Exploring Persistent Policy
Practices: Germany's Dispersal
Policy and the Accommodation
of Asylum Seekers

Hannah Pascucci

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the apparent tension between the German dispersal policy practice and the allocation and accommodation of asylum seekers. Within the context of the 2015 'summer of welcome', Germany received the highest number of asylum applications not only in its own history, but also in European history. Consequently, it is facing the challenge of accommodating and integrating more than 1.2 million asylum seekers in the coming years. While the practice of dispersal of asylum seekers is based on the *Königsteiner Key* in line with the discourse of fair and equal distribution and therefore sharing the social and economic burden caused by the cost of accommodation and integration, there seems to be a tension when regarding the limited possibility of providing adequate housing and accommodation. Drawing from experience and fieldwork in Freiburg, a mid-size city with an overwhelmingly green and progressive political orientation in the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg, this thesis, using the Neo-Gramscian understanding of common sense à la Bruff, demonstrates how a persistent common sense logic on equally dispersing asylum seekers is creating tension with the need of accommodating them. By analyzing how and why historically synthesized common sense rooted with the practice of dispersion is locally sedimented and manifest in the accommodation of asylum seekers in Freiburg, this analysis provides a critical understanding of the systemic relationality between dispersal and accommodation and the tension created.

Key words: Dispersal Policy, Asylum Seeker, Accommodation Policy, Common Sense, Germany, Königsteiner Key, Refugee Integration.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BAMF	*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*	Federal Office for Migration And Refugees
AMI	*Amt für Migration und Integration*	Office for Migration And Integration
NG		Neo-Gramscian
DRK	*Deutsches Rotes Kreuz*	German Red Cross
LEA	*Landeserstaufnahmezentrum*	Initial Reception Center
VU	*Vorläufige Unterkunft*	Preliminary Accommodation
AU	*Anschluss Unterkunft*	Connection Accommodation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The number of individuals being forcibly displaced worldwide reached an unprecedented high of 70.8 million in 2018, including 25.9 million refugees and 3.5 million asylum seekers (UNHCR 2019). Such trends suggest not only the continuation, but an expansion of the global crisis of displacement. Hence, the growing prioritization of investigating and addressing connected policy issues such as the reception, accommodation and, in the broader view, the integration of displaced persons could not be stressed more. Recently a relatively minor fraction of the world's displaced made their way to Europe and for the past four years European countries have increasingly been placed at the center of providing policy responses concerning reception and long-term integration measures.

In the aftermath of the enormous numbers of asylum seekers received over the years 2015 and 2016, debates about asylum migration have particularly regained momentum in Germany. With the reception of more than 1.2 million asylum seekers, Germany has not only received the most asylum applications in its own history, but also across that of the entire European Union (Statista 2019a, BAMF 2019b). Such developments not only led to an accelerated political and public discussion, but more importantly and of more relevance to this dissertation, they have led to critical circumstances on the ground impeding successful integration[1]. While initially, the most pressing task for the government, federal states and municipalities concerned immediate reception and accommodation, today, emergency shelters are no longer in use and the focus is directed towards integration. Nevertheless, accommodation remains problematic due to scarce possibilities for housing and finding accommodation in an already stressed residential market (Adam et al. 2019). Consequently, cities, while being the central space of accommodation and integration, appear to also be representative of how "space is becoming a central object of political struggle" as already put forward by the Marxist philosopher and sociologist Lefebvre (Kipfer 2018:373).

Despite the dispersal policy of the *Königsteiner Key*, which disperses asylum seekers equally across the federal states with the main rationale being the sharing and lightening of the social and economic burden associated with the accommodation and integration of asylums seekers, accommodation challenges persist in most German urban areas (BAMF 2019a, Katz et al. 2016). German authorities are struggling to provide adequate connection accommodations (AUs) and at present, four years after the initial influx, the majority of asylum seekers are still residing in collective preliminary accommodations (VUs) as is the case, here studied, in the city of Freiburg. Despite the shortcomings in dispersal mechanisms being roundly acknowledged among social researchers, on the political level the practice of dispersal does not

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[1]Integration is widely understood as a multidimensional concept, dependent on national discourses and difficult to assess in its entirety. Hence, while acknowledging the multifaceted nature implied in successful integration, for the purpose of this dissertation, integration refers to social integration in the context of housing, the ability to gain access to good-quality, safe, affordable accommodation, as it is considered one of the most important priorities by politicians, policy makers and academics (Philips 2010, Ager Strang 2008, Robinson et al. 2003, Bither and Zoebarth 2016, Groter 2018).

appear to be questioned in Germany, suggesting a persistent policy practice. Against this backdrop, the following question guiding this research arises: How can the tension between the discourse and practice of dispersal policy and the allocation of asylum seekers in Germany be explained? In other words, how can we account for the tension created by the contrasting needs of dispersing asylum seekers across the country with the needs of accommodating them within it? While the term dispersal is often used to refer to the interaction between governmental and federal state level, whereas distribution is commonly used to the federal state and municipal level, for the sake of simplicity, throughout this thesis the two terms will be used interchangeably, as is also the case with the terms allocation and accommodation.

The need to investigate this policy problem more in depth derives from both its long-term relevance to socio-political decision making and the incomplete associated literature. The provision of permanent accommodation and its implications for integration will continue to be topics of concern especially bearing in mind that Germany at this moment hosts the world's fifth largest population of asylum seekers as well as due to persistent global inequality along with the continuation of violent conflicts and climate change (UNHCR 2019). Furthermore, although increasingly studied, a too narrow set of perspectives is currently implemented in relevant analyses: Most studies tend to focus separately on singular elements of dispersal or of accommodation, not on both as related to each other. Other existing approaches endorse structuralist, functionalist and normative perspectives in the light of exceptional situations and housing bottlenecks. The existing literature does not seem to be able to explain the tension between dispersal and accommodation in a relational way and how this systemically undermines the overall asylum seeker policy objectives.

Hence, to overcome this weakness and to extend the arguments made in the literature, this dissertation aims to explain the tension between dispersal policy and accommodation of asylums seekers through empirical research in the city of Freiburg in the timeframe from 2015 to 2019, and the Neo-Gramscian (NG) conceptualization of common sense provided by Bruff (2008, 2011). It claims that despite the material change of an increased number of asylum seekers and housing bottlenecks, the ideational foundations underlying the practice of dispersal have not changed, thus supporting its persistency. This is argued on the basis of a systemic understanding of the tension between dispersal and accommodation. This understanding emerges from an internalization of consent over dispersal practices via the sedimentation of that same common sense, even at the local level where the problem of providing accommodation is experienced the most. The core added-value of this approach stems from its dynamic perspective on the internalization of certain practices and their causal power and consequently the dialectical understanding of structures and agency as well as of the material and ideational. It allows for a systemic understanding of the tension in its totality and to go beyond the state-federal-local setup, pointing towards a policy problem inherent to its underlying structure which is reluctant to accommodate asylum seekers. Thereby, the thesis aims to broaden the current dominant understanding and to enhance

the possibility for intelligently designed policy approaches concerning the distribution and accommodation of asylum seekers.

To sustain this claim, this research proceeds first with a brief outline of Germany's context in dispersing and allocating asylum seekers. Next, it reviews the main literature and existing arguments dominating the explanations related to dispersal and accommodation. The NG theoretical framework, its added-value and the conceptualization of key concepts is clarified in the third section. Building on the theoretical framework, the fourth section presents the research design, methods of case study and data collection. The fifth section considers the empirics and the analysis of the sedimentation of common sense in Freiburg and demonstrates why and how it is manifested. Conclusions are drawn in the final section and paths for further research are suggested.

CHAPTER 2: THE GERMAN CONTEXT

Before addressing the question of how we can explain the tension between dispersal policy and the allocation of asylum seekers, it is necessary to provide a brief background on German asylum policy to understand its functioning as well as the structural set up of the German federal state system when it comes to dispersing and allocating asylum seekers. An asylum seeker as a term generally refers to a person who has requested asylum, which in Germany is a process that can take from 3 months to one-year, depending on administrative capacities and number of applicants. In 2018, the average time of an asylum process was eight months, while in mid-2017 it was 12 ½ months (Kalkmann 2018). Once a legal status is assigned, be it refugee status, subsidiary protection or humanitarian protection which are all enshrined in the Asylum Act, there are legal differences concerning rights and time of residency (AsylG 2019). Since the asylum application process often exceeds the initial six months stay[2] at the initial reception centers (LEAs), applicants are subsequently often placed together in the same accommodation centers independently of their status. Consequently, while acknowledging the differences among asylum seeker and refugees, for the clarity of this thesis and from herein out the term asylum seekers refers to both asylum seekers and to persons with an assigned legal protection status, since it is unfortunately not so much their legal status that determines how they are received and hosted but rather it is the tension that exists in dispersing asylum seekers and providing accommodation for them generally.

