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**„Empowerment through self-help. Migrants helping migrants/
refugees helping refugees “**

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Abstract (English and German)

English

The present thesis discusses the concept of empowerment within the wide academic field of migration and integration from an anthropological point of view. The focus lies on the question to what extent knowledge can be seen as a tool used to gain (a sense of) empowerment. In order to answer this question, data was gathered among four different projects or associations, based in Germany or Austria, which were founded either by refugees or migrants themselves or aiming towards supporting refugees or migrants in an approach that is promoting self-help and independence. Another goal was to find out why the projects or associations were established and what other (positive or negative) outcomes can be derived from the participation in these. The collection of the data took place in the period from February to June 2019 and was conducted by qualitative guideline interviews with nine people, informal talks, participant observations, literature research and the analysis of an already existing survey. The data was then analysed with a qualitative content analysis and collated with selected theory on empowerment, integration, power and social capital. One of the main findings was that knowledge (both in gaining it and passing it on), among others, plays its part in achieving empowerment, as it is also connected to the process of integration and to accumulating social capital and power.

Keywords: • *refugees* • *migrants* • *empowerment* • *integration* • *self-help* • *social capital*

Deutsch

Die vorliegende Masterarbeit beschäftigt sich mit dem Konzept des Empowerments aus einer anthropologischen Perspektive im wissenschaftlichen Bereich der Migration und Integration. Der Fokus liegt auf der Frage, inwieweit Wissen als ein Instrument zur Erlangung (eines Gefühls von) Empowerment gelten kann. Zur Beantwortung dieser Frage wurden vier verschiedene Projekte und Verein mit dem Sitz in Deutschland oder Österreich untersucht, die entweder von Flüchtlingen oder MigrantInnen selbst gegründet wurden oder darauf abzielen, Flüchtlinge oder MigrantInnen dahingehend zu unterstützen ihre Unabhängigkeit zu erkennen und ihre Selbst-Hilfe eigenmächtig zu

realisieren. Ein weiteres Vorhaben war es herauszufinden mit welchem Ziel die Projekte oder Verbände gegründet wurden und welche anderen (positiven oder negativen) Folgen sich aus der Teilnahme an diesen für Flüchtlinge oder MigrantInnen ergeben. Die Daten wurden im Zeitraum von Februar bis Juni 2019 erhoben. Die Erhebung erfolgte durch qualitative Leitfadeninterviews mit neun Personen, informelle Gespräche, teilnehmende Beobachtungen, Literaturrecherchen und die Auswertung einer bereits vorhandenen quantitativen Befragung. Die Daten wurden mit Hilfe der qualitativen Inhaltsanalyse analysiert und mit ausgewählten Theorie zu Empowerment, Integration, Macht und sozialem Kapital verglichen. Eine der wichtigsten Erkenntnisse war, dass Wissen (sowohl beim Erwerb als auch bei der Weitergabe), neben anderen Aspekten, einen wichtigen Beitrag zu Empowerment leisten kann, da es auch mit dem Integrationsprozess und mit der Anhäufung von sozialem Kapital und sozialer Macht verbunden ist.

Keywords: • Flüchtlinge • MigrantInnen • Empowerment • Integration • Selbsthilfe • Soziales Kapital

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1. Introduction

The central question of this work is if and in which form the individual initiative of refugees, as well as their will to support other refugees, are related to (a sense of) empowerment. It was the aim of the present thesis to determine what contribution the special knowledge of refugees has on their ability and affirmation.

The phenomenon of migration is a so-called anthropological constant that is since humans exist they are looking for better living conditions in other countries.

Immigration and emigration have always shaped the history of European nations, just as in Austria and Germany. The two countries were and still are characterized economically, politically, socially and culturally by immigration and emigration.

Migrants have become involved in social life through their work in many ways. No occupational field can manage today without migration, even more: migration creates new occupational fields. Migration has thus become an integral part of social and scientific debates. (Grasl-Akkilic, 2019, p. 8)

Having said this and given the current economy of migration research and theory development, it is astonishing that anthropologists took note of the relevance of this topic relatively late (Armbruster, 2009, p. 52).

“Anthropology, as a discipline, came relatively late to the study of migration as a social, political, economic, and cultural process. Indeed, anthropologists often chose not to write about it, even when it was happening right in front of them, because it did not fit the timeless and bounded idea of culture that framed their analyses.” (Brettell, 2003, p. ix)

However, many anthropologists realized in the 1960s that migration should receive more attention as a research topic. Initially, the emphasis was either on rural-urban migration, in the economies of most developing countries (ibid., p. ix), or the subject was studied through the concepts of identity and ethnicity, especially regarding post-migration communities (Vertovec, 2007, p. 963). Since the 1990s, migrant transnationalism became one of the most fashionable topics, whereas it is nowadays pointed at the public debates around multiculturalism (ibid., p. 963).

So today, anthropologists can hardly avoid considerations of migrants and the migratory process, and theoretical contributions made by anthropology increasingly

engage with the subject of migration (Brettell, 2003, p. x) - such as theoretical impulses by cultural and social anthropologists like as Arjun Appadurai, Ulf Hannerz, Markus Banks or Vered Amitit.

In general, anthropologists tended to work at both ends of the migration process: at the country of origin and the receiving country to not only find out what causes individuals to leave their communities, but also what happens to them in their place of destination, including if and how they remain connected to their places of origin. (Brettell, 2003, p. 1)

Armbruster (2009) states in a similar way, that migration so far has raised three topics for ethnologists: the question of change that causes migratory movements at the place of origin and destination; the question of contact or relationships between ethnically diverse groups, and the issue of the link between local action spaces and the larger trans-local economic and political realities, in which they are involved. (ibid., p. 54f) Therefore anthropologists working in the field of migration today aim their research towards the merge of micro and macro perspectives, the concept of transnationalism, the insertion of immigrant populations in cities and questions of ethnicity and ethnic identity, or the relationship between gender and migration (Brettell, 2003, p. x).

However, another related topic is becoming increasingly important. Migration of people has existed in all ages, but the facets of global migration have changed a lot in the last few decades. By the end of 2018, 70.8 million people were on the run worldwide, of which 25.9 million were refugees fleeing conflicts, persecution or serious human rights violations (UNHCR Statistiken, 2019). That is 2.3 million more people than the year before, and twice as many as 20 years ago (Weltweit erstmals mehr als 70 Millionen Menschen auf der Flucht, 2019).

Most of the refugees seek shelter in neighboring countries or live as internally displaced persons within the state borders of their home country. Only a comparatively small part comes to the EU states and seeks asylum there. (Walden, 2019, p. 471)

This poses a human, social, political, cultural and economic challenge to the societies of all nation-states concerned - be it the sending or the receiving country - and therefore is a topic, which cultural and social anthropology also has to deal with. Hence, migration and migration-related topics, such as flight, currently have a prominent place in the discipline of anthropology (Vertovec, 2007, p. 961), and a major contribution to

understanding the complexity of migratory movements is provided by studies on flight. Anthropological refugee research is a relatively new field of research within cultural and social anthropology, but it has become increasingly important over the last three decades and was even constituted as a separate field of research (Tošić et al., 2009, p. 123).

Flight can be defined as a special kind of migration and the anthropologists Harrell-Bond and Voutira argue that in the anthropological sense all people are refugees who *“have undergone a violent ,rite’ of separation and unless or until they are ,incorporated’ as citizens into their host state (or return to their state of origin) find themselves in ,transition’, or in a state of ,liminality”* (Harrell-Bond & Voutira, 1992, p. 7, as cited in Tošić et al., 2009, p. 112).

What facing this situation does to refugees is also often the content of anthropological studies. Research on migrant adaptation so far has tended to examine pathology and victimization among migrants, and most literature focuses on negative outcomes. Only in the recent years, researchers began to focus on constructive aspects of the migrant experience, positive adjustment, and resilience in the host countries. (Uskul & Greenglass, 2005, as cited in Cakir & Guneri, 2011, p. 224)

Admittedly, flight and migration can be one of the most stressful events in life, but there are positive ways to overcome this challenging time. According to Shih (2004), successful individuals may go through one of two processes when faced with serious stress: ‘coping’ or ‘empowerment’ (as cited in Cakir & Guneri, 2011, p. 224).

“Coping’ with stress, individuals tend to avoid negative outcomes rather than create positive ones. In contrast, ‘empowerment’ can be characterized by replenishment and enrichment rather than depletion in the process of overcoming stigma and adversity. It is therefore likely that migration, as a stressful experience, can be understood through a model of resilience, and that empowerment can be considered an outcome of resilience in which migrants experience positive adjustment within the migration context.” (ibid., p. 224)

Despite its relevance to the migration experience, the empowerment construct has been neglected in migration studies. (ibid., p. 225)

This paper seeks to make a small contribution to closing this gap in scientific research and therefore addresses the question of how far migrants and refugees contribute to

their own empowerment through a measure of initiative, activity and the desire to help people in a similar situation.

This thesis is comprised of six chapters. The main body's first chapter discusses theories and concepts employed in the study, and therefore focuses on empowerment. The chapter not only shows the definitions of the term 'empowerment' given in literature, but also the ones of the interview partners and a personal definition. It moreover presents concepts closely related to empowerment, such as social capital, power, and knowledge.

Chapter two will look at the methodological approach undertaken in this research study. After outlining the research question, the chapter continues with an explanation of the field and the methods used. These are: semi-structured interviews, participant observations, informal talks, using and analysing already existing data and a supplementary literature research. This is followed by a presentation of the means of analysis and interpretation of the collected data, which is the qualitative content analysis. The chapter ends with a reflexion on the methods.

The research field and the projects 'CORE- Integration im Zentrum' and 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten', as well as 'Afghan Wulas' and 'FRIDA' are the content of the third chapter. The four projects are depicted regarding their aims, approaches, projects in offer and their understanding of empowerment. The chapter also features an explanation of the personal involvement of this thesis' author.

The next chapter is an examination of the connection between the two concepts 'empowerment' and 'migration', as well as a closer look on these concepts in their conjunction with gender, education and racism. Followed by this is a small excursion on the topic of integration.

Chapter number five deals with the findings of all the collected data. The subchapters all analyse a main category formed during the process of a qualitative content analysis. The chapter is concluded with an reflexion and evaluation, which also takes up some theories mentioned in chapter one and four.

Last but not least, the final chapter will present a conclusion as well as a summary.

2. Theory - The concept of empowerment

"[Empowerment] is used frequently and is no longer a word used only by the unconventional or fringe activists; it has become an acceptable, even, perhaps, a necessary part of the vocabulary of the mainstream development thinker or policy maker.."

(Rowlands, 1997, p. 1)

Starting with this quotation, the remarks on the definition, use, history and problem of the term empowerment are to be cited.

2.1. Definition of the term

The term 'empowerment' has been interpreted in various ways, but it would be beyond the scope and objectives of this thesis to engage into this anthropological, sociological and psychological debate too deeply. However, the term is a keyword in this research and it is therefore of great importance to define it. Now, how can one define what empowerment is? When engaging with the term it soon becomes evident, that it is a concept used by many disciplines and in diverse ways. Although heavily researched, it appears to be nebulous. The social scientist Rappaport holds the opinion that *"empowerment is a little bit like obscenity; you have trouble defining it but you know it when you see it"* (Rappaport, 1985, p. 17). In a similar way, Rowland states that

"the meaning of the word 'empowerment', in either a development or gender context, is not very precise. The word tends to be used in a way which presupposes that the reader or listener will know what is meant, and that the question of how empowerment comes about can either be assumed or ignored. The term may be used merely to communicate good intentions, and to imply some unspecified recognition of the need for changes in the distribution of power." (Rowlands, 1997, p. 7)

So although the mentioning of empowerment is mandatory and much employed across many subfields, the lack of consistency in defining it is an obstacle to a meaningful synthesis of findings and also to a consistent application in practice (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010, p. 646). This difficulty will be apparent throughout the present thesis.

Starting from the roots, the Oxford Dictionary describes empowerment as *"authority or power given to someone to do something"* and as *"the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights"* (Empowerment. English Oxford Living Dictionary).

This is similar to the empowerment definition made by Rappaport (1987), which is most commonly agreed upon, despite the mentioned issues. He defines it as *“the ability of people, organizations, and communities to gain mastery over their affairs”* (ibid, p. 122). He moreover mentions that empowerment is

“easy to define in its absences: powerlessness, real or imagined; learned helplessness; alienation; loss of a sense of control over one’s own life. It is more difficult to define positively only because it takes on a different form in different people and contexts”,

and that it has to be considered as a central part of all areas of life (Rappaport, 1984, p. 3).

The importance of context is supported by Shetty (1991) when saying that empowerment has to be seen as a *“dynamic and ongoing process which can only be located on a continuum that can be defined only within the local social, cultural, economic, political, and historical context”*.

Garba (1999) also distinguishes between static and dynamic empowerment and defines two strategies. On the one hand, the static model allows exogenously initiated strategies from outside. In this context a "top-down" approach is meant, in which empowerment can be induced by changing living conditions. On the other hand, the dynamic model allows only endogenous strategies of empowerment. It represents the method of a "bottom-up" process through which the actors empower themselves. (ibid., p. 131) Rappaport (1984) explained in this regard, that empowerment *“implies that new competencies are learned in a context of living life, rather than being told what to do by experts”* (ibid., p. 4).

What most definitions agree on is that empowerment aims at strengthening and expanding the subject's self-reliance forces - it is about the (re-) production of self-determination about the circumstances of one's everyday life (Herriger, 1991, p. 222). It thus cannot be directly accomplished, produced or even prescribed by professionals. Rather, it is about a processes of self-empowerment (Selbst-Bemächtigung) of those affected, finding their own resources, mobilizing their own assets and ultimately regaining control consciousness (Weiß, 1992, p. 162).

The German sociologist Herriger (2014) picks up on this, but extends it to the following: In his opinion, the lowest common denominator when talking about defining the

empowerment concept is a process of development within a dimension of time, in which people gain the strength to live a better life, which is following their own standards. For him, the concept of empowerment is an open normative form, as the added value of life, the outcome of individuals, and the collective processes of gaining power and autonomy over one's life, is open to conflicting interpretations and ideological frameworks. He takes the view that the blurriness of the concept, together with its seemingly progressiveness, and future openness leads to approval in many normatively differing disciplines and provide the term with attractiveness and populist appeal. Therefore, the term finds place in the fashionable progress jargon of scientific and professional practice. (ibid., p. 13)

Herriger distinguishes between four approaches to a definition of empowerment: The political approach, the lifeworld approach, the reflexive approach and the transitive approach.

The first approach is the political approach, in which empowerment is seen as the structurally unequal distribution of political power and influence - a conflictual process of redistributing political power, during which people or groups of people step out of positions of relative power inequality and acquire more democratic participation, and decision-making power. (ibid., p. 14)

The second one is the lifeworld approach, in which empowerment describes the ability of people to cope with the unclear nature, complications, and burdens of their everyday life with the means of their own power, in order to live and realize an independent life that is successful according to their own standards. People are thus empowered to live an autonomous life of self-determination. (ibid., p. 15)

The third aspect is the reflexive one, which marks empowerment as a self-initiated and self-directed process of (re-) establishing life sovereignty at the level of everyday relationships, as well as at the level of political participation. It is about the self-help and the active self-organisation of those affected. People hence act on their own behalf and are encouraged to take charge of their own affairs and to recognize their competences. (ibid., p. 16)

The fourth and last approach is the transitive one. It emphasises the aspects of enabling, supporting, and promoting self-determination by non-affected people in order to help the ones affected in their conquest of new territories of self-determination. The focus of the transitive definition therefore lies on the service catalogue of psycho-social service

staff and institutions that stimulate, encourage, and support processes of (re-) appropriation of self-creative forces and provide resources for empowerment processes. People are encouraged to become aware of their competences and are provided with resources for a successful life management. (ibid., p. 17)

A different classification is done by Goetz (2002), who describes empowerment as a dimension of social sustainability and an ability to act, which increases when being aware of it and when being promoted and reinforced institutionally (p. 183f).

He distinguished between three levels of empowerment in its phenomena and functions:

1. The individual level
2. The level of groups or organisations
3. The structural level

The first level describes the process of obtaining control awareness: People gain a certain degree of confidence in their own ability to act and realize that they can influence situations, as well as shape their social and political environment. The second level depicts how social networks are established in order to emerge together from the situation of powerlessness and to develop initiative. The last one happens on a social level. The goal here is to bring about social change and to reduce structural injustices. (ibid., p. 185f)

2.2 History and use of the term

As various as its definitions are the disciplines in which the term empowerment is used. Empowerment has long been a key concept in various disciplines such as critical, liberation, and community psychology, multicultural and feminist counselling, and social work. What all disciplines have in common is that within each perspective empowerment is central to the work of improving human lives. (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010, p. 646)

The use of empowerment as a key term in so many disciplines is explained by Cheater (1999) as follows:

“The mystifying rhetoric of empowerment as expansible, vocal power is the offspring of an optimistic postmodernism linked to democratic and negotiated organisational structures. These, in turn, are related to rational social preferences arising from individual choices. Yet

any such liberal democratic transfer of power from those who currently have it to those who do not, could (and should) be expected, not to slip past unnoticed, but to engender resistance in those whose ability to get what they want is affected by others' access." (ibid., p. 7)

The emergence of the idea of empowerment is closely linked to the development of social movements, which since the 1950s have changed not only the US, but all of the Western capitalist societies. These social movements were about people demanding a greater say over their own lives and about them raising their voices for a change in apparently immutable living conditions. The birthplace of the philosophy and practice of empowerment was undoubtedly the civil rights movement of the black minority population of the US in the 1950s (Herriger, 2014, p. 21f), coupled with the second wave of American women's movement in the 1960s (Heiden, 2005).

Rosa Parks and her act of civil disobedience (not leaving her bus seat to a white man) was the beginning of the civil rights movement of 'black empowerment', whereas the publication of Betty Friedan's book 'The Feminine Mystique', which deals with the emotional and intellectual oppression of women, led to the second wave of the American women's movement (Heiden, 2005).

The empowerment concept was first addressed in a book in 1976 in Barbara B. Solomon's 'Black Empowerment: Social work in oppressed communities', which is located at the interface between the traditions of civil rights movement and radical political community work (Herriger, 2014, p. 21f), and which can be considered as a theoretical underpinning of the concept of empowerment and as a summary under a 'definitional umbrella'. Under this umbrella, the empowerment concept was extended to other areas of society. It was particularly applicable to those parts of society that have been and are being patronized, oppressed and discriminated against. The consequences of these social conflicts were personal emancipatory processes on the one hand and political innovations, often in the form of laws or organisational changes, on the other. (Heiden, 2005)

The history of empowerment is inextricably linked to the history of social movements and according to Herriger, two lines of tradition can be identified, which the empowerment discourse is historically embedded in. First of all, empowerment as a collective process of self-appropriation of political power in the tradition of the civil

rights movement of the Black civilisation in the United States and the Women's movements. The second line of tradition then describes the term as a professional concept of self-determination, in which empowerment is reclaimed for professional assistance (Herriger, 2014, p. 18f).

Another overview of the lineages of empowerment is given by Simon (1994), at least from the point of view of US history. In addition to the aforementioned civil rights movement of the black population and feminism, she also makes reference to self-help movement and community action programmes, and moreover discovers older roots, such as the Protestant revolution of the 16th century, or the democratic policies of American President Thomas Jefferson, and finally the anarchism of the 19th century.

Empowerment has its roots in user movements and self-help groups, community organisation methods, adult education techniques, feminist theory and political psychology, and has now also attracted the attention of researchers in the fields of social work, health education, rehabilitation, sociology, community psychology, and counselling (Cakir & Guneri, 2011, p. 224). Until the mid-1990s empowerment was mostly associated with women, gender, health, education and development, especially in Africa (Cheater, 1999, p. 1), today it is even addressed in the areas of management / personnel management, medicine / nursing, and work for the disabled (Heiden, 2005).

2.3 Measurability of empowerment

Since, as already mentioned, it is hardly possible to find a uniform definition for the term empowerment and as the range of application of the term is also manifold, it becomes clear how problematic it is to determine a suitable method for measuring the empowerment process. Generally speaking, social phenomena are hard to measure, and Jupp et al. (2010) admit that any proposed solution to measure empowerment will be imperfect and subject to further challenges (p. 39).

“Empowerment is a value-laden concept. Different views are shaped by experience and normative beliefs. Different expectations (of end results of an empowerment process) mean that outcome measures are the only ones which can begin to satisfy different stakeholders. However, what are considered significant outcomes will vary widely across different perspectives.” (ibid., p. 38)

So, what is successful empowerment, what are significant outcomes, and how can a person not involved in the process evaluate successful empowerment? Empowerment is often 'only' a subjectively experienced phenomenon, which, depending on the person and context, results from changes in different areas of life. This leads Rappaport (1984) into the assumption that successful empowerment can be determined, but only by the affected person itself.

Jupp et al. (2010) also propose to let those being empowered define what empowerment means to them (so they are no longer contested by external presumption), as they can recognise a positive process of empowerment or a negative process of disempowerment and the changes arising during the process (p. 38).

The World Bank views empowerment as an expansion of the freedom of choice, the action to shape one's life, and as the control over resources and decisions. They define the term as the *“expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.”* (Narayan, 2002, p. 14)

Although not one universally valid institutional model for empowerment can be found or established, it is added that the World Bank's experience shows how certain elements are predominantly present when empowerment efforts are successful. The empowerment framework the World Bank Sourcebook promotes, is based on four key elements of empowerment that seem critical and therefore must underlie institutional reforms. (ibid., p. xix)

These elements are access to information, inclusion/ participation, social accountability, and local organisational capacity:

1. Access to information. Information is power, but for the information to be powerful, it has to flow between the government and the citizens in both ways: *“Informed citizens are better equipped to take advantage of opportunity, access services, exercise their rights, and hold state and nonstate actors accountable.”* The fields in which the flow of information is most important are state and private sector performance, financial services and markets, and rules/ rights regarding basic services. (ibid., p. xix)
2. Inclusion/ participation. *“An empowering approach to participation treats (...) people as co-producers, with authority and control over decisions and resources*

devolved to the lowest appropriate level.” Inclusion in decision making is crucial to ensure that public resources build on local knowledge and priorities. In order to sustain inclusion and participation, it is often necessary to change rules and processes to form the infrastructure for people to participate in local and national priority setting and budget formation, and for them to access basic and financial services. (ibid., p. xx)

3. Accountability. *“State officials, public employees, private providers, employers, and politicians must be held to account, making them answerable for their policies and actions that affect the wellbeing of citizens.”* Three types of accountability mechanism can be defined:
 - a. Political accountability of political parties and representatives, which is established through elections.
 - b. Administrative accountability of government agencies, which is realized through internal accountability mechanisms within and between agencies.
 - c. Social or public accountability mechanisms, which *“hold agencies accountable to citizens, and can reinforce both political and administrative accountability.”* (ibid., p. xx)
4. Local organisational capacity. When people gather in groups and communities and are therefore able to work together, organise themselves, and mobilize resources to solve their mutual problems, they are more likely to have their voices heard and their demands met. *“When such membership-based groups federate at higher levels, they can gain voice and representation in policy dialogues and decisions that affect their wellbeing.”* (ibid., p. xx)

As already mentioned, the subjectively experienced empowerment varies depending on the person and the context, and can result from changes in different areas of life. It is therefore essential to include various indicators in the evaluation of empowerment. Thus, the criteria set by the World Bank – access to information, inclusion/ participation, social accountability, and local organisational capacity – will be of help when measuring the process of empowerment in the present thesis. Moreover, the definitions of Herriger and Goetz will be taken into account, to gain a broader understanding and cover more aspects of the life of refugees/ migrants. However, also

using these ‘tools’ won’t lead towards a perfect measurability of the term ‘empowerment’, as not only the World Bank’s indicators themselves are in some sense subjective and formed for a specific context, but also, resulting from this, some aspects of the gathered data in this thesis seem easier to measure than others, such as the refugees organising themselves in groups or establishing projects.

The difficulty explained in this chapter has to be taken into account in the findings and hence some results may need to be considered carefully. At the same time however, the effort put into understanding the term a little better in this specific context should be cherished.

2.4 Empowerment and other concepts

Empowerment is a socio-political process. The critical operating concept within empowerment is power. Empowerment is therefore about shifts in political, social, and economic relations between and across both individuals and social groups. (Tandon, 2016, p. 7)

This statement by Tandon shows the need to not only define what empowerment is, but also to discuss it in its connections to related concepts. For the present paper the concepts ‘power’, ‘social capital’ and ‘knowledge’ were chosen, as they are not only crucial for the understanding of the term, but also related to the research goal of this thesis.

2.4.1 Empowerment and power

When talking about empowerment, it is crucial to also talk about power. Power is not only part of the word *em-power-ment*, but also a key term in most definitions mentioned in chapter 2.1. It is the power given to somebody (Oxford Dictionary), the need for changes in the distribution of power, as Rowlands (1997) puts it, or in Rappaport’s (1984) opinion the absence of powerlessness, whether it is real or imagined. Cattaneo & Chapman (2010) even argue that “*the process of empowerment is fundamentally about gaining power*” (p. 647).

In general, scholars view power as embedded in social interactions, which are not limited to struggles for dominance, but include the wide range of ways in which people perform influence. Thus, an increase in power is an increase in one’s influence in social

relations at any level of human interaction, from dyadic interactions to the interaction between a person and a system. Keeping this understanding of power in mind, Cattaneo & Chapman (2010) define

“empowerment as an iterative process in which a person who lacks power sets a personally meaningful goal oriented toward increasing power, takes action toward that goal, and observes and reflects on the impact of this action, drawing on his or her evolving self-efficacy, knowledge, and competence related to the goal” (p. 647).

In her book ‘Macht und Gewalt’, the German-American philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt provides a helpful access to power regarding the discussion about empowerment. She describes power as something productive and potentially positive, but refers restrictively to the realm of the political, that is, to the public sphere in which people act together. Power in this sense arises from the relations of people and can manifest as a social asset in the form of collective thinking and action processes in public space. Thus, power does not lie within an individual, but within the merge of people in community action:

*„Macht entspricht der menschlichen Fähigkeit, nicht nur zu handeln oder etwas zu tun, sondern sich mit anderen zusammenzuschließen und im Einvernehmen mit ihnen zu handeln. Über Macht verfügt niemals ein Einzelner; sie ist im Besitz einer Gruppe und bleibt nur so lange existent, wie die Gruppe zusammenhält. Wenn wir von jemand sagen, er ‘habe die Macht’, heißt das in Wirklichkeit, daß er von einer bestimmten Anzahl von Menschen ermächtigt ist, in ihrem Namen zu handeln.“*¹ (Arendt, 1970, p. 42, as cited in Rachbacher, 2010, p. 47f)

This means that an individual can only have power at their disposal, if they represent the interests of a group, and when this power is therefore legitimized by a common concern. If this legitimacy is withdrawn, the power disappears, too. (Rachbauer, 2010, p. 47f)

The concept of power is described in a similar way by James (1999). In his opinion, power is mainly based upon the ownership and productive use of resources, or upon the

¹ "Power equals the human ability to not only act or do something, but to unite with others and to act in agreement with them. There is never a single individual who has power; it is owned by a group and only exists as long as the group holds together. If we say of someone that he has 'the power', that means in reality that he is empowered by a certain number of people to act on their behalf."

control of people through historically established political formations in which legitimacy was invested and specifically located (ibid., p. 14).

Cheater (1999) bases her explanation of power on how (dis-) empowerment might be achieved. Three possible ways are shown:

1. Empowerment can be conferred by some on others.
2. Self-empowerment through networking allows previously uninfluential individuals collectively to make bigger waves.
3. A collectively negotiated construction of (new) social rules, which are based on individual choice.

The author suggests that power remains a difficult, elusive concept, particularly when by definition it is hegemonically embedded in one or other cultural habitus. (ibid., p. 8f)

2.4.2 Empowerment and social capital

There are some papers suggesting that social capital has a great importance within the empowerment process. Ham (2007) for instance argues that social capital plays a key role in the empowerment process of women's self-organised groups, both as a means to empowerment, a means to achieve social change goals, and as a motivation to sustain collective struggles (p. 72).

Miller (2000) divides between different kinds of resources in which empowerment is possible. Among material resources; physical, cognitive and psychomotor resources; mental resources, and ecological resources, she also defines social resources and cultural resources as important for the process of empowerment. Relations, contacts, networks, communication, emotional support, recognition, security, status, rules are all part of the social resource, whereas education, training, experience, values, and norms belong to the cultural resource. (ibid., p. 30)

Since the evaluation of the interviews conducted for this thesis suggested that the concept of resources and social capital is also relevant in connection with the empowerment of refugees, this term will be analysed more detailed in the following.

The concept of the four different types of capital was primarily shaped by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. He starts from dividing society into classes, which differ according to the equipment with different types of capital. Capital is defined as the

resources people use to enforce their goals. A distinction is made between social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital.

