural and co-constitutive, and always embedded in contested politics, economies and geographies. This thesis further disentangled the historically complicit roles of media practices in the modern refugee regime, focusing attention on the heterotopian and heterochronic characteristics of how media practices condition space, time, and politics in the refugee camp and regime, and how these practices highlight the necessary othering and differentiating functions of media practices that historically enable the production of wider social orders around borders, states and belonging at large.

Through such attempts of differentiation, media practices become politically complicit enablers and disablers, makers, unmakers and remakers of refugee experiences and modes of refugee governance. Here, the functions of camps’ media practices to differentiate, order and organize echo Peters’ (2015) infrastructuralist view on mediated communication, as going beyond the channelling of content and meaning and focusing instead on mediation as a cultural technique of arranging, ordering and distributing. In the context of refugee camps, it became clear that the relationships created by way of media and communication (both by authorities as well as refugees) are the sites where refugee experiences, borders, and the refugee regime come to life: in other words, where media practices crystallized into structures and existential conditions that had to be dealt with and related to. Tying this perspective to migration theory, the negotiation of contested differentiations lies at the core of migration as a phenomenon: “[m]igration has always been a space of deep contestation characterized by tensions between opposing forces such as visibility and invisibility, motion and stasis, legality and illegality and alienation and community” (Hegde, 2020, p. 6). These dichotomous tensions (on which phenomena of migration, refugeehood and the bordered state fundamentally thrive) are practiced and materialized in media and communication. In this way, media are fundamental enablers of migra-
tion (a key assumption and perspective of media and migration studies), and a heterotopian perspective also inverts this perspective: migration and refugeehood, their geographies, economies, and politics, enable and bring forth media practices as forms and materialities of differentiation and social order at large.

This approach could further open the field of media studies and lay the groundwork for an approach to media studies from the margins. Refugee camps are ostensibly spaces at the peripheries of society, and forced migrants as their inhabitants are no doubt a highly marginalized social group. But what this thesis has shown is that zooming in on the margins can in fact guide and nuance the understanding of the centre. Seemingly marginal media practices matter for media practices in general. This thesis has started out from a non-media-centric approach, from a specific space in society (the refugee camp), instead of a specific media technology or media practice. A disentanglement of the refugee camp’s marginalized spaces, times, and politics, which are enabled and differentiated by way of media practices, has led to their description as heterotopian, heterochronic, and heteropolitical and as media practices in the business of negotiating relations between margins and centres. An approach to media studies could be delineated that would addresses societal margins as a heuristic for wider arguments about society and its alleged centres in general. Within their mirrored other, and in the othered spaces and times of for example refugee camps, societies figurate and fabricate themselves – their borders and boundaries of belonging and recognition, their fault lines of inclusion and exclusion, and their notions of freedom, control, surveillance or privacy are hashed out at the margins. The fully recognized, included citizen without conditions only becomes possible in the mirrors of heterotopian juxtapositions and the borders they mediate. Moving to the margins, hence, can become a project for media studies, not only in order to document and concentrate on dispossessed and excluded social groups, but also going beyond that, to use the epistemological advantages of the margins in order to assess roles of media practices, media technologies, media materialities, and communication processes in how societies constitute themselves more generally.

Markus Krajewski (2018) employed the heuristic of the “servant” as a historical figure and media practice to develop a “marginal epistemology” (Krajewski, 2018, p. 348). In shifting the perspective from centres of power to the provincial margins and the peripheral back stages (such as servants, but also refugee camps as spaces and social figures of subalternity), Krajewski argued that alternative historiographies become possible, which “enables the
production of knowledge – not merely in the sense of supplementing [marginal elements] but also in seeing [them] in the right light” (Krajewski, 2018, p. 352). Marginal studies of history, culture, society, and media start out from the subaltern not to fill blind spots of attention, but to adjust this very attention and epistemology in the first place. The media practices in and of refugee camps are not only often neglected and forgotten, but marginal events and processes that deserve attention: “[The subaltern’s] activities play a significant role in the successful completion of each task; indeed they are the sine qua non of the entire procedure” (Krajewski, 2018, p. 351). Studying media practices at and from the margins becomes a wider matter of studying social order and media practices in general. Media practices in refugee camps, as captured with the notion of heterotopias and heterochronias, are fundamentally relational and co-constitutive of the social as a whole: they enable and configure states, citizens, borders, and ideas of belonging in general. Such an inverted epistemology (looking for media practices at the margins across history) promises to be a productive approach. Media histories of refugee camps not only readjust focus to societal margins, but enable “an alternate mode of historical inquiry” with a sharpened gaze on the “supposedly trivial but, as it turns out, crucially important actors operating on the margins” (Krajewski, 2018, p. 351), making visible the whole in new ways.