2.1. Dispersal and Distribution

As a result of the long history of human mobility and the subsequent need to accommodate asylum seekers, the German federal system adopted the use of a dispersal policy (Bither & Ziebarth 2016). The current dispersal policy of distributing asylum seekers across Germany is called EASY[3] and entails the

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[2] §47 AsylG
[3] §45 AsylG [Admission Quotas].

initial distribution of asylum seekers. Similar to the legislation granting asylum, it dates back to the 1949 Constitution which established a distribution key, the *Königsteiner Key*. Initially only used to determine funding shares for research institutions and universities across the 16 German federal states, the *Bundesländer*, in 1974 it was further extended to other policy areas such as the dispersal of asylum seekers (Bosewell 2003). While dispersal practice has consistently been implemented since then, a well-established integration policy was only implemented in August 2016, signifying the conclusion of a long-lasting political and philosophical debate about the meaning of integration in Germany.

The dispersal practice anchored in the *Königsteiner Key* entails a distribution quota combining the *Bundesländer* fiscal capacity of tax revenue to two-thirds and their population size weighted to one-third and is adjusted annually, to establish an economically efficient and equitable indicator of how to distribute asylum seekers and share their associated burden (BAMF 2019a)[4]. Once the quota is allocated from the national to the federal state level, each of the 16 *Bundesländer* can independently decide how to distribute asylum seekers within its municipalities and districts, normally this follows a simple distribution key based on the share of population mainly to avoid social segregation[5]. Asylum seekers have no influence on the location of distribution and once dispersed they are confined to the assigned area for the subsequent three years and can only leave with special permits. This regulation, known as 'residence requirement' (Wohnsitzauflage)[6], is part of the new integration policy, which demonstrates the combination of attempts to distribute human beings in an economically efficient manner and of providing the apparent preconditions for future integration, which seems contradictory considering that conditions of accommodations and housing market are not taken into account. The *Königsteiner Key* follows the discourse of sharing financial burdens and socio-economic responsibility among government and *Bundesländer*, whereas the municipalities are responsible for implementing integration measures, among others providing accommodation (Katz et al. 2016).

2.2. Accommodation and Allocation

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), is responsible for processing asylum procedures and the *Bundesländer* are legally obliged to allocate and accommodate the number of asylum seekers assigned by the *Königsteiner Key*. There are three different types of accommodation that are important to distinguish[7]. LEAs, with at least one in each federal state, are responsible for the initial reception of up to six months and the consecutive distribution of asylum seekers within the regional district. One can further distinguish VUs, which constitute group or collective accommodations centers[8] and have responsibility for the obligatory stay of up to 12 months. After this obligation has passed,

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[4]§45 Asylgesetz
[5]§50 Asylgesetz
[6]§12 Aufenthaltsgesetz; §50 Asylgesetz
[7]§47, 48, 49, 50 Asylgesetz
[8] §53 Asylgesetz

asylum seekers are nominally transferred to the third type of accommodation, AUs, which are decentralized and private (Kalkmann 2018). Despite the legal distinctions and subsequent granted conditions, cities and communities are left with the 'challenge' of providing the required accommodation to the distributed asylum seekers, particularly when it comes to AUs and their implications for integration. They appear to be unable to follow the legal definitions for accommodation, leading to asylum seekers being accommodated in collective and supposedly temporary VUs only and for unforeseeable periods of time, despite the emphasis that is put on integration since 2016.

This brief clarification on the concepts of dispersal and accommodation has demonstrated that tension on the ground already seems to exist and to cause contradictory policies to be implemented. In the context of the 2015 'summer of welcome', Angela Merkel's infamous announcement of "Wir schaffen das [we can do it]" and suspension of the Dublin regulation, this tension, or these contradictions, seems to have come to the fore and persists particularly today. This thesis aims to provide a systemic understanding of the relational aspects between distributing and accommodating which produce policy problems on the ground and hence hindering the integration of asylum seekers. To address this puzzle, it is necessary to explore first how pervious scholars have addressed dispersal policy and accommodation.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

The massive inflow of asylum seekers did not only bring the German asylum system close to collapse, but also overwhelmed the federal states and their municipalities in providing accommodation in an already strained German housing market (Groter 2018). The tension created between the need to disperse and the need to accommodate asylum seekers did not only trigger a momentum to engage with the mechanism of dispersal, but also led to dominant arguments concerning an unpredictable crisis and miscommunication among the leading federal state structures (Ibid.).

Before this thesis proceeds with how this tension can be explained in its totality through the use of a critical lens, it is necessary to present the existing literature on dispersal policy and on the recent developments in allocation and accommodation. The present and prevailing explanations of tensions concerning dispersal and accommodation divide into two thematic blocks of arguments: Rational and Spatial Normative.

3.1. The Rational Arguments of Dispersal Policy

The majority of the literature on dispersal policy engages with the rationale behind dispersal. The first meaningful investigations were conducted by Christina Boswell (2003) providing a comprehensive understanding of the emergence of dispersal policies in the United Kingdom and Germany. Focusing particularly on the logic of a distribution key, she maintains that the burden-sharing of the cost of

reception and the potential social tension and control over entry and stay are the main rationales behind it. Based on historical patterns of migration policy she explains a path dependent policy development that persists over time. This approach dominates also among other authors, who investigate the descriptive development of the right to asylum and the emergence of the practice of dispersal policies in Germany based on the sequencing and timing of important socio-political events (Block and Levy 1999, Robinson et al. 2003). The legacy of the past of policy choices and structural persistency influencing policy developments and debates are thereby highlighted These contributions might provide an adequate lens to zoom in on dispersal policies as a unit, but unfortunately they do not seem to explain the interaction with and implications of dispersal policy when it comes to allocation.

A growing body of recent literature and policy research addresses functioning of the federal structures and the unidimensional nature of the dispersal key (Bither & Ziebarth 2016, Katz et al. 2016, Degler and Liebing 2017). The inability of including other variables influencing the distribution such as unemployment rate, population density and housing market conditions is argued to represent one of the major obstacles to cost-efficient accommodation in light of integration. Katz et al. (2016) take this calculus argument based on strategic calculation further by highlighting a distortion created in larger cities, particularly in terms of financial costs, and sustain their claim with a case study research on Germany's 15 largest cities (p. 11). These finding are also in line with arguments made by Eva Degler and Thomas Liebing (2017) and their studies for the OECD, which emphasize the importance of employment opportunities and consequently argue to prioritize labor market integration to compensate for fiscal costs asylum seekers produce, which lay around €10,000 per application. Christian Druck (2017) agrees with these rational choice arguments and similar to Katz et al. (2016) points towards the structural constraints resulting from the federal structure. According to him, it impeded the "communication between the three state levels" leading to the reluctance of the authorities to provide accommodation since they are left with the burden of the costs (Druck 2017: 74). Nihad El-Kayed and Ulrike Hamann (2018), while bridging this gap between the regulatory state and local levels by focusing on the federal regulations and legal rights of asylum seekers, their analysis remains limited on the stratified structural barriers producing obstacles to housing integration.

Finally, by explaining the tension within dispersal policy, if not between dispersal and accommodation, all these arguments provide a partial account by reducing their view to the rational, structural and functionalist dimensions and by remaining focused on the systematic problems within dispersal, instead of considering a more systemic discussion.

3.2. The Spatial-Normative Arguments on Accommodation

While most research and findings concerning housing are based on Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom, the problematic situation of reception and accommodation of asylum seekers in Germany has recently gained scholarly attention. Emphasis lies on the realities on the ground, the dynamics of the German housing market, the various barriers for asylum seekers and urban planning policies.

Shahd Seethaler-Wari (2018) establishes a strong link between accommodation and integration by focusing on refugee accommodation in Germany. Based on Ager and Strang's (2008) ten normative domains included in the operational definition of integration, Seethaler-Wari conducts an in-depth one city case study analysis of local factors connected to initial reception and accommodation of asylum seekers. She advocates for the indispensable role and inclusion of the local dimension when designing urban planning and integration policies consequently focusing on spatial-institutional arrangements such as location, proximity-distance, infrastructure and socio-economic structures of the neighborhood. While mentioning the dispersal policy and the spontaneous, practical and ad hoc measures taken by local decision-makers during the 2015 influx, they are not elaborated further as the focus of the analysis lies on the empirics given by local structural factors on the ground.