Social capital is based on belonging to a certain group and thus consists of social relations. It comprises resources (and obligations) based on this belonging to a group. The extent of the social capital of a person depends both on the extent of their social network of relationships and on the extent of the (economic, cultural, symbolic) capital of the people in this network with whom the person is in contact with. The profit, which arises in return is the basis for solidarity within the group. It is a steady process of renewal and maintenance of relationships. This can also be seen as a social investment in relationships, which will sooner or later bring benefit. (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 63f)

Some scholars in this regard have done research on the importance of social capital for migrants, who are active in self-help-groups. According to the basic idea of the network analysis - which indicates that every person has a personal network through which information is processed, attitudes and values are formed, and social security and stability emerge - Weiss & Thränhardt (2005) argue that a strong self-organisation and the forming of migrants' self-help groups help them with achieving social capital in the receiving society. The authors define the group of migrants as a social entity, whose members have to network with the new environment in order to thereby build new relationships and find their place in the new society. The brought in, former cultural capital can become worthless or even dysfunctional in the new environment and thus new cultural and social capital must be acquired. (ibid., p. 11)

In order to accomplish this, self-help is needed - the voluntary grouping of individuals into groups in order to pursue specific goals together, as Wex (1995) defines it (as cited in Weiss. & Thränhardt, 2005, p. 30). But it is not only about private self-help, but also social self-help, as a study carried out by the Institut für Politikwissenschaft der Universität Münster (1999) has shown. Self-help is not just about pursuing goals that only improve the living conditions of the self-help group's members themselves. Social self-help is also aimed at a wider circle of victims, to which the group members belong. For the social self-help area three levels of impact are constitutive:

1. The concrete objective
2. Their own political re-socialization and the opening of alternative courses of action

3. The effect in the public

In addition, the individual action competence of each group member is strengthened. (as cited in Weiss & Thränhardt, 2005, p. 30)

This idea is also shown in the paper written by Thränhardt (2005) about the success of Spanish migrants in German education system between 1970 and 2000. The author shows how successful integration of Spanish migrants is a result of both the conscious entering of German society and the strong self-organisation within an association (ibid., p. 110), which then leads to good school qualifications of the immigrant Spaniards' children, to early success in the placement of apprenticeships, and to corresponding professional successes (ibid., p. 99).

The success of the Spanish children is rooted in a club structure with close internal coherence, networking, and relations in Germany as well as throughout Europe, and a consistent focus on integration into German school system. (ibid., p. 106f)

2.4.3 Empowerment and knowledge

Knowledge is power - on the whole, this is the generally accepted assumption. Can knowledge also account for empowerment or function as an empowerment agent, as suggested in the research question of this thesis? There are only a few journals to be found regarding this topic. However, Cattaneo & Chapman (2010) propose that one component of the overall empowerment process is knowledge. They define knowledge as an understanding of the relevant social context including power dynamics, possible routes to goal attainment, needed resources, and ways to obtain them (p. 653).

Yon (1999) states that power is integral to discourses, or 'systems of knowledge', of culture, identity, community, and anti-racism (p. 29). Also Jones et al. (2012) view knowledge as a critical component of development and empowerment (p. 1). Perkin & Court define knowledge as "*information that has been evaluated and organised so that it can be used purposefully*" (2005, p. 2, as cited in Jones et al., 2012, p. 1), but there are historically different points of view about the content of knowledge, how knowledge is connected to other concepts, and where it is implemented. Jones et al. explain that Foucault observed that power infuses the processes of generating and using knowledge, whereas their conception of knowledge "*holds that the processes of evaluating and organising it are strongly influenced by power dynamics, values and belief systems*". This means that knowledge, its production, and use are interwoven in an ongoing and

continually changing discourse within the politics and power dynamics of policy making. (Jones et al., 2012, p. 3f)

Coming back to Foucault, his definition of power, and the connection with empowerment: In Foucault's concept of power, power relations are expressed through social relationships and practices of a society. This system or structure lacks a clear center, it is unstable and dynamic. He understands power as something productive that creates true and real content in a society: *"Sie produziert Gegenstandsbereiche und Wahrheitsrituale: das Individuum und seine Erkenntnis sind Ergebnisse dieser Produktion"*² (Foucault, 1977, p. 250, as cited in Jones et al., 2012, p. 46).

Knowledge plays a key role in this process - on the one hand in the sense of a technique of knowledge production as an expression of power, and on the other hand in the sense of knowledge as the basis of power:

*"Ich habe den Eindruck, (...) dass sich Macht immer an Wissen und Wissen immer an Macht anschließt. Es genügt nicht zu sagen, dass die Macht dieser oder jener Wissensform bedarf. Vielmehr bringt die Ausübung von Macht Wissensgegenstände hervor; sie sammelt und verwertet Informationen. (...) Die Macht bringt ständig Wissen hervor und umgekehrt bringt Wissen Machtwirkungen mit sich."*³ (Foucault, 1976, p. 45, as cited in Jones et al., 2012, p. 46)

In Foucault's understanding, power is not something that has an influence on people and prevents them from realizing their interests, but it is the result of social relationships that lead to fragile power constellations. Power, knowledge, and discourse are in a mutual relationship, creating consensus on the basis of temporary truths. (Rachbauer, 2010, p. 45f)

One last paper worth mentioning is Somuah's PhD thesis dealing with the question on how the production, exchange, and use of local spatialized knowledge in multilevel forest governance in Ghana can contribute to community empowerment. The author considers community empowerment to be a process in which local people become aware of the

² "It produces object realms and truth rituals: the individual and his realization are results of this production."

³ "I have the impression (...) that power is always connected to knowledge and knowledge always to power. It is not enough to say that the power requires this or that form of knowledge. Rather, the exercise of power produces objects of knowledge; it collects and uses information. (...) Power is always generating knowledge and vice versa, knowledge brings power effects."

“power dynamics that hinder their participation and ability to meaningfully influence decision-making and gain control over the exchange and use of local spatialized knowledge in multilevel forest governance.” (Somuah, 2018, p. 168f)

Her findings show, other than what was previously stated in this chapter, a rather bleak situation in terms of local people’s empowerment outcomes and hence their ability to have control over the exchange and use of their knowledge in a multilevel forest governance. The main problem being that they are missing functional organised community groups, which can ensure local people to have a voice in ensuring that they benefit from the inclusion of their knowledge in multilevel forest governance. (ibid., p. 200)

2.5 Empowerment in this thesis

Now that so much has been talked about how science defines the concept of empowerment, it is now necessary to explore what my personal definition of the term looks like and how the interviewees think about it.

2.5.1 Personal definition

“Self-determination, this is what empowerment is all about. Having a sense of control over your life. Empowerment for me is a value, a sign, a source and strategy for well-being associated with having control over your life, feeling respected, protecting your dignity and expressing voice and choice in personal and social affairs.” (Prilleltensky, 2007)

My personal definition and understanding of the term ‘empowerment’ is closely linked to this citation by Dr Isaac Prilleltensky. Empowerment in my judgement is a social shift in power (nevertheless if it is a real shift or just perceived as such), arising from a negative situation or a deficiency, that strengthens and expands the forces of people in order for them to (re-) gain control over their everyday life, their independence, and/ or their self-determination. In the case of refugees and migrants this means that an oppressed group is trying to create changes within society in order to change their social status and to come out of this change with a greater ability, capability, and well-being, such as more equality, a sense of belonging, and participation.

This again is similar to Herriger’s (2014) definition of empowerment at the level of collective self-organisation: Often, empowerment is the collaborative product of people, who come together and join forces to emerge from a situation of powerlessness,

resignation, and demoralization by actively shaping everyday life and the environment. It is a voluntary social engagement to cope with the experiences of helplessness or with life's problems, and moreover to help others. Processes of empowerment are embedded hereby in social groups and realized within the strengthening community of others.

(ibid., p. 130f)

For my concern also knowledge plays a great role within the empowerment process. Just like Mecheril & Velho (2013) explain, when saying that the aim of empowerment approaches lies in overcoming helplessness, in strengthening one another in the exchange of knowledge, as well as in the exchange of experiences of and strategies against racism. It is about developing every day and political action, and resistance strategies from a minority perspective. (ibid., p. 210f)

In my estimation, empowerment is about finding strategies and possibilities, individually or in a group, autonomously or with support, to successfully overcome a situation of powerlessness, helplessness or the inability to act due to an unequal distribution of power, resources or political participation. I refer to empowerment as a dynamic process, which - as Garba (1999) puts it - represents the method of a "bottom-up" process through which the actors empower themselves (p. 131).

2.5.2. Definition of the interview partners

The coordinators of the researched projects have a similar understanding of how empowerment is addressed and realized within their approaches. Christian Gerhus, the anchorman of 'Geflüchtete für Geflüchtete' of the university in Siegen, describes the goal of the project as a change of roles and help for self-help:

“(D)er Sinn oder das Ziel des Projektes (ist) so ein Rollenwechsel - vom Hilfesuchenden zum Hilfeleistenden (...). (D)as ist genau das was wir in Führungszeichen unter Empowerment verstehen, dass man die (Flüchtlinge) (...) ganz hart gesagt aus dieser Opferrolle (...) zur agierenden Rolle (...) kultiviert, oder Angebote schafft für einen Rollenwechsel, weil wir auch gemerkt haben, dass ähm gerade auch 2015, 2016 (...) (die) starke Hilfsbereitschaft in Deutschland, diese Willkommenskultur (...) auch leider zum Teil dazu geführt (hat), dass sie die (...) Autonomie (...) eingebüßt haben, das heißt sie ähm ham sich um viele Sachen auch nicht gekümmert, sondern das ehrenamtliche Flüchtlingsbetreuer machen lassen. (D)ie Geflüchteten sind sozusagen die armen Opfer und (...) die Ehrenamtlichen sind die

*großen Helfer (...). Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe eben, das meinen wir mit Empowerment."*⁴

(Interview 8, p. 3f, l. 42 - 43)

In a similar way Kathrin Lipowec and Shokat Walizadeh, who work for the MA17 and run the project 'Peer Mentor Training für geflüchtete Jugendliche' as a part of the 'CORE project', also connect empowerment with the concept of help for self-help. They state that refugees have to be guided up to a certain point and given 'tools' to work with, to then be 'set free', in order to be independent:

"Also wir gehen einen Schritt weiter und sagen man muss die Leute an die Hand nehmen, bis zu einem gewissen Grad, damit sie eigenständig werden können. Wo ich mir auch denk, okay woher kommt diese Person, was hat die alles durchgemacht (...)." (Interview 1, p. 12, l. 36 - 39)

*"(W)as unsere Herangehensweise ist zu diesem Empowerment: Einerseits Händchen halten und andererseits schon der Versuch natürlich fliegen zu lassen. Denen halt tools an die Hand zu geben."*⁵ (Interview 1, p. 20, l. 25-30)

Both parties mention the importance of supporting refugees up to a certain point, while being careful not to restrict their independence during this process. It is more about giving them the possibilities, the infrastructure, the connections to people, and providing special offers, so they can act independently in the future and help themselves as well as others in need.

This conception of empowerment reflects Herringer's fourth approach, which has been mentioned in chapter 2.1. This transitive approach is about enabling and supporting self-determination by others in order to stimulate, encourage, and support processes of (re-) appropriation of the suppressed group's self-creative forces and to provide resources for empowerment processes. People are helped to become aware of their

⁴ "The aim or purpose of the project is to change roles - away from those seeking help and towards helping people. This is exactly what we understand in quotation marks under empowerment, that one cultivates the refugees from this victim role to the acting role, or creates offers for a role change, because we also noticed that umh especially in 2015, 2016 the strong helpfulness in Germany unfortunately, this welcoming culture has also partly led to them having lost their autonomy, meaning that they did not care about many things, but had the voluntary refugee caretaker do it. The refugees are, so to speak, the poor victims and the volunteers are the great helpers. Help for self-help, that's what we mean by empowerment."

⁵ "So we go one step further and say you have to take people by the hand, to certain a degree, so that they can become independent. Whereas I think, okay where did this person come from, what did she do."

"Our approach to empowerment is: On the one hand holding hands and on the other hand, the attempt to letting fly. Give them tools to hand."

competences and are provided with resources for a successful life. This exactly is mentioned by all the organisers. Furthermore, when looking at Goetz' levels of empowerment, the understanding of Kathrin Lipowec, Shokat Ali Walizadeh, and Christian Gerhus represents the second level of his subdivision, which is the level of groups or organisations. It depicts how social networks are established in order to emerge together from a situation of powerlessness and to develop initiative. The projects emerging from the peer mentor project are a perfect example for this level. Finally, a quotation from Tandon shall be cited, which summarizes what has already been mentioned in a very precise way:

“Empowerment in its emancipatory meaning is a serious word one which brings up the question of personal agency, one that links action to needs, and one that results in making significant collective change. It is also a concept that does not merely concern personal identity but brings out a broader analysis of human rights and social justice.” (Tandon, 2016, p. 6)

3. Methodology

The following chapter takes a look at the methodology used in the present thesis and will hereby address the research question, the field, the used methods - semi-structured interviews, participant observation, informal talks, making use of already existing data, literature research - and the means of interpretation. Lastly, it will reflect on the overall approach.

3.1 Research Question

The focus of this research will lie on projects that aim towards the integration of migrants and refugees in a, as the founders of the projects put it themselves, innovative way (see e.g. CORE - Integration im Zentrum). The chosen projects, which are based in Austria and Germany, pair migrants and/ or refugees, who have already been living in a city for a longer time, and thus gained knowledge and experiences, with newly arrived migrants and/ or refugees. The intention of these projects is to support the newly arrived ones in various aspects of their lives - be it through a peer-mentor training for teenagers, or an event for occupational information. The integration aspect of all

projects is said to be established through empowering migrants/ refugees and putting their particular knowledge to use.

The idea to work on this topic came to me through two occurrences. One was the visit of the lecture 'Ankommen in Wien. Ankommen in Favoriten. Präsentation Projekt StartWien', held by Dr Ursula Eltayeb the 17th of October 2018, as part of the lecture series 'Favoriten.Vielfalt.Wissen - Integration in Wien' - offered by the municipal department MA 17 (integration and diversity). This so called 'Wissensplattform' (knowledge platform) addressed topics like integration, diversity, projects, initiatives and institutions in Favoriten, the tenth district of Vienna. During the visited lecture some of the MA 17's integration projects, such as a peer mentor training for young refugees were presented. (Favoriten. Vielfalt. Wissen)

The second incident was my own participation in a mentor-mentee-programme for refugees, which is organised by the association 'Grenzenlos Wien'. In this programme, I spend leisure time and also help a Syrian refugee girl with everyday life problems. The collision of the two events and the two different ways of carrying out a (peer) mentor programme got me thinking, if projects in which refugees actively and independently participate in order to help and support other refugees actually leads towards empowerment, or a better manner of integration. The goal, which has been worked out for the present thesis is therefore to find out what contribution can be made by projects in which migrants or refugees, who have been living in a receiving country for some time already, support newly arrived migrants or refugees. This contribution should be examined specifically concerning empowerment.

Based on this, the research question of my MA-thesis sounds as follows:

In what way can the acquired knowledge of migrants function as an empowerment agent for themselves and others?

Supportingly, two subquestions will be asked:

1. *What other (positive) aspects do the mentioned projects carry out for the migrants/ refugees giving, and the ones receiving support?*
2. *What goals and functions do the founders/ organiser of the projects see?*

3.2 Field and methods

Compared to the beginnings of ethnographic work, field research has become more and more dynamic, as people and their networks are less localized and fixed. Field research is moreover increasingly being used in familiar cultural contexts. (Beer, 2008, p. 31f)

Also the context of this thesis is a somewhat familiar one. To answer the research question mentioned in the previous chapter, various data material was collected during the timespan of February 2019 to June 2019 within Germany and Austria, the focus being on Austria. While working in known surroundings, the field of tension 'inherent/foreign' must be reflected even more than usually, and also incessantly when researching in one's own context (Beer, 2008, p. 32). This was constantly done while taking to and observing the people of the two organisations in focus - the German initiative 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten' and the Austrian organisation 'CORE-Integration im Zentrum'. Two other clubs based in Austria - 'Afghan Wulas' and 'FRIDA' were also part of the research field. It has to be mentioned, that the chosen clubs, initiatives, and organisations although based in a German-speaking country, were not initiated for the people originated in these countries. The focus was on migrants and refugees being active in these organisations. Chapter four will give a more detailed insight into the projects.

During field research, different methods and techniques are combined according to the research question. This variety of methods is an essential feature of ethnological fieldwork, as such a procedure has the great advantage of the different methods complementing and controlling each other. (Beer, 2008, p.11)

Therefore, in order to realize the research project, I did not solely rely on one method, but decided to combine interviews, participant observation, informal conversations, evaluation of already existing data, and literature research to gain a broader understanding of the topic. These methods will be looked at a little more closely in the following subchapters.

3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

The main method used however, is the elaboration, conduction, and interpretation of semi-structured/ guided interviews.

'Guideline interview' is a collective term for semi-standardized interview types, which are used in order to compare people's perspectives. The guideline is therefore only a point of reference in the conversation. (Hussy et al., 2013, p. 225)

This method was chosen, as guided interviews are geared towards the call for openness of the qualitative research, as such interviews are characterized by a guideline with openly formulated questions to which the interviewee can respond freely (Mayer, 2013, p. 37). Moreover, as it is a useful way of conducting an interview, when the interviewer - as in this case - is still inexperienced and relatively insecure, as this kind of interview facilitates preparation for the interview and hence confers confidence to the interviewer (Schlehe, 2008, p. 127).

The advantage of this methods furthermore lies in the consistent use of a guideline, which increases the comparability of the data and helps the interviews to gain a structure due to the reuse of the questions. If concrete statements about an object are the goal of the data collection, a guided interview is the more economical way. (Flick, 1998, p. 114)

Therefore, a guideline was developed before having the interviews, and depending on who the interviews were to be conducted with, different questions were established. There was a guideline for the developers or rather organisers of the projects, a guideline for the participants (refugees) of the projects, and a guideline for the migrants/ refugees, who are actively supporting other migrants/ refugees in diverse ways. One interview, the one held with Mr Gerhus, organiser of 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten' is considered an expert interview, which is a special type of semi-structured interview. The expert interview refers to a clearly defined section of reality and can gain knowledge that goes beyond the case investigated (Mayer, 2013, p. 39). This form of interview is done with people, who are seen as particularly competent for a certain category or problem, often in a practical sense, for instance when certain handlings, work processes, or organisational respectively institutional connections ought to be explained (Schlehe, 2008, p. 128f).

Needless to say, some questions of the guidelines were changed or enhanced, but the basic framework of the three mentioned types stayed the same. Only sometimes detailed information was asked, or ad hoc questions were used when the situation allowed it. The interviews were held in German as it was easier to realize and as some of the refugees were not capable of speaking English. The interviews were conducted with

seven men and four women, all within an age range of early twenties to late fifties, being active in all sorts of projects related to the research question of this thesis.

In order to be able to make comparisons and contrasting within the field of investigation, it is important for the sampling of informants not only to happen accidentally, but that persons relevant to the research question are taken into account and that a range of variation is pictured. It is about understanding the heterogeneity of the field of investigation. (Schlehe, 2008, p. 131)

In addition, chance plays a big role and not all people interesting and relevant for the research also want to be interviewed. I thus talked to the following people:

- Three refugees, who took part in the 'Peer Mentor Training für jugendliche Geflüchtete' in 2018 and are still actively working in projects to support other refugees. Those were:
 - Samim, 24, from Afghanistan, living in Austria since the end of 2015. The interview was held the 19th of February 2019.
 - Ali, who wanted to keep his personal information private. The interview was held the 1st of March 2019.
 - Fatima, 23, from Somalia, living in Austria since 2015. The interview was held the 5th of March 2019.
- The two persons responsible for and leading the 'Peer Mentor Training für jugendliche Geflüchtete' Kathrin Lipowec and Shokat Ali Walizadeh, both working for the 'Magistratsabteilung 17' (MA 17), the municipal department for integration and diversity. The interview was held the 14th of February 2019.
- Three refugees holding workshops and seminars at the CORE-Zentrum for other refugees:
 - Ziba Ravoshi, 54, immigrated to Austria from the Iran in 2013. The interview was held the 12th of March 2019.
 - Razan Jamil, 44, from Syria, living in Vienna since 2016. She was accompanied by her husband Imad Samour during the interview, which was held the 20th of March 2019.
- The chairman of the association 'Afghan Wulas', Dr Fazel Rahman from Afghanistan, who co-founded the club in 1999. The interview was held the 20th of March 2019.

- The coordinator of the initiative 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten', Christian Gerhus, working at the Universität Siegen. The interview was held the 22nd of May on the phone.
- A member of the club 'FRIDA' and 'Asyl in Not', Amir, from Afghanistan, who wanted to keep his personal information private. The interview was held the 16th of June.

As seen above, nine interviews with eleven people were held, of which seven were recorded and transcribed. For the transcription from audio to written form, the computer programme 'easytranscript' was used. As two interview partners, for personal reasons, did not want to be recorded on tape, these transcripts were written on site on the laptop. One of the nine interviews was done on the phone, the rest was held face to face in different locations in Vienna.

3.2.2 Participant observation

The second method used was participant observation, which is the methodological peculiarity of ethnological field work. Often, ethnological field research is equated with participatory observation (Hauser-Schäublin, 2008, p. 37). Here, the researchers actively take on a role in the field and become not only a member of the field themselves, but are also a part of the setting, which itself is the subject of the research (Hussy et al., 2013, p. 240).

In any case, participatory observation is based on social relationships between the researcher and the people to be studied, and thus depends on the situations on-site, the people who are participating in it, and the way of how they interact with each other. The data gathered by means of participant observation is thus always influenced by the interactions of the researcher with his field of investigation. (Hauser-Schäublin, 2008, p. 37f)

Furthermore, participant observation is a good way to learn more about habits, processes, organisations, and relationships. It has to be in line with the research question, as well as documented and analysed. Much of what people cannot verbalize or what cannot be queried is thus still experienceable and detectable, since the observer witnesses it. Overall, the role of the observer is difficult, as it is an activity, which is

generally considered disturbing and also requires the researcher to not change the situation or to 'go native'. (Thierbach & Petschick, 2014, p. 855f)

For this thesis it was decided to carry out an open, direct, non-standardized type of observation, which lay in between participating observation and observing participation. In the non-standardized manner it is not determined in advance what will be observed, what matters is revealed during the course of the investigation. (Hussy et al., 2013, p. 239)

The method was carried out during three sessions of the peer mentor training, offered by the MA 17:

- A workshop about diversity, on the 15th of March 2019,
- a training about project management, on the 24th of May 2019
- and two units where the participants had to come up with ideas for projects they want to establish in order to support other refugees, on the 22nd of March and the 17th of May 2019.

Moreover, I managed to attend a project, which was established by refugees taking part in the second lap of the peer mentor training a year earlier. During the so-called 'Schulworkshops', the trained peer mentors visit schools, which have a great amount of pupils with a background in migration, to give a short presentation about flight and asylum and to then work together with the pupils in small groups in order to answer questions about the refugees themselves and their history/ background, on how to deal with being a refugee, etc.

All observations were written down as handwritten notes in a field diary, a so called observation protocol. This protocol is supposed to contain - as detailed as possible - the descriptions of the spatial settings, the social setting, and the observed activities. The observation protocol should be kept as descriptive as possible. (ibid., p. 241)

3.2.3 Informal talk

During the mentioned occurrences there were often opportunities to talk to people in an informal way. These happened randomly, unplanned in different settings and were therefore also unstructured and often guided by what the counterpart had to say. The notes of these informal conversations were mostly taken afterwards, as I did not want to make my counterpart feel weird or interrogated, since this method is characterized by a relaxed and non-authoritarian climate between the researcher and the interviewed

person. The main criterion of informal interviews or conversations is that they are taking place in different social fields. They are characterized by a largely unstructured nature on the part of the interviewer. Rather, it is the interviewees who make the key contribution to structuring the conversation. (Halbmayer & Salat, 2011)

3.2.4 Using already existing data

The research and the interviews with employees of the MA 17 led to me starting an internship there, what then gave me the chance to and entitled me to access available background information about the peer mentor training, which was collected by the organisers of the project before I started working there. I for instance was allowed to analyse an anonymously executed survey, in which the participants were asked about their reasons to take part in the training and what kind of outcome they expect from it. The survey was handed out to the participants of the third lap of the peer mentor project before having started the training. The survey contained of multiple open questions, of which three were worth analysing. The ones used were: "*Warum bist du heute hier?*" ("Why are you here today?"), "*Was möchtest du im Peer Training lernen?*" ("What do you want to learn during the peer mentor training?") and "*Was möchtest du nach dem Training mit dem erworbenen Wissen anfangen?*" ("What do you wish to do with the knowledge gained in the training afterwards?"). To be able to analyse and cite the answers, which were written on the survey by hand, they were typed out and put into an excel sheet, in which each column represented a question and the corresponding answers.

3.2.5 Literature research

In order to narrow down the research focus, to find a fitting research question, and to see what had already been researched and written in this regard, a broad literature research was done to also collect ideas for possible topics. Mostly books and articles connecting the topics of migration and empowerment were looked at.

Most articles and books reflected on empowerment in relation to gender topics, such as analysing gender specific migration conditions (e.g. Gratzner, 2010) or investigating the role of demographic factors, perceived discrimination, and psychological distress in predicting empowerment among migrant women (e.g. Cakir & Guneri, 2011).

Moreover, there were articles connected to education, such as one exploring the ways of creating empowerment for migrants in order to expand their possibilities of participation in the field of science, especially within the university domain (e.g. Satilmis et al., 2014). Others were looking into the topic of how the engagement of migrants in education projects can play a role in their upward mobility, their participation in society, and their empowerment (e.g. Bello, 2011).

The last topic often connected to migrants and empowerment was racism. Mecheril & Velho (2013) for example talk about how everyday experiences of racial discrimination can lead to both disadvantages and burdens, and to a change of migrants' subject positions and thus their self-conception and action.

All of these factors will be dealt with in chapter 5.1.3.

Additionally, it was necessary to do research on methodological literature, as well as theory in order to base the research question on fitting theories and to find appropriate methods for the fieldwork. I therefore looked deeper into the topic of empowerment and its connections to social capital (such as Weiss & Thränhardt, 2005), power (such as James, 1999), and knowledge (such as Jones et al., 2012). This has already been mentioned in chapter 2.4.

3.3 Means of analysis and interpretation of the collected data - Qualitative content analysis

For interpreting and analysing the collected data, a qualitative approach was chosen.

For the interviews and informal talks this means using the structuring qualitative content analysis by Philipp Mayring, since this procedure can be considered the core of a qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2014).

In principle, during any interpretation the goal of comparing the collected interviews is to find out about the super individual common, whereby the audio transcriptions function as the foundation (Mayer, 2013, p. 47). For this research, only the actual remarks were of importance - breaks, voice, or other paralinguistic elements are not the subject of interpretation, as they are not considered meaningful in a conversation held with a non-native speaker. Mayring's method examines the manifest communication contents, that is, statements of respondents, which are given consciously and explicitly (Lamnek, 1995, p. 205).

Mayring, the founder of this kind of analysis explains that the subject of (qualitative) content analysis can be any kind of fixated communication (call logs, documents, videotapes ...). It analyses not only the manifest content of the material, but also formal aspects of the material. The qualitative content analysis embeds its material in a communication model and tries to draw conclusions to parts of this model. (Mayring, 2000)

Thus, the core of a content-structuring approach is to identify and conceptualise selected content-related aspects of the material and to systematically describe the material with regard to such aspects. Qualitative content analysis was initially defined as an equally systematic and valid method with the aim of summarising the material. This description is made by explicating relevant meaning aspects as categories of a category system and assigning relevant parts of the material to the categories of that category system (Schreier, 2014).

In practice this means that a process model of nine steps had to be followed (Mayring, 2015, 62f and Lamnek, 1995, p. 207f):

1. Determining the material
2. Analysing the situations from which the material originated
3. Characterising the material formally
4. Deciding the direction of the analysis
5. Theory-based differentiation of the research question
6. Defining the analysis technique (summary, explication or structuring?)
7. Defining the analysis units
8. Analysing the material and finding a structure
9. Interpretation regarding the main question and compilation of the results

For the present thesis this means that concerning the qualitative content analysis, all interviews and informal talks were taken as the material, for which every situation of origin was described in the beginning. The material was partly written by hand, partly on the computer - all recorded interviews were transcribed with a computer programme called 'easytranscript'. The structuring qualitative content analysis was chosen and all mentioned steps were followed through. The analysis units and their interpretation can be read in chapter six, which is dealing with the findings.

3.4 Reflexion on the methods

During the process of gathering the data it became explicit that most of the mentioned methods brought both positive and negative aspects, and that every method had their own kind of hurdles, which had to be tackled.

