



CENTER FOR POLICY STUDIES
CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Challenging the Political Across Borders: Migrants' and Solidarity Struggles

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“Written in the aftermath of the “European refugee crisis” of 2015, this agenda-setting volume turns to conceptual reflections on the meaning and structures of solidarity with and by migrants and refugees. It connects global processes with local responses, scrutinises the political architecture of citizen-state-nation nexus and dares to complicate, problematise and contextualise pro-migrant solidarity.”

*Olena Fedyuk, Visiting Research Fellow,
Department of Work, Employment and Organisation,
Strathclyde Business School, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow*

“This interdisciplinary volume offers an important and timely insight on migration solidarity initiatives and migrants’ struggles during the “European refugee crisis”. The rich collection of case-studies in different national settings is a valuable record of a diverse and multifaceted solidarity landscape that resists normative interpretations.”

*Katerina Rozakou, Assistant Professor of Anthropology,
Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens*

While recent years have seen the reassertion of exclusionary, anti-migrant politics and discourses, migrant-led and solidarity struggles contesting migration and border regimes have also risen and gained in visibility. How new are those struggles? What do they mean for our understanding and practice of politics and the political? What possibilities for change do they open up, and what limitations may they face? Based on chapters by a range of academics and activists engaged in border and migration struggles, *Challenging the Political Across Borders: Migrants' and Solidarity Struggles* examines the practices, structures, and meanings of solidarity with and by migrants and refugees in Europe and beyond. Bringing together empirical, conceptual and historical insights, the volume interrogates struggles unfolding on the ground and situates them within a critical analysis of historical and current mobility regimes, and how these have been resisted. This collection will be of interest to students and academics working on migration and social struggles, as well as to activists, volunteers and those interested in new forms of solidarity.

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CHALLENGING THE POLITICAL ACROSS BORDERS:
MIGRANTS' AND SOLIDARITY STRUGGLES

Edited by

Tegiye Birey, Céline Cantat, Ewa Maczynska, Eda Sevinin

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INTRODUCTION: MIGRANTS' AND SOLIDARITY STRUGGLES

Tegiye Birey, Céline Cantat, Ewa Maczynska, Eda Sevinin

Situating the volume

This edited volume stems from the workshop '*Challenging the Political beyond and across Borders: Possibilities and Tensions of Migrants' and Solidarity Struggles*', which took place in November 2016 at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. The volume consists of some of the papers presented at the workshop, as well as contributions from scholars who joined us later for this publication. The overall motivation has been to develop collective reflections on solidarity projects and practices with, for, and by migrants, which have been affected by, and also shaped, European border and migration policies in differentiated ways. This introduction reviews some of the major topics of debate addressed in the workshop and the present volume.

The first key issue bringing us together concerns the discourse of crisis, more specifically of 'Europe's migrant (or refugee) crisis' that came to characterise much of the public, media and political debates around migration from 2015 onwards. In the wake of hypervisibility of these transnational movements, the participants in the workshop and volume have engaged in critical conversations regarding the notion of 'crisis' and its implications. We immediately noted the ways in which bracketing a social and political event as 'crisis' has an isolating effect, presenting it as

out of the ordinary and disconnected from the context in which it emerged and developed. This relates to a second key point for discussion, namely the meanings and aims of ‘migration solidarity’ and the ways in which it has been conceptualised, mobilised and enacted across a variety of local, national and transnational settings including the ways in which it has related to ideas of migration as ‘crisis’. A third key concern has been to think migration and migration solidarity in more interconnected ways, by which we mean in relation to other social and political processes and mobilisation. We have been interested in sites where struggles that are seen as pertaining to migration and migrants intersect with other struggles, and what may come out of such encounters. Based on these three key themes, the questions we pursued include: how have joint migrant-citizen struggles destabilised traditional understandings of the political and of ‘legitimate’ political actors?; to what extent have solidarity acts challenged, disrupted and/or confirmed dominant representations of migrants and migration?; how have solidarity initiatives challenged the discourses of ‘crisis’ and migrant exceptionalism?; have solidarity practices at times reproduced dominant dynamics and binaries?; what does solidarity look like beyond heroism?; how have recent discourses and policies regarding ‘crisis’ changed the meaning, practices and actors of solidarity?

After providing some context to the three themes outlined above, this introduction will locate the present contribution within other scholarly debates and relevant literature. Finally, this introduction will provide a brief outline of the various parts and chapters of the volume.

Thinking and acting through the discourse of ‘crisis’

The deployment of the discourse of ‘crisis’, which takes the political imaginaries of ‘Western’ states as its starting -and often ending- point, has produced representations of migrants’ mobility as exceptional and contributed to the depoliticisation and dehistoricisation of people’s mobility, isolating migrants’ arrivals from the political and historical reasons that led to their displacement in the first place. In so doing, it has justified ‘emergency interventions’ by European states, in order to rectify the ‘abnormality’ of

unsanctioned movement through its classification, containment and/or immobilisation.

Many of the bordering and restrictive measures employed by states since 2015 are however far from new. What primarily concerns us here is whether migration solidarity movements have successfully challenged the representations underlying these measures. In particular, it seems that not all pro-migrant interventions have developed critical stances towards the notion of crisis. What does it mean, then, to call for 'solidarity' with refugees and migrants without rejecting the terms of the debate that construct people on the move as illegitimate and unwanted? This issue calls for a set of detailed and grounded investigations into the field of political mobilisation surrounding migration and its struggles – a set of investigations that scrutinise emerging forms of resistance to exclusionary anti-migrant discourses without overlooking the potential connections and commonalities that may exist between these apparently opposed stances.

The deployment of the discourse of refugee crisis in 2015 has indeed played a key role in the emergence of a range of solidarity practices among diverse communities of actors including activists, humanitarian workers, regular citizens, academics and of course migrants and refugees themselves. Many groups in host countries have mobilised their political as well as humanitarian resources to invest in what they labelled 'solidarity' actions for and with migrants and refugees, while self-organisation practices among migrants have also been numerous. Such practices have ranged from providing material assistance through donations, hosting people in personal homes in times of need, to facilitating cross-border journeys or providing legal and technical assistance to people seeking asylum. It thus seems that the term 'solidarity' operates as an umbrella notion that covers a wide spectrum of actions and actors – as we come back to in the next section.

What is of interest here is to reflect on the meaning and potential of such practices if they are not associated with a critical denunciation of the political and economic structures that lead to displacement in the first place, and that reinforce violence and exclusion all along migratory routes including in host localities. What are the ethical, political and

epistemological implications of solidarity practices that position themselves as responses to a non-scrutinised framework of migration as ‘crisis’? Can these actions still subvert the border and migration regimes that in fact produce the needs to which they aim to respond?

We call for ethnographies of situated struggles that pay careful attention to local nuances and contexts in order to examine the way in which ‘crisis’ as a discourse and a worldview has shaped some of the solidarity practices that have emerged since 2015. In particular, we set out to assess whether some migrant and solidarity struggles, but also the academic knowledge that tries to understand them, run the risk of reproducing dehistoricised frameworks. It seems indeed that even within solidarity circles (activist and/or academic), the population movements and the ‘solidarity movements’ that we witnessed during and after 2015 have been primarily discussed within the temporality and geography of ‘crisis’ - that is, the geography which centres around the ‘core of Europe’ or the global North. Under the immediacy of the crisis framework, temporalities and geographies of solidarity have been re-centralised on the ‘West’.

This is also an important question insofar as, if the discourse of crisis becomes the starting point of solidarity mobilisation with and for migrants, these actions risk subsiding as soon as states or international organisations signal the containment of the ‘crisis’ through various emergency (and in fact often brutal) measures. This volume thus aims to reflect on what such a framing of ‘crisis’ conceals, reveals and enables in terms of migration governance, and how the naming of ‘crisis’ has impacted and shaped solidarity practices within transit and host societies.

Conceptualising solidarity

The chapters in this volume touch on important questions of the meanings and practices of solidarity, and the limits of its autonomy. A common starting point across the contributions in this volume is the recognition that solidarity means different things to different actors, takes on different shapes in different contexts, and is invoked to explain and define a wide range of practices, discourses, positionings and social relations. In turn, rather than

attempting to propose a conclusive definition of solidarity, we start from the perspective of those social actors who understand their work as pertaining to solidarity and try to study their potential, tensions, contradictions and the hopes they may allow to formulate across a range of settings.

One interrogation regarding the recent mobilisations to assist people's mobilities in Europe and its neighbouring countries concerns the meaning of migrant-citizen solidarities for the notion of politics and the practice of being political. What does it mean when those constructed as 'speechless emissaries' (Malkki, 1996) by humanitarian discourses, and, simultaneously, as threats by securitising discourses, form alliances both with and without citizens and residents of the host societies, and organise in ways that challenge the state in its current historical form? What challenge to the state and statecraft is posed when the practices of separation and differentiation embedded in migration and border policies are contested? What happens when the notion of solidarity, a concept often reserved for imagined communities such as the family or the nation (see Kymlicka, 2015), is extended to those who are narrated as outsiders in hegemonic discourses; when solidarity reaches out to such communities through citizens' mobilisations in support of the struggles of asylum-seekers and refugees (Kelz, 2015)?

Beyond analysing how these struggles challenge notions of solidarity underpinned by state-centred and static understandings of community and identity, we are also interested in thinking how migration solidarity struggles themselves may have evolved. For instance, we reflect on how migration solidarity struggles may also be assuming a transnational meaning and form as they combat increasingly transnational border regimes. In a context where not only migration and migrants but also solidarity struggles are being criminalised (Fekete, 2018), we are compelled to rethink solidarity by, with, and for migrants, and to explore its forms and novel political meanings.

In this volume, we gather a number of interventions that explore these issues by scrutinising the complex and at times contradictory micro-dynamics, tensions and conflicts expressed in the everyday work of migrant activists, support groups and solidarity actions. Importantly, such

deliberations challenge reduction of solidarity to being only possible between people with shared identities and a common history. At the same time, they also raise new questions about power hierarchies that generate gendered, racialised, class positionalities entangled with politics of place and history within migrants' solidarity movements (Ünsal, 2015). Transnational and black feminist scholarship (Yuval-Davis, 1997; Cockburn and Hunter, 1999; Mohanty, 2003; Collins, 2017) provides a valuable resource for scholars seeking to draw out the complexities and nuances of solidarity struggles that involve differently positioned actors. While the authors in this volume do not always explicitly refer to this literature, their contributions all reflect a reflexive and attuned stance towards the possibilities and the limitations of such struggles. In particular, Mohanty's discussion of a feminist transversal politics and practices, which is based on the recognition of differential positions together with the awareness of common (more specifically anti-capitalist) fields of struggle, and a 'noncolonising feminist solidarity across borders' (2003, p. 503), seems to speak to many of the concerns examined by contributors to this volume.

The volume also sets out to complexify our understanding of solidarity by looking at groups and individuals who are traditionally not included in critical analyses of migrant solidarity and who nonetheless mobilise the category. We show that 'solidarity' has been evoked by a wide range of actors beyond the non-state actors traditionally understood as the civil society. These include state institutions, international non-governmental organisations, (multi)national corporations, faith-based associations and humanitarian organisations, but also local organisations led by the residents of various neighbourhoods and so-called 'independent activists' (migrants and non-migrants, alike).

Converging struggles and rethinking the political

Contemporary migrants' struggles do not always pertain solely to issues related to borders and migratory status, but are also linked with issues such as labour conditions and access to economic and social rights. Departing from this observation, we connect our analyses of migrants' mobilisation

and immobilisation to other realms of political and economic activity within broader historical contexts. Thus, alongside collective reflections on mobility regimes and the ways these are challenged by migrants and those standing in solidarity with them, this volume also explores how the intersection of mobility regimes and other regimes or disciplinary devices can lead to the emergence of new critical sites of political engagement that may articulate a range of contentious demands. In the examination of struggles surrounding migration today, we attempt to think through possibilities and hopes, including the potential convergence of struggles enacted by different social groups or groups concerned with different social issues. We also focus on the emergence of tensions and the possible reproduction of exclusionary discourses and practices in both migrant solidarity movements and joint struggles carried out by migrants, solidarity actors and other groups. The aim is, above all, to reflect on the potential to contest dominant representations of migrants and mobility and to question the hierarchical and differentiated positions that states and other actors ascribe to different social groups.

Thinking many struggles around mobility, access, equality and rights in more interconnected ways also highlights the extent to which migration and borders have become key sites for exploring, challenging and expanding politics and political subjectivities in the contemporary era. This is reflected in the upsurge in political mobilisation among refugees, illegalised migrants and solidarity activists across the world: from the European Union and countries at its borders to the North American and Australian contexts but also countries of the Global South, collective actions by and in support of refugees and migrants have multiplied, adopting a variety of forms including marches, workers' movements, hunger strikes, material support networks, and occupations, to name just some.

These various forms of resistance have been heralded as the advent of new forms of being political (Ataç et al., 2017) where migrants open up space for politics that, in challenging the territorially bounded conception of politics, are no longer defined in relation to the state-nation-citizen nexus (Squire, 2010; Nyers, 2010). The significance of disruptive forms of political

mobilisations by, for and with migrants and refugees lies in understanding how such mobilisations can offer alternative pathways of ‘the political’ that may undo/unsettle the nation-state-citizen nexus (Soğuk, 1999). This volume offers important contributions to this line of analysis by proposing a series of case studies that scrutinise this argument and its materialisation in a variety of contexts. Moreover, while exploring this disruptive potential, we also pay careful attention to moments when ‘solidarities’ may reproduce, settle and perhaps even enhance these hierarchies. As we will see, forms of action that self-declare as solidarity can also at times consolidate the centrality of not only the borders of the nation-state but also of capital as a relation that is deeply ingrained in migration regimes. From this perspective, this volume explores the multiple ways in which migrants establish themselves as political actors in relation to broader contemporary political issues.

Locating migrants’ and solidarity struggles in scholarly debates

This edited volume is located in the emerging and growing field of scholarly studies focusing on migration struggles, and particularly on the ways in which migrants resist and subvert increasingly marginalising immigration and border policies. In order to locate this edited volume in the broader discussions in critical migration studies, we identify four strands of scholarship to which our volume speaks that have systematically engaged with migrants’ struggles: social movement theory (SMT), critical citizenship studies (CCS), scholarship around the autonomy of migration (AoM) and critical humanitarian studies. While the contributors also engage with various other scholarly debates, in this introduction we introduce these four strands as these are most evident throughout the book.

The first strand of literature we engage with is social movement theory (SMT). Its focus on the organisational and structural aspects of protests and emphasis on social movements’ relative capacity to mobilise resources, their repertoires of contention, their use of ‘frames’ to produce legibility, and the structures of opportunities and constraints that restrict and enable protests provide a framework to focus on the inner workings of solidarity struggles.

When applied to the study of social struggles by and for migrants, SMT has offered a number of studies looking at the political context of migration as an 'opportunity structure', examining how contextual elements impact upon migrant actors (see Cinalli, 2016; Bloemraad, 2006; Cinalli and Guigni, 2011). Research in SMT has also looked at the relationship between migrants' political mobilisation and pro-migrant actors (NGOs, activists, charities, etc.) which can be drawn on as resources for migrant mobilisation (Cinalli, 2008; Simeant, 1998).

Opportunities and constraints, however, are rarely fully external to movements; rather, they are also shaped and influenced by them. This points to SMT's difficulty in accounting for the interactions between different spaces and scales of political action and their role in producing political subjectivities 'in action' (Ataç et al., 2016). In that sense, we argue that the fluid and dynamic politics through which agency and struggles are constructed, enacted and negotiated, and the ways in which people constitute themselves as political through movements, remain only marginally addressed by SMT (Ataç et al., 2015; Schwenken, 2013). Thus, we draw on those authors that have addressed these limitations, showing, for example, that those who stand in solidarity with migrants tend to take over 'the voice' of the struggle (Chimienti and Solomos, 2011). At the same time, we recognise, following Johnson (2012), that even though activism and related analyses should start from the perspective of the migrant, citizen's 'momentary activism' – interventions made at specific moments – is at times necessary to strategically make use of differential positions, and to translate and legitimise migrants' demands. We draw on such positioned analyses, paying close attention to the changing and situated internal and external dynamics of movement-building as well as to the contradictions, tensions and hierarchies that characterise the construction of alliances.

In scrutinising the fluid and transformative potential of migrants' struggles, we find critical citizenship studies (CCS) particularly insightful. This body of scholarship examines the political and counter-hegemonic character of migrants' movements and highlights the grounded and positioned politics that animate social and political struggles. The starting

point of CCS is a critique of formal models of citizenship that associate and restrict rights to legal status and to membership of a territorial state. In that sense, CCS questions the basis of what has been traditionally recognised as ‘political’ (Isin, 2002; Isin and Nielsen, 2008) and examines how political struggles and actions, particularly when enacted by those marginalised in formal citizenship regimes, re-make and enlarge the boundaries of citizenship. A central concept in CCS is ‘acts of citizenship’, defined as “acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens (claimants of rights and responsibilities) through creating new sites and scales of struggle” (Isin, 2008, p. 39). Citizenship is seen as a dynamic and contested field of struggles (Isin, Nyers and Turner 2009) within which the political agency of those usually considered as politically voiceless and marginalised becomes central (Ataç et al., 2016; Turner, 2016; Tyler and Marciniak, 2013; Nyers and Rygiel, 2012). While SMT focuses on the ways in which collectivities aim at challenging and disturbing state-centric understandings of political action, CCS adds a focus on the actions of individuals. It argues that even singular acts of individual resistance should be interpreted as a productive challenge to hegemonic discourses. In this, CCS is committed to opening space for a bottom-up scrutiny of migration, where the voices of those who are usually silenced, both by states and by mainstream scholarship, come to the foreground.

Autonomy of migration (AoM), on the other hand, departs from a critique of what it sees as static and mechanical approaches to migration, particularly those that frame migration in terms of ‘push-and-pull’ factors. Instead, it proposes to look closely at the ‘autonomous’ and uncontrollable dimension of migratory movements and pays greater attention to the political economic dimension of migratory struggles (Mezzadra, 2011; 2005; Bojadžijev and Karakayalı, 2010; Tazzioli, 2014). We find AoM’s argument, that mobility always precedes and exceeds the border and immigration regimes that try to control it, extremely useful. From such a perspective, citizenship, perceived as always in some relationship with

sovereignty and territoriality, is considered exclusionary, an instrument of control and regulation on the part of states and thus limiting the possibility of developing more inclusive political communities (Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2013, p. 179-85). Thus, the calls in the AoM literature to destabilise citizenship-oriented approaches in migration studies and to develop new “conceptual nomenclatures” (Mezzadra, 2015, p. 134) that move beyond citizenship (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013) is something we find crucial in reflecting on solidarity struggles.

