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## Living with others: fostering radical cosmopolitanism through citizenship politics in Berlin

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### ABSTRACT

A growing refugee and migration crisis has imploded on European shores, immobilizing E.U. countries and fuelling a rise in far-right parties. Against this backdrop, this paper investigates the question of how to foster pluralism and a cosmopolitan desire for living with others who are newcomers. It does so by investigating community-based, citizen-led initiatives that open communities to newcomers, such as refugees and migrants, and foster cultural pluralism in ways that transform understandings of who is a citizen and belongs to the community. This study focuses on initiatives which seek to build solidarity and social relations with newcomers, but in ways that challenge citizen/non-citizen binaries based on one of our field research sites: Berlin, Germany. The paper brings insights from critical citizenship studies, exploring how citizenship is constituted through everyday practices, into dialogue with radical cosmopolitanism, particularly through Derrida's works on 'unconditional hospitality'. This radical cosmopolitan literature theorizes possibilities for building relational ontologies between guest and host, citizen and newcomer, in ways that are not based on exclusion, but engagement with difference and which challenge antagonistic forms of self-other and citizen-non-citizen dichotomies. Illustrative examples based on community-led initiatives in Berlin demonstrate how this spirit of radical communitarianism is put into practice through everyday lived experience and demonstrate that it is possible to develop a cosmopolitan spirit through exchange and transformation of both the self and other by engaging with rather than seeking to eliminate difference in the aims of constituting a universal around which cosmopolitanism can be built.

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## Introduction

A refugee and migration crisis has imploded on European shores, immobilizing E.U. countries and fuelling far-right parties such as the Golden Dawn in Greece, the Front National in France, and the Fidezs Party in Hungary. An outspoken critic against Muslims and refugees, Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán has consolidated an anti-migrant 'eastern bloc' with countries such as Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech

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Republic (Puhl 2015). Xenophobic and racist attacks have also spread across Europe (Rossignol 2016), along with popular anti-(im)migrant movements such as the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (P.E.G.I.D.A.) in Germany. The election of Donald Trump and his xenophobic, anti-migrant discourse has further bolstered the far right in Europe, as expressed in Florian Philippot's, deputy leader of France's National Front, tweet: 'Their world is crumbling. Ours is building'.

This anti-migrant and refugee sentiment has grown, moreover, amidst greater numbers of Syrians and other refugees and migrants arriving from across the Middle East and Africa in desperate need of protection, with more than one million people crossing the Mediterranean and Aegean seas in the past year alone (UNHCR 2015). As these examples illustrate, the E.U. project, which was once a model of liberal cosmopolitanism, is now at breaking point. Speaking to this context, former U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Guterres (2014) has warned:

Societies across the globe are becoming multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multireligious. Like it or not, we cannot stop this trend; it is inevitable. We do have a choice, however, in how we approach this. Do we embrace diversity as a source of strength, or do we play the populist game and make it a source of fear? I believe tolerance is the only responsible option.

In response to Guterres' question of how to deal with growing multicultural, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic societies, the right-wing response is an extreme one of excluding newcomers. However, others coming from communitarian positions have presented more justifiable reasons for their discomfort with the idea of liberally opening communities to newcomers. Some communitarians argue for a more restricted approach to opening the political community to newcomers, on the grounds that the egalitarian and distributive mechanisms, long established under welfare regimes, require a degree of national homogeneity in order to create solidaristic ties amongst citizens. As Miller (2000, 3) explains:

nationality answers one of the most pressing needs of the modern world, namely how to maintain solidarity among the populations of states that are large and anonymous, such that their citizens cannot possibly enjoy the kind of community that relies on kinship or face to face interaction. ... Nationality is *de facto* the main source of such solidarity.

Others present the communitarian argument in simple economic terms as, for example, evident in debates justifying Brexit. Immigrants, according to British Prime Minister Theresa May and others, are said to place a burden on a fraying social-safety net and are adding to further competition (and even 'job displacement') for what are already scare jobs, along with 'downward pressure' on wages in a weak labour market (May 2012). From this version of the communitarian perspective, the discomfort of welcoming newcomers may be less about social cohesion and accommodating cultural differences, and more about whether a standard of life can be maintained with more people sharing already strained public resources. Whether through an appeal to cultural identity and social cohesion or economics, communitarians fear that the protection, which they perceive to be gained from having firm boundaries around the political community, will unravel with the arrival of too many newcomers.

If the right-wing response of closing the borders to newcomers is one response, another is to welcome some limited groups of newcomers, but on the grounds that they 'integrate'

into society. Proponents of this assimilationist position argue that the visibility of cultural differences of newcomers is detrimental to the integrity of national identities. This approach suggests strategies to minimize the visibility of cultural difference, placing demands on cultural minorities to minimize attachments to other cultural belongings (Sackmann, Peters, and Faist 2003). As we have argued elsewhere (Baban and Rygiel 2014), the assimilationist approach is ultimately unsuccessful; however, because it ignores the legitimate claims that newcomers make for representation, it is a necessary element for having a sense of belonging to society. Growing debates over fears of Muslims practising Islam in European countries such as Denmark, Germany, France, and Sweden, for example, reveal the tensions which arise from forced assimilationist approaches (Bowen 2008; Chatham House 2017; Plenel 2016; Reid 2017; Wike, Stokes, and Simmons 2016). It also sets up an unrealistic bar that newcomers must meet and yet never seem to be able to quite realize. For example, after half a century of Turkish immigrants being present and settled in Germany, those of third generation who are born and fully immersed in German culture are still not seen as Germans (Baban 2006a). Informed by assumptions about the homogeneity of old-style forms of nation building, the assimilationist approach is no longer sustainable, unable as it is to adequately address the reality of growing population movements and transnational linkages. Cultural plurality within the state prevents the easy reproduction of dominant national narratives, predicated upon erasing cultural belonging and forgetting past memories (Taras 2009). Yet, cultural plurality is now integral to the fabric of most European societies. This is why we agree with Guterres' that the way forward cannot be a reactionary one, based on either xenophobia or assimilation.