Especially during the interviews there were some obstacles, which had to be overcome due to the fact that, as Schlehe (2008) puts it, every non-standardized interview is unique and new, and is shaped both by the constellation and the relationship of the participants and the context of the encounter. It requires high attention and openness to the unexpected. (ibid., p. 119)

The situation occurred for example, that one interviewee brought her husband to the meeting, so he would help with the German-Arabic-translation. She did not mention this in advance, and the issue was the husband not only translating what his wife was saying, but also bringing up things himself and adding new topics to the conversation. As I do not speak Arabic, it was hard to keep track what the interview partner answered to the question, what her opinion was, and what part was added by the husband.

In general, the language barrier was the hardest thing to tackle. As most of the interviews were held with people, whose mother tongue is not German, some of the questions from the guideline were not understood the way they were intended or the questions were not understood at all. Of course, I learned from experience and from mistakes during the process of conducting the interviews and then tried to use an easier language or different expressions. Nevertheless, problems of this matter occurred during almost every interview.

When transcribing the interviews, I sometimes in hindsight recognised missed opportunities for follow up questions or answers where I should have 'dug deeper'. Another problem was the unreliability of some interviewees. It was hard to organise dates for interviews (some took months even), it was difficult to reach people over the phone or via e-mail, some interviewees came late for face-to-face interviews, others did not answer the phone at the arranged interview dates. Moreover, sometimes the person used the interview time to promote themselves and their ideas or projects.

Another issue was related to the personal history of the chosen interview partners. In some cases the interviewees with a flight background asked for the interviews not to be recorded or for missing questions related to their personal affairs, as they were scared of negative outcomes concerning their residence status - even after my assurance that

they would stay anonymous. Anyway, their request was clearly respected, keeping in mind that within a qualitative interview, different ambivalences have to be balanced, such as power relations, establishing a trusting atmosphere, and a sense of dialogue within the interviews (Schlehe, 2008, p. 120).

Furthermore, some people did not want to talk about their attendance in the chosen projects, as they do not want to be seen solely as refugees anymore. That is the reason why there were no people willing to talk to me attending the project 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten'.

More of a challenge on a personal and emotional level occurred during an interview with a female interviewee. I found the person crying when approaching her for the talk, as she just got the news that she might be deported. This naturally had an effect on the interview later on.

Concerning the method of participant observation, finding the proper role during the workshops, as well as the project 'Schulworkshop' carried some problems.

Generally speaking, participant observation is composed of a contradictory behavior, to act like a person who belongs and at the same time to have a perception like a person standing outside: participation means proximity, observation means distance (Hauser-Schäublin, 2008, p. 42).

In addition to this problem came the fact that I was not only working as an observer, but also as an intern at MA 17. I thus had to balance the roles of a participant observer and an active intern, who also had to organise and present things during the meetings. This had to be (re-) considered during the process, as over-involvement in the field can be problematic, if the researcher is unable to observe properly when acting simultaneously. For every observation, one should change the field as little as possible. How strongly one participates in the field should therefore be reflected regularly. (Thierbach & Petschick, 2014, p. 861f)

In regards to the informal talks, the desire of not wanting to make the people I spoke to feel weird, led to not writing down the given information immediately. The talks were written down with a slight delay - which might have led to some kind of loss. However, I had the impression that people seemed more relaxed that way, as during the official interviews there was sometimes a tense vibe or the feeling of an artificial setting.

Having addressed the negative matters first, it is now time to come to the reflexion of the positive ones. Overall, the data gathered by means of the chosen methods brought up some good and valuable information and insights - especially the method of the qualitative interviews. Most of the people questioned answered open and talkative to the given questions. Furthermore, the interviewees mentioned things and came up with thought, which I had not considered beforehand or did not ask about specifically. These additions were then used for other means of collecting data. A similar incident happened during the participant observation during the workshops at MA 17. Some of the refugees spoke really freely in these as well as during the unofficial conversations, as the setting thereby was less artificial. I believe that also the data from the survey, as it was collected anonymously, produced valuable results - although I did not have an influence on the questions of already established survey. Anyway, an interview leading to an internship leading to me being able to attend a lot of things and being able to get better information, was surely a lucky concurrence of events. Overall it can be said that mixing the approaches helped to gain a wider understanding, as all of them brought up different aspects and insights.

4. My research field - The projects

For quite some time now, but especially since the 'refugee crisis' in 2015, there has been a heated debate across European media, politics and society regarding the right way of treating migrants and refugees, and the obstacles coming with it. Integration seems to be the solution for it all, but there are millions of organisations, offering diverse projects with different approaches.

The focus of this research will lie on two projects that aim towards the integration of migrants and refugees in a, as they put it themselves, innovative way (see e.g. CORE - Integration im Zentrum). The chosen projects, which are based in Austria and Germany, pair migrants and/ or refugees, who have already been living in a city for a longer time, and thus gained knowledge and experiences, with newly arrived migrants and/ or refugees. The intention of these projects is to support the newly arrived ones in various aspects of their lives - be it through a peer-mentor training for teenagers or an event for occupational information.

Although this thesis focuses on projects in the German-speaking countries, there are similar initiatives found all over Europe, even worldwide.

A project in Finland for instance supports people concerning their social integration with an immigrant background by encouraging them to take part in a physical activity or sport-related hobbies. They do that by providing peer tutors, who have undergone a personal integration process and thus

“can act as a type of expert of experiences and a neutraliser between two or more cultures. The more a person acting as a peer tutor feels that participating in physical activity has helped themselves, the more likely they are to recommend it to others as well.” (Westö, 2017)

Another peer mentor project is carried out by the IB-Jugendcafé Hudekamp in Lübeck, Germany. This peer mentor training is said to not only increase the chances of finding a training place, but also for the refugees to make a meaningful contribution to community work, and also to pass on their gained insights to their peer group. (Peer-to-peer-projekt für bessere Integration)

In Denmark, a volunteer student network, ‘Student Refugees’, was founded by Danish students and refugees in order to support refugees in gaining access and thrive in higher education. The network’s goal is to assist refugees in Denmark in understanding the Danish education system, in overcoming language barriers and in improving their eligibility in order to apply to higher education. Advice is given, as well as help with practical issues, and the chance of peer support and motivation. (Arnsdorf Haslund, 2019)

In Egypt, the child welfare organisation ‘Terre des hommes’ trains refugees to help other refugees. The organisation works together with the ‘Psycho-Social Services and Training Institute’ in Cairo (PSTIC) with the goal of providing *“culturally and contextually sensitive community-based support by refugees to refugees”*. Therefore, psychosocial workers from refugee communities are trained to assist people with their migration related problems such as protection, mental health and their well-being in general. (Helping refugees help refugees, 2019)

The two projects ‘CORE-Integration im Zentrum’ and ‘Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten’, which are also projects in which refugees help other refugees, will be the main focus of research in this thesis. They put their emphasis on “strengthening” and “empowering”

refugees/ migrants, “raising their self-esteem” so that they can “act independently”, “participate actively” and gain a “sense of belonging” towards their receiving countries. Migrants also serve as role models for others, as they have a profound knowledge of the cultural differences and the experiences, they have made themselves. The integration aspect seems to be established through empowering migrants and putting their particular knowledge to use, which made them interesting for this thesis.

During the process of research, two more projects, respectively two associations were also taken into account, as they seemed to be interesting and fitting for the research question: ‘Afghan Wulas’ and ‘FRIDA’. These two Vienna based clubs were founded and are also run by former refugees (together with Austrian citizens) with the goal of supporting other refugees and providing information and help.

These four projects and clubs will be explained in more detail in the next chapter.

4.1 CORE - Integration im Zentrum

In recent years, especially since 2017 and the elections of the right-wing coalition government, Austria has taken an increasingly hard line on refugees.

In 2018 Austria's government proposed harsher asylum measures and the former Interior Minister Kickl of the FPÖ called those the most "restrictive asylum policy as possible." (Austria plans to toughen asylum policy, ease deportations, 2018)

However, the city of Vienna tries to head in the opposite direction and even expands the range of provided services as a response to record numbers of refugee arrivals in 2015. The city's efforts to help asylum seekers, to coordinate the work of different agencies and to find ways around restrictive federal rules, can be considered a testament to the power of local government. One of these ways of support is shown in the project ‘CORE - Integration im Zentrum’. (As Austria cracks down on asylum seekers, Vienna integrates them anyway, 2018)

Hence, the main focus of this research lies on the EU funded and Vienna based project ‘CORE -Integration im Zentrum’, which is a joint project of the municipal department of Vienna (‘MA17 - Integration und Diversität’), ‘Fonds Soziales Wien’, ‘waff’, ‘Wirtschaftsagentur Wien’ und’ Bildungsdirektion für Wien/ Europa Büro’, claims to be the driving force in the city of Vienna for further development in the field of integration: *“Integration ist nicht nur eine Herausforderung, sondern vor allem auch eine Chance für*

die Gesellschaft."⁶ CORE-project is co-financed by the 'European Regional Development Fund' (ERDF) in the context of the 'Urban Innovative Actions Initiative', in which 80 percent are funded by the ERDF and 20 percent are financed by project partners' resources. CORE was selected from 378 submissions in autumn 2016 as one of 18 winning projects and runs until October 2019. (CORE - Integration im Zentrum)

4.1.1 Ambition and approach

CORE wants to provide an integration from the first day on and thus creates new and - as they put it - innovative offers of integration. These are oriented somewhat stronger towards the needs of the newcomers in Vienna, hence facilitate the integration of refugees from the very beginning, and accelerate the entire process of integration. CORE describes refugees as 'experts in their own right' and therefore created a participatory approach to ensure that refugees themselves can design integration offers and actively participate in the projects. Selected individuals will be trained as mentors to assist other refugees in facilitating their life in the city or assisting them in health related questions. CORE also provides the space and the organisational infrastructure to enable not only their project partners, but also organisations, associations, civil society initiatives, and above all refugees themselves to implement helpful services for others, such as workshops, seminars or other projects. (CORE - Integration im Zentrum)

The goal is therefore to implement the ideas of refugees, provide them with infrastructure and support them to support other refugees (Holzinger, 2017).

City councillor Jürgen Czernohorszky has put it as follows: *"Das Projekt CORE legt den Fokus auf die Fähigkeiten, Kenntnisse und Erfahrungen von Flüchtlingen und bindet sie aktiv in die Gestaltung von Integrationsangeboten ein."*⁷ In practical terms, this means that CORE not only offers many sub-projects, but also helped with developing the new website www.refugees.wien as a digital port of call for refugees, which provides multilingual information for better orientation and life in the city. (CORE: Projekt der Stadt Wien zur Integration von Flüchtlingen zieht erste Bilanz, 2018)

⁶ "Integration is not only a challenge, but above all an opportunity for society."

⁷ "The CORE project focuses on the skills, knowledge and experiences of refugees and actively integrates them into the design of integration offers."

The mentioned sub-projects will be dealt with in the next chapter, whereby the peer mentor project will be looked at more closely, as this is where most of this thesis' research took place.

4.1.2 Projects

The CORE-project consists of many sub-projects, which are carried out by different project partners.

One of them is the certificate course for refugee teachers. Refugee teachers, despite having a high level of specialist qualification, have partly no opportunity to work in their trained profession in Austria. That is why the city school council together with the University of Vienna has developed a certificate course, which entitles them to teach at Austrian schools. Furthermore, workshops are held by the 'Wirtschaftsagentur Wien' to prepare refugees for self-employment in the most sought after industries: carpentry, bakery/ pastry, gastronomy and IT. A significant part is taken by the three different peer mentor projects. One of them, a peer mentor training for labour market integration is run by 'waff'. Individuals, who have a background in flight themselves, are given information and learn how to inform others about social and labour law framework. (CORE: Projekt der Stadt Wien zur Integration von Flüchtlingen zieht erste Bilanz, 2018)

Next to this, there is the peer mentor training executed by the 'Magistratsabteilung 17' (MA 17), which is twofold. The aim of the programmes is to draw attention to existing resources of refugees and to make them utilizable not only for themselves, but also within their communities. (Holzinger, 2017)

In their flyer, holding information in German and English they state:

"Building on their experiences of displacement and acquired knowledge in their country of origin they learn how to help other refugees to get acquainted with their new surroundings. Throughout the extension of their individual qualifications in the context of their new living environment, the participants become invaluable mentors for people with similar experiences." (Peer Mentoring für Geflüchtete. Peer Mentoring for refugees)

On the one hand, refugee women who had worked in their home countries in women's health as midwives or gynecologists are trained to help with the special needs of pregnant refugee women and young mothers. Ursula Struppe refers to them as a bridge between birth departments, midwives, and pregnant refugee women. (Holzinger, 2017)

Last but not least, and mostly important and focused on in this thesis is the ‘Peer Mentor Training für jugendliche Geflüchtete’. In this project, teenage refugees are trained to become peer mentors for other teenage refugees. The participants get educated in everyday questions, in dealing with challenges of a foreign society, and empowered in their personality development. During the training they develop ideas and strategies on how to transmit their knowledge to other teenage refugees, their communities, and peer groups, and how to realize their own projects independently, actively, and in a positive way. (CORE Zoom-In, 2018)

The ‘Peer Mentor Training für jugendliche Geflüchtete’ already took place three times, once every year from 2017 to 2019. Parts of the research for this paper, such as informal talks and participant observation, were conducted during the third and last round of this project. A brief explanation of the procedure of the project: A requirement profile is sent to cooperation partners and contacts of CORE, and shared on the homepage and on social media. Required criteria are for example the age from 17 up to 24, the place of residence in Vienna, a German language level of at least B1, and qualities such as independence, a positive attitude towards life, perseverance and joy in communication, reflexion, and working together in a team. The residence status does not matter, only a background in flight, the wish to acquire new knowledge, and the will to commit oneself to helping others. Interested persons fulfilling these criteria then send a written application in either German or their native language, which must contain a CV, a letter of motivation, and a letter of recommendation, to the MA 17. (3. Durchgang des Projekts, „Peer-MentorInnen für jugendliche Geflüchtete“ durchgeführt von der MA 17 - Integration und Diversität im Rahmen des EU-Projekts CORE - Integration im Zentrum)

All fitting people then get invited for an interview, from which 30 are selected. Care is taken to ensure that at least one third of the participants are women and that the distribution of nationalities is approximately equal to the one in society. After this interview both parties can decide definitively about the participation.

During the sequence of the third lap of the peer mentor project, there is a workshop held every week. Three workshops on theoretical inputs are offered, which are about diversity, living in the city of Vienna, and religion. The rest is more practical and focused on helping the attendees to come up with an idea for a project they want to establish in

the future and on supporting them in doing so. These workshops are about idea generation, associations, official points of contact for fundings, project management, and communication training. Moreover, the refugees are encouraged to visit a club on their own and attend five information modules at the 'CORE-Zentrum', of which the topics on asylum and gender are mandatory. At the end of the programme, all participants that have met these criteria will receive an official certificate, which is said to show integration endeavours and help with job or apprenticeship prospects. (Interview 1)

At the beginning of the third round of the project, the group consisted of 30 participants, of which 20 are male, and 10 female. They were all born between 1994 and 2000. Only three of them have an Austrian passport, the rest is divided into subsidiary protection or - most of them - the so called white card. The group is very multicultural, there is people from Afghanistan, Armenia, Syria, Somalia, Iran, Iraq and Eritrea. The biggest group is the Afghans, followed by the Syrians. (Fieldnotes 19.3.19, p. 1)

Most of them came to Austria in 2015 and can also see themselves living in Vienna in the future, even though most of them did not plan to come to Austria when fleeing from their home countries. Many state that they are comfortable in Vienna, as the city has a good infrastructure, many (Muslim) offers, a lot of basic freedoms, and mostly friendly and open minded inhabitants. Only a few of them have had negative and racist encounters with Austrians. (Fieldnotes, 15.3.19, p. 1)

In general, they all feel a certain degree of frustration, because of the long wait for the asylum notice. Notwithstanding, they want to fight this negative emotion and take action. A male refugee from Afghanistan spoke his mind during one of the workshops, by saying that no refugee leads a parallel life voluntarily and that all the participants of the project are on the right way, as they want to be or become a part of Austrian society. He adds that it has become harder to establish contact with Austrians and to find offers for refugees these days, especially when compared with the situation in 2015. Due to this change, he and many of his refugee friends now want to take things in their own hands and give others a better opportunity, as they know best what is needed during the asylum process. (Fieldnotes, 15.3.19, p. 2)

4.1.3 Empowerment

The aim of the CORE- project is mostly described with the buzzwords like 'strengthening' and 'empowering' refugees/ migrants, 'raising their self-esteem' so that they can 'act independently', 'participate actively' and gain a 'sense of belonging' towards their receiving countries:

"Wien lebt Integration ab dem ersten Tag. CORE ist ein wichtiger Baustein in diesem System, weil es eine Ergänzung zu anderen Maßnahmen wie Deutschkursen bietet und die Selbstständigkeit stärkt" ⁸,

as Peter Hacker managing director of Fonds-Soziales-Wien puts it. (CORE: Projekt der Stadt Wien zur Integration von Flüchtlingen zieht erste Bilanz, 2018)

"Uns ist es wichtig, dass Flüchtlinge in unserer Stadt möglichst schnell auf eigenen Beinen stehen und ihr Leben selbst in die Hand nehmen können" ⁹,

explains city councillor Jürgen Czernohorszky. (ibid.)

"Wir wollten nicht für die Menschen Programme zu entwickeln, sondern mit ihnen. Wir wollen Flüchtlinge nicht als Objekte von gut gemeinten Maßnahmen sehen, sondern als Subjekte und als Gestalter ihrer eigenen Geschichte und ihrer eigenen Lebenssituation" ¹⁰,

mentions Ursula Struppe, head of department of the MA 17. (Holzinger, 2017)

It is mentioned that the participants are being empowered in questions of everyday life, in dealing with social challenges and their personality development (CORE Zoom-In, 2018). In a short video that includes conversations with students and trainers, the main discussion points, and the most valuable lessons for those participating within them, shows that the peer mentors want to give orientation, mediate between cultures, exemplify goal orientation, pass on new information, for instance about the asylum system, and thus help and strengthen others (Urban Innovative Actions, 2018).

The integrational aspect seems to be established through empowering migrants and putting their particular knowledge to use.

⁸ "Vienna lives integration from the first day. CORE is an important building block in this system because it complements other measures such as German language courses and strengthens self-employment."

⁹ "It is important to us that refugees in our city should be able to stand on their own two feet as soon as possible and take their lives into their own hands."

¹⁰ "We did not want to develop programmes for people, but with them. We do not want to see refugees as objects of well-meant action, but as subjects and as shapers of their own history and their own living situation."

4.1.4 Access and personal involvement

A lucky and unexpected coincidence gave me the chance and possibility to have a closer look into the project 'Peer Mentor Training für jugendliche Geflüchtete' organised and carried out by the Magistratsabteilung 17. During an interview that was conducted with the two organisers, Kathrin Lipowec and Shokat Ali Walizadeh, they first offered me to do participant observation in a few of their seminars, to then also tell me that they were looking for an intern for the time of the training. Accepting both these offers brought beneficial and adverse aspects. For once, being an active part of the MA 17, helping with organisational things and office chores, gave me access to data collected beforehand and also a deeper insight and thus understanding of the project itself. It moreover made me see the participants of the peer mentor training more often and in situations outside of the framework of the weekly workshops, where I could establish trust and talk to them in a casual way.

But this involvement also came with the problem of having to fulfil tasks during the seminars and other activities, where it would have been advisable to only focus on the participant observation. I was a little stuck in between roles, duties and areas of responsibilities - a situation, which had to be reflected upon concerning the research finding and the analysis.

4.2 Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten

Acting as the second research object is the project 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten' by the 'Universität Siegen' in Germany. In this university project, refugees benefit from the experiences of other refugees, who are in an advanced phase of their studies and now work as the so-called 'Bildungsmentoren' (education mentors).

During the interview with Christian Gerhus, the coordinator of the project, he mentioned that the project's name has been changed from 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten' to 'Starthelfer' due to the wish of the refugees and some administrative reasons (Interview 8, p. 2). For a better understanding however, the original name was retained in this research paper.

4.2.1 Ambition and approach

The mentioned project is a university counselling centre, which advises refugees on various areas (such as funding opportunities and intercultural sensitisation) and offers support in language learning, exam preparations, and sport activities. The center also organises information and social integrative events. Every participant of the project has their own background in flight migration and after successfully completing a language course has started their studies at the 'Universität Siegen'. Not only do the volunteers have the linguistic ability to communicate with newcomers and know about the cultural differences between the country of origin and Germany, but they have also made and mastered their own experience in the day-to-day challenges of successful integration and can therefore be seen as authentic contact persons and role models. (Bido, 2017) The voluntary participants do not have to complete a special training in order to become 'Bildungsmentoren', but if they have problems or questions, they can either talk to the organiser Christian Gerhus, or if it is competence exceeded problems he can organise contacts to specialist staff from different faculties (Interview 8, p. 5, l. 6-12).

In general, the 'Bildungsmentoren' are responsible for organising workshops on study orientation, in which they introduce certain courses of study, mostly those which they study themselves or related studies. They moreover offer German language tutoring, give workshops on exam preparations and tips on how to pass certain exams, as they have gone through the same system beforehand. Furthermore, they organise sports activities, manage the content on social media, and take care of the matching within a study buddy programme. (Interview 8, p. 7, l. 37-29)

The idea behind the project is to support the empowerment of the refugees so that they are enabled to act independently both in the academic world and in the everyday environment in order to become active participants in a society, to which they feel a sense of belonging (Verleihung des Welcome-Preises für Studierendeninitiativen, 2018). For their involvement in the integration of refugees, the 'Federal Ministry of Education' and the 'Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst' (DAAD) have awarded 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten' as a student initiative with the 'Welcome Award'. This award promotes student initiatives since 2016, which follow the aim to make it easier for refugees to integrate into higher education and to help them get started studying. (Studentische Initiativen für Geflüchtete ausgezeichnet, 2017).

4.2.2 Projects

Next to the counselling on university related topics and language learning, there are regular, intermittent projects concerning political education and field trips, which are held to give the refugees an understanding of German history and culture. Moreover, there is engagement to pair up refugees with other students, no matter if they are refugee, foreign or German students. One of these engagements is called 'Dinner-Time', a meet-up of a few students, who cook for each other in order to get to know each other's (culinary) culture. ("Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten" an der Universität Siegen, 2019)

Another one is the 'Study Buddy' programme that seeks to facilitate the integration of refugees into the German higher education system. Any student enrolled at the University of Siegen can become a senior-buddy for a refugee to prepare them for their studies and accompany them during their first steps and studies at the university. A senior-buddy is meant to give orientation around the campus, help with problems and mutual social activities, and not only to give support for study planning, exam organisation, and timetables, but also advice for communication with professors and examination offices. (Study Buddy Programm, 2019)

4.2.3 Mentioning of empowerment

All descriptions of the project mention that the voluntarily participating refugees' successful integration was established through their own work, influence, and will. Within the project they can thus serve as role models for others, as they have a profound knowledge of the cultural differences and the experiences, they have made themselves. Moreover, they develop their personal potential within the project while supporting others at the same time. (Bido, 2017)

In an information video about the project, one can even see the coordinator of 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten', Christian Gerhus, write down the word empowerment onto a blackboard during a participants' teaching. Mr Gerhus, as well as active participants of the project highlight the importance of the refugees' independence, which enables them to not only integrate autonomously into society and into the higher education sector, but also to contribute to and participate in society. Refugees are

supported to realize their own goals and also to help their fellow countrymen to settle down in Germany. (DAAD Worldwide, 2017)

Just like the 'CORE-project', also 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten' seeks to realize integration through empowering migrants and putting their particular knowledge to use.

4.3 Other projects

Next to the two main projects mentioned in the previous chapters, which I chose based on my research goal, two other projects more or less chose me.

By sending out an e-mail explaining the aim of my master thesis that was forwarded to different but fitting organisations by Nina Andresen, the CORE-project manager of 'Fonds Soziales Wien', I tried to contact more people to conduct interviews with. Ms Andresen claimed that she could not give out the contacts directly due to data protection reasons. In this process, Dr Fazel Raman, a member of the association 'Afghan Wulas' called me and was willing to meet for an interview. As 'Afghan Wulas' is a club, founded by Afghans that came to Austria some time ago in order to support newly arrived Afghan refugees in Austria, talking to him seemed like a positive plus for this thesis, although this association did not directly aim at refugees' or migrants' empowerment or the support of their independence. Moreover, it is a part of ethnographic research to be open to the new and the unexpected, and to take up problems, topics, and questions that play a part in the lifeworld of the people or group of people examined (Diaz-Bone & Weischer, 2015, p. 119).

During the interview with Dr Rahman, he promised me to help looking for more interviewees fitting into my investigatory group and later on gave me the contacts of Amir (who does not want to have his last name mentioned). Amir is actively taking part in multiple organisations supporting refugees, such as 'FRIDA'.

In the following the associations 'Afghan Wulas' and 'FRIDA' will be characterised briefly, to show why they can also be considered fitting for the research question.

4.3.1 Afghan Wulas

The association 'Afghan Wulas', which calls itself a non-profit organisation on facebook, was founded in 1999 to maintain and promote Afghan culture and the native languages

of Afghanistan, and now also supports the education and integration of Afghan refugees in Austria (Afghan Wulas, 2019).

Next to helping during the process of integration, the club also aims towards making successful integration visible to the public. During a panel discussion Dr Fazel Rahman, one of the founding members and chairman of the association, mentioned that he wants to support newly arrived refugees in various ways: Not only in dealing with authorities and translations, but also as a guide for questions of religious tolerance, women's rights, and freedom of expression. Another chairman of the club, Wais Barekzai, refers to the importance of making successful examples of integration visible. This would take away much of the Austrians' anxiety, which they feel through the sudden influx of refugees, especially of (Afghan) young men. (*DIE AFGHANISCHE COMMUNITY HILFT FLÜCHTLINGEN*, 2016)

The club moreover actively supports refugee demonstrations against deportations of Afghans back to Afghanistan, such as the one that was held in March 2017, where 1500 people went out on the streets under the motto 'Afghanistan is not safe' (Reisinger, 2017).

4.3.2 FRIDA

'FRIDA' is an organisation that offers legal advice for mainly refugees and migrants, which is free of charge and independent. They cover asylum and alien law, and operate on the principle that law is a fundamental right for everyone (Die SIA Finalists 2019, 2019) and that everybody has a fundamental right to legal protection (Wer wir sind, 2019).

They are a team of legal advisors, who founded the association in order to contribute to and offer free legal aid to people in need. 'FRIDA' is "*responding to the fact that people are increasingly prevented from claiming and enforcing their human rights*" (Wer wir sind, 2019).

The open consultations take place twice a week and are always accompanied by interpreters for Dari/ Farsi and Arabic. If another language is needed, the clients can bring their own interpreters or it will be taken care of after a notification beforehand.

'FRIDA' claims to support her clients through

- *personal counselling*
- *statements and appeals in asylum procedures*

- *statements and appeals in alien law procedures*
- *applications for residence permits*
- *applications for residence permits for extenuating reasons". (Was wir tun, 2019)*

The organisation even drew public attention and thus ranked top ten finalist of the 'Social Impact Awards 2019', for which 52 organisations applied (Die SIA Finalists 2019, 2019). This award was founded 2009 by the 'Institut für Entrepreneurship und Innovation' of the 'WU Wien'. The aim of the competition was to launch a competition for student social entrepreneurs in Austria, which not only honours, but also supports them in their first steps. (SIA's Geschichte, 2019)

Both associations mentioned were founded by refugees/ migrants aiming towards helping and supporting other refugees/ migrants by providing information, special knowledge, and experiences. Talking to two persons being active in these clubs was hence regarded as a possibility to obtain more data on the reasons why refugees commit themselves to helping one another, despite the fact that the clubs were not focused specifically on empowerment.

5. Empowerment and Migration

As the research focus of the present thesis lies specifically on the connection between migrants respectively refugees and certain ways that lead to their empowerment, a literature research regarding this topic was conducted, before doing the empirical study about the projects mentioned in the previous chapter. The findings of this literature research will now be presented.

5.1 Connection of the concepts in literature

During the research it became evident that there are three main components which are addressed as a third factor around the relation between empowerment and migration. These factors are gender, racism and education.

5.1.1 Empowerment, migration and gender

Most articles and books reflected on the empowerment of migrants in relation to gender topics, but in a manifold way. Gender can be seen as one of the most important social forces shaping migration patterns, and as migration is a powerful catalyst of social change, it is therefore also important when it comes to empowerment (Parrado & Flippen, 2005, p. 606). In this chapter different approaches to this conjunction are discussed.

