



# Asylum and Belonging

Study Project WS 2019/20 Charlotte Ulbrich



## The Project

For my project I conducted interviews with tolerated African asylum seekers from Stuttgart. A toleration means that the deportation is delayed for an indefinite time (e.g. for humanitarian reasons). A "Duldung" is valid for up to 6 months and can be extended. Thus, it can happen that many rejected asylum seekers stay in Germany for a longer period of time and do not know what their future will be. I asked myself the question: is it possible to feel at home in a place that you have to leave at an undefined time?

## Methods and Reflection

In the end 8 young men contacted me. We met in the city, drank coffee and talked. I conducted narrative interviews, because it allowed my counterpart to tell their whole story in peace – from their flight up to their actual situation. At this point I would like to thank my interview partners for their openness and trust. It was not easy for everyone to tell about themselves and as the person responsible for the interview, it was important to me that the people concerned felt comfortable. For this reason it is important to take a lot of time for this kind of interview and to adapt it to the person being interviewed.

## Findings and Thesis

Many of my interview partners felt safe in Germany but not at home or welcome. They had come to Germany, because they had hoped for a perspective. Due to the restrictions of the toleration status (difficulties to find a job/apartment, no possibility to study) and an often missing social environment, as well as political rejection by the state, they did not feel belonging. In my master thesis I would like to investigate how the two actors – the German state and the asylum seeker – define belonging. I hope to make a contribution with this thesis, especially with regard to the refugee policy.