This paper intends to address the difficult question of reconciling cultural plurality with communitarian concerns regarding maintaining long-established traditions and norms of those societies. Put differently, is it possible to accommodate the cultural plurality of newcomers, while at the same time creating conditions under which these same newcomers can participate in the historical traditions and norms of their adopted countries? In this paper we intend to address this difficult question by rethinking citizenship with the help of radical cosmopolitanism.

Radical cosmopolitanism brings insight into theorizing the citizen/non-citizen border. Citizenship establishes a border of inclusion and exclusion on two fronts. The first is with respect to legal status between those who legally belong within the polity and those outside. The second is one of cultural membership, based on who is perceived as belonging within the community. This boundary of inclusion/exclusion is most often portrayed as establishing a hierarchy between citizens and insiders and those non-citizens on the outside, whether legally defined as non-citizens or constituted as such because of cultural, religious, or other reasons.<sup>1</sup> As Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2013, 182) explain, citizenship is a 'cut' between those who are

<sup>1</sup>Critical citizenship studies expand theorizing citizenship in ways that relax the boundaries of citizenship. For example, Isin and Nyers (2014, 1) define citizenship in more 'minimalist' ways that loosen definitions around institution and polity, such that citizenship might be re-imagined in multiple ways and as other than state-based. Isin (2002, 4) provides a genealogy of citizenship, noting that 'citizenship and its alterity always emerged simultaneously in a dialogical manner and constituted each other'. Moreover, Isin (2002, 3) notes that this dialogical relationship, while often portrayed as one based on a logic of exclusion, might take multiple strategies including 'solidaristic strategies such as recognition and affiliation, agonistic strategies such as domination and authorization, or alienating strategies such as disbarment across various positions within social space. However, despite Isin's observations and the desire of critical citizenship to expand the boundaries on citizenship, this relationship is most often addressed as an agonistic one based on exclusion and hierarchy, as evidenced by Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2013).

included and excluded within the polity, a demarcation denoting ‘haves’ from ‘have nots’ with outsider status:

Imagine a scale where we have on the one pole full rights and on the other complete illegalization and invisibility. It is somewhere between these two extreme poles that a cut is placed. This cut is citizenship. [...] Citizenship [...] regulates the balance between rights and representation and renders certain populations as legitimate bearers of rights while other populations are marked as inexistent.

We argue that radical cosmopolitanism offers a way of addressing this shortcoming often present in discussions of citizenship. Whereas often the assumption is that the border between citizen and non-citizen is *necessarily* hierarchical, radical cosmopolitanism offers a way of theorizing the border in ways that do not always assume this to be the case.<sup>2</sup> Radical cosmopolitanism offers a different way to theorize the citizen/non-citizen border by emphasizing the desire to live and engage with others but also to be transformed by those considered as potentially different and as outsiders. At the core of radical cosmopolitanism lies a relational ontology based on a moment of transgression of self-other, non-citizen/citizen binaries. Baban and Rygiel (2014) refer to this as ‘transgressive cosmopolitanism’, when individuals engage with each other, not by ignoring or transcending particularities, but by being motivated through one’s own particularities to open oneself up to the other and to the experience of being transformed by the exchange. From the perspective of radical cosmopolitanism, then, the border between insider and outsider can materialize in non-hierarchical ways as well, and the question for us then becomes under what conditions might a radical form of cosmopolitanism develop.

In addition to using radical cosmopolitanism to advance theorizing the border in citizenship studies, this paper also aims to show that radical cosmopolitanism is a discussion that has real-world applicability, especially for the current moment in which we are living. By focusing on several illustrative examples, we wish to show how radical cosmopolitanism might emerge in very material ways through everyday living with others. We demonstrate here how radical cosmopolitanism disrupts the inside/outside logic of citizenship by establishing new forms of solidarity among newcomers and local populations, and in ways that transgress legal requirements of membership in the community, while allowing new forms of living together to emerge that also challenge the strict cultural boundaries of belonging. The examples discussed in the second half of the paper are based on field research conducted in 2016 and 2017 in Berlin, Germany as part of a 5-year funded project investigating community and citizen-led initiatives in several sites across four countries. In this paper we focus on Berlin as one of these sites, and explore several grassroots initiatives, based on visits and participatory observation and 33 in-depth interviews, including with individuals working in cafe and kitchen

<sup>2</sup>Literature on ‘cosmopolitan citizenship’ shifts in the opposite direction. Rather than a hierarchical border, most discussions eliminate the border altogether by downplaying power relations and shifting scales from the national to the global. Cosmopolitan citizenship proposes expanding the rights of citizens, but as global rather than national citizens. The discussion shifts away from thinking about citizenship within the territorial borders of the state in favour of multiple memberships at the supranational or global political levels (Hutchings and Dannreuther 1999; Linklater 1998; Heater 2002; Archibugi and Held 1995; Archibugi 2003). However, as Chandler (2003) has rightly observed, there are ‘problems with extending the concept of rights beyond the bounds of the sovereign state, without a mechanism of making these new rights accountable to their subject’ and without thinking through how the spirit of radical cosmopolitanism might be practiced, not by superseding the domestic polity, but within its very boundaries.

projects, solidarity convoys, and art-based projects, all of which can be seen to be part of what has been referred to as Germany's 'welcome culture' (Karakayali 2015). While growing hostility against refugees and migrants in Germany suggests that the initial openness expressed in its 'welcome culture' may be on a downturn, citizen-based initiatives of solidarity with newcomers remain strong in many cities and towns across Germany. These initiatives present a counter-narrative to far right politics and aim to build solidarity with newcomers but in ways that challenge citizen/non-citizen binaries, which often pit newcomers as undesirable outsiders. In this paper we focus on a detailed discussion of five initiatives representative of different types of projects. We argue that, despite the fact that the projects are initiated by a diverse group of Germans, from a spectrum of different backgrounds and identities, a spirit of radical cosmopolitanism motivates all of these projects. As illustrated here through examples of community-based initiatives, this boundary between insider and outsider, citizen and non-citizen, can be rearticulated by developing a relational ontology in the spirit of radical cosmopolitanism.