Gratzer (2010) for instance examines gender-specific migration conditions, choices, and experiences in the countries of origin and host country using the example of Burmese (Siberian) migrants in Germany and Spain. In this case migration is a positive, strengthening, and empowering choice for women. The author argues that one reason for female migration is the empowerment of women, which is associated with economic factors. Another one is that the women's experiences in the country of migration are perceived as a new step in their life in order to find themselves. Migration is accompanied by changes in norms, desires, beliefs, and the women's personality itself, which are perceived as a positive change and the empowerment of women's self. This happens as the new social space, which the female migrants are in, gives them the possibility not only to implement new strategies of action, but also to redesign existing gender relations. (ibid., p. 91f)

A study with a similar focus, but a different conclusion was done by Pickbourn (2018). This paper depicts a field research in Ghana about rural-urban migration (women's migration within national borders) and shows how this migration on the one hand gives women access to an independent source of income, and enables them to exercise control over major decisions that affect their life outcomes, while on the other hand their emancipatory potential of migration is limited by the official stance towards rural-urban migration and informality. Nevertheless, the decision by women to migrate represents an attempt to improve their life outcomes as well as the ones of their families, although facing severely constrained options in doing so. (ibid., p. 1075f)

In this regard the 'Sustainable Development Goal 5' (SDG 5) is mentioned, which describes

“the promotion of women’s empowerment complex links between women’s empowerment and the migration of women from rural to urban areas, and argues for a reframing of policy towards women’s rural–urban migration” (ibid., p. 1076).

This shows that under certain circumstances, migration can empower women and can be a way for them to escape social control or gender discrimination. Migration is more likely to be empowering for women, if they migrate from rural to urban places, find employment outside of their home in formal sector occupations, and if the migration takes place within a legal framework for an extended period. (ibid., p. 1085)

Also Morokvasic (2009) talks about the connection between processes of migration and the distribution of power within families and between sexes. Women as migrants are involved in power hierarchies, which they have not constructed themselves, but which shape the way people think and act. Based on these hierarchies, women develop certain action initiatives. The author argues that female migration for the purpose of employment can lead to the empowerment of women, as it helps to question established norms regarding the relationship between the sexes. However, they can also lead to new dependencies and reinforce existing boundaries and hierarchies in gender relations, as women mostly do stereotypical female work, also in the receiving countries. (ibid., p. 28f)

Other scholars are of the opinion, that despite their importance to women's empowerment and migrant adaptation, the social and cultural processes, which determine how gender relations and expectations develop in the migration process are poorly understood (Parrado & Flippen, 2005)

Parrado & Flippen’s article about Mexican women in the US and their experiences regarding structures of labour, power, and emotional attachments, shows how gender relations and expectations evolve during the process of migration and how this change has a big importance on women’s empowerment. Mexican women who immigrated to the US due to better chances for female employment, often incorporate the behaviour patterns and cultural values of the US. However, the gender ideologies differ between the two states and migration is therefore accompanied by the diversity of changes in gender relations. (ibid., p. 606)

Thus, the effect of migration on gender relations is highly variable, with gains in some realms offsetting losses in others (ibid., p. 626).

The study from Cakir & Guneri (2011) examines the role of demographic factors (length of stay, education, and language level), perceived discrimination, social support, and psychological distress in predicting empowerment among Turkish migrant women in the UK. They argue that lower levels of psychological distress in addition to higher levels of education and social support appears to predict greater empowerment in migrant women. The presumed reason is the level of education and social support functioning as protective factors, whereas the psychological distress is functioning as a risk factor for empowerment in the migration context (ibid., p. 223)

Moreover, similar to what was said in the chapter about empowerment and social capital on page 21f in this paper, the authors show that conducting support groups in which migrant women are able to discuss their difficulties and coping strategies, can help them to overcome problems and enhance empowerment. (ibid., p. 230)

In her paper, Ghosh (2017) discusses the positive and negative effects of women's migration on the women themselves and on the sending and receiving countries. It is shown that the sending country not only benefits economically (e.g. through remittances) from women's migration, but also has to face 'brain drain' problems. The migrating women themselves might improve their lives and income opportunities, or might also experience exploitation and discrimination in the host countries. Generally the author is of the opinion, that the patterns of economic migration are changing in ways that are based on rising female empowerment.

"The picture of women's migration today is complex, reflecting the apparent advantages to women of higher incomes and recognition of work, as well as the dangers and difficulties associated with migrating to new and unknown situations with the potential for various kinds of exploitation. The desperation that drives most such economic migration, and the exploitative conditions that it can result in, should not be underestimated."

However, Ghosh adds that it is also true that the knowledge of conditions and possibilities in other places or countries can have an important liberating effect on women, which creates a impulse for positive social change and empowerment. (ibid., p. 61f)

The importance of knowledge and education in the migration/empowerment nexus will be addressed in the next chapter.

5.1.2 Empowerment, migration and education

Education is often mentioned in the context of the empowerment of migrants and even defined as a key site for the promotion of empowerment among migrants and refugees (Hannah, 2008, as cited in Cakir & Guneri, 2011, p. 223).

Bello (2011) is looking into the topic of how the engagement of migrants in education projects can play a role in their upwards mobility, their participation in society, and their empowerment in present-day Italian society (ibid., p. 348).

This is explored in the field of non-formal education, which is defined as any educational activity that takes place outside the formal system *“in providing chances for young migrants to access resources and to participate in Italian society, while at the same time taking into account their intersectional identities”* (ibid., p. 349).

The non-formal education this paper inspects are practice examples organised mainly by the EU youth policy. It is found out that this type of education plays a key role in the empowerment of young migrants, which is conceived as a mean for enhancing their inclusion and participation, given the fact that it aims to transform diversity into a source of social inclusion (ibid., p. 350f)

Satilmis et al. (2014) investigate the ways of creating empowerment for migrants in order to expand their possibilities of participation in the field of science, especially within the university domain. This investigation is done through the example of the project ‘enter science für studierende mit migrationshintergrund’ organised by the university of Bremen in Germany.

The project is geared towards supporting immigrant students, as universities often lack knowledge about the needs, problems, and skills of people, who have grown up and/ or live between different cultures, languages, and milieus. The project aims at creating opportunities for empowerment, expanding the opportunities for migrants to participate in the field of science, and encouraging them to deal with the professional field of science in conjunction with their own life and work perspectives. In addition, the

variety of students should be made visible in public and the university environment sensitised to their specific needs, questions, and potential. (ibid., p. 508)

It is a transdisciplinary event established for master students having a migration background, with the aim to provide them with in-depth insights into research practice and helping them to establish contacts with (non-) university research institutions.

The other aims are:

- Identifying the needs of students with a background in migration.
- Supporting students with demand-oriented concepts and offers in order to expand their options for action.
- Giving information to and aiming at the sensitisation of teachers regarding the specific needs of the target group.
- Public relations: Making diversity (also within the target group) and the informal exclusion mechanisms visible.
- Contributing to reducing structural disadvantages in the field of science for students with a migration background. (ibid., p. 509)

5.1.3 Empowerment, migration and racism

The last topic that was often connected to migrants and empowerment was racism. Mecheril and Velho (2013) for example talk about how everyday experiences of racial discrimination can not only lead to disadvantages, burdens, effects on physical and mental health, but also to a change of migrants' subject positions and thus their self-conception and action (ibid., p. 206f).

The messages and content of discrimination (violence, degradation, social exclusion ...) are internalized by migrants and can become a part of their self-image. The perception of others thus becomes the self-image. But migrants are not helpless, and experiences of racism go hand in hand with a capacity for agency, which is released as a strength in collective and individual political, social, artistic, scientific, and everyday forms (against racism) (ibid., p. 206f).

Empowerment approaches come into play here. These can manifest either as collective processes of self-organisation and appropriation of political power, or as professional pedagogical or psychosocial concepts in order to support self-empowerment (ibid., p. 209).

However, the authors see empowerment as a transformative process of education:

“Praxen des Empowerment können in diesem Sinne als Bildungsprozesse verstanden werden, die es ermöglichen die eigene Involvierung in rassistische Verhältnisse zu verstehen und so die Übernahme rassistischer Fremdbilder oder Versuche der Selbst-Angleichung zu hinterfragen und zu verändern. Dies hat Effekt auf Einzelne, aber auch gesamtgesellschaftlich, da Menschen angeregt werden kritisch und widerständig gegen Alltagsrassismus und für die gerechtere Verteilung von Ressourcen und Rechten zu agieren”.¹¹ (ibid., p. 2011)

An Austrian study report engages with the ways of migrants dealing with racial discrimination in everyday life and how this self-organised approach leads to empowerment.

It is a survey on discrimination experiences of migrants as a part of the ‘MIDAS project’, which took place in the period from October 2002 to June 2005, and which was focused on the empowerment of migrants. Empowerment was recognized here as the process of strengthening the migrants’ self-organisation and also as an intercultural opening of institutions and enterprises. (Hetfleisch, n.d., p. 5f)

The survey looked at immigrant associations in Austria and hence, not only biographical interviews, but also discussions in the form of focus groups were conducted with the members. It turned out that not only the network building of associations leads to the empowerment of migrants. The confrontation with one's own life story, or with the personal experiences of discrimination increases one's own appreciation and self-acceptance. It is added that the so-called ‘bridge-function’ of immigrant associations should not be underestimated: With their expert knowledge in the field of migration, the development of perspectives, and their representational function, they perform essential work in the field of anti-discrimination and integration. (Sartori, n.d., p. 7f)

5.2 Empowerment and migration in this thesis

A lot of the previously mentioned studies, be it about gender, education or the experience of racism in the context of empowerment also have another topic they deal with: integration.

¹¹ *“Practices of empowerment can in this sense be understood as educational processes that make it possible to understand their own involvement in racist relationships and thus to question the acquisition of racist images of others or attempts of self-alignment and change. This has an effect on individuals, but also on the whole of society, as people are encouraged to act critically and resistant to everyday racism and for a fairer distribution of resources and rights.”*

That is not surprising, since the topic of migration is generally discussed very intensively with the focus on integration and the successful integration policy. Science and politics deal with theoretical aspects of the integration of first- and second-generation immigrants, as well as practice-relevant integration-promoting measures (Aigner, 2013, p. 151).

Admittedly, the carried out literature research revealed that the connection of empowerment and integration is mostly done in the field of female political empowerment (e.g. Andorfer, 1995 or Winker, 2005), in the areas of work with handicapped persons (e.g. Lugsteiner, 2013 or Schwalb & Theunissen, 2018) or regarding mental health (e.g. Bagci et al., 2018; Yotsidi & Kounenou, 2018 or Ornelas et al., 2019). There seems to be no literature concerned with integration and empowerment associated with migration. Of course, there is the possibility that these two terms (empowerment and integration) are used synonymously in literature, as they reveal similarities in some respect. In the preliminary work, however, they are treated as two separate processes. Moreover, integration was mentioned in many interviews, informal talks, and in some responses of the survey and it is closely linked to the topic of migration. Hence, a small explanation of this concept will be addressed here, as it is an important aspect in this thesis.

It should be noted in this regard, that it is impossible - at least in this context - to oversee and reproduce the sheer endless mass of various studies on the topic of integration. Especially in integration research, a lack of theory is confronted with a preponderance of political slogans, empirical work without theoretical reference, and ideologically influenced statements (Löffler, 2011, p. 5). The focus in this thesis is therefore on the tangible and often mentioned theory of Hartmut Esser (Löffler, 2011, p. 6; Aigner, 2013, p. 152 or Han, 2010, p. 313).

Integration can be described as a complex social phenomenon that every society faces (Löffler, 2011, p. 5). In the scientific discourse there are many theoretical terminology definitions and empirical research papers that deal with integration in general or specifically, and that differentiate between social integration and system integration, pluralism, assimilation, multiculturalism, etc. But due to the abundance of theoretical arguments, it becomes clear that no uniform definition can exist for this concept (Aigner, 2013, p. 151f). *“Wie die meisten Grundbegriffe geisteswissenschaftlicher*

*Disziplinen ist auch der Begriff der Integration vage und unbestimmt*¹² (Friedrichs & Jagodzinski, 1999, p. 11). The concept of integration, however, always deals with the creation of a social balance and a special stability, and can therefore not be regarded as an undisputed concept (Reinprecht & Weiss, 2011, p. 24).

It should be noted that the meaning of the concept of integration may change depending on a person's social and political standpoint. Some see integration as legal equality without adaptation, others as approximation, which is particularly important in the cultural and religious realm, and yet others as a reciprocal process of rapprochement between migrants and natives (Löffler, 2011, p. 4).

According to Friedrichs & Jagodzinski (1999), integration is mainly related to a system or a collective, which is either a relationship between a part (such as an element or a subsystem) and the whole (such as a system or collective), or the integration of the system itself. Within these systems, an internal state or attitude can be considered a criterion for integration, just like external or goal-oriented behaviour. Internal states include ratings and feelings of the persons for and against the system in which they wish to be integrated in, as well as the identification with the system goals. The external behaviour describes a bilateral cooperation, which is to work for a mutual benefit - the purposeful behaviour is thus a combination of external action and inner attitude. In addition, it can be said that a person is only then integrated into a system if they help to maintain the system, or to fulfil the system functions. (ibid, p. 11f).

In terms of migration, for Bommers (2007) this means:

*“Es gibt keine Alternative zur Integration von Migrantinnen und Migranten. Sie werden gebraucht und sie sind umgekehrt ihrerseits an ihrer Integration interessiert, geht es dabei doch um den Zugang zu den für die Lebensführung wichtigen gesellschaftlichen Bereichen, wie Bildung, Arbeit, Gesundheit, Wohnung, Recht und Sicherheit.”*¹³ (p. 3)

Integration thus includes the most important spheres of life, such as work, housing, social interaction, and communication, as well as political and cultural participation. Successful integration can be addressed if discrimination and social inequalities, especially in these areas, disappear and social upwards mobility becomes possible. (Reinprecht & Weiss, 2011, p. 24)

¹² *“Like most basic concepts of humanities disciplines, the concept of integration is vague and indefinite.”*

¹³ *“There is no alternative to the integration of migrants. On the other hand, they are needed and, conversely, they are interested in their integration, since it is about the access to key social fields such as education, work, health, housing, law and security.”*

Also crucial for the course of integration are social requirements of law, politics or healthcare, as well as the material, social, and cultural resources, which are available to individuals. Since migrants are often less well-endowed with cultural and social resources in the host country than natives, integration in its processes, successes, and failures is the result of the migrants' efforts to fulfil the requirements in various areas, such as economy, labour market or politics. (Bommes, 2007, p. 3f)

Esser (2001) generally understands integration as the cohesion of parts in a systemic whole, irrespective of what this cohesion is based on. The parts must be an integral part of a whole in order to be able to distinguish themselves from their surroundings as a system, and also to become recognizable as such. (ibid., p. 1)

In terms of the definition of integration Esser works out two different perspectives: the system integration and the social integration.

The system integration puts the system into focus as a whole. It is the cohesion of parts of a social system, which emerges and intervenes independently from the specific motives and relationships of individual actors and often against their intentions and interests. Examples for executive bodies of the system integration would be the nation state, the world market or international corporations. (ibid., p. 3f)

Social integration, on the other hand, refers to the integration of actors, populations and the groups they form within a system, and it directly addresses themes, orientations, intentions, and relationships (ibid., p. 3f). Concerning the integration of immigrants and foreign ethnic groups, social integration is usually meant (ibid., p. 8).

Although both forms of integration are interrelated to a varying degree, system integration can exist without social integration. As an example for the importance of the distinction between system and social integration, Esser mentions the conflict between ethnic groups. Ethnic conflicts, like those that took place in Northern Ireland or former Yugoslavia, the author sees as a case of a failed system integration. On the other hand, Esser ascribes social distances or prejudices between actors of different ethnic groups in everyday situations to problems of social integration. (ibid, p. 4f)

Furthermore, Esser differentiates between different mechanisms of the two forms of integration. Systems integration is secured through anonymous mechanisms that are not tied to identifiable individuals, such as those represented by the market, organisation, and media (ibid., p. 6). Regarding social integration, at least four variants

can be distinguished regarding the involvement or inclusion of the actors within society: cultururation, placement, interaction, and identification (ibid., p. 8).

Under cultururation Esser understands the fact that actors have to have the necessary knowledge for meaningful, understanding, and successful acting and interacting. It is therefore about socialisation, the knowledge of the most important rules for typical social situations and the mastery of the necessary (cultural) skills. Language is seen as a part of this. (ibid., p. 8f)

The second mechanism of social integration is placement, that is, the occupation of a particular social position by an actor, integrating them into an already existing social system. The most important forms here are both the granting of certain rights, as well as taking over (professional) positions, and forming social relationships with other members of the social system. (ibid., p. 9)

Another mechanism of social integration is interaction:

“Interaktionen sind ein Spezialfall des sozialen Handelns, bei dem sich die [AkteurInnen] wechselseitig über Wissen und Symbole aneinander orientieren und so, und über ihre Orientierungen und ihr Handeln, Relationen miteinander bilden.“¹⁴

Likewise, social relationships and emotions play a role in interaction (ibid, p. 9f).

Esser identifies identification as the fourth and last mechanism of social integration. The identification of a person with a social system is a particular attitude of a person in which they see themselves and the social structure as a unity and become ‘identical’.

Thus, there is an emotional relationship between the individual and the social system, , which is obtained through an orientation with the collective content. (ibid, p. 12)

How these remarks transfer to the research goal of the present paper, will be addressed in the following chapter, which is dealing with the findings.

6. Findings

6.1 Results from the data collection

Using the qualitative content analysis, as described in chapter 3.3, the way of analysing the conducted and transcribed interviews was forming main categories, which will

¹⁴ *“Interactions are a special case of social action, in which the [actors] are mutually oriented towards each other via knowledge and symbols and thus, through their orientations and actions, form relations with each other.”*

function as chapters in the following summary. The hereby formed subcategories will function as subchapters. The compiled categories have then been compared with the field notes from the participant observation, as well as the informal talks and the answers from the anonymous survey. The results were complemented correspondingly. The following chapter depicts an overview of the results of all gathered data.

6.1.1 Reasons to found a club or to start such a project

For refugees/ migrants getting involved in integrative projects and clubs that support other refugees/ migrants, an offer of such projects and clubs is needed in the first place. The following will explain why people decide to establish projects like 'CORE' and 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten', and clubs such as "Afghan Wulas' and 'FRIDA'.

6.1.1.1 Seeing a need for this specific help

According to Christian Gerhus, the coordinator of 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten' at the university of Siegen, one of the reasons to start the project was mainly the need, as there were no university initiatives aimed to support refugees:

"Also es gibt und gab auch vorher schon studentische Initiativen, natürlich keine, die sich explizit mit Flüchtlingen beschäftigt haben. Es gibt hier an der Uni auch zwei studentische Initiativen, die sich zum Beispiel mit ERASMUS Studenten auseinandersetzen, ähm also gibt's schon im Kontext mit Ausländern - was anbieten, aber speziell für die Gruppe der Geflüchteten gab's sonst eigentlich nichts." ¹⁵ (Interview 8, p. 1, l. 38-42)

The reason behind the founding of the 'CORE project' and the fact that differentiates it from others, as explained by Kathrin Lipowec and Shokat Ali Walizadeh, the project managers of 'Peer Mentor Training für geflüchtete Jugendliche', is the goal of supporting refugees from day one.

Shokat Ali Walizadeh declares the importance of this approach:

"(A)lso generell ist diese Projekt zu unterscheiden zu andere Integrationsprojekte, (...) das ist ganz klar und deutlich, dass die Geflüchteten von erste Tag zu helfen. (...) Also, dass das nicht also irgendwann warten, so wie Projekte von (...) andere Organisationen, dass die sobald positiv subsidiären Schutz haben, fünf Jahre da sind, drei Jahre und und und und"

¹⁵ "There are and have been student initiatives before, of course, none explicitly dealing with refugees. There are also two student initiatives here at the university, for example dealing with ERASMUS students, and there are already some in the context of foreigners, but there was nothing else for the group of refugees in particular."

danach einen Kurs bekommen, danach einen, irgendeinen äh ähm zu diese Projekte passen, und reinkommen können dürfen. (...) Also damals als ich begonnen zu arbeiten, also hier (...) und hab ich ganz genau am Anfang gesehen, dass die Geflüchtete von ersten Tag helfen. (...) und das hat mich persönlich bewegt, also zu diese Projekt und dann dass ich zu hier kommen und und arbeiten. Ähm das ist halt ein, eine große Unterschied zu anderen Projekten (...) und eine wichtige, eine ganz, ganz wichtige.”¹⁶ (Interview 1, p. 14, l. 2-22)

Some interviewees explain the want to help with seeing a raising need for it, such as during the events and impacts of the stream of refugees in 2015. Amir, working as a translator for different organisations, but mainly for FRIDA, describes seeing all the refugees arriving almost as a shock:

“Und dann war so 2015 dieser Flüchtlings(ansturm) und ich war dort, so ich hab mit paar Freunde äh ... wir zusammen Verein gegründet und ja auch privat so im Ausland, zum Beispiel Ungarn und Serbien, so dort gefahren, dort den Menschen geholfen. Und dann wir haben einen Verein gegründet am Hauptbahnhof "Train of Hope", vielleicht kennen Sie? (...) Ja. Ähm ich hab dort dann angefangen, so .. Ich war Tag und Nacht dort. (...) und dort war auch so allgemein Helfen, zum Beispiel erste Hilfe, Dolmetschen, es war so crazy. (...) Es war so, tausend auf tausend Menschen kommt auf einmal. (...) Und dann danach .. also im Hauptbahnhof war fertig, und wir haben privat nochmal versucht so eine Quartier zu gründen, (...) aber es hat nicht geschafft und dann ich hab mit ein Freund, Asyl in Not, dort angefangen, weil das war eine extrem wichtige Sache, weil Menschen hat keine Ahnung gehabt, was ist Asyl und was äh zum Beispiel Interview. Also auch Hilfe in Richtung, wie bekomme ich Asylrecht.”¹⁷ (Interview 9, p. 1f, l. 39-20)

¹⁶ "In general, this project is to be distinguished from other integration projects that is very clear, because the refugees are helped from the first day on. So that is not waiting until sometime, as is the case in projects from other organizations, that once they have a positive subsidiary protection, five years, three years and then get a course. So back in the days when I started working here, I saw right from the beginning that the refugees were helped from day one, and that moved me personally to work here. That's a big difference to other projects and a very, very important."

¹⁷ And then in 2015 there was this flood of refugees and I was there, I founded a club with some friends and also went abroad privately, for example to Hungary and Serbia, and helped people there. And then we founded a club at the main station "Train of Hope", maybe you know it? I was there day and night and helped there in a general way, for example first aid, interpreting, it was so crazy. There were thousands of people at once. And then afterwards, so when the main station was finished, we tried privately again to establish an accommodation, but we failed and then I started with a friend at 'Asyl in Not', because it was an extremely important thing, because people had no idea what asylum is and what, for example, an interview is. So, also help in the direction of how do I get asylum."

The motivation that Amir overcame during this event, therefore continued also after that, and he and some of his friends thus founded a club and began to get involved in it.

6.1.1.2 Other projects/ clubs are lacking something or are not working well

However, it was not only seeing the need to take action, but also the experience of having worked in similar organisations. While being an active and helping member of the 'big players', Amir had the impression that their way of approaching the refugees' problems is too formal and based on too many strict rules:

"B9: Es ist so viel Arbeit. Problem ist, ich helfe einem Mensch und ich liebe, zum Beispiel ich habe bei Asyl in Not und äh FRIDA, so .. viel gemacht, weil die sind nicht so äh professionell, es gibt nicht so viele Regeln. (...) Am liebsten machen wir das freundlich, mit Freundschaft und so, (...) und auch ich kann so viel erklären, wie ich will. Weißt du, bei andere Organisationen, ich habe oft Samariterbund, Diakonie, äh Anrufe bekommen und ich bin gegangen, aber dort bist du 'word by word' übersetzen und du darfst nicht extra etwas erzählen und ich hasse es.

I1: Also man hat genau vorgegeben, was man sagen darf und was nicht?

B9: Mhm, ja und bei FRIDA so ich (...) bin dann selber ein Berater. Ansonsten ich habe eine Angebot gehabt ähm äh Asyl in Not, so als Berater, aber ich kann nicht schreiben. Aber sie haben gesagt, du kannst ja eh Beratung machen. Es ist schwer so." ¹⁸ (Interview 9, p. 5f, l. 37-7)

It is important for him to mention that he does not want to criticize the other organisations he has worked for, but that for him it was not the right environment to work in:

"Ja, also ich bin, also zum Beispiel mit den zwei Vereinen, also Train of Hope wir waren wirklich freundlich, wie eine Familie geholfen (...) und bei Asyl in Not auch so. Ähm bei FRIDA ist sowieso, die sind alle Freunde. Aber die andere Vereine, ich bin nicht so oft dort gegangen, (...) ich hab so einen Blick gesehen und ich hab gesagt, He das ist, das ist nicht meine.(...) (D)ie machen sowieso, aber was ich denke und was ich mache nicht zum Beispiel.

¹⁸ "B9: It's so much work. The problem is, I'm helping a person and I love that, for example I have done so much at 'Asyl in Not' and 'FRIDA' because they are not professional, there are not that many rules. We like to do this amicable and I can explain as much as I want. You know, in other organizations, I've often worked at Samaritan organization, Diakonie, but there you have to translate 'word by word' and you cannot say anything additionally and I hate it.

I1: So you have set exactly what you are and what you are not allowed to say?

B9: Mhm, yes and at 'FRIDA' I am a consultant myself. It's hard like this."

Bei denen is so, so wie heißt? Formalites. Zum Beispiel, ich mach mein Arbeit und dann (...) und dann geh ich nach Hause und fertig.”¹⁹ (Interview 9, p. 8, l. 22-31)

For Dr Fazel Rahman the problem of many big integrational organisations lies in the poor variety of the offered languages, be it regarding workshops or written information:

“Schwierigkeiten sind noch immer (...) wenige Information in Muttersprache der Paschtu. (...) In vielen Beratungsstelle, noch immer. (...) Das kann Caritas sein, Diakonie, .. Volkshilfe, (...) OIF (...). Da gibt, ich hab sogar angerufen und warum gibt nicht. Nein, sie ham niemanden, keine Übersetzer, (keine) Kapazität.”²⁰ (Interview 7, p. 10, l. 39-9)

The positive aspect and the advantage of ‘Afghan Wulas’ is thus the non-existing language barrier, and the resulting trust and mobilisation possibilities:

“(Z)uerst einmal, wir reden selbe Sprache, (...) Und diese (K)ommunikation ist für sie leichter. Zweiten, die Vertrauen ist schon da. (...) Dritten, die (M)obilisation ist leichter bei uns als Verein für die ähm ander NGOs und österreichische Initiative ist ist schwerer.”²¹ (Interview 7, p. 6, l. 22-29)

6.1.1.3 Channelling helpfulness

Giving people, who want to help an opportunity and an institution to do so is also a top priority in most projects. Christian Gerhus declares that his projects aims at the students, who really want to help and who do not want to only enable themselves to make a step further in their university career. Hence, they do not receive any ECTS credits for their engagement:

“Genau, die kriegen gar keine ECTS-Punkte dafür. Was wir machen ist, wir schreiben natürlich eine Bescheinigung, (...) für ehrenamtliches Engagement, ähm aber wir sind keine wissenschaftliche Einrichtung, (...) wir machen eigentlich nur die Studienvorbereitung, (...) deswegen können wir auch keine Leistungspunkte vergeben. (...)”

¹⁹ “Yes, so I’m with the two clubs for example, in ‘Train of Hope’ we really helped like a family and ‘Asyl in Not’, too. At ‘FRIDA’ they are all friends anyway. But the other clubs, I did not go there so often, I saw it at a glance and I said, Hey, that’s not my way. They do not do it as I think and the way I do it. They do it with, how is it? Formalities. For example, I do my job and then and then I go home and done.”

²⁰ “The difficulties are still the little information in the mother tongue of the Pashto. In many advice centre, such as Caritas, Diakonie, Volkshilfe, OIF. I even called and asked why not. No, they have nobody, no translators, no capacity.”

²¹ “First of all, we speak the same language and communication is easier for them. Secondly, confidence is already there. Thirdly, mobilization is easier with us as a club, it’s harder for the other NGOs and the Austrian initiatives.”

*Es ist vielleicht auch, also ich weiß andere Unis machen das, die ham natürlich dann viel viel mehr ähm Bildungsmentoren (...) oder Study-Buddies, aber ich bin mir da manchmal nicht sicher, ob die Motivation auch die gleiche ist. Also ob man dann unterstützen will, helfen selbst zu helfen, oder ob man sich wirklich selber helfen will.”*²² (Interview 8, p. 5, l. 28-41)

Kathrin Lipowec and Shokat Ali Walizadeh back this statement when explaining how they chose the participants of their project:

*“Ja, also wir schauen schon so ein bissi, das ist jetzt beim Auswahlverfahren, ja? (...) Wo wir dann (...) schauen, okay was ist eure Motivation, was sind eure Erwartungen, (...) Was für Ideen habt ihr schon, was ihr mit anderen Jugendlichen machen wollt (...). Und wo wir auch ein bisschen eben herausfinden zu versuchen (...) woher kommen die eigentlich und wer, wer sind da die Kanäle, die gut funktionieren. (...) Dass wir einfach unser Projekt steuern können.”*²³ (Interview 1, p. 5, l. 31-41)

Having found fitting participants it is then necessary to help them channelling their willingness to help and their activism:

“(Wir) sind so ein bisschen Schneeballmenschen” (Interview 1, p. 9, l. 7).