Ultimately, such alternate historicizations can be liberating. Instead of excavating historical contingencies in a deterministic fashion, and assuming history to be an inescapable progression, images of history from the margins point in the opposite direction. Through aligning and evaluating excavated media practices with the present, this thesis has also been a project of identifying historical alternatives, or “late insights”, with which “today’s soil” is dug up and re-arranged (Benjamin, 1932/2011) – a project of giving alternatives to what media practices can mean, to what refugee governance, humanitarian relief, and their connections to media and communication can look like. By re-evaluating the conditions of both the past and of the present, eventually a critique of the often-assumed inevitability of historical progression emerges, of technological development and advancement, the digital imperative, and the ensuing assumptions of inescapability, solutionism and saviourism that characterize the present moment in media and migration. Resetting the view on the whole from the view of the margins can uncover alternatives across history that challenge a contemporary rhetoric of newness, progressivism, and inevitability around media practices.


ARD. (2020). Isabel Schayani über die Zustände auf Lesbos. https://www.arndmediathek.de/video/anne-will/isabel-schayani-ueber-die-zustande-auf-lesbos/daserste/Y3JpZDovL25kci5kZS83NzQ3OTA1OC0zNzlkLTRjM2UtOTFlZCIkODcxMmQ5ZDUxZGI/


REFERENCES


Martín-Barbero, J. (1993). *Communication, Culture and Hegemony: From the Media to the Mediations.* SAGE.
Marvin, C. (1988). *When old technologies were new: thinking about electric communication in the late nineteenth century*. Oxford University Press.


Morley, D. (2017). *Communications and Mobility: The Migrant, the Mobile Phone, and the Container Box*. Wiley.


O’Malley, James (7 September 2015). Surprised that Syrian refugees have smartphones? Sorry to break this to you, but you’re an idiot. The Independent. https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/surprised-syrian-refugees-have-smartphones-well-sorry-break-you-you-re-idiot-10489719.html


Siegert, B. (2011). The map is the territory. Radical Philosophy, 169 (September/October), 13–16.


Appendix: extended list of archival files

Archiv der Sozialen Bewegungen, Hamburg (Archive for Social Movements, Hamburg)

“04 Antirassismus, Asyl- und Immigrationspolitik“:
- Signatur 04.143
- Signatur 04.153
- Signatur 04.154
- Signatur 04.210
- Signatur 04.300
- Signatur 04.412
- Signatur 04.500
- Signatur 04.530

Archiv Soziale Bewegungen, Freiburg (Archive for Social Movements, Freiburg)

- 16.1.0.: Presse zu Asyl: chronologisch 1970er bis 1992
- 16.1.1.–16.1.3.: Asylpolitik. Flugblätter
- 16.1.2.: Flugblätter Waldkirch
- 16.1.1. II.: Flugblätter aus der Region Südbaden
- 16.1.1. I: Diskussionspapiere aus Freiburg der 80er Jahre bis 1991
- 16.3.3.: Ausländerpolitik/Integration, Initiativen und kulturelle Aktivitäten
- 16.0. III: Asyl- und Ausländerpolitik, Gemeinderatsvorlagen
- 16.3.2. I.: Ausländerpolitik und Integration, regionale Flugblätter

Archiv der Sozialen Bewegungen, Bremen (Archive for Social Movements, Bremen)

- „Asyl Antirassismus, Mappe Bosnische Flüchtlinge – Schwerpunkt Bremen (1996/97), Herkunft: Mafalda Nachlass”
- Box “Antirassismus” (5 boxes in total)
- Box “Antirassismus (auch Zeitungsausschnitte)”
- Mappe Frauen* und Migration in der BRD/Feminismus und Antira, Herkunft Mafalda Nachlass