### Radical cosmopolitanism through unconditional hospitality

How can radical cosmopolitanism help us better understand political debates within Europe regarding the conditions facing cultural minorities such as immigrants, ethnic minorities, or Roma populations, or Europe's ethical and legal responsibilities towards refugees arriving in Europe? Right-wing movements are demanding greater cultural purity and denying representation to cultural minorities, whom they deem to be outside of their cultural framework. They also seek to prevent refugees from entering into Europe and call for new laws denying citizenship rights to minorities and refugees. The main impetus behind such exclusionary demands, however, is a fear of difference – a fear of what it means to live with others with different cultural habits and practices and, more importantly, a fear of losing one's identity and cultural references imagined as timeless and essential. Levinas (1969) points out that this fear of the other is the fear of 'the stranger who disturbs the being at home with oneself' (p. 39). This fear of being disturbed by the stranger at home (where one is alone with oneself) places the relationship between the self and the one who is seeking inclusion (for example the refugee) into an antagonistic relationship. This antagonistic relationship is often expressed in terms of either shutting the door and, thus, denying entry, or, alternatively, restricting entry to those willing to assimilate (to become one with the self) in order to keep the home safe and secure. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why many are skeptical of cosmopolitanism's claim to be able to build bridges across our common humanity. Historically, this claim has failed to alter the antagonistic relationship between self and other. Instead, it has manifested itself in the idea of entering someone else's house, where the host has already determined the rules, and guests are expected to merely abide by them so as not to disturb the host. In Kant's (2006) liberal cosmopolitanism, in which hospitality towards others is clearly defined by the host/guest logic, 'the stranger' has the right to visit, and to be treated without hostility, but not the right to settle or make claims to the land (p. 82). In Kant's cosmopolitanism, the moment of contact with the stranger is also one of danger, a moment when the host's peace, as Levinas notes, is disturbed. Cosmopolitanism in this instance is not about 'recognizing our

common humanity', but rather about establishing the minimal conditions regulating how to interact with the stranger in order to keep the host at peace and without necessarily harming the stranger. This rather restrictive cosmopolitan vision sees both the host and guest as potential enemies. Their interactions are perceived as inevitably leading either to the destruction of the host's right to be oneself or the forcible removal of the guest, but never to a situation where the host and the guest can 'build a new house in which they can live together' (Baban 2006b, 119–120).

It is easy to see that the cosmopolitan vision noted here, one based on a binary logic of host/guest and mediated through legal procedures, cannot provide minority cultures with a hospitable environment in which to seek inclusion, and not just as temporary guests, but by becoming hosts themselves. Scholars have criticized this particular version of traditional cosmopolitanism by correctly pointing out that attempts to create cosmopolitanism from inherently hierarchical relationships has, historically, only produced further exclusion and marginalization (Mignolo 2000; Fine and Cohen 2002; Appiah 2006; Delanty 2006). At this point one may question cosmopolitanism's utility for finding solutions to the complex social and cultural problems currently facing us. Yet, cosmopolitanism is not restricted to this traditional form: more radical interpretations of cosmopolitanism have the potential to move beyond this simple dichotomy of universal and particular (Baban 2006b). Critical cosmopolitanism scholarship has noted that the radical potential at the heart of cosmopolitanism can be revived by reflecting on how different identities are related to one another and the ways in which the relationship between self and other can be transformed (Beck 2002; Nyers 2003; Appiah 2006; Cheah 2006; Delanty 2009; Landau and Freemantle 2010).

Building on this idea, we believe that the spirit of cosmopolitanism requires a simultaneous double process of, first, building the desire to recognize that we are all part of a common humanity and, second, recognizing the need to acknowledge the question of difference that comes with the premise of living with others. This difficult tension underpinning cosmopolitanism seeks, in other words, to find common humanity with someone having different ways of life, habits, and beliefs. Yet, the radical potential of cosmopolitanism is located right at the heart of this tension; the desire to find common humanity with the stranger requires the self to engage with him or her, no matter how risky that engagement might be. Radical cosmopolitanism seeks out this risk as the potential reward of the cosmopolitan moment, for it is only through such engagement that we may transcend self and other. As Levinas (1969, 76) argues, the host's sovereignty becomes visible not in the absence, but the presence of the guest, whose claim to be included is not just simply a plea for recognition, but also a direct claim about the sovereignty of the self. Radical cosmopolitanism acts on this premise of finding common humanity, not in the tolerance towards the guest or establishing a set of rules that can regulate the responsibilities of the host towards the guest, but in the very act of redefining the host's sovereignty through a mutually constitutive relationship between a host (who is supposed to define the rules of hospitality) and a guest (who is expected to obey those rules that are already in place).

