

STIFTUNG
MERCATOR



KITCHEN ON THE RUN 2022

A COMPASS

TOWARDS A BETTER US

INVITATION TO ON-GOING QUESTIONING

FOR EXISTING AND NEW COMMUNITIES





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CHECK-IN



KITCHEN ON THE RUN 2022

The project Kitchen on the Run (KOTR) from the Berlin-based organization Über den Tellerrand e. V. returned in 2022 to the streets after two years of pause due to the Covid-19 pandemic. KOTR is the mobile version of Über den Tellerrand and with a kitchen built into a shipping container it has travelled through Germany and Europe. **As a place of encounter, the container brings together people whose life-worlds otherwise have few points of contact.** Free, easily accessible cooking events and other low-threshold activities make participation possible for everyone. During their stay of several weeks, the KOTR teams accompany the local people in building up a community that will continue to exist after its departure. In this way, the project contributes to better social cohesion within our diverse society.

Since 2016, the KOTR container has travelled to 20 cities in 5 different countries. During this time, over 8,300 people of 72 nationalities participated in 412 events in Germany and Europe. The first tour in 2016 through Europe was about facilitating as many encounters as possible in order to reduce prejudices in the host society. From 2017-2019, the mobile kitchen visited three small German towns each year to create a meeting place for people with and without a history of flight. From this, groups of volunteers formed in each case, which were subsequently transferred to the Über den Tellerrand network as new locations. These locations are called satellites.

Under the motto 'A Compass Towards a Better Us', KOTR travelled in 2022 to four small towns in north-

Since 2013, Über den Tellerrand e.V. has been bringing people with different backgrounds and stories together through diverse encounter formats. Founded in 2013 with headquarters in Berlin-Schöneberg, we are now active throughout Germany and promote an open and diverse society in over 35 cities and towns.

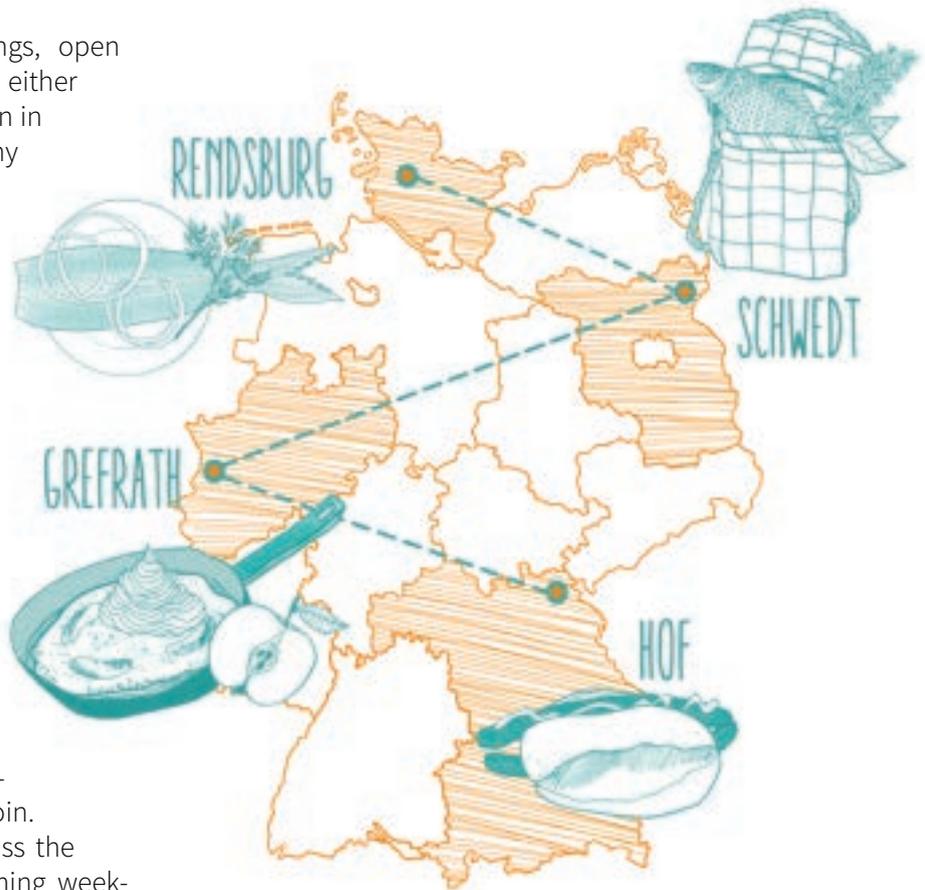
ern, eastern, southern and western Germany – Hof (Bayern), Greifath (Nordrhein-Westfalen), Schwedt (Brandenburg) and Rendsburg (Schleswig-Holsteins). In contrast to previous years, the tour mainly visited locations where there was already a satellite. A team of four coordinated the project and accompanied the local groups for five weeks each in their process of community (re)building.

Together with the local satellites-groups, a weekly program was designed at each location: cooking evenings were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays and up to 35 people could register in advance. People who came as participants got involved in cooking and other facilitation tasks and could learn new dishes, using the container as a low-threshold space to meet others. In addition, it was possible to sign up as a cook and then lead one's own dish preparation at a cooking station. The idea was to present a personal recipe and its story to others, taking on the role of guide through the evening. There were three to four such cooking stations each evening. Groups as well signed up to lead the stations together.

In addition to the cooking evenings, open events took place on the weekends, either at the container or at another location in the city. These could have been many things: a picnic in the park, a city walk accompanied by get-to-know-you questions, a dance evening or a board game afternoon. These events were organized and implemented independently by the local Über den Tellerrand group with the support of the KOTR team. They were meant to try out different event formats that, like the cooking, served the purpose of providing an opportunity for people to meet who did not know each other before.

Every Wednesday, the KOTR team offered a two-hours volunteer meeting for the local community and interested people who wanted to join. This was a time to reflect and discuss the cooking events and plan the upcoming weekend events. Roles were assigned and questions and responsibilities clarified. At the volunteer meetings, the KOTR team also provided regular input on a variety of topics, including how to design and implement a cooking evening, different team roles and responsibilities, self-organization, outreach for new volunteers, and diversity on the orga-team.

The entire tour was a five-month journey full of rich experiences and diverse encounters.



With the help of this four-parted program and under the heading of 'Recovery', the local communities were strengthened to resume their activities after a long Corona break. The focus was accordingly on community (re)building. All volunteer groups created and strengthened during the tours continue to receive support after the end of the project in the form of training, mentoring programs and consultations.

KITCHEN ON THE RUN CREW 2022

Esther loves the dynamics of groups that can be discovered in every corner of our society. She is convinced that diversity is a gift and that we can create great things if all people help to shape social coexistence.

Firas firmly believes that people need to be in contact with each other in order to remain human. Already in 2018, he had the opportunity to be on tour with the Kitchen container and witnessed the magic that happens when the most diverse people meet and share their perspectives.

Cäthe has been spreading her infectious enthusiasm at Über den Tellerrand Berlin for some time now. Whether at the classic encounter cooking or creative workshop formats, Cäthe is a hostess with passion and ensures with her positive charisma that everyone feels comfortable.

Alex always explores new ideas and implements creative meeting formats, first in Frankfurt and Karlsruhe, and now also at the container. He wears his heart on his sleeve and is a very pleasant conversational partner with his open-mindedness. He finds win-win situations for everyone involved.

As part of the KOTR 2022 project – funded among others by the Stiftung Mercator – a paid position was also created for accompanying research. Through the public call for applications in February 2022, I became aware of the project and was eventually selected to conduct the research.



ACCOMPANYING RESEARCH

The aim of my role as a researcher collaborating with the KOTR project was to provide Über den Tellerrand with a qualitative evaluation of this year's edition of the project. I was asked since the beginning to develop my research with the aim of **offering the satellites critical input concerning challenges, potentials and possible strategies** useful to their process of community (re)building. Based on this double intention, I designed the research moving from three initial questions:



IMPACT

What are the opportunities and challenges of a public meeting place like the kitchen container?



NETWORK

What role do (local) cooperations with different actors play in this?



SUSTAINABILITY

What does it take to sustain long-term commitment to diversity and social cohesion?

These three areas of inquiry quickly intersected in the everyday life of the project; still, they offered a common vocabulary for discussion with Esther, my referent in the KOTR team. In our weekly online meetings, we planned the logistics and exchanged ideas and reflections. This relationship was extremely impor-

tant for the creation of a shared understanding of the themes and issues that were emerging. It also provided me with a direct insight into the experience of the project on the side of the team.

During the four months of research, I visited the cities of the project each for a period between 5 and 7 days. There I conducted **participant observation** during public events, volunteer meetings and team meetings where I engaged in **informal conversations** with the participants. I entered into a more direct exchange with a total of 18 old and new members of the satellites through **one-to-one unstructured interviews**. In three of the four cities, I designed and co-conducted together with Esther a workshop to explore the project through the lens of 'space' with **emotional mapping** and **group walks**.



ETHNOGRAPHY AS METHOD

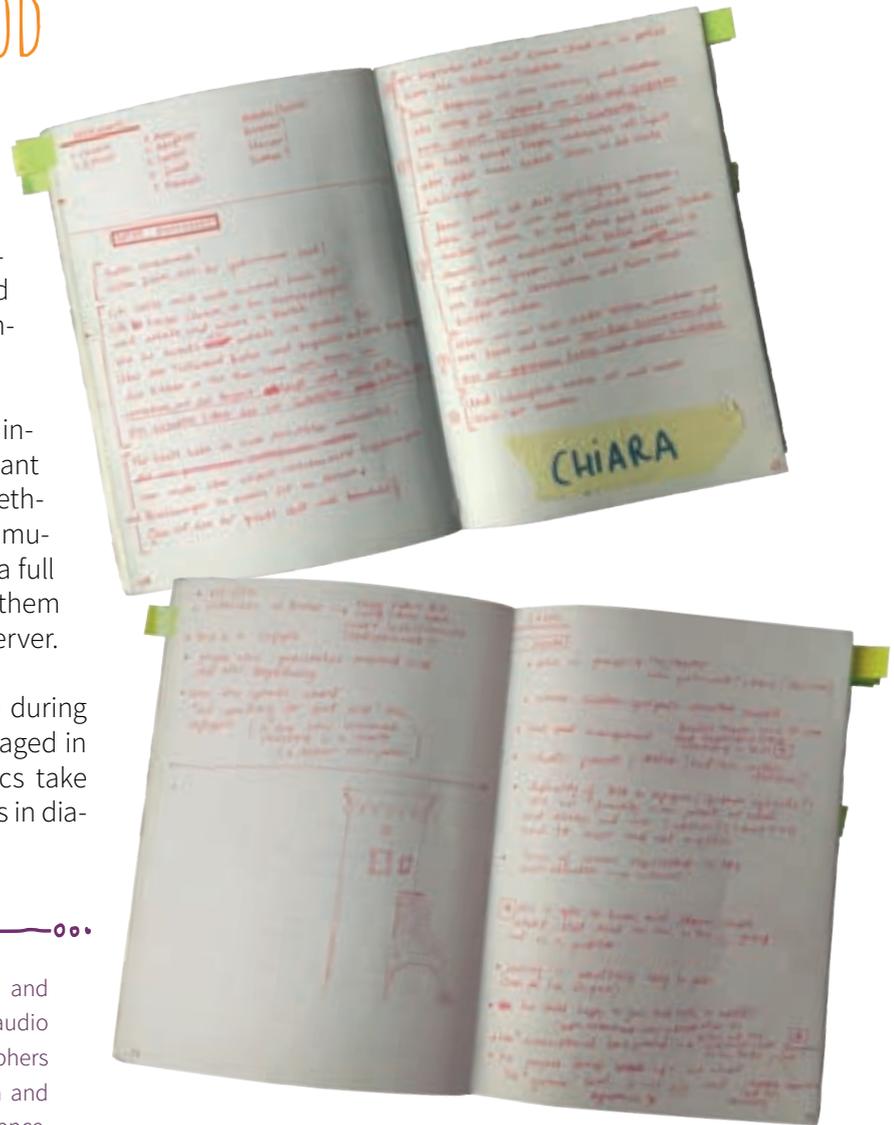
As a social anthropologist, I engaged with the research with my ethnographic toolkit. This qualitative methodology, shared across social sciences and humanities, offers a series of methods that can be applied and mixed according to the specificity of the research and the collaboration with the people and environment involved.

Together with in-depth one-to-one or group interviews – more or less structured – participant observation is the core method¹. With this method the researcher joins the activities of a community in a double way: she is at the same time a full participant in those activities – learning from them and influencing them – and their critical observer.