Adam et al. (2019) feed into this spatial debate through an analysis of the city of Cologne and its local housing market. By looking into decentralized housing possibilities and the local housing market they establish the argument that structural and material lack of affordable housing and social-normative constraints of discrimination obstruct personal accommodation and thus integration. Similar to Seethaler-Wari (2018), they employ the integration framework by Ager and Strang (2008) and thus justify their focus on housing as an essential component for successful integration. By establishing valuable insights into reasons for malfunctioning housing markets such as low vacancy rates for apartments, the importance of accessibility and affordability becomes salient.

Another case study conducted by Hinger et. al (2016) in the city of Leipzig provides insights on the actor's involved in the establishment of decent initial reception centers through a migration-regime lens. By investigating how particular actors and factors play into the negotiations of creating decent accommodation, they employ a constructivist understanding of space and locality as a social product of practices by certain actors and how this affects the provision of asylum. It focuses on the importance of timing and communication and how space serves as a medium for ideas and practices of actors to be manifested. While providing valuable insights into the dynamics of actors beyond structures, the analysis remains limited to the particular type of accommodation and the timeframe of 2015, consequently lacking an understanding of future implications for subsequent housing and integration. Neis et al.'s (2018) approach adds to mentioned studies by drawing attention to integration. They analyze the meaning, importance and impact the 'welcoming attitude' of 2015 had on asylum seekers'

expectations and actual local experiences. While providing strong empirical evidence on different dimensions of the local reception and integration in three German cities, they apply a normative approach by focusing on attitudes, experiences, emotions, and language patterns and also highlight the importance of the events of 2015 and its immediate aftermath. The main weakness in both of the mentioned studies is that they offer no explanation for the connection to dispersal policy and remain temporally constrained with their focus on events surrounding the particular circumstances of 2015.

Finally, the presented literature on accommodation and allocation policy remains largely concerned with concrete local spatial-urban obstacles without considering the impact of dispersal. Therefore, it seems to concentrate on normative and constructivist perspectives and arguments explaining the tension from within the housing-accommodation dilemma.

3.3. Towards my Positionality

All of the arguments brought forward are individually valid and necessary to consider when explaining the discourse and practice of dispersal policy as well as when examining accommodation situations. However, the issue, as this brief review has made evident, is that the problems concerned with accommodation and dispersal are analyzed independently and separately and regarded as fully constituted entities with essential properties. Each of these approaches seems to provide only a partial account of the forces at work in a given situation or capture different dimensions of human actions and institutional impacts present without more extensively considering their interrelated nature or connection (Peters 2011). Consequently, this thesis claims that across this range of presented contingencies aiming to explain the tension, which are valid but conditioned to time, there is a relationality which the reviewed literature does not seem to engage with. On the contrary, the presented arguments do not seem to be sufficient to explain the tension created between the discourse and the practice of equitable distribution and the inability to provide accommodation for asylum seekers in its systemic totality. The different available perspectives seem to be lacking in their understanding that institutions are not only the foundation of social life but also founded upon social life (Bruff 2011). Therefore, there is the need for a deeper understanding of the policy problem of dispersal and accommodation considering dynamics internal to the institutional development.

Against this backdrop and based on a case study conducted in the city of Freiburg, this thesis asks the question of how the apparent tension between the discourse and practice of dispersal policy and the allocation of asylum seekers in Germany can be explained. To access the policy problem in a holistic manner and to explain the relational link between dispersal and accommodation that this thesis argues exists, I apply the critical theoretical approach of historical materialism. I apply a NG perspective and use the 'new' understanding of common sense to go beyond the existing structuralist federal state arguments and broaden the current understanding by providing a lens through which the systemic logic

underlying structures and creating this inherent tension between dispersal policy and allocation of asylum seekers can be explained.

CHAPTER 4:   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is based on NG critical literature and allows us to draw a more holistic picture and dynamic understanding of the apparent gap between dispersal and accommodation and consequently explain how the arguments brought forward in the existing literature can be linked. While some of them *describe* the path-dependent elements within the dispersal policies, the NG framework enables us to *analyze* the interaction through its path-dependence. By emphasizing the importance of social forces and the power of ideas it overcomes deterministic and reductionist perspectives and tries to fully capture the systemic dynamics underlying dispersal and accommodation.

4.1. Added-value of Neo-Gramscian lens

Originating from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1971) and first interpreted by a historical materialist, Robert Cox (1987), NG conceptualization of contemporary society and political and economic processes provides this thesis with a systemic understanding of the relationality between dispersal and accommodation. Basing their understanding on Gramsci's key notions of state, civil society, hegemony, common sense and organic intellectuals, ontologically speaking, NGs are firmly grounded in the traditions of historical materialism. Therefore, they give primacy to the social relations of the production of capital and their role in determining all the material conditions that shape society and history. However, NGs take the social relations of production further by considering a dynamic interplay between structure and agency and the ideational and material. Simultaneously, they overcome the dualism of structure and agency often advocated by structuralist perspectives.

NGs use the sphere of production as the basis of analysis, but the social relations of production are considered to engender social forces which are recognized as the most important collective actors, consequently stipulating agential-material power (Bieler and Morton 2001, 2004). It allows us to analyze the social purpose underlying various social forces' activities. This goes hand in hand with their added-value of considering the state as an extended and integral structure. Instead of seeing it has a fixed entity, in line with a state-centrist view, it is understood as 'political society'. Consisting of different forms such as state institutions and civil society made up of political parties, unions, associations and churches, it is regarded as a complex structure within which and through which social forces operate (Gramsci 1971, Bieler 2002:581). It does not question the ontological primacy of the state, rather it enables us to analyze the dynamics and relations of force in a given society.

Instead of taking the existing institutions and social and power structures for granted, a NG framework allows us to call them into question, make queries about their historical origins and understand the

material structure of ideas and how certain ideas have become predominant (Bieler 2005:518). Constructivists focus on different systems of meaning or discourses underlying our daily lives, thereby acknowledging how vested interests are the vehicle for ideas to receive their meaning and therefore meet their potential. NGs, however, reject deterministic arguments and acknowledge the existence of power structures, the open-ended nature of historical specificities and the power of ideas and agency (Overbeek 2004, Bieler 2002).

Finally, the French Marxist scholar and urban-geographer Henri Lefebvre was one of the first who applied Gramscian thinking to the urban context. He opened the opportunity to consider urban spaces and localities such as cities, no longer as just "the passive locus of social relations", but rather as a space produced to serve hegemony. He insisted that the state itself is an "instrument, site, result and product of the struggle for hegemony" and, when applied to urban space simultaneously requires further consideration of urbanization and urban planning as a class phenomenon of some sort (Kipfer 2008: 197). Lefebvre is not only aligned to the NG understanding of the state, but also with the dialectical relationship of structures and agency and of the material and the ideational.

Therefore, his writing and understanding of space connected to the social relations of production, hegemony and common sense allows this thesis to conceptualize the NG theoretical framework and new understanding of common sense also in the context of an urban locality such as Freiburg, overall increasing the conceptual understanding provided by the NG lens to explain the tension between dispersal and accommodation.

4.2. Neo-Gramscian Understanding of Hegemony and Role of Ideas

Gramsci considered hegemony "as a concept used to analyze the relation of forces in a given society" (Gill and Law 1989: 476). In a hegemonic order the social relations between classes, the state and civil society are characterized by consent, not by coercion. This implies the existence of a common sense over certain ideas which corresponds to the narrow interest of the dominant class. Furthermore, such a consensual-common sense order implies that a dominant force in a state and society is considered hegemonic, not by dominance or supremacy, but also by implementing or symbolizing "intellectual and moral leadership" (Ibid). Thus, hegemony introduces the relevance of the ideational dimension within structures and leads us to consider how a hegemonic social order is also based on values and a shared notion of the social relations shaping reality. As explained by Cox, "'Reality is not only the physical environment of human action, but also the institutional, moral and ideological context that shapes thoughts and actions" pointing towards the interaction between the ideational and the material (cited in Bieler and Morton 2004:87).