What does a radical cosmopolitan vision, based on renegotiating what it means to be host and guest, entail? Derrida (1990) argues that this form of cosmopolitanism based on unconditional hospitality requires thinking about hospitality not from the point of view of the host, but from that of the guest. Contrary to liberal, legalistic cosmopolitan

approaches, in which the host extends rights to newcomers – rights that can be changed at any time at the whim of the host – Derrida's interpretation of cosmopolitanism, based on unconditional hospitality, removes the host as the sole authority determining the rules. Instead, space is opened up for the guest to participate in defining the rules of living together (Derrida 1990, 971). In other words, in Derrida's account, hospitality ceases to be solely within the host's domain. Rather, it emerges from 'the infinite' right of the other as 'someone who is neither expected nor invited, to whomever arrives as an absolute foreign visitor, as a new arrival, non-identifiable and unforeseeable, in short, wholly other' (Borradori 2003, 129). Derrida turns the logic of hospitality upside down by indicating that the act of hospitality is not something that the host offers, but is, instead, the stranger's right to claim.

Derrida's reworking of cosmopolitanism through unconditional hospitality abolishes several assumptions about the self/other dichotomy and the rights of strangers. The self is no longer the universal through which the particularity of the other is mediated; and, relatedly, self-other or universal-particular hierarchies are overturned. Finally, hospitality is no longer based solely on the host's generosity, but redefined as a condition constituted by the presence of the other. As such, cosmopolitanism is rearticulated as an ethical responsibility, which precedes any prior form of legality. As Derrida (2003, 4) explains:

beyond rights and laws, beyond a hospitality conditioned by the right of asylum, by the right of immigration, to citizenship, and even by the right to universal hospitality, which still remains, for Kant, for example under the authority of a political and cosmopolitan law. Only an unconditional hospitality can give meaning and practical rationality to a concept of hospitality. Unconditional hospitality exceeds juridical, political, or economic calculation.

Are there limits to this unconditional hospitality in an era where state sovereignty still determines who can and cannot enter into a country, the conditions under which a person enters, and the types of rights afforded as a result? In other words, how does Derrida's unconditional hospitality work in a world that is divided by borders and nation states?

As Derrida (2005) notes, the circumstances of limiting 'unconditional hospitality' are only justified when there is a need to secure the conditions of hospitality. Such limitations can be applied only in order to ensure that the country in which the stranger arrives stays intact and retains its capacity to continue to offer unconditional hospitality. While paradoxical in nature, Derrida's limits on unconditional hospitality lead to a vision where a state cannot deny entry to newcomers on the grounds of difference and where immigration and asylum laws and regulations must facilitate easy entry rather than preventing inclusion on the basis of cultural, ethnic, or religious difference. For instance, from this radical cosmopolitan view, current arguments used today by European countries, such as economic pressure or integration problems, would be insufficient to justify denying the entry of one million or more refugees in Europe, a continent with half a billion residents. More importantly, this radical cosmopolitan vision refuses to privilege insiders, whether citizens or dominant cultural groups, as the ultimate deciders of the legal framework of citizenship. Rather, it grants authority



instead to those who are directly affected by the legal framework to participate in the decision-making process.

### Practicing everyday cosmopolitanism in Berlin

The previous section highlighted the significance of cosmopolitan theory for citizenship and specifically re-theorizing the relationship between citizens and non-citizens in non-hierarchical ways. This discussion frequently occurs, however, on more abstract and philosophical terms. Our intention in this next section is to show the applicability of such theoretical discussion by illustrating how radical cosmopolitanism materializes through everyday lived experiences. To do so we examine several examples of community or citizen-led initiatives that have emerged in Berlin over the past year. These initiatives are ones designed to open up communities to newcomers in ways that transform understandings about who is a citizen and who belongs to the community. Such illustrative examples point to the seeming contradictions and polarization within German society. They are also, however, representative of the type of polarization occurring within European societies, more broadly, where we see the simultaneous rise in xenophobic responses alongside active citizen-led initiatives that challenge xenophobia and welcome newcomers instead. As a recent issue of *Der Spiegel* (2015) put it:

The attacks on refugee hostels in Germany have reached a shocking level this year. By July 6, there were fully 199 of them, and the attacks have shown no signs of stopping. At the same time, though, Germans seem more willing to help than ever before. They visit refugee hostels, bringing along clothes and toys. They cook together with the Syrians and Sudanese. They invite migrant boys to join the football teams where their own children play. Which Germany will prevail? (Amann et al. 2015)

These growing initiatives are a part of what is referred to as Germany's 'welcome culture'. A 2014 study by the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research (B.I.M.) at Humboldt University, led by Karakayali (2015), conducted on-line surveys with 466 volunteers and 70 organizations. The research found that many of those involved in Germany's 'welcome culture' 'became active spontaneously' (Fuchs 2015). They did not have previous experience working in political associations or with migrant and refugee rights. The study notes that 'two-thirds of respondents said that they wanted to help shape society with their efforts', from which the authors concluded that 'many volunteers were not motivated by personal and professional gain' (Karakayali 2015). Our discussion below focuses on cases from Berlin, and reveals that, while these initiatives are motivated by participants with very different positionalities, they share reflections of a cosmopolitan spirit of engaging with newcomers and building social relations that challenge citizen/non-citizen binaries, and the pitting of newcomers as simply outsiders. Importantly, these individuals come to their cosmopolitanism not by erasing their own particularities or those of newcomers, but by engaging with differences. They also demonstrate an attitude of openness towards being transformed in the process of such exchange. It is not entirely surprising that one of the strongest manifestations of welcome culture has occurred in Berlin. Since the Cold War years Berlin has been a city in which newcomers have found a more hospitable

environment when compared to other parts of Germany. This is no doubt in part due to Berlin's historical position of providing refuge to East Germans during and after the Cold War. The strong anti-authoritarian and anti-fascist tradition in the city played a great role in developing networks of solidarity. In our interviews in Berlin, people often noted that community initiatives were established in their neighbourhood as a way of pre-empting and indicating that right-wing expressions of hostility towards newcomers, such as seen in Dresden, would not be tolerated. Below we explore four examples in greater detail to elaborate upon how citizen-led initiatives open communities to newcomers, and by doing so materialize cosmopolitanism through everyday living.