Taking in-depth notes about the experience during and/or after the participation, she is thus engaged in a constant reflection on how social dynamics take place and what people say about them, always in dialogue with the existing theoretical literature.



1 Other methods include speech analysis, photo and sound recording and the production of visual and audio material together with the participants. Ethnographers explore also creative methods such as illustration and comics, fiction writing and filmmaking, performance, gaming or digital practices.



Sharing the everyday life of a community as much as possible permits **learning in first person about the shared system of techniques, meanings and values that the community members use to navigate the complexity of social life.**

Ethnography is a particularly fruitful method when it comes to research about community making in the context of differences and commonalities. **How do people explain differences and what does this mean for their everyday life and their interaction with others? How are differences made visible or invisible in the community?** These are questions an anthropologist would ask to understand on which base people come together. Answering that opens up the possibility for the community to think strategically about whether such explanations need adjustment, of what kind and to which purpose.

This is the case of the KOTR project and its communities – the satellites – with their specific everyday life in between voluntary work, administrative politics and the organization of encounters. Through my research, I asked myself: **how are the communities being organized and maintained? What specific style do they develop in their process of community (re)building? Which challenges and chances occur on the way?**

In the four months, I could assist to moments of decision-making, discussions about change and common ideation of solutions. **Moments of frictions and ambiguity – where categories and practices ‘failed’ or became ‘uncertain’ – were particularly useful to identify possible boundaries and blind spots.**



HOW DID THE RESEARCH GO?

The KOTR team was very welcoming and helped me navigate the project from the beginning. The research started in fact from scratch during my first visit to Hof. As a consequence, **mapping and learning about the multisite field happened organically in response to the encounters, conversations and observations** I engaged with. A relevant point is that I only experienced fractions of the project. I only engaged in some volunteer meetings and other events. Therefore, my research results must be understood as excerpts and derived from my subjective perception. They have no claim to completeness.

Being in Hof in the first week of research made clear to me once more that ethnography is never about observing a detached reality from an external point of view. Being present and joining the groups, even though for a limited amount of time, **I took a direct part in shaping the encounters and added a new person to the project.**

White woman, originally from Italy, living in Berlin, without German citizenship, German-speaking at a middle level and English speaking at a more fluent level, 37 years old, unmarried and with no children: **these and other aspects of who I am influenced how people**



responded to my questions, the encounters I could and could not have and the kind of interaction with different people in general.

CHIARA GARBELLOTTO

In the last 10 years, I studied Anthropology and Museum Studies and researched politics and forms of participation, diversity and public engagement especially in exhibiting contexts. I have supported and created workshops and events in between sciences and the arts. Moving from a feminist approach, I am particularly interested in collaborative work and in creative and open-ended methodologies.

What was your favorite place as a child?

On a hammock at the seaside reading a book.

What makes you very curious?

Tales and fantastic worlds from different cultures, objects from the past, cities, animals doing their things, all forms of dance.

What are you terrible at?

Keeping a routine, sports, being serious, economic thinking!

When you smell this meal, you remember your childhood: fried courgettes and chocolate pudding.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOKLET

The primary intention of this booklet is to hand a curated assemblage of inputs and questions back to those of you whom I had the pleasure to meet during the research and who contributed in the first place to shape the direction of this research. The presentation of notes and observations is meant to be the starting point for a critical engagement into community making and community work for all satellites, which can directly benefit from the experience of the four cities, whether they have the same challenges and opportunities or also different ones. Overall, the booklet is **intended as a resource for all communities actively interested in slowing down their activity and taking time to address challenges and opportunities with a critical and open approach to learning and change.**

In the next Chapter entitled **SATELLITES COORDINATES** I will bring you closer to my experience of being at the container through a collection of notes from the four cities. A series of **BOXES** throughout the booklet profile information in a synthetic way about specific matters. In four of them, you can find more details about the project's satellites, their development and their community spaces.

The notes and observations I gathered are introduced in the following Chapter entitled **CHALLENGES AND CHANCES FOR THE COMMUNITIES**. 4 sections present the main themes that emerged across the satellites:

→ **CROSSING ROUTES**

→ **CONTAINER / KITCHENS**

→ **HANDS AND KNIVES**

→ **CHECK-IN, CHECKOUT**

You can read each of these sections as a separate input for discussion or you can find the relations across them that are more relevant to your own community.

In each section, you will find my reflections presented in dialogue with selected **ethnographic material** (blue in the text). **Relevant sentences are marked in orange.** On the final page, you will find as well the Working Tools, questions and methods to engage collectively with the reflections. They are an invitation to address the challenges presented in the sections starting from the real context of your own group.

In the final Chapter entitled **CHECK OUT**, I will discuss the motto of the 2022 KOTR edition – ‘Compass towards a Better Us’ – in relation to the research finding. The central issue of “social cohesion” is the focus of these conclusions, where you can find my suggestions and invitations for your process of community (re)building.

In the text, you will also encounter **conceptual terms** marked in violet. For those of you who are interested to delve further into the perspective of social sciences, you can look for their introduction in the **Glossary** at the end of the booklet together with a series of links and texts under the title **Resources**.



SATELLITES COORDINATES



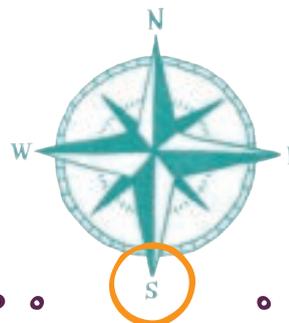
HOF



The city of Hof hosted the container for the first time in 2019. After this experience, the satellite was founded in the same year. Bärbel and Franziska, two Integrationslotsinnen from the local Diakonie, supported the satellite in the early days and withdrew after some time in order not to interfere too much in the self-development and management of the group. When Corona started, the community continued to organize meetings and cooking events online and tried to keep the collective spirit alive. However, the tightening of restrictions and regulations had a critical effect on the satellite, and internal disagreements led some of the members to leave the group. As a result, Bärbel approached the group again to support it during this difficult time.



- 2 Statistisches Bundesamt 2021: Fortschreibung des Bevölkerungsstandes. Code 12411-0015.
- 3 Statistisches Bundesamt 2021: Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Schutzsuchende Ergebnisse des Ausländerzentralregisters



- STATE: BAVARIA
- CONTAINER LOCATION: LORENZPARK, LORENZSTRASSE 47, 95028 HOF, GERMANY
- CONTAINER PERIOD: 9 MAY-12 JUNE 2022
- NUMBER OF INHABITANTS: 45.125²
- PEOPLE WITHOUT GERMAN CITIZENSHIP: 8.615³

FACEBOOK:
Über den Tellerrand Hof

INSTAGRAM:
ueber_den_tellerrand_hof &
ueber_den_tellerrand_hof3

E-MAIL:
Hof@ueberdentellerrand.org

“I arrive at the container where the preparation for the cooking evening has already started. I meet immediately new people at one table: a woman who speaks Arabic is drinking tea with his partner on a bench; there are a lot of vegetables on the table where she will later cook her recipe. After a while tables were set properly. One was prepared for baking a dessert and I happily remember that someone announced it the day before. Three young men arrive and immediately start organizing their table, where they will cook two sorts of Biryani. After a few seconds, I find myself doing something: washing and cutting ingredients, moving tools or tables and chairs, moving from one station to the kitchen, crossing many times the path of other people who are doing the same. Noticing how I am drawn to the action, I wonder how will I ever be able to talk to all those people. I realize that the dimension of the container and the event area is such, that is impossible not to interact with others: I quickly need to ask for instruction, wait in line with others to access the sink or simply find myself around a table with other 3 to 4 people waiting for the chef of the recipe to tell us how to proceed. During the cooking phase, Kena and Shriroop join the table and we start to chat. They are both students at the Hochschule in Hof, in different fields. The cooking proceeds with us carving the vegetables as the woman teaches us, Shriroop laughs saying she can't do it properly. After a while, I hear Firas asking around the chefs how much is left for the plates to be ready: quite a lot, minimum another hour. Some women and girls start dancing on the wooden patio; I am called to join the group but I feel a bit embarrassed and I don't last long.”

Hof, 26.05.2022

Year of foundation:

2019

Number of members in the orga team:

currently 20

When and how often do you meet?

1-2 organising meetings per month and one cooking evening per month.

Where do you cook and how often?

In the “Lichthaus”, once a month

Your superpower as an organising team?

Team spirit, solidarity and passion

What do you still need to practise a bit?

The team is relatively new and sometimes things are still a bit awkward, but that will come in time.

Your vision for the future?

To continue to be a place of social cohesion and openness for all people and nations and thereby inspire others!

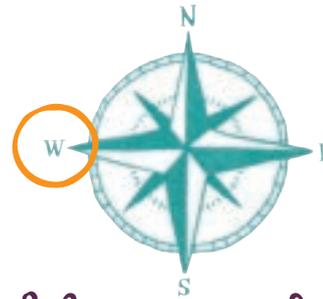


GREFRATH



The satellite in Grefrath was founded in 2019 on the initiative of Monika and Susanne. They got to know Über den Tellerrand when they participated in an event of the KOTR project in 2018 in the nearby town of Süchteln. Inspired by this, they put together a network of persons who had already met as part of other local initiatives to support people with refugee experience and to cook. The Kommunales Integrationszentrum of the district of Viersen supported the community. This participated with booths and information material in local events, for example in a meeting event where local associations presented their work, organized by the project Ankommen und Leben in Grefrath and the music festival Schwingboden.

They remained active during the Corona period, organizing meetings according to the rules and participating in online events of the wider network. They



STATE:	NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN
CONTAINER LOCATION:	BURG UDA 47929
GREFRATH (IN THE DISTRICT OEDT)	
CONTAINER PERIOD:	13 JUNE-17 JULY 2022
NUMBER OF INHABITANTS:	15.263 ⁴
PEOPLE WITHOUT GERMAN CITIZENSHIP:	1.513 ⁵

also managed to stay in touch with each other through their active use of social media. In 2021, Monika attended a workshop in Berlin and became a Safira - the Arabic word for ambassador - for Über den Tellerrand. Safirs are volunteers from across the network who can be asked by satellites for support with specific challenges.



- <https://www.grefrath.de/de/inhalt/grefrath-im-portrait/&nid1=64956>
- AdminStat Germania 2020 Karten, Analysen und Statistiken zur ansässigen Bevölkerung

“This is my first cooking event in Oedt but I already got to know three members of the orga-team during a one-to-one meeting I look around for people I don’t know and I introduce myself to a young woman. She is Wehazit and I am glad during the evening to chat more than once with her, who I feel very comfortable with. She is very easygoing and engages with many people during the evening, including Leo, an older man who is a volunteer in the neighbor satellite in the town of Süchteln for many years. While the cooking proceeds, I see Aram who is part of the orga-team. Rasha, a friend of hers seats on some deckchairs in a corner where she will draw with Henna on women’s hands and arms for at least one hour. She came with her son, who she will constantly check with one eye while doing the decorations. At least three kids, Cäthe, Hannah – also a member of the orga-team – her mother Sylvia and me had one, seated all around, chatting together. Wehazit joins at a certain point and another woman, Souad, as well, commenting that she also does it but with a syringe in the Morocco style. After a while Aram says, addressing her friend: “she should take a break now!”

Oedt, 05.07.2022



FACEBOOK:
Über den Tellerrand - Grefrath

INSTAGRAM:
gefrath_ueber_den_tellerrand

E-MAIL:
Gefrath@ueberdentellerrand.org

Year of foundation:
2019

Number of members in the orga team:
11

When and how often do you meet?
About 1 x a month

How many cookouts have you had so far?
About 20

Where do you cook and how often?
Always different, sometimes in the youth club “Dingens”, but we are a “wandering group”, usually 1 x per month.

Which dish has been best received so far?
Tajine, roulades

Your superpower as an orga team?
We are a mix of young/old/male/female/intercultural and we are very well connected within the region. We treat each other with a lot of appreciation.

What do you still need to practice a bit?
Rituals before and after cooking/acquisition of new participants.

Your vision for the future?
To find a permanent meeting place.

SCHWEDT



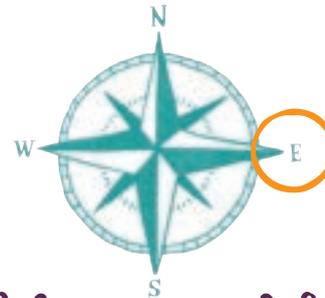
The satellite in Schwedt was founded during the third week of the KOTR project in 2022, as the first satellite in Brandenburg. Erik, co-initiator together with Burglind, had been already in contact with Über den Tellerrand in Berlin since he joined the project Begegnungswerkstatt Deutschland⁶ in Berlin in 2021. Through the connections of both the founders – whose job brings them in contact with people arriving and already living in Schwedt with flight experience – and thanks to the KOTR team, they all engaged many participants at the container: the group has now started its collective journey.