**Staatsarchiv Hamburg (State archive of Hamburg)**

- 131-1 II_959: Gründung und Zusammensetzung des Flüchtlingsausschusses Hamburg, 1945–1955
- 131-1 II_1233: Betreuung von Heimatvertriebenen, Flüchtlingen und Evakuierten, 1945–1956
- 131-1 II_1242: Tagungen, Sitzungen und Besprechungen verschiedener Gremien in Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten, 1945–1959
- 131-13_1047: Flachbauten in Finkenwerder
- 131-5_151/24: Wohnraumangelegenheiten; Flüchtlingslager, Nissenhütten; Bewirtschaftung von Lagern, Baracken und Wohnheimen; Staatskanzlei-Verwaltungsbeschwerden
- 131-1 II_1257: Anerkennung und allgemeine Angelegenheiten von Flüchtlingsvereinigungen, 1946–1951
- 135-1 VI_1585: Pressestelle VI, Weltflüchtlingsjahr ab 28. Juni 1959
- 331-1 II_439: Lager für Ungarnflüchtlinge in Finkenwerder. Überwachung und Räumung des Lagers, Auseinandersetzung mit der Bevölkerung, verschiedene Straftaten
- 321-3 I_239: Baubehörde I, Neubau des Heimes der offenen Tür im Flüchtlingslager Finkenwerder, Heimatlosenlagerdiesnt CVJM
- 361-2 VI_3981: Unterricht für Ungarnflüchtlinge
- 361-2 VI_520 Band I: Berichte zur Eingliederung von Flüchtlingen
APPENDIX

- 430-4_I A 1 7: ostpreußische Flüchtlinge in Hamburg 1915
- 442-7_219: Finkenwerder Ungarnflüchtlinge
- 444-5_240: Ausbau und Nutzung des ehemaligen Sandsteinwerks – Im Soll 35–41 – als Gemeinschaftsunterkunft für Asylbewerber
- 444-5_241: Ausbau und Nutzung der Asylbewerberunterkunft Karlshöhe 52
- 444-4_389: Unterbringung von Asylbewerbern im Asylbewerberheim am Ohlstedter Platz in Ohlstedt
- 444-5_194: Planung, Bau und Unterhaltung von Heimen und Gemeinschaftsunterkünften
- 445-2 II_58: Notunterkunft für Asylbewerber Bornheide, Rugenbarg 111
- 444-2_181: Einrichtung eines Pavillondorfes für Aus- und Über- siedler und Asylbewerber an der Harksheider Straße in Poppenbüttel
- 442-3_1046: Unterbringung der Asylbwerber, Band 3, 1999–2006
- 621-1/11_712: Flüchtlingsaktion des NWDR

**Staatsarchiv Bayern in Nürnberg (State archive of Bavaria in Nuremberg)**

- “Gewerbebetriebe im Sammellager für Ausländer und Kantinen Allgemein” (Reg. v. Mfr. Abg. 1978, Nr. 19856)

**Landesarchiv Niedersachsen (State archive of Lower Saxony)**

- NDS 480 Acc. 118/84, Nr. 17: Caritas-Kinderhort, Flüchtlingslager Uelzen-Bohldamm, 1950–1963
- NDS 380 Acc. 32/97 Nr. 8: Beschwerden über das Durchgangslager Friedland, 1955–1956
- Hann. 174 Dannenberg Nr. 1207: Personalangelegenheiten der Flüchtlingslager, 1945–1946
APPENDIX

Bundesarchiv Koblenz (Federal archive in Koblenz)

- B115/5753: Nürnberg, Valka-Lager
- B150/3333: Behandlung des Vertriebenenproblems bei den Rundfunksendern, Versuch zur Intensivierung
- B150/3355: Rundfunksendungen von Radio Freies Europa und Sender Leipzig
- B150/3304: Spendenaufkommen für die Friedlandhilfe
- B145/16578: Asylverfahren; Medienhilfe für die Dritte Welt
- B106/90316: Verteilung der Asylbewerber allgemein, Bd. 4 und 5; Durchführung der Vorprüfung in den zentralen Anlaufstellen der Länder
- B149/59684: Verschiedenes zu Asylrecht
- B150/3357: Rundfunksendungen und Interviews von Angehörigen des BMVt
- B150/4303: Übernahme der Zeitschrift "Der Flüchtlingsberater" durch das BMVt
- B150/4201: Ratgeber für heimatlose Ausländer
- B150/3378: Filme über die Vertreibungsgebiete
- B150/3377: Einsatz von Heimatfilmen und Diareihen – Zusammenarbeit mit der Konferenz der Landesfilmdienste für Jugend und Volksbildung
- B150/3374: Texte zu Diareihen über die Vertreibungsgebiete