### *Third-generation Turkish German artist*

Gülin<sup>3</sup> is a young Turkish-German woman, born and raised in Berlin. She belongs to a third-generation Germans of migrant descent, whose parents came from Turkey in the 1960s as guest workers. The claims of belonging and Germanness that are made by Germans of migrant descent are complex, and determined by both their own experiences of Germanness and their cultural belonging, as well as the exclusion they experience within the larger German society (Mandel 2008). Gülin is a photographer, a filmmaker, and a political activist. She defines her identity as one of her own making, despite the cultural influences surrounding her:

I am neither a product of Turkish culture nor a German one. I define myself through my own struggles as a gay person, a woman, and an artist. I have a close relationship with my LGBT community and beyond that I constantly have to justify myself (Interview, Berlin, 19 February 2016).

Gülin mediates her belonging through contradictory experiences of being Turkish, German, a Berliner, and gay. Her uneasy relationship with her parents and her frustrations with the Turkish community's disapproval of her choices does not make her feel any closer to German culture or being German. The refusal within Germany's mainstream society to accept Germans of migrant descent as insiders places Gülin in the uncomfortable and frustrating space of being an outsider and insider simultaneously.

During the time of our interview, Gülin was actively involved in refugee relief activities and volunteered in a refugee shelter, while at the same time organizing community events like movie nights, walking tours, and night club socials with young Syrian refugees as the DJs. Gülin explained that these social activities organized for Syrian refugees are geared towards enabling them to establish social relations with Berliners, whom they might not otherwise meet at the shelter. While volunteering in the refugee shelter was important for Gülin, as it provided immediate relief for people urgently in need of receiving basic social services, her involvement with organizing social events for Syrian refugees was equally important, as it enabled her to relate to them in ways that were not possible in the shelter. During our interview, she emphasized two points several times: her desire to make sure that refugees were not just seen as faceless numbers but that they could become part of everyday life in Berlin and her anxiety about German society's ability or willingness to accept refugees not just as

<sup>3</sup>All original names have been changed to pseudonyms where requested, with the exception of Über den Tellerrand's founder Rafael Strasser.

people who are in need but as people who would become part of German society. She explains her anxiety about the reception of newcomers within German society as follows:

I was born and raised here, but I do not feel that Germans see me as a full member of German society; I am still seen as an outsider and I am made to feel my outsider status every day. Now, large numbers of Syrians are coming and they will go through the same process. They will end up being outsiders just like us. Actually, there are quite a lot of Germans who want to help and they are really touched by the human tragedy. But the problem is that when they approach refugees, they approach them with a sense of superiority. I see this every day in the shelter. Even the volunteers, who come to the shelter to help, talk to refugees as if they are talking to a child or some of them insist that refugees should make efforts to speak German. These people are coming from war and very difficult circumstances and many of them are traumatized. Why do you insist that they speak German? Is this the time? Can't you give them a break? Can't you relate to what happened to them and what they went through? (Interview, Berlin, 19 February 2016).

Gülin explained that she was motivated in her efforts to organize social activities for young refugees by wanting to provide them with opportunities where they can enjoy some of the normalcy that has been absent from their lives for such a long time. She clarified that it was only in such settings that it was possible to really get to know them as real people with dreams and desires. When ordinary people look at the TV screens, they see a mass of people with no story and history behind them, but when they meet them in one of the social events, 'they see the stories behind them, they see them as who they are, as real human beings with real emotions' (Interview, Berlin, 19 February 2016). At nightclub socials or movie nights, 'refugees, even for a short time, are able to forget the label that is attached to them. They become themselves, they do not have to interact with people around them as a refugee, but as an individual' (Interview, Berlin, 19 February 2016).

Gülin's involvement with refugee solidarity activism is directly informed by her personal experience in Berlin as a third generation Turkish-German. Her experience of otherness in Germany society and her ongoing struggle to challenge the exclusion she feels in everyday life informs and provides the background context for her solidarity with Syrian refugees, who may also potentially experience exclusion in German society. The specific ways that she tries to relate to Syrian refugees, and the activities she organizes for them, are geared towards bringing them into the everyday social life of Berlin. Her solidarity with Syrian refugees creates a moment of reflection on her own experiences in Germany and becomes another means for positioning herself and her own identity within German society. Her experience as an outsider in German society allows her to relate to newcomers, not necessarily through a host/guest dichotomy, because she never feels herself to be in a position of 'host' in Germany, but because she identifies with them and is, therefore, able to interact with them without the hierarchy that is associated with such a dichotomy.