Finally, critical humanitarian studies, which has long contributed to the analysis of the power relations and hierarchies that can underpin aid and support relationships, is the fourth field of academic literature that this collection speaks to. Critical humanitarian studies have often focused on exploring the hierarchies and asymmetries embedded in formal aid relations as enacted by large NGOs and humanitarian actors (see Ticktin, 2011; Fassin, 2011; Malkki, 1996, 2015). However, its critique of vertical and highly unequal aid relationships and their depoliticising, dehumanising and dehistoricising effects at times proves equally relevant to think of support relationships beyond the official humanitarian industry. The chapters in this volume extend the analytical tools developed by critical humanitarian studies to look at solidarity struggles that are framed as ‘political’ and ‘horizontal’ in order to analyse the extent to which they break away from or reproduce problems such as dependency and hierarchy. With many of the authors contributing to this volume, we find it important not to take for granted the ‘horizontal’ and ‘politically subversive’ nature of solidarity struggles as contrasted with vertical humanitarianism, but instead to look closely at the possibilities and challenges inscribed in both.

Recent scholarship shows that the clear-cut demarcation between humanitarian practices and practices of solidarity needs to be questioned (Rozakou, 2016; Cantat, 2018). Indeed, another argument made in this book is that, while many of the dynamics manifested in 2015 can be seen in continuity with earlier processes, the mass mobilisation of people from various economic, social, and national backgrounds in support of migrants have challenged the usual dichotomies between humanitarianism and

solidarity (Cantat and Feischmidt 2018). The chapters of this volume call for a more nuanced analysis of the many forms and meanings that support for migrants can endorse - one that takes into account the political, ethical and personal motivations evoked in support of pro-migrant mobilisation. In transit as well as in various countries of the EU and beyond where migrants attempt to build lives, a range of practices, sometimes emerging from very different politics, ethics, and motives, converge in the vaguely defined space of 'migrant solidarity'. In order to make sense of such movements, interrogating and challenging the dichotomies of 'the state vs. migrants' and 'humanitarianism vs. solidarity' is crucial. This also allows for reflection on how these practices can be empowering, less hierarchical and can open up space for new understandings of the political. Yet at the same time, this can also show how these practices may run a risk of reproducing the depoliticising and exceptionalising dynamics for which humanitarianism has been criticised.

We argue that a nuanced and situated analysis of solidarity enables scholars to make greater sense of the complexities of the political action of both migrants and citizens. By bringing together chapters that pay particular attention to the ways in which solidarity practices challenge a common dichotomy between migrants and citizens, highlighting the continuities between different social groups and their shared experiences, responsibilities, and struggles, we hope to open new avenues for further debates on solidarity. This, we believe, enables us to challenge the perceived homogeneity of host societies and a state-centric understanding of politics. Further, such a careful analysis of the dynamics at play in solidarity groups allows us to question some of the binaries that structure much of the literature around migration, social movements and the state. Indeed, it is often assumed that there exists a dichotomy between dynamics of exclusion - enacted by the state and state-centric organisations such as the UN and the EU - and processes of inclusion, often seen as belonging to non-state actors. Various scholars have complicated this picture by showing how nuanced, variegated and differentiated the relations of inclusion and exclusion are in a range of situated contexts (see De Genova, 2013). We join those scholars

by looking closely at the ways solidarity practices as they emerge on the ground challenge binary understandings of inclusion-exclusion practices and show that solidarity relations are also embedded in a broader context of global inequalities and hierarchies.

Structure of the volume

Re-historicising and re-conceptualising mobility regimes and solidarity

The first section of this volume comprises two chapters that contextualise academic approaches to migration, interrogate the relationship between different forms of scholarly work and the nation-state project, and put forward important reflections on the meaning and need for migration solidarity. These two opening chapters call attention to the necessity of analysing current solidarity struggles within their specific historical context and in relation to a critical reading of the geopolitical practices of states.

Philip Marfleet explores state practices of exclusion in 20th-century Britain and reflects, first, on the way in which official History relates to such practices and, second, on the invisibilisation of popular responses to 'aliens' that challenge these policies and discourses. Marfleet's chapter starts with the period of the 1914-18 Great War in Britain, which was characterised by large numbers of alien arrivals – both as prisoners of war and as refugees. While prisoners of war often became part of the local economy and social life, as Marfleet shows with the example of a camp in Dorchester, they were entirely forgotten in mainstream accounts of the war. These accounts did not leave any space for different relationships or imaginations of relationships between the war prisoners and the local people. It was only when renewed interest in local experiences of the war emerged a century later, that these stories were unearthed. Similarly, the arrival of over a quarter of a million refugees from Belgium into Britain in 1914 was hardly remembered in historical narratives of the period. As explained by Marfleet, these refugees were admitted in response to popular pressure, and in spite of governmental hostility. The scenes evoked by Marfleet of 'volunteers' welcoming people

at ports of entry and of sustained hospitality practices, call to mind more recent instances of solidarity - some of which are examined in this volume – yet the former are rarely brought to scholarly or public attention.

These examples, Marfleet argues, are consistent with a broader trend whereby those deemed as Others in relation to the nation are invisibilised from records of the past. Similarly, on-the-ground relations that subvert discourses separating the ‘national Self and threatening Other’ are rarely recorded in official History. The role of mainstream History in sustaining the narrative of the nation as an ‘imagined community’ explains this silencing. Indeed, the (capitalist) nation-state requires “means of socio-political definition – on the basis of both territorial segregation and cultural differentiation” (Marfleet, this volume) which work to separate members of the national community from Others, and to produce allegiance to the state from those seen as belonging to the nation. In this context, policies of exclusion and bordering gain importance as sites where states can demonstrate their authority and materialise the separation between the nation and its Others.

While mainstream History has reproduced politics and discourses of exclusion, Marfleet argues, there exist forms of popular memory, including widespread beliefs about sanctuary emerging from religious traditions and family memories of previous displacement, which become mobilised in order to challenge the exclusionary agendas of the state. Solidarity initiatives today may, in this sense, be placed within longer histories of contestation. As shown by Marfleet, there is particular value in recording these practices, and in challenging official narratives that invisibilise and silence migrants and those in solidarity with them.

Martina Tazzioli explores the way in which cartography and mapping also reproduce a state-like gaze on migration, and questions how the epistemological and ideological premises that underpin such representations may be challenged. In particular, she asks how to account for the histories that have participated into the constitution of the space of Europe, the (colonial) genealogies that have worked towards its production and the power relations involved in its making – all of which inform current

(mainstream) representations of migration. Her response is what she labels 'counter mapping' – more than a practice or a method, it is a deconstruction of the 'gaze' that animates a state-centric view of migration.

Tazzioli's counter mapping relies on cultivating other visibilities and temporalities in migration representations – both cartographic and non-cartographic. As with Marfleet's call to refuse the naturalisation of territorial states and associated notions of the nation, Tazzioli calls for a mapping process that de-naturalises borders and evidences the mechanisms of control engaged in the organisation of space and time which migrants have to navigate. This approach subverts the abstraction through which particular mobilities are constituted into 'migration' and then reified into objects of surveillance and control. In this sense, Tazzioli attempts to uncover the ideological power/knowledge nexus on which migration governmentality is based. Importantly, counter mapping is not about 'showing more' - affording more visibility to migrants' trajectories and routes, but rather about re-focusing our gaze in different ways, so that what becomes central is the production of control and surveillance and the ways in which these shape the geographies and temporalities of migrant mobilities. The ambivalent way in which the politics of visibility and invisibility are applied to migrants in mainstream scholarly accounts and state narratives – invisibilising their presence and experience while visibilising their movement in order to detect and control it – indeed calls for a shift in the visibility regimes underpinning representations of migration. As such, the counter mapping that Tazzioli describes can be seen as a call for an epistemic shift that can translate into radical solidarity positioning in academic research on and accounts of migration.

Practices of solidarity

The second part of the volume consists of four chapters, each looking closely at the ways in which practices of solidarity, citizenship, and political action play out in empirical case studies of pro-migrant mobilisation. These chapters are connected by a shared focus on empirics, a sensitivity towards the complexities and contradictions that unfold 'on the ground' as solidarity

is practiced, and a willingness to see these complexities and contradictions as theoretically, methodologically, and epistemologically productive spaces. The four empirical cases focus on concrete and situated instances of mobilisation and in that call our attention to the particularities of each instance of solidarity. As such, while the first part of the book develops analytical lenses that allow to see migration and solidarity as historical and geographical processes rather than standalone events, the second part of the book reminds us of the importance of detailed and ethnographically rich case studies.

The chapters join the scholarship that aims at opening space for on-the-ground voices to not only be heard but also to be taken as pivotal in contesting and challenging the hegemonic narratives of migration, citizenship, belonging, and political mobilisation. This challenge is analysed by the authors as posed by the ways in which various groups and people positioned within different legal categories frame their mobilization through the discourse of solidarity. The working together of migrants, undocumented persons and citizens creates a situation where political action is no longer defined purely by a legal status of those who act (Spång and Lundberg this volume), or by the space in and from which they act (Hall, Lounasmaa and Squire this volume). By tracing the moments of coming together, these chapters highlight the possibilities and limitations of appropriating and transgressing a nation- and state-centric understanding of politics, showing that narrations of solidarity might aim at generating alternative spaces for the making of politics. These chapters show the often competing and conflicting discourses that the actors employ, the breaking of solidarity alliances along national, ethnic, and gender lines, and the ways in which dominant discourses are at times strategically used by actors and through that reproduced and sustained. By discussing solidarity initiatives as containing both the potential to challenge hegemonic discourses as well as contradictions and tensions, the chapters highlight the complexities inscribed in solidarity struggles.

The chapters rethink concepts that structure the ways in which inclusion, exclusion, and migration are problematised – namely citizenship and politics. They argue that looking at actors and events that are usually not taken into account in discussions of political actions and practices of

citizenship shows the limitations of hegemonic discourses and opens up space for new understandings of belonging, mobility and politics. At the same time, the chapters ask whether these new ways of thinking about politics and citizenship that emerge from solidarity struggles have the potential to outlive sudden mobilizations and create long-lived alternatives to the nation-state centered organisation of political life.

This part of the book opens with Mikael Spång and Anna Lundberg's study of three pro-migrant initiatives in Malmö, Sweden: a musical, a relay, and a tent-camp action. The chapter draws on Hannah Arendt's notion of "action and work" in order to build an interpretation of the ways in which mobilisation by and on behalf of undocumented persons and the solidarity that is built between citizens and migrants can expand our understanding of what it means to be political. The chapter analyzes ways in which coming together of people assigned to different legal categories over projects that mobilize artistic expressions can be perceived as solidarity struggles. The authors highlight the potential of solidarity actions to generate space for politics and redefine ascribed relations, simultaneously recognizing the need for long-term projects and commitment in sustaining the space for politics that is generated beyond the juridical.

The study of pro-migrant initiatives in Malmö is followed by a chapter that examines the forms of solidarity and political practices that emerged in the unofficial refugee camps around Calais, France between 2014 and 2016. Tim Hall, Aura Lounasmaa, and Corinne Squire join Spång and Lundberg in analysing migrants' and pro-migrants' initiatives as spaces that offer new conceptualisations of politics and citizenship, while at the same time tracing tensions and contradictions embedded in practicing new forms of citizenship. By focusing on different forms of practicing politics - politics of commons, coalition politics, and associative politics – the authors show how alliances are built, and how dominant discourses may be used strategically to practice resistance, which in turn challenges the bounds of such discourses. At the same time, they scrutinize how these practices may break alongside conflicting agendas and in that often end up reproducing, rather than challenging, racialised, gendered, and nationally motivated political structures and discourses. Similar to Spång and Lundberg, Hall et

al. ask if it is possible for the new forms of politics to outlive the particular circumstances in which they emerged: will these new forms of citizenship be sustainable after the Calais camp is closed?

Tahir Zaman's chapter adds to this discussion by looking closely at the moments of encounter between migrants and citizens, and the various ways in which solidarity, humanitarianism, responsibility, hospitality, and philanthropy are articulated together. He examines the autonomous housing collectives in Athens, Greece, and analyses them in relation to and as a continuation of social struggles enacted by Greek citizens. His analysis privileges the intersection of social relations and the places where migrants' struggles against the state can be seen in relation to the anti-state rhetoric of those affected by the economic crisis, rather than as a distinct form of mobilisation. At the same time, the chapter shows the limitations of this common struggle, arguing that different legal positioning of migrants and citizens often leads to a reproduction of the host-guest relationship. Zaman's study offers an important insight into tensions and contradictions that emerge between various actors on the ground and at the same time it manages to capture moments of productive 'comings together', where the solidarity is no longer a practice on behalf of someone else but a shared struggle.

In her study of solidarity groups in Belgrade, Serbia, Céline Cantat focuses closely on the dynamics between the development of solidarity struggles, state responses that aim at the institutionalisation of structures supporting migrants, and the EU - Serbia relationship. She shows how through funds, as well as the accession negotiation process, the EU shapes and supports the Serbian state's control not only over Serbia's border, but also over societal responses towards migrants, by investing in the NGO-isation of solidarity actions. The institutionalisation of solidarity, both through access to refugee and migrants' camps and through funding, allows the state to slowly establish control over responses towards migration and thus circumscribe the possibility of a strong grassroots solidarity movement. Cantat links the Serbian state's institutionalisation of solidarity with broader dynamics of gentrification, urbanisation, and modernisation experienced by the Serbian capital city, also in relation to the Europeanisation process. By linking the ideological and cultural discourses,

as well as capital reproduction that underpin both the institutionalisation of pro-migrant activism and the gentrification of Belgrade, Cantat suggests looking for commonalities between those (and other seemingly separate) struggles. Cantat argues that border regimes, neoliberal violence, and urban marginalisation should be thought together for future solidarity struggles, rather than as strictly separate processes.

Alternative solidarities, varying struggles

This final section of the book further complicates solidarity both as an analytical concept and as a political act. It first suggests broadening the geographies usually taken under scrutiny by introducing cases that go beyond Europe (Sevinin, this volume). Secondly, it interrogates the various meanings accorded to solidarity by asking who these struggles stand in solidarity with, and if and how solidarity can reproduce the dominant hierarchies such as migrant/citizen (*ibid.*), transit/destination (Kallius, this volume) and legality/illegality (Merelo, this volume). Practices of solidarity may emerge beyond the imagined (geographical) destinations as shown in the concept of 'solidarity in transit' (Kallius, this volume).

Although each chapter focuses on a particular context, they underline some parallels regarding the complexities of solidarity. The three chapters we brought together under this section provide broader temporal and geographical approaches both to solidarity and to migratory movements. Each chapter focuses on cases that did not necessarily emerge in conjunction with the 'migration crisis'. Also, all of them draw attention to the processual aspects of solidaristic encounters rather than to 'moments' of solidarity. In this respect, they all point to the temporal complexity of solidarity as well as to the ways in which various geographies are connected in affective, social, economic and political ways.

In doing so, all three chapters challenge the dominant understandings of solidarity by showing how solidarity movements are in constant negotiation with power structures in various contexts. They do this by conceptualizing the forms of solidarity that do not necessarily fit within the oft-used framework of solidarity movements and migrant struggles,

recently brought together under the title of a ‘new era of protests’ (Ataç et.al., 2016). Migrant struggles and solidaristic movements are built under a progressive agenda; they are almost too readily framed as movements that are ‘demanding and enacting the right to move and to stay, struggling for citizenship and human rights, and protesting the violence and deadliness of contemporary border regimes’ (Ataç et.al. 2016). Although we do not seek to contest the significance of the political mobilisation of migrants and solidarity activists, we also examine contexts in which such political mobilisations are absent, fall short of these objectives or are obstructed by other political mechanisms. All three chapters in this section draw our attention to cases where dominant frames of solidaristic movements are either exhausted (Kallius), reproductive of immediate inequalities (Sevinin), or take shape in ways that challenge the presumably progressive frames of solidarity (Merelo).

These chapters also call for a rethinking of the broader social relations inscribed in solidarity movements. This last section can therefore be understood as a call for a collective rethinking of the power structures that are not only embedded in solidaristic movements but also constantly negotiated to rework the subjects, meanings, and actors of solidarity. Dominant solidarity frameworks highlight horizontal politics as opposed to vertical politics (Kallius et al. 2016); equality and non-hierarchical organisation as opposed to the asymmetries and hierarchies that are inscribed in state-centric border regimes or humanitarian relations. Transnational solidarity that disrupts and unsettles nation-state borders, and that attempts to transcend state-centric citizenship and politics, has been the central focus of critical scholarly investigations. However, as solidaristic movements, the meaning of solidarity is also in constant resignification. It is evoked to emphasize the cooperation needed between EU-member states in ‘distribution’ and resettlement of asylum-seekers and to frame far right, nationalist and anti-migration movements as acting in support with the states.

Annastiina Kallius traces the non-linear journey of a refugee, Sami, who started his trip well before 2015, through various geographies of Europe. His journey, Kallius shows us, challenges the imagined geography of Europe and the imagination of linear migratory movement from the

global South, or the 'periphery', to the 'core' of Europe. Kallius shows that kinship ties are appealed to as concrete solidaristic relations with the potentiality to enhance one's position. As shown in her case, where migrant solidarity networks have limited resources to mobilise or when they are restrained by political measures as in Hungary, kinship or family ties stand as another form of solidarity to turn to.

Guillermo Merelo, from a different perspective, goes beyond the immediacy of the 'crisis' that is bounded by the dichotomy between 'legal and illegal' migration, and shows us the everyday experiences of Mexican migrants in Sweden and how their encounter with both Swedish society and various migrant groups shapes mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Merelo challenges the notion of solidarity by showing how Mexican migrants in Sweden, placed on the legal end of 'legal-illegal migrant' continuum, who (implicitly or explicitly) join the official migration discourses of the Swedish state vis-a-vis the forced migrants and their political claims.

Eda Sevinin looks at the case of Turkey, where the discourse of a 'migration crisis' has been externalised as 'the crisis of Europe' and solidaristic movements with refugees have largely taken on a humanitarian and charitable form. In this context, Sevinin argues, the reproduction of inequalities and hierarchies are concealed under discourses of (religious) solidarity between refugees and humanitarians, especially those who derive their operational motivation from Islamic beliefs, acting in solidarity with the refugees in order to be good citizens, in order not to fail the Turkish state.