*“Also irgendwie wirklich, (...) wir sehnsuchend auch halt so ein bisschen als als als Brückenbauer. (...) Wir wissen schon welche Organisationen es gibt auch und wo man sie vielleicht hinvermitteln kann.”*²⁴ (Interview 1, p. 9f, l. 43-3)

It is also required to support the participants during their founding of projects:

*“(Viele Projekte sind) eine großartige Idee (...), aber da muss man dahinter bleiben und und auch wirklich unterstützen, meinen halt wir (lacht) (...) Dass das auch passieren kann.”*²⁵ (Interview 1, p. 10, l. 17-20)

²² “Exactly, they will not receive any ECTS credits. Of course, we write a certificate for volunteering, but we are not a scientific institution, we only do the study preparation, so we cannot award any credit points. I know other universities do that, and of course they have a lot more education mentors or study buddies, but sometimes I am not sure if the motivation is the same. If you want to support the help for self-help, or if you really want to help yourself.”

²³ “Yes, we are already looking a bit at it in the selection process. Where we look, okay, what is your motivation, what are your expectations, what ideas do you already have, what you want to do with the other teenagers? And where we try to find out, where are they from and what are the channels that work well? SO we can control our project.”

²⁴ “We are a bit like snowball people.” “Well, we also see ourselves a bit as a bridge builder. We already know which organizations there are and where you can possibly convey them.”

²⁵ “Many projects are a great idea, but you have to really support them, that’s how we see it, that it can actually happen.”

6.1.1.4 Building a community

The need for a place where refugees can talk to their own country men, exchange information and experiences, while also finding a way to integrate into Austrian society, was emphasized during the interview with Dr Fazel Rahman as a reason to have founded the club:

“Also es geht einerseits um die Integration der Leute, aber auch die Werte, die kulturelle, (...) am Leben, Leben (halten) (...) Dass sich die (...) Geflüchtete (...) eine äh community finden, (...) die ähm ihre eigene Sprache sprechen, ihre eigene Kultur und (I)dentität (...) zu wahrnehmen hier. Deswegen ist uns wichtig, dass äh diesen äh zwei kulturelle Leben, einmal afghanische (...) Kultur und Sprache zu fordern, gleichzeitig auch österreichische ... Kultur und Sprache äh kennenzulernen.” ²⁶ (Interview 7, p. 4f, l. 31-2)

He is of the opinion that such a community and the provision of such a place by ‘Afghan Wulas’ brings a positive outcome to the people:

“Das hilft ihne auch ähm ich hab die Erfahrung, dass sie viel ähm Stress abbauen. (...) Dass (...) fühlen sie sich in, in eigene (...) Landsleute, Familien, (...) das macht ihnen Freude. Zufrieden ... Und einfach die andere afghanische Familie kennenlernen (...) Afghanern kennenlernen, (...) dass sie ihre Probleme auch austauschen (...), Erfahrungen sammeln (...) Informationen, (...) Erfahrungen über das Leben hier in Österreich über die Möglichkeiten allen Seiten des Lebens hier (...) Was hast du gemacht? Erfahrungen, was hast eine Schule, eine Ausbildung gemacht, wo kann man Arbeit finden? Sie reden miteinander, sie kennenlernen, sie (...) diese ähm gegenseitige Kontakte aufzubauen.” ²⁷ (Interview 7, p. 5f, l. 36-13)

6.1.1.5 Voluntary work before

That projects sponsored by the university and community institutions sometimes happen by chance and develop from an initial voluntary work, Christian Gerhus stated

²⁶ "So on the one hand it is about the integration of the people, but also to preserve the cultural values, that the refugees find an community, which speaks their own language, their own culture and identity is perceived here. That is why it is important for us to promote these two cultural lifes, the Afghan culture and language, and at the same time to get to know Austrian culture and language."

²⁷ "That helps him too uhm, I have made the experience that they reduce a lot of stress. They feel good among their countrymen, families that makes them happy. Satisfied. And just to get to know the other Afghan families, to get to know Afghans, that they also exchange their problems, gain experience, information, experiences about life here in Austria, about the possibilities on all sides of life here. What did you do? Experiences, what kind of school, education did you do, where can you find work? They talk to each other, get to know each other, build mutual contacts."

during the interview and explains the start of ‘Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten’ as follows:

“(A)lso das war eher durch Zufall ähm zustande gekommen, weil ich war damals hier an der Uni auch als Deutschlehrer schon tätig, (...) und hab dann ehrenamtlich in der Notunterkunft Deutschunterricht gegeben (...). In den Deutschkursen selber hab ich dann auch gefragt wer Arabisch kann, ja Persisch, Arabisch und wer Lust hat was zu machen, (...) und da sind, ist noch einer (d)azugestoßen und den anderen, (...) ein Syrer (...) der war selber auch schon ehrenamtlich da oben tätig ähm und zu dem Zeitpunkt wusste ich ehrlich gesagt gar nicht, dass er selber auch Flüchtling ist, der ist schon 2014 nach Deutschland gekommen, (...) (Der) war zu dem Zeitpunkt bei uns (...) an der Uni (...) und ja dann so sind wir quasi zusammengekommen, haben das erst ehrenamtlich gemacht, dann hat die Universität rund 300.000 Euro ähm zur Verfügung gestellt, um solche studentischen Initiativen oder Projekte eben zu fördern und dann, da war jetzt "Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten" war nur eins davon (...) Also es gab auch Kinderbetreuung, es gab .. ja refugees welcome, Kleider- äh Kleiderkammern (...) Also alle möglichen Projekte, studentische Projekte wurde damals gefördert, so dass es ähm .. einige von den Ehrenamtlichen eben dann als studentische Hilfskraft beschäftigt wurden und da gehören eben auch zwei Syrer und eine Iranerin dazu, die zu der Zeit bei uns im Sprachkurs waren.”
28 (Interview 8, p. 1, l. 12-34)

6.1.2 Aims of the projects and clubs

Since a subquestion of the research question is what goals and functions the founders/organiser of the projects see, this topic will be looked at in this chapter.

6.1.2.1 Support in specific field

‘Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten’ as well as the peer mentor project both tend to support their participants in their specific fields. The main concern of the peer mentor project,

²⁸ "It was more like a coincidence, because at that time I was working here as a German teacher at the university, and then volunteered for German lessons in the emergency shelter. In the German courses I asked who spoke Persian, Arabic and who wanted to do something, and there one more joined and the other, a Syrian, who was also already active as a volunteer and at the time I honestly did not know that he is also a refugee, who came to Germany in 2014. He was at our university at the time and we came together so to speak, did this first on a voluntary basis, then the university provided about 300,000€ to support such student initiatives or projects and ‘Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten’ was only one of them. So there was also child care, there was refugees welcome, clothing stores. So all sorts of projects, student projects were funded at that time, so some of the volunteers were then employed as a student assistant and there are now two Syrians and one Iranian, which were with us in the language course at the time."

as Kathrin Lipowec puts it, is supporting them to create projects to then support other young refugees:

*“Wir wollen ja wirklich Leute hier irgendwie au-, nicht ausbilden ist zu hochgegriffen, aber halt unterstützen, die tatsächlich Projekte weiterbringen möchten, die Ideen haben, wie sie andere Jugendlichen unterstützen möchten”*²⁹ (Interview 1, p. 5, l. 13-15).

The university project is focused on supporting refugees during any situation that is connected to their university development and career:

*“(A)lso (es) fängt an bei der Beratung für die Studienvorbereitung, sozusagen ja, Vorstudium für Geflüchtete heißt das. Sprachkurse, aber auch praktische Vorbereitung. Dann ähm geht das weiter äh während des Studiums, dass man die Studierenden begleitet, Studienfinanzierung, das sind so die Fragen mit denen wir uns beschäftigen, (...) wo wir die Angebote machen.”*³⁰ (Interview 8, p. 3, l. 8-14)

6.1.2.2 Self-organisation, autonomy, independence

A second aim, mentioned by both the organiser of ‘Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten’ and the organisers of the peer mentor project is independence and self-organisation.

Christian Gerhus declares how important autonomy and self-organisation is especially in the university field: *“gerade im Verlauf des Studiums, das wissen sie ja selber ist (...) Autonomie extrem wichtig (...) und Selbstorganisation”*³¹ (Interview 8, p. 4, l. 26-29).

During the two prior rounds of the peer mentor project, the organisers found out that their main goal should not be to pass on refugee and migration related knowledge to the participants, but to support them more in becoming active in an independent way:

“(W)ir ham begonnen damit, dass wir viele Infomodule gemacht haben und sind jetzt aber eigentlich ähm dazu gekommen, dass wir gesagt haben, nein wir wollen vielmehr ja die

²⁹ *“What we really want here is to, train is too exaggerated, but support those, who actually want to establish projects, who have ideas on how they want to support other young people.”*

³⁰ *“It starts with the advice for the study preparation, so to speak the preliminary study for refugees. Language courses, but also practical preparation. Then, it goes on during the study, that you accompany the students, study financing, these are the questions we deal with, where we make the offers.”*

³¹ *“Especially in the course of study, you know that yourself, autonomy is extremely important, and self-organization.”*

*Leute dabei unterstützen, dass sie dann wirklich selber aktiv werden können.”*³²

(Interview 1, p. 6, l. 18-22)

Moreover, in their eyes a minimum of support, coordination, and motivation is needed in order to make the refugee participants become independent:

*“Also wir (...) sagen man muss die Leute an die Hand nehmen, (...) bis zu einem gewissen Grad, damit sie eigenständig werden können. Wo ich mir auch denk, okay woher kommt diese Person, was hat die alles durchgemacht, ja? (...) Du kannst nicht erwarten von heute auf morgen, dass die das dann . du hast ihr das und das gegeben und jetzt ist sie dankbar und (...) Schluss aus. (...) Aber das ist jetzt, (...) meine persönliche (...) Einstellung zu den Dingen, ja? Dass ich sehe, okay, wenns (...) da nicht diese Leute gibt, die da ein bisschen koordinieren dahinter und motivieren auch, (...) dann lässt du sie ja wieder, also (m)an muss ne Hilfestellung geben (...), so ein bisschen auch, als als Motivator einfach tätig sein, nicht locker lassen.”*³³ (Interview 1, p. 12f, l. 36-14)

6.1.2.3 Involving refugees in the process

A closely linked aim is the one involving the refugees in the process of which they are a part themselves.

‘Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten’ comprises several little individual projects, of which some were initiated by the refugees themselves:

*“Dazu kommt aber auch noch eine Vielzahl anderer (eigener) Projekte, also grade so Sachen mit Sport, mit Kochen, äh politische Bildung, wir machen Exkursionen, das sind alles ähm ja Bausteine sozusagen von dem Projekt”*³⁴ (Interview 8, p. 3, l. 14-16).

Christian Gerhus gives two examples in which it becomes clear how important it is to involve refugees in the process, as they themselves know best what is in demand or what is needed. One example concerns a workshop about the German constitutional law, the other one a swimming class:

³² *“We started by giving a lot of information workshops, but we now actually started to say, no, we want to help people to get really actively involved themselves.”*

³³ *“We say you have to take people by the hand to some extent to help them become independent. Whenever I think, okay where did this person come from, what did they do? You cannot expect them to do something after you have given them this and that, and now she’s grateful and that’s it. But that’s my personal attitude to things. I see, okay, there are no people, who are coordinating and motivating a bit too. You have to offer some help, just as well as acting as a motivator, not letting go.”*

³⁴ *“In addition, there is also a large number of other own projects, so things that have to do with sports, with cooking, with political education, we make field trips, these are all building blocks, so to speak, of the project.”*

“(W)ir haben zum Beispiel mal was zum Grundgesetz gemacht, da dachten wir das interessiert keine Sau, aber das kam komischerweise gut an. Das war wirklich interessant, da waren viele da und die haben alle ganz aktiv mitgemacht ähm und sich mit dem Grundgesetz auseinandergesetzt (...) mit den verschiedenen Artikeln, was die bedeuten, (...) die ham auch Fragen gestellt. (...) Die Projektmitarbeiter haben gesagt das fänden sie gut, das wollten sie mal machen und ich meinte ich glaub zwar nicht, dass das jemand interessiert, die Deutschen hätten sich nicht interessiert, aber das äh kam zum Beispiel gut an.”³⁵ (Interview 8, p. 7, l. 8-20)

“(D)ann gibt's äh einen, der sich auch um sportliche Aktivitäten kümmert, also wir haben zum Beispiel einen Schwimmkurs organisiert ähm das auf die Idee wär ich jetzt (...) gar nicht gekommen, weil er hat erzählt, dass er auch mit dem Boot übers Mittelmeer gekommen ist und ähm eigentlich gar nicht schwimmen konnte, (...) so wie viele Syrer wohl nicht schwimmen können, (...) und ähm ja dann hat er sich gekümmert, dass wir hier mit dem Schwimmverein zusammen einen Schwimmkurs angeboten haben für Geflüchtete.”³⁶ (Interview 8, p. 8, l. 11-20)

In both examples the coordinator of the project admits, that he would not have thought of these offers himself, which were considered important by the refugee voluntary helpers and were moreover well received by the attendees.

6.1.2.4 Enable contacts

The last aim which was brought up was about communication and establishing contacts.

“(D)as Projekt "Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten" ist so ein bisschen das Herz würde ich sagen, weil da sind die Menschen, die (...) Kommunikation findet sozusagen eher da statt, während (...) strukturelle und organisatorische Dinge äh so von Bewerbungen ähm Deutschlehrer, das wird alles eben über ein anderes Projekt getragen (...) (D)as "Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten"- Projekt schafft einen sozialintegrativen Rahmen

³⁵ *"For example, we did something on constitutional law, where we did not think that would of interest, but it was surprisingly well received. That was really interesting, there were a lot of people and they all actively participated in it and dealt with the constitutional law, what the different articles mean, they also asked questions. The project staff thought it would good, they wanted to do that and I did not think anyone would be interested, the Germans would not care, but that, for example, was well received."*

³⁶ *"Then there's someone who also takes care of sports activities, so we organized a swimming class, for example. I would not have had the idea, because he said that he came by boat across the Mediterranean sea and he could not swim at all, just like many Syrians cannot swim, and well then he took care of it, so we offered swimming lessons for refugees together with the swimming club."*

*drumherum und das ist auch (...) was wertvolles. Die meisten Migranten sind auch persönliche Kontakte (...) unglaublich wichtig, wichtiger als uns Deutschen.”*³⁷ (Interview 8, p. 3, l. 20-18)

He declares not only the importance and meaning of personal communication in the project, which he calls ‘the heart’ of it, but also the chance to establish personal contacts. These contacts are not only made possible between refugees, but also between refugees and German students, for example with the study buddy programme:

*“Das ist einmal die Bildungsmentoren, die jetzt hier angestellt sind, dann gibts aber auch noch Study-Buddies. Das sind Studenten höheren Semesters, die sich ehrenamtlich (...) um Geflüchtete kümmern. Die kriegen kein Geld, aber die werden durch die, durch das Projekt organisiert, oder ja, verteilt, verwaltet.”*³⁸ (Interview 8, p. 5, l. 15-19)

6.1.3 Challenges of clubs/ projects

The implementation of such projects can not only be positive, even if it has seemed like it so far. So here are the hurdles the organisers are struggling with and need to address.

6.1.3.1 Declining figures in the projects

The first hurdle is one that cannot actively be changed by the organisers, as it is a decrease of people wanting to take part in the projects due to a broad variety of external reasons. One of the reasons being political changes that make it harder for refugees to come to European countries: *“Das wissen Sie ja auch, dass 2016 ist es unglaublich schwer geworden überhaupt nach Deutschland zu kommen für Flüchtlinge”*³⁹ (Interview 8, p. 2, l. 36-37).

The second reason which Christian Gerhus detects is a change within the university in-house politics, as the financial promotion now does not come from the university itself anymore, but from the government, which shifted the focus of the project:

³⁷ *“The project is a little bit the heart I would say, because there are the people, the communication takes place rather there, while structural and organizational things, applications, uhm German teachers, that is all carried out through another project The ‘Geflüchtete helfen Gefüchteten’ -project creates a social inclusive framework around it and that is also something valuable. For most migrants personal contacts are incredibly important, more important than to us Germans.”*

³⁸ *“There are the education mentors, who are now employed here, but there are also the study buddies. These are students from higher semesters, who volunteer to take care of refugees. They do not get any money, but they are organized, or distributed, managed by the project.”*

³⁹ *“You also know that in 2016 it has become incredibly difficult for refugees to come to Germany in the first place.”*

“Ja, also generell ham wir schon n Rücklauf, was jetzt Bewerbungen von Geflüchteten angeht, also grade 2016 war ähm. Also gut, was ich vielleicht auch noch dazu sagen sollte, das Projekt hat sich auch ein bisschen verändert. Als das 2015 anfang, da gings eben um alle Geflüchtete, weil wir auch wirklich alle Geflüchtete ähm weil ein breites Spektrum an Geflüchteten hier an der Uni war. (...) Während das dann 2016 als es auch in Anführungszeichen verstaatlicht wurde, als die Förderung nicht mehr von der Uni, sondern vom Bund kam, ähm ist dann auch durch die Ausschreibung ganz klar auf die Studien, oder Studierenden oder Studieren-interessierten Geflüchteten äh gerichtet. Also das hat sich da sozusagen verschoben.”⁴⁰ (Interview 8, p. 2, l. 21-29)

Also Kathrin Lipowec and Shokal Ali Walizadeh hold political changes responsible for the decline in applicants. Kathrin Lipowec gives her opinion as follows:

“Also ich glaube, da hängt auch viel irgendwie so wirklich von politischer Situation ab, ja? (...) Und einfach auch Motivation. (...) Also (...) zum Beispiel, dass jetzt keine Lehrstellen mehr möglich sind und so, ist schon auch die Motivation weg. (...) Oder eine andere. Ist jetzt meine persönliche Sichtweise, ja? (...) Des ist jetzt nicht irgendwie, haben wir nicht beobachtet und irgendwie erhoben, aber (...) so ein bisschen ist, ist das Gefühl in die Richtung auch. Und es kommen ja auch nicht mehr so viele nach. (...) Also das ist das andere einfach.”⁴¹ (Interview 1, p. 4, l. 1-15)

Shokal Ali Walizadeh adds that the change in the political sentiment also leads to gossip among refugees about the asylum procedure, which then again leads to a rise in demotivation to take part in projects promoting integration.

“(Auf) andere Seite auch sehr viele Informationen läuft innerhalb der Geflüchtete ähm, dass auch Personen, die Interview gegeben haben bei BFA, (...) also dass (...) die Leute die Integration nicht, überhaupt nicht wahrgenommen (...) und auch nicht geschaut haben ähm und einfach wollten nicht reden, anschauen die Dokumente, die die Personen, (...) also die Deutschnachweis (...), die Integrationsnachweise (...) verweigern und nicht anschauen und dann diese Information läuft innerhalb die Geflüchtete, wozu soll man das tun (...)”

⁴⁰ *“In general, we already have a decrease in applications of refugees. What I should add, is that the project has also changed a bit. When it started in 2015, it was about all the refugees, because a wide range of refugees was here at the university. While in 2016, when it was - in quotation marks - nationalized, as the funding no longer came from the university, but from the federal government, the call for applications was clearly aimed at students or those who are interested in studying. So that has shifted so to speak.”*

⁴¹ *“Well, I think a lot depends on the political situation and on the motivation. So, for example, that now no apprenticeships are possible anymore, the motivation is already gone. Or another thing, that's my personal point of view, we did not observe or collect data on it, but that's the feeling. And not many of them come anymore. So that's just the other one.”*

wirkt eh nicht im Asylverfahren, (...) warum das tun und solange das keine positiven subsidiären Schutz und wozu Deutsch lernen, wozu die Sprache lernen und zu integrieren und so weiter. Das läuft schon von lange, ähm aber jetzt generell die Situation sozusagen politische ähm alles was läuft und auch sogar äh Information innerhalb der Geflüchtete.“⁴² (Interview 1, p. 4, l. 18-36)

The point addressed here is that some refugees only take part in the programme to receive the certificate, which they then hear to be a worthless piece of paper in the asylum procedure of the BFA. Kathrin Lipowec calls this problem a credibility dilemma:

“Also was der Kollege gemeint hat ist so eben, dass viele das dann einfach nur für das Zertifikat machen und dann draufkommen okay beim BFA die blättern da eh nur kurz drüber und lesen das gar nicht, was da steht. (...) Wozu investiere ich die ganze Zeit? (...) Also das ist (...) ein bisschen auch das Glaubwürdigkeitsdilemma.“⁴³ (Interview 1, p. 4f, l. 38-10)

6.1.3.2 Frictions between participants

Working with a multicultural group of different nations and languages, different levels of education, and different cultural values brings opportunities, but also frictions. For the peer mentor project, this means:

“Wir arbeiten hier mit einer Gruppe, auch mit einer multikulturellen Gruppe. (...) Die Leute kommen von, von unterschiedlichen Ländern, aus unterschiedlichen Bildungsschichten, was auch immer, ja? Ähm, die sollen aber hier als Gruppe funktionieren (...) Wir müssen vor allem schauen, dass wir da die Differenzen innerhalb der Gruppe auch immer wieder bereinigen oder bearbeiten.“⁴⁴ (Interview 1, p. 7, l. 6-12)

⁴² "On the other hand, there is also a lot of information circulating among the refugees, that even people who gave interviews at the BFA, that the integration was not perceived as such at all and that they did not even look at it and the documents, the people, the German language certificates, they do not look at the proof of integration. And then this information is circulating within the refugees, why doing that, it does not help in the asylum procedure anyway, why do so, and for so long as there is no subsidiary protection, and why learn German, why learn the language and integrate and so on. This has been happening for a long time, but now generally with the political situation, everything runs as information within the refugees."

⁴³ "What the colleague meant was that many just did it for the certificate and then they realized that the people at the BFA do not really read what was written there. Why do I invest all the time? So that's a bit of the credibility dilemma."

⁴⁴ "We are working here with a group, with a multicultural group. People come from different countries, from different educational backgrounds. But they have to function here as a group. Above all, we have to look at the fact that we are always adjust or working through the differences within the group."

Kathrin Lipowec also explains the difficulties of gossip, prejudices, and her colleague's nationality within the group, and how important it is to convey the participants to work and function as a group:

"Dass man wirklich an dieser Gruppe arbeiten muss und da gibts immer wieder irgendwelche Reibereien, oder Gerüchte, (...) (A)lso (...) die größte Gruppe sind Afghanen, (...) dann ham wir ähm Syrer, ähm Somalis (...) und dann so vereinzelt vielleicht noch ein, ein zwei, ja? Aber grad wenn du jetzt jemanden hast (...) (d)er dann selber aus Afghanistan kommt (...) dann bringst du da schon Vorurteile in die Gruppe rein. (...) Weil der ist ja dann, der kommt dann von denen und der ist dann für die sicher mehr als für uns, ja? (...) oder halt auch immer so dieses okay die sprechen eine Sprache und ich hör das nicht und die lachen, (...) Aber daran muss man einfach arbeiten. Also das ist wirklich halt dieses, dieses interkulturelle Ding, geh? (...) Wo man echt schau'n muss, dass alle das Gefühl haben wir sind hier eine Gruppe und wir sind hier für alle da. Wir nehmen euch alle ernst, und (...) ihnen beizubringen, dass sie Sachen ansprechen müssen. Nicht dass sie dann zum Shokat gehen und der soll das für sie klären." ⁴⁵ (Interview 1, p. 7f, l. 33-18)

Ziba Ravoshi, an Iranian woman living in Austria since 2013, now offering workshops on different topics for other refugees in the 'CORE-Zentrum', tells about disputes and racist remarks in her workshops between Afghans and Iranians on the basis of mistreatments of Afghans in the Iran. She tries to solve these by telling her participants that in Austria they are all equal:

"Manchmal (...) afghanische Leute, (...) das waren im Iran und iranische Regierung es ist sehr (...) schlecht mit Afghanern (umgegangen). (...) Ohne Staatsbürgerschaft ohne (...) Schule gehen, ohne äh Krankenversicherung, (...) und dann wenn sie kommen hier, immer mit Iraner äh ein bisschen äh böse. (...) Und dann, und Iraner vielleicht auch äh schauen Afghanen anderes. (...) Ich habe gesagt alles gleich in mein Kurs. (...) Und dann wenn sprechen über, ein bisschen rassistisch sprechen (...) Iraner oder Afghanen habe (ich) gesagt bitte, wir sind, Sie sind hier, weil sind alles gleich. (...) Alles ist Menschen. Ja,

⁴⁵ "That you really have to work on this group and there are always some friction or rumours. The largest group are Afghans, then Syrians, Somalis, and then perhaps one or two others. But if you have someone who comes from Afghanistan then you bring prejudices into the group. Because he is one of them and he is more for them than for us. Or always the topic: okay they speak a language and I do not understand that and they laugh - but you just have to work on that. So that is just this, this intercultural thing, where you have to really look, that everyone has the feeling we are a group here and we are here for everyone. We take you all seriously. And teach them to address things. Not that they go to Shokat and then he should clarify it for them."

manchmal eben von Iraner, manchmal von Afghaner, ich habe gesehen." ⁴⁶ (Interview 5, p. 11, l. 4-20)

6.1.3.3 Trust issues

Building and maintaining trust is of particular importance when working with refugees. They are often scared that any behaviour or statement will lead to a negative asylum notice. Shokat Ali Walizadeh talks about participants losing the trust in the MA 17 after a negative notice and dropping out of the peer mentor programme:

"(Es) ist auch eine Herausforderung, wenn ein, zwei, der Interview hat (...), danach eine negative Entscheidung (bekommt) (...) (u)nd (...) überlegt, ob bleibt in Österreich oder nicht und dann hat Angst vor die Gebäude, vor MA17, Stadt Wien, (...). Vielleicht die haben Kontakt mit dem BMI, Innenministerium, (...) Polizei und so weiter. Also das ist eine große Herausforderung, (...) dass die Leute Angst haben und nicht weiter Termine besuchen und auch dabeibleiben. (...) Das ist auch, genau, wirklich das Vertrauen (...) zu finden, zu schaffen, ja? (...) Ja, sobald der Person den zweiten negativ (Bescheid) bekommt und dann (...) und dann Vertrauen verliert zu uns, also obwohl wir das nicht so tun." ⁴⁷ (Interview 1, p. 17, l. 23-42)

Similar problems exist with the group of Turkish migrants within the project 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten'. The organiser explains their lack of trust with a fear of consequences for what they have done or what they have fled from in Turkey, as there is a big community of Turkish migrants and refugees in Germany, with a diverging political orientation:

"Und die Türken ham natürlich viel, viel mehr Angst, weil die türkische community in Deutschland ist sehr groß (...) und (sehr viele) haben bei der letzten Wahl Erdogan gewählt. 99 Prozent der Geflüchteten sind in irgendeiner Weise wegen Erdogan geflohen (...) ob Gülen-Anhänger oder wir hatten auch schon Militärs, die mehr oder weniger am

⁴⁶ "Iran and the Iranian government have dealt very poorly with Afghans. Without citizenship, without school, without health insurance, and then when they come here, they are always a bit angry with Iranians. And then Iranians maybe also look at Afghans differently. I said everybody is the same in my class. And then when talking a bit of racist talk, Iranians or Afghans, I said please, we are here because we are all the same. Everyone is human. Yes, sometimes from Iranians, sometimes Afghans, I've heard it."

⁴⁷ "It is also a challenge when someone has the interview and then gets a negative decision and thinks whether he can stay in Austria or not and then is afraid of the building, of the MA17, of the city of Vienna. Maybe they are in contact with the BMI, the Ministry of Interior, the police and so on. So that's a big challenge, that people are scared of not attending appointments and continuing with the programme. To really find, to create the trust. Once the person gets the second negative notice and then loses trust in us, even though we do not do that."