The concept of organic intellectuals plays a crucial role, since it is their task "to organize social forces from which they stem and to develop a 'hegemonic project', which is able to transcend particular economic-corporate interests of their social group by binding diverse aspirations, interests and identities" (Bieler 2005:581). Therefore, when organic intellectuals of the dominant group formulate and disseminate those ideological and moral elements and by transforming them into 'universal' ones, they simultaneously bind subordinate groups in the existing and hegemonic social order (Overbeek 2000:174). This confirms organic intellectuals' indispensable agential function and ideationally linking power.

When hegemony is sustained over time and exercised within a wider social and political constellation of forces, we can talk about the concept of historical bloc. It refers to "a historical congruence between material forces, institutions and ideologies, or broadly to an alliance of different class forces" and represents the organic fusion of political and civil society (Gill and Law 1989:476).

Leading NG scholars such as Cox (1987) and with him the associated Amsterdam School elaborate on these concepts and present discussions on the social relations of the production of capital, their historical forms and analyze them mainly in the global system of world orders. They are characterized by emphasizing the transnational aspects, the rise in the structural power of transnational capital and class formation and the internationalization of production processes (Overbeek 2004, van Apeldoorn 2004). While these arguments are valuable to explain transnational socio-economic phenomena, they have been criticized for giving little attention to the state and internal dynamics to the state. The act of production is important, but it is argued that 'how' production is organized is also conditioned by values and norms. The internalization process of the 'how' hegemony is constructed and sustained also needs to be considered, which Cox and the Amsterdam School fail to do so sufficiently (Bruff 2011).

This intra-state focus of analysis and the deriving immanent critique consequently gave rise to a new wave of NG understanding with an internal focus on how and what specifically forms and sustains certain persistent ideas and practices in society, focusing particularly on ideas in and beyond their context. Instead of just assuming hegemony, this new wave examines the deeper dynamics through which hegemonic ideas are formed, giving the ideational dimension a more causal role. Since this research aims at investigating how and why the practice of dispersal is continued despite it being problematic, to consequently provide a systemic understanding of dispersal and accommodation of asylum seekers, the investigation is subsequently directed to a deeper understanding of the relevant common sense.

4.3. The New Understanding of Common Sense

Instead of assuming that everything derives from the social relations of production, the Neo-Gramscian scholar Ian Bruff takes the idea to a deeper level and questions what these relations are shaped through – how and by what are human social practices conditioned and influenced. His understanding and analysis of common sense provides a more detailed assessment of the internalization process of constructing consent within the state, the fundamental role of organic intellectuals and the concrete composition of common sense – its historical accumulation, synthesis and sedimentation. Thereby, Bruff gives the ideational a more causal role without abandoning the materiality underlying the system of production and providing a deeper understanding of persistent policy practices.

Instead of detaching the notion of common sense as a sum of ideas which can be broken down, isolated or disaggregated as variables and added to and removed from the analysis whenever it fits, the new understanding advocates a holistic assessment of common sense on the internal nation-state level (Bruff 2010). It allows us to investigate one level deeper - how a policy practice is continued despite creating tension on the ground as is occurring at present with the dispersal policy and the accommodation of asylum seekers in Germany.

Common sense not only comprises a set of ideas from a variety of sources, but also it is created by the historical accumulation of sediments of thought. It is built over time by deposits and traces of popular thoughts involving cultural, political and economic dimensions. This adds temporal stability to the notion of common sense, but also acknowledges the potential for continuous transformation since common sense is simultaneously enriched by "historical relevance and importance of the sediments left behind by different conceptions of the world" (Bruff 2011:487). For the analysis, this implies that we do not look at common sense as something fought over by, produced or propagated by a certain social group. Instead, we look at it as the precondition for certain structures and consequently through which social relation of production are formed. It is about the internalization through sedimentation of how current practices are built on layers of values and understandings from the past (Bruff 2005).

Common sense is perceived to be embodied in all human social practices and "it forms the basis for how humans make sense of situations they find themselves in (Bruff 2008:279, Gramsci 1971). Furthermore, "every social stratum has its own 'common sense' [and] every philosophical current leaves a sedimentation of 'common sense'" (Gramsci 1971:630). Consequently, different versions of common sense can co-exist and overlap, which shapes the possibility for a synthesis of different perspectives, consensus forming and ultimately leads to a hegemonic ideology. For such synthesis of common sense to occur, the social forces as well as their position within society, and thus the role of certain actors, become relevant. Through the organic clarification and organization of common sense by intellectuals,

ideas receive material force and thus there is a relationally causal power between the material and ideational. According to Bruff (2008:54) political parties, political foundations, social movements, research centers, interest groups, trade unions – everything fundamentally linked to a collective intellectual and social group can be brought under the rubric of organic intellectuals. According to Gramsci (1971) there is the "strategic concentration of power in particular sites of civil society and the state" (461). Thus, it also depends on the leading social forces' position operating in and through the state and whether they are able to use their strategic position to disseminate and sustain the dominant ideology. Our analysis therefore requires an analytical focus on the positions of identified social forces, which Gramsci elaborated further through his five levels of collective political consciousness, which will be discussed in the following chapter on methodology (Gramsci 1971:405).

This 'new' perception of common sense allows us to not only explain dominating policy practices such as dispersal despite the tension it creates, but also points towards a framework grounded in our system of production as the underlying logic creating such tension, rather than the operating institutions and the laws and policy they create, which most of the existing literature has linked this dynamic to.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

The analysis of the sedimentation of common sense in the local context of Freiburg that will be presented in chapter 6 would not be fully effective without first clarifying how the theoretical framework can be translated into an analytical strategy and without outlining the method used: The identification of the chosen case study, procedures for the qualitative data collection and analysis and limitations of these methods.

5.1. Applying Gramsci's Levels of Consciousness

The analysis concerns the synthesized common sense of the practice and discourse of the dispersal policy and the tension it creates with providing accommodation. It is not just about the discourse and practice but also about the material preconditions of the structures producing these. In detail, the analysis involves the social forces' positions – their class location – rooted within the structures producing discourse and practice and endorsing and maintaining that dominating common sense through its sedimentation. Since my positioned research paradigm does not equip me with a specific method of analysis, the analysis here adopts Gramsci's five levels of political consciousness, which enables the ideational and material but also agential analysis of relations of force, thereby encompassing different players, their positions and agency (Bieler 2005:518). Ideally, the analysis would have examined all five levels but given the size of this research project it is only possible to address the third and fourth level and their interaction.

The operationalization of the levels of consciousness involves philosophical, theoretical, ethical and common sense ideas alongside structures. Through intellectual, moral and political practices of organic intellectuals, the narrow interests of class formation can be translated to ethico-political ones (Bruff 2008). The conscious position of dominant social forces within society relates to the third level. It is the class formation moment when one transcends their own corporate interest on the political level, since it is not enough anymore in the economic class. The fourth level – the ethico-political moment – implies the phase of confrontation and conflict of various common senses until one of them or a combination is fused by organic intellectuals and ultimately creates a hegemonic common sense (Gramsci 1971: 405, Gill 2008). The analysis is consequently concerned with the third and fourth level of consciousness, examining the relations among social forces in society, how they interact and make use of their strategic position of influence as represented by centers of accumulation and sedimentation of common sense.

A critical and thorough analysis to explain the relational logic between dispersal and accommodation therefore requires the tracing of the sedimented common sense on dispersal in the local context via three steps. Firstly, through empirically examining the ideas manifested at the local level of accommodation, corresponding to the ideational dimension shaping this common sense. Secondly, looking at the social forces dimension, thus local actors and organic intellectuals corresponding to the agential dimension sustaining those ideas, and mainly focusing on political parties, unions, foundations, societal actors, federal state and municipal institutions (Bruff 2008: 54). Thirdly, evaluate these actors' material positions within society.

5.2. Identification of the Case Study

Located in the South-West of Germany, in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, Freiburg is a medium-size city with a total population size of approximately 230 thousand people, 30 percent of which come from a migratory background. It hosts 5,000 asylum seekers, out of which 3,000 newly arrived since 2015 and currently 2,600 are being accommodated by the city council (AMI 2019b, 2019c).

As these demographics suggest, a multicultural society such as Freiburg also demonstrates a particularly lively political landscape. In addition to its university setting with approximately 25,000 students, in 2002 it took the lead in green city politics as the first major city which elected a Green Party mayor (Universität Freiburg 2019). As former party leader of the Greens in Baden-Württemberg Dieter Salomon was in office for 17 years until recently being substituted by the party independent mayor Martin Horn (Spiegel 2002). Freiburg is known for its lengthy Green city politics, which is also evident from the Greens dominating recent city council elections (Badische Zeitung 2019). Furthermore, dispersal policy and allocation in Germany has only recently been studied, whereas the country's industrialized South has not been analyzed yet, making Freiburg an attractive research niche.