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Part I:
Re-historicising and
Re-conceptualising
Mobility Regimes and Solidarity

REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING REFUGEES - FORCED MIGRANTS, INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

Philip Marfleet

The spectre of the “enemy alien” has returned to Europe.¹ A feature of political discourse during much of the 20th century, it has been renewed by political currents of the Right for which both internal and external enemies threaten the integrity of national society. Across Europe, parties of the new Right express intense hostility to “Others” within and outside territorial borders, targeting migrants in general and refugees in particular - together with Muslims and imagined enemies of an earlier era, notably Jews and Roma. They advocate for the illegalisation of migrants; for surveillance, detention, and deportation; and for the construction of obstacles to cross-border movement said to secure the integrity of nation-states, and of Europe as a socio-cultural and political entity. Increasingly, these policies find support among parties of the political establishment, state officials, and transnational agencies. They are accompanied, however, by counter-discourses - agendas for solidarity that identify common interests with those deemed alien to nation-states and to Europe. This is not a novel development: European history provides ample evidence of popular engagement with Others viewed officially as threatening and malign.

This chapter addresses policies of exclusion in early 20th century Britain and popular responses that challenged official discourse and the practice of the state. It addresses two important episodes during the First World War: the establishment of the first prisoner-of-war camp in England, and the

arrival of refugees from the first military engagements of the conflict in mainland Europe. Both introduced large numbers of people categorised by the state as alien, but viewed differently by a public that was largely tolerant or even enthusiastic about their presence. Each has been obscured by mainstream History - “forgotten” by archivists and professional historians for whom outsiders and minority communities have no significant role in the narrative of nation. This is consistent with records of the national past in which the presence of Others is minimised or rendered invisible. Tony Kushner and Catherine Knox (1999: 4) observe: “Acknowledging immigrant and ethnic minorities has been difficult for British historians because it challenges assumptions about mono-culturalism” (Kushner and Knox 1999: 4). They note “a failure to record [migrants’] experiences” and a “general silence” among historians, observing that if the presence of refugees in modern society is said to be one of the hallmarks of our time, “modern and contemporary historians have hardly noticed it” (Kushner and Knox 1999: 4). Accommodation by the public of those officially deemed alien has been particularly difficult for historians to address - a further reason why the circumstances of both refugees and prisoners-of-war during the conflict of 1914 to 1918 have rarely been examined.

Aliens and exclusion

The 19th century is often viewed as a definitive Age of Migration, during which scores of millions of people engaged in mass movements that marked an era of proto-globalisation (Castles & Miller 2009). The borders of nation-states and imperial blocs were often blurred and seldom policed in the manner later to become a feature of national politics. Citizenship and the politics of belonging were hazy and passports were yet to be introduced, so that much migration was unrestricted. Of special significance were trans-Atlantic migrations; forced migrations associated with emergence of nation-states among the empires of Europe; and movements through colonial networks, notably those which facilitated slavery and/or indentured labour.

Some migratory routes enabled movements on a massive scale. In the 1860s, tens of thousands of Chinese people were recruited by agencies in the United States and Canada, moving to Pacific regions of North America

where they soon were integral to infrastructural and industrial development: within a few years over a quarter of the workforce in California was of Chinese heritage (Zolberg 1997: 295). In Europe, the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 were followed by major forced migrations, as activists known as “political exiles” moved across Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Eastern Europe. Many travelled to Britain, where they were accepted largely without controversy. During the whole of the 19th century, no “exile” from Europe was refused admission to mainland Britain (Porter 1979: 1).²

During the 1870s, economic recession and social discontent began to shape a different approach. A surge in Sinophobia in the United States focused on immigrant communities, and in 1882 Congress passed a Chinese Exclusion Act, abruptly ending movements across the Pacific. In Europe, recession was accompanied by intensification of colonial competition and nationalist rhetoric. In Eastern Europe and the Balkans, campaigns for independence from the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires produced mass migrations across and between new state borders, with “minority” populations a focus of attention - in 1879 an international Anti-Semitic League was formed to co-ordinate Judeophobic currents. In Western Europe hostility vis-à-vis Others also intensified. In Britain, heightened anti-Semitic sentiment produced the Aliens Act of 1905 – the first legislation of the modern era to target refugees, restricting immigration of Jews escaping persecution in the Russian Empire (Glover 2012).

Over the next 10 years successive British governments emphasised threats at home and abroad.³ “Jingoism” was expressed in xenophobic campaigns in which citizens of rival states were characterised as alien and threatening – and it was in this climate that Britain entered the Great War of 1914.⁴ Within hours of formal declaration of hostilities, the British government introduced legislation to target non-citizens, introducing an Aliens Restriction Act that required foreign nationals to register with the police, and which also provided for their internment and deportation.⁵ Directed initially at German citizens, this was later extended by regulatory procedures known as orders-in-council to cover all foreign nationals: within a month, the regulations had been brought together as the Aliens

Restriction (Consolidation) Order. This designated ports of arrival and departure for “neutral” aliens and imposed travel restrictions on “enemy” aliens, designating areas of the United Kingdom in which they were forbidden to travel or reside. The armed forces (through the War Office) and the police (through the Home Office – the ministry of interior) were allocated responsibility to register, monitor, and intern non-citizens. The key institutions of the state now directed non-nationals within British territorial borders – a precedent for policies of surveillance and control that were to be pursued for the next 100 years.

Citizens and aliens

Those interned by combatant states during the First World War have rarely been subjects for historical research. It is “astonishing”, observes Panikos Panayi, that almost a century after the conflict, no academic study had addressed the experiences of German prisoners of war in Britain (Panayi 2012: 1). Mainstream history – produced by professional historians, writers, and archivists – ignored the presence in prison camps of both German soldiers and non-combatants of German origin. Their experiences eventually came to light as the result of a surge of interest in local history in Britain, and as an outcome of professional historical research associated with the 2014 centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1914 there were some 60,000 Germans in Britain, most of whom were relatively recent migrants – part of westward movements of people from Europe, among whom the majority were to end their journeys in North America (Panayi 1995, 1996). Historically, Germans had not been targets of specific forms of discrimination. In the mid-19th century thousands of refugees from the counter-revolutions that followed the 1848 European uprisings sought sanctuary in England. Among the Germans were many journalists, writers, and academics, among whom some became celebrated figures. Political activists including Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels joined the radical wing of an emerging British labour movement: Friedrich Lessner was to be a founding member of the Independent Labour Party (Ashton 1986: viii). Neither Germans nor other “exiles” from Europe

faced the hostility experienced by Irish immigrants, the focus of racist initiatives in which Ireland's anti-colonial struggles were viewed in terms of cultural/religious backwardness and "disloyalty" to Queen and Empire (Hickman 1995).⁶ Successive British governments viewed the Germans sympathetically as the refugees established community institutions including churches, seamen's missions, and – in East London - a German Hospital. It was not until the closing years of the century that Germans and other Europeans were drawn into campaigns hostile to "aliens" in general and Jews in particular.

Following the declaration of war on 4 August 1914, there were demands in the British parliament for the imprisonment of Germans and Austrians as, observes Panayi (1993: 54), "anti-Germanism and jingoism became a national obsession". Germans were said to threaten national integrity - as "spies" or "saboteurs" they were alleged to undermine the war effort and the national collective. Over the next month, 4,300 Germans were interned; within eight weeks the number was over 13,000, of whom 10,500 were civilians, the rest having been captured on the battlefield and transported to Britain (Panayi 1993: 57). In May 1915, following the sinking of the British liner *Lusitania* by the German navy, there were anti-German riots in some cities and intensified calls for internment: by November 1915, almost 32,500 civilians and military personnel had been imprisoned (Panayi 1993: 63). By 1918, there were 115,950 Germans in British prison camps - 24,522 civilians and 91,428 military internees (Panayi 2012: 44).

Matthew Stibbe (1993: 8) observes that the development of virulent war cultures in all belligerent states, "helped to reinforce popular prejudices against immigrants and minority communities". In 1914, all nationals of Germany came under suspicion, as did people with names or accents believed to express an affiliation with the enemy. In London, staff of the German Hospital were seized and interned on the Isle of Man, even though the majority of patients treated at the institution were local people with no association with "the enemy" (McKellar 1991: 10). Germans, or people suspected to have an affiliation with Germany, were increasingly the object of "spy-fever", resulting in harassment, loss of employment, and - in some areas - violent attacks. Other minority communities were also targeted.

When Jews who had fled Tsarist Russia declined to serve in the allied armies (with the implication that they would fight for the Russian imperial cause), the British Home Secretary proposed to deport all Russian Jews of military age; in the event, both Jews and non-Jews from Russia were deported. In this atmosphere of suspicion and resentment there were attacks on Jewish communities in London and the cities of northern England. People of Chinese origin – caricatured, like Jews, as a menace from the East – were also targeted. Cesarani (1993: 36) comments that wartime chauvinism and xenophobia could not be limited to “enemy aliens” or to the war itself, for “anti-alien discourse by definition had no boundary: it comprehended everything that that was ‘Other’ to Britain and Englishness”.

The discourse of national belonging – and of commitment to King and Country – was reinforced by state intervention in the form of official propaganda, surveillance, and population management. The Trading with the Enemy Act closed down German businesses: it also placed under suspicion British citizens who maintained relations with “the enemy”: David Englander (1987: 24) observes that the armed forces were transformed into “a gigantic licensing authority”, leading to “wholesale criminalization of vast areas of everyday life”. Meanwhile, the Defence of the Realm Act focused attention on political radicals and pacifists, who faced harassment, arrest, and imprisonment – in some cases with fatal consequences (Rae 1970: 226).

Prisoners and the people

Internment of aliens was integral to the state’s mobilisation for war. Recent historical work has shown not only that internees played an important role in state propaganda, but also that some engaged with local people in ways that subverted official discourses of the alien – of national Self and a threatening Other.

Dorchester is a small town in the predominantly rural county of Dorset in south-west England, and the site of a prison camp established in the earliest days of the war.⁷ A study of the camp by local historian Brian Bates reveals much about the culture of the institution and relationships that developed between internees and people of the town. *Living with the*

Enemy: Dorchester's Great War Prison Camp examines the circumstances and experiences of the prisoners (Bates 2016). Within days of the declaration of war, Germans were being transported to Dorchester and imprisoned in the camp, located close to an existing army base. Over the next five years they became part of the local economy and, in a more limited sense, of local society, in which they were accepted, says Barnes, largely with sympathy and tolerance. This relationship was expressed in an enduring form. Prisoners who died in Dorchester were buried publicly in a local churchyard: here, after the war, a prominent memorial was placed next to their graves. Designed by a prisoner and sculpted by a German artist, it bore the words: "Hier ruhen Deutsche Krieger in fremder Erde doch unvergessen" ("Here lie German soldiers, in a foreign land but not forgotten"). Each year on Remembrance Day, 11 November, the mayor, councillors, and citizens of Dorchester still conduct a service at the German War Memorial in a cemetery that also contain Commonwealth War Graves.

The prisoners made an enormous impact on the town. By 1918, there were almost 4,500 internees in the camp; the local population numbered some 9,500 (Bates 2016: 1, 30). There had been no similar migration in popular memory and a local newspaper, the *Dorset County Chronicle*, described "the greatest public interest" in the first contingent of prisoners (Bates 2016: 16). Thousands of Durnovarians (people of the town)⁸ assembled to see them marched from the railway station to the newly constructed camp (Bates 2016 16-17). Internees soon became familiar figures: within months, they were being mobilised as urgently needed labour, working on Dorchester's streets and in parks; some were also employed in local businesses, farms, and households. Bates observes that they were received in general "with a mixture of sympathy and toleration, and occasionally overt kindness" (Bates 2016: 33).

Most of the early internees were civilians – people detained as German citizens or under suspicion of being Germans or Austrians. As the war progressed, however, the prison population in Dorchester consisted increasingly of military men captured at the front: records of those who died in Dorchester show that by 1919, all but a handful were rank-and-

file troops, largely infantrymen and non-commissioned officers (Bates 2016: 71-72). They might have become targets for hostility of local people, among whom there were many bereaved families who had lost fathers, sons, and brothers at the battlefront. In towns and villages across Dorset, war memorials list names of thousands of war dead. Bates's research suggests that internees at the Dorchester camp nonetheless attracted little hostility, even when symbols of national identity were displayed in public - as during funeral processions to the local cemetery in which prisoners' coffins were draped with the German flag and escorted through the streets by their comrades in uniform (Bates 2016: 63-65). On occasions when contingents of prisoners marched through the streets singing patriotic German songs they were received respectfully, as one prisoner - Kapitänleutnant Gunther Plüschow - recorded in his memoir of the war years:

I must admit that the English were extraordinarily tolerant, and the population always behaved in exemplary fashion. Silently, closely pressed together, they stood on both sides of the street. From all the windows fair little heads peeped at us, but not one contemptuous gesture, not one abusive word. They even seemed to enjoy listening to the German melodies ... The English population behaved even then with the utmost restraint, and never uttered a word of abuse or threat (Bates 2016: 37).

Dorchester's most eminent resident, the poet and novelist Thomas Hardy, employed prisoners in his garden at Max Gate, just outside the town. He saw affinities between the English and the Germans, who were, he said, "Kin folk, kin tongued".⁹ In 1917, after visiting the camp, he arranged for translations of his work to be made available to the prisoners.

Memorial

Why were Durnovarians so accommodating to "the enemy"? The Dorchester camp was within the town and visible to local people. Internees became a familiar sight, making their way to and from work in the streets,

parks, or local households, or beyond the town on farms, in quarries, or as loggers in the forest, where in effect they were workmates with townspeople and villagers. They also became a familiar sight on “recreational” marches through nearby villages under supervision by camp guards, or in the River Frome, the town’s open-air “swimming pool”. By all accounts the prisoners were considerate of the local population and, in a number of episodes, intervened to assist those in difficulty, some receiving special awards for their efforts.

Most of those interned early in the war appeared little different from the townspeople: according to the *Western Gazette*, the first arrivals were “a motley collection, a good number of whom were shabbily dressed and decidedly ‘down-at-heel’” (Bates 2016: 16). Many came from immigrant families and had a native-speaker command of English, minimising problems of communication. As one sympathetic member of parliament pointed out in debates on internment, many of those incarcerated had long been long resident in Britain, and were “more British in sentiment than German” (Kushner and Knox 44-45). They had been thoroughly integrated into the wider society, being distinguished largely by names and by accent. Because of the location of the Dorchester camp internees were not isolated as if in quarantine, with its implications of threat and the need for protection from the enemy. Indeed, the Germans were more visible and interacted more fully with the community than local people “interned” on the other side of Dorchester at the Dorset County Lunatic Asylum (sic) - the forbidding Herrison House, where on the outbreak of war there were almost 1,000 patients who were, in effect, imprisoned. At the mental hospital, observes an official archivist, “It was just a case of keeping people in secure accommodation away from the rest of society.”¹⁰ Many enemy aliens, in contrast, were in regular contact with local residents, becoming part of everyday life and the routines of the town.

With military conflict becoming “total war”, huge losses at the battlefield and general privation among the British population, there might have been resentment vis-à-vis the internees. It seems, however, that public sentiment in Dorchester remained positive, so that in 1919 the local authority willingly erected a memorial in St George’s Churchyard

to prisoners who had died in the town. Subsequently, a wreath was laid annually at the memorial by a local charity: eventually the responsibility was taken on by Dorchester Town Council. On 11 November each year a short service is still held, with prayers led by local churchwomen/men and wreaths laid by officials of the town.¹¹ Today the memorial is listed officially by the government agency Historic England, as “of special architectural or historic interest ... an exceptionally rare example of a First World War memorial dedicated to German prisoners of war” (Historic England: nd). According to the British Government’s Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the memorial is, “a sombre testament to German POWs [prisoners of war] who lost their lives far from home and a tangible reminder of the manner in which Dorchester residents came to terms with the adversary in their midst, laying them to rest with care and dignity” (Historic England: nd).

Refugees

The example of Dorchester suggests that the British state was not always successful in mobilising popular sentiment against “the enemy”. Attitudes were more complex than mainstream histories allow, not least because of the absence from such accounts of the circumstances and experiences of internees. For most of the 20th century, dominant narratives excluded these experiences – a pattern consistent with a long practice of marginalising, or rendering “invisible” in historical writing the lives of minority communities, migrants, and others deemed outside national society. As a result, even in Dorchester, the history of the local camp remained the town’s “best-kept secret” (Bates 2016: 3).

Panayi’s expression of surprise at the exclusion of internees from historical work on the First World War is consistent with other observations on British society during the conflict. Kushner and Knox (1999: 49) note that for decades there was no systematic study of an unprecedented mass movement of refugees to Britain during the early phases of the war. In the autumn of 1914, as Germans were being seized and imprisoned in the new internment camps, some 250,000 refugees arrived in England from

Belgium to escape advancing German forces. This was the most significant refugee arrival in Britain since that of French Calvinists – the Huguenots – in the late 17th century. Although Belgium was an ally, all the refugees were technically aliens and fell within the provisions of exclusionary legislation introduced during the first days of the war. The government was at first determined not to accept them, bending reluctantly to sustained public pressure and eventually permitting entry at British ports.

This mass migration, of special significance under conditions of war, was ignored by historians until Peter Cahalan (1982) published a pioneering study - *Belgian Refugee Relief in England During the Great War*. His work demonstrated that, despite the wish of the British government to maintain a regime of exclusion, popular opinion compelled admission of the Belgians. An official Belgian Refugee Committee, reporting soon after the first arrivals, noted very widespread public backing for the immigrants, including reception at British ports “entirely carried out by volunteers” and support provided by some 2,500 local committees.¹² The Committee reported to parliament that there had been an overwhelmingly positive response to the Belgians: hospitality had been extended widely and generously, it said, and public complaints were largely from “eager hosts to whom suitable [sic] refugees were not sent as quickly or as to the extent ... desired” (Government Belgian Refugees Committee, 1914: 7).

In the context of war, observe Kushner and Knox (1999: 47), people categorised as aliens could be viewed as “devils” or - if they were associated with an allied state - as “angels”. Public perception was shaped by the state’s discourse and its legal measures *and* by popular attitudes including traditions of sanctuary and hospitality vis-à-vis refugees, “exiles”, and others. Cahalan (1982: 67) notes that in 1914, ordinary people “delves into the past to place the Belgian refugees in context, and their search for a usable past took some back as far as the French Huguenots and other Protestant exiles”. In some cases there were debates as to the character and worthiness of specific refugees, including exchanges in local newspapers on the theme of “Belgian or German?” (Cahalan 1982: 47). Most were perceived as victims of German aggression, appealing to popular nationalist sentiment and, more significantly, to broader ethics of compassion and solidarity.