6 Begegnungswerkstatt Über den Tellerrand

7 <https://www.schwedt.eu/de/72156>

8 AdminStat. Karten, Analysen und Statistiken zur ansässigen Bevölkerung 2020 Gemeinde von Schwedt/Oder



STATE: BRANDENBURG
CONTAINER LOCATION: VIERRADENER STR. 22,
16303 SCHWEDT/ODER
CONTAINER PERIOD: 18 JULY-21 AUGUST 2022
NUMBER OF INHABITANTS: 30.750⁷
PEOPLE WITHOUT GERMAN CITIZENSHIP: 1.259⁸



FACEBOOK:

Über den Tellerrand Schwedt

INSTAGRAM:

ueber_den_tellerrand_schwedt

E-MAIL:

schwedt@ueberdentellerrand.org

“Yaari came tonight from Berlin. He works for Über den Tellerrand in Berlin and I already met him once quickly. He’s happy to see the container and the team in action for the first time. “Amazing how people autonomously are using the container as they have been doing that forever” he tells me. Later in the evening, while we are waiting for the recipe to be ready, I get to know Danish. We introduce each other and I discover that he is a Badminton semi-professional player and the week after will be in Köpenick near Berlin for a tournament with his team. When Cäthe announces we still need to wait before eating and that there are games and sports equipment to play together, he goes and gets his rackets from the car. Later on, while I am seated on a corner of the long table between Andy and Marcel, I notice that in front of me a woman is translating to her friend into sign language what other commensals are saying. She also speaks Italian because, as she tells me when I ask about it, she likes the country and goes often to visit a friend and so we exchange a couple of sentences in Italian. After a while, Ahmed and Abdul arrive at the table. They come closer to my corner to say hi to another commensal. While we eat, I exchange some words with Abdul, who’s holding his child on his lap: when I tell him that I’m from Italy, he tells me that his hobby is the history of architecture and that he would really love travelling to Italy. He asks me if I’m going to be there at the next cooking evening because they are going to prepare a recipe together, he still has to speak with his friend. While we are speaking, a man is taking a lot of pictures around the table. I ask Andy if he’s from the press but he says no, he just likes to take pictures. Later when we were eating he will comment, ‘this feels like paparazzi!’”

Schwedt, 11.08.2022

Year of foundation:

2022

Number of members in the orga team:

about 15

When and how often do you meet?

Every second Wednesday of the month

How many cooking evenings have you had so far?

2

Where do you cook and how often?

At the Mehrgenerationenhaus, every last Wednesday of the month. We are planning more for next year.

Which dish has been the most popular so far?

All of them. We love food.

Your superpower as an orga team?

Motivation and imagination.

What do you need to practice a bit more?

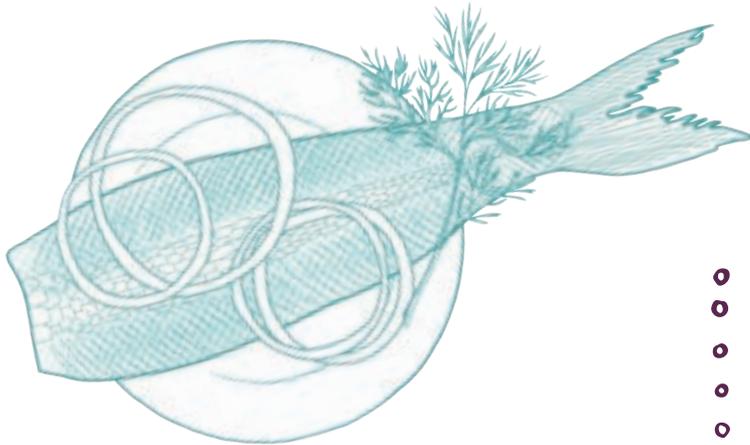
Task delegation and social media presence.

Your vision for the future?

Inventing new meeting formats, reaching new people, contributing to the welcome culture in Schwedt in the long term.

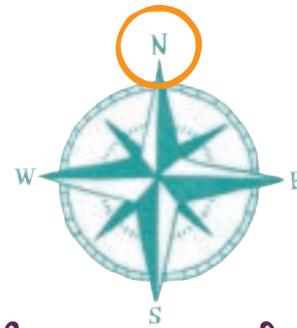


RENDSBURG



The satellite in Rendsburg was founded in 2019, after the container was already in the city for seven weeks at that time, just like in Hof. At that time, a dedicated group had been found to continue cooking. Melanie, who works at the Migration Service of the city of Rendsburg, was to support the community as a volunteer coordinator. Only a few weeks after the container left the city, the group's activities were slowed down by the corona pandemic and infection control measures. As a result, the members lost track of each other and there were only sporadic events, mostly initiated by Melanie.

When the container came to Rendsburg another time in 2022, old members were again inspired by the idea and new members were recruited. This enabled the satellite to recover and resume its activities. The community has also found a new kitchen in the local adult education centre, where meetings work even better than before.



STATE: SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN
CONTAINER LOCATION: SCHLOBLATZ 10,
24768 RENDSBURG
CONTAINER PERIOD: 22 AUGUST-25 SEPTEMBER 2022
NUMBER OF INHABITANTS: 28.790⁹
PEOPLE WITHOUT GERMAN CITIZENSHIP: 1.650¹⁰



9 <https://www.rendsburg.de/stadtverwaltung/stadtportrait/statistiken-zahlenspiegel>

10 AdminStat. Karten, Analysen und Statistiken zur ansässigen Bevölkerung 2020 Gemeinde von Rendsburg

“The second cooking event is a rainy one. I have never experienced events at the container during rain and I am curious, how that changes the atmosphere. A sense of familiarity for me – this is the fourth city I’m visiting – mixes with that of the satellite, which I have already perceived as very lively and playful during the previous event. People are close to each other on the container platform, protected by the lateral doors and busy around the stations for cooking. That evening also falafel is cooked and everyone takes turns in trying to prepare one, guided by Said and also Emily, a younger kid who is very active throughout the whole evening. After the dinner, Khadija prepares chai for everyone; it’s almost a tradition now, since it is not the first time she serves it. In that weather is very much appreciated, the queue starts forming; the glasses are passed from hand to hand and like this people enjoy their chai and heat up their hands on the warm tee glasses. Rana brought as well something from home for the after-dinner: a perfume for the hair to cover the smell of food. She burns it into a censer and directs the smoke into the hairs of people who are very much used to that and those who are curious to try for the first time.”

Rendsburg, 08.09.2022



Year of foundation:
2019

Number of members in the orga team:
5 - 44

When and how often do you meet?
Once a month

How many cooking evenings have you had so far?
Approx. 12 - 15

Where do you cook and how often?
At the VHS school, once a month.

Which dish has been the most popular so far?
Falafel and Shawarma.

Your superpower as an orga team?
We do everything together, we are a team

What do you need to practice a bit more?
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CHALLENGES AND CHANCES FOR THE COMMUNITIES



CROSSING ROUTES

People move along many kinds of routes. Routes are here intended as both movements across countries and cities as well as across communities. Even if satellites' members live in the same city, the experience of navigating society can be very different.

PERSONAL ROUTES

My stay in **Grefrath** was particularly rich with stories about many elsewhere: routes and places related to each other in many collages of memories, stories, desires, images and imaginations.

The day after I met Aram for a one-to-one conversation. She had been living in Oedt for 7 years with her family of 4. Seated under the old Burg Uda tower and surrounded by trees in the calm of the afternoon, she told me about the places of her life in Iran where she was born, where she studied and lived before and after she got married. She told me as well about the route to Germany and the stressful house changes that came in the following years within Oedt itself.

In Oedt I got to know also Hannah, one of the new members of the orga-team. We met in a café where she described, among other things, her experience in international contexts in Berlin and in India, where she met her future husband. This was a key experience for her and the long-life relation to that country is very much part of her everyday life. When we shared about our changes of routes in working life, Hannah told me about a 'revelatory' experience she had: when she joined the volunteers' meeting

of Über den Tellerrand Grefrath for the first time she felt passing from a difficult communicational atmosphere to an opposite one.

Avoiding collecting personal life experiences for the sake of it, the way the routes of different persons were meeting is what mattered to me. **The collective route of the communities was not a parallel, separate route from those of its members. It was rather the fabric made through the specific weavings of personal routes.** It was a different one in every community and, since the encounters happened under real, historical and material conditions, it was changing over time within the communities themselves.

EVERYDAY LIFE AT THE CONTAINER

While listening to these and other stories during my research, I learnt about volunteers' perception of the container and their satellite also through the comparison they offered to other communities they belonged to. It was important to acknowledge that the broader historical and political context was influencing their participation.

- What do people look for in the community?
- How do they feel they can behave there?
- Who can they be in comparison to other groups and situations?

All the people I met took part in the project, not as abstract members of a standard group. They rather always (re)acted in a specific personal way within the volunteer's group, depending on the concrete and diverse positions in their own routes in life.

These positions defined how their present looked like as well as what future they could imagine (their **futurability**), both for themselves and the community. 'Long-term planning' can in fact mean very different things for students, working women and men, families and single people, retired people and persons with a Duldung status (among others). **The general choreography at the container, during both events and meetings, was changing according to people's rhythms and moods and people participated at different paces.**

(→ See chapter **HANDS AND KNIVES**)

WALKING THE STREETS

One of the most important lines of difference that influenced how people joined and lived through the events at the container was their experience of public life in the city. For people who were still settling into the local life, this was a particularly charged experience, especially for those who didn't have a stable network of acquaintances and friendships yet.

In **Hof**, the city center challenged two members of the community very differently to go out of their comfort zone.



For our one-to-one meeting, Ali and I decided to take a walk. We got to know each other at my first cooking evening. With an energetic pace, he showed me the streets around the park where the container was located and took me up to the hill in a bigger park. He described the job he left when decided to leave Syria as well as the first days in town 3 years before. With a very pragmatic disposition, he told me how he had walked around to discover the city and asked people in shops and restaurants directly if he could work there.



During those first days of research in Hof, I was orientating in my new role. Moving across the city through the experience of Ali, Sara and other members of Über den Tellerrand Hof showed me how walking the streets is not the same thing for everyone, it is not an obvious and neutral act. **Recognizing that we all walk the same routes differently, depending on our stories of the past, present and future, is the first step for a community centered on promoting encounter between different experiences of mobility and especially flight.** Therefore room for addressing these differences needs to be created. Creating an open communication atmosphere and culture in the satellites emerged as a challenging and relevant issue for the creation of a more diverse and inclusive community.

During the first cooking evening, I get to know also Sara, a young woman new to the community of Über den Tellerrand Hof. We bonded quickly and started chatting again the following Lagerfeuer night. It was towards the end of that event that she told me she was afraid to walk alone at night with her two children, even though they live five minutes on foot from the container. She was talking about that on the phone with her partner. I offered to accompany her, so we walked together down the street to her apartment.

ANTI-RACIST LEARNING

Two persons from different satellites explicitly shared during informal conversations that they experienced racism while attempting to open an exchange with strangers on the street. These experiences also form an important aspect in the negotiation of differences within the same community. Not every member of a community is affected by **racism** and **discrimination** and everyone who is can experience it in a different form. It turned out to be very enriching and transform-

ative to address **prejudices** and **stereotypes** openly within the community. Learning together, how different forms of discrimination and racism play out in the local context can initiate a **process of collective learning – across differences and multiple routes**.

This emerged in **Rendsburg**, where the satellite organized a workshop on everyday-life racism moderated by referent Gloria Boateng. Besides single training sessions such as this one – a precious resource for all participants – **the inclusion of a collective anti-racist learning process in the long-term aim of the satellite could work as a backbone to its community (re)building**.

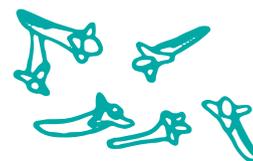
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Thinking about the project along crossing routes, I came to the following findings:

★ **Community members have moved and keep moving along incredibly different routes, across geographical space and across communities**. In the same satellite there could be people who are born in the same city and people who moved to a new one recently; people who migrated by choice and people who fled from unlivable conditions; people who experienced community life in their past and people who are longing to be part of one; people who are in rent and people who cannot work in the field they have studied for or in which they are professionals. The differences these positions create are **intersectional**, which means they overlap, cross and mutually inform each other.