From its demographic and political characteristics, Freiburg would appear a progressive and liberal municipality that would be more likely to be tolerant and receptive towards asylum seekers than other German cities of a similar size[9]. Consequently, this makes it an interesting case for investigating sedimented common senses and how and why the dominating common sense creating tension can exist even within such a least likely context - it allows for a more refined understanding of the problematic common sense. Furthermore, the affirmation of common sense logic in the case of Freiburg would enable generalization as it would stipulate that even in a least likely case, which rather suggests the opposite, the dominant common sense is sedimented and manifested in the local space.

5.3. Data Collection

To trace the synthesized common sense sedimented within the locality of Freiburg, I made use of qualitative research methods combining semi-structured interviews through phone calls, open-ended questionnaires and an analysis of relevant official documentation. I conducted seven interviews with local representatives from the federal state, municipality and of the main humanitarian organizations working in the city's accommodation centers. The documents stem from societal actors corresponding to social forces, precisely, brochures and documents of foundations and of local institutions, as well as city council decisions and legal documents of Baden-Württemberg.

When conducting the interviews, I relied on snowball sampling, asking the interviewees to suggest further people relevant for the purpose of this study. This technique allowed me to save time and ensure that people would be more responsive, of particular consideration as I conducted most interviews through phone calls. Finally, I interviewed four employees of the Office for Migration and Integration (AMI) responsible for housing, accommodation and integration, a city council member, and two representatives of the humanitarian organizations of Caritas and the German Red Cross (DRK). Due to the logistical difficulty of conducting personal interviews, I combine an individually adjusted, open-ended questionnaire in anticipation to a follow-up clarification phone call. The phone call normally lasted one hour and the questionnaire covered three main areas: personal aspects of the interviewee and their individual role within the organization, administrative tasks of their organization during the 2015 influx of asylum seekers and how tasks changed in the period from that year to 2019. The choice of semi-structured interviews in combination with the questionnaires allowed me to gain the trust of the research participants over the barrier of physical distance and conduct an exploratory investigation. Confidentiality and data protection were agreed upon beforehand and maintained throughout the research. Even though participants were reluctant in signing a explicit consent form and being recorded,

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[9]Following the correlative assumptions established by Kymlicka and Banting (2006) on green party politics, their advocacy of multiculturalism and acceptance of asylum seekers in Germany.

I received the implicit consent of all interviewees via signature of the five transcribed interviews and via email through the two answered and discussed questionnaires[10].

5.4. Trustworthiness and Limitation

The trustworthiness of this research depends on the evaluation of the primary data's validity and reliability to replicate the study (Berg 2001). Due to the personal and semi-structured nature of the interviews, the authenticity and accuracy of the data contributes to the study's overall validity. The replicability is possible due to the consistent and systematic approach of the interviews and the line of questioning.

Limitations governing the data collection process concerned a high amount of reluctance of the interviewees. Generally, only after persistent requests through follow-up emails and calls were they willing to contribute to the study, without being willing to be recorded, which complicated the research process more. Overall, it contributed to decrease my own motivation and energy. Finally, conducting field work from a distance due to limited time to travel, represented one major obstacle to the data collection process. This goes hand in hand with the obstacle presented by asylum seeker politics still being a sensitive topic, which requires the establishment of trust with the interviewees to overcome.

CHAPTER 6:   FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

To explain the tension between dispersal and accommodation, which existing studies and literature have confirmed, most arguments are based on the path-depended logic of the dispersal policy, the exceptional inflow and the moment of a 'crisis', functionalist logics concerning institutions, structural constraints caused by Germany's federal system, the saturated housing market and barriers that exist for asylum seekers (Katz et al. 2016, Adam et al. 2018, Seethaler-Wari 2018). While they all provide a valid but incomplete assessment, this thesis claims that it is not sufficient to identify the tension as a unidimensional phenomenon deriving from institutional or path-dependent constraints. Instead we need to study how the synthesized common sense present in the duty of equitable discourse and practice of dispersal is sedimented within the totality of Freiburg's society and sustains the systemic understanding of economically efficient practices at the expense of providing human needs, such as accommodation, hence impeding the ultimate goal of integration. Therefore, the analysis will firstly identify the social forces active within the accommodation centers. Secondly, it will investigate interactions in the wider society and their position and how common sense is internalized to understand the relationality between dispersal and accommodation. Thirdly, it will analyze how synthesized common sense is locally

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[10]The fully transcribed interviews are available by the author upon request.
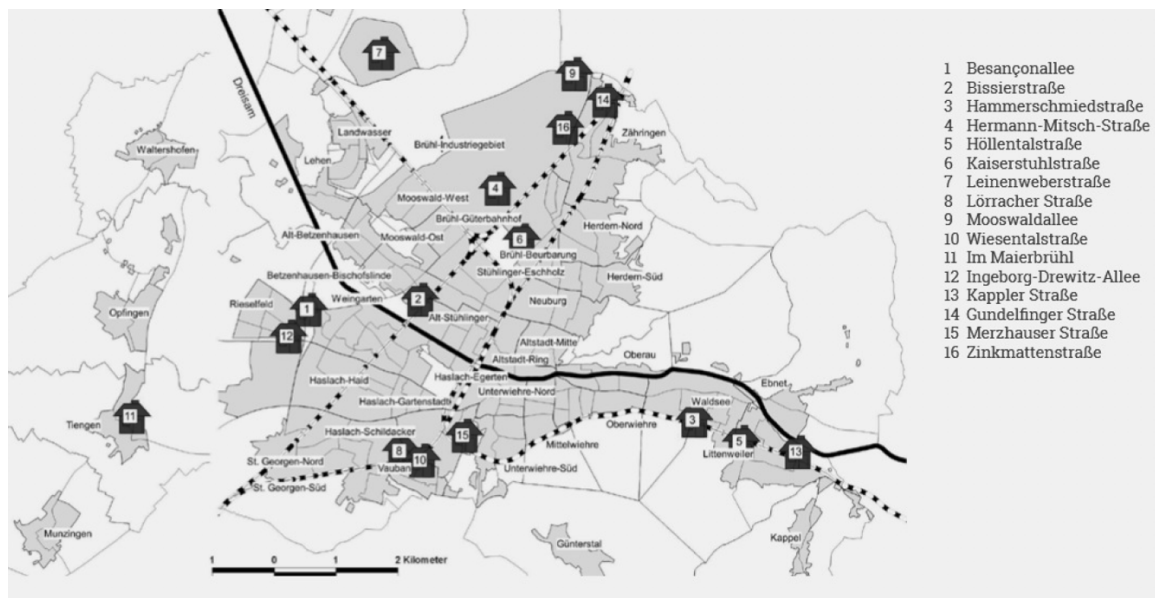
manifested in recent attempts made to alleviate the pressure for asylum seeker accommodation in Freiburg.

6.1. Freiburg's Accommodation Centers and Social Forces

Out of all accommodation centers, 15 are administered and maintained by the public service of the municipality of Freiburg, while the LEA (figure 1 no.8) is administered by the refugee and migration unit of Baden-Württemberg. Established in 2017, it is interesting to note that once a district hosts a LEA, it no longer has to accommodate asylum seekers distributed by the dispersal key. Consequently, while as of December 2017 Freiburg no longer has to accommodate asylum seekers into VUs according to the *Königsteiner Key*, still, the 15 VUs are not sufficient to house asylum seekers already present in the city (City Council 2017).

Dispersed rather evenly across the city of Freiburg, it becomes evident that asylum seekers are generally located toward the outskirts. While from the summer of 2015 until the end of 2018, Freiburg received a total of 3.700 asylum seekers, between 2015 and 2016, 200 to 450 asylum seekers were distributed per month according to the *Königsteiner Key* and the population quota of Baden-Württemberg[11] (AMI 2019a, City Council 2016). While numbers dropped significantly from the second half of 2016 onwards, five centers (figure nos. 1, 3, 11, 13, 14, 15) were subsequently newly built accommodating approximately 100-300 asylum seekers [12].