The Belgians nonetheless remained unwelcome to state authorities engaged in persistent efforts to exclude aliens. At the end of the war the government arranged mass repatriation, so that by 1919, all but a handful of the refugees had left Britain. At this date, the number of Germans still held in prison camps greatly exceeded the number of remaining Belgians.

‘Amnesia’

Following the war, the British government hardened its policy of alien exclusion. It systematised border control, the use of passports, and close regulation of population movements. The official discourse of national affairs as set out in mainstream history excluded from the record of the conflict both German internees and Belgian refugees, who in effect disappeared from British history - part of a pattern that Tony Kushner (2006: 47) calls “a general amnesia” in relation to refugees - a practice of “active forgetting” that excluded people marginal to the narrative of nation.

Until the early modern era and the emergence of the nation-state in Europe, borders had been fuzzy and imprecise. As new states began to take shape, first in the form of “absolutist” rule, territorial control became more important and exclusion a means of enforcing authority for those in power, as shown in the mass expulsions of Jews and Muslims from Spain and Portugal in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, and of Calvinists from Catholic France 100 years later – the Huguenots being the first forced migrants to be widely known as “refugees”. These tendencies became much more pronounced with the growth of industrial capitalism and the emergence of the first modern states “proper”. For the first time, these were *nation-states*, in which those in power - or who aspired to hold power - made enormous efforts to convince the population at large that they had underlying interests in a national collective, a mode of belonging that superseded loyalties to the local aristocracy, to the church, or a particular sect.¹³ This, famously, is Benedict Anderson’s “imagined community”, in which people with diverse ethno-linguistic traditions and local affiliations, and with different class locations, were induced to see themselves as part of an embracing social whole (Anderson 1983). By this means, new ruling

classes hoped to combine under their own authority volatile populations engaged in processes of rapid – and sometimes explosive – change.

The new states required much sharper means of socio-political definition – on the basis of both territorial segregation and cultural differentiation. Those in authority in the state needed formal means to secure claims over property and labour, to regulate commercial activity, to raise taxes, and to enforce duties and tariffs. Territorial borders were defined in new ways, notably by reference to legal systems underpinned by “national” values. These identified and separated members of the national collective from “Others”, with territorial borders now key sites at which the state could demonstrate its authority in relation to the “national” population. And the border had a further role to play – that of defining cultural spaces within which categories of national belonging were to be applied. One key aspect of “nation-building” during this period was the identification and subordination of internal enemies – people who did not conform to religious or ethno-linguistic models written into the national agenda. Emerging nation-states such as France and Britain continuously suppressed dissident religious and political currents, together with speakers of “non-official” languages, minority ethnic groups, and mobile populations such as pastoralists, itinerant artisans, and “travellers” of all kinds.¹⁴

Refugees and borders

A key purpose of borders in the modern state is to assert the role of those in authority as guardian of collective interests of the nation. Here migrants have an important function – they enable border regimes to be enacted, and territorial and social integrity to be manifested.

Certain migrants play a special role. Forced migrants – people we identify today as refugees – often arrive abruptly in unplanned movements (that is, movements unplanned by the state) and appear to pose a challenge to those in authority. Forced migrants are also almost invariably *vulnerable* people, without economic or socio-political resources adequate to contest the state. Governing authorities can act in relation to refugees at little cost to themselves, so that they are often a useful means of demonstrating authority

in the context of national cohesion and “security”. Nevzat Soguk (1999) argues that by the time the modern nation-state had emerged as a distinct form of political order in the 18th century, refugees had become part of its repertoire – they were a means of asserting political control and inducing popular consent to central authority. Under these circumstances, some states *sought* refugees: they solicited migrants as a means of confirming “national” values. Hence, the British state in the 17th century *induced* French Calvinists to emigrate - their presence was seen as a means of embellishing “British” values, as well as weakening the pool of resources available to the rival state of France (Marfleet 2006). Admission of forced migrants has always been a contingent issue however. When *rejection* of refugees has been seen by those in authority as a means to strengthen their hand, migrants have readily been excluded – as with Calvinists persecuted in Germany who, in the early 18th century, hoped to emulate their co-believers, the Huguenots, but who were quickly deported from Britain as undesirable aliens (Marfleet 2006).

The emergence of the modern state is everywhere associated with mass forced migration: the more states (and the more new borders), the more refugees. So the disintegration of European empires in the late 19th century and early 20th century produced tens of millions of refugees: as Peter Gatrell memorably observed in the title of his book on refugees of Russia and Eastern Europe during the First World War, refugee movements during the conflict constituted *A Whole Empire Walking* (Gatrell 2005). States of Central and Eastern Europe (and later the Middle East and South Asia) emerged as part of these processes of mass displacement. But with certain specific exceptions, refugees were seldom part of new narratives of the nation, and rarely featured in mainstream historical accounts. As in the case of early 20th-century Britain, a “general amnesia” affected historians and archivists who wilfully “forgot” the refugees.

Global South

“Outsiders” in general and refugees in particular “exercise” the border regime and may provide opportunities to strengthen it. They do so by asserting *difference* – and although difference can episodically be functional to the

national agenda, the national discourse as a means of narrating mainstream history largely excludes those said *not to be* of the nation. They remain at best at the margin of the national story.

In rare cases, refugees are part of myths of origin of the nation-state - as in stories of the 16th-century Pilgrim Fathers in accounts of the earliest history of the United States - or of European Jewish refugees in the history of Israel. In general, however, even when mass forced migration has been part of the process by which new state structures have emerged, refugees are “forgotten” – or their circumstances and experiences are denied.

The more that modern states on the European model were established in the Global South, the more often ideologues of the state, notably professional historians, “forgot” refugees, minority populations, and internal Others. In the case of the Middle East, the early 20th-century disintegration of the Ottoman Empire was associated with multiple mass displacements, as new borders were established and novel states created – such as today’s Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and (later) Israel. Refugees moved in their millions – at the same time they moved *out* of the official narratives of these events. The Turkish historian Çaglar Keyder (2004: 48) observes: “Turkish nationalism was invented against the backdrop of major shifts in population composition ... a concept of Turkishness was constructed in an attempt to present the remaining population as homogenous, and it glossed over any real diversity.” Among those excluded were people who had arrived in the new state of Turkey as ethnic Turks seeking security in a national homeland. They were pushed to the margin of the Turkish narrative. Hundreds of thousands of Ottoman Muslims – people of Islamic faith who lived in areas that eventually became part of the independent state of Greece – had migrated in the early 1920s to Anatolia. They were viewed as marginal to the nation-building enterprise and rarely appeared in accounts of the establishment and consolidation of an independent nation-state.

When the British imperial state of India was partitioned in 1947, tens of millions of people became refugees. These vast displacements marked the emergence of new states - India, Pakistan, Burma, and Ceylon. At the same time, refugees largely disappeared from the historical record, from what

Indian historian Gyanendra Pandey (2001) calls “national memory”. One of the leading researchers on refugees in South Asia, Tapan Bose (1997: 57), comments that the region’s elites espoused models of the state based upon what he calls “territorial ‘national society’”, in which national identity is articulated through a “symbolism of majority ethnicity”. Refugees – the majority of whom did not conform to the appropriate ethnic model – largely disappeared from the story of the modern state.

Popular memory

Similar practices are evident worldwide. At the same time they are challenged – often with difficulty – by popular practice. In many cultures there are widely held beliefs about sanctuary, refuge, and what today we call asylum that are held independently of official policy and mainstream discourse. These are sometimes associated with enduring religious traditions, notably those of Islam, or with the long tradition of the Catholic Church in Europe whereby sanctuary was a “privilege” of religious authorities, so that until very recently, churches in general were regarded as places of refuge in which fugitives and displaced people could be secure in the face of persecution, including the attentions of the state. These traditions can be deeply embedded in popular culture: in Western Europe, the emerging nation-state of the early modern era had to struggle for two centuries with the Church to seize for itself the entitlement to offer refuge, so that instead of religious institutions being places of sanctuary, the territory of the nation-state itself became a place of asylum (Marfleet 2011).

In the United States in the 19th century thousands of fugitives – African-Americans who had escaped slavery – passed through the Underground Railroad, protected by traditions of sanctuary that were remembered and revitalised in the 1970s when a new Sanctuary Movement emerged to protect refugees from Central America (Rabben 2016). This movement has had its own impact in Europe in recent years through the City of Sanctuary campaigns and initiatives to assist and advocate for *sans-papiers* – undocumented migrants. Traditions of hospitality, reciprocity, and mutual respect appear to be universal. Even in a world in which they

are circumscribed by state authorities, these traditions emerge at times of crisis to contest official discourses of exclusion. When refugees from Syria sought security in states of central and western Europe in 2015, they were met by regimes of exclusion *and* movements of solidarity. As well as immigration officials, border guards, and troops, and hostility generated by the new Right, the refugees were received with empathy and friendship. As Cantat (2017: 22) makes clear in the case of Hungary, popular responses to refugees contested hostile discourses and policies of the state, developing “powerful forms of identification with the circumstances faced by people on the move”. It is important that these experiences are identified and placed on record, so that the practice of official “forgetting” can be challenged and the characterisation of migrants as aliens can be contested.

For almost a century, historians in Britain shaped a record of events during the First World War in which Others were present only as a malign and threatening presence. They ignored accommodating relationships such as those between local people and the prisoners of Dorchester during the First World War. They also ignored the largest refugee movement of British history, as a quarter of a million Belgians were received and accommodated before - at the end of conflict - they were expelled from the territory of state and from the historical record. States exclude - from national territories and from national cultures and histories. People have their own memories and practices, however, and - despite the difficulties - continue to assert different and more embracing approaches.

In 1914, Thomas Hardy was already an iconic figure of English literature, having achieved fame for novels that explored the everyday lives of local people. Like his neighbours in Dorchester he accepted the presence of thousands of German troops and internees. Sensitive to the local mood, Hardy recognised the humanity of the prisoners: they were “kin folk”, he said, with an obvious affinity to the people of Dorset. This view - understated but of profound importance during a savage military confrontation - might be a motif for those who express solidarity with the Others of today.

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Notes

- 1 This paper is based on a talk at the workshop on “Challenging the Political Beyond and Across Borders: Possibilities and Tensions of Migrants’ and Solidarity Struggles”, at Central European University, Budapest, 17-18 November, 2016.
- 2 British policy reflected the willingness of successive governments to accommodate opponents of rival European states. Porter (1985: 160) notes that no “exiles” were refused entry to mainland Britain during the 19th century, though some were excluded from the Channel Islands – British territories close to France.
- 3 Britain and Germany were locked in an escalating arms race: in the five years before 1914, each directed enormous sums to military budgets, as expenditure on arms among the major powers grew by 50 % (Fromkin 2005: 94).
- 4 “Jingoism” – a term used colloquially, initially in Britain, to describe aggressive foreign policy, often implying military intervention. Originating in a popular late 19th-century song: “We don’t want to fight but by Jingo if we do, We’ve got the ships, we’ve got the men, we’ve got the money too...”
- 5 See: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1914/12/pdfs/ukpga_19140012_en.pdf
- 6 People from Ireland, the largest group of migrants living in mainland Britain, were viewed as British citizens rather than “foreigners”, “exiles” or other categories indicating formal identification with another national origin. Until 1922, Ireland was part of the British state.
- 7 The first camps to be established, shortly after the declaration of war in August 1914, were at Olympia, Central London, Horsham in Sussex, and Dorchester in Dorset.
- 8 Durnovarians – inhabitants of Durnovaria, the name given by Roman settlers to the site they occupied on the River Frome during the first century CE, and still used to describe people of Dorchester.

- 9 Hardy's words quoted by the Mayor of Dorchester, Peter Mann (in office 2014), in a Foreword to Bates's *Living with the Enemy* (Bates 2016: vii).
- 10 Archivist Anne Brown of the Dorset History Centre, reported in Paz, 2009.
- 11 The memorial is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as of "special architectural or historic interest". The official record notes its rarity as "an exceptionally rare example of a First World War memorial dedicated to German prisoners of war"; its historic interest as "a sombre testament to German POWs who lost their lives far from home, and a tangible reminder of the manner in which Dorchester residents came to terms with the adversary in their midst, laying them to rest with care and dignity"; and its design: "a dignified and well-crafted design by German prisoners of war, with a carved panel of a German soldier in fine Portland stone masonry, framed by wrought-iron crosses and set into a rubble stone wall". The architect was K. Gartholmay and the sculptor was Josef Walter. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1428334>; accessed 18 November 2017.
- 12 "Ladies and gentlemen [of the public] ... worked without rest, refusing no call made upon their services and daily acting as cooks, nurses, waiting maids, booking clerks, chauffeurs, porters and refreshment attendants". Government Belgian Refugees Committee, 1914: 5.
- 13 In the case of Britain, see Linda Colley's study of the construction of national identity and ideologies of belonging during the 18th century: Colley 1992.
- 14 In the case of France, see Robb 2007.

COUNTER-MAPPING THE BORDERS OF EUROPE:¹ TOWARDS A NON-CARTOGRAPHIC COUNTER-MAPPING APPROACH

Martina Tazzioli

Counter-mapping as method

The current crisis of the EU border regime evidences the inadequacy of traditional geopolitical maps to account for the remaking and dislocation of the frontiers of Europe, as well as for the bordering practices through which migration is disciplined, channelled, and contained. The question “where is Europe?” should *de facto* be situated within a broader interrogation about “which Europe?” and, perhaps, “whose Europe?”. Redrawing the cartography of the European space in ways that retrace its colonial genealogy would indeed enable us to grasp its changed political geographies and their connection to what Foucault calls “the relations that are possible between power and knowledge” (Foucault, 1980: 69). In line with the call for representations that elucidate the constitutive aspects of power and knowledge, this paper engages in what I term a *counter-mapping gaze* on borders and migration that consists of refusing the visibilities and temporalities of a state mapping gaze on migration. That is, counter-mapping is mobilised here as a method, as a form of analytical sensibility that challenges the state-centric epistemologies that govern cartography and mapping: counter-mapping sets out to destabilise the modes of knowing and seeing that have dominated mainstream approaches to migration. In

other words, as a method, counter-mapping refers to an epistemic shift in how we think and visualise movement, one that centres on an analytical sensibility towards migration governmentality.

When speaking of a state-based visibility on migration - or of “seeing like a state” (Scott, 1998) when approaching migration - I refer to the fact that migrations are (re)presented and narrated as a counterpoint to the nation-state; at the same time, the nation is posited as the spatial and political referent through which migrations are crafted as a problem (Walters, 2010). That is, migrations are mapped and seen as deviations from what can be called the *territorial norm*, the primacy of the territory and of a settled subject figure in the Western political tradition. Additionally, the state-based mapping perspective consists of “translating” some practices of movement into “migration flows”, through a process of abstraction, and through reifying some subjects as “migrants”. It is important here to clarify that a state-gaze on migration is not limited to state-actors’ interventions in the field. More broadly, a “state-gaze on migration” refers to the enforcement of an unquestioned nexus between migration and government; that is, migration is posited as an object of government, a phenomenon that requires mobilising a governmental approach towards it (Tazzioli, 2015). The state-based gaze on migration is characterised not only by a specific spatiality - the territorial norm - but also by a certain temporality through which migrations are “captured” and framed as an object of governmental concern. More precisely, migration maps produced by states or international agencies are sustained by a sort of *hidden linear temporality*, insofar as they appear to be deprived of a temporal dimension. In fact, the narrative that sustains institutional migration maps is a South-to-North linear move that migration routes are supposed to reproduce. How can we visualise and account for mobile spaces that are generated by migration policies and, in a different way, by migration movements? How can the frictions between the spatial-temporal fixation of migration onto maps and the fleeting character of migration spaces be tackled?

The chapter proceeds as follows: in the first section, it investigates what counter-mapping as a method means, and explains why this is relevant beyond cartography and as a non-cartographic approach. Then,

it interrogates what the “counter” to counter-mapping is, and a counter-mapping approach may be mobilised in relation to borders and migration. It moves on to applying counter-mapping as a method in relation to three salient domains of migration governmentality: the EU politics of externalisation; migration data flows; and migrant spaces of transit in the European space. I contend that a counter-mapping gaze is particularly useful for foregrounding the following aspects that tend to remain overshadowed in migration scholarship. First, the production of spaces of control and movement that stem from the enactment of bilateral agreements, as well as from the resistances and refusals to implement these. Second are the invisible circuits of data flows generated by states and non-state actors, which constantly collect different kinds of migration data. Third, the ephemeral spaces of transit that proliferate across Europe as a result of border enforcement measures or of migrant struggles, and that do not last in time.

What is counter-mapping?

Does counter-mapping in the field of migration consist of a “disobedient gaze” (towards a migration governmentality that unveils the *political violence* which “*it is founded on and the human rights violations that are its structural outcome*” (Pezzani, Heller, 2013: 294)? Actually, the argument I put forward in this chapter is that counter-mapping should be put to work in relation to migration governmentality not (only) in terms of *seeing differently* or *seeing more*. That is, it is not a question of “sight” on migration, but of a knowledge production practice that foregrounds spaces of mobility and control that cannot be grasped within the register of cartographic representation.

My take on counter-mapping relies on what I call a *reflexive cartography*, an analysis that consists not only of a cartographic practice, but that rather interrogates the predicaments and implications of mapping migration. More broadly, counter-mapping can be seen as a reflexive practice, a methodological approach that sets out to unsettle and unpack the spatial assumptions upon which migration maps are crafted. Additionally, I refer to cartographic experimentations that disturb the spatial and temporal fixes of

a state-based gaze on migration. In sum, counter-mapping as a method and counter-mapping as a cartographic experimentation work together as part of a critical account of the visualisations of migration and refugee issues.

A counter-mapping approach to borders and migration thus consists of refusing the visibilities and temporalities performed by a statist gaze on the basis of which migration maps are crafted. A state cartographic perspective consists of “translating” some practices of movement into “migration flows”, through a process of abstraction that reifies particular subjects as “migrants”. By applying counter-mapping as a method, I shift attention from the question of how to represent (or not represent) migration, towards an interrogation about the effects generated by mechanisms of control on migrant lives and geographies, and how to account for the temporary or constituent spaces opened up by migration movements and border enforcement measures. This means investigating the spaces of governmentality and spaces of movement that are generated through border enforcement measures and migration movements and that are not apprehensible on the geopolitical map.