Archiv des Generalsekretariats des Deutschen Roten Kreuz, Berlin (Red Cross Archive, Berlin)

- DRK 1173
- DRK 530
- DRK 1741
- DRK 3089
- DRK 2073
- DRK 2291
- DRK 4750
- DRK 5166
- DRK 4715
- DRK 3266
UN Archives, New York City

- S-1058-0001-01: Germany Mission – Photographs #001–120 [negatives in cabinet]
- S-1058-0002-0001: Germany Mission – Photographs #121–240 [negatives in cabinet]
- S-1058-0003-0001: Germany Mission – Photographs #241–362 [negatives in cabinet]
- S-0800-0034-0002: Germany – Churches for displaced persons
- S-0800-0034-0001: Germany – Children and refugees
- S-0800-0034-0004: Germany – Hitler’s home
- S-0800-0034-0006: Germany – UNRRA Logistics
- S-0399-0003-03: Treatment of Displaced Persons
- S-0406-0003-18: BZ/HQ/EC – Eligibility and Care – 476 – Film Services – Parts I and II
- S-0401-0005-01: Community Activities
- S-0401-0006-07: Employment Program – Employment and Training of Displaced Persons
- S-0401-0008-05: Recreation
- S-0401-0009-01: Reports
- S-0402-0001-12: Displaced Persons – Newspapers
- S-0404-0004-24: Closure – 19. Survey Reports
- S-0405-0011-05: Z-87 – Welfare – Community Activities
- S-0405-0019-01: Z-178 – Public Information – Hometown Releases
- S-0405-0019-03: Z-180 – Public Information – Releases for Team News
- S-0405-0019-04: Z-181 – Story Material Used
- S-0405-0019-07: Z-184 – Unpublished Stories
- S-0406-0001-04: BZ/HQ/CR – Communications and Records – 306 – Cable Procedure
- S-0406-0001-06: BZ/HQ/CR – Communications and Records – 308 – Telephones
- S-0437-0018-11: Displaced Persons – Communications for Displaced Persons
- S-0437-0018-22: Displaced Persons – German Newspapers
- S-0438-0006-03: Newspapers – PAA
- S-0438-0006-04: Newspapers – PAA
- S-0436-0004-07: Area Team 1023 – DP Camp 566 – Cornburg – Photographs and Copy of Newspaper – “For Liberty” – Ukrainian Camp Weekly
- S-0436-0006-04: Area Team 1027 – Berlin – Newspaper Clippings from the Berlin Observer
- S-0436-0016-01: Illustrated Histories, Daily Logs, etc. of Various Camps
- S-0436-0018-02: Newspapers and Publications
- S-0436-0019-03: Newspapers Issued by Warsaw Government Which Are Being Released to Camps
- S-0434-0001-01: BZ/SH – A / Administration – 609 – Field Narrative Reports – Part I
- S-0428-0005-01: 822 – Camp Activities – Entertainment
- S-1367-0000-0128: Telecommunications Plan Post War
- S-1365-0000-0138: Telecommunication and Wireless Stores
- S-1345-0000-0011: Wireless Receivers
- S-1442-0000-0127: Wireless Sets
- S-0438-0006-02: Monthly Reports
- S-0438-0009-06: Welfare – Supplies
- S-0413-0001-06: Central Archives – Radio Scripts – Mass Tracing Branch
- S-0415-0001-01: Bremen and Hamburg Reports
- S-0408-0002-14: 26 – Monthly Narrative Reports – North Rhine – Westphalia Region
- S-0408-0004-10: 53 - Displaced person Complaints – examples of the many legitimate complaints concerning their treatment
- S-0431-0007-07: BZ/REG: WEL / Welfare- VS / Voluntary Societies – 537 – Camp Newspapers
Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv (DRA), Frankfurt am Main (German Broadcasting Archive, Frankfurt am Main)