*Putsch beteiligt waren oder davon wussten zumindest, auch ja Journalisten, Menschenrechtler. Die ham ganz, ganz große Vorbehalte und ham auch zum Beispiel, die wolln auch eben nicht mit Türken in Kontakt kommen, (...) weil die Angst haben, (...) dass die Imame zum Beispiel (...) Informationen von ihnen gesammelt haben, ähm und die sind wesentlich zurückhaltender, brauchen aber auch Kontakte.”*⁴⁸ (Interview 8, p. 10f, l. 26-2)

6.1.3.4 Personal problems of refugees

The last difficulty worth mentioning is the one of personal problems among the refugees. Razan Jamil, another refugee woman offering workshops for refugees and migrants at the ‘CORE-Zentrum’ for instance often experiences that people are ashamed of talking about their problems, but still approach her for advice. Her solution for this is talking about the problems in a general manner:

*“Wir haben das System im Projekt, dass man nicht über seine persönlichen Probleme reden darf, man muss das immer allgemein halten. Sonst wird das nach dem Workshop besprochen, also nur zwischen uns. Die Leute schämen sich oft über ihre Probleme zu sprechen, also halten sie es allgemein, besonders wenn es um Familie oder Krankheit geht. Aber sie haben viele Fragen an mich, vielleicht weil sie wissen, dass ich auch mal in einer ähnlichen Situation war und ihre Sprache sprech.”*⁴⁹ (Interview 6, p. 4f, l. 40-2)

Amir recounts how some people he translated for are so ashamed of their history and their background he got to know during his work, that he is not allowed to talk to them or approach afterwards, when meeting by accident. They are even scared of him telling their stories to others:

“B9: Und Dolmetschen ist auch ein bisschen so komisch. Zum Beispiel äh manchmal ich sehe so ein Menschen, ich hab so also ihnen geholfen, aber ich darf nicht sie Beispiel so Hallo, wie geht's und ich hab dir da und da, weil es kommt auf die Geschichte an.

⁴⁸ "And the Turks are of course much more scared, because the Turkish community in Germany is very large and many have voted Erdogan in the last election. Ninety-nine percent of the refugees fled in some way because of Erdogan, whether Gülen supporters or we already had soldiers who were more or less involved in the coup, or at least knew about it, even journalists, human rights activists. They have very big reservations and do not want to get in touch with Turks, because they are afraid that the imams, for example, have collected information from them and they are much more reserved, but they also need contacts."

⁴⁹ "We are following the rule in the project that you cannot talk about your personal problems, you always have to keep it general. Otherwise this will be discussed after the workshop, so only between us. People are often ashamed to talk about their problems, so they keep it general, especially when it comes to family or illness. However, they have many questions for me, maybe because they know that I was in a similar situation and that I speak their language."

I1: Wirklich? Also dass man das irgendwie geheim halten muss?

B9: Muss, muss, ja. Und besonders Familien und Frauen (...) Wir haben so mit damals so ein zwei weibliche Dolmetscher gehabt, aber sie waren auch so immer irgendwo aktiv und keine Zeit gehabt, dann ich muss das machen und dann mit eine zum Beispiel eine Frau reden und manchmal die schämen sich und erzählen nicht.

I1: Dass man Hilfe bekommen hat, oder wofür schämen die sich?

B9: Nein, nein, über die Geschichte (...) und deswegen muss man auch manchmal so ignorieren, okay ich habe dich nicht gesehen. (...) Zum Beispiel was wir hier machen, für diese Person es muss hierbleiben, nicht dass du (...) weitererzählen, auch irgendwo treffen und sagen ja, du hast da und da gemacht oder dir ist so und so passiert. Ich ignoriere immer, weil egal dass die äh Frauen oder Männer oder Jungs, ich ignoriere immer.”⁵⁰

(Interview 9, p. 4f, l. 31-11)

Related to this is the answer from Christian Gerhus to the question why his project changed the name from ‘Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten’ to ‘Starthelfer’. He explains that the refugees do not want to be seen solely as refugees anymore: *“Der eine Grund ist, die Flüchtlinge selbst wollen auch nicht mehr unbedingt immer nur als Geflüchtete, (...) oder Flüchtlinge wahrgenommen werden”* (Interview 8, p. 2, l. 3-6), and not in a different way than other foreigners: *“(W)ie gesagt, jetzt mittlerweile wollen die auch nicht immer nur als Flüchtlinge hingestellt werden, (...) sondern auch als . nicht anders sein als die anderen Ausländer”* (Interview 8, p. 10, l. 23-26). The refugees do not want to be seen as such anymore and do not want to have a different stigma than other foreigners.

6.1.4 Reasons for participation in the projects/ activism in this field

What motivates refugees and migrants to get involved and to be active in projects or clubs that support other refugees and migrants? During the collecting of the data,

⁵⁰ *“B9: And interpreting is also a bit weird. For example sometimes I see a person I have helped, but I cannot greet them Hello, how are you, because it depends on the story.*

I1: Really? So somehow you have to keep this a secret?

B9: You have to, yes. Especially with families and women. We had two female interpreters back then, but they were always active somewhere and had no time, and then I had to do their job and I had to talk to a woman and sometimes they would be ashamed and not tell anything.

I1: That they got help, or what are they ashamed of?

B9: No, no, about the story and that's why you have to ignore them sometimes, okay, I did not see you. For example, what we do here, you cannot pass it on, also meet somewhere and say you did that and that or this and that is what happened to you. I always ignore people, whether it is women or men or boys.”

having interviews and informal talks with different people fulfilling different tasks, a vast variety of reasons became evident.

Kathrin Lipowec sees the reasons of attending the peer mentor training in getting to know people, being active, improving the German skills and the guiding principle 'I want to help because I was helped'

*"(I)ch glaub es kommen schon einige zu uns, die das so und so tun, (weil sie sich selber engagieren wollen) (...) weil sie irgendwo ehrenamtlich tätig sind, aber mit der Idee, selber jetzt mit einer Projektidee kommen sie nicht. (...) Es sind so die zwei Hauptgründe (...) oder drei, sind ähm neue Leute kennenlernen (...) Mir wurde geholfen, ich will helfen und ähm Deutschkenntnisse verbessern. (...) Ja, also oder aktiv sein, einfach (...) Also grundsätzlich ist einfach dieser Wunsch (...) genau ich will was machen, woah. (...) Mir ist fad. Ich hab Zeit (...) Und dann schauen wir halt, okay ihr wollts was machen und ihr wollts helfen und unsere große Frage ist dann, wie wollts ihr helfen?"*⁵¹ (Interview 1, p. 11f, l. 37-17)

This assessment was found to be true during the data gathering, but not entirely exhaustive, as will be shown in the following.

6.1.4.1 Passing on experiences and knowledge

First and foremost, passing on own experiences that were made during the process of flight and seeking for asylum in the receiving country and thus passing on valuable knowledge and information was mentioned as a reason for becoming active by most refugees.

The question "Why are you here?" of the survey that was handed out to the young refugees, who wanted to participate in the peer mentor programme was often answered in this regard:

*"Ich interessier mich für die jugendliche Flüchtlinge, weil ich gern mein Wissen und meine Erfahrung weitergeben möchte. Viele der Probleme habe ich selbst erlebt. Kann die Jugendlichen daher gut verstehen und unterstützen."*⁵² (Fragebogen-excel, p. 3, B24)

⁵¹ "I think some of them come to us because they want to get involved, because they are doing voluntary work somewhere, but they do not already come with a project idea. There are two main reasons or three getting to know new people, I want to help because I was helped, and improve German skills. Or just being active. So basically, it is just this wish, I want to do something. I'm bored. I have time. And then we look, okay you want to do something and you want to help and then our big question is, how do you want to help?"

⁵² "I am interested in young refugees because I would like to pass on my knowledge and experience. I experienced many of the problems myself. I can thus understand and support the young people well."

*“(W)eil ich viel Erfahrung habe und will das alles aufgeben von die die im gleich Sitautationen wie meine Sitautation war. (Ich) habe viele Workshope gemacht und will gerne die andern unterstützung.”*⁵³ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 1, B4)

Some even mentioned the want to keep others from doing the same wrong things as themselves, as they have gone through the same problems: *“(Ich will) Menschen helfen und weil ich viele Propleme zuerst habe und ich will die andre mensche nicht die Gleiche falsche dinge machen”* (Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, B18).

This was also stated by Samim, an active peer mentor:

“Es ist schön etwas weitergeben zu können, auch dass dann andere von deinen Erfahrungen, die du gemacht hast profitieren können und sie nicht selber so machen müssen. Einfach als Unterstützung. (...) Es geht mir einfach darum Dinge weiterzugeben und die Bedürfnisse von anderen gut nachzuempfinden und dann dementsprechend auch gut helfen zu können.” (Interview 2, p. 3, l. 12-17)

*“Ich wollte auch Wissen und Infos weitergeben. Ich habe ja selber Erfahrungen als Flüchtling gemacht und kann dann diese spezielle Info an andere weitergeben.”*⁵⁴ (Interview 2, p. 3, l. 1-3)

Ali, another active peer, emphasises the importance of transmitting not only the experiences themselves, but also the specific knowledge gained in this processes, together with new knowledge acquired at different educational institutions:

“(Da)s war so ein besonders Angebot für geflüchtete Menschen (...) und als ich das, weil ich selber auch ein äh Flüchtling bin, dann hab mir gedacht okay des ist was (...) und ich hab schon (...) ein bisschen erfahren, dass es ist etwas, dass man sich da hier ausbildet und weiter die anderen hilft, die auch wirklich diese äh wichtige Informationen und auch brauchen, ja? (...) Und des ist nicht, dass nur alleine Informationen weitergeben, sondern es war spezifische Informationen, die ganz wichtig sind.” (Interview 3, p. 2f, l. 36-4)

“Ja, man kann alles halt zusammenbringen, was man hat. (...) Eigene Erfahrungen und auch, was man nebenbei lernt, wie ich selber auch in der Schule gelernt hab (...) Und in eine

⁵³ *“Because I have a lot of experiences and I want to pass this onto people in the same situation. I have done many workshops and I want to support the others.”*

⁵⁴ *“It's nice to be able to share something, so others can benefit from the experience you've made and not have to make them themselves. Simply as a support. I just want to pass things on and understand the needs of others and then be able to help them.”*

“I also wanted to pass on knowledge and information. After all, I have experience as a refugee myself and can then pass on this special information to others.”

Kombi kann man sagen, dass man auch wirklich alles zusammenbauen kann und das ist auch ein äh wichtige äh Punkt, dass (...) die äh wirklich äh auch diejenigen brauchen. ⁵⁵
(Interview 3, p. 3, l. 13-20)

Amir explains how hard it is to arrive in a country with wrong or missing information and that he offers his help, as he is aware of the problems, having fled himself:

„Ja, also ich mache so oft so, zum Beispiel ich dolmetsche (...) und dann ich kenn mich so gut aus, weil ich hab die Zeit selber verbracht (...) Ich habe so viele Erfahrungen, ich war jahrelang unterwegs (...) Zum Beispiel die Menschen hat wirklich so unterschiedliche Gedanke und auch oft falsche Informationen. (...) Das war bei mir auch so, ich bin hier hingekommen und nicht gewusst, was das und dort gehört, das ist das. Aber Leben ist schwer und äh das ist schwer zu verstehen.“ ⁵⁶ (Interview 9, p. 1, l. 23-28)

A participant of the peer mentor training calls himself an advisor for his friends, as he has already spent five years in Austria and therefore knows a lot about the educational system there, as well as asylum law and health concerns. He wants to pass on this knowledge together with the experience that a positive attitude is crucial for any refugee: *“There is a way out of every situation, but you also have to know someone who is well-versed”*, he explains. (Fieldnotes, p. 1)

6.1.4.2 Helping (because knowing where help is needed)

A general willingness to help can be identified among the refugees:

“Mit diesem Projekt kann mein Ziel dass neue oder die lange da sind helfen. ich will alle Flüchtlinge dass bekommen was sie wollen.“ ⁵⁷ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 1, B9)

⁵⁵ *“That was a special offer for people who fled and because I am a refugee myself, I figured that it was okay and I've already heard that it is something where you get educated and help others, who really need important information. And that's not only information alone, but it is specific information, which is very important.”*

“You can bring together everything you have. My own experiences and also what you learn along the way, like what I have also learned at school. And in a combination, you can say that you can really put everything together and that is also an important point, that they really need those.”

⁵⁶ *“Yes, I interpret and then I know well, because I have spent the time in a similar way myself. I have had so many experiences, I was on the road for years. For example, people really have so many different thoughts and also often wrong information. It was the same with me, I came here and I did not know what was what. But life is hard and it's hard to understand.”*

⁵⁷ *“With this project I can achieve my goal to help. I want that all the refugees get what they want.”*

*“Weil ich den Jugendlichen helfen, um in Österreich ohne Schwierigkeiten einzuleben. Ich möchte mit ihnen die Infos tauschen.”*⁵⁸ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 3, B25)

*“Aber es ist mir wichtig zu sagen, dass das Geld nicht der Grund ist, warum ich das mache. Ich möchte Menschen helfen, Flüchtlingen helfen. (...) Ich möchte Infos geben an Leute, die kein Deutsch sprechen, sondern nur Arabisch. Ich kenne mich ja jetzt aus.”*⁵⁹ (Interview 6, p. 3, l. 25-28)

Razan Jamil, after having visited refugee camps in Vienna and seeing the problems there, felt a need to help. As her husband describes:

*“(Es gab) Lokalbesuche in Flüchtlingslagern und -unterkünften. Dort wurden direkt Module abgehalten, 2 bis 3 Tage hintereinander. Der Eindruck, der dort entstand war, dass die Leute sehr verschlossen und unorientiert waren. Sie hatten Angst vor der Polizei, der Gesellschaft und auch der neuen Freiheit. Sie wussten nicht was das heißt und wie man damit umzugehen hat. Die Leute dort hatten zu kämpfen mit den kulturellen Unterschieden und der so anderen Art des Umgangs zwischen und mit Menschen in diesem Land. Ich habe viel, viel gearbeitet an dieser Sache, viel Zeit und Energie reingesteckt, weil ich gemerkt habe die Menschen sind durstig nach Wissen. Und es gab keine Projekte, wo sie so lernen konnten. Die MA 17 hat auch zusammengearbeitet mit der VHS damals, aber jetzt läuft das alles über CORE, wo auch meine Frau jetzt seit 2 Jahren dabei ist.”*⁶⁰
(Interview 6, p. 1, l. 34-43)

Ziba Ravoshi quotes that she chooses the topics of her seminars based on her knowledge on what refugees need and where she can and wants to help. She gives workshops about stress, depression, and safety, as she knows that refugees struggle with these problems and even develop headaches, eating disorders or insomnia:

⁵⁸ *“Because I want to help the young people to settle in Austria without difficulty. I would like to exchange information with them.”*

⁵⁹ *“It is important to me to say that money is not the reason why I do that. I want to help people, help refugees. I would like to give information to people who do not speak German but only Arabic. I know my way around now.”*

⁶⁰ *“There were local visits to refugee camps and shelters. There were modules held directly, 2 to 3 days in a row. The impression that emerged there was that the people were very reserved and unoriented. They were afraid of the police, the society and also the new freedom. They did not know what that means and how to handle it. The people there had to struggle with the cultural differences and the different way of dealing with people in this country. I have worked a lot, I have put a lot of time and energy into it, because I realized that people are thirsty for knowledge. And there were no projects where they could learn this way. The MA 17 also worked with the VHS back then, but now it's all about CORE, where my wife has been for 2 years now.”*

“(Ich gebe) Workshop über Stress, über Depression, (...) über Sicherheit und dann viele Leute, ich merke viel über Stress und Depression, (...) weil (...) viele Flüchtling haben Stress oder äh ich weiß es nicht richtig sagen, über (...) Interview viel viel Stress. Sie können nicht schlafen, sie können nicht essen, immer Kopfschmerz.” (Interview 5, p. 1, l. 21-27)

She is of the opinion that talking about their problems in their own mother tongue and learning about helpful techniques and methods, helps them to calm down:

“Wenn kommen in der Kurs und dann sprechen über ihre Gefühle (...). Ein bisschen, äh ich glaube als Muttersprache, ein bisschen werden sie äh ruhig (...) Und lehre ein bisschen Methode oder Technique, dass äh kann ich in ihnen helfen.” (Interview 5, p. 2, l. 4-9)

Dr Fazel Rahman sees his will to help others based mainly on the lack of something, in this case the lack of useful information for refugees in Pashto. This topic is a very important concern to him and he emphasizes it several times during the interview.

“Dann die Sprache natürlich und und ähm deswegen (...) gibts Schwierigkeiten bei der äh äh bei der Integration. (...) Was wichtig ist auch, dass die Information ihre eigene, in ihre eigene Sprache ist, sehr begrenzt, sehr wenig. Meist Information über Bildung, über Asyl, Asyl und (...) was die Flüchtlinge brauchen, (...) ist in (...) Farsi, in arabische Sprache. (...) In Paschtusprache ist nicht (...). Und der Verein versucht seit 20 Jahren, in diesem Bereich wir haben viel geleistet.”⁶¹ (Interview 7, p. 7f, l. 34-4)

6.1.4.3 Having been in a similar situation

It is suggested in most interviews, but a few interviewees explicitly declare their desire to help with the reason that they have already been in a similar situation.

In this regard, Ziba Ravoshi says that she can understand the feelings of refugees and their problems, as she herself is a refugee. She refers to the newly arrived refugees as coming from her roots:

“Und dann besonders hier. Ich bin auch ein Flüchtling. (...) Eine Flüchtling. Und dann äh ich fühle äh .. trotzdem. Meine, meine Prozess das war so einfach. Wenn ich komme in Österreich, ich hatte positive Bescheid, ich warte nicht so lange (...) und tamtam. Aber ich, auch für mich ist äh es ist sehr schwer, ich verstehe was, was sie geföhlen. Wir sind

⁶¹ *“Then the language of course and that is why there are difficulties in integration. What is also important is the information in their own language, which is very limited, very little. Most information about education, about asylum, what the refugees need is in Farsi, in Arabic. There is nothing in Pashto language. And the club has been trying for 20 years, in this area we have done a lot.”*

*Menschen und die sind meine äh von meine Wurzeln bekommen. Ich verstehe was haben sie gesagt.”*⁶² (Interview 5, p. 5, l. 5-12)

Also Amir tells me during the interview how challenging arriving in Austria was for him, especially concerning the language barrier and that this is the main reason for him to work as a translator for refugees:

*“(I)ch bin so seit 10 oder 11 Jahre unterwegs, (...) ich hab damals so viel gemacht so zum Beispiel von Familie, Freunde, von Bekannte und dann ich war auch so in Pakistan äh in ein Flüchtlingslager mit UNHCR (...), habe also gedolmetscht. (...) Und hier auch weil äh ich war selber hier so .. hergekommen, kenne niemand, Sprache schwer, Situation schwer (...) und äh es gibt zum Beispiel unbekannte Menschen, die sind gekommen und äh also mir geholfen (...). Dann ich habe so langsam langsam (...) auch ein bisschen Erfahrung bekommen, und habe gedacht okay, ich will die Menschen dort hilfe und ich hab Zeit, besser (...) dass wenn ich jemanden hilfe. Also das ist (...) Hobby oder Wunsch (...) Deswegen so ich bin bis jetzt so aktiv. (...), also ich war in eine schwere Situation und (...) ich hab äh schwere Zeit gehabt (...) Ich hab wirklich so viele Menschen gefragt und alle haben gesagt, ja nein wir kann das nicht blablabla. Problem war nur Sprache (...), Englisch zum Beispiel in Niederösterreich und Burgenland.”*⁶³ (Interview 9, p. 3, l. 19-4)

6.1.4.4 Supporting/ promoting the process of integration

Integration is used as a key word in a lot of the interviews I conducted. Fatima, 23 from Somalia, a former participant of the peer mentor project tells me that she wants to make a change in Austrian society, although many people are afraid of change: *“Weil ich will das machen, weißt du? Ich will was ändern (...) Es ist schwierig mich zu ändern und viele Leute hassen die Wort ändern, weil sie haben viel Angst vor das, aber Kleinigkeit.”* (Interview 4, p. 8, l. 33-36)

⁶² *“And then especially here. I am also a refugee. And then I feel with them. My process was so easy. When I arrived in Austria, I have had a positive notice, I have not waited so long, and tamtam. But for me it is very difficult, I understand what they feel. We are human beings and they are my roots, come from my roots. I understand what they said.”*

⁶³ *“I've been traveling like this for 10 or 11 years, I've done so much back then, for example, for family, friends, acquaintances, and then I was in Pakistan, too, in a refugee camp with UNHCR, I interpreted. And here also because I had come here myself, knowing no one, language was difficult, situation was difficult and there were unknown people, for example, who helped me. Then I got a bit of experience and I thought, okay, I want to help the people and I have time, better that I help someone. So that's a hobby or wish. That's why I'm active so far, so I was in a difficult situation and I had a hard time. I really asked so many people and everybody said, yes no we can not blablabla. The problem was only the language, English for example in Niederösterreich and Burgenland.”*

She moreover believes that the peer mentor project helps refugees to get out and integrate into Austrian society, which is a hard task in general in her eyes:

*“Diese Projekt ist sehr sehr wichtig. Weil diese Jugendliche bekommen die Brief, die österreichische und dann sie versuchen, aber es ist nicht so leicht, dass sie, dass wir rausgehen und die Österreichische auch integrieren lasse, die andere Kultur. Und das liegt mir immer im Herz, dass die zwei Kulturen einander verstehen. Viele Leute wollen nur auf Distanz bleiben, die Bürgerinnen (...) Nicht viele, aber paar. Es tut mir leid, dass ich viel sage, viele sind sehr offen, aber paar Leute. (Das Projekt) hilft, ja. Langsam, aber langsam. Die Flüchtlinge kommen schnell integriert, weil die machen das selber. Kurse (...) so.”*⁶⁴
(Interview 4, p. 9, l. 9-26)

Also Razan Jamil wants to help other people with a background in flight with integration and thus tries to give answers to the question of what is Austrian society, how does it work and how does it differ from Arab societies. *“People can only be happy here if they understand how to behave in Austria”* (Interview 6, p. 1, l. 28-32).

Likewise, it is the concern of a participant in the peer mentor project to help their community with integration:

*“Ich habe interesse weil in diese Projekt man bekommt viel neue erfahrung. Man lernt viel und integriert sich mit verschiedene Leute aus verschiedene länder. Man kann lernen seine Recht und andere Leute Recht. (...) Und viele somalische Jung haben kein Integration Projekt bekommen deswegen ich will diese Projekt machen und mein ander Freund einladen und diese gute Chance finden.”*⁶⁵ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, B19)

Dr Fazel Rahman even explains that next to the promotion of education of Afghans and the promotion of Afghan culture in Austria, the main goal of the club “Afghan Wulas is the integration of Afghans:

⁶⁴ *“This project is very very important. Because the teenagers get the letter and then they try, but it is not so easy that they go out and integrate, the Austrian, the other culture. And that's always close to my heart, that the two cultures understand each other. A lot of people just want to stay at a distance. Not many, but few. I am sorry that I say a lot, many are very open, but few people. The project helps, yes. Slowly, but slowly. The refugees are quickly integrated because they do it themselves. Courses and so on.”*

⁶⁵ *“I am interested because in this project you gain a lot of new experiences. You learn a lot and integrate with different people from different countries. You can learn about your own rights and other people's rights. And many Somali boys did not get an integration project, so I want to do this project and invite my other friends and use this good opportunity.”*

“Hauptziel war noch, ist noch Hilfe zur Integration der geflüchtete Afghanen. (...) Der Verein macht jetzt hauptsächlich, also die Tätigkeit der Verein ist jetzt hauptsächlich im Bereich Integration.” (Interview 7, p. 2, l. 30-33)

They offer information about integration, offer German classes and help with trainings, accommodation, professions, asylum, etc.:

“(H)auptsächlich äh geben wir Information. (...) Was Integration betrifft das kann ähm Deutschkurs oder Deutschkurse, Ausbildung, Wohnung, Job (...) Asyl, Asylverfahren ... ja und so weiter.” (Interview 7, p. 2f, l. 43-6)

Furthermore he explains that integration is a process that can not only be accomplished from only the Afghan side. It has to be a joint process in which both sides bring in their specific knowledge and language:

“Was ich gemerkt habe, bei diesen Integration-, das sind meine eigene Erfahrung, (...), Integration muss ähm mit der Hilfe österreichische zuständige Behörden und äh NGOs und afghanische, (...) Initiative ... äh durchgeführt werden. (...) Die Afghanen wissen mehr über die Probleme, die afghanische Bevölkerung. (...) Ihre Schwäche, ihre Stärke. (...) Also erfolgreich ist die Integration, äh .. mit österreichische zuständige Behörden, Stellen und (...) mit Hilfe der Afghanen (...) einfach auf die Gründe Sprache und Wissen (...) Die Information hier, die von österreichische Sprache, also deutsche Sprache gegeben wird, sie verstehen die Hälfte. (...) Aber, wenn das mit einer ... Inkorporation mit Afghanen wird es ähm weitergegeben, (...) Das ist (...) ein große Faktum, das (...) begreifen sie das nicht, (...) also die ganze Integrationsprozess, ähm und Forderung zu Integration ist mit ähm die eigener Landsleute ist mehr ähm effektiv.”⁶⁶ (Interview 7, p. 17f, l. 6-3)

Samim tells me about a project he is currently working on together with two friends from the peer mentor project. This project aims towards integrating asylum seekers living in asylum camps into Austrian society by answering their questions in a relaxed environment and offering distraction:

⁶⁶ *“What I have noticed, these are my own experiences, integration must be carried out with the help of Austrian authorities and NGOs and Afghan initiative. The Afghans know more about the problems of the Afghan people. Their weakness, their strength. So successful is integration with Austrian competent authorities, agencies and with the help of the Afghans, simply because of language and knowledge. Of the information here, given in German, they understand half. But if that happens with the incorporation of Afghans, it will be passed on. This is a big fact that they do not understand, so the whole integration process, and the demand for integration with your own countrymen is more effective.”*

“Ich arbeite auch gerade an einem weiteren Projekt, ‘WG Besuch’. (...) Wir haben vor Asylwerber-WGs mit Anderen zu besuchen und dann eventuell gemeinsam zu frühstücken und in einer entspannten Atmosphäre Probleme ansprechen. Wenn Flüchtlinge im Camp leben sind sie zu sehr abgeschottet und dann kann auch keine Integration passieren. Wir wollen ihnen ermöglichen innerhalb der Gesellschaft zu sein. Und es besteht auch schon großes Interesse von den WGs und den Betreuern aus. Das Interesse von den Asylwerbern kommt oft daher, dass sie Fragen zum Asylsystem haben, die noch nicht beantwortet werden konnte. Zum Beispiel warum sie so lange auf ihren Bescheid warten müssen. Und genau hier kann ich dann das, was ich bei meinen eigenen Erfahrungen gelernt habe weiter geben.” ⁶⁷ (Interview 2, p. 3, l. 19-28)

Also two participants of the survey explain the importance of integration into Austrian society by getting in contact with people and culture there:

“Ich will die Somalische Leute in Wien helfen. Viel Somali in Wien wissen kein Deutsch und sie haben kein Chance bekommen. Ich will diese Leute helfen. Wie sie können Deutsch lernen und Arbeit finden. Und mit österreichische Leute Kontakt haben.” (Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, D19)

“(Ich bin Mitglied einer Gemeinschaft - your well come heißt. nach dem Training ich will unbedingt mit anderen Asyl in unsere Gemeinschaft ein paar Sitzung habe und erkläre es was wir können machen in Österreich.” ⁶⁸ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 1, D10)

Another participant of the peer mentor training explained during an informal talk that he already has a lot of contact to local persons and already learned a great deal about Austrian culture, society, and differences in comparison with his country of origin. He declares that this taught him how diverse cultures can interact in a tolerating and respectful way and that with this knowledge he can now support other people from his country during the integration process. (Fieldnotes Informal Talks, p. 1)

⁶⁷ *“I am also working on another project, ‘WG Besuch’. We want to visit asylum seekers' shared apartments with others and then possibly have breakfast together and address issues in a relaxed atmosphere. If refugees live in a camp, they are too isolated and then integration cannot happen. We want to enable them to be in society. And there is already a lot of interest from the WGs and the carers. The interest of asylum seekers often comes from having questions about the asylum system that has not yet been answered. For example why they have to wait so long for their notice. And this is where I can pass on what I've learned from my own experiences.”*

⁶⁸ *“I want to help the Somali people in Vienna. Many Somali in Vienna do not know German and they did not get a chance. I want to help these people. How to learn German and find work. And have contact with Austrian people.”*

“I am a member of a community called your well come. After the training I absolutely want to have a few sessions with other asylum in our community and explain what we can do in Austria.”