Counter-mapping as a method means, first, conceiving of counter-mapping as an epistemic approach and not merely as a cartographic perspective. It refers to an analytical gaze that engages in both a deconstructive move and in a constructive one. The former consists of refusing the temporalities and visibilities of migration enacted by states. The latter involves bringing to the fore the multiple disjunctions between the spaces and borders of sovereignty on the one hand, and the spaces of migration mobility and control that are the outcome of migrant movements and “bordering practices” on the other (Parker, Vaughan-Williams, 2012). This resonates with Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson’s argument about the heterogeneity of spaces (and times) as a characteristic of contemporary capitalism: they point to a fundamental disjunction between spaces of capital and spaces produced by logistics, and the “traditional” territorial spaces of the state (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2017). Border practices are not limited here to border controls and border enforcement measures but, rather, include technical cooperation between the EU and third countries,

and the virtual circuits of data flows and data exchange activities. These spaces of control remain essentially invisible, and therefore inexistent, on geopolitical maps. Simultaneously, there are migration spaces resulting from migrants' movements and presence that remain unaccounted for and unperceived, as long as they exceed and cannot be contained by the government of routes. These spaces amount to what Sebastian Cobarrubias and Maribel Casas-Cortes have poignantly named "itinerant borders" (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, 2015). This does not mean falling into the trap of "romanticising" (Scheel, 2013) migration, seen as a phenomenon that would, in itself, challenge the "national order of things" (Malkki, 1995). Nor does it pretend to have the ability to completely disturb the *cartographic order of migration* – yet it does mean critically questioning the normalisation of such a national order and reflecting on what implications this has for cartographic and non-cartographic migration mapping.

What is the "counter" of counter-mapping?

Although I do not focus here on mapping in cartographic terms, reflecting on counter-mapping and migrations entails engaging in a radical questioning of critical cartography at large. Indeed, migration makes us raise fundamental interrogations of cartographic representation: the starting point of any critical approach to migration maps concerns the extent to which it is ethically and politically desirable to map migrations. In other words, while critical cartography has generally asked the question "how to unveil the silences of maps?", if we turn our attention to migration, the preliminary question is instead "what should not be put on a map?". This, of course, stems from concerns regarding the viability of such trajectories if they are to be revealed through maps. Secondly, raising the point of counter-mapping regarding migration governmentality involves engaging not only with space but also with time. Indeed, the state-based narrative on migration hinges on a specific temporality: the supposedly linear time of migration movements from South to North. Moreover, at a cartographic level, migrations tend to be represented through temporal fixations - that is, through snapshots. Thus, what is fundamentally missing, and what is erased from mapping,

is the autonomous temporality of migration, and how it is obstructed and altered by migration policies and border enforcement practices. The conundrum of mapping and counter-mapping migration relies on the mobile spaces that characterise the border regime and, concomitantly, on their temporary dimension - as spaces generated by the implementation of migration policies, as migrant spaces of transit and refuge that are suddenly evacuated, or as mobile borders that are constantly displaced in order to follow and anticipate migration movements.

Before dealing with the EU politics of externalisation, I expand here on the theoretical implications of counter-mapping in the field of migration. First of all, counter-mapping involves questioning the gaze mobilised by academic scholarship that “(however critical) is implicated in a continuous (re-) reification of ‘migrants’ as a distinct category of human mobility” (De Genova, 2013: 250). For instance, if we consider the Mediterranean Sea, rescued migrants are depicted and narrated on the northern shore of the Mediterranean by reiterating the gesture of making migration start in correspondence with the *scene of drowning and rescue*, or at the moment when migrants enter or land in Europe. Challenging such a state-centred representation of migration entails a shift away from the regime of visibility at stake in governing migration, and which always starts by assuming migration as a phenomenon to be “managed”. However, it is not merely a question of spatial delimitation to overcome. Rather, the main point is related to the space-time narrative that implicitly sustains discourses and analyses on migration, and which seems to be underpinned by the notion of a vague and indeterminate (spatial and temporal) “before” migrants existed or moved before landing on European shores. The sea crossing accentuates, I suggest, the disjuncture between, on the one hand, the space of (supposed) destination - Europe - conceived as fully political and governed by laws and procedures for managing and channelling migrants properly and, on the other, the supposedly unruly space that migrants lived in and crossed “before” coming.

At a general level, the gesture of making things, events, and subjects visible or invisible strictly relies on a specific regime of visibility. As far as migration is concerned this is particularly blatant, insofar as the production

of visibility and invisibility and the constant oscillations and blurring between the two in relation to a given object is at the very core of migration governmentality. Indeed, migrants are in some circumstances the *looked upon* and *monitored* subjects par excellence. *To be looked upon* and *to be monitored* correspond, in fact, to two coexisting but distinct mechanisms of visibility. Migrants are looked upon insofar as they are the objects of processes of racialisation, selection, and categorisation, though this is often disconnected from an act of interpellation (Fanon, 2008). They are monitored because they are controlled, detected, and mapped.

Yet at the same time, migrants are also the objects of politics and techniques of invisibilisation that make them inexistent to the records and statistics of states even if they are spatially present. Two main points ensue from these observations. Firstly, challenging the regime of visibility that underpins the government of migration means refusing to freeze migration into a stable and essentialised category, and shifting the attention to the *making of migration*, that is, to the racialised policies, mechanisms, and laws through which some people are labelled as “migrants”. The visibility of migration cannot be dislocated from the spaces and times in which some people are labelled and governed as “migrants” through border enforcement policies, state narratives and discourses, techniques of control, and forms of visual apprehension. Secondly, and in relation to the first point, unsettling the regime of migration visibility entails moving away from what I call here *governmental visibility*. This expression refers to the modes, procedures, and tempos through which some subjects - taken individually or as part of multiplicities and temporary groups - become known as migrants or as forming migration, and through which they become assumed to be an issue of government, as subjects to be governed accordingly. Starting from such a critical appraisal of governmental visibilities, the goal of a non-cartographic counter-mapping approach does not then consist of extending the field of visibility - making more objects visible - nor in showing what remains hidden or overshadowed. In fact, such a move would contribute to making these movements, subjects, and conducts further “governable” by rendering them intelligible and graspable in the very same terms that organise the discourse and practice of powers. Work by critical geographers is particularly

helpful in this regard, in providing clues on what a counter-mapping gaze should mean at the level of knowledge production. In his book *A History of Spaces*, John Pickles stresses that counter-mapping must go “beyond the unmasking of the silences in traditional maps onto the production of new maps” (Pickles, 2004: 23), pointing to what he calls “a de-ontologized cartography” that needs to produce a new openness, bringing to the fore spaces that result from connections and border practices.

In the article “Unfolding mapping practices: a new epistemology for cartography”, Robert Kitchin, Justin Gleeson and Martin Dodge advocate for a radical shift from a critical cartography still grounded on maps as fixed and autonomous objects (the ontological dimension) towards an understanding of maps in terms of mapping practices (the ontogenic approach) (Kitchin et al. 2012). Through such a move, they gesture towards a reconceptualisation of mapping as something that cannot be grasped separately from the discursive and non-discursive practices that produce a series of lines and dots into a map. Such a methodological gesture entails a questioning of the critical cartography literature which has been essentially predicated upon “deconstructing the map” (Harley, 1989), in which maps, as critically analysed as they may be, remain autonomous artefacts characterised by a certain degree of ontological security. Pushing this argument further, they move beyond post-representational map analyses, arguing that what matters is not stressing the irreducible discrepancy between map and territory, but to disassociate the map from the quest for representation as such. Derek Gregory, in his article “Seeing Red: Baghdad and the eventful city”, points to the nexus between spaces of constructed visibility and spaces of intervention (war battlefields), highlighting how a focus on modes of visibility and visibility makes it possible to grasp the specific entanglement between biopolitics and geopolitics (Gregory, 2010). Gregory concurs with the challenge (proposed by Kitchin et. al.) of questioning the ontological security of maps, adding however that a shift towards counter-mapping practices requires not only an examination of mapping as such, but also an exploration of the security operations and biopolitical modes that sustain any regime of visualisation.

Producing visibility on that which remains under the threshold of knowledge can become a further governmentalisation of migration to the extent that it is made without questioning the categories and political mechanisms that sustain state-centred regimes of visibility. In her essay “The evidence of experience”, Joan Scott provides a critique of the quest for evidence that is at the core of history as a discipline, arguing that “the evidence of experience”, as it is produced by analyses that challenge normative history, tends to reproduce “rather than contest given ideological experiences, its categories of representation” (Scott, 1991: 778). Thus, she concludes, “the project of making experience visible precludes analysis of the workings of this system and of its historicity; instead, it reproduces its terms” (Scott, 1991: 779).

This involves refusing the categories and epistemological-political rationales that establish the condition of emergence, and visibilisation, of subjects as migrants. Simultaneously, a counter-mapping gaze consists of unsettling the binary alternative between making visible and making invisible, pointing rather to the constitutive opacity of migration governmentality (Pinelli, 2017). In fact, a counter-mapping approach does not unveil the secrecy of the state’s operations, nor does it embrace a neo-positivist approach or provide evidence of the state’s violations of international law. Counter-mapping as a method maintains a distance from an epistemic commitment that aims to fill in the gaps, black holes, and grey zones of conventional maps. On the contrary, it starts from the assumption that struggles over the border regime do not depend on a lack of knowledge but, rather, on the hyper-exposure of states’ “warfare on migrants” (Garelli, Tazzioli, 2017b). Hence, a counter-mapping gaze would engage in undoing and rewriting the modes of discourse and visibility on migration not according to a less-to-more logic - more visibility, more knowledge, more evidence - but by building and interlinking new political and historical connections.² Taking Scott’s argument further, according to which “making visible the experience of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms but not their inner working or logics” (Scott, 1991: 799), I suggest that counter mapping as a reflexive practice is not a question

of unveiling the human rights violations to which migrants are subjected, or even of making the migrant's presence visible. Rather, *counter-mapping as a method* consists of a *rippling gesture* that brings to the fore spaces of control that are not accounted for or represented on geopolitical maps, and which are the result of border cooperation practices, virtual spaces of data circulation, or spaces formed by channels of forced mobility. Additionally, a counter-mapping approach to migration and borders highlights the spaces of mobility opened up by migration movements, focussing attention on the way in which they exceed the humanitarian and security captures of the border regime.

Undoing externalisation: a counter-mapping approach

A counter-mapping gaze on the external frontiers of Europe consists of looking at the spaces of control, mobility, and containment that are generated through bordering practices, which are not visible on the geopolitical map and do not appear as territorial entities. Concrete examples can be found with the cooperation between the EU and African countries in sea patrolling activities aimed at intercepting migrant vessels, the training provided by the EU to border and coast guards of third countries, as well as the donation of technical equipment (radars and fingerprinting machines, among others). On this point, I also want to advance the argument that looking at the spaces of control opened up by border enforcement practices does not postulate a smooth space of cooperation between European and non-European countries. As I will show later, this cooperation has its own tensions and hierarchies.

Through the term “external frontiers” I refer to the official national borders traced on the geopolitical map of Europe and, at the same time, to the “pre-frontiers” of Europe. The term pre-frontiers is used here both in the sense of “the areas beyond the EU’s surveillance reach” (Andersson, 2016) and, more broadly, as border cooperation activities between EU member states and third countries for controlling and containing migration. The external frontiers of Europe and the bilateral agreements with third-countries, in particular African states, have gained great momentum on the

EU political agenda over the last three years, although the implementation of EU externalisation politics can be traced back to the early 2000s. The following pages do not provide an exhaustive account of the most recent steps in terms of bilateral agreements between the EU and third countries. Rather, the chapter engages in a counter-mapping approach to EU externalisation politics and state-based narratives and gaze on migration. It examines the main theoretical and political challenges a counter-mapping (non-cartographic) approach needs to tackle and reflect on related practices. As part of the counter-mapping approach, the very term “externalisation” should be questioned in light of the role of third countries in negotiating, partially refusing, and strategically appropriating the conditions and obligations enshrined in bilateral agreements and imposed by Europe. In fact, the term “externalisation” hints at a booming European space that progressively stretches its actual frontiers beyond geopolitical borders. In addition to cooperation activities, we should include the channels of deportations, transfers, relocations, and data exchange that criss-cross the European space and extend beyond it. The stretching of the EU border regime and its externalisation in fact cannot be flattened to visible territories; in order for it to be *seen*, a map of the mobile spaces of control should be made. This ultimately entails shifting attention towards channels of forced and autonomous mobility to grasp how these spatialities emerge and reshape the very borders of Europe. What I want to suggest is that the very notion of “externalisation” should be questioned as it is not fully adequate to, on the one hand, understand the spatial reshaping of European borders and, on the other hand, account for the spaces of control and mobility that result from border practices. In fact, the term “externalisation” and the way it is used in political discourses and academic literature convey the idea of Europe as an expanding space, which stretches its borders beyond its geopolitical territory; this is in part true if we conceive borders not only as the boundaries of sovereignty but also as the spaces where national authorities of third countries act in their territory in place of Europe and for the sake of Europe, by stopping migrants heading to Europe. Yet, as some scholars have demonstrated, externalisation implicitly dismisses third

countries' resistance to signing agreements on the one hand, and also their interest in managing migrations on the other (Cassarino, 2016; Paoletti, 2010). This thesis has been proposed by Jean-Pierre Cassarino who has introduced the notion of "new forms of interconnectedness", and contended that "it is important to break away from the taken for granted vision that the participation of third countries in border cooperation activities is based on a cause-effect relationship, which is the mere result of the EU's pressure on them" (Cassarino, 2005).

Secondly, the idea of externalisation replicates the image of Europe as an expanding space, and contributes to mobilising a gaze on migration as a phenomenon fully governed *from* and *by* Europe, thus reproducing the geopolitical narrative grounded on state frontiers by merely stretching the borders of the European Union. Instead, if we draw attention to *border practices* - conceived as security devices, mapping software, and systems, but also training activities and border patrolling - and their material effects, we come to grips with spaces that are the result of asymmetric state cooperation (also with the involvement of private actors, NGOs, and international organisations) and that however cannot be reduced to the limits of their sovereignty. Thirdly, externalisation implicates a sort of travelling of practices from the Northern to the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, without investigating how bordering techniques are effectively actualised in non-European spaces. In fact, as Aino Korvensyrjä has argued, the geopolitical imaginary that sustains migration scholarship is still fundamentally Westphalian (Korvensyrjä, 2017). In other words, employing the terminology of border externalisation entails surreptitiously reiterating the image of a booming European space that spills over its geopolitical borders. Can the asymmetric cooperation in border controls and migration management activities between the EU and third countries be adequately captured in terms of "border stretching"? Indeed, this is how "externalisation" has been commonly conceived in migration scholarship, that is, as the displacement of border control practices "from the border of the sovereign state into which the individual is seeking to enter to within the state of origin" (Guild, 2004: 34).

Maribel Casas-Cortes, Sebastian Cobarrubias and John Pickles have highlighted a twofold shift that is generated by the EU border externalisation: a “blurring of the ‘outside/inside’ that signals a profound geographical attention and flexibility in thinking about non-EU spaces” (Casas-Cortes et al., 2013: 46); and, simultaneously, a shift from an EU strategy centred on border fencing towards an approach “increasingly focused on the management of flows” (Casas-Cortes et al., 2013: 48). Thus, it is not in territorial terms that the EU externalisation project can be grasped but, rather, by drawing attention to bordering practices that never fully overlap with the frontiers of the nation states. I suggest extending the argument further and challenging the very image of multiple border-stretching operations that the EU would enact from two intertwined perspectives. The first concerns moving from the image of border stretching towards a gaze on multiple *spatial reshuffling*: these are not limited to border outsourcing practices and involve, rather, the emergence and transformations of “spaces of governmentality” (Tazzioli, 2015) which remain unaccounted for on geopolitical maps. The second perspective re-situates EU externalisation politics into the European project at large, one that is based on “connected histories of colonialism and Empire” (Bhambra, 2015; see also De Genova, 2016). In fact, whereas much attention has been paid to the political and legal milestones that have paved the way to the EU border outsourcing strategy, the intertwined genealogies of Europe’s colonialism and migration management remain fundamentally unexplored. This involves, I suggest, refusing a centrifugal move that posits Europe as the propulsive and original spatial core from where a series of border displacements and spatial enlargements take place. Thus, it could be argued that a counter-mapping approach to EU externalisation politics entails not only a critical *cartography* but also a *genealogy* of the European frontiers and of “Europe” as such.

Therefore, it is not just a matter of the EU extending its influence and actions on a spatial level through mechanisms of co-optation. Instead of relying on a stated-grounded approach, we should investigate geopolitical relationships between states as well as considering the interests and stakes of third countries in managing mobility, and in demanding support for member states to deal with security issues that are not only limited to

migration. One instance of this is new barrier built last year by Tunisia at the Libyan border. The fence was primarily constructed to prevent the mobility of Tunisian foreign fighters and the “infiltration of potential terrorists” from Libya. The technical equipment provided by Germany and the US, and which was requested by Tunisia, was only marginally related to the problem of migration management, and it only indirectly ended up having a relative deterrence effect on migration movements from Libya to Tunisia.

A case in point of spatial reshuffling and the emergence of new spaces of governmentality, far beyond border stretching as such, can be seen in what may be called the *externalisation of search and rescue* in the Mediterranean: the EU’s attempt to involve the Libyan Coast Guard in rescuing and returning (pushing back) migrants in distress at sea was officially declared at the EU Council on Security and Defence held on 22 June 2017.³ In this case, the notion of externalisation can be used in a critical way, not in the sense of a border-stretching activity performed by the EU but, rather, for addressing the emergence of the Mediterranean Sea a space of governmentality. This has been opened up through the delegation of patrolling operations to the Libyans and for displacing the scene of migration containment-and-rescue towards the Southern shore of the Mediterranean.

Together with a challenge to the notion of externalisation, and as a consequence, I gesture towards technical practices of bordering through which spaces of mobility and control are produced. On a theoretical level, this leads simultaneously to a reconceptualisation of border cooperation programmes. Without dismissing or downplaying the effects of containment and blockage on migrants, it is important to highlight how migrants’ mobility is channelled, monitored, and targeted as the object of pre-emptive risk analyses and knowledge production. This occurs both at the level of training activities and in terms of technical equipment provided to third countries, not simply for blocking migrants but also for channelling and gaining control over mobility, and producing data on migrants. Moreover, many of these initiatives are predicated upon the entanglement between humanitarian and security approaches, insofar as some of them, for instance, consist of measures for registering asylum seekers in order to protect and contain.