DOMiD (Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über die Migration in Deutschland e.V.) (Documentation Centre and Museum for Migration in Germany)

17. Renata Ingbrant, *From Her Point of View: Woman’s Anti-World in the Poetry of Anna Świrszczyńska*, 2007
34. Tommy Larsson Segerlind, *Team Entrepreneurship: A process analysis of the venture team and the venture team roles in relation to the innovation process*, 2009
36. Stefan Hallgren, *Brain aromatase in the guppy, Poecilia reticulate: Distribution, control and role in behavior*, 2009
37. Karin Ellencrona, *Functional characterization of interactions between the flavivirus NS5 protein and PDZ proteins of the mammalian host*, 2009
43. René León Rosales, Vid framtidens hitersta gräns: Om pojkar och elevpositioner i en multietnisk skola, 2010
44. Simon Larsson, Intelligensaristokrater och arkivmartyrer: Normerna för vetenskaplig skicklighet i svensk historieforskning 1900–1945, 2010
45. Håkan Lättman, Studies on spatial and temporal distributions of epiphytic lichens, 2010
46. Alia Jaensson, Pheromonal mediated behaviour and endocrine response in salmonids: The impact of cypermethrin, copper, and glyphosate, 2010
47. Michael Wigerius, Roles of mammalian Scribble in polarity signaling, virus offense and cell-fate determination, 2010
48. Anna Hedtjärn Wester, Män i kostym: Prinsar, konstnärer och tegelbärare vid sekelskiftet 1900, 2010
49. Magnus Linnarsson, Postgång på växlande villkor: Det svenska postväsendets organisation under stormaktstiden, 2010
52. Carl Cederberg, Resaying the Human: Levinas Beyond Humanism and Antihumanism, 2010
57. Christina Douglas, Kärlek per korrespondens: Två förlovade par under andra hälften av 1800-talet, 2011
70. Maria Wolrath Söderberg, *Topos som meningsskapare: retorikens topiska perspektiv på tänkande och lärande genom argumentation*, 2012
76. Tanya Jukkala, *Suicide in Russia: A macro-sociological study*, 2013
77. Maria Nyman, *Resandets gränser: svenska resenärers skildringar av Ryssland under 1700-talet*, 2013
82. Anna Kharkina, *From Kinship to Global Brand: the Discourse on Culture in Nordic Cooperation after World War II*, 2013
84. Oskar Henriksson, *Genetic connectivity of fish in the Western Indian Ocean*, 2013
94. Henriette Cederlöf, *Alien Places in Late Soviet Science Fiction: The ”Unexpected Encounters” of Arkady and Boris Strugatsky as Novels and Films*, 2014
105. Katharina Wesolowski, *Maybe baby? Reproductive behaviour, fertility intentions, and family policies in post-communist countries, with a special focus on Ukraine*, 2015
131. Ekaterina Tarasova, *Anti-nuclear Movements in Discursive and Political Contexts: Between expert voices and local protests*, 2017
132. Sanja Obrenović Johansson, Från kombifeminism till rörelse: Kvinnlig serbisk organisation i förändring, 2017
139. Alberto Frigo, Life-stowing from a Digital Media Perspective: Past, Present and Future, 2017
140. Maarja Saar, The Answers You Seek Will Never Be Found At Home: Reflexivity, biographical narratives and lifestyle migration among highly-skilled Estonians, 2017
141. Anh Mai, Organizing for Efficiency: Essay on merger policies, independence of authorities, and technology diffusion, 2017
142. Gustav Strandberg, Politikens omskakning: Negativitet, samexistens och frihet i Jan Patočkas tänkande, 2017
143. Lovisa Andén, Litteratur och erfarenhet i Merleau-Pontys läsning av Proust, Valéry och Stendhal, 2017
144. Fredrik Bertilsson, Frihetstida policykapande: uppfosstringskommissionen och de akademiska konstitutionerna 1738–1766, 2017
145. Börjeson, Natasja, Toxic Textiles – towards responsibility in complex supply chains, 2017
149. Roman Horbyk, Mediated Europes – Discourse and Power in Ukraine, Russia and Poland during Euromaidan, 2017
150. Nadezda Petrusenko, Creating the Revolutionary Heroines: The Case of Female Terrorists of the PSR (Russia, Beginning of the 20th Century), 2017
151. Rahel Kuflu, Bröder emellan: Identitetsformer i det koloniserade Eritrea, 2018
152. Karin Edberg, Energilandskap i förändring: Inramningar av kontroversiella lokaliseringar på norra Gotland, 2018