★ **People's perspectives about their future and the rhythms of present life emerged clearly as very different in the same community**. Engaging in the group more or less actively is a response to different aims and urgencies (i.e. learning about different cooking cultures, having fun, training in the German language and not being alone). Equally the availability of resources (i.e. time, money, daily care for children and transport) plays a crucial role.

★ **People live and move in the cities as bodies. That means we all are read by others accordingly to social conventions, personal prejudices and stereotypes**. Speaking about discrimination and racism in the communities goes along with speaking about **critical whiteness**. It is important to raise awareness of these dynamics in individual interactions as well as acknowledge them as foundations of the social structure. Through this, the satellites can foster their process of community (re)building.



WORKING TOOLS



WHO OR WHAT EVENT SHAPED YOUR LIFE PATH? WHEN HAS YOUR ROUTE BEEN STONY? WHEN SUNNY? REFLECT ALONE, IF YOU FEEL LIKE IT WITH THE HELP OF CREATIVE METHODS. FOR EXAMPLE, DRAW THE STEPS OF YOUR PATH.

EXCHANGE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AFTERWARDS.



CREATE AS A GROUP A LANDSCAPE WITH ALL THE PERSONAL LANDMARKS FROM THE LIVES OF THE GROUP MEMBERS. YOU CAN FOR EXAMPLE DRAW OR MAKE A COLLAGE. INCLUDE NOT ONLY THOSE IN THE CITY BUT ALSO OTHERS, WHEREVER THEY EXIST IN SPACE (ELSEWHERE) AND IN MEMORY (PAST).

EXCHANGE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.



HOW DOES PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL DECISION WORK IN YOUR CITY? WHAT “KEYS” DO YOUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS OWN TO PLACES WHERE DECISIONS ABOUT COMMON LIFE ARE MADE? WHAT CONSEQUENCES ARE THERE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES?

EXCHANGE KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHER SATELLITES AND NOTE KEY FINDINGS.



CONTAINER / KITCHENS

KOTR came to life in and through the container. The characteristics of this unique mobile place were at the center of the project.

CO-CREATING THE CONTAINER

The container had its full application during the cooking evenings, influencing in many ways the encounters of the people who met under its roof: how many could join, what did they need to bring from home and even how close to each other did they find themselves.

The container defined the project also in terms of the relations between the community members during the five weeks as well as before and especially after: it activated some volunteers to bring the container into the city, it created a new context for old and new relations and amplified local dynamics during the organization of events.

→ In what ways is the container accessible as a physical and social space?

The container with all its equipment was not simply the base on which the community came together. It constituted what the community members actually did together. All the movement, planning and communication needed to use the container brought the community into action. **Co-creating the container assembled people close to each other across wide differences, prompting many kinds of interaction with**

it and with each other.

“It’s a constant issue”, said Firas to me a few minutes after we met for the first time, on a June afternoon in Hof: buying substitute pieces, adjusting, cleaning, sorting things out, keeping it tidy are part of the everyday life of the team. Firas and Alex were telling Cäthe about the tidying-up session they had the day before, up until 2 in the night, to organize all of the plates, cutleries, tools, spices and many other objects in the wooden pantry built into the internal wall of the container. Together they re-ordered everything according to the pictograms on the shelves created to help people navigate and appropriate the container.

→ How does the container’s functionality drive people to collaborate, especially in maintenance and – when something breaks – repair work?

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

The way organizational work and logistics management were distributed between the KOTR team and the satellites during the five weeks revealed interesting aspects of the challenges of community (re)building. Discussing such tasks occupied a good part of the exchange between the teams – which were indeed referred to as orga-teams (→ **TABLES AND BANKS**). Volunteer meetings were also dedicated to discussing topics concerning community making such as group moderation, diversity and racism, as per input from the

Berlin team or the satellites themselves. Still, the organization of events and the distribution of tasks had a central place in the conversations.

The maintenance and repair of the container and its equipment was instead a core task of the Berlin team, which had the responsibility of its transport as well. The opening and closing of the container when used for events and meetings – as well as privately by the team – was also carried out by Cäthe, Esther, Alex and Firas, sometimes with the help of other people who were often very interested in the process.

On my first day in Hof, the closure of the container began and Esther invited me to assist closer. Together with the opening, it would reveal during the following months as a proper ritual. I was taught how to do that properly, but I really never learnt being there only sporadically. On that day, all of them were moving doors and locks: those were the first weeks for them after all – with time it became instead an automatic procedure. A cable got trapped at the top so Firas climbed on one door (“Einfach!”) – the others joking about him damaging the container.

This scene could seem unimportant. Still, when seen as one of the many moments in the broader construction of a daily routine for the four team members in their new life ‘on the run’, it makes visible how small details and daily actions are also and foremost the things of which shared life is built upon.

This acknowledgement pushes some reflections:

- Who owns the community space?
- On which terms can the space be used and shaped according to the group’s wishes?
- Does every member of the community feel entitled to use the space for their own wishes and purposes?

OWNING THE CONTAINER

Sharing the opening of the container after its arrival and the construction of its external structure together with its dismantlement at the end of the five weeks was always an operation in which old and new members of the local community were invited to participate. These were relevant moments for the people who joined, who mentioned them in their narration of the project experience and of the new relations they made. The gesture of building the space was a gesture of symbolic ownership of that space. It was also a transformative moment in time that was actually experienced and later recalled in the collective story of the local community.

This was the case for instance in Schwedt:

The opening of the container was a bonding moment for Belal and Erik of the community in Schwedt, beyond their usual professional relationship. Erik shared that Belal, who visited his office to receive

support in the job application process, accepted to stop calling him 'boss' and started considering him as a brother.

This situation emphasizes what is described as part of Über den Tellerrand in terms of **meeting at 'eye-to-eye level': people can challenge the roles they have as part of their daily life during these encounters, explore and be in charge of taking up new ones.**

EVERYONE COOKS TOGETHER

Another moment when community members interacted together through practical work as part of the KOTR project was during the cooking evenings. All participants were invited to follow the structure developed and transmitted by Über den Tellerrand for such events, the cooking-eating-cleaning cycle. This structure aimed for the participants to live through the event not as a dinner offered by hosts to their guests but rather as a collective engagement of everyone in

the different aspects that turn cooking into a happening for everyone.

Nevertheless, doubts and ambiguity concerning the event structure emerged during the research. Especially during the cooking phase, more than once someone asked me how to proceed. **When team members were asked for instruction, they left open the choice of how to proceed. In this way, they chose a learn-by-doing approach and rather avoided a didactical explanation of how to proceed.**

Roles and tasks in the orga-team were a central concern for all the satellites (→ **SEE CHAPTER TABLES AND BANKS**). They aimed at empowering people to find their own place in the satellite, contribute with their own creativity and ultimately take ownership of the space. This stayed in a delicate balance with the possibility that people could instead feel overwhelmed by this approach to the event facilitation and would distance themselves.



→ Think about the diversity of people joining your events for the first time: what exactly is helpful or rather critical for them to feel entitled to use the kitchen as if it was their own kitchen?

TAKING UP ROLES

The Spülparty was the final moment of the cooking evenings when cleaning pots and cutlery and tidying up the container was collectively done to the sound of music. This phase was presented by the team as one of the more entertaining and playful moments of the event. More than once, the velocity with which people were able to carry out this task as a group was commented with a big surprise: “it’s incredible! A few seconds ago there was a huge pile of dishes and now the work is done!” At the same time, it was also observed that often the same people were carrying out the cleaning task. “Who doesn’t clean, takes care of the dancing mood!” repeated Esther often during the initial check-in to encourage people to take action. Beyond moral explanations about who takes on more ‘duties’ as part of the satellite and who less, multiple reasons can be acknowledged on the base of this research for the different commitments of people to community work.

Roles were recognized, taken up and refused

according to the individual character
In Rendsburg, Ali shared with me that at first, he needed to observe

the group dynamics at the container without participating much and only then he started interacting, enjoying the position of being helpful to others.

according to experience in other communities

In Hof, Julia told me in the fast-paced rhythm of the Spülparty that she worked in the kitchen of a local school and thus she was used to being efficient in that kind of task.

in response to current life contingencies

In Grefrath, Souad described to me the reason for being less present in the last period: she was not able to join the meetings like before because she needed to focus on getting the B1 certificate and her driving license as well as having to pick up her kids from school.

The capacity to identify and distribute tasks and roles was the main point raised when explaining strategies for community making. The issue of gaining new people for the orga-team was indeed central for all communities. This issue weaves together the aim of sharing more equally the workload among volunteers as well as diversifying the group. (See → TABLES AND BANKS)

CARE WORK

Care work occurs in every community, whether it is visible or invisible to all its members. Identifying what kind of care work needs to be carried out in the context of each satellite is a way to open a discussion about the distribution of tasks:

- Should roles be distributed according to experience or according to a rotation principle for which each member is sooner or later responsible for all the tasks?
- What consequences do these and other models have on the way difference and change can manifest?

The way the work was organized during the KOTR project was tied to the container. This produced a sort of **overlap between the container and the experience of the atmosphere during the events facilitated by the KOTR team and its style**. The strong personal attachment to the team and the container mixed with the discussions about the organization of the satellite in the context of its local life.

CONTAINER MAGIC?

During my visits halfway through the five weeks, many people shared their sadness for the departure of the team with its container.

In Hof, I speculated with Bärbel about the possibility of having a permanent container for the community and she shared her dream of a place like that. She

expressed her enthusiasm for the capacity of such a place to bring people together across differences. Still, she commented, "Existing structures and networks can of course support such an offer and possibly make it easier, they can make such a possibility, such a place work and keep it going. But everyone on the ground has to pull together to ensure that something like this works permanently and 'stays alive'. Without the commitment of many actors and volunteers, it is not feasible in the long term. That is why it is important to motivate, positively support and coach fellow campaigners again and again. This can and should be the task on site of us Integrationslotsinnen!"

The role of the local community was as fundamental as that of the KOTR team in creating a community feeling during the events. The style of Cäthe, Esther, Alex and Firas was recognizable as a strong and skillful example of motivation and moderation of groups. It is part of their job to be able to apply skills, methods and personal aptitude to the facilitation of events. Still, **what people experienced at the container was in the end the collective result of what everyone was able to bring in that specific moment**. Different personalities, moods and spontaneous contributions to the dinner preparation created the flow and the 'magic' of the events. With its structure, the event flow was filled with different moments that were also completely independent from the team action. In those moments of 'messy life', people explored each other and themselves as part of the situation, across many big and small moments and different perceptions of the single event.

IMAGINING THE “GOOD SPACE”

When thinking about the transition from the container to the local kitchens after the KOTR experience, it is important to detach for a moment the style and methods of event facilitation applied by the KOTR crew from the design of the container. In this way, the communities can address the specific relevancy of these two elements in more detail. **The style of the local communities is in fact inevitably different from that of the KOTR team since it is developed through different structures, material resources and of course the different skills and personalities of the community members.** Moreover, local kitchens are usually not designed by satellites or even equipped by them from scratch. Therefore, it is an interesting and creative process for communities to explore the hidden potential of their spaces beyond their mere usage.

Creating and designing a common space open for everyone in connection to the actual availability of community spaces and kitchens in the cities was one of the biggest challenges. The example that the four cities offer shows the diversity of developments and decisions concerning this issue. In the end, the satellites had to base their decisions a lot on what spaces were readily available in the provinces in the first place.

There is no doubt that not all volunteers have the capacity or the social position to be able to address the logistics and the bureaucratic processes required to secure the desired community space. This is very much one of the differences internal to the commu-



nities, which I addressed specifically with Monika, one of the main organizers of the satellite in Greifrath. When I asked her if and how the satellite could interact with the political life of the city, she replied: “there are some very well-connected key people in our circle who, from the beginning until today, have also networked the community in social and political life and thus, for example, provide financial resources, spaces, cooperation partners and also support in administration and politics. However, it is the community that makes the project so powerful. We all meet at eye level and are all equally happy to be together.”

Access to civic action and **social capital** as well as the capacity to act politically as part of one’s community emerged as another axe of difference. Being able to use one’s privileges and contacts in solidarity with the purpose of the community and their members, it is

necessary to recognize that these privileges exist and that they are distributed unequally.

Even if not immediately available, speculating about the ‘good’ space is a collective project that can motivate community (re)building beyond external opportunities and restrictions. **Creating a collective vision helps transform individual potential into common action; it creates a collective route that was not there before.** Inspired by the flexible and functional design of the container, the satellite can use this vision as a long-term project of creating their kitchen as well as satellite group. In the end, their own space is made just like a mosaic of its own design, rounded in the different styles and stories of its members.