### *Über den Tellerrand – Kitchen Project*

Über den Tellerrand is a non-profit kitchen project where refugees and ordinary Berliners cook together, share a meal, and socialize with one another. The founder,

Rafael, describes his principal objective as trying to create ‘positive experiences between refugees and German people’ (Interview, Berlin, 18 February 2016). The kitchen is located in the Schöneberg district of Berlin and from the first look it appears as a small, stylish restaurant with an open kitchen and communal table. The project runs regular cooking classes where 12–15 participants register and pay a fee of 70 Euro to cook together with refugees. Rafael explains the rationale for this fee as an attempt to reach middle class people in Berlin, who mostly see refugees in the media as a mass of people. He believes that, while many may be interested in knowing more and helping, they often do not know how. Given this, his objective is to create ‘a platform where refugees and ordinary people come together in a relaxed environment, cook and share food and socialize as friends do, and, more importantly, establish friendships as equals, not as one party speaks and the other listens’ (Interview, Berlin, 18 February 2016). In fact, the kitchen project strongly emphasizes this idea of equal exchange and togetherness among people. As Rafael explained to us, the kitchen project works with the assumption that creating genuine relationships between people takes time and happens through incremental stages. This is why the first point of contact with interested people is the cookbook that was published by the project, which features different recipes described by refugees alongside their personal life stories. The next stage is to bring people who have purchased the book into a cooking class where the actual exchange takes place through cooking and sharing food. After this stage, the project encourages social activities between participants such as soccer clubs, yoga basketball and other social events, where one night of cooking together translates into a regular socialization and sustained friendships. The kitchen project also organizes larger events where 50–200 people get together to socialize around various activities such as sports and music events. Rafael describes the kitchen as a ‘hub’ through which initial contact takes place and relationships are established. After this initial contact most people develop further networks and start organizing community events on their own. In other words, the small cooking event in the kitchen leads to larger events and relationships; the kitchen in Rafael’s words acts as both a hub and an incubator to ‘establish genuine relationships that are not conditioned by preconceived notions and stereotypical images’ (Interview, Berlin, 18 February 2016). Currently, the kitchen project has 17 affiliates in other German cities that are also setting up similar projects modelled after the original one in Berlin.

The kitchen project is Rafael’s personal initiative. He has an engineering background and owned a small company before starting this project. Two years ago he met four students who were working on the idea of a cookbook written by refugees and his cooperation with them convinced him that something bigger could emerge from the idea. He sold his company, which allowed him to have the financial freedom to start the kitchen project, which is mostly financed by Rafael and occasional private sponsors. It has no other official sponsors or regular streams of income other than the cookbook and the cooking classes. Rafael does not have an activist background or any other prior involvement with refugee solidarity movements. In fact, he does not use the usual activist language to describe his project, explaining that he has no background in political activism. Instead, he uses technical and business jargon to describe the kitchen project. He explains his motive as follows:

When I was watching the refugee crisis on television I felt helpless and I had this desire to do something that achieves some kind of change, no matter how small. People on the left are already on board and understand this issue and we will never reach people on the right. We have a large group of people in Germany who are in the middle and are open to engage with this issue. They can go either direction. I want to reach out to them (Interview, Berlin, 18 February 2016).

The kitchen project is small in scale, but it is designed to bring people together in situations in which they can establish relationships beyond identifying each other simply through refugee and citizen identities. In fact, both the kitchen project and Rafael's description of the overall vision for this project aim to create an alternative platform where people can interact with one another without necessarily thinking about their status, thereby creating moments in which they can connect as part of one and the same community. Rafael does not necessarily articulate his vision as one that tries to mitigate the impact of otherness or problematize German nationalism, as Gülin does in the previous case. Yet, the project envisions creating a sense of community where members can relate to one another without being reminded of their refugee/citizenship identities.

### *Sharehaus refugio and rooftop cafe*

Refugio is a café and a living space for refugees, part of the Sharehaus and Berlin City Mission. The café is stylish, clean and modern, filled with young people both drinking lattes and serving as baristas behind the bar. The six floor living accommodations are connected behind the café and a hall space is connected to one side, which can be rented out for money or used for Refugio activities. As noted on the web site 'The Refugio aims to be financed in the long range by rent, the café, and events'.

Refugio describes itself on its website as a 'Christian led-house' or a 'city-monastery'. The idea of the space is for 40 people to live together, 20 of who are German citizens and 20 are refugees, with backgrounds from Syria, Somalia, Afghanistan Palestine, Turkey, Croatia, and Bosnia (<http://www.refugio.berlin/>). The refugee residents are mostly men between the ages of 18 and 35, with one family and a couple of pregnant women with new families on the way (Interview, Berlin, 16 February 2016). As member Martin explains, all Refugio members share in the running of the space. There is a rooftop terrace and vegetable garden to grow food and a shared kitchen where all residents cook together. They also share in the cleaning of the facilities, with some members working in the café or on the rooftop in urban gardening. They also have a catering project in which those with cooking expertise find work. The money from the café goes back into financing Refugio and its activities, which include music concerts, language courses, and a Syrian dance party once a month, with the last dance party drawing some 300 people (Interview, Berlin, 16 February 2016).

Refugio is an example of a community-based initiative organized with the intention of building solidarity and social relations with newcomers. While motivated by a spirit of cosmopolitanism to come together to find friendship and build relationships with people of different cultural backgrounds and independent of refugee and citizen identities, it is also a project that is motivated through engaging (rather than transcending) a particular positionality, in this case a Christian one. Nevertheless, although a

Christian spirit motivates the project, this positionality is used as a way to reach out to others with different backgrounds (including religion) to engage in social relations disruptive of ways of thinking about newcomers in terms of citizen-non-citizen binaries. The website makes clear, for example, that the project has Christian roots, yet it also states that it is this orientation towards a spiritual sensibility that enables different people to come together in exchange and to do so in ways that also transcend particular denominations – including Christianity – noting that it provides a space where ‘spirituality plays an important role’ and which ‘provides protection under its roof for people of different cultures and religions’. Moreover, as Martin explained, the idea of spirituality is really materialized in the value of sharing: ‘The idea is very simple. We are living together, working together, sharing food, sharing skills, watching football together, and going to the museum. We want to help integrate, but we value everyone’s own culture’ (Interview, Berlin, 16 February 2016). The website picks up this idea by describing Sharehaus Refugio, in the last instance, as ‘a construction site, a work in progress, because working together is important and connects us. It is in a way healing as well. The Sharehaus Refugio will hopefully never be completed, but will remain organic so it can change and grow.’ Rather than eliminate religious and cultural differences, the focus is one of celebrating differences by sharing with each other different skills, knowledge, and life experiences as well as different cultural backgrounds, through the sharing of food and music.