Drawing attention to border and coast guard training activities provided by member states to third countries - or more recently by Eunavfor to the Libyan Coast Guard⁴ - allows us to highlight the disjuncture between border practices cooperation and national territory: in fact, many of these training activities are conducted on the high sea or on European territory, and not in third countries. Secondly, training activities shed light on the transfer of practices from North to South that have become a crucial aspect of the actualisation of bilateral agreements. Both the “hardwiring” (Andersson, 2016) and what can be called the “*softwaring*” of frontiers - that is, the implementation of systems for collecting and elaborating data and producing a real-time picture of borders - should be taken into account when we speak about technical cooperation and spaces of control.⁵

The logistics of data and data flows

Spaces of migration governmentality are also the result of data circulation and data exchange activities performed on a daily basis by migration agencies, national authorities, and military actors. Following the logistics of data enables us to grasp and bring to the fore immaterial and invisible spaces of control which, however, have tangible consequences for migrant trajectories. The logistics of migration data is, in fact, by far the most critical dimension of border cooperation activities: the asymmetries in data exchange activities between the Northern and the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, and the reluctance on the part of third countries, characterise the so-called neighbourhood policies. Therefore, we should not overstate cooperation in terms of data sharing between Mediterranean countries. Although collaboration with third countries in terms of real-time data-sharing appears in the last EU Maritime Security Strategy as an EU priority, it has until now taken place mainly through the Virtual Maritime Regional Traffic Centre (V-RMTC) coordinated by the Italian Navy and launched in 2008.⁶ This real-time database collects relevant information or unclassified data about vessels, which are then shared among the navies of ten countries of the Mediterranean region - Italy, France, Algeria, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, and Tunisia. The

reluctance to share data on the part of non-European countries was revealed in an interview with a representative of the Italian navy: “If you take the V-RMTC⁷ system, a database that contains information about unclassified vessels in the Mediterranean, the amount of data sent by Tunisia or Morocco is by far irrelevant with respect to the data sent by Italy or Spain”.⁸ Recent initiatives like the SafeSeaNet⁹ project, launched by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and which includes training activities for Tunisian, Moroccan, and Algerian coast guards to learn how to use the Automatic Identification System (AIS), as well as Frontex’s pressure on North African countries to send data to EUROSUR, represent multiple attempts to create a Mediterranean space of data circulation that, however, is far from being actualised to date.

Therefore, the collaboration with third countries in terms of data-sharing is a thorny issue: in fact, until the end of 2016, Moroccan and Tunisian authorities refused to engage in Sea Horse, the satellite-based Mediterranean Network, or establish coordination centres for sharing data with EU member states - although there are now ongoing negotiations for effectively involving North African countries in Sea Horse.¹⁰ The EU’s goal of establishing a common pre-frontier intelligence picture among member states is in line with the implementation of the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR), but the countries of the Southern Mediterranean shore remain reluctant to share data. As the director of EUROSUR’s Italian national coordination centre told me, “a comprehensive situational awareness picture coordinated by the EU is certainly the main objective but in practice, what should be pursued is in fact data-exchange on a bilateral level”.¹¹ Therefore, taking into account the material spaces of mobility and control opened up, respectively, by migration movements and border cooperation (and non-cooperation) activities, together with the immaterial and virtual spaces of data circulation, enables a foregrounding and engagement with the fundamental disjuncture between geopolitical spaces and the space of nation-states on the one hand, and spaces of circulation on the other.

Migrants' Europe map

While the external frontiers and internal national borders of Europe are deeply inscribed in our geographical imagination, the temporary spaces of transit and refuge that result from the clash between migrants' movements and border enforcement politics are missing in the geopolitical map of Europe. Instead of locating migrants and refugees on maps, or of representing their routes, we should gesture towards a re-mapping of Europe bringing in the temporary spaces of migration, transit, and refuge that have multiplied across the European space. Most of these spaces are informal encampments, built by migrants or migrant support groups, and which, however, have also become zones of control - as in the case of Ventimiglia, a camp in set up in the Italian city on the Italian-French border in 2015, when France suspended the Schengen agreement.

Following the multiplication of official and informal encampments and the uneven temporality created by appearances, evictions, and recursive re-emergences of these spaces of confinement, the impossibility of a fixed cartography of migrant encampments is revealed. Moreover, tracing a history of the turbulences of migration camps involves resisting claims to transparency and full visibility, dealing rather with what Ann Laura Stoler has called "symptomatic" spaces (Stoler, 2010: 7), spaces that can be grasped only through minor traces left in the archives. In fact, many of the encampments that mushroomed across Europe as a result of border enforcement measures or as spaces of refuge opened up by migrants are not apprehensible through a mapping gaze that aims to unveil hidden places in the name of transparency or to make fully visible what is invisible. On the contrary, by bringing attention to the traces left by these encampments and the irregular pace of their emergence and disappearance, it becomes possible to draw what I call a *minor cartography of vanishing refugees' spaces*. Such a map would be a constitutively opaque and missing cartography, which confronts the spatial and temporal traces of heterogeneous encampments.

However, by highlighting the fundamentally fleeting dimension of migrant spaces of refuge and confinement, we should not conclude with

the impossibility of an archive of encampments, nor the total disappearance of the memory and existence of places that have since been evacuated or shut down. Spaces of refuge and transit often remain alive in the collective memory due to the re-emergence of these spaces upon eviction or, in the case of institutional camps, after being officially closed. Many of these places blur with the surrounding urban areas and cannot be approached through the lens of extraterritoriality. What I want to suggest is an ethnography of “infamous” vanishing spaces, which directs attention to temporary migration sites that become apprehensible only through “an encounter with power”, and as something that is “beside what is usually estimated as worthy of being recounted” (Foucault, 1954: 79). Re-mapping Europe as a space of migrants’ and refugees’ temporary spaces requires navigating through the interstices of the produced opacity of migrant encampments, in order to grasp the persistence of camps’ traces as spatial landmarks in migrants’ enacted geographies. Thus, it entails bringing the dimension of temporality into maps, accounting for and keeping alive the temporariness of these spaces. Yet, more than mapping official refugee camps or reception centres, the crafting of a refugees’ Europe map involves research into unofficial spaces produced as an effect of migration and border policies, as well as of migrants’ practices of movement. Some of these spaces of transit have then become places of containment or are places within European cities that have played the twofold role of space-refuge and areas controlled by the police, and then have been cleared as dwelling places where migrants found a temporary place to stay. Others are self-managed, like the Refugee City Plaza Hotel in Athens, or squares and public spaces that have been sites of migrant struggles for some time, such as Oranienplatz in Berlin. This map-archive is an ongoing collective project that we have put into place with researchers and activists based in different European countries, with the goal of preserving the memory of refugee spaces that have been forcibly cleared, or “disappeared”. Simultaneously, this allows us to challenge governmental refugee maps that locate refugees in spaces, counting them, and visualising their juridical status.

Conclusion

Exploring and understanding the contested field of migration governmentality from a perspective that does not stick to state-centred and policy-led approaches leads to a radical unsettling of the geopolitical map of Europe, insofar as the borders of nation states and the official frontiers of the EU do not allow us to grasp the spaces of control and mobility produced as a result of the very government of mobility. This effort is part of an epistemological project that accounts for “mobile borders” (Mekadjian, 2015), which are particularly at stake in migration governmentality, bringing to the fore the spaces enacted through border enforcement measures, beyond geopolitical frontiers, and the migrant spaces - as spaces generated by migrants’ “spatial disobediences” (Tazzioli, 2016) and spaces that are constantly fleeting, on the move. Yet, not all migration movements open up spaces that clash with or unsettle spaces of control; I point, rather, towards those contexts and moments in which certain spatial disobediences end up producing temporary spaces that are not fully recuperated by measures for disciplining unruly mobility. These spaces can also be crystallised into sites that have become migrant transit points, or that have been transformed into border zones. In fact, the European space itself can be remapped through the multiplication of zones of transit, unofficial borders, and spaces of refuge. These spaces are not only invisible, not represented on the geopolitical map, but they nevertheless have tangible effects on migrant geographies and lives; they are also spaces at the limits of representation - as they are often temporary, ephemeral spaces which are evacuated by the authorities or that change in their function of containment. Therefore, the dimension of temporality and temporariness appears as crucial, a dimension that is fundamentally missing from (migration) maps and that, in the end, conflicts with the fixation gesture at the core of the cartographic reason. Bringing to the fore the mobile spaces generated by border cooperation activities and migration movements involves paying attention to the multiple disjunctures between the space of sovereignties and the spaces of control and movement.

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Part II:

Practices of Solidarity

IN THE WORLD: ACTION AND FABRICATION BY AND ON BEHALF OF UNDOCUMENTED PERSONS

Mikael Spång and Anna Lundberg

Introduction

Deportability and precarious living conditions characterize the situation for persons living in irregular situations (Alexander, 2010; CRC-committee, 2012; De Genova, 2002; FRA, 2011; Koser, 2010, Sager 2011).¹ The exclusion of undocumented migrants from politics is central when following Hannah Arendt's (1951: chapter 9.2) analysis of the plight of stateless persons and refugees. Their loss of political existence entails the risks of being reduced to the abstract nakedness of human beings (Dikeç, 2013; Gündoğdu, 2015; Krause, 2008). Arendt famously invoked the right to have rights in this context, often understood as the right to citizenship—that is, the right to a secure status for political action within the jurisdictional space of the state (see Ingram, 2008; Michelman, 1996). This view of the right to have rights is supported by Arendt's (1958: 194f) claim that the political community is a precondition for political action. The *polis* is the space for politics and must be in place for action to be possible (to take place).

However, another view about the relation between *polis* and political action is also evident from Arendt's work. Arendt (1958: 198f) argued that the *polis* is brought about by action and speech; it is then less the precondition for action than the outcome of acting in concert. This suggests another understanding of the right to have rights, not the inclusion in an

already existing polity but the constituting of the *polis*, the simultaneous expression of political existence and the establishment of a space in which it is possible to act and speak recurrently (see Honig, 2009; Keenan, 2003).

The two conceptions of the *polis* suggested by Arendt may seem contradictory. However, they can also be seen as showing how acting in an existing political space and establishing a space of appearance, where the possibility of acting is sustained over time, are related to each other. This is particularly relevant for understanding the political action by and on behalf of undocumented migrants. These forms of action are potentially *polis*-generating, which to some extent challenges or perhaps modifies the jurisdictional space of action. Yet, there are obvious problems in sustaining the space of appearance thereby established. In this article, we discuss this relation between *polis* and political action by examining examples of action by and on behalf of migrants living in irregular situations. We refer to three initiatives from the city of Malmö, Sweden, as empirical examples: a musical, a relay, and a tent-camp action.² These examples highlight the relationship between *polis* and action by bringing out the interrelation of work and action. Work plays a significant role in sustaining spaces of appearances. It is therefore relevant to highlight this dimension when discussing political action by and on behalf of persons in an undocumented situation. In this discussion, we rely on Arendt's tripartite division of human activities, labour, work, and action. Whereas for Arendt (1958: 7), labour concerns the sustaining of biological life, work is about providing "an artificial' world of things". Examples include artwork, written accounts, and so on. Finally, action refers to politics, to that which "goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter" (Arendt, 1958: 7). Speech belongs to action in this sense.

We begin the chapter by providing a background to the problem we address here. In doing so, we build on the existing work on undocumentedness that draws on Arendt. We suggest that focusing on the relation between *polis* and action, and paying specific attention to the role of work in sustaining a space of appearance, add to this literature. After this, we introduce the three initiatives in Malmö. In the next section, we consider the interrelations between Arendt's two accounts of the *polis*. In the subsequent sections, we

highlight the elements of action and work involved in the empirical examples. Taken together, action and work show how a world is established and sustained; work plays an important role in this context, both for establishing a durable space in which future action and speech are possible, and because work involves the establishment of relations between things in the world. We conclude by briefly discussing how the proposed understanding of political action clarifies what is involved in the release from undocumentedness.

***Polis*, action and undocumentedness**

Several scholars have discussed the relation between the *polis* as the outcome of action and precondition for action, for instance in the context of questions about the establishment of the constitutional framework of political action (see Keenan, 2003; Rua Wall, 2013; Villa, 2007; Waldron, 2000). Others have addressed this relation with regard to the actions of refugees and persons living in irregular situations. Cristina Beltrán (2009), for example, in her analysis of demonstrations, rallies, and so on by immigrants and their allies in the United States in 2006, argues that Arendt helps us to highlight the political dimension of these events. It allows us to see how the coming together inaugurates freedom and the transformative dimensions of action. Moreover, Beltrán argues, it allows us to resist translating demands and claims into an already established vocabulary of inclusion, into the too familiar light of citizenship, regularisation, and so on. Monika Krause (2008) also points to the political character of undocumentedness. She stresses how undocumented persons are political actors whose public appearance can be potentially explosive and liberating. Referring to Arendt's (1982) conscious pariah, Krause illustrates that undocumented migrants' collective action, essentially their mere presence, is constitutive of political action. Ayten Gündoğdu (2012; 2015) reads Arendt in similar ways and link actions by *sans-papiers* to practices of founding; they bring forth new subjects, propose new rights, "and push already existing rights beyond their institutional formulations" (2015: 190). Through an insurgent politics, it is possible to push human rights and citizenship beyond instituted confines (Gündoğdu, 2015: 188).

These studies of undocumentedness and political action by and on behalf of undocumented people are important contributions that reiterate the relevance of using Arendt's concepts for understanding political action. While building on these discussions in the present chapter, we highlight two dimensions that do not figure prominently in the writings of other scholars who focus on political action by refugees and undocumented migrants. *First*, we highlight the interrelationship between action and work in relation to Arendt's twofold conception of the *polis*. Work plays a central role in sustaining the possibilities of action in the future, for instance, through writing about previous action, and we highlight this in relation to some examples from the city of Malmö in southern Sweden. *Second*, we use these examples to shed light on how the fabrication of things is not only relevant for sustaining action, but also for redefining and reshaping the relations between things in the world. With regard to the latter, we follow Patchen Markell (2011), who suggests that Arendt was concerned with *both* separating activities, implying a "territorial" approach to labour, work, and action where each has its proper location, *and* the interrelation of these activities. Central to the latter is the role of work for action. Instead of seeing labour, work, and action as a triad, there is, Markell (2011: 18) argues, "the fraught conjunction of two different pairs of concepts – labour and work, and work and action." The first pair of concepts is understood in terms of separation in order to distinguish the worldly activities of work and action from labour, which does not take part in establishing a world. The second pair is understood in terms of the mutual relation between work and action, both the role of work in sustaining a world in which action is possible, and because work involves relations of "provocation and response between things in their meaningful appearances" (Markell, 2011: 36).

Elaborating on the relationship between action and work allows us to contribute to the existing literature on political action by or on behalf of undocumented migrants. It also allows for transcending the distinction between inclusion/exclusion; several scholars involved in research about persons in irregular situations point to this need. The limitations of the exclusion/inclusion logic are evident in research about, for instance,

deportability, as well as in research around political mobilisation among undocumented migrants who resist present conditions (see De Genova and Peutz, 2010 on deportability; Bhabha, 2009 and Gonzales, 2011 on migrant children). The situation in specific states or local contexts has also been explored in research in this field (see Alexander, 2010; Cuadra, 2012; De Genova, 2013; Krause, 2011; Lundberg and Strange 2016; Sager, 2011; Wright, 2003). Other scholars have instead focused on how new spaces are invented, thus drawing on processes of inclusion (inclusion logic). Studies on political mobilisations by irregular migrants and pro-migrant activists are increasingly common in this research field (Nyers, 2003, 2008; McNevin, 2006); they point to other forms (and places) of politics rather than what is secured through citizenship (or legal residence) (see Isin, 2011; Millner, 2011; Nyers, 2011; Rajaram, 2013; Squire and Darling, 2013; Rygiel, 2011; Walters, 2008). While persons who lack residence permits are excluded from the political community, they increasingly take part in the inauguration of politics outside the established political spaces (Nyers and Rygiel, 2012). Our discussion also relates to studies of the coping practices of persons in undocumented situations (see for example Lind, 2016). These studies show how persons employ different strategies to get by in their everyday lives, how they cope with problems regarding subsistence, avoiding detection by police and other authorities, as well as how they relate to others, in particular their children, in their situation. In highlighting how persons not only try to cope in their everyday struggles, we want to point to elements of their political existence as beings engaging in action and speech. Certainly, coping involves relations to other people as well, and is interrelated to political action, but action involves a public appearance that is also different, not least as it may be a sign of release from the situation of undocumentedness.

Approaching the field

Anna Lundberg was involved as an activist, to various extents, in all three initiatives: on the first day of the relay since it first took place in 2013, during the tent camp through legal work with asylum cases over a period of eighteen

months,³ and in the musical for one year as a participant researcher. As part of a research project taking an activist approach, interviews were conducted in collaboration with the PhD candidate Emma Söderman with musical ensemble members. Of course, the three initiatives referred to here did (and do) not happen in isolation. All three cases are connected to each other and to previous initiatives, as well as to later actions in Malmö and Europe, within the refugee rights movement. In recent years, there have been several projects similar to the tent camp in Malmö as well as in other Swedish cities, and the same goes for the Asylum relay. The number of political actions taken by and on behalf of refugees with different legal statuses has also increased in Sweden, following broad public engagement in 2015 when approximately 160,000 refugees applied for asylum in the country.