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Thinking about KOTR from the perspective of the container and the many kitchens of all satellites brought to light the following findings:

★ **Community (re)building doesn’t happen in an abstract and general space.** Collective organization and a convivial sense of belonging are nurtured by daily routines and the maintenance and care of common spaces – the physical space of the kitchen and the social space of the relations. Feeling entitled to be a member of the satellite is tightly related to access to and ownership of resources and their usage.

★ **Defining tasks and roles serves the orga-team to discuss what model of work distribution is more helpful to its aims.** It is the way to open or close the

access to material resources (a space to use for your own purpose, the possibility to train your language skills and your working skills in group and event management and facilitation, a space to ask for practical help) and immaterial resources (sense of belonging, healthy human contact, convivial and joyful expressions, diversification of your experience of life routes and life stories).

★ **A learn-by-doing approach to the distribution of tasks and roles fosters spontaneous contribution and co-creation of the event and at the same time generates uncertainty and doubts about doing something wrong.** Reactions and modes of participating in the events are multiple. Ambiguity, chaos and sometimes conflict are part of all social life. If the desired outcome is to offer an experience of encounter across differences through convivial cooking and eating, then how much scaffolding is needed for participation is a central theme.

★ **To find and create a community space and a kitchen is a collective creative and motivational matter and not only a logistical issue. The vision of a ‘good’ community space is created through envisioning as a group what are the impactful and transformative characteristics to support everyone’s mode of participation.** This exercise fosters a learning process between satellite members about their needs and desires. It also promotes skill sharing, such as creative and visual skills, creative and out-of-the-box thinking, pragmatic thinking: having a fictional mock-up of the community space can facilitate discussions about ‘real’ concerns and dynamics of the community.

KITCHEN ÜBER DEN TELLERRAND HOF

Since 2019, Über den Tellerrand Hof has been hosting its events at the Lichthaus, a space used and managed by the local Evangelische Jugendwerk (YMCA). Christian – one of its members – joined the events at the container in 2019 and was the main contact for the collaboration and is still today the contact person at the Lichthaus. Fabian, one of the satellite co-founders, is the reference person who manages the calendar and owns a key to the space. Fabian hopes the collaboration with the Lichthaus will keep going; during the research, more than one person expressed a positive impression of the space, which is used free of charge: renovated in 2018, it is located in the city center and offers an open space with a fully-equipped kitchen, tables, sofas, a billiard table and shelves with board games. The satellite has been also collaborating with the local Food Sharing initiative that exists in Hof since 2017. Together, they were able to save and redistribute food also this year at the end of many of the cooking events at the container.



KITCHEN ÜBER DEN TELLERRAND RENDSBURG

The satellite in Rendsburg, founded in 2019, has experienced in its first years some difficulties in finding a kitchen for its cooking events due to external contingencies. The place they wanted at the time, the local Familienzentrum, started to be renovated and was eventually given to another renter. They started then using the kitchen of a school but the collaboration did not work well since the hygienic standard for the space could not be provided by the volunteers in a sustainable way. In 2021, after a break due to Corona, the community started to organize again cooking events at the local Seniorenbegegnungstätt.

Still with some open questions during this year's KOTR project, since the beginning of November 2022, the satellite has started cooking in the kitchen of the local VHS (Volkhochschule). The collaboration is free and it was organized and managed by Melanie and Monika, two of the satellite founders who work in the Integration Department of the city administration. Besides the kitchen, the group has found also another permanent place, also free of charge, at the House of Resources (hor-rendsburg.de). They meet there monthly, alternating with the cooking evenings, to plan and reflect together.

WORKING TOOLS



IS THE COMMUNITY SPACE AND/OR KITCHEN YOU HAVE (OR YOU ARE LOOKING FOR) A SPACE FOR EVENTS OR A SPACE FOR YOUR GROUP? WHAT WOULD YOUR IDEAL COMMUNITY SPACE LOOK LIKE? WHAT VISION FOR YOUR COMMUNITY DO YOU ASSOCIATE WITH THIS SPACE OR KITCHEN?

CREATE A COLLECTIVE VISUAL COLLAGE.



IN WHAT WAY DIFFERS THE IDEAL SPACE YOU HAVE VISUALIZED FROM THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE CURRENTLY LIVING? HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM THE SPACE YOUR SATELLITE IS CURRENTLY USING?

EXCHANGE WITH OTHERS.



IS YOUR COMMUNITY SPACE MORE LIKE A GARDEN, A SQUARE, A THEATRE OR A DANCE HALL? HOW DO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ACTIVITIES AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE COMMUNITY CHANGE ACCORDING TO THE IMAGE?

BRAINSTORM IMAGES.



WHAT DO YOU THINK THE PARTICIPANTS OF YOUR EVENTS WOULD NEED IN ORDER TO FEEL WELCOME AND AT HOME? WHAT DO YOU USUALLY NEED TO GET THIS FEELING? WHAT DETAILS INSIDE A ROOM INFLUENCE THAT?

FIRST THINK FOR YOURSELF, THEN EXCHANGE.



HANDS & KNIVES

For KOTR and the whole Über den Tellerrand network, cooking is the chosen way to foster encounter among people with and without experience of migration and flight and to work for social cohesion in their broader social contexts. It is the process through which volunteers move their first steps into the satellite and decide to become more actively part of the orga-teams. Satellites host as well events that don't include cooking; still, this is what especially attracts and draws together people from so many different backgrounds. **"Sometimes, there is even too much attraction!"** comments Barbara in [Grefrath](#), emphasizing the attraction this activity has on many locals without migration background and how this can unbalance the desired diversity of the satellite.

DIFFERENCES ON THE CUTTING BOARD

In the understanding of Über den Tellerrand, cooking is 'universal' and therefore a connecting moment across various social groups. In this chapter, I reflect on this and look at the way cooking was a chance for people to join the community in their own way. **Cooking and eating together in real life never occurs in an abstract space. They happen as part of existing relations and material conditions.**

To speak about difference I will use in this case the term cooking **cultures**: how food is cut, what pots and utensils are used and how they are used, how long every step takes in bringing the recipe to the plate and the significance given to cooking are all things that

people learnt as part of one or more communities along their lives. This is valid also for eating cultures: who eats together, how food is offered and consumed, how long people seat at the table or what is talked about while eating are all elements that can differ as well from community to community.

Already during the first week of research, my notes spoke about people cutting ingredients. At the cooking events, people met around the table of choice and started organizing the preparation of the recipe: washing and cutting the ingredients were always the first things to do. **Cutting is representative here of how very practical and minute acts allow exchanges with deeper meanings to happen.** Other objects and operations brought people together. Wooden boards, pots, improvised lids, jars, names of ingredients, bowls, dishcloths, oven temperatures and many ingredients were passed across hands from the tables to the counter and back.

While getting the food ready in general was carried out as a collective activity, using the kitchen was much more a personal affair. Different ideas and understandings about cooking and eating came up in my conversations with other participants during those bustling moments. Those who registered as cooks especially brought to the kitchen their way of handling food, even though the task of **sharing one's cooking and guiding the preparation was not always taken on by the cooks.**

NON-PARTICIPATION

Moments of uncertainty and withhold were part of the daily life of the communities: personal routes and current life circumstances of its members were the basis upon which the encounters actually happened.

On one occasion, it was Esther who shared with me about the living hurdles of some community members who registered to lead a cooking station. General feelings of resignation and withdrawal had the effect that they didn't join the last cooking evening more actively, Esther said. On that evening, instead of guiding the participants and cooking together with them, they took over the whole preparation of their meal. As a consequence, people who joined that cooking station in the beginning soon moved to another one looking for tasks.

In another satellite, a person was suggested as a possible cook during a volunteer meeting but with some reserves. The woman was described as picky about her recipes and not wanting to cook with others. Indeed she decided to cook only with the assistance of the volunteer who proposed her, who speaks the same language. During the cooking event, she was not in a good mood because she couldn't use the ingredients she wanted.

Including these examples in my reflections is not meant to point at critical situations as such. It is a way instead to reflect on how the events were designed and how adjustments operated.

→ How do different rhythms and styles of cooking find space in the common kitchen?

“OUT OF TIME” COOKING

The issue of time and pace is a good case to think about. In all satellites, I noted in fact how the length of the cooking procedure and the complexity of the recipe were contentious matters. 'Too slow' and 'too complex' for the event format: who was voicing these comments? Who were the addressees? It seemed that these comments were directed to people with a 'different cooking culture'. But who decides which cooking culture is the norm?

This pattern presents a situation in which a differential line is traced between cooking cultures more or less fitting to the event. Logistical motivations were brought to support those remarks: the size of the cooking station, the available equipment, the time restrictions both in the public spaces where the container was located and in the closed kitchens locally used by the satellites.

With this reflection, I do not want to point out intentional discrimination by specific participants towards other specific participants. I want instead to show how **the framework of the event was used to express the idea that there is a fitting way to participate.**

BINARY THINKING

These comments relating to the pace and procedure of the event crossed with my own perception of the event. Coming myself from yet another cooking culture, since the beginning, I perceived the time allocated for eating during the events as very short. This made me ask myself:

- Whose cooking culture becomes the normalized one and whose is the 'new' one?
- How many cooking cultures are considered in this contraposition?

Out of my own life experience in Berlin, I have often found myself contrasting a 'slower Italian' cooking and eating culture with a 'faster German' cooking culture. There is a certain risk in placing one side against another side. **One of the two sides of the comparison becomes the reference point for the other** – usually one's own side: this is normal, the other is extraordinary.

This dynamic often works by ascribing the difference to one of the two sides (being it a person or a community) and treating it as its stable, essential characteristic. By doing this, another person (or community) as well as one's self (or one's community) gets often defined in terms of culture or **identity**. In my own case, I was defining my identity as Italian against the German one.

Bringing to the container table a third cooking culture, such as my own, can be used to unbalance the contraposition "slow cooking/fast cooking". **Another risk of binary thinking is in fact the flattening out of differences within the cooking cultures.** This risk was sometimes supported by the very contraposition of the two categories of 'people with migration experience' and 'people without migration experience': the danger of making these categories the base of the voluntary work is the danger of closing up the space to explore the multitude of differences within and across the two categories. People are always a mix of their routes in life and so are their cooking and eating cultures. The community we grew up in shaped our cooking and eating culture, but there are so many more. Likewise, the experience of migration or staying in one community the whole lifetime strongly conditions us, as also our current living situation and relations with friends and neighbors do.

- Are people always cooking and eating in the same way?
- According to which principles do the cooks choose their recipes for the events?

EXPECTATIONS AND BOUNDARIES

Being the cook is a quite personal matter, beyond the aim of having a meal ready in time. On many occasions, the excitement to be registered as one and present one's own recipe to the community was expressed to me or to the group. In the same way, some felt they were not 'good enough' to be one.

On one evening in Schwedt, Danish shared his doubts about being able to cook for so many people. Three teenagers had been invited to participate in the same event for the first time. Half through the cooking phase, they left the container with no explanation. Others took over their recipe but unfortunately the meal could not be cooked the way it was planned. When the food was served, commensals – me included – described the rice as ‘crunchy’ but very enjoyable.

“Let me make that non-spicy version so that you guys enjoy it”, Dheeraj told me during our one-to-one conversation in Hof. He later added: “Sometimes you can’t give the experience you want them to have, for example like the spicy thing (...) you want to give an experience to another person but you don’t force it on them, you just give it ad then if they want to take it, it’s fine and nice”.

Moments perceived as ‘off’, even only by one person, are the best sources to learn what are the implicit boundaries in the group and in which way harmony is re-established through different kinds of adjustments performed by the people.

They are a call to slow down the ‘normal’ routines and evaluate what types of situations the event design allows paying attention to and what let pass unnoticed.



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Thinking about the project with hands and knives brought to light the following findings:

★ **Cooking and eating exist as part of community practices; they take place in historical time according to material conditions.** Speaking about cooking and eating cultures allows making visible the modes of cooking and eating that people value in their everyday life. Stories of food and convivial moments and the relations done through cooking and eating – not only between humans – are part of the common experience shared by the community.

★ **Cooking during the satellites’ events is more than just presenting a recipe. It’s the vehicle to enter and nourish the life of the community.** Food practices – names, tools, procedures, techniques, taste and meanings – become the utensils to connect with other people and to shape the collective with one’s own style and one’s own rhythm.