154. Maria Lönn, *Bruten vithet: Om den ryska femininitetens sinnliga och temporala villkor*, 2018
155. Tove Porseryd, *Endocrine Disruption in Fish: Effects of 17α-ethinylestradiol exposure on non-reproductive behavior, fertility and brain and testis transcriptome*, 2018
156. Marcel Mangold, *Securing the working democracy: Inventive arrangements to guarantee circulation and the emergence of democracy policy*, 2018
157. Matilda Tudor, *Desire Lines: Towards a Queer Digital Media Phenomenology*, 2018
158. Martin Andersson, *Migration i 1600-talets Sverige: Älvsborgs lösen 1613–1618*, 2018
160. Irina Seits, *Architectures of Life-Building in the Twentieth Century: Russia, Germany, Sweden*, 2018
164. Ralph Tafon, *Analyzing the “Dark Side” of Marine Spatial Planning – A study of domination, empowerment and freedom (or power in, of and on planning) through theories of discourse and power*, 2019
165. Ingela Visuri, *Varieties of Supernatural Experience: The case of high-functioning autism*, 2019
166. Mathilde Rehnlund, *Getting the transport right – for what? What transport policy can tell us about the construction of sustainability*, 2019
169. Eva Karlberg, *Organizing the Voice of Women: A study of the Polish and Swedish women’s movements’ adaptation to international structures*, 2019
174. Renat Bekkin, *People of reliable loyalty…: Muftiates and the State in Modern Russia*, 2020
175. Olena Podolian, *The Challenge of 'Stateness' in Estonia and Ukraine: The international dimension a quarter of a century into independence*, 2020
176. Patrick Seniuk, *Encountering Depression In-Depth: An existential-phenomenological approach to selfhood, depression, and psychiatric practice*, 2020
177. Vasileios Petrogiannis, *European Mobility and Spatial Belongings: Greek and Latvian migrants in Sweden*, 2020
178. Lena Norbäck Ivarsson, *Tracing environmental change and human impact as recorded in sediments from coastal areas of the northwestern Baltic Proper*, 2020
179. Sara Persson, *Corporate Hegemony through Sustainability – A study of sustainability standards and CSR practices as tools to demobilise community resistance in the Albanian oil industry*, 2020
184. Anna Enström, *Sinnesstämning, skratt och hypokondri: Om estetisk erfarenhet i Kants tredje Kritik*, 2021
192. Raili Uibo, “And I don’t know who we really are to each other”: Queers doing close relationships in Estonia, 2021
194. Mani Shutzberg, *Tricks of the Medical Trade: Cunning in the Age of Bureaucratic Austerity*, 2021


196. Philipp Seuferling, *Media and the refugee camp – The historical making of space, time, and politics in the modern refugee regime*, 2021
As digital technologies become ever more involved in the experiences of refugees and the governance of borders and migration, surprisingly little is known about the histories of media practices and media technologies in the context of refugeehood. *Media and the Refugee Camp* historically explores the space of the refugee camp as a site of the modern refugee regime from a media historical perspective. By investigating how media practices of residents, authorities, and activists have mattered in constructing conditions for space, time, and politics in the refugee camp, this thesis traces the role of media and communication as existential in being and being made a refugee in Germany after 1945. Zooming in on a space that seemingly lies at the margins of society, this dissertation rather flags the refugee camp as a central hub of media practices that uphold and negotiate borders and modes of distinction in society at large.

Philipp Seuferling (born 1994) is based at the Department for Media and Communication Studies at Södertörn University, Stockholm. His research interests comprise the intersections of media, migration and borders, and their histories.

Media and Communication Studies, Critical and Cultural Theory, School of Culture and Education, Södertörn University.

ISBN 978-91-89109-82-7 (print) / 978-91-89109-83-4 (digital) | Södertörns University | publications@sh.se