Table 6.1 Freiburg's VUs collective accommodation centers

Source: AMI 2019b

Despite the reception requirement of granting a minimum living and sleeping area of 7m^2 per person, such guidelines could not be upheld in any of the accommodation facilities where mostly four to five people were living per room during the given time period. Today it is possible to accommodate two people per 15m^2 room as well as grant families two rooms, nevertheless according to all the interviewees it is widely acknowledged that current conditions are still not ideal for integration[13], an acknowledgment that current efforts are directed towards integration at least in name and that policy is not working to this end. According to the adjusted reception law in Baden-Württemberg[14], asylum seekers are supposed to reside in VUs for only up to 24 months. Out of the 2,600 asylum seekers currently residing in Freiburg, however, 2,000 are still accommodated in VUs, with the majority arriving between 2015 and 2016 and consequently exceeding obligatory standards. The prospects of moving to AUs do not effectively exist, as the distinction between VUs and AUs could not be respected nor adhered due to the lack of space and a stressed housing market[15](City Council 2016).

As in many other German cities, the housing market of Freiburg is characterized by high demand and low supply leading to ever rising prices. With the lowest price per square meter starting at approximately €2,832 per square meter for an average priced apartment making affordability impossible and revealing of Freiburg's inability to provide AUs (Lutz 2018). Analyzing these developments only in the light of structural and logistical dimensions, the explanations provided by some authors concerning functionality, structural constraints and the timing dimension seem to fit (Druck 2017, Katz et al 2016, Adam et al. 2019, Neis et al. 2018). However, this thesis claims that this is not sufficient to understand the tension, but that it requires a deeper investigation that zooms in on the actors involved in the operation of the centers and the social forces sustaining the persistent practice of dispersal while stressing the need for integration despite accommodation bottlenecks. This need to investigate deeper is further sustained by the fact that even asylum seekers arriving during the first experienced influx of 1994 continue to reside in those collective accommodation centers, after a period exceeding 20 years. It is indicative of the systemic understanding underlying the efficient practices of simple dispersal at the expense of providing actual long-term accommodation that would improve integration efforts.

The department on property and facility management within the AMI seems to be most influential since it is not only exclusively responsible for the property and functioning of facilities but also for the allocation of asylum seekers to VUs[16]. AMI's other prominent role is in the department of social care for asylum seekers, which shares its responsibilities on equal terms with the three public humanitarian

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[13]All interviewees.
[14]§9 FlüAG
[15]Interview with German Red Cross Freiburg 29.03.2019; Interview with Caritas Freiburg 17.04.2019
[16]Interview with Employee Office for Migration and Integration - Accommodation Unit 09.05.2019.

organization of DRK, Caritas and Diakonie (AMI 2019b). This means that out of the 15 accommodation centers, seven receive social support of up to 50 percent shared by all three publicly funded organizations and 50 percent from AMI's social care department, while the remaining eight centers receive their social support exclusively through the AMI[17]. These specificities are particularly relevant as they demonstrate the particular position the AMI, and therefore also the city, has in the context of the accommodation of asylum seekers. These findings further highlight how this institutional dominance provides for constant influence over the centers, not only in the logistical dimension, but also in the social dimension. This is further supported by AMI's newly created integration management department providing case specific integration management to the asylum seekers living in all accommodation centers, despite the humanitarian organization's simultaneous provision of social care (Ibid.). It also reveals the explicit focus addressing integration, while the accommodation problem remains unresolved. Consequently, the AMI obtains important ideational agency within the material realm of asylum accommodations and demonstrates how social forces can operate through and within the state.

DRC, Caritas and Diakonie deliver support in areas such as language acquisition, recognition of qualifications, personal, family, legal advice and physical and psychological support, whilst each organization is specialized in a certain area such as counseling, psychological assistance or displaced person search[18]. These more technical tasks that are concretely related to facilitating integration and these organizations' high degree of involvement reveal the importance of their role. However, due to AMI's omnipresence their impact is stated to be very limited and even diminishing over time[19], which seems contradictory if enhanced focus is stated to be on integration[20]. This became also apparent with the aforementioned creation of the integration management framework. This addition to the provided social care was experienced by the humanitarian organizations as the creation of an inefficient double structure only contributing to more confusion and complications for them as well as for the asylum seekers. Despite the humanitarian organizations constituting a cohesive social force within the accommodation dynamic, because of their similar areas of responsibilities, level of influence and joint positioning towards disputes with the AMI, in this described case their advocacy for adjustment remain unheard, which further reinforces AMI's already robust position and influence on the centers in terms of logistical functioning, but also social integration. Furthermore, the need for integration triggered the emergence of local initiatives and small NGOs to provide social activities in the area of neighborhood integration, cultural exchange and empowerment and participation[21]. However, also in that area the AMI displays a regulatory oversight function (City Council 2019d).

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[17]Interview with German Red Cross 29.03.2019.
[18]Interview with Caritas Freiburg 17.04.2019; Interview with German Red Cross Freiburg 29.03.2019.
[19]Interview with Member of Freiburg City Council 12.04.2019.
[20]Interview with Caritas Freiburg 17.04.2019; Interview with German Red Cross Freiburg Interview with Caritas Freiburg 17.04.2019; Interview with German Red Cross Freiburg
[21]Interview with Office for Migration and Integration - Integration Unit 07.03.2019.

This outline of the actors involved within accommodation and integration demonstrates how the different social forces are linked together and held accountable by the AMI. Due to AMI's dominant position within the centers the agency appears to obtain a role of organizing different social elements, bind them together and contribute to the ideational and material persistency of accommodation and integration practices within the centers. Considering these power structures within the centers individually and alone in a vacuum would be in line with reductionist actor-focused approaches dominating existing literature (Hinger et al. 2016). With the new understanding of common sense, however, it is not sufficient to construct consent within a small dimension such as the accommodation centers, rather, the dynamics of how consent is internalized, how it is built, formed and organized to be upheld throughout the given society should be understood (Bruff 2010). This concretely calls for analyzing how and why the common sense of the practices of dispersal is sedimented and internalized in Freiburg's society despite the tension it creates, particularly within Freiburg's accommodation possibilities. This is where the interplay and interaction of different social forces within the third and fourth level of wider society of Freiburg come to the fore as they represent the mechanisms behind deposits of popular thought sustaining a dominant policy idea and practice.

6.2. Internalization of Common Sense in Freiburg

To understand the internalization process of the hegemonic common sense of the practice and discourse of dispersal policy despite the tension it creates with the need to accommodate, the interaction and linkages among certain sites of civil society and the state are fundamental, as "[this] interaction with the knowledge systems with the rest of the historical process" is what is meant by the process of analyzing through the different levels of consciousness (Gill 2008:39). The social forces' positions and their interactions represent the dynamics between the class formational moment and the ethico-political moment of the dominating common sense. According to Bruff's (2008) conceptualization of common sense, the role of organic intellectuals to organize the relevant social forces, transcend a particular interest and bind the diverse aspirations, interests and identities to one overarching consensus is pivotal.

One important layer through which popular thought on dispersal can be sedimented is through the presence of the historically established structures such as political foundations and research institutes (Bruff 2008:54). These perform as both powerful institutional materialities through which accumulations of thought and knowledge sediment over time and an ideational agency through which knowledge is disseminated, thus contributing to certain tendencies that form a particular common sense. It serves the dialectical understanding of structure-agency and ideational-material. Simultaneously, because of their historical establishment, such institutions provide an element of temporal stability within the common sense logic. In German society, political foundations constitute a decisive agency forming opinions and perspectives since they provide an environment for political dialogue, knowledge acquisition and exchange of information and opinions (Wolf 2000).

Strikingly, the only political foundation present in Freiburg and its wider region is the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, which is affiliated with the conservative political wing of the Christian-democrats, also the ruling party in the national government in the considered research timeframe. Established since more than 40 years, the foundation represents a historically stable structure through which social relations can operate on the basis of traditions and cultures and function as social agents of unification of thoughts. This stability, furthered by its continuity of leadership with the same director, the same Thomas Wolf cited above, in place for the last 20 years, consequently provides an important ideational consistency through his own sedimented common sense. The foundation obtains an influential agency by politically educating Freiburg's civil society with more than 2,250 organized events and more than 145 thousand people reached (Ibid.). Clearly demonstrating that it not only represents a material structure in which layers of culture, values and knowledge are transmitted from the past to current practices, but also that it enables ideas concerning political practices, such as prioritizing equitable dispersal over providing human needs of accommodation, to be disseminated across society and receive material force. In line with this category are also the German National Office of Education Freiburg (LpB), the independent research center Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut and the University of Freiburg, all of which cooperate closely together (LpB 2019, Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut 2018). Correspondingly, they not only embody important historical institutional structures, and thus meaningful materiality, but also play an important agential role within the political-cultural domain. Comprised of leading social forces connected to leading social structures at the local as well as federal and national levels their pivotal role as organic intellectuals is clear. They represent active centers for the production of knowledge and understanding, consequently functioning as accumulators of thought over policies such as cost-efficiency and sharing the burden practices via distributing asylum seekers at the expense of the asylum seekers' need for adequate accommodation.