This intention was also noticeable during the 'Schulworkshop - Zuhause in der Welt', in which students, led by several young refugees and a member of the MA 17, deal with the topics of flight and asylum. The focus of the workshop is the personal exchange between the refugees and the students. The participants learn in small groups about different causes and routes of flight, and about the life situation of refugee youths in Vienna. (Zuhause in der Welt, 2019)

I joined one of these, held at SZ-FIDS-Rosasgasse the 28th of May 2019. Before the workshop itself, waiting in front of the school for the other participants, one former participant of the peer mentor programme explained to me in an informal talk that he is happy to take part in a project, in which he can reduce prejudices, help with integration and that he gladly tells about his flight experiences in order to do so. He moreover told me that most of the students show interest in this topic and ask a lot of questions. (Fieldnotes 28.05.19, p. 1f)

Fatima, occasionally taking part in this workshop as well, explained her cause like this:

*"(D)as liegt mir im Herzen (...) ich mag das gerne machen. Weil (...) die Kinder sind sehr innocent (lacht). Sie kennen gar nichts. Sie lernen ein bisschen Sache (...). Es ist gut (...) international zu werden (...), weil wenn man nur lokal bleibt, man versteht nicht viel. (...) (E)s ist bestimmt auch wichtig (...) wenn sie noch klein sind, dass sie dann schon was davon hören. Dann kriegen sie (...) keine falschen Vorurteile."*⁶⁹ (Interview 4, p. 7, l. 14-24)

Also Samim told me during the interview that they go to schools and tell children their own story, also with the idea in mind to show them that they too may be foreigners as well, because their grandparents may have immigrated, etc.

"Leute bilden sich schnell irgendeine Meinung, dass Asylwerber das Land schlechter machen und man muss früh bei den Kindern anfangen, dass das nicht stimmt" (Interview 2, p. 4, l. 16-19).

*"Und es kommen immer viele Fragen von ihnen, die Kinder sind immer sehr interessiert."*⁷⁰ (Interview 2, p. 4, l. 23-14)

⁶⁹ "That's important to me, I like to do that. Because the children are very innocent. They do not know anything. They learn a little bit of things. It's good to be international, because if you stay only local, you do not understand much. It is also important, if they are still small, that they hear something about it. Then they will not get any wrong prejudices."

⁷⁰ "People are quick to come to believe that asylum seekers are making the country worse and you have to start early with the children, that that's not true."

This impression did not come to me during the participant observation. The frontal lecture initially taking place was rather chaotic: The students were partly inattentive, talked all at once, and asked irrelevant questions. With the exception of two students, all others had a background in migration themselves, some were born abroad, some were second generation migrants. However, no one had an answer to the question of what migration is. (Fieldnotes 28.05.19, p. 2)

While working in small groups, in which one refugee tells his story of flight, arriving in Austria, and what it means to be a refugee, things got slightly better. It stayed a little chaotic, however, a few students seemed very interested and asked about things they did not understand in the first place and also further questions. In the end, the students thanked the participating refugees for the new information they had received and that they were allowed to ask such private, personal questions. (Fieldnotes 28.05.19, p. 3)

Lastly, it needs to be stated that some interviewees spoke about the topic of integration from a feminist, or gender oriented point of view.

Fatima for example said: *“Und ich bin eine Feministin (...). Für mich ist es sehr sehr wichtig, Frauenrechte und so. Als Frauen Rechte zu haben und das hat mir sehr viel gegeben.”*⁷¹ (Interview 4, p. 2f, l. 43-3)

Due to her interest in feminism and gender topics in general, she is now active in associations pursuing the same aim: *“Ich mache viele, ich nehme teil viele Sache. (...) (I)ch bin so Aktivistin in eine österreichischen Gruppe und sie machen äh Frauenrechte und so”*⁷² (Interview 4, p. 2, l. 42-43).

Fatima is of the opinion that in the culture and socialisation of many refugees, the men hold a higher social position than the women, which then leads to integration problems when living in a society that is characterized by a great level of gender equality. She thus wants to pass on knowledge about this topic and present role models - like men doing housework and taking care of the children and not acting like the kings of the household, and like women not fulfilling the cliché of a stay-at-home mum. (Interview 4, p. 6, l. 5-20)

“And there are always many questions from them, the children are always very interested.”

⁷¹ *“And I’m a feminist. For me, it’s very important to have women’s rights and stuff. As a woman, having rights gives me a lot.”*

⁷² *“I do a lot, I participate in many things. For example I am an activist in an Austrian group and they do woman rights and such.”*

Also Razan Jamil spoke about gender related problems within the integration process. She sees the problem lying in the newly gained freedom for women, who first need to figure out how to deal with, as she puts it, not having to endure a slave-like behaviour. Also here the solution is giving information, passing on knowledge and strengthening the women's self-esteem:

*"Ja, wir wollten auch über die negativen Dinge in der Heimat und die positiven Dinge in Österreich reden. Wie die Flucht den Alltag betrifft und wie man helfen kann. Es geht oft um Frauen, die jetzt gleichberechtigt sind und lernen müssen damit umzugehen - offen und ohne Angst. Wir wollen das Selbstbewusstsein der Frauen aufbauen, die jetzt so viel Unabhängigkeit erfahren. Hier können sie alleine ausgehen und zum Sport und müssen nicht ihre Männer fragen oder mitnehmen. Sie müssen kein Sklavenverhalten mehr erdulden."*⁷³ (Interview 6, p. 5, l. 11-16)

6.1.4.5 Short excursion: Project plans of the attendees of the peer mentor training

The four reasons mentioned above 'passing on experiences and knowledge', 'helping, because knowing where help is needed', 'having been in a similar situation', 'supporting/ promoting the process of integration', can all be detected as goals within the project ideas developed by the refugees participating in the peer mentor project. During two units, held the 22nd of March and the 17th of May 2019 under the motto 'ideas workshop' the participants formed groups according to their project ideas, discussed, them and then gave a presentation about them in front of Kathrin Lipowec, Shokat Ali Walizadeh and me to then get feedback, critique, questions, suggestions. In total five groups were formed. (Fieldnotes 22.03.19, p. 1 & Fieldnotes 17.05.19, p. 3)

The first group, consisting of seven boys, planned on founding an integrational project for elderly refugees, aged 50 and older who they claim to be the forgotten group of refugees. They aim towards providing more offers and support them by establishing integration through culture, the Viennese 'Kulturpass', and other activities.

⁷³ "Yes, we also wanted to talk about the negative things in the home country and the positive things in Austria. How the flight affects everyday life and how one can help. It is often about women who are now equal and must learn to deal with it - openly and without fear. We want to build the self-confidence of the women who are now experiencing so much independence. Here they can go out alone and do sports and do not have to ask their men or take them. They no longer have to endure slave behaviour."

The second project is planned by six boys in order to fight the stress of refugees. Their idea is to reduce stress, boredom, and the feeling of being lonely for Afghan refugees through leisure time activities such as sports, music, and trips.

Carpet weaving is the activity that two boys and one girl from Afghanistan want to use to bring people together by teaching them a new skill, while at the same time presenting Afghan culture and creativity in Austria. They even talk about 'showing the strength of their country'. (Fieldnotes 17.05.19)

Six girls came together to offer sport workshops for girls only, against classic sporty integration offers, focusing on dance classes to build trust and friendships and to pass on own experiences as a woman.

The last project idea wants to lay its focus on refugees with special needs. One boy intends to help those concerned by giving them information about their rights and legal claims, and where to find this information - also by establishing an online platform. (Fieldnotes 24.05.19, p. 1f)

It is apparent that all group members used their knowledge about (the negative impacts) of the flight and asylum procedure and their experiences hereby to come up with ideas for supporting others. It is either about giving needed, beneficial information or offering activities for specific social groups. Additionally, the wish for integration or maintaining and bringing the knowledge about their country's heritage to the receiving nation seems to play a role in these projects.

6.1.4.6 Gaining new knowledge

It is not only important for the refugees to take part in the peer mentor programme to pass on their knowledge, but also to gain new knowledge during the workshops of the MA 17 and CORE. They for instance claim that they are lacking knowledge and that they want to make progress: "*Weil mir das Wissen fehlt. Weil ich mich weiterbilden/entwickeln möchte. Weil die Inhalte bzw. die Themen, die besprochen werden, interessieren mich sehr*" (Fragebogen-excel, p. 3, B26) and that they want to learn from others: "*Weil ich sollen was neues von (Jugendlichen) lernen will und auch was ich kann denen weiterteilen*" (Fragebogen-excel, p. 1, B4).

Fatima emphasises how important knowledge is to her in general and that she sees the whole life as a learning process:

“Ich muss viele Sachen lernen, lernen, wissen, weißt du, weil dass ich reinpassen kann und selber unterstützen und selber unterstütze ständig Leute. (...) Für mich Wissen ist sehr wichtig. Man kann essen, satt sein, alles. Aber Wissen, auch wenn du Doktorat hast, meine Liebe, es gibt was neues. (...) Immer neues Wissen ansammeln. Man ist immer eine Schüler. (...) Ja. Und ich möchte das in mein Leben und ich lerne jeden Tag was. (...) Ich nehme von jemand, von jede Person was. Obwohl die Leute sagen du bist sehr ausgebildet, oh Gott! Nee, ich sage nein, ich bin so humble. (...) Ich respektiere was der andere Person sagt und ich lerne was. Ja und wir tauschen aus. (...) Das ist sehr, sehr wichtig im Leben.”⁷⁴

(Interview 4, p. 4, l. 4-24)

Ali adds to this that he can also learn from the experiences of the refugees taking part in the projects he founded to then be able to communicate in a different way:

“(F)ür mich ist es halt, dass äh ich hab äh meine Wissen schon wirklich verbessert (...) dadurch dass ich mit verschiedenen Menschen Kontakt habe, (...) ich hole mir auch natürlich die ganze Wissen, die ich bekomme, die Erfahrungen von anderen. (...) Und jeder hat seine Geschichte und kann man nicht allzu eng vergleichen. (...) Trotzdem (...) man kann voneinander immer lernen und ja, das hab ich auch gemacht und ja ein Vorteil ist auch eine allgemeine Wissen, das ich auch halt in der Schule brauch. (...) Dass man, wenn man was weiß, kann man mit anderen reden und kommunizieren.”⁷⁵ (Interview 3, p. 8, l. 12-24)

6.1.4.7 Establishing contacts

Connected to the reason of gaining knowledge is the one about establishing contacts.

The peer mentors explained that they wanted to meet new people with a background in flight or migration, or establish new friendships to then achieve their goals together:

- *“Mein Ziel ist neue Menschen kennenzulernen die auch Fluchthintergrund haben.”*
(Fragebogen-excel, p. 1, B6)

⁷⁴ *“I have to learn a lot, know, you know, because I can fit in and I constantly support people. Knowledge is very important to me. You can eat, be full, everything. But knowledge, even if you have a doctorate, my dear, there is something new. Always accumulating new knowledge. You are always a student. Yes. And I want that in my life and I learn something every day. I take something from each person. Although people say you are very educated, oh god! No, I say no, I'm so humble. I respect what the other person says and I learn something. Yes and we exchange. That's very, very important in life.”*

⁷⁵ *“For me, I have really improved my knowledge by having contact with different people, of course I also get all the knowledge, the experiences from others. And everyone has their story and you cannot compare that too closely. Nevertheless, you can always learn from each other and yes, I did that and yes, an advantage is also a general knowledge that I need in school. If you know something, you can talk and communicate with others.”*

- *“Ich erwarte (...) Spaß haben. Meine Deutsch verbessert. Neue Freunde finden. Neue Erfahrung.”* (Fragebogen-excel, p. 1, C31)
- *“Vereine kennen lernen. Neuer Leute kennenlernen und zusammen etwas Gutes machen.”*⁷⁶ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, C15)

Ali in a similar way states that next to being active, connecting with other people and refugees was important to him:

*“Ich wusste ja schon, dass sich viele Leute bewerben werden und dass dann auch viele dann an den Peer Trainings teilnehmen. Ich habe gedacht, dass ich dann dort an viele Kontakte komme. Außerdem hatte ich zu der Zeit nicht viel zu tun und wollte Neues lernen, obwohl mir im Nachhinein natürlich einiges schon bekannt war.”*⁷⁷ (Interview 2, p. 2. l. 5-8)

6.1.4.8 Being a role model

The peers also mentioned the importance of a role model for refugees or rather the importance of taking this role within their community.

*“Ich bin der Auffassung, dass die Flüchtlingen Unterstützung brauchen bzw. würde ich mich als Vorbild zeigen und ihnen sagen, dass die viele Möglichkeiten haben. Hauptsache ich sie motivieren aktiv zu sein.”*⁷⁸ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, B23)

*“Neue Kultur lernen wie kann ich mein Leben in Wien verbessern, was sind meine Rechte als Flüchtlinge, wie kann ich gut integrieren in Österreich. Wie kann ich ein gutes Bild sein für somalische Community in Wien.”*⁷⁹ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, C19)

6.1.4.9 Duty to give something back

The two women who came to Austria as refugees and now offer workshops see it as their duty or responsibility to work in this field, as they not only feel obliged towards

⁷⁶ *“My goal is to meet new people who also have a background in flight.”
“I expect to have fun. Improve my German. Find new friends. New experience.”
“Get to know clubs. Meet new people and do something good together.”*

⁷⁷ *“I already knew that many people will apply and that then many will participate in the peer training. I thought that I would establish a lot of contacts there. Besides, at the time I did not have much to do and I wanted to learn something new, although of course I already knew a lot in retrospect.”*

⁷⁸ *“I believe that the refugees need support or I would show myself as a role model and explain them that they have many options. The main thing is to motivate them to be active.”*

⁷⁹ *“Learning about a new culture, how can I improve my life in Vienna, what are my rights as refugees, how can I integrate well in Austria. How can I be a model for the Somali community in Vienna.”*

the refugees coming from 'their' country, but also to give something back to the country they now live in. As says Razan Jamil:

*"Ich sehe das als meine Aufgabe für andere, die aus meinem Land kommen und es ist auch etwas, das ich Österreich zurückgeben kann. Das ist unsere Pflicht. Es zeigt auch unsere Einstellung, dass viele Flüchtlinge integrationswillig sind. Viele arbeiten, möchten ein Leben ohne Hindernisse haben, sehen viele positive Aspekte am Leben in Österreich."*⁸⁰
(Interview 6, p. 3, l. 32-35)

*"Ich habe meinen Ort in Österreich gefunden, um das zu machen."*⁸¹ (Interview 6, p. 3, l. 42)

Ziba Ravoshi describes helping other refugees as a part of her soul *"das ist meine Seele"* (Interview 5, p. 7, l. 23) and as something she owes to all Austrians *"(schulden) alle Österreicherinnen"* (Interview 5, p. 7, l. 29).

Also Dr Fazel Rahman uses the word 'duty' when asked about the reason of his activism with 'Afghan Wulas'. He also states that it fills him with a feeling of satisfaction:

*"Ich fühle mich, (...) zufrieden deswegen, weil das ist mein Pflicht, (...) Pflicht gegenüber den Landsmännern! (...) Pflicht gegenüber mein Sprache, (...) mein Kultur. Pflicht (...) dass die Geflüchtete hier wirklich sich richtig integrieren. (...) Richtig und schneller integrieren. (...) Pflicht auch, dass sie nicht .. zu Kriminalität .. zu Sucht, (...) zu Drogensucht ähm sich zuwenden."*⁸² (Interview 7, p. 9, l. 15-33)

6.1.4.10 Former profession

However, more pragmatic reasons also play a role in the choice of where to work and help. The husband of Razan Jamil explains during the interview that he was one of the founders of the project in which his wife now takes part, as she already had experiences working in this field:

⁸⁰ "I see this as my task for others, who come from my country and it is also something that I can give back to Austria. That is our duty. It also shows our attitude that many refugees are willing to integrate. Many work, want to have a life without obstacles, see positive aspects of a life in Austria."

⁸¹ "I have found my place in Austria to do so."

⁸² "I feel satisfied, because that is my duty, duty to the compatriots! Duty to my language, my culture. Duty that the refugees here really integrate themselves. Integrate correctly and faster. It is also compulsory that they do not turn to addiction, to crime, to drug addiction."

*“Ich habe dieses Projekt mit ins Leben gerufen vor 3 Jahren zusammen mit der MA 17. Meine Frau hat in Syrien viel Erfahrung als Lehrerin und kann deshalb den Teilnehmern gut Präsentationen geben. Auch pädagogische Beraterin für Themen rund um Kinder und auch da viel Arbeitserfahrung.”*⁸³ (Interview 6, p. 1, l. 19-22)

Also Ziba Ravoshi states that the choice of giving workshops about psychological topics was based on her former profession:

*“(D)as ist mein Job. (...) Mein Job das ist interessant für mich und äh ich finde es ist sehr sinnvoll und äh gerne, ich mag immer ander Menschen helfen kann.”*⁸⁴ (Interview 5, p. 4f, l. 43-3)

In an informal talk during one of the workshops of the MA 17, one of the attendees told me that he had finished his apprenticeship as a leisure-time educationalist and already got a mini-job in this field. His aim now is to gain more experiences in working with young adults, as he sees his professional future there. He explains that before this apprenticeship he felt unmotivated and lost, but now he has found a goal to work towards. This experience together with the knowledge from his training he wants to use in order to inform and motivate others in a similar situation. (Fieldnotes, p. 1)

6.1.4.11 Independence

Last but not least, being independent and working autonomously was mentioned as a reason to participate. Samim for instance wanted to take part in the peer mentor training, as he knew about the chance to found projects on your own:

*“Ich wusste auch als ich mich für das Peer Mentor Training beworben habe nicht so genau, was das Ziel ist, aber dann habe ich mich dafür interessiert, weil man dort selber und eigenständig Projekte machen kann.”*⁸⁵ (Interview 2, p. 3, l. 1-3)

⁸³ "I co-founded this project three years ago together with the MA 17. My wife has a lot of experience as a teacher in Syria and therefore she can give good presentations to the participants. Also educational consultant for children related topics and also a lot of work experience there."

⁸⁴ "That is my job. My job is interesting for me and I think it makes a lot of sense and I like it a lot that I can always help other people."

⁸⁵ "When I applied for the peer mentor training, I did not know exactly what the goal was, but then I was interested in it, because you can do projects yourself and on your own."

The chance of independently founding and then getting involved in an own project was not only mentioned during the interviews, but also in the survey designed for the future peer mentors. A statement of the survey reads as follows:

*"Ich erwarte dass ich genug info bekomme wie kann ich ein Projekt selber für andere flüchtlinge machen kann und denen das bei bringen was ich habe in diesem Projekt gelernt."*⁸⁶ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 1, C9)

6.1.5 Positive outcome/ aspects for participants

All of these are the reasons for the participation, but what are the results? There are both positive and negative outcomes that will be highlighted in the following chapter.

6.1.5.1 Gaining a positive feeling ("reward")

Most of the interviewees mentioned how rewarding it was for them to help other people in need, as it gave them a positive, joyful, and energising feeling and the impression of being needed.

Fatima is especially happy about the gratefulness of the people and explains her activism with believing in karma and doing good things according to the Qur'an:

*"(E)s ist mir sehr wichtig andere Menschen zu unterstützen, weil man bekommt glücklich, wenn die andere Person lacht (...) und sagt danke. (W)enn du was Gutes tust, weißt du, die Leben ist wie Karma, kommt zurück. (...) Wenn du was Gutes machst, dann du bekommst was Gutes. Und (...) ich habe (in) Religion gelernt und ich habe nicht so genau gelernt, aber ich hab's im Erwachsenenalter gewusst, das ist auch richtig. Das was machst, was du Gutes machst, dann wird das wiederkommen. (...) Das (...) steht in (...) Koran oder in Islam, dass man der andere unterstützt, was das ist die Benehmung, was wir gelernt haben als Kind halt."*⁸⁷ (Interview 4, p. 3, l. 8-20)

⁸⁶ "I expect to get enough information on how to establish a project myself for other refugees and teach them what I've learned in this training."

⁸⁷ "It is very important to support other people because you get happy when the other person laughs and says thank you. If you do something good, you know, life is like karma, it comes back. If you do something good, then you get back something good. And I learned during religion lessons and I did not learn so precisely, but I knew it in adulthood that it is right. What you do, what good things you do, it will come back. It is said in the Qur'an or in Islam that you support the others, which is the way we learned to behave when we were children."

Razan Jamil states that it fills her with joy to pass on her knowledge as well as enable other refugees to be independent and active. She moreover explains that helping with translations, even if her German is not perfect, makes her happy:

*“Ich sehe wie die Leute danach glücklich sind, sie bedanken sich bei mir und das freut mich. Unterstützen freut mich, zu sehen dass sie Flüchtlinge danach mehr Wissen haben und wieder selber etwas machen können.”*⁸⁸ (Interview 6, p. 3, l. 29-31)

*“Wissen weitergeben ist etwas Schönes für mich, es erfüllt mich, auch zu sehen, wie dankbar die Leute nach den Workshops und Modulen sind. Im OIF auf der Landstraße gibt es auch organisierte Frauentreffen und Integrationsprojekte. Die können oft noch schlechter Deutsch als ich, ich habe nur B2, aber trotzdem kann ich dort beim Übersetzen helfen und mit anderen ins Gespräch kommen.”*⁸⁹ (Interview 6, p. 4, l. 15-19)

Ziba Ravoshi is touched by the emotionality of the participants of her workshops and declares how helping them during challenging times not only energises them, but also herself:

*“(Z)um Beispiel über Stress wir sprechen und dann viele Methoden und Technique verwenden. (...) Und dann äh habe gefragt (...) was hier .. bleiben und was mitnehmen? (...) Und dann manchmal habe gesehen viele Leute weinen. Zum Beispiel (...) ein Mann äh so viel geweint. (...) Wir haben, äh unsere Thema war über äh Selbstbewusstsein und Selbstwertigkeit. (...) Und dann sie hat wirklich geweint und (...) gesagt ich möchte ähm das alle Stress bleibt hier, alle hmh wenige Selbstbewusstsein bleibt hier. (...) Und dann viel Energie, mit viele Energie gehen Zuhause. (...) Ja, und diese die nur diese Wort (...) für mich ist genug. (...) Und ich bin selbst sehr gut gefühlt. (...) Wenn ist gut und dann für mich ist gut und für ihnen ist gut.”*⁹⁰ (Interview 5, p. 8f, l. 34-20)

⁸⁸ "I see how people are happy afterwards, they thank me and that makes me happy. I am pleased to see that the refugees have more knowledge after that and that they can do something themselves again."

⁸⁹ "Sharing knowledge is beautiful for me, it fills me to see how grateful people are after the workshops and modules. The OIF on Landstraße also organises women's meetings and integration projects. They often speak German worse than me, I only have B2, but still I can help with the translation and get into conversation with others."

⁹⁰ "For example, we talk about stress and use many methods and techniques. And then I asked what stays here and what will be taken away. And then sometimes I have seen how many people were crying. For example, a man cried a lot. Our topic was about self-esteem and self-confidence. And then he really cried and said I want that all the stress stays here, that the little self-confidence stays here. And then a lot of energy, with a lot of energy he went home. Yes, and only those words are enough for me. And I felt very good myself. If it is good, then for me it is good and for them it is good."

Amir actually uses the word 'reward' to describe his positive feeling while working for different associations, although for him the positive feeling can rather be described as relaxed than energetic:

*"Das ist so wie Hauptsache, dass ich hab dort diese Arbeit bekommen und (...) es gibt viele Menschen, die sagen, du bist blablabla, machst du nichts für dich, aber wenn jemand anderes Hilfe braucht, laufst du immer. Dann was hast du jetzt bekommen, gar nichts, du hast Zeit zum Beispiel äh verloren. (...) Und ich sage nein, äh ich hab (...) da zu die Menschen ähm das ist für mich ja die Belohnung."*⁹¹ (Interview 9, p. 7, l. 12-18)

*"(I)ch hab so ein Sache verdient, zuerst ist äh Vertrauen und zwar ich hab so viel Menschen geholfen, und äh ich bin so relaxed."*⁹² (Interview 9, p. 7, l. 5-6)

6.1.5.2 Establishing contacts/ friendships

That charitable activities and activism in clubs where both refugees and locals work in, can lead to multicultural friendships and the improvement of the local language, as Amir explains:

*"Und Hauptsache, dass ich hab so viele gute und nette Menschen kennengelernt, (...) und ich hab feste Freunde äh aber jetzt ich habe wirklich so beste Freunde und äh ja Sprache."*⁹³ (Interview 9, p. 7, l. 8-10)

6.1.5.3 Future perspectives

Changing and improving somebody else's future while changing and improving their own, seems to be a worthwhile outcome for the participants of the peer mentor programme especially. They plan to use their newly gained knowledge and their certified qualification for establishing associations or getting a job in a related field.

6.1.5.3.1 Founding a club

One of the participants declares that he wants to found a club to be able to support refugees with the knowledge he receives during the teachings:

⁹¹ "That's the main thing that I got this job there and there are many people who say you're blablabla, you do not do anything for yourself, but when someone else needs help, you always run. Then what have you got now, nothing at all, you have lost time, for example. And I say no, I have the people, that's the reward for me."

⁹² "I deserve one thing, first is trust, and I helped so many people, and I'm so relaxed."

⁹³ "And the main thing is that I met so many good and nice people, and I have friends, now I really have best friends and yes language."

*“Ich hoffe, dass ich später selber ein Verein gründen kann um die Menschen zu helfen. Ich will lernen wie man mit anderen Menschen kommuniziert. Ich erwarte mir viel Informationen bezüglich ein Verein gründe, wo bekommt man z.B. Förderungen. Wie kann man mit unterschiedlichen Menschen umgehen.”*⁹⁴ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 1, C3)

Another participant already has a specific goal in mind, which his club will pursue:

*“Ich will in der Zukunft ein Verein gründen und viele Workshops anbieten. Mein großes Ziel ist es die Frauen meine Erfahrung, Wissen weitergeben und ihnen motivieren das sie auch an verscheidene Kursen, Vereinen teilnehmen.”*⁹⁵ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, D3)

6.1.5.3.2 Finding a job

A push in the right direction, a basis to find a job in this area, a chance to acquire knowledge in a field of (professional) interest - these are the reasons for some of the young refugees to participate in the project, which they also see as a possibility to reach their goal, as can be seen in the following statements:

*“(Ich) möchte mein Wissen bzw das Gelernte in die Tat umsetzen und als Anfang in einer Beratungsstelle freiwillig arbeiten, aber ich habe die Absicht weiterzustudieren und mein Wissen zu erweitern, als mit dem Training erreiche ich mein Ziel nicht, sondern ist es die Mittel zu erreichen oder ein Schub auf dem Weg zum Ziel.”*⁹⁶ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 3, D26)

*“Ich möchte nach dem Training in diese Richtung weiter arbeiten bzw. eine ausbildung bei AMS oder Caritas abschlielen. Das heißt ich arbeite gerne mit Menschen egal von wo und von welsche Kultur.”*⁹⁷ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, D23)

⁹⁴ "I hope that later I can start an association myself to help people. I want to learn how to communicate with other people. I expect a lot of information regarding founding a club, where you get promotions for example. How to deal with different people."

⁹⁵ "I want to start an association in the future and offer many workshops. My great goal is to share my experience, knowledge with women and motivate them to take part in different courses and clubs."

⁹⁶ "I would like to put my knowledge or what I have learned into practice and work as a volunteer in a counselling centre, but I intend to continue my studies and expand my knowledge, so with the training I do not achieve my goal, but it is a means to reach it or a boost on the way to the goal."

⁹⁷ "I would like to continue to work in this direction after the training or to complete an apprenticeship with AMS or Caritas. That means I like working with people no matter where they are from and from what culture."

*“Das ich mehrere Leute helfen kann und ihnen hoffnung geben dass können auch als normale menschen leben können. Und selber in diesem bereich arbeiten kann.”*⁹⁸

(Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, D20)

6.1.6 Negative aspects for participants

Naturally, there are both positive and negative outcomes for the refugees making efforts for other refugees. The challenging aspects are overall the missing salary, the high expenditure of time, and the (mental) stress level.

6.1.6.1 No salary

One big concern is the non-existing salary, as most of the interviewees work voluntarily. Amir states that he loves his job and wants to work in this field all his life - a goal that is impossible given the non-existent payment: *“Ich liebe meinen Job, ich will das ganze Leben machen, aber (...) ohne Geld geht nicht”* (Interview 9, p. 6, l. 7-10).

Also Razan Jamil refers to this problem:

*“Also die ersten 8 Monate habe ich unentgeltlich gearbeitet, dann gabe es eine Schulung und einen Test bei der Einsatzleiterin, ob man qualifiziert genug ist, wegen der Sprache und auch wie man Präsentationen gibt.”*⁹⁹ (Interview 6, p. 3, l. 22-24)

Dr Fazel Rahman brings up both the lack of payment, but also how time consuming this kind of activism and translation work is, when also having a paid job:

“B7: Alles Infomodulen (der MA17) wurden auf Paschtu übersetzt Obwohl ich hab viel, ich ich muss arbeiten. Ich muss wirklich von (...) 7 tätigen (...) in Labor. (...) Und äh ein medizinisches Labor Leiter war ich, (...) aber ich habe gesagt, ich kann garantieren, ich mach das alles. (...)

I1: Ist das alles freiwillig dann? Freiwillige Arbeit mit der MA 17?