### ***‘Give refugees a lift!’ – Convoy initiatives: the Peng collective and the Convoy of hope***

Convoy initiatives are another example of projects mobilized by citizens in support of refugees. The convoys began in the ‘long summer of migration’, continuing into the fall of 2015 (Kasperek and Speer 2015). In contrast to the other initiatives discussed thus far, this example is supported by those who affiliate themselves with the political left, or who locate themselves as activists or as being politically involved with more formal political groups and networks.

One such group is the Peng Collective, which describes itself on its website (<https://pen.gg/>) as ‘a collective of smart and silly people producing creative political stunts and enriching campaigns with subversion, humour, and civil disobedience’. The Collective notes that it uses strategies such as ‘direct action, culture jamming, civil disobedience, and guerrilla communications’ and that it uses ‘these tactics to create difficult moments for politics and business and make media stories about social justice’.

One of its campaigns, ‘Fluchthelfer.in or “Ich bin Fluchthelferin!” (I am an ‘escape artist’ or ‘refugee helper’) calls upon ordinary people to help migrants across European borders by giving them a ride in their own personal cars. As has been the case, particularly since the summer of 2015, refugees and migrants have found themselves trapped between states, such as Hungary and Austria, or currently between Macedonia and Greece, as some of these countries have periodically closed their borders in an effort to divert and re-route refugees to neighbouring countries. As Peng’s website (<https://pen.gg/>) in English explains:

While Europeans can travel to almost every country in the world without problems, this is not the case for most people coming to Europe. When they have to flee for a reason whatsoever the European Union forces them to risk their lives on small boats or under the spindles of trucks. But, even if they manage to climb the walls of fortress Europe, there is no freedom of movement for them. The Dublin III regulation prevents them from leaving the country they enter the EU. But how could we possibly help? Well, simply by providing aid when crossing borders.

Peng connects such action not with smuggling, but within a tradition of civil disobedience and particularly within Germany's own Cold War history in which West Germans smuggled people out of the communist East (Huggler 2015). As explained by the Collective, "The so-called "Fluchthelfer" who helped people quit the former GDR were being decorated after the wall of the Iron curtain. So why should helping people cross borders be less honourable these days' (Huggler 2015).

Creating a tongue-in-cheek website that resembles a slick commercial advertisement, the initiative is described by showing an older couple helping to drive a migrant of African origin into Austria at a remote border crossing high in the Alps (Huggler 2015; see also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYszLc6iYTU>). The website also provides tips on how to become an 'escape artist', noting such things as 'where to find migrants, how to avoid attracting police attention, and legal tips on escaping prosecution for trafficking' (Huggler 2015). Most importantly, it warns against activities that might lead to being perceived as a smuggler, which in Germany can carry a prison sentence of up to 10 years. These include taking 'only one migrant at a time, and not to accept any money' and to carry 'little or no cash, and paying for petrol by credit card' (Huggler 2015).

This example illustrates a concern with helping those in need, but motivated by values of social justice, such as the right to the freedom of movement for all. Similar to previous examples, this case demonstrates a cosmopolitan spirit motivated not by eliminating differences, but precisely because of one's positionality. In this case, participation is motivated by one's privilege as a European who has the freedom to move within the EU and a recognition that this freedom should be the grounds of a basis to assist those denied this similar right. Also, showing solidarity with refugees is also grounded here in a particular German experience of civil disobedience and the particularity of having a history of assisting East Germans escape oppression, which provides the grounds upon which to extend similar outreach to refugees now.

The Peng Collective is but one initiative among several that participate in convoys. In an interview with Karl (Berlin, 17 February 2016), who is a member of a left wing political group, the interventionist left (interventionistische-linke), or 'the biggest radical left group in Germany', Karl explained how he joined what has been nicknamed the 'convoy of hope' (FFM On-Line 2015) from Leipzig to Hungary in September 2015 in support of refugees on their 'escape route':

We had some two or three convoys from the initiative of my group first from Leipzig in September/October, I think, and there was this debate going on about closing the borders, especially the borders between Germany and Austria where most migrants came through (and) the people from Leipzig were the first, who made a convoy with 15–20 cars, and they mostly brought the people from Hungary to Vienna and this was their shuttling because it was very prohibited newly there. (...) It was a very nice thing. We had something like 25 cars and we went with some winter clothes and all that stuff. (Interview, Berlin, 17 February 2016).

Karl noted that this experience of connecting to others in this way really moved him: it was ‘a touching situation’ and ‘a very emotional thing’. Karl situates his work, however, within a more organized political framework, rather than within what he sees as being ‘grassroots initiatives’, because he argues that such moments of solidarity need to be accompanied by more traditional forms of political criticism and engagement. Karl explains the split, which he sees emerging within different initiatives as one between participants ‘who were getting contact with the refugees, making public welcome dinners, and those who just wanted to show charity and sharing clothes and give it to the people but don’t want to criticize the government for its inability to organize this thing’ (Interview, Berlin, 17 February 2016). From his perspective in more organized left politics, Karl sees a mismatch between the sudden growth of a very large welcome movement, on the one hand, and the strengthening of anti-migrant sentiment and restrictive new anti-migrant laws on the other. He explained to us that he worries about the failure of more grassroots welcome initiatives if they do not also extend political criticism and criticize government policies and make interventions into public debates.