★ **Binary dynamics of othering are part of community life.** Cooking and eating cultures are easily attached to people through identitarian representations but identities and practices are never fixed and ‘natural’. They are a mix of elements that need constant adjustment and learning since they always exist in relation to others’ identities and practices.

WORKING TOOLS



TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW EXCERPTS FROM THE RESEARCH:

- COOKING AND SERVING FOOD TO PEOPLE IS A WAY OF RECEIVING SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS;
- A CHOCOLATE BRAND HAS POLITICAL RELEVANCE FOR ONE'S SENSE OF BELONGING IN TIMES OF WAR;
- ACCORDING TO A RELIGIOUS VEGAN PRACTICE, PLANTS ARE ALLOWED TO BE EATEN ONLY FOR A SHORT MOMENTS BEFORE THEY START SPROUTING, EVEN WHEN ALREADY COOKED;
- A MIX OF SPICES BROUGHT FROM PALESTINE REMAINED UNKNOWN AND "LOST IN TRANSLATION".



CAN YOU RECOGNIZE THESE OR SIMILAR STORIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

METHOD: DURING A COOKING EVENING, ASK PARTICIPANTS TO NOTE ON PAPER (PLACED ON THE TABLES UNDER EACH COMMENSAL'S PLATE) FOOD STORIES INSPIRED BY THE RECIPES. ASK THE COOKS TO INTRODUCE INGREDIENTS AND PROCESSES IN THE CHECK-IN ROUND. IF NECESSARY, MEET WITH THEM BEFOREHAND TO EXPLAIN WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING.



PLAY WITH TIME TO EXPLORE EATING CULTURES: WHAT IS THE LONGEST MEAL TO PREPARE? WHAT IS THE QUICKEST? HOW LONG ARE YOU USED TO COOKING OR SITTING AT THE TABLE? FROM WHOM HAVE YOU INHERITED A RECIPE?

EXCHANGE IN GROUP.



CAN MORE THAN ONE PERSON COLLABORATE IN THE PREPARATION OF ONE MEAL DURING THE COOKING EVENTS? HOW THE DIFFERENT STEPS TOWARDS THE DINNER CAN BE ORGANIZED AROUND THE AIM OF ENCOURAGING ENCOUNTER?

DISCUSS IN A GROUP OF 2-3 PEOPLE AND SHARE LATER THE RESULTS WITH THE OTHERS.

TABLES & BANKS

Under this title, I discuss the organization of the satellites and those themes that came up, especially during the meetings between the orga-teams and the Berlin crew as well as in conversations I had with some of the satellites initiators. The image of the table and banks reminds the call for **diversity** of the KOTR project: who seats on those banks? Who belongs to those tables? Who built them in the first place?

CURRENT CONCERNS

In the process of community (re)building, the orga-teams of the three older satellites (Hof, Grefrath and Rendsburg) emphasized the necessity to find a 'good' form for their group structure. This reflected the load of tasks that the initiators perceived to be carrying. They performed administrative and organizational work, making use of the access they enjoyed to various resources as part of their work network and as German citizens who grew up and were socialized in the local civic life.

In this position, they expressed the **wish for a higher commitment of more members in the satellite to be able to share such responsibilities**. They were in all four cities the people who co-founded the satellite and invited the container to support and motivate old and new volunteers. In two cities, they led the management of the group during the last years of Corona, describing their role as vital for the group to keep going.

At the same time, they shared about the difficulty to maintain such a position and creating a more stable and diverse network of volunteers. In **Hof**, the challenge concerned especially the commitment to the orga-team in a long-term perspective. In **Grefrath**, the risk for relaxed and joyful participation to turn into one filled with responsibility and obligations were brought to the table. In **Rendsburg**, there was a lot of discussion about the fact that responsibilities and competencies laid primarily with one person; as a result, this person was overburdened and at the same time other members of the community did not feel entitled to take over certain tasks.



SATELLITE CO-FOUNDERS

Broadening the orga-team in order to distribute responsibilities was connected to the wish to diversify the orga-team, which was a topic already present also in the first weeks of the satellite in **Schwedt**. The KOTR team and the co-founders of the satellites expressed that. Having a brief overview of the background from which the communities stemmed helps understanding them.

In **Hof**, Bärbel and Franziska had been responsible for the satellite in their position as facilitators of integration (Integrationslotsinnen) in the local Diakonie. Melanie supported the satellite in **Rendsburg** as part of her position in the city administration as coordinator of volunteers (Ehrenamtliche Flüchtlingshilfe). In **Grefrath**, Monika and Susanne, who had been working in the social field as part of the local Diakonie (Sozialpsychiatrischer Verbund) co-founded the satellite with the support of Barbara, referent in the city administration for Equal Opportunities (Gleichstellungsstelle). In **Schwedt**, Ute and Erik submitted the request to participate in this year's KOTR; Ute works in the city administration as coordinator of the help for refugees (Flüchtlingshilfe) and Erik as referent for the integration of refugees in the job market (Arbeitsmarktintegration von Geflüchteten).

Thanks to the conversation I had with Melanie during my last stay in **Rendsburg**, I could grasp well how the position of the co-founders is decisive to the daily implementation of the satellite life and at the same time, how it is a very tricky place to be.

Melanie shared with me about a conflicting situation that recently occurred in the community concerning the coordination of the registrations for the cooking events. She underlined that the people involved considered it necessary to clarify the situation only with her and not among each other. She talked about the situation in terms of crisis management: when something goes bad, who takes responsibility? Where do people can go to ask for help?

Working for the city administration or/and other social initiatives and participating personally as a volunteer in the satellite life was also a reason to make this role a tricky one. Bärbel openly depicted this ambiguity during our conversation in **Hof**:

"Hof is a small place, so you know each other. I was born here, I live here, I've always worked here, I know a lot of people. That can be good for many things, when I have projects where I need cooperation partners, it's relatively easy for me because I know exactly who I can approach and for what. Sometimes it is also an obstacle because you have to redefine your role all the time, you have to separate roles and give space to others because there are different responsibilities. I am the last one to say: 'Here we are separated', but on the other hand, I realize that you are involved in so many processes and sometimes I also need opportunities to take a step back so that I can do my work professionally, otherwise (...) I think you reach a personal and professional limit at some point and it is important for me to always do my work empathetically but also professionally".



NAVIGATING MULTIPLE BELONGINGS

Reflecting on these concerns and the expected processes of change, I turned to other volunteers to learn about other roles they covered and the working environments they came from when joining the satellite.

→ What experiences do people have in terms of collaborative work and group processes?

During the research, some of the people I talked to shared their experiences of being part of group initiatives or about jobs requiring teamwork skills. **I think about Ali, who worked for the logistics of an organization in Syria helping people relocating to different towns; Sara who is a language teacher; Dheeraj who used to organize food events as a part of his student community; Ramiz who is a civil engineer with experience in coordinating construction sites.**

The comments of some people about the activity at the container showed also how their way to deal with group processes as part of their professional and also private life shaped their expectations about interaction in the community.

In **Rendsburg**, two volunteers underlined the difference between a ‘chaotic’ style and a more ‘organized’ style in their group. During a volunteer meeting in Rendsburg and during my workshop in **Schwedt**, the setting for the activity with the whiteboard and the moderation cards was described as similar to a school one.

The newly formed satellite in **Schwedt** offered another interesting example of how the volunteers’ life is completely embedded in the local social context. **While discussing with Erik – one of the initiators and founders of the satellite – as well as with one new volunteer an influential element they noticed in their working life was the heritage deeply rooted in the history of the place, which both called “a DDR mentality”.** Their comments pointed to a certain kind of openness to citizen participation, a specific administrative bureaucracy and a particular rela-

relationship between the individual and the state."

Belonging to various communities besides the satellite grounded the experience at the container also into people's other networks of relations. In all cities, the encounter between current and ex-colleagues was commented on by the people themselves, being for some a nice occasion to share about one's life and for others a less comfortable situation.

- In what way do people navigate their multiple communities when these meet during the activities of Über den Tellerrand?

For some of the volunteers, navigating the social life of the city and its relational networks was more demanding than for others, especially if they were new to the place. **Acknowledging that the different social capital of volunteers and their confidence in taking ownership of the satellite space have an impact on hierarchical relations within the group.** Even if not formally defined in fact, hierarchical relations do inform all communities' life. They become visible when volunteers take on roles and shape the cooperation with others according to their own ideas and wishes (or rather take a back seat).

- How much participation and non-participation to decision-making and role distribution reflect invisible barriers and hierarchical relations?
- When do hierarchies manifest more clearly in the life of the satellite?

DIVERSIFY!

I had my first discussion about the **diversity** of the satellites with Bärbel in **Hof** when the configuration of the satellite was expressed according to different kinds of categories: 'German locals' and 'people with migration experience' as well as 'personality types' in relation to how much people like to be in group situations. I encountered the same way of thinking about volunteers across all satellites. Talking about the **Hof** satellite before and after the phase of the Corona pandemic, Bärbel told me:

"So the proportion of people with migration background was unfortunately at best a quarter. The others were citizens of Hof of German origin. At the moment, it's quite clear to me who actually feels part of this new Über den Tellerrand group, although I know some feel a greater sense of belonging, but are a little afraid of taking the step to commit reliably and permanently. There are all kinds of people in the immediate and wider surroundings who express themselves in this way, that they think it's great, but there are not so many who really get involved and contribute regularly. (...) If I look, for example, who is involved in voluntary work with a migrant background, then these are often the same people at the VHS (Adult Education Centre), with us, with the EJSA (Protestant Youth Social Work). It's often the same people who are there and say 'OK, I'll help you, I'll translate for you and so on'. And in the end, it's probably no different from the phenomenon with the original German people."

She stressed this last point also later in the interview:

"I don't think it depends on nationality at all, it's a type issue (...) Maybe I'll be proven wrong one day, I don't know. As always, one tries to, let's say, get to the bottom of it and create incentives to motivate people, but I think it's simply a question of type and not at all of nationality whether and what someone does or does not do. Instead, some people say 'OK, I want to move out of my comfort zone, I'm going to do more about it, I live here now and therefore I want to get more involved here and do something for cohesion and social togetherness.'"

More than one mode of thinking diversity circulated across the satellites in [Hof](#), [Grefrath](#) and [Schwedt](#), where the issue was more urgent to address. Bärbel and other local initiators acknowledged the undetermined life circumstances of the volunteers with flight experience as a clear explanation of the possible difficulties in taking up organizational responsibilities in a long-term perspective. Diversity was thought more in terms of social position than in terms of nationality.

During a volunteer meeting in [Schwedt](#) that specifically addressed the topic, there was a discussion about which characteristics describe the diversity of a group. Here, nationality was explicitly used as a category to argue that the group on that day was very diverse.

The discussion about how to engage more diverse people in the orga-team sometimes slipped from the

discussion of what diversity is into a discussion about strategies and methods of group management, for example creating profiles of target groups. Diversity came up in these terms also in [Grefrath](#) during the regional meeting.



This was a discussion about 'how to gain new volunteers' in general more than a question about what does diversity mean in the context of Über den Tellerrand – the difference between having had an experience of flight or not – and in what way it is missing in the orga-team.

Having diverse groups represented in the orga-team reflects the ideal of a society that the satellites and Über den Tellerrand are aiming at. Besides being rep-

resented, diversity is foremost about how access to resources and power are controlled by some people and not others. If diversity is understood as having in a decision-making space the representatives of all communities who are affected by the decision taken in that space, then other kind of questions for the satellites could be:

- Where and when in the communities decision-making takes place?
- How do discussions and decision-making takes place? How are they translated and facilitated?

As banal as this can sound, **acknowledging how much space one occupies as member of the satellite on the basis of one's social position and adjusting that to hold space for people who are part of marginalized or discriminated groups can make a huge difference.**

The experience of Melanie in **Rendsburg** and her concern for the satellite atmosphere offers a relevant example of navigating change from a position of privilege in one's community.

Melanie had formal responsibility for the satellite, being the referent in the city administration for the funding of the Über den Tellerrand group Rendsburg. She shared about the pressure she felt in covering such position: "The easiness to say 'Someone wants to do something? Sure! We'll do that' is missing" she told me. At the time of the research, she was wondering about how she could contribute to create a

GENDER AND PARTICIPATION

Among German volunteers who decided and were able to both initiate and sustain actively the life of the satellites, most were women already working in the social sector – most of the time having the responsibility of a family. People with flight experience who decided to join the-orga teams were also in majority women – all with family responsibilities. In their case, the issue of being able to commit was directly dependent on their working position and attendance to language courses. **Relations among women were a core characteristic of the satellites' lives.** They nurtured all the other relations and made sure the encounters could actually happen, even during the difficult times of social restrictions in the first years of Corona.