Considering the influential role of the AMI, a rigorous analysis of its representative individuals active within the accommodation center context demonstrates that the AMI does not only hold a strategic position to generate consent within the dimension of accommodation but also across Freiburg's society.

While it seems to operate independently with its own director, the department on accommodation management is closely linked with the city council department of social affairs. Interestingly, the mayor for social affairs and integration is not only involved in all decisions concerning accommodation, but is also the chairperson of two foundations, the Citizen Foundation (Bürgerstiftung) and the Foundation Administration. While the latter is active in different social areas, of particular relevance is its interaction with the Citizen Foundation. They are not only very active within one of the major accommodation centers (table 6.1. no. 9, no. 15) and assist in sourcing private accommodation for asylum seekers, but also play an active role in the housing and accommodation market of Freiburg in general. The head of

AMI's integration department overseeing the local initiatives is also a board member of that foundation, consequently demonstrating the interlinkages that exist between the AMI and wider social forces in Freiburg's society involved with accommodation (Bürgerstiftung 2019).

Such interactions represent mechanisms for the dissemination and internalization of similar thoughts and ideas. Furthermore, it is indicative for how the AMI, through holding another influential position within strategic sites of society, such as foundations, can transcend its interest and ideas to the wider social and political constellation of social forces in Freiburg's society and vice versa. This is essential as a precondition for certain ideas on economically efficient practices to sediment and internalize into a common sense on asylum seeker management, thereby sustaining a common aversion to provide adequate housing despite the apparent material need. Such interlinkages are important for common sense formation as they signify not only the mechanisms of sedimentation but also "form the passage of common sense from its humble beginnings to something of (potential) lasting significance" (Bruff 2008:55). Evidently, these interactions can be related to the movement of class formation towards the ethico-political moment.

Also of note, are individuals within the AMI who reveal linkages with national, rather than local or federal, agencies which also contribute to the sedimentation of certain layers of common sense on 'human management' of asylum seekers. The director of the AMI has actively been part of the German Council on Foreign Relations (GDAP), a non-partisan think tank that next to publishing academic journals also engages in political consulting (DGAP 2006). She is also a former employee of a critical contemporary political arts center connected to the German Foreign Affairs Office, the renowned think tank and political consultancy SWP and several university lecture holdings (Zimmermann 2017). On the one hand, such past experiences, linked to the fact that the state follows a given logic, contribute to her own common sense formation, as again each individual common sense is accumulated from sediments of past experiences and interactions which are dialectically transmitted over time. Consequently, certain asymmetries and tendencies, such as the systemic understanding of economically efficient practices at the expense of human needs, can be identified. These are not all necessarily linked to the dominant common sense, which reflects its open-ended nature (Bruff 2010, Bruff 2008:280). On the other hand, such interlinkages with leading state institutions on issues of asylum seekers create spaces for dialogue and knowledge production and formations of societal common-sense and display important traces of sedimented common sense. This all simultaneously informs her conscious position as an organic intellectual. In the context of Freiburg this demonstrates how her sedimented common sense expressed within a strategic structure such as the AMI leads to the ability to fuse and connect different layers of thought on the practice of dispersal. According to common sense logic such linkages consequently also play a crucial role for revealing and explaining where decisions come from,

particularly when positioned as AMI's director and leading all decisions concerning accommodating asylum seekers.

Simultaneously, the head of the accommodation management department is an active member of the KOMBA union which advocates for civil servants' rights and promotes a qualified and efficient civil service and administration (KOMBA 2019). Another AMI officer, in charge of managing private housing possibilities for asylum seekers, has linkages of former employment with the Federal Authority for Real Estate. In relation to common sense sedimentation, these linkages contribute to a holistic assessment and feed into the stratified common sense enabling the practice of the dispersal policy despite the tension that is created on the ground. It also can explain certain vested interests linked to that idea of efficiency and equitable dispersal, that do not allow the provision of costly and complicated adjustments to the housing and accommodation dilemma; indicative for the dialectical interplay of the ideational and material dimensions. Particularly, as the main and most influential institutional actor concerning accommodation practices, this interlinkage reveals where the rationale comes from and how it has been built over time, consequently revealing the underlying sedimentation of the ideational dimension. Analyzing the common sense and its sedimentation is precisely about identifying how current practices are built on layers of value and understandings from the past (Bruff 2005).

Consequently, it becomes apparent how the practice of dispersal can be continued through certain agents and historical established structures, their sedimented common sense on the efficient practice of dispersal coming from previous experiences and interlinkages with the state apparatus. Tracing the interactions that exist within influential sites of society and the dominant actors involved in the decisions and practices of accommodating asylum seekers explains how this sedimented framework already exists, spreads and maintains coherent ideas and practices on economically cost-efficient practices at the expense of adequately meeting human needs across the political, educational, cultural and economic sphere of Freiburg's society. Despite tension on accommodation and even in the locality of Freiburg where their rather liberal political attitude would suggest greater openness, ultimately, this disseminated popular understanding of the discourse and practice of dispersal leads to its persistent practice rather than change and adaptation in line with the needs of integration linked to asylum seekers' accommodation.

6.3. Manifestation of Hegemonic Common Sense

While the analyzed interactions have already hinted towards the hegemonic common sense, it is the fourth level, the ethico-political moment in which confrontation and conflict among common senses characterizes the dynamics and ultimately demonstrates how the synthesized dominant common sense is manifested locally while sustaining our systemic understanding of the relationality between distribution and accommodation. Such confrontations and manifestations can be identified in new

structures created by the AMI as well as in innovative ideas of housing to adjust to the problematic housing situation and the need to respond to demand, which currently sums up to 590 homes needed for asylum seekers in the city (AMI 2019b).

With the creation of the AMI in June 2016, this new structure suggests an adaptation to the new material reality of increased asylum seekers, which would be in line with a historical institutionalist view of creating structures for the solution of problems in critical juncture moments of 'crisis' (Peters 2011). However, the preceding analysis of the interactions demonstrated that it is only a structural change without an ideational adjustment of the practices[22], which further seems to be confirmed by two observations. Firstly, when discussing issues of accommodation for asylum seekers, none of the interviewees from the AMI[23] acknowledged that the practice of dispersal might be problematic, especially in combination with Freiburg's already difficult housing situation, rather dispersal is taken for granted - an accepted practice sedimented within the common sense. Secondly, as was discussed with AMI's newly created integration management structure and despite the humanitarian organizations' remarks on its inefficiency there was no interest in adjusting or altering the structures. This is emblematic for how the AMI acts in line with the enhanced focus on integration even though certain conditions are pointed out to not produce the envisioned results. Consequently, AMI's operations underlie a certain institutional robustness, as also does its dominant position which it uses to maintain dominant practices[24]. This can be referred to "'[t]he moment of power', for whoever manages to secure the process of change for themselves is likely to be the group which achieves societal hegemony – for a certain period of time at least" (Bruff 2008:56). This relationality of continuity despite change is what this thesis aims to explain with its systemic understanding through common sense.

This is also apparent within Freiburg's civil society when resisting against proposals tackling the tension on accommodation produced by dispersal. One proposal concerns the AMI's private housing acquisition strategy with the aim of enabling more private accommodations for asylum seekers by subsidizing rent contracts with private landlords with the city as guarantor (City Council 2018). However, this initiative does not seem to be effective since private landlords express reluctance about the city only functioning as a guarantor for the first year of a ten-year lease[25]. While this strategy can be considered as a potential adjustment to the current tension, the unwillingness of citizens to rent out apartments to asylum seekers demonstrates a certain sedimentation of common sense. This sustains the common sense of efficiency and dispersal while creating housing bottlenecks, rather than facilitating the proper accommodation of asylum seekers.

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[22]Interview with Office for Migration and Integration - Integration Unit 09.05.2019.
[23]All interviews with Office for Migration and Integration.
[24]Interview with German Red Cross Freiburg 29.03.2019.
[25]Interview with Office for Migration and Integration – Private Accommodation Unity 07.03.2019.