*B7: Jetzt nicht mehr. (...), am Anfang, früher schon, ja.”*¹⁰⁰ (Interview 7, p. 9, l. 2-10)

⁹⁸ *“That I can help several people and give them hope that they can live like normal people. And I can work in this area myself.”*

⁹⁹ *“So for the first 8 months I worked for free, then there was a training and a test with the head of operations, whether one is qualified enough, because of the language and also how to give presentations.”*

¹⁰⁰ *“B7: All information modules of the MA17 were translated to Pashto. Although I had to work. I really need to be in the lab by 7. And I was a medical lab leader, but I said I can guarantee I'll do it all.*

I1: Is this all voluntary then? Volunteering with the MA 17?

B7: Not anymore, at the beginning, earlier, yes.”

6.1.6.2 Time consuming

The lack of time was also addressed by Razan Jamil, but more in the sense that some questions or problems cannot be approached within the short time frame of her workshops:

*“Die Leute haben immer viele Fragen, die oft nicht in den 3 Stunden geklärt werden können. Die 3 Stunden reichen auch oft nicht für alle neuen Ideen. Es ist insgesamt sehr zeitintensiv.”*¹⁰¹ (Interview 6, p. 4, l. 22-23)

6.1.6.3 (Mental) Stress

Mental and physical stress during the activism exhausts the voluntary helpers:

*“(U)nd dann also letztes Jahr äh .. Weihnachten hab ich dort gemacht, aber ich war so fertig und müde, (...) Weil ich war so Tag und Tag und Nacht zum Beispiel so, stundenlang dort.”*¹⁰² (Interview 9, p. 2, l. 27-30)

Not only the amount of work, but also reliving their own flight history, when hearing other people’s stories, brings a high level of stress and anxiety, which in Amir’s case even led to sleep disorder:

*“Ja, es ist negativ war, es ist wirklich so stressig. (...) Ja, es ist auch ein bisschen komisch, wenn du jemandem hilfst und äh .. er geht so zufrieden äh raus und du bist dann später so fertig. Weil ich hab auch selber das äh ist Vergangenheit, aber ich hab so viel erlebt, live gesehen, schlimme Sachen (...) Und die Menschen erzähl(en) (es) nochmal. So oft ich hab Schlafstörung gehabt, ich hab Stress gehabt, aber ich hab gedacht okay, äh .. Hauptsache die sind zufrieden, weil ich hab jetzt alles und die sind wirklich, weil ich ich denke an die Zeit, wo ich war.”*¹⁰³ (Interview 9, p. 7, l. 24-32)

¹⁰¹ "People always have many questions that often cannot be answered within the 3 hours. The 3 hours are often not enough for all new ideas. It is very time consuming overall."

¹⁰² "And then last Christmas I did there, but I was so exhausted and tired because I was there day and night, spending hours there."

¹⁰³ "Yes, it was negative, it's really stressful. Yeah, it is also a bit weird if you help someone and he is happy and you are so exhausted later. Because I myself have, that is a thing of the past, but I have experienced so much, bad things. And people tell it again. So many times I have had sleep disorder, I have had stress, but I thought okay, the main thing is that they are happy because I have everything now and because I think of the time when I have been there."

6.2 Reflexion and evaluation of the findings

Empowerment, when understood as Rappaport's (1987) *"ability of people, organizations, and communities to gain mastery over their affairs"*, and as an ability that works towards strengthening and expanding the subject's self-reliance forces and the production of self-determination concerning the circumstances of a person's everyday life, can be detected among the lines of the collected data. Why this is and what interactions there are to be found between empowerment, knowledge, social capital, and power is explained in the following.

6.2.1 Evaluation according to Herriger

Herriger (2014) distinguishes between four approaches to a definition of empowerment: The political approach, the lifeworld approach, the reflexive approach, and the transitive approach. Aspect three and four are interesting for the chosen research question.

The third aspect, the reflexive one, understands empowerment as an independent, self-directed process of (re-) establishing life sovereignty at the level of everyday relationships as well as at the level of political participation. It is about self-help and active self-organisation, in which people act on their own behalf, are encouraged to take charge of their own affairs and to recognize their competences.

The aspect of (re-) establishing life sovereignty can for example be witnessed in Amir's desire and participation in founding two associations and offering his consulting activities and translation services there, after having worked - unhappily and in his eyes unsuccessfully - for bigger aid organisation, such as 'Samariterbund' or 'Diakonie' (Interview 9, p. 5f).

Dr Fazel Rahman's association was founded, inter alia, (him being one of the founding members) in order to call attention to the drawback, that there are no integration offers in the language Pashto (Interview 7, p. 10) and because they realized their advantage compared to other integration projects and aid organisations:

"(Z)uerst einmal, wir reden selbe Sprache, (...) Und diese (K)ommunikation ist für sie leichter. Zweiten, die Vertrauen ist schon da. (...) Dritten, die (M)obilisation ist leichter bei

uns als Verein für die ähm ander NGOs und österreichische Initiative ist ist schwerer." ¹⁰⁴

(Interview 7, p. 6, l. 22-29)

Fatima says she wants to actively do something, change something, as she cares deeply about the understanding between the two cultures she is confronted with daily - the one of her country of origin and her community, Somalia, and the one of the country she now lives in, Austria (Interview 4, p. 8f). She moreover is aware of the fact that also she herself has got a voice she can use to step out of her social position and the gender-specific ascriptions. Thus, she commits herself to feminist clubs: "*Ich mache viele, ich nehme teil viele Sache. Ich nehme jetzt dort zum Beispiel ich bin so Aktivistin in eine österreichischen Gruppe und sie machen äh Frauenrechte und so*" ¹⁰⁵ (Interview 4, p. 2, l. 42-43).

Speaking of taking charge of own affairs: Many refugees/ migrants have become aware that they, too, have something that is needed by others, such as their knowledge. A participant of the peer mentor training for instance calls himself an advisor for his friends, as he has already spent five years in Austria and thus acquired useful knowledge. He wants to pass this on together with the experience that a positive attitude is crucial for any refugee. He explains that there is a way out of every situation, you just have to know someone who is well-versed - and he considers himself this well informed person. (Fieldnotes, p. 1)

The fourth approach is the transitive one. Here the aspects of enabling, supporting, and promoting self-determination by others in order to help in the conquest of new territories of self-determination are emphasised. The focus is on people and institutions that stimulate, encourage, and support processes of self-creative forces and provide resources for empowerment processes. People are encouraged to become aware of their competences and are provided with resources for a for successful life management. This aim reflects the intentions and self-set goals of the researched projects and clubs. The two projects, 'CORE' and 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten', are even institutions established in order to support refugees/ migrants and to encourage an independent processes and self-creative forces.

¹⁰⁴ "*First of all, we speak the same language and communication is easier for them. Secondly, confidence is already there. Thirdly, mobilization is easier with us as a club, it's harder for the other NGOs and the Austrian initiatives.*"

¹⁰⁵ "*I do a lot, I participate in many things. For example I am an activist in an Austrian group and they do woman rights and such.*"

The main concern of the peer mentor project as Kathrin Lipowec puts it, is supporting the young refugees to create projects that aim at supporting other young refugees (Interview 1, p. 5). The organisers aim at aiding the refugee participants in becoming more active in an independent way, which sometimes needs coordination and motivation in the background, especially when it comes to realizing the project ideas (Interview 1, p. 12f) and supplying the refugees with resources, which Kathrin Lipowec calls tools (Interview 1, p. 20). It is a tightrope walk between supporting the participants (too much) and (giving them too much) independence; it is a decision between holding hands and letting fly (Interview 1, p. 20).

Christian Gerhus of 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten' declares how important autonomy and self-organisation is especially in the university field and that the goal of his project is to guide the student refugees towards becoming independent (Interview 8, p. 4). Moreover, the project is also targeted at a change of roles and help for self-help. This means that the project provides offers for refugees to emerge from their state of victimisation and adapt to their new proactive role (Interview 8, p. 3f). Hence, 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten' comprises several little individual projects, of which some were initiated by the refugees themselves. Those are often aiming at political education, or learning new (physical) skills (Interview 8, p. 3).

6.2.2 Evaluation according to Goetz

It also fits to the differentiation done by Goetz (2002), who distinguished between three levels of empowerment in its phenomena and functions: the individual level, the level of groups or organisations, and the structural level.

The first level describes the process of people gaining confidence in their own ability to act and realize that they can shape their social and political environment, just like mentioned above concerning Fatima's will to bring change to Austrian society and her Somali community. The second level depicts how social networks are established in order to emerge together from the situation of powerlessness and to develop initiative. Both levels matter in the present paper, for which the foundation of all four projects/clubs can serve as examples.

6.2.3 Evaluation according to Esser

When looking at the concept of empowerment in its use within the broader coherence of migration, the importance of addressing integration becomes evident. As mentioned in chapter five Esser (2001) works out two different perspectives of integration: the system integration and the social integration. The perspective vital in the research of this thesis is the social integration, which refers to the integration of actors, groups, and populations and addresses personal orientations, intentions, and relationships. In the case of the present paper it is talked about the integration of refugees and migrants into Austrian or German society. Within this social integration, Esser then distinguishes between four variants concerning the involvement or inclusion of the actors in a society: cultururation, placement, interaction, and identification. Of special interest hereof seems to be the cultururation. This term describes the need of people to have the necessary knowledge for a meaningful, understanding, and successful acting and interacting within an already existing group. It is therefore about socialization, the knowledge of the most important rules for typical social situations, and the mastery of the necessary (cultural) skills, such as the language. Also interaction seems to play a role in this research. Esser understands interactions as social behaviour in which people inform and are oriented towards each other by sharing knowledge and thus establish relations with each other. Therefore also social relationships and emotions are of importance.

Knowledge and (being provided) access to knowledge is essential in both interaction and cultururation and was often mentioned in regard to integration by the participants of the interviews, the survey, and the informal talks.

Razan Jamil for instance wants to help refugees with the process of integration and hence tries to provide essential information and to give answers to the question of what Austrian society is, how it works and how it differs from the Arab societies. *“Die Leute können hier erst glücklich werden, wenn sie verstehen wie man sich in Österreich zu verhalten hat”*¹⁰⁶ (Interview 6, p. 1, l. 28-32).

Ali is working on a project that aims towards integrating refugees living in asylum camps by answering their questions about the asylum process, but also questions on everyday life in a relaxed environment. Him and his project partners focus on offering

¹⁰⁶ *“People can only be happy here, if they understand how to behave in Austria.”*

information as well as distraction and enable the refugees to become a part of society, as they are of the opinion that refugees living in a camp are too isolated and therefore integration cannot happen. (Interview 2, p. 3)

A participant of the peer mentor training explained in an informal talk that he already has a lot of contact to local persons and already learned a great deal about the Austrian culture, society, and differences in comparison with his country of origin. He declares that this taught him how diverse cultures can interact in a tolerating and respectful way and that with this knowledge he can now support other people from his country during the integration process. (Fieldnotes Informal Talks, p. 1)

The 'Schulworkshop' can also be mentioned in this regard. The aim of this workshop is, as Samim declared during the interview, that refugees go to schools and tell their own story to the pupils - with the idea to fight prejudices before they happen. He states that in his experience people quickly form the opinion that asylum seekers are making the country worse and that they as refugees have to 'start early' and explain the children - which are often really interested in the topic - that this opinion and the negative prejudices are not true. (Interview 2, p. 4)

Fatima, occasionally taking part in this workshop as well, explained her cause in a similar way, but she added that the importance not only lies in preventing prejudices, but also in broadening the horizon of the children and help them 'become international, not staying solely local'. (Interview 4, p. 7)

6.2.4 Evaluation according to power theories

The concept of knowledge, as just discussed, not only matters with respect to integration, but also when speaking of empowerment (and its connection to power). Cattaneo & Chapman (2010) for example argue that one component of the empowerment process is knowledge, but that the whole process of empowerment is about gaining power (p. 647). They define knowledge as an understanding of the relevant social contexts, including the power dynamics, the possible routes to goal attainment, the resources needed, and the ways to obtain them (ibid., p. 653). The direct connection the authors see between power and knowledge, and therefore empowerment, is already clear here, but becomes even clearer in the following citation:

“(E)mpowerment as an iterative process in which a person who lacks power sets a personally meaningful goal oriented toward increasing power, takes action toward that

goal, and observes and reflects on the impact of this action, drawing on his or her evolving self-efficacy, knowledge, and competence related to the goal” (ibid., p. 647).

Also Foucault explains in his treatise on power, that power is always generating knowledge and vice versa, knowledge also brings forth power effects (Foucault, 1976, p. 45, as cited in Jones et al., 2012, p. 46).

Thus it is hardly surprising that knowledge and gaining new skills and information is mentioned multiple times by all interviewees. The refugees pass on knowledge, require to receive new knowledge, and learn from other refugees: *“Weil ich sollen was neues von (Jugendlichen) lernen will und auch was ich kann denen weiterteilen”*¹⁰⁷ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 1, B4).

Fatima for instance emphasises how important knowledge is to her in general and that she sees life as a learning process. She not only explains that she needs to expand her knowledge in order to ‘fit into society herself’ and to then be able to help others with it, but also how important it is to learn new things on a daily basis from anyone. She states that she tries to respect everyone and to be open towards new knowledge, as the interchange of ideas and knowledge should be a key aspect in everyone’s life. (Interview 4, p. 4)

Amir explains his occupation with having had the experience how hard it is to arrive in a country with wrong or missing information. He started working as a translator and also as a (legal) advisor because he gained the needed information he can now pass on the hard way - by himself. He hence knows how many refugees and migrants have wrong information:

*“Zum Beispiel die Menschen hat wirklich so unterschiedliche Gedanke und auch oft falsche Informationen. (...) Das war bei mir auch so, ich bin hier hingekommen und nicht gewusst, was das und dort gehört, das ist das. Aber Leben ist schwer und äh das ist schwer zu verstehen.”*¹⁰⁸ (Interview 9, p. 1, l. 24-28)

Razan Jamil states that it fills her with joy to pass on her knowledge as well as enable other refugees to be independent and active. She moreover explains that helping with translations, even if her German is not perfect, makes her happy (Interview 6, p. 3f).

¹⁰⁷ *“Because I want to learn something new from young people and I can also give something back to them.”*

¹⁰⁸ *“For example, people really have such different thoughts and also often wrong information. It was the same with me, I came here and did not know what this and that is. But life is hard and that's hard to understand.”*

Her husband adds that they reflected on the topic of what knowledge would be best to pass on to the refugees and they came up with the idea to hold workshops about employment rights. This being the case as they got to know how many refugees are working without legal contract or get exploited. The couple now wants to show them what rights they have or which organisations they can contact if they have problems. (Interview 6, p. 2)

Also Ziba Ravoshi quotes that she chooses the topics of her seminars based on her knowledge on what refugees need and where she can and wants to help - in her case workshops about stress, depression, safety, and psychosomatic pain. She experienced that talking about these topics in their native language has helped the attendees of her workshops, who then also get taught methods on how to cope with their situation. (Interview 5, p. 1f)

Ziba Ravoshi is touched by the emotionality of the participants of her workshops and declares how helping them during challenging times not only energises them, but also herself:

*“Und dann viel Energie, mit viele Energie wir gehen Zuhause. (...) Ja, und diese die nur diese Wort (...) für mich ist genug. (...) Und ich bin selbst sehr gut gefühlt. (...) Wenn ist gut und dann für mich ist gut und für ihnen ist gut.”*¹⁰⁹ (Interview 5, p. 9, l. 8-20)

The participants of the peer mentor project explain it in a more playful way. They expect the outcome to be having fun, improving their German, finding new friends, and making new experiences (Fragebogen-excel, p. 1, C31) and also providing their communities with their newly acquired skills and knowledge:

*“Ich habe interesse weil in diese Projekt man bekommt viel neue erfahrung. Man lernt viel und integriert sich mit verschiedene Leute aus verschiedene länder. Man kann lernen seine Recht und andere Leute Recht. (...) Und viele somalische Jung haben kein Integration Projekt bekommen deswegen ich will diese Projekt machen und mein ander Freund einladen und diese gute Chance finden.”*¹¹⁰ (Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, B19)

¹⁰⁹ *And then a lot of energy, with a lot of energy he went home. Yes, and only those words are enough for me. And I felt very good myself. If it is good, then for me it is good and for them it is good.”*

¹¹⁰ *“I am interested because in this project you gain a lot of new experiences. You learn a lot and integrate with different people from different countries. You can learn about your own rights and other people’s rights. And many Somali boys did not get an integration project, so I want to do this project and invite my other friends and use this good opportunity.”*

Taking up this last quote and its referring to a community, it shall be added that Hannah Arendt considers power to be not only a human ability to act or to do something, but rather uniting with others and acting in accordance with them. There is never a single individual who has power; it is always in possession of a group. Thus, there is a connection between power, empowerment, and social groups. This connection will now be highlighted regarding Bourdieu's social capital.

6.2.5 Evaluation according to theories about social capital

Bourdieu (1992) defines social capital as based on belonging to a certain social group and as consisting of social relations. It comprises resources (and obligations) based on this belonging to a group. The extent of the social capital of an actor depends both on the extent of their social network of relationships and on the extent of the (economic, cultural, and symbolic) capital of those with whom the actor is in contact with in this network.

Having said that, migrants and refugees can be regarded as a social unity, whose members have to network with the new environment and therefore build new relationships and find their place in the new society. In this regard, Cheater (1999) explains achieving empowerment as an act of self-empowerment through networking, which allows previously uninfluential individuals collectively becoming more powerful and influential.

This aspect of building a community, establishing contacts, and being provided with helpful contacts came up multiple times and in different ways throughout the gathering of the data.

The organisers of both projects, the peer mentor training and 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten', explained that they try to provide the refugees with useful contacts, that will continue to support them, answer their questions in a more detailed and professional manner, or helping them with staying active and realizing their project ideas (Interview 8, p. 5; Interview 1, p. 9)

In this regard, one member of the peer mentor project explained that his goal is to be a role model for his community, which he wants to assist with the process of integration into Austrian society. He thus feels the need to first get to know the culture of Austria, to then learn how to improve his life and what his rights as a refugee are. (Fragebogen-excel, p. 2, C19)

Dr Fazel Rahman as well mentioned the importance of gathering people from another country, in this case Afghanistan, to not only keeping their own culture and language and thus their identity alive within the comfortable setting of an Afghan community, but also to get to know the Austrian culture and language to then be able to integrate better. This intention to find a place in the receiving country is easier to realize as a group. (Interview 7, p. 4f)

Ali explained that connecting with others was an important factor for him when deciding to take part in the peer mentor training. He knew that many people were to apply for this programme and that many were to participate. He therefore hoped to establish new contacts and with the help of those then gain new information and chances. (Interview 2, p. 2)

In a similar way Amir stated that the charitable activities and activism in the clubs where both refugees and locals work, can lead to more acceptance within the receiving society through establishing multicultural friendships and improving the local language (Interview 9, p. 7).

6.2.6 Evaluation according to the World Bank's four key elements of empowerment

The World Bank's empowerment framework rests on four key elements of empowerment that seem critical for a successful empowerment process. These are access to information, inclusion/ participation, social accountability, and local organisational capacity (Narayan, 2002, p. xix) and will be applied on the findings on this thesis in this chapter.

Regarding 'access to information', it is the World Bank's belief that informed citizens are better equipped to take advantage of opportunity, to access services, to exercise their rights, and to hold state and non-state actors accountable. This is what the interviewees referred to when saying how important gaining knowledge is and how crucial it is to pass the right information onto others, who are in need of certain information. This was mainly mentioned regarding information on the asylum procedure, the rights as a refugee or labour rights, which public institutions to turn to for help, the mechanisms of dealing with stress, depression, boredom and loneliness, and adapting to a new culture and society. The (access to) information was often provided by the refugees themselves,

as they had gained knowledge throughout their own experience of flight and seeking asylum.

By the issue 'inclusion/ participation', it is meant that the people concerned, the people seeking empowerment, become co-producers with authority and control over decisions and resources, in order to ensure that public resources are built on local knowledge and priorities. It moreover means a change in rules and processes to enable people to actively participate on their own account. This 'key element of empowerment' is reflected precisely in the goals of 'CORE' and 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten', as both projects aim towards integrating refugees and migrants into the process of establishing clubs, projects, programmes for themselves by using their knowledge, resources, and experiences.

'Accountability' describes how state officials, public employees, private providers, employers, and politicians must be held to account, making them answerable for their policies and actions that affect the wellbeing of citizens. This aspect is a missing one in this thesis.

The World Bank defines 'local organisational capacity' as the procedure of people gathering in groups and communities to be able to work together, organise themselves, and mobilize resources to solve their mutual problems. Through this process the people longing for empowerment are more likely to have their voices heard and their demands met. Refugees and migrants founding associations like 'Afghan Wulas' and 'FRIDA', as well as the peer mentors planning on starting their own clubs, can account as an example for this category. The problems of common interest are aspects regarding language, legal counselling, physical activities, etc.

Three out of four key criteria could be detected within the collected data, which leads to the assumption that - at least when measured with this method - empowerment is present among the people this research is based on.

6.2.7 Summary and further additions

In summary, it can be said that knowledge is an essential factor within the process of empowerment, irrespective of whether it is about giving or receiving knowledge, or even using it as a tool to accelerate the process of integration or gaining more social capital. It can surely not be seen as the only factor, as that meant disregarding a broad spectrum of possible other explanations. There are also the aspects of the feeling of

being needed, of gaining a positive, rewarding and empowering feeling, of getting to know their own strengths, and of improving the possibilities and chances of their futures, like regarding finding a job or founding a club, etc.

Fatima for example is happy about the gratefulness of the people and explains her activism with believing in karma - if you do well the good comes back to you - and also by doing good things according to the Qur'an. (Interview 4, p. 3)

Ziba Ravoshi is touched by the emotionality of the participants of her workshops and declares how helping them during challenging times not only energises them, but also herself. She explains that she and her participants go home after a workshop with a lot of energy and with a positive feeling. (Interview 5, p. 8f)

Amir actually uses the word 'reward' to describe his positive feeling while working for different associations, although for him the positive feeling can rather be described as relaxed than energetic (Interview 9, p. 7).

Concerning future plans Samim for instance stated that his career aspiration was and still is to become a social worker, which he cannot do yet, because he did not get his positive asylum decision. But he considers the peer mentor training as a step towards achieving his career goal. (Interview 2, p. 3)

As a final reference it has to be stated that although the positive aspects outweigh the negative ones, also concerns have been made both by the organisers of the projects and clubs, but also by the participants. The main concerns of the organisers are intragroup disputes and trust issues of the participants.

In case of the peer mentor training, Kathrin Lipowec sees the problem of occurring frictions between participants in working with a multicultural group of different nations and languages, different levels of education and different cultural values, which brings opportunities, but also frictions (Interview 1, p. 7). The same problem is addressed by Ziba Ravoshi when talking about disputes and racist remarks in her workshops between Afghans and Iranians on the basis of mistreatments of Afghans in the Iran (Interview 5, p. 11). Both parties add that it is their job as the leaders of the workshop to explain to the participants that they are all equal and that disputes need to be settled.

The second big issue is the one of missing or instable trust. Ali Walizadeh tells about participants losing trust in and being scared of the MA 17 after a negative notice and hence dropping out of the programme for peer mentors thinking their negative notice was due to something they said or did during the training (Interview 1, p. 17). Similar

problems exist regarding the group of Turkish migrants within the project 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten', as Christian Gerhus argues. The organiser explains their lack of trust, especially towards other Turkish persons with a fear of consequences for what they have done or what they have fled from in Turkey, as there is a big community of Turkish migrants and refugees in Germany, with a diverging political orientation (Interview 8, p. 10f).

The problems the participants have to face are of a different nature. One big concern is the non-existing salary, as most of the interviewees work voluntarily (e.g. Interview 9, p. 6), the time intensity of the job (e.g. Interview 6, p. 4), and the reliving the own flight history, when hearing other people's stories, which brings a high level of stress and anxiety, which in Amir's case even led to sleep disorder (Interview 9, p. 7).

7. Conclusion and final remarks

The present thesis discusses the concept of empowerment within the wide academic field of migration and integration from an anthropological point of view. The focus on this occasion lies on the question to what extent knowledge can be seen as a tool used to gain (a sense of) empowerment. In order to receive answers to this question, data was gathered among four different projects or associations, based in Germany or Austria, which were founded either by refugees or migrants themselves or aiming towards supporting refugees or migrants in an approach that is promoting self-help and independence. The projects looked at are the Vienna based 'CORE - Integration im Zentrum' with a special focus on their offer to train young refugees to become peer mentors, the university project 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten' in Siegen, Germany, and the two associations 'Afghan Wulas' and 'FRIDA', both located in Vienna. Moreover, it was to find out why and with what aims in mind the projects or associations were founded and what other (positive or negative) outcome can be derived from the participation in these. The collection of the data took place in the period from February 2019 to June 2019 and was conducted by qualitative interviews, informal talks, participant observations, and moreover literature research and the analysis of an already existing survey. The data was then analysed with a qualitative content analysis and collated with chosen theory about empowerment, integration, power, and social capital. One of the main findings was that knowledge (both in gaining

it and passing it on) does play a great role in achieving empowerment, as it is also connected to the process of integration and to the process of accumulating social capital and power. Empowering refugees/ migrants was mentioned as a project goal by both the organisers of the peer mentor project and 'Geflüchtete helfen Geflüchteten', next to providing helpful contacts for the future, supporting the refugees/migrants in a specific field of everyday life or the university sector, giving them the possibility to get involved in their own integration process, strengthening their autonomy/ independence and enabling them to get active in a self-organisation. These aims partly reflect the reasons why the refugees and migrants commit themselves and help others. Other reasons mentioned, next to the passing on and receiving knowledge, were the wish to become a role model for the community, the feeling of a duty to give something back to the receiving society, but also wanting to help, because they were helped themselves. Additionally, knowing the problems due to having been in a similar situation themselves, following a former profession, and supporting or promoting the process of integration for themselves and others were mentioned.

Pertaining to the question about the outcome for the refugees participating or volunteering in the projects and clubs, it is clear that more positive than negative aspects were brought up. On the positive side, the participants mentioned gaining a positive, empowering, rewarding feeling when seeing that they can change somebody else's life to the better. They also appreciated the opportunity to establish new contacts or even friendships, and aiming at a better future - for instance regarding founding a club or finding a job. Negative outcomes or aspects mentioned were the missing salary, the high expenditure of time, and the (mental) stress, as they sometimes had to painfully relive their own flight experiences when talking to other persons concerned.

As already mentioned in the introductory part of this paper, the concept of empowerment is widely neglected in the academic field of migration and integration, despite the fact that some scholars consider it a relevant aspect in the migration experience (e.g. Cakir & Guneri, 2011, p. 225). Although it is both a boom time for the anthropology of migration (Vertovec, 2007, p. 961) and although researchers have explored various outcomes of positive/ successful adaptation of migrants (Cakir & Guneri, 2011, p. 225), most anthropologists tend to only analyse the way in which

migrants live in social networks, such as family or community, that provide the practical context and the cultural meaning of the migration experience (Haines, 2013, p. 77). Hence, the goal of this thesis was to show the importance and the effect empowerment has on refugees and migrants - of course being aware of the fact that the present paper can only provide a minimal contribution for closing this scientific gap within the field of the anthropology of migration. It might help to raise awareness and turn the attention to this topic. Although the findings from this study contribute to the existing literature on migration and empowerment, a number of limitations needs to be mentioned. First, the focus on the German speaking area places certain restrictions on the generalizability of the findings. The results may or may not be valid for different groups of refugees and migrants in other countries. The second limitation lies in the number and variety of the interviewees, due to a lack of people willing or having the time to give interviews. Generally speaking, the interpretation of connections concerning empowerment has to be handled with care due to the difficulty of measuring this concept. Similarly, the findings should be questioned in a critical, reflexive way. Despite these constraints, the findings of this research thesis carry certain implications for future research and practice, and should also be considered as an attempt to contribute to the understanding of empowerment. A strong relationship between empowerment and knowledge was detected, and providing appropriate integration offers that aim into this direction would be surely be promising. Despite the need for such offers, the project 'CORE' will be finished by the end of this year, as the EU-funds were only designed for three years. This thesis will be ended with a citation done by a participant expressing his regret, as he considers the project to be helpful and a good way to understand and support people affected:

"Allgemein werde ich sagen, (...) das war ein super Projekt und (...) wir äh brauchen solche Projekte, das nocheinmal gefördert wird (...), weil es ist so Phase dass äh diese Menschen, die dort ausgebildet werden, sie haben auch selber diese Erfahrung (...) und deshalb sie können besser äh die Betroffene verstehen (...) und ich finde das ist ein guter Weg." ¹¹¹
(Interview 3, p. 10, l. 25-32)

¹¹¹ "In general, I will say that it was a great project and we need projects like this one, which will be promoted again and because the people who are being trained there, they have this experience themselves and that is why they can understand those involved better, and I think that's a good way."

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