Here, cosmopolitanism is expressed differently, informed by more radical left notions of challenging inequality and around social justice issues such as freedom of rights to movement, which should be extended to refugees and migrants on the outside of Germany’s borders, as well as through more organized forms of political activity and disobedience to publicly challenge government positions and policies. This cosmopolitan spirit demonstrated in convoy initiatives, like other experiences of cooking, living, and dancing together, also has the potential to build social relationships beyond citizen-refugee dichotomies. As noted by one refugee assisted with a convoy: ‘I trusted those people. I was very tired because I always had to run, and I never knew what’s next. But when I travelled with the *Fluchthelfer.in* people, it was like travelling with my friends’, he said. ‘I knew they could still catch us, but it is so much better if you know that people do this because they want to help you’ (Parameswaran and Gaedtker 2015).

These examples discussed above have in common the desire to put the spirit of cosmopolitanism into practice through everyday living with others. Returning to our earlier discussion of citizenship, where citizenship is a ‘cut’ between those included in and excluded from the polity; and where citizenship politics revolves around the cut’s location, how and who moves it, but where this cut is always envisioned as being based upon an antagonistic relationship; radical cosmopolitanism in the above examples opens up several venues through which the relationship between the self and the other can be reconstituted in a non-hierarchical fashion. As evident in the case of the Turkish-German artist, Gülin, with respect to who is included and excluded from citizenship in legal terms, as well as culturally and socially, radical cosmopolitanism, starts with the refusal to think about citizenship from an insider’s point of the view as one who has the right to decide the extent of rights and to whom these rights can be granted. Rather, it opens up new terrain in which the right to make claims to have rights. By following Derrida’s discussion of unconditional hospitality, this occurs, not from the insider’s generosity or willingness to let others in, but from the outsider’s arrival and presence. As illustrated in the case of *Über den Tellerrand*, Rafael is moved by the very presence of Syrian refugees. It is their presence that motivates him to sell his business and devote his time to establishing a kitchen project, one that opens up space in the neighbourhood where refugees can feel welcome. Similarly, with convoy



initiatives, many Germans are willing to put themselves at risk and show solidarity with people with whom they have no prior connection. They are motivated to do so by the belief in the right to equality of movement for all, and the oral and political obligation to offer protection to refugees. From this radical cosmopolitan perspective, citizenship is no longer the sole domain of those who already have it. Arriving as an outsider, whether as a refugee or an (im)migrant, does not necessarily require that the outsider seek inclusion and only on the grounds already defined by the host. Instead, the ethics of unconditional hospitality relocates the right to make claims about inclusion to the domain of newcomers. Thus, those who arrive from outside to the polity do so with the right to make claims to citizenship.

Similarly, questions of how cultural, ethnic, and religious differences are mediated within national communities through citizenship politics take different forms under conditions of unconditional hospitality. Instead of countries and dominant populations demanding assimilation from cultural, ethnic, and national minorities, these minorities have the right to engage these national narratives not just for the purposes of integration, but with the intent of remaking them. Citizenship politics informed by radical cosmopolitanism, thus, seeks to destabilize the voice of authority of dominant narratives, which demand that minority groups and newcomers assimilate, according to terms that have already been decided. As illustrated in the example of Refugio, citizens and non-citizens live and work together side by side, irrespective of legal status and cultural belonging, with an unconditional acceptance of living together, according to the rules they agree upon as cohabitants of their jointly created living space. Finally, as radical cosmopolitanism refuses to engage with politics through the prism of a hierarchical self/other relationship, it becomes possible to engage in forms of citizenship politics that are not always antagonistic and which have the potential to create new forms of solidarities among people who may not otherwise relate in everyday interactions.

## Conclusion

Despite growing right-wing anti-migrant sentiment in Europe, in this paper we have drawn attention to the importance of grassroots citizen initiatives, which are also flourishing at the same time. These initiatives illustrate what we call radical cosmopolitanism. This form of cosmopolitanism, rather than requiring newcomers to conform to the existing legal and procedural frameworks of a country, operates through people's everyday practices and lived experiences with newcomers, but in ways other than as simply outsiders or people in need of charity. People demonstrate a cosmopolitan spirit, but one that is not motivated by feeling a need to give up one's own particularities or to force newcomers to do the same in order to find a universal common ground upon which to relate to others. Rather, the forms of cosmopolitanism shown across these projects are motivated by a desire to engage with others and with their cultural, religious, and other forms of particularities. It is by engaging through these particularities that German citizens and refugee or migrant newcomers come together in experiences of exchange. And it is this process of exchange that leads both parties to transform themselves in the process. This is a form of cosmopolitanism that rejects the citizen/non-citizen binary, establishing relationships that instead transcend hierarchical boundaries between insider and outside. As illustrated, the people who engage in

political acts of cosmopolitanism come from very different backgrounds and identities. Yet, their divergent politics produces very similar outcomes, demonstrating that cosmopolitanism does not have to be based on a single universal moment within which all different positionalities converge in order to produce a commonality or to recognize our common humanity. Rather, such examples demonstrate that radical cosmopolitanism, exercised and experienced in everyday life, can lead to a universal moment that embraces diversity. Precisely because of this reason, in this paper we call for greater dialogue between citizenship and radical cosmopolitanism scholarship. Bringing these literatures and debates into conversation enables us to explore forms of politics that reject self/other dichotomies and hierarchical constructions of insider/outsider. Citizenship politics, informed by radical cosmopolitanism, enables us to rethink hospitality through the rights of the guest rather than the privilege of the host, and as such to open up new venues for citizenship politics. In these new spaces, it becomes possible to invent a new language where newcomers are not confined to simply the legal and procedural language of existing citizenship practices. It enables us to take seriously the idea that citizenship does not have to be, *by definition*, read as always having to be about relationships defined as one of hierarchy, exclusion, and antagonism.

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