Similar developments are experienced with the proposal 'Einfach-Wohnen' by the city council[26]. Based on an adjustment of the federal building code[27] which envisioned the provision of AUs, which in Freiburg are in short supply, and consequently the proposal contains constructing a total of 95-110 apartments in three districts' peripheral locations[28]. Interesting to point out is that the director of the AMI as well as the municipal building society of the city, the Freiburger Stadtbau GmbH, are involved in drafting, presenting and implementing the proposal. Such interlinkages among asylum seeker 'management' and housing market management not only point towards the mechanisms of idea sedimentation constituting the common sense and contributing to the aversion of actors within this sphere to alleviate the tension, but also point towards centralization of control over housing. Furthermore, the envisioned construction areas are owned by the church and the Citizen Foundation, which, as argued, is linked to the city mayor's office (City Council 2019c). Even though, only ¼ of the apartments are intended to allocate asylum seekers, civil society and their respected citizens councils showed resistance and denied this proposal in all three districts (City Council 2019a, 2019b). Especially the construction area owned by the Citizens Foundation experienced particular resistance, indicative of the aforementioned interlinkage and consequent sedimentation of common sense to persist with the dispersal policy despite the apparent tension. Citizens councils justified their opposition with arguments based on endangered nature conservation areas and the negative peripheral locations inconvenient for such integration measures[29]. Consequently, this reluctance embodies the manifestation of the omnipresence of the common sense on cost-efficient practices of dispersal instead of alleviating the tension through building costly but long-term accommodation facilitating integration.

The City Council's members argued that the observed resistance can be justified by the poor communication of the city council and the proposal's first announcement through the local newspaper generating a feeling of exclusion among local citizens (City Council 2019c). However, going beyond this normative argument and considering this reluctant behavior in the wider perspective of our analysis, it can be related to the already existing sedimented framework of common sense favoring dispersal over providing accommodation across Freiburg's society. It seems in line with the systemic understanding of the rationality between dispersal and accommodation and the ideational efficiency logic of equitably dispersing, thereby undermining the material needs of providing accommodation, and hence contradicting the ideational dimension of long-term integration. This argument sustaining the persistent

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[26]Interview with German Red Cross Freiburg 29.03.2019;

[27]§246 Article 9 BauGB is allowing cities and municipalities to treat construction ground on the outskirts in a facilitated, accelerated and special manner to provide connecting accommodations for asylum seekers. This regulation has been adjusted in the light of the problematic housing situation many cities are facing in the aftermath of accommodating asylum seekers and is only valid until 31.12.2019.

[28]Interview with Member of Freiburg City Council 17.04.2019.

[29]Interview with German Red Cross Freiburg 29.03.2019; Interview with Member of Freiburg City Council 17.04.2019

inclination to the nominally efficient practice of dispersal and its discourse of equal distribution winning over the responsibility to provide proper accommodation can be upheld further through the establishment of the LEA in 2017. It signifies Freiburg evading its responsibility of accommodating asylum seekers dispersed by the Königsteiner Key. When it comes to the justification of the choice of location, the federal state government argues that Freiburg 'liberal-minded' characteristics are ideal for integration (City Council 2017:20). This is contradicting itself since LEAs only distribute asylum seekers elsewhere instead of accommodating and integrating them in the long-term. Bearing in mind the findings of the analysis, this acceptance of a LEA seems more likely to represent the city council's reluctance of providing costly accommodation in a saturated housing market. If a simpler and more efficient practice of dispersal can be pursued, this is favored over the costly and complicated endeavor of accommodating and integrating asylum seekers. This can be seen at the policy maker level as well as that of the citizenry. Statements of city council members sustain this claim and are indicative of the systemic logic underlying dispersal and accommodation when they outline the inability of changing the overarching political framework, with the AMI's director even acknowledging "that given the current housing situation we have to expect asylum seekers to remain living in VUs for longer" (City Council 2019c, Zimmermann 2017).

Finally, such reluctance and resistance within Freiburg demonstrates not only the manifestation of the common sense logic of cost-efficiently dispersing without providing the evident need of accommodation, but also how grounded and rooted that common sense is within civil society. Despite the given potential to resolve some of the housing and accommodation dilemmas created by the distribution of asylum seekers, even Freiburg's perceived liberal and progressive civil society demonstrates little willingness for change. This fourth level manifestation of reluctance demonstrates how urban space, besides a space to serve hegemonic common sense, is also a site of struggle, ultimately a struggle for hegemony of the dominant class interest of persisting with cost-efficient practices rather than going against that dominate common sense by providing accommodation for asylum seekers. Consequently, the tension that persists can be explained by the locally expressed sedimentation of the common sense sustained over time within the wider social, cultural, political and economic constellation of Freiburg's social forces active within and beyond the material reality of the accommodation centers.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This dissertation has attempted to investigate the perceived tension between dispersal and accommodation in Germany, not via the orthodox explanations of institutional and functional constraints and the particular timing of the 2015 so-called 'refugee crisis' but by going beyond these arguments and assessing the relationality that exists between dispersal and accommodation via the NG understanding of common sense à la Bruff. This approach enabled this research to go a level deeper than existing institutional and time contingent arguments by tracing the sedimented meanings and practices of the persistent common sense on cost-efficient and equitable dispersal policy though the social forces and their positions in the local context of Freiburg and draw conclusions for a systemic understanding of the tension between dispersal and accommodation practices.

The collected and analyzed evidence underlined the importance of layers of sedimented meaning across the educational, cultural, political and economic spheres and within strategic sites of society. This includes the central position that the AMI and therefore also the city have in the context of accommodation of asylum seekers. The AMI not only obtains important ideational agency within the material realm of accommodation, but its individual linkages demonstrate how social forces operate through and within the state and can reveal where certain ideas, practices and decisions come from. It is not just about influence in strategic sites, but about influential exercise over culture and knowledge, institutions and ideas mediated by organic intellectuals. This influence includes the analyzed interactions of cultural and political foundations as well as of research centers and universities, which emerge as historical structures from which the relevant common sense can be traced, more generally and beyond the direct material concerns of accommodation needs, and how these are ideationally sedimented within the wider dimension of society.

Taken together, these results suggest that the sedimentation of the historical ideology of the *Königsteiner Key* and its discourse of efficient, fair and equitable dispersal dominates the common sense of policy makers to the extent that other counter-hegemonic policies cannot be brought forward, regardless of whether they may better respond to asylum seeker basic needs. This suggests that there exists an underlying dominance of the cost-efficiency logic above all other considerations, as demonstrated to also be embedded in the practice and discourse of dispersal policy.

Therefore, the tension here examined can be explained by an inherent logic dominating policy practices embedded in the presented sedimentation of the synthesized common sense. The tension produced between dispersal and accommodation can be understood as a systemic product, rather than the product of functional constraints or because of a moment of 'crisis'. It is particularly striking, that even in the case of Freiburg, characterized by an actively engaged civil society that is considered liberal and

progressive, the robustness of this systemic logic underlying all structures became so evident when analyzing the sedimented common sense, the interlinkages and hence its internalization. It appears to be pointing towards a framework grounded in our wider system of production, consequently also enabling these findings to be generalized across the country of Germany.

Nevertheless, given the relatively small sample size, the overall validity of the study can be affected and generalizing the results to similar cases within Germany should be done with caution. Another limitation lies in the method used as it entails a particular 'reading' of Gramsci that requires a certain level of subjectivity, which could influence the research reliability. However, having established valid reasons for this particular theoretical lens and method, these present the most feasible and accurate manner of capturing the tension between dispersal and accommodation. Furthermore, due to the focus on accommodation, other aspects of integration such as labor market or language acquisition were not here considered. Thus, the picture provided by this thesis, while valuable, is still incomplete and therefore leaves room for further research. To enhance generalizability, future studies of a larger scale extended to other German cities could contribute with large sample sizes and increase the overall validity. To overcome the accommodation-limited focus, it would be recommendable to include other aspects of integration and examine whether that common sense logic underlying dispersal can also be found across the other dimensions of integration.

Finally, due to the enhanced focus on integration together with the emerging importance of urban spaces, which are becoming the central sites of hosting more than half of the world's population as well as of political struggle, it has proven fundamental to have a deeper discussion about these apparently interconnected topics. The systemic understanding provided in this research and the relationality that it suggests between the material and the ideational levels as well as between the structures and embedded agents could support decision makers because of a more in depth understanding of dispersal policy and accommodation beyond the commonly understood structural logics. Bearing in mind the persistent challenge of global human displacement and the need for accommodation and integration, such a wider understanding of this experienced tension seems fundamental to be able to produce meaningful integration policies that more inherently consider the importance of accommodation in the context of integration.

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LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTNERS

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