I could reflect on this also in response to comments concerning the different styles of children's education that women were confronted with during the events. This perspective also emerged in the self-depiction of German white women in terms of motherly figures for members of the community with flight experience. This delicate dynamic is worth a more thorough discussion as part of the satellite reflection in the frame of anti-racist learning and the issues of **critical whiteness.**



more flexible and organic structure for the satellite.

This example speaks of course about a specific context. I present it here not as a general lesson but rather as an example of how hierarchies and forms of leadership in the satellites have a direct impact on the community atmosphere and the experience of the volunteers.

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Exploring the project in connection to diversity, I gathered the following findings:

★ **Some volunteers already have personal or professional experience in group facilitation of various kinds.** Learning about volunteers' skills, values and wishes concerning community life can foster a more inclusive approach to the distribution of roles and more motivation in taking up those roles.

★ **Volunteers participate in the orga-team having experienced various other repertoires of teamwork styles and aptitude for group interaction.** The relative expectations about the activity in the satellites contribute to the way people negotiate their participation and non-participation in the different aspects of the community.

★ **Different experiences and different social positions influence the way roles are taken up and hierarchies implicitly reproduced.** Non-participation in various levels of the activities and even divergence from the expected flow during the events 'slow down' the group life, pointing at possibly critical dynamics where implicit hierarchies and decision-making create some form of barrier to people's intentions and needs.

★ **The initiators of the satellites find themselves in between professional responsibilities and engagement with the life of the satellite on a personal base.** They are bridges between people who have been born and raised in their respective cities, those

who have migrated or fled there and the city administration, from which the impulse to promote inclusiveness and 'integration' come.

★ **Calling for a diversification of the orga-team is not the same thing as improving 'audience management' and the gain of new volunteers.** Diversity is about the representation in the orga-team of the groups that are affected by the decision taken in the orga-team. It is also about the way the resources and access to power are shared and used also to different purposes than those imagined so far.

★ **A critical self-reflection on how much space every volunteer takes as part of the satellite encourages learning about the social position from which people move into the satellite.** Holding space for people who usually are not in a position of leadership implies also acknowledging which groups are deemed as deserving to participate and which are not.



WORKING TOOLS



WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND TASKS IN YOUR SATELLITE? HOW TASKS CONNECT TO ROLES?

DRAW A MIND MAP.



DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE PERFORMING SPECIFIC TASKS/ROLES? DO YOU HAVE ALREADY TRIED ALL TASKS/ROLES?

WRITE THE TASKS AND ROLES INTO PAPER CUTS AND PUT THEM INTO A BOWL.

PICK AND SHARE IN THE GROUP.



WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF LEADERSHIP YOU HAVE AS PART OF YOUR PRIVATE AND/OR PROFESSIONAL LIFE? HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT FORMS OF LEADERSHIP AND GROUP SELF-ORGANIZATION IN INFORMAL AND AUTONOMOUS SETTINGS?

FIND RESOURCES ON THIS TOPIC.





CHECK OUT



A COMPASS TOWARDS A BETTER US

The KOTR crew and the four satellites engaged this year in a process of self-reflection and future thinking after the last two years of the Corona pandemic, which put their experiences and that of many other communities on hold. The risk faced was the disaggregation of relational bonds and the consequence impossibility to bring forward the activities as satellite of Über den Tellerrand. Added to this, there was the real isolation of people with weaker social nets and less access to public, civic and material resources.

To face the situation they were in at the end of 2021, the four satellites embarked on the KOTR project intending to explore and learn the tools to (re)build their community. The aim of my research was to help the satellites in this exploration and to articulate the challenges and opportunities found into a useful booklet where they can find inspiration for reflection and action for their immediate future.

In this final chapter, the research findings and the challenges for the satellites are listed in a compact form. They are discussed in more detail in the previous chapters, where specific quotes and notes from the field accompany them. Here, I also offer a final reflection and invitation to the satellites moving from the concept of social cohesion.

KEY FINDINGS



CROSSING ROUTES

★ People have moved and keep moving across different geographical spaces and communities;

★ People walk the same routes differently;

★ Social positions define differently how people's present looks and the kind of future they can imagine.

★ The choreography during events and meetings changes according to the rhythms, paces and moods of participants;

→ Create room to address differences between volunteers and in your community

→ Address dynamics of discrimination and racism in society and within the satellite

CONTAINER / KITCHENS

★ Co-creating the community space assembles people across differences;

★ Owning the space – formally and symbolically – transforms the experience of volunteers and creates occasions for collective memory making.

★ Collaborative care work in the community space is a concrete way through which roles' from daily life are challenged and different kinds of interaction experienced;

★ Roles are taken up during events according to individual character, experience in other communities and response to current life contingencies.

★ The way roles are distributed has conse-

quences on the relational dynamics in the group, the constitution of hierarchies and the possibility for change.

★ Creating a collective vision is the first step to transforming individual potential into common action.

→ Explore the hidden potential of community spaces beyond the use for cooking events

→ Speculate in-group about a 'good space' for the satellite and your community beyond external restrictions

HANDS AND KNIVES

★ Cooking and eating cultures also meet 'in difference' beyond the universal quality of cooking and eating;

★ Processes of defining differences as 'other' in contraposition to 'normal' can be part of cooking events;

★ Presenting a recipe and taking up the role of a cook is a way for people to offer their own personality and style to the collective learning experience.

→ Give space to stories behind plates and cooking practices

→ Be flexible to styles and times of different cooking and eating cultures

TABLES AND BANKS

★ Participation in the satellite can turn from a joyful and relaxed experience into a stressful one when the distribution of roles is unbalanced and hierarchies unaddressed;

★ Volunteers have multiple and different skills and knowledges they can contribute to the management of the group and the organization of events;

★ The social positions and privileges of people influence the way they want to and can take ownership of the satellite and of the community space, the way they actively bring their contribution and suggest change;

★ In the context of the satellites, diversity in terms of flight experience, residency status

and access to resources and privileges has a central role, even if other forms of diversity do play a role in the life of the satellites;

→ Separate the discussion about diversity from that of outreach

→ Be aware of how you take space in social groups and how you can hold space for others. This is a relevant contribution to the inclusiveness of the community.

CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY (RE)BUILDING

- ★ Finding and creating collectively a 'good' community space is a challenge and it depends on whether the satellites consider it a space for events, a space for the orga-teamwork or an informal space for the community;
- ★ The wish to empower people to find their own place in the satellite, contribute and take ownership of the space is in a delicate balance with the possibility of feeling overwhelmed and in need to distance themselves
- ★ The convivial atmosphere of the events can limit sometimes the possibility for personal styles, reactions and different cooking/eating cultures to be directly expressed and 'off' moments are re-accommodated for the sake of the general atmosphere;
- ★ The contraposition between German cooking culture and other cooking cultures risks to sustaining 'othering' processes through food essentialising people into fixed identities;
- ★ Finding a 'good' structure for the orga-teams challenges the volunteers to define the roles, the strategies to distribute them and the possible forms of leadership for their specific context;
- ★ People with more responsibilities in the orga-teams push for a more active and long-term commitment of volunteers who are not in the orga-teams to increase the sustainability of the group in a more equal way;
- ★ Satellites want to diversify the orga-teams, meaning in this context increasing the volunteering on the side of people with flight experience.

PRE-CONDITIONS FOR SOCIAL COHESION

The findings and challenges present what the research was able to show as well as a (partial) description of the current situation of the four satellites that joined the KOTR project in 2022. I want now to offer a final reflection on how this situation influences the vision of the groups for their future, moving by the idea of working towards social cohesion.

Social cohesion in this context can be described as the opposite of social disaggregation and isolation. Two pre-conditions are particularly impactful on the construction of a social net of relations, on the access to such net and on the active participation in the common life, which I will call infrastructure and literacy.

These two specific aspects emerged from the research field as the areas of work that the satellites are addressing when thinking about possible futures for their satellites.

The community space is the main infrastructure of the satellites, as well as all the other public and private spaces of which the satellites make use or aim at using. Other 'physical components' allowing the satellites to exist are the public transports system as well as the private one created among volunteers to support and assist the participation in events and meetings for everyone; the local networks of food retails through which people can access food belonging to their cooking cultures is another one as well as initiatives such as food-sharing improving the sustainability of the cooking events. The funding some satellites can

access – for example through administrative schemes they are part of but not only – are definitively an infrastructure to consider. Other very relevant ones for some of the volunteers are the system of language schools and that of daily care for children.

These and other infrastructures are part of the environment in which the satellites are embedded. Having an overview of them and of their possible expansion it's important considering the direct impact they have on people's access to participation and on their mode of participation.

Literacy instead refers to the knowledges and skills concerning participation in social life in general and more specifically in the social life of the satellites. Literacy includes how people think about themselves as part of the community and what is their vision of common life. The core focus of the satellites on the encounter between people with different background and stories defines literacy for the satellites, particularly in terms of transcultural interaction, inclusiveness and diversity.

The tools and methods of Über den Tellerrand shared with the satellites through the KOTR projects, workshops and other meetings are another form of literacy that circulates in the volunteering network. How to organize events and facilitating them, gaining new volunteers and distributing roles can be seen as also parts of the satellites' literacy concerning the specific kind of volunteering activity of the Über den Tellerrand network.

During the encounters they create, people can also learn from each other about these tools and methods as well as about other knowledges and skills concerning participation in social life – from practical information concerning administrative procedures to different forms of children’s education, from different styles of interactions to, of course, different cooking and eating cultures.

FINAL INVITATIONS

Infrastructures are already a core and explicit theme of discussion and action as part of the work of the volunteers and the same is valid for literacy concerning tools, methods, management and organization.

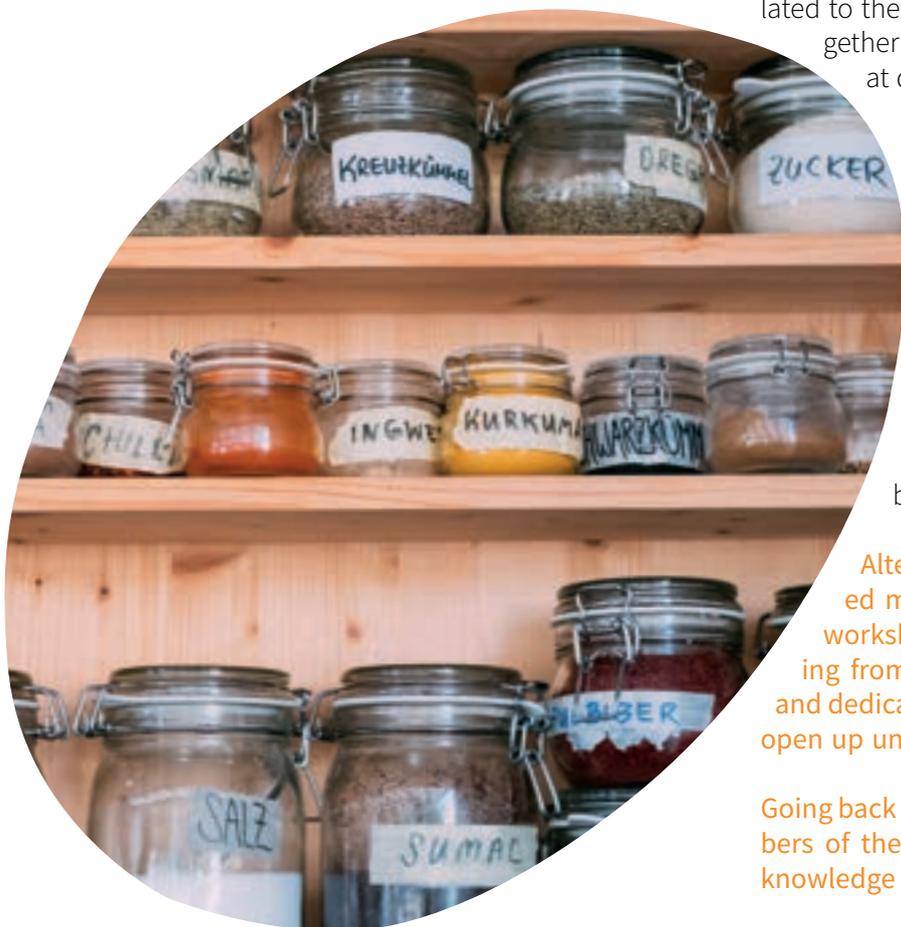
For what it concerns the literacy about diversity and transcultural interaction – and all themes possibly related to the core aim of bringing different people together – that was part of the satellites discussion at different grades in the four cities.

What I could notice in all of them though, was how discussing organizational and management issues occupied a big part of the activity shared by the volunteers, binding their time the resources to the realization of the events.

The balance of energies and creativity of all volunteers emerged thus as an important aspect of volunteer life especially if the community is in a process of (re) building.

Alternating informal, flexible and open-ended meetings to more structured events and workshops is a way to lower the pressure coming from roles and tasks required from people and dedicate time also to nurture the relations and open up untapped possibilities for engagement.

Going back to the motivations and aims of the members of the orga-teams is also a good step to acknowledge their multiplicity and learn more about



the needs of the group. Motivations that were mentioned during the research are: the expectation of meeting ‘nice’ people in a welcoming atmosphere; the fun, pleasure and happiness connected to the experience of learning new things, activities, skills and people (value of novelty and change); the love for people in general and for the friends already made; the love for food; the positive feelings associated with social situations and with being among other people. Some aims that were mentioned are: meet new people in general and in particular people who live in the same city or neighbourhood; learn new recipes, new cultures, new languages; exercise the German language; contribute to the growth of tolerance in society; change the framework and the context from the usual ones.

Acknowledging that their diversity shapes the life of the group, together with the acknowledgement of the different social positions of volunteers is a way to keep in mind that expectations in joining the satellite and for the kind of commitment will always be multiple.

Including in the satellite moments to engage in literacy work about issues of diversity, discrimination or privilege will help make differences come to the surface and give tools to the community to navigate them.

Lastly, I would like to invite to create together a "local compass" for the community based on the common value of "coming together in diversity" and the specific desires and needs of its members.



Taking time to reflect on the process of community (re)building and all the challenges it brings with it was not and cannot be a process of finding perfect answers. I see it more as a good excuse to imagine together what possible ‘good’ solutions are there to specific issues concerning satellite life and activity. A process of questioning together supports the other activities of the satellite and opens an informal space to get to know each other in new ways. This can get at times frustrating and bring up uncomfortable feelings, especially when differences and expectations challenge a common understanding of things. By opening a discussion space about the core issues that make the very existence of the satellites necessary – such as social cohesion and discrimination – differences can be made visible and taken as opportunities to get out of one’s comfort zone without letting them act from under the surface, leaving inequalities unchallenged.

This is an invitation to be curious about what can come out of such moments: stories, imaginations, places, concrete problems, existential concerns, memories and at times also discomfort. I hope this booklet can give you good input to try for yourself!

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EXTRA



GLOSSARY

ACCESS refers to the possibility of entering physical (i.e. public institutions, restaurants, parks) and social spaces (i.e. communities, friendship groups) – digital spaces are also more or less accessible as well as content produced (i.e. text, video, exhibition). Real and symbolic restrictions and closures exist for both types of spaces. Access thus can be considered in relation to infrastructure and physical spaces (i.e. lack of ramps for wheel-chairs users) and in relation to material and social resources (lack of money and lack of social capital). Political and social rights (i.e. access to citizenship, residence permit, vote right, marriage right, health system) as well as representation in cultural productions (i.e. who are the main characters in movies? Whose are the stories told in a museum?) are also differently accessible.

CARE WORK is a term to define every kind of work that sustains and maintains the physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs of one or more other people. Care providers typically include public and private health services, state-regulated or public-sector social workers, public or private care-provider agencies, enterprises of employment, voluntary and community organizations, faith-based organizations or networks, relatives and friends and domestic work. It is done visibly, as formal employment in institutions, and invisibly and informally, in the home (one's own or someone else's). It is sometimes remunerated and sometimes not. It is hard physical, mental, and emotional work, which is often unequally distributed throughout society.

CRITICAL WHITENESS refers to the critical view of whiteness as a social category. (...) Even though it is clear that there are no 'races', racialised categorisations are a social reality. While black people are structurally ethnicised and marked as different, the counter-concept that makes these racist constructions possible in the first place – whiteness – is structurally hidden and with it all the privileges and inequalities that go with it. For example, even in childhood, white people are represented as a matter of course in books, films and songs, while black people hardly ever appear as a matter of course. As a result, whiteness remains the norm and normality and it is not possible to recognise and question racist power structures.

→ www.idaev.de/recherchetools/glossar

CULTURE in the anthropological sense refers to practices, (implicit and explicit) values, meanings and rules of behavior, artifacts and technologies relative to a social group and relatively stable in time. Cultures are learned – actively or passively – and transmitted to the new generations. They are dynamic and evolving, they are never set in stone but rather hybrid and in constant transformation.

CULTURALIZATION is the practice of understanding culture as an essential, central and determinant explanation for (individual) actions, attitudes, behaviours, conflicts or expressions. Often, the concept of culture is ethnicised, and people are, for example, fixed to their 'Turkish culture'. This means that they are not perceived in their diversity and complexity, but are reduced exclusively to a (supposed or actual) cultur-

al affiliation. The fact that these are often ascribed by others and not one's own subjective identification is often lost sight of in culturalising interpretations of reality. Culturalisations reinforce the dichotomisation (division) of society into those who belong ('we') and those who do not ('the others') and reproduce stereotypes and attributions.

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[See → **OTHERING, STEREOTYPING**]

DISCRIMINATION refers to the oppression and structural disadvantage of people or social groups due to certain (ascribed) characteristics (e.g. skin colour, gender, social background, etc.). Discrimination can be expressed on different levels. For example, in the actions of individuals (e.g. in offensive, exclusionary language), in norms, values and images conveyed by the media (e.g. in the derogatory portrayal of certain social groups in music, film and advertising) and in the form of rules and laws implemented by the institutions of a society (e.g. discrimination in school or health care). Discrimination has social, economic and health consequences for affected people. It can be experienced in different ways, e.g. in the form of exclusion, marginalisation, violence, exploitation or also by creating powerlessness.

→ www.initiative-perspektivwechsel.org/projekte/glossar/

DIVERSITY is about characteristics, habits and behaviours that differentiate every person from others. Some characteristics bring privileges; others make access to resources more difficult. The diversity approach problematises social power relations, which

are linked through norms, discrimination and privileges to ascribed categories such as 'skin colour', origin, residence status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age and origin or social status. (...) Diversity therefore does not only mean multiplicity, it is also a critique of discrimination, power and norms as well as an issue of empowerment, power sharing and intersectionality.

→ www.initiative-perspektivwechsel.org/projekte/glossar/

FUTURABILITY refers to the 'horizon of possibilities' that a person or a group can imagine, independently from the external conditions that can limit their present reality. Futurability is about the capacity to speculate alternative futures and proactively pursue improbable paths. In the context of this booklet, futurability should be considered in connection to the different social status of volunteers with and without flight experience.

IDENTITY is a lifelong process of defining and redefining oneself and others. This is not something unbroken, continuous and coherent, but something that people construct anew again and again at the intersections of various lines of difference. Which lines of difference are determinant for individual identity at a given point in time depends, for example, on the concrete situation, the current living conditions and the social position.

→ www.idaev.de/recherchetools/glossar

INTERSECTIONALITY describes the interdependence (mutual conditionality) and the interaction of different categories of difference with dimensions of social ine-

quality and exclusion. In order to understand discrimination, its individual forms (such as racism, sexism or heterosexism) cannot be considered independently of each other. A homosexual Muslim who has migrated and is studying economics, for example, could be affected by discrimination because of his sexual identity and/or his religion and/or his 'ethnic' origin. At the same time, due to his gender and educational background, he has various resources at his disposal that privilege him in these aspects. Intersectionality therefore does not only mean multiple discriminations, but the fact that the interdependence of lines of difference and their social consequences lead to very specific forms of discrimination.

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OTHERING is based on 'we/you' constructions; the 'you' becomes the supposedly Other who is thought to be less emancipated, enlightened, tolerant, democratic, educated etc. in contrast to the 'we'. Elementary differences are constructed, which are evaluated and emphasised in a hierarchical way – whether openly negatively or in an exoticising way seemingly positively. When the counterpart, through constant confrontation with the attributions, gradually adopts them unconsciously, he or she has actually become the supposed Other, he or she has conformed to the image of the Other. Migrants, for example, whose bilingual competences are openly underestimated, will also gradually focus on their own deficits in German and therefore possibly speak it less, which ultimately reinforces the prejudice and thus unconsciously confirms the process of othering.

→ www.idaev.de/recherchetools/glossar

[See → **STEREOTYPING**]

PREJUDICES are negative or dismissive attitudes towards a person or a group of people. As a result of stereotypical ideas, certain and mostly negative characteristics are attributed to others, which are difficult to correct due to rigidity and emotional charge, even in the case of contradictory experience.

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RACISM is the process in which people are constructed as homogeneous groups, hierarchically evaluated and excluded on the basis of actual or supposed physical or cultural characteristics (i.e. skin color, origin, language, religion). Classical racism asserts an inequality and inequivalence of groups of people based on alleged biological differences. Neo-racism attempts to justify inequality and inequivalence on the basis of alleged differences between 'cultures'. Racism is the sum of all behaviors, laws, regulations and views that support the process of hierarchisation and exclusion. They are all based on unequal power relations.

→ www.idaev.de/recherchetools/glossar

Critique of racism is based on the assumption that racism is a social normality, insofar as all people are positioned in our society through racist categorisations, attributions and discrimination. (...) In doing so, the position of the actors has to be taken into account in order not to support racist structures of superiority and subordination again (...) In this way, racism critique explicitly sets itself apart from attitudes and forms of action that are based on the assumption that it is enough to stand up for equality and against rac-

ism in order not to be racist.

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SCAFFOLDING refers to the provision of resources, tasks, and guidance to people who are invited to participate in an activity. Scaffolding helps participants can build their confidence and abilities. A framework and some limitations together with personal entry points to the activity are usually considered to help participatory experiences.

SOCIAL CAPITAL refers to how much people have access to networks, bonding experiences with similar people and bridging ones between diverse people. Contacts, recognition, trust, cooperation and reciprocity are all part of this form of capital.

SOCIAL POSITION means the location of a person on the basis of different identity characteristics and the associated experiences, e.g. through discrimination or privilege that shape each person. For example, positioning as a white genderqueer person means that a person in the system of racism cannot experience discrimination but enjoys many advantages and privileges, while in the system of sexism they can experience disadvantages and discrimination due to their gender identity.

→ www.diskrit-kubi.net/glossar/#P

STEREOTYPING is the process by which a few, highly simplified characteristics are attributed to constructed social groups. People will consequently be reduced to their ascribed group membership and to these characteristics. This blurs both commonalities between

and differences within the constructed groups (...) Attributed characteristics and behaviour are essentialised and naturalised.

The characteristics attributed to 'the others' are neither arbitrary nor random. They are derived from the socially prevailing values. By means of stereotyping, people who cannot be discredited racially can project everything that is deviant and "abnormal" onto 'the others' and in this way split themselves off. In this way, social norms are enforced, one's own identity is stabilised and symbolic boundaries are drawn. (...) This process works regardless of whether the stereotypes are positive (exoticisation, idealisation, romanticisation) or negative (demonisation).

→ www.idaev.de/recherchetools/glossar

SPACE is both physical and measurable but also social. In this second version, space does not simply exist outside there; it is the product of how people, things and the environment interact with each other through many kinds of practices through time. Space can be public, semi-public or private, open or closed. Racism, discrimination and other forms of othering are generated by people's actions and expressions but they are also inscribed in the materiality of space – its architecture, design and accessibility. This influences the way people can or cannot be in specific spaces and whether they get to enter at all those spaces.

Safe spaces are analogue and digital spaces where people with similar experiences of discrimination and marginalisation can retreat to share their experiences, organise and empower each other. However, it is often

rightly pointed out that even safe spaces are not free of power structures within the discriminated group.

Brave Space, on the other hand, is distinct from the concepts of Safe and Safer Space. (...) learning spaces are heterogeneous throughout, so that 100% safety for those affected by discrimination can never be guaranteed. The basic idea of a Brave Space is the awareness that all participants have different levels of knowledge. The resulting conflicts in the space as well as (inner) resistance become part of the learning process. Brave Spaces are thus spaces in which participants are challenged to grow within these inequalities. In order for this to succeed, an atmosphere must nevertheless be created in which conflicts can be dealt with. Rules are established, boundaries are communicated, possibilities for retreat are created, and responsibility for one's own speech and actions is consciously borne.

→ <https://diskrit-kubi.net/glossar/#S>





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We believe in getting to know each other because together we can [#maketheworldabetterplate!](#)