Our three examples from Malmö illustrate speaking and acting together. The *No Border Musical* involved activists (including one of the authors of the present chapter), some of whom were undocumented youth living in Malmö connected to the local refugee rights movement the Asylum Group. An important part of the work conducted in the musical took place through direct contact between Swedish citizens and asylum applicants or undocumented migrants. The aim was to tell a broader audience about the consequences of contemporary migration management, and to do something *together*, involving undocumented refugees and other activists in the city. The project initially demonstrated new ways in which Sweden's increasingly restrictive immigration policy could be contested. More specifically, the musical attempted to inspire hope for another world, and not only to resist prevailing policy. The formation of the musical project began in early 2011 when activists initiated several workshops to bring persons interested in no-border activism together. This preparatory work resulted in a manuscript for the musical that was finalised in the spring of 2012. Undocumented, unaccompanied children and young people who resided in Malmö at the time and were in contact with the Asylum Group joined the project, and a musical ensemble was formed. The majority of those taking part had arrived in Sweden as unaccompanied minors. They all shared experiences of forced migration and harsh migration control. As

for the other people involved, some had experience of working with refugee rights issues, while for others, the musical was an entry into understanding the situation for persons living as undocumented in Europe.⁴

The *Asylum Relay* is a walk through Sweden that has taken place every summer since 2013, in which people can either walk all the way (for a few weeks), or join for a shorter part of the trek. The starting point for the relay was people living in Sweden who were affected by present-day refugee policy. Telling their stories about why they had to seek refuge and how they had been treated in the asylum process led to the initiative. After much planning and preparation, the relay in the summer of 2013 went from Malmö to Stockholm. In the summer of 2014, it went from Malmö to Almedalen, in the city of Visby (on the Baltic Sea island of Gotland), where a large political gathering took place. The relay in 2015 was shorter (about 250 km) and went from Malmö to a detention centre in Åstorp where a demonstration was held.

On the starting day of the relays, between 100 and 200 people meet up at a square in central Malmö. Then, after speeches and instructions about the route, places, and times for food stops, as well as the sale of T-shirts and other materials, a parade-like walk begins, which more people join. Additional speeches are given along the way concerning what it means to be in the Swedish asylum process or experiencing clandestine living in Sweden. As the walk progresses, conversations develop between the participants on issues such as solidarity, refugee policies, and everyday struggles. Some members of the aforementioned musical project also participated in the 2014 event, doing street performances along the walk. A continuous broadcast of many activities and some media attention surround the relay (see for example *The Asylum relay*, 2014a).⁵

Our third example of a political action initiated by undocumented persons in Malmö was a *tent camp* in the city's parks in 2014, when four young asylum seekers protested the Swedish Migration Agency's decisions to deport them, and the exercises by the migration authorities that led to these decisions. Habil, one of the rejected asylum seekers, explained in a newspaper interview that the migration authorities did not believe his story

about how his mother took him from Afghanistan to Iran. The Agency had argued that a woman could not have been capable of doing such a thing on her own. However, the family had no choice but to escape since they were under death threats from a warlord after having tried to get the courts to prosecute him for murder (Peña Rojas, 2014, interview with Habil). The extended tent-action was initiated in February 2014, when the temperature in Malmö was below freezing, right in the centre of the city. On their Facebook page, Habil and his friends wrote:

Because who would listen to us otherwise? We are undocumented refugees from Afghanistan. Sweden deports ten of us once a month. A regular demonstration lasts for a few hours and then everybody is ready to forget about us. And let's face it, it is not as if the media is lining up to get a chance to talk to us unless we do something spectacular. We want the people of Sweden to know about the sloppiness with which our asylum cases were handled, and about the things awaiting us if we are forced to return to Afghanistan (Tent action, 2014, our translation).

As noted in the quote by Habil and his friends, deeds aimed at highlighting the precarious living conditions of deportable persons do not often lead to major, long-term changes. Protests and demonstrations are often quickly forgotten. We will return to this central argument for the present chapter, starting off with Arendt's (1958: 199) understanding of this instability of political acts: "the actuality of the movement [that brought them into being]" is dissolved when the multitude shatters. Action and speech bring about a space of appearance, but this space, including the relationships it enacts, may easily disappear unless sheltered. Arendt's twofold conception of the *polis* tries to capture this interrelationship between acting and work (which establishes relations). It points to how the worldliness of action and fabrication are intermeshed, yet not reducible to each other.

What is the *polis*?

The *polis* is the space of appearance of the political existence of human beings. Arendt (1971: 19ff) emphasises this element of appearance, arguing that being and appearance coincide in the *polis*; the *polis* not only offers a space for appearance but also discloses being as appearance. Thus, the *polis* is both a precondition for the possibility of action and speech, and an outcome of action and speech (Arendt, 1958: sections 7, 27-29). This pulls us in two directions: we may either focus on how the *polis* is a precondition for action and speech, or on how the *polis* is brought about through action and speech.

The former is explained in Arendt's discussion of the function of city walls and the laws of the city. They establish a place where people can speak and act together. Neither the building of the city walls nor legislation are political activities in the Greek *polis*, Arendt (1958: 194) noted, yet both are required for political action to be possible. To the Greeks:

[T]he laws, like the wall around the city, were not [the] result of action but products of making. Before men began to act, a definite space had to be secured and a structure built where all subsequent actions could take place, the space being the public realm of the polis and its structure the law (Arendt, 1958: 194f).

However, the *polis* is also the outcome of action, Arendt argues. The space of appearance arises out of speaking and acting together:

The *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be (Arendt, 1958: 198).

As noted earlier, these two understandings of the *polis*, as arising out of acting and speaking, and as related to the making of laws and walls, pull in two directions. However, it is also possible to see the two understandings

of the *polis* as mutually complementing or constituting (see Keenan, 2003; Villa, 2007). The first interpretation suggests making sense of political action by and on behalf of undocumented persons within an already established space of action, like the jurisdictional space of the state. This interpretation has the advantage of highlighting problems that undocumented people face; they cannot rely on the protection of rights in the same way as other residents and citizens can. There are, however, also drawbacks to such an understanding because it pushes us into interpreting the aim of action as one of inclusion in the established space (Beltrán, 2009). Not only may that not be the aim for the people acting; this interpretation may also underestimate the extent to which political action is part of creating new spaces for political action.

The second interpretation allows for an understanding of how this space of appearance emerges out of acting and speaking together. What comes into view then are the *polis*-generating dimensions of political action, the potential space actualised when individuals come together to undertake some common project. However, political action needs the support of work in order to become a sustainable space (see Assy, 2004; Markell, 2011). As Arendt repeatedly makes clear, and as reported by the activists in the Malmö tent-camp, what is said and done by people who come together tends to disappear when they disperse. As noted in the introduction, several scholars have addressed this problem of sustaining the space of appearance related to political action. Arendt herself points to the importance of work in this regard:

[A]cting and speaking men need the help of *homo faber* in his highest capacity, that is, the help of the artists, of poets and historiographers, of monument-builders or writers, because without them the only product of their activity, the story they enact and tell, would not survive at all (Arendt, 1958: 173).

It is in relation to this problem of disbandment that Markell's reading becomes important. He (2011: 18) highlights that work performs a dual function in Arendt's thought. Work plays one role in the "territorial"

understanding of labour, work, and action, and another role in the “relational” understanding of these concepts. In the first sense, work is a spatial concept allowing for a separation of labour and action so that they do not collapse into each other. In ancient Greece for example, laws had the function of separating the non-durable dimensions of action from the non-durable character of labour, thereby allowing action and labour to have their proper place. However, separating spatiality is not the only function of work, Markell continues, since work also relates to action in how it connects private and public. The walls around the private household not only demarcate the private and the public but also allow people to move between them, to enter the public and return to the private. Moreover, this entering and returning from the public is visible to others. Certainly, this entering the public and returning to the private is much more complicated in the case of persons in undocumented situations since they risk deportation when entering the public realm. Appearing in public involves the risk of detection by police and other authorities. To talk about returning to the private sphere is also problematic, because it does not constitute a sheltered place for undocumented persons in the same way it does for citizens and other residents. The risk of deportation is always present. Thus, to enter the public and then return to the private sphere is a significant problem for persons in undocumented situations. In several ways, this makes it even more important to look not only at action, but also at the interrelationship between action and work. The latter plays an important role in creating and re-creating a world in which this movement from the private to the public and back is possible. Knowing that others have travelled back and forth may also contribute to making the step easier, less fraught with troubles and anxieties.

Arendt elaborates on the interrelationship between work and action primarily in terms of works of art; acting and speaking people need a helping hand from those who can talk about what has happened through art works. More specifically, this allows for remembering actions. When people get together a second, third, and fourth time, they can relate back to previous actions. We highlight this function of fabrication below in our account

of the examples of acting and speaking by persons who live clandestinely. While this understanding of how work and action is related is important, Markell (2011: 35f) insists that it:

[U]nderestimates the range of worldly artefacts that are relevant to action, and misunderstand[s] the nature of their relevance, by focusing narrowly on their function of guaranteeing stability. The relation of work to action is not just the paradoxical relation of a solid foundation to a freedom that it simultaneously enables and risks smothering. It is also a relation of provocation and response between things in their meaningful appearance...

The latter suggests that we have to understand the work of art to be intermeshed with action in ways that establish relations between things, and not only sustaining the space of appearance in which action is possible. Works of art are again exemplary in this regard, because they share with action the character of shining forth. Unlike action, however, works of art also establish connections between things in the world.

Accordingly, stressing the ways in which work and action are interrelated is central for reading Arendt not only in “territorial” terms as insisting on the separation of labour, work, and action, but also in “relational” terms. However, the territorial reading should not be replaced by the relational one. Arendt’s warning against assimilating action to labour or work is central for political action. Heeding the separation of work and action is therefore important; otherwise, we risk falling back into the tradition in which making substitutes act, and *poiēsis* are set above and before *praxis*. However, the suggested analysis is consistent with Arendt’s (1958: sections 27-29; 1961) views about the interrelationship between action and work, in particular when approached from the point of view of the twofold conception of the *polis* as both the outcome of and condition for action and speech.⁶ More specifically, *polis* here points to how *worldliness*—to which we will return—of action and fabrication are intermeshed, yet not reducible to one another. By highlighting the interrelationship between work and action

in initiatives by activists, some of whom are also living as “deportables”, we argue that it is possible to develop a deeper understanding of Arendtian worldliness. As such, our analysis contributes to the understanding of the nature of political existence of undocumented persons.

Acting and speaking among undocumented persons

An initial element of action is the expression of people coming together to act and speak, shown for instance through expressions such as “today we stand up together,” in the words of one of the tent camp activists. In relation to the fear of being exposed to racist violence, another tent camp activist expressed that people “gave us shelter and love, and have been with us in the fight.” Such expressions point to one of the defining characteristics of action: how it *is a beginning*, or the *possibility of beginning* something new, which for Arendt (1958: sections 1-2, 7, 24 and 27-29) is connected to the conditions of natality. As Kim, a *No Border Musical* participant, put it in a newspaper interview: “Everyone can do small things. No way can it continue to be the way it is now. The future can be different” (Pizarro Correa, 2013, interview with Kim). Actions contribute to changing the world, even when one begins by what at first seem to be only small steps.

Expressions such as “to be with us in the fight” and “give us shelter” also point to another defining characteristic of action: the web of relationships constituted through action, that is, the kind of reality to which acting and speaking refers. The web of relationships is an intangible form of reality, which is “no less real than the world of things” (Arendt, 1958: 183). For Arendt, the metaphor of the web of relationships serves to underline what she argued was the subjective dimension of the fact that action goes on between human beings. The objective dimension of this in-between concerns that which is spoken about. We return to the latter element below and focus here on the subjective element, the intangible reality of action and speech.

We find the intangible, yet real, element of in-between expressed in several ways in the forms of action presented above. For instance, during discussions about the common aim of the musical project, the possibility of showing another world was raised, mixed with other activities such as

rehearsals and planning for public performances of the musical. The latter included practical issues, such as transportation, providing for meals, and questions about how to protect the participants from being detected by the border police when performing in public places. As argued above, entering the public and returning to the private sphere is difficult in an undocumented situation. The web of relationships spun in the musical project related to a group of people firmly held together by the goals of the project as well as the practicalities it involved, and outrage over violent migration control systems. It took some time for the group to become welded together, but eventually, a common sense of purpose and work organisation was achieved.

The case of the tent camp was somewhat different because the people who came together to protest and support it were more loosely connected to each other (even though the most concerned refugees were family members). Thus, it was more open to new people joining but also leaving. This openness exposed the tent camp action to risks, such as racist violence, as one of the tent camp activists noted: “We have lived and slept in Jesus Park, and sometimes we’ve been worried about the risk of being subjected to racist violence, but mostly we felt secure in the park.” The asylum relay was somewhere in between the musical and the tent camp. Like the musical project, the web of relationships constituted among relay participants was tight, but it shared with the tent camp the character of an on-going happening, where other people joined in and left throughout the relay.

Another dimension of the web of relationships created through actions is that it enables people to appear as doers. Arendt (1958: 179) famously discussed this in terms of the distinction between what and who:

In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world, while their physical identities appear without any activity of their own in the unique shape of the body and sound of the voice. This disclosure of “who” in contradistinction to “what” somebody is—his qualities, gifts, talents, and shortcomings, which he may display or hide—is implicit in everything somebody says and does.

The importance of appearing as a unique human being through acting and speaking was evident in several of the examples. One example was when Ali, who initiated the asylum relay, explained in a newspaper interview that appearance is important: “Not being able to explain your situation to people you meet is heavy because you are afraid that the authorities might find you and deport you. This we make sure to do now during the relay instead” (Oldberg, 2013, interview with Ali).

The final feature to action we want to emphasise is that it also tells us something about world, what Arendt (1958: 182) called the objective element of the in-between. This was expressed in the discussions among the No Border Musical participants about the goals to be achieved, showing the possibility of another world and the disclosure of experiences of living clandestinely. It was also evident in the asylum relay, where making people aware of the situation of undocumented persons was central. Showing what it is like to live clandestinely brings attention to how the situation of undocumented persons is the outcome of laws and policies. Several researchers in the field stress this production of undocumentedness (see De Genova, 2010, 2013). When somebody speaks about something in the world, it is done from the perspective of how the world appears to this person. How the world appears to me (*dokei moi*) is central to political debates about the world. It makes up what Arendt (2005: 14ff) discusses in terms of *doxa*, the opinions that constitute the public realm. The person speaking offers something for others to consider. Ali, when interviewed by a journalist, expressed this in the context of the asylum relay in the following way: “It is very important to tell ordinary people about our situation, about how we got here, why we are in Sweden and how we have it here. It is the people that in turn shape the kind of asylum policy Sweden should have” (Ölund, 2013).

The dimensions of action and speech discussed in this section show how a space of appearance comes about and helps establish a web of relationships that sustain interaction. Emphasising this element of action is central when following Arendt in her insistence that the polis is a space of appearance where being and appearance coincide. At the same time, it is clear that all

examples also involve many instances of making artefacts (fabrication), for instance, setting up the tent camp, organising the relay, and staging the speeches along the walk. In the musical, we find it in such examples as writing the script, arranging the scene, and providing for the practicalities around the performance of the musical. Moreover, people involved in these activities were aware that short interventions and sporadic protests have limited duration (as the tent-camp activists brought up initially). For these reasons, it is important to emphasise the relation between action and work; fabrication helps shelter and sustain the possibility of acting and speaking together. The sustaining role of work is, however, not the only function work has for Arendt, as Markell (2011) reminds us. Fabrication is also important for establishing relations among things in the world.

Fabricating among undocumented persons

While acting and speaking—as with all political action—have goals, they do not have specific ends for which action and speech are means. The goals are guidelines and directives by which humans orient themselves (Arendt, 2005: 193). With fabrication (work), it is different because it is structured by means-ends reasoning. In making a tangible object, an image is set up that guides the process of fabrication; the process and what is part of it—tools, material worked upon, and so on—are means towards achieving the product. This means-end structure also makes fabrication problematic for Arendt (1958: 153ff and 220ff; 2005: chapter 6). Even though work is a worldly activity, Arendt (1958: 156) argues there is a risk that the world built through fabrication becomes “as worthless as the employed material” if we make the standards that govern fabrication into those which define politics. Turning away from action to fabrication entails several problems, notably that what is in the world, including human beings, risks becoming material for moulding according to certain shapes and images.

These problems associated with fabrication, however, do not mean that work does not play an important role with regard to action. The characteristics of fabrication—its permanence, stability, and durability—are necessary for the space of appearance to be sheltered (Arendt, 1958:

part IV). Of the various forms of fabrication, some are closer to action than others. Works of art are exemplary because they help to sustain action. In talking about events, activists, journalists, researchers, and others allow for remembering the events, which is important for the next time people gather to speak and act together. Works of art are also provocations that affect things in the world, but they are not tools for delineated ends.

Looking at our examples for this study, they all involve fabrication of different kinds. Some of this work is perhaps better described as labour, such as preparing meals during rehearsals for the musical, or organising meals or accommodation during the relay. These are life-sustaining activities and disappear from the world when consumed. Other forms of work are close to crafting useful objects. This was, for example, preparation of the stage, making costumes and other items for the musical, setting up the tents during the tent camp action, preparing banners and flyers used during demonstrations in relation to the tent camp campaign and the asylum relay, and the setting up of Facebook pages or preparation before interviews with journalists.

Yet other forms of fabrication in our examples involved producing works of art. Apparently, the musical itself was such an artwork as well as the writing of the musical script. The tent action campaign involved in some sense works of art, both the tents themselves that became installations in the park, and as the park itself became a place to perform, for instance, music in support of the initiative. Further examples were the performances of parts of the musical during the asylum relay, and the production of a booklet entitled *Book-zine asylstafetten crafts politics* (The asylum relay, 2014b, also see Keshavarz, 2016). Some forms of fabrication can be viewed as both artwork and the fabrication of useful objects. Setting up the tents in the park is an example; as useful objects, they were necessary for the kind of action that took place in the park but they were also installations in the park, bringing them closer to being works of art. The participants themselves writing down accounts of the events and reporting about them through social media, and journalists reporting about the events are also examples of this kind of work (see Granath, 2015).

Fabrication of different types of objects, including the works of art and accounts of stories that enable remembering the events, were central

activities in the three examples. Moreover, in several of our cases, work and action were intermeshed. An obvious example is the performance of the musical, which was both a form of action and a work of art. The writing of the script for the musical was not the solitary work of an author, but a collective process involving participants coming together to discuss what the musical should focus on and how to express experiences as well as hopes for the future.

Following Arendt's understanding of the relationship between work and action, one of the functions of work is that it helps shelter action by sustaining the space of appearance that is first established by people acting together. In all our examples, both participants in the activities and others, such as journalists and researchers, engage in work that entails remembering what has happened and what people have done. This kind of work helps to connect the present to the past and to the future, enabling action again. Work therefore has a world-building function and helps to sustain the space of appearance in which future action is possible.

We should note that the fabrication of stories not only plays a role after the events, but also as they unfold. This is particularly clear in the case of the tent-camp where, for instance, the Facebook page functioned as a way of coordinating activities among those who were not present on site, at least not all of the time. This Facebook page also allowed for reporting of events that may threaten or destroy the action, be it from persons bent on attacking the tent-camp or the police. New forms of information technology allow for immediate reporting about events in ways that Arendt did not know of. In her account, the function of historians and poets is to communicate about action when it has taken place. In our contemporary world, this communication about what has happened is also largely a communication about what is happening now.

As argued earlier, Markell suggests that another function of work, besides sheltering the space of appearance, is how it changes the relation between things in the world. Examples include the tent camp campaign that transformed the park in which it took place from a place most people pass through into a space for political action, thereby making it noticeable in new ways. To some extent, we can understand this to also entail shifts

in the understanding of parks and other public places, where, for instance, squares rather than parks have been sites for political action, especially for political action of unconventional kinds. Another example of provoking new understandings of things is related to the construction of the route for the asylum relay. This connected villages, towns, and cities in ways that they had not been connected before. Moreover, the relay passed through several areas of Sweden not commonly associated with the presence of refugees engaged in political actions. It thereby also provoked new understandings of things in the world, “things” that before did not have any joint meaning, or at least not the meaning they were given through the relay. These unsettling dimensions of the activities affected how different spaces appeared to those passing by, or hearing and reading about the activities. Hence, these various activities provoked new relations between things in the world.

Both the tent camp and the asylum musical are also interesting from the point of view of demarcating and interrelating private and public. This is particularly clear in the case of the asylum musical. Private, everyday life was separated from the public space of appearing, as it involved the writing process, rehearsals, and performances. Yet, private and public were intermeshed as the musical allowed for entering into the public, thereby making it possible to appear as somebody unique – *who* as opposed to *what* – in ways that at the same time disclosed what living clandestinely means. Interestingly enough, staging the disclosing of the latter, not primarily as protest against how things are but as part of what another world could be like, has important consequences for what kind of action and work of art the musical was. We may understand this in terms of hope, the hope for another world in which migration is not criminalized and rendered a problem. This hope also helped people to be released in some ways from undocumentedness. As some of the participants expressed it, the musical was a form of relief:

I want to show that I am in pain, but it also feels good. We tell our lines on stage, it's a pain, but at the same time it feels lighter (Pizarro Correa, 2013, interview with Tofan).

Similar expressions of relief came about in the asylum relay. This involved performing songs and plays during the walk. Going from one village or town to the next, people joined in, for longer or shorter stretches, showing how the separation of the private and public also makes entry into and exit from the public sphere visible. The latter is important because it allows political action to stand out and not to disappear into people's more or less private, everyday existence.

In the world: Release from undocumentedness

The examples we have explored above all show the *polis*-generating dimensions of action and work by and on behalf of refugees residing as undocumented. It is central for their political existence. Rendered deportable by the state, often exposed to violence and degrading treatment as well as precarious living conditions, persons living clandestinely appear as political beings when coming together to speak and to act. This, to be sure, involves resisting the order in which they live and protesting against it, but its world-building function is also important. In this space of appearance, undocumented persons act publicly as agents and not as privately suffering victims. As we have shown in our examples, they appear much in terms of who they are (see Parekh, 2004; 2008). By acting and speaking together with others, refugees in this sense achieve a world. They contribute to the world in which we live—a world that is common—irrespective of whether their papers are in order or not. In this regard, we may talk of a (partial) release from undocumentedness.

In the asylum relay, for example, numerous undocumented persons showed up and appeared publicly along the route of the relay, and in the streets and squares of small towns as well as larger cities. In the tent-camp, undocumented persons drew the public's attention by speaking, settling down in the city for the purpose of staying there and stimulating debates about asylum management in Sweden. In the *No Border Musical*, participants performed on stage despite the fact that they had been denied residency. Appearing in public is central for making the presence of undocumented persons into political existence, as the tent camp activists expressed their role in a broader anti-racist movement:

We are undocumented but we refuse to hide. We want to be with you in the struggle against the different guises of fascism. A thousand bodies feel a blow to one of us, and when one person is knocked down, a thousand anti-fascists raise. We are on your side, and today we stand up together.

Arendt stressed just this; that the space of appearance, which is the *polis*, is the space where being and appearance coincide. Being able to step forward to speak in one's own voice, being seen and heard by others, and sensing the ability to affect both those close by and those more distant, are central dimensions of appearing. Being is therefore to some extent changing, from deportable subjects to political beings.

Concluding remarks

The willingness both to appear and to act is evident in the examples addressed in this chapter. In the opening performance of the *No Border Musical*, undocumented persons stood upright and poignantly sang about their own experiences of seeking refuge and then becoming non-existent as days and years were lost. In Arendtian terms, this and other instances illustrate how the passion of living can endure under what, metaphorically, are desert conditions. They summon in themselves “the courage that lies at the root of action, of becoming an active being” (Arendt, 2005: 202). Drawing on Arendt, we have shown that fabrication sheltered and developed the opportunity for people to listen to each other and talk as equals. Accordingly, through action and speech, a space of appearance was achieved, which required fabrication to become a space where continuous action and speech is possible. In the initiatives analysed here, these dimensions are intermeshed. Moreover, in the space of appearance brought about, persons were released from undocumentedness, at least to some extent. The *what*—the image of an undocumented migrant, often persons whose asylum claims have been repeatedly rejected by the migration authorities, which constantly make themselves felt—is replaced by *whom*.

To conclude, we have emphasised the interrelationship between action and fabrication in the background of the twofold conception of the *polis*. This, we suggest, helps overcome the problems with understanding the situation of undocumented migrants in terms of the inclusion/exclusion logic. Undocumented persons are excluded from the jurisdictional space of the state but act nonetheless. Their actions entail not simply a form of inclusion in the existing polity but the constituting of spaces of appearance, the bringing about of a world in which the possibilities of acting and speaking are sustained and enabled at future times. At stake is not only (or not primarily) inclusion in the existing polity, but also the re-configuration of the space of appearance of persons who are undocumented. Through action and speech by and on behalf of undocumented persons, a space of appearance—a kind of *polis*—is established. This space would not survive the moment of acting and speaking unless supported by fabricating activities that allow it to be told to a wider audience, constituting a tangible world to which later action can connect. Thereby, with every act being a beginning, all that is said and done takes hold in the world.

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Notes

- 1 By undocumented persons or clandestine refugees, we mean people who have no formal right to reside in the country where they live; usually they are asylum seekers who have had their application rejected in all instances but who do not see any choice other than to stay in Sweden despite the expulsion decision.
- 2 All three cases have been openly discussed in various Swedish mass media. In order to avoid presenting information about individuals in a new context—the context of this publication—all personal names in the present text have been replaced. Quotes are used from interviews in newspaper articles. This research has been approved by the local vetting board (see The Act Concerning the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans [Lag om etikprövning av forskning som avser människor], 2003, 460).
- 3 Anna Lundberg has been volunteering in Malmö for several years, providing legal information and advice through local refugee rights groups.

- 4 A PhD project in social work is being conducted by Emma Söderman at Lund University, see <http://www.soch.lu.se/en/emma-soderman>
- 5 The initiative is discussed in a recent PhD project in social work by Pouran Djampour at Malmö University, see <https://muep.mau.se/handle/2043/24776>
- 6 Arendt also makes clear that the making of art and politics belong together. In discussing the notion of culture, for instance, Arendt (1961: 218) argues that the “culture indicates that art and politics, their conflicts and tensions notwithstanding, are interrelated and even mutually dependent. Seen against the background of political experiences and activities, which, if left to themselves, come and go without leaving any trace in the world, beauty is the very manifestation of imperishability”.

FROM MARGIN TO CENTRE? PRACTISING NEW FORMS OF EUROPEAN POLITICS AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE CALAIS 'JUNGLE'

Tim Hall, Aura Lounasmaa and Corinne Squire

Introduction

From the early 2000s onwards, the 'Jungle', the name given by media and then inhabitants to a series of unofficial refugee camps around Calais, the nearest French port to the UK, saw the arrivals and departures of hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants. In October 2016, the 'Jungle' came, in its most recent and obvious form, to an end. A UK-funded wall was constructed around the Calais port, and French authorities began registering all the residents in the camp, prior to its demolition. Many left before the camp was razed; others were transported to new locations around France, to await registration and processing as asylum seekers. A small number of unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable residents, most with UK family connections, were sent to the UK. At the time of its closure, the 'Jungle' was home to approximately 8,000 people, by and large men; at its largest, it had housed around 10,000.

Refugees' formal and informal presence in Calais had a history first remarked on by the media in the 1990s. The Sangatte camp was opened in a former factory warehouse in 1999 to house 200 refugees living rough in the area, mostly from Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraqi Kurdistan. Run by the Red Cross, the camp was closed in 2002, by which time it housed

2,000 in squalid conditions, with smuggling activities fuelling considerable violence. Residence permits were issued by both France and the UK to ex-residents, among whom there was said to be no overwhelming desire to get to the UK; Calais was just the last place they had reached.

Refugees continued to arrive at this ‘last place’ to live informally in the woods around Calais. In 2009, their encampment, called the ‘jungle’ by French media, was cleared, and people moved to squat in smaller groups in the surrounding countryside or in the town. In late 2014, the French interior minister, Bernard Cazeneuve, supporting the mayor of Calais, responded to rising refugee numbers by opening the old *Jules Ferry* recreation centre on the edge of the town as a facility for women and children. The centre bordered an unused landfill area among sand dunes, known as *La Lande* (the marsh). Many recognised that this was no solution. Global conflicts forcing migration, incoherent international, European and national refugee policies, and local factors shaping refugee arrivals and conditions had not changed (Reinisch, 2015). As Jean-Pierre Alaux, a long-time activist with a refugee NGO presciently put it at the time: “The migrants are going to figure out that approximately 400 of them can be housed in this centre, and the others will build slums around it. It is doomed from the onset. In a few months, there will be so many people that Bernard Cazeneuve himself will close down this humanitarian hub” (Bouchard, 2014).

As Yvette Cooper wrote in the *Guardian* in January 2016 about the second ‘Jungle’ camp, “the most shocking thing about Calais is that it’s not even too big to solve” (Cooper, 2016). The 2014–2016 Calais ‘Jungle’ was nevertheless the largest unofficial European camp for forced migrants at the time. In 2015 alone, more than 1,000,000 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe (BBC, 2016). Many once again ended up in Calais. Now, a majority of this group had plans to reach the UK because of family associations, language, employment possibilities, or colonial history; because of their poor reception across the rest of Europe; and increasingly, because of French tolerance or facilitation of the inhumane situation within the ‘Jungle’ itself – the name ‘Jungle’ was taken up and used by many camp residents to emphasise appalling living conditions – and because of hostile treatment by some Calaisians and the French local administration and national state.

The new ‘Jungle’ was separated by several kilometres from the town centre, rendering residents’ use of urban services difficult. Besides, some Calais residents’ verbal and physical hostility increased the dangers of going there. Located on the unwanted landfill site, with possibly toxic infill, the site had initially been allocated to refugees as a place where they could stay indefinitely. From a police perspective, it was conveniently far – a two-hour walk – from the port and train station. For the many residents who walked to these destinations, this location involved nightly, exhausting trajectories, cutting and crossing numerous razor wire fences, to make risky attempts to board boats, cars, trucks, and trains to the UK, and, if unsuccessful, this required walking back to the camp in the early morning. The camp was also itself bordered by roads to the port which presented a small and dangerous chance of boarding trucks. Police secured this border, particularly at the motorway bridge (Inanloo and Haghooui, 2016), as well as the perimeters of the port and station, and deployed tear gas and batons liberally, resulting in many injuries. The ‘Jungle’ in this 2015-2016 form was an effect of the UK paying the French government to outsource its border controls to the Calais region, the local police, and the national riot police, the CRS, and to upgrade them significantly. The camp was thus permitted but policed by France in collaboration with and funded by the UK – an alliance with, by then, a two-decade history (Mould, 2017).

Today, around 700 people are estimated to be still living in Calais and its environs, attempting to reach the UK, now residing in worse conditions than in the camp: living in the open, with sporadic and insufficient access to shelter, food, water, warmth, and medical care (Refugee Rights Data Project, 2017). Paris has become another ‘Calais’, with informal settlements building up around the formal, small transit camp at La Chapelle, and there are similar settlements in nearby cities, for instance, Brussels. More broadly, barriers to movement have been strengthened in many other locations across Europe, producing poorly-served long-term unofficial encampments: for instance, in Ventimiglia on the Italian-French border; Lampedusa; the Greek islands of Chios, Samos, and Lesbos; the Greek-Macedonian border; in Athens; in Sicily; in Serbia; and – since the exporting of the EU border – also in Turkey.

In 2015-2016, however, the Calais 'Jungle' was unique in displaying extremely inadequate living conditions for large numbers of relatively long-term inhabitants in an informal European refugee camp. Many residents were rehoused in better conditions during and after the closure of the camp. All agreed that no one should have been left to live in the appalling conditions of this camp. Nevertheless, there was a great deal of discontent about the camp's closure. Despite the poor sanitary conditions, inadequate food, water, clothes, shelter, and medical provision, fights related to smugglers and resources, and constant police and 'third force' violence, the 'Jungle' developed powerful and positive meanings for many living there, including large numbers who worked as 'volunteers', that is, helping other camp residents.

Given the 'Jungle's' vigilant, often violent bordering, perhaps it was not surprising that despite its abject conditions, the camp operated for many residents as the only safe and productive space locally available to them (Africa et al., 2017). However, the positive meanings of the 'Jungle' also lay to a considerable extent in the forms of lived everyday citizenship that grew up there. By 'citizenship', we are referring here to practices of effective public engagement that, for us, can usefully be seen not in relation to nation states and their colonial histories – in which context they are clearly problematic for the field of forced migration and more broadly, for decolonial approaches (Smith and Rogers, 2016) – but through the decolonial lens of mobile resistances in and to coloniality (Joseph-Gabriel, 2015) and postcoloniality, and as part of the 'expansive project' of democracy (Mbembe, 2016). All politics, insofar as it involves acting with others, relies on some notion of citizenship but not all conceptions of citizenship are linked to place. The forms of politics and citizenship that we are concerned with here, while certainly emerging in the physical space of the 'Jungle', are not restricted to this space.

Arising, then, from the camp's unofficial status and the lack of local, national, or large NGO support for the residents; appalling camp conditions; intense external surveillance and aggression; and, most significantly, residents' own strong sense of sociality and solidarity, a

number of important forms of political practice developed within the camp. These practices operated particularly strongly before the evictions and demolitions in March 2016 but were re-established to some extent after that (Picquemal, 2016). Many such engagements had occurred in the Calais region before, for instance in the 'No Borders' protests in 2009 that brought together a network of mainly UK, French, and Belgian groups and individuals with refugees (Rigby and Schlembach, 2013). The active, 'mobile citizenly' politics of the prior 'Jungle' have also been recognised and analysed (Rygiel, 2011). However, the size, integration, and complexity of political practices within the 2014-2016 'Jungle' call for specific attention.

Several groups of actors contributed to these developments. First, many of the refugee residents had considerable employment and voluntary experience, as well as education, language abilities, and backgrounds in community or political work that enabled them to identify major problems, look for solutions, and build structures and processes that could implement those solutions. Second, the 'Jungle' attracted a large number of volunteers and small NGOs from France and the UK, as well as other European countries and countries outside Europe, who delivered and cooked food, built shelters, cleared rubbish, provided medical services and legal assistance, and engaged residents in educational, artistic, and community building activities. Third, many refugees worked alongside French, British, and other European volunteers and NGOs in these endeavours, and negotiated with them the ways in which the camp would run and how services would be delivered. For instance, varying sets of residents, NGOs, and volunteers came to collective agreements about the content and form of camp political resistances and interventions, such as resident-led silent protests, often by specific national groups, when refugees died on the road or rails while trying to get to the UK; the hunger strike by Iranian residents which was supported, with some criticisms, by NGOs, volunteers, and other resident groups in the camp; the refugee rights organisations' successful legal action, in collaboration with 250 residents, against local authorities' early 2016 plans to demolish parts of the camp serving social functions; and the protests within Calais town centre, often organised by No Borders, with significant camp resident participation.

Popular media often concentrated on reporting the inhuman circumstances of life in the 'Jungle', or later, on violent clashes between groups living there. Representations of refugees themselves were 'bordered' by silencing, collectivising, and de-contextualising within European media, as the refugees themselves were by European states (Chouliaraki and Zaborowski, 2017). However, reports from refugee residents (Africa et al., 2017) and volunteers alike, as well as our own notes and observations, suggest that ideas of deliberative democracy, freedom, equality, and human rights, seen Eurocentrically by many as core 'European' values, were pivotal in the camp's political practices. These so-called 'European' values were at the same time often in dialogue within the camp with other, broader or more critical ideas about democracy and politics, as well as with religious and cultural understandings of community formation, charity, and kinship. Such dialogues could be seen as constructing a new form of 'European' politics – that is, politics within Europe – something similar, perhaps, to the reconstitution of 'Mediterranean' identities mapped out by Solera (2016) and the constant renegotiations of 'becoming-Europe' in the light of ongoing migration, suggested by Amin (2004).

This chapter discusses the operation of everyday political organisations and processes in the 'Jungle'. It does not focus extensively on explicitly political discourses or actions within or about the camp,¹ but rather considers those instances in parallel with more quotidian examples of political talk and practice. In particular, it looks at four distinct, though often overlapping, kinds of politics that were apparent: (1) the use of 'rights' language and action in constituting the camp residents as political citizens; and then three forms of cooperative politics: (2) coalitions between residents and volunteers as a political practice; (3) the politics of commons operating alongside deliberative processes in the camp; and (4) associative spaces within the camp, which also developed a range of political practices reaching out from their initial, specific remits.

Over two years after the closure of the camp, the chapter also asks whether these forms of political process that developed in the 'Jungle' are limited to the physical and temporal space of such environments, or whether they have potential to continue transforming the 'citizenship' and

democracies of forcibly displaced people in Europe, and of Europe itself, after the camp's closure. Do they, in bell hooks' (2000) phrase, describing intersectional feminism's potential to adopt perspectives on the edge as well as in the mainstream, open up the possibility of an extended political understanding more generally, in which the 'Jungle' and similar spaces could act critically and oppositionally (Said, 1984), but at the same time – given the inherent limits of such 'edge' strategies – in a doubled way, as new political 'centres' of thought and action?

This chapter is informed by our experiences of teaching an accredited short university course in the Calais 'Jungle' between October 2015 and October 2016. In that time, we travelled to Calais on average every two weeks to teach, deliver art and photography workshops, and help students write