UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
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# Differential Recruitment to and Outcomes of Solidarity Activism

## Ethics, Values and Group Style in the Danish Refugee Solidarity Movement

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*To my parents*

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*Mr. K and the cats*

Mr. K did not love cats. They did not appear to him to be friends of humankind; hence he was not their friend, either. "If we have common interests," he said, "then I would be indifferent to their hostile attitude." But Mr. K was reluctant to chase cats from his chair. "To lay oneself down to rest is work," he said. "It should be allowed to succeed." And if cats meowed outside his door he rose from his bed, even when it was cold, and let them into the warmth. "Their calculation is simple," he said. "If they cry out, the door is opened for them. If the door is no longer opened for them, they will no longer cry out. To cry out, that's progress."

—Bertolt Brecht, *Stories of Mr. Keuner*

## 1. Introduction

This dissertation is concerned with a certain kind of activism, namely solidarity activism, taking place in a cluster of grass root networks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and associations of people engaged in solidarity work with refugees in Denmark, that I call *the refugee solidarity movement*. Thus, we are not dealing with a movement made up of immigrants or refugees fighting for their own rights like the U.S. immigrant rights movement (Bloemraad *et al.* 2016; Voss and Bloemraad 2011), or the Sans-Papiers in France (Freedman 2004; McNevin 2006). Rather, we are dealing with Danes from the majority culture acting in solidarity with refugees. Solidarity activism implies that its purpose is to further the cause of someone else who is perceived as unfortunate, often a victim. In this case, the unfortunate is the refugee who has been forced to flee his or her home to find a haven where life can continue. They receive help from movement activists who provide clothing, furniture, toys, money, or whatever the newly arrived refugees may need. They organize events to help promote cultural integration, support them in the processing of their legal cases, protest relevant laws perceived as unfair, and, on rare occasions, assist refugees who have decided to go underground to avoid deportation they fear may be fatal. This kind of solidarity activism is at the center of this dissertation's basic question: Why do people who appear to have no part in the events that have led to another person's misfortune involve themselves in the fate of the unfortunate refugee, that is, why altruism?

However, it is a central tenet in this dissertation that it is false to perceive such acts as altruistic in the utilitarian sense where ego, in a seemingly irrational manner, sacrifices something to help alter. It is false because this approach makes sense only if we assume that ego and alter are two separate entities living in different worlds with no bearing on each another. In this light, altruism is sensational, and its origin becomes a mystery that must be unraveled. It can either be revealed as not truly altruistic because it turns out that ego nevertheless benefits from what initially appeared to be an unselfish act to help alter, or it may be ascribed to the power of irrational emotions, which are perceived as a malfunction.

This dissertation starts from the opposite standpoint and assumes that we are not separate entities living in separate worlds. Instead, not only do our choices and actions influence the lives of other people and vice versa, we exist only as social creatures constituted by the relationships and interactions we are part of and in which we have been involved. "Man is born in society [...] and there he remains" Adam Ferguson (1782 [1767], 27) famously summarized Montesquieu, asserting the ontological fact of human beings' inherently social nature, which continues to be fundamental to most sociology and finds a more recent expression in Elias' notion of *homines aperti* (open people) as opposed to the misleading but widespread idea of *homo clausus* (closed man) (Elias 1978). Then, the question of why the single individual helps a stranger becomes a question of what it is about *us* that such actions signify. Also, when such acts become part of a contentious struggle over principal and global issues of immigration, nationalism, and security, they certainly become questions about the ideational foundation of our society. To continue the reasoning of Brecht's Mr. K quoted above, what progress on our part is lost if we no longer open the doors and the cats stop crying out? Alternatively, what progress is defended when some insist on leaving the door ajar?

Thus, the overall question that motivates this dissertation is to understand what it is about us that makes the individual person feel responsible for the other to the extent that the individual engages in actions which may entail substantial cost and risk in order to assist the unfortunate. The "us" of this question is both the big "us" of the wider society characterized by its values and institutions to which the individual belongs (Durkheim 1975) and the small "us" of the dyad of the unfortunate and the spectator in concrete situations (Boltanski 1999; Løgstrup 1997), as well as all the "us" in between, comprising groups, institutions, organizations, and so forth. These different "us" are intrinsically linked, which becomes evident when people who help refugees are labeled traitors to the nation and are blamed for showing kindness toward refugees of a nationality other than Danish. In the heated and contentious atmosphere that surrounds the issues of immigration and refugees in Denmark and, indeed, the whole of Europe

and North America, basic acts of kindness toward non-nationals—implying that the Dane and the refugee are of the same "us"—take on a political significance that spurs strong reactions from those who wish to delimit the "us" to exclude the refugee.

The dissertation thus asserts a fundamental connection between the small "us" and the bigger "us". Sociologists have formulated this connection in a variety of ways from Benedict Andersons assertion that everyday practices reproduce the construct of the nation (2006 [1983]) to the concept of a civil religion focusing on how rituals reaffirm a secular religion of society (Bellah 1967). Such thinking probably finds its most general expression in Berger and Luckmann's institutionalism (1990 [1966]) but also resonates with classical sociological thinking (Durkheim 2008; Marx 1978). At the heart of these classical texts lies the observation that institutions and values (Joas 2000) are the product of processes of interpretation and the creating of meaning for human life. Even though values and institutions may be experienced as external entities, thereby enjoying a relative autonomy, they are nonetheless reproduced and reconfigured through human practice.

The definition of "us" then comes to signify those with whom we share an affinity warranting solidarity (Durkheim 1997). For "us" to include the other—with or without affinities enabling sympathy and perhaps solidarity—it is crucial to act like Brecht's Mr. K who establishes a bond of sympathy with the cats by recognizing a basic affinity in the observation that '"To lay oneself down to rest is work," he said. "It should be allowed to succeed."' In relation to refugee solidarity, the question becomes whether it is enough that we share our world and are part of a common humanity or if the hierarchy of the nation-state system should determine for whom we have a responsibility to care (Boltanski 1999; Boltanski and Thévenot 2006)? This struggle over the appropriate definition of "us" then becomes a struggle over the basic values and principles of society.

As will be shown below, the people with whom this dissertation is preoccupied have, by their actions of solidarity, given a clear answer to "the vexed ethical question of whether we see ourselves and others as united by our common humanity or differentiated by our social identity" (Jackson 2013). In their view, we share our world with the people we encounter because we are part of a common humanity. Thus, we should not just ignore the people we share the world with and claim no responsibility for them. To the extent we do not care for them and fail to act as such, we destroy the world we inhabit with the other, and thereby the life of which we ourselves are a part (Løgstrup 1997, 2007). The claim is not that they think of it this way or would even describe it in such words, but they act according to such an ethic.

Following these considerations, the overall ambition of this dissertation is, through studies of the small "us," to shed a bit of light on what struggles lie at the heart of the

big "us" of modern Western societies concerning the issues of immigration and refugees. To be clear, the issue of the fundamental value struggle in Danish society is nowhere close to fully covered in this dissertation. It is nonetheless a relevant perspective to the following analyses. In light of this more general view, in line with Alexander (2006), the Danish refugee solidarity movement constitutes a prism that sharpens our view of what is at stake in the ongoing struggle over society's basic values (see also Joas 2013). Indeed, what motivated the formulation of this research project to begin with, was the intuition that when ordinary middle-class citizens in one of the world's richest, most equal, and happiest societies suddenly start to protest their government and even commit civil disobedience such as assisting refugees in going underground for whom they have no formal responsibility and hardly know, it must signify some substantial political discord at the more fundamental level of the basic principles and values of society.

The dissertation situates itself in the processual and relational social movement tradition (McAdam *et al.* 2001; Tarrow 2011; Tilly and Wood 2009) but also benefits from insights from the new social movement and European tradition (Della Porta 1995; Johnston and Klandermans 1995; Melucci 1989, 1996; Porta and Giugni 2013) as well as the culturally oriented tradition (Goodwin *et al.* 2009; Jasper 2008, 2011; Polletta 1998; Doerr 2012, 2008). In dialogue with central questions and problems of this body of literature, through empirically informed analyses, the aim is to characterize the movement and address the above mentioned more general questions. In truth, despite disagreements and divisions in the research field, this dissertation overall takes a constructive approach and combines insights from different lines of theory, also from beyond the social movement literature, to the extent it is helpful to analyze the problem under scrutiny.

The dissertation contributes mainly to the two questions of differential recruitment—what accounts for activists' involvement in different activities—and the question of social movement outcome in the form of activism's lasting impact on the views, perceptions, and attitudes of those involved. These contributions, dispersed in four papers, show that in solidarity activism the ethical commitment to care for the unfortunate is a central ethical driver of activism that may effect involvement in high-risk activism despite none or only little prior experience with activism. This ethical demand is mediated by basic human values of self-transcendence, that is, awareness of the fact that our lives depend on each another and that our acts have consequences for the fortune of others. Such basic human values are shown to be important for how we react emotionally to major events, and how emotional reactions influence our propensity to

engage in low- and high-risk activism respectively. The ethical dimension is also expressed in how variation between group styles that constitute interaction orders affect the level of contentious activism. Activists in groups with a style that focuses on the immediate compassion and care for the refugees and excludes the political dimension of the refugees' misfortune engage to a lesser degree in political protest, no matter their prior history of activism, than do activists in a group culture that focuses on the political and contentious dimension of the matter. Finally, being engaged in refugee activism often involves experiencing a bureaucratic system that lacks any degree of compassion and care for the cases of the refugees it processes. For an activist engaged personally in the cases of refugees, such bureaucratic processing involving little or no care for the human beings behind the dossiers when combined with an experience of systematic bias against the refugee results in a loss of trust in such institutions which becomes an outcome of activism in the refugee solidarity movement.

These main contributions are argued in four chapters following some initial consideration regarding data, methodology, and a general description of the Danish refugee solidarity movement in chapters 2 to 5.

At the heart of the movement's collective identity (Melucci 1989, 1995), analyzed in chapter 5, is the responsibility for the refugees and much of the internal conflict in the movement concerns how the refugees are dealt with. In essence, the preservation of the life and dignity of the refugees is the end, and refugees should never be the means to some other end. Indeed, the movement's opponents are critiqued basically for not treating the refugees as human beings with a non-negotiable right to life and dignity. Instead, refugees are seen as being treated like things that can be sacrificed for political ends, or reified as bureaucratic entities handled no differently than some material thing. This implies an important element of ethical responsibility at the heart of the movement's activities. If someone in the movement is seen as not handling that responsibility in a proper manner, that is, acting in the best interest of the refugee, it is a source of internal conflict. Such conflicts are also at the heart of the variation in scene styles where some, at one extreme, do not view the matter as political in any way. Their activity with refugees is purely humanitarian and does not imply any critique of the political institutions. At the other extreme, the refugees are viewed as the consequence of an inhuman political system, implying that the salvation of the refugees relies on implementing fundamental political changes. However, across differences, the different factions still identify with each other and share some solidarity due to their shared commitment to helping the single refugees with whose fate they have become entangled.

This shared experience of an ethical responsibility, which is at the heart of the movement and why in this dissertation it is identified as the refugee *solidarity* movement, is scrutinized in chapter 6. More precisely, in this chapter it is argued that ethical drivers identified in the authorship of Knud Ejler Løgstrup (1997, 2007) has hitherto been either overlooked in the literature on social movements or wrongly specified as moral shocks due to an emotional reaction rooted in cultural representations (Jasper 2008; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). In contrast, it is argued that in any relationship an ethical demand to care for the other exists. This demand to care for the other can be understood as parallel to what Goffman terms the moral obligation of the interaction order (Rawls 1987). In any relationship or interaction, given a bond of sympathy, a small "us" may emerge. The point is that the ethical demand is of social origin but, as the interaction order, it exists at a level prior to what we identify with society. Thus, it operates in relative autonomy in relation to the societal factors of institutions, norms, culture, values, and conventions. However, it gets its form from these societal factors. In other words, how you care for the other depends on your cultural resources. What is significant about the ethical demand to the study of activism and social movement is that it may be helpful in explaining why people in an apparently spontaneous way sometimes act to aid others as, for instance, in the case of civil disobedience, despite such acts entailing significant costs and risks (McAdam 1986). In addition, it may explain why it is not always through the ordinary process of gradual socialization of an activist identity that people get engaged in high-risk activism, and why sometimes embeddedness in activist networks is not always a precondition.

The finding of the importance of ethical drivers informs chapter 7 which attempts to integrate three different lines of theory on activist recruitment. The first line of theory focuses on the importance of network (Fernandez and McAdam 1988; McAdam and Paulsen 1993), socialization (Della Porta 1988; Klandermans *et al.* 2002), and biographical availability (Bruni 2013; Schussman and Soule 2005). The second is pre-occupied with the impact of emotions (Goodwin *et al.* 2004, 2009), and the third concerns predisposition in the form of values (Deth and Scarbrough 1995a; Inglehart 1977). It is the third line that relates to the ethical drivers identified in chapter 6. This connection relies on the fact that our basic view of life, which can be said to correspond to Schwartz concept of basic human values (Davidov *et al.* 2008b; Schwartz 1992), is an important mediator of our inclination to act ethically. The statistical analyses show that basic human values indeed influence our propensity to engage in activism as expected from the theory of Løgstrup. Furthermore, it reveals that factors related to network and socialization as well as emotions are important in explaining differential activist recruitment. Furthermore, variables operationalized as belonging to different lines of theory

interact in significant ways suggesting that the three lines of theory that to some extent have been viewed as competing would gain from a systematic theoretical integration. Finally, it also shows that recruitment to low- and high-risk activism are influenced by different factors, but that the overall finding with regard to high-risk activism is in line with the theoretical expectations (McAdam 1986; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991).

The analysis in chapter 8 contributes by showing the usefulness to supplement the well-established concepts of framing (Snow *et al.* 1986; Snow and Benford 1988) and social network (e.g. McAdam 1986; Passy 2001; Snow *et al.* 1980) with the relatively new concept of group styles (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003; Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014). These concepts all concern the meso level of analysis constituted by the group. Network analysis is concerned with dyadic relationships and their structure in the aggregate and not the group as a context of interaction and tends to black-box the content of the network ties. In contrast, group style concerns the stabilized patterns of interaction in the group and how they form an order of interaction that has relative autonomous effects on differential recruitment. Processes of frame alignment also deviate from this perspective because here the group is viewed as a collective actor, and the internal processes are paid no attention. We undertake several statistical tests that show that the contentiousness of the group styles identified in patterns of online interaction recorded in Facebook groups indeed has significant effects on the individual's participation in political protest. The effect tends to be more robust and stronger than the effect of the measures of the group's frames and the individual's network embeddedness.

From chapters 6, 7, and 8 having been focused on differential recruitment, chapter 9 concerns the outcome of movement activism. This shift also entails connecting the small "us" concerning the ethical relationships and actions carried out in correspondence with certain values with the bigger "us" concerned with society's political institutions and the values and principles underpinning them. In this chapter, it is demonstrated that a likely outcome in the aggregate of activists is a loss of trust in the political institutions of Parliament, the legal system, and the police. This is in stark contrast to the literature on institutional trust which assumes the opposite relationship, namely that low institutional trust leads to activism (Ejrnæs 2016; Hooghe and Marien 2013; Kaase 1999). It is furthermore argued that the loss of trust is a consequence of interaction with institutional actors who do not adhere to the values and principles to which the activists expect them to adhere. These values and principles are in broad terms those we associate with modern democracy (Habermas 1996). They include impartiality and neutrality on behalf of the civil servants of the order institutions of the legal system and the police (Creutzfeldt and Bradford 2016; Nix *et al.* 2015; Tyler 2003), and

high political efficacy (Craig *et al.* 1990; Pollock 1983) with regard to the partisan institution of parliament (Rothstein and Stolle 2008), implying access to dialogue with the politicians. In addition to losing trust, a consequence of experiencing that basic principles of law do not apply to refugees is that the activists not only consider it legitimate to commit civil disobedience, they also express that they are obligated to resist what they view as corrupted institutions. This change of view gains further significance when we consider that the average activist in the movement has a significantly higher level of civic engagement and support for democratic values than the general Danish population. Thus, a further outcome is that middle-class citizens with a high engagement in civil society, vital to the legitimacy of democracy, from a participatory mode change their role in civil society to be one of opposition and resistance to the political institutions of democracy they view as corrupted (Tocqueville 2004). In this sense, this chapter also demonstrates, that mobilization in opposition to the state also happens at the opposite position of the much debated nationalist mobilization in the Western democracies which should be taken into consideration in relation to the asserted crisis of Western democracy (Celikates *et al.* 2015; Kriesi 2012, 2014).

In the final chapter 10, the results are summarized and their implications for our understanding of differential recruitment and movement activism's consequences for the wider society are discussed. In addition, the chapter considers some research questions and perspectives derived from the findings that suggest promising perspectives for future research as well as the need for testing the generalizability of the findings which, after all, are made in relation to only one specific case.

The reader will be spared a literature review in the introductory parts of the dissertation. Instead, relevant literature is considered in the separate analyses. In the following chapters, focus will be on providing background on the empirical foundation of the dissertation and, in particular, the movement itself which is the primary continuity throughout the analyses.

In chapters 2 and 3, data and methods will be introduced and discussed. Several sources of data have been collected and introduced in different ways and sometimes in mixed-methods research designs. Thus, a thorough understanding of data will benefit the reader a great deal, especially regarding assessing the scientific quality of the subsequent analyses. Of course, relevant aspects relating to data and methods are discussed in relation to the different analyses. Chapter 4 concerns the historical background. Here, the development of the movement in relation to the political opportunity structure is analyzed. It is argued that rather than opportunity, the movement mobilizes under threat, and at the emotional level, it is driven not as much by hope as it is by

fear. Finally, it discusses the recent mobilization in the summer and fall of 2015 across Europe which in Denmark took a turn as it intersected with the diffusion of a new cohort of movement activists, namely the *Friendly People*, who, although puzzling given the heated political debate around the refugee issue, frames their activity as purely humanitarian or "friendly" and in an absolute sense, non-contentious. An exhaustive analysis of this is not provided, only some tentative suggestions. Chapter 5 provides general background on the movement, such as what the main social movement organizations (SMO) are, the variation in the movement population, as well as repertoire, and finally, the collective identity of the movement. Having provided the reader with extensive background knowledge of the movement and the empirical and methodological foundation of the dissertation, chapters 6 to 9 contain the four major analyses outlined above. In chapter 10, the overall conclusions are presented.

## 2. Data collection

This dissertation has its foundation in an original empirical material consisting of several components: 1) 42 qualitative interviews with as many activists. 2) an online survey of activists including items comparable with items in the survey programs of the European Social Survey (ESS) and International Social Survey Program (ISSP), and 3) data on social media activity in the Facebook forums associated with the movement which on individual and group levels can be linked to the data from the online survey. Also, information on background and history of the movement from secondary sources has been used.

The way the data collection proceeded was not part of some grand, carefully planned research design. In fact, when the project started in the summer of 2013, the qualitative interviews collected during spring 2014 were supposed to be the only data source, even though from the outset I was looking out for possibilities for surveying the movement. However, as things developed, especially in the fall of 2015 when a major mobilization took place, new opportunities for data collection emerged as the entire movement went online and a population that could be surveyed suddenly presented itself. Furthermore, Facebook, being a vehicle of mobilization and a site of interaction, took center stage in the movement infrastructure, adding a new and unforeseen dimension to the dissertation. Also, the mobilization affected a transformation of the movement from consisting predominantly of Danes from the majority culture to also encompassing Danes from the minority cultures including immigrants and individuals with a family history of integration in Denmark. Thus, the movement population that I tried to sample changed dramatically during the project.

This was a challenge but also—and in my view to a much greater extend—an opportunity. That the movement within the four-year span of this project evolved from a historic low to a historic peak in activity and membership, not only in Denmark but across Europe, I can only consider a stroke of luck as it presented unique opportunities for conducting research. However, it did impact the data collection and changed the project in a fundamental way. In what follows, I shall seek to clarify the content of the different data-sources as well as how they are interlinked, as this is only briefly touched upon in the subsequent analyses.

An issue of particular importance which, from the very beginning, structured the data-collection has to do with research ethical considerations related to the fact that the dissertation is about people who may have committed potentially unlawful acts of civil disobedience in order to help refugees. Exposure may get them—and the asylum-

seekers they may have helped—in serious trouble. How this has been handled and its consequences for data receives special attention in the following.

**Interviews**

Keeping to the chronology of the data collection, first the qualitative interviews are considered, which also make up the empirical backbone of the dissertation. Below, focus is on access to informants and how data were collected.

During spring and summer of 2014, I conducted 42 qualitative interviews with 42 activists.[1] To help refugees go underground, which is illegal and punishable by prison in Denmark, is part of the movement's repertoire, and it was, from the beginning, a goal to interview persons who had been involved in such acts of civil disobedience, but not only them, as all kinds of activism were of interest. However, assuming that such high-risk and high-cost activism was relatively rare and that persons so engaged were more difficult to get to participate in an interview, special attention was paid to recruiting such interview persons.

To get in touch with activists in the movement, some access points to the movement were identified. Some were NGOs or groups that could be identified on the Internet and thus could be contacted directly. Others were individual persons who had come forward in the public debate and told about their involvement with refugees of legal as well as illegal status. Finally, through my personal network, I knew people with a history of activity in the movement. This handful of access points were recruited as both interview persons and as gatekeepers. To ensure the anonymity of the additional interview persons, a specific procedure of recruitment was devised. This was done to avoid involuntary disclosure by the gatekeepers. It would be ethically problematic if details regarding a person's involvement in activities which the person wished to keep secret were disclosed to me against their will. Furthermore, if such actions could give rise to conflict and controversy between gatekeepers and activists who felt the disclosure was a violation of their privacy, my research project would have been a catalyst to processes harmful to the relationships of the movement members and thereby my object of study.

To avoid such research ethical pitfalls, the method of recruitment became somewhat cumbersome. In practice, recruitment was carried out by asking a number the gatekeepers to circulate a letter of invitation in their network within the movement. The letter explained the purpose of my research project, the details regarding confiden-

[1] In total, 65.5 hours of interviews were recorded. The shortest was 23 minutes, the longest two hours and 28 minutes. On average, the interviews lasted a little more than 1½ hours.

tiality and so forth, and how to contact me if interested in participating[2]. When an interview was carried out, the interview person often was recruited as a gatekeeper, meaning she or he was asked to circulate the letter in her or his network.

Such a procedure of "blind"[3] snowball sampling (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981) implies a massive loss of control by the researcher over the process of recruitment. In most cases, however, the interviewee would, in anonymized form, tell me about other movement members she or he had in mind, which provided me an opportunity to make sure that no one was not contacted due to the gatekeepers misunderstanding what kind of activists I was interested in. In this way, unwanted deselection of potential interviewees in the network of the gatekeepers was countered, thus ensuring as broad a scope of recruitment as possible.

However, it cannot be denied that the strength, as well as the weakness, of snowball sampling is its embeddedness in certain social networks about which one potentially develops an intimate knowledge (Noy 2008) but which also limit the researcher's perspective and excludes those beyond the network's reach (Browne 2005). In this regard, the selection of the initial gatekeepers provided me with an opportunity to influence the recruitment process. The gatekeepers were intentionally chosen and sought out to get a varied selection of initial access points into different networks to counter the fallacy of exclusion. Thus, maximal heterogeneity was the objective rather than a representative sample; also assessing representativeness would not be possible as no data on the entire movement population exists. For these reasons, I have no reason to believe my set of interviews should be representative in a proportional sense, but on the other hand, I have good reasons to believe that the distinctive types of activists are represented.

The interviews were carried out preferably in the interviewee's home or another place of the interviewee's choosing. The site should be a place in which the interviewee felt comfortable in order to ensure a feeling of safety that would allow for a more open

[2] See appendix 2.1 for the letter (in Danish). This letter was carefully crafted and initial drafts were read by pilots and subsequently revised in order to avoid misunderstandings like potential interview persons of relevance regarding themselves as irrelevant or making an impression that the project was amateurish or that the promised anonymity and confidentiality could not be trusted. On the other hand, the risk should not be exaggerated and unnecessary worries should not be generated. The letter was even revised to a minor degree during the data-collection and at one point two versions existed: one targeting traditional left-wing activists, and the other targeting active members of the movement with no significant history of prior activism. Furthermore, the letter also articulated potential interests in participation on behalf of the activists, namely that participation is a possibility to get a voice, especially concerning civil disobedience in the form of helping asylum-seekers in going underground, which one hardly can go public with without also putting the refugee(s) concerned at risk. On the other hand, such framing could affect what would be said during the interview, so the words were carefully chosen and this matter was not mentioned until the end of the letter. Such framing effects also were paid attention to during the interviews and the process of interpretation. However, it turned out that it was not a problem, and if there were such effects, they were negligible.

[3] In the sense that I am "blind" to who received the letter of invitation.

approach on their part. In general, it was important to make the interview situation as safe a space as possible because we were going to talk about well-kept secrets on the interviewee's part from the very outset over a few hours and after meeting in person for the first time. To create a relaxed atmosphere promoting a feeling of mutual trust, I would dress casually and, to the extent possible, tell some personal details about myself, thereby exposing myself a bit to demonstrate openness and my trust of them. Also, bringing up "small talk"—such as having children or the like—was deliberately pursued to establish mutual identification to help "break the ice."

Such an approach may sound strategic and even manipulative (Winsløw 1992), but I think it was not. First, in the letter of invitation (see appendix 2.1) the interviewees had been made aware of the overall themes we were going to discuss, including the topic of civil disobedience. Also, it was their choice whether to make themselves known to me, as I did not know who had received the letter of invitation. Thus, by contacting me they indicated their willingness to tell me about their experiences in relation to these sensitive issues. Furthermore, in the process of organizing the interview, we would discuss its content further. Thus, rather than being manipulative and strategic, such measures were a means to make the common activity of the interview successful. In fact, it was no different than when the interviewees often would serve coffee and biscuits or the like to make the meal a point of common reference and demonstrate hospitality toward me. Finally, the interviewees were, in general, resourceful (see table 2.1), often with higher education and large social networks, and far from socially vulnerable or the like. Thus, in the interview situation, if there was an asymmetrical balance of power, it was in favor of the interviewee who possessed the knowledge and experiences that we were going to discuss and whom I was in no position to sanction or otherwise force to participate.

The interviews were semi-structured going toward unstructured. This implies that I had prepared an interview guide with questions organized around different themes relating to central problems and concepts.[4] However, except for the introduction and obtaining recorded consent to the terms and conditions of the interview (Roberts and Indermauer 2003), it was only rarely the case that the interview guide was followed in detail, and the interviews would largely be formed by what the interviewee brought up and found significant. Rather than a structure, the interview guide functioned as a checklist used to ensure that something central had not been skipped. However, sometimes it would be laid aside and the interview would follow another path dictated by the experiences of the interviewee. Furthermore, during the period of interviewing, I revised the interview guide as new themes came up. For instance, the concept of the

[4] See the interview guide in appendix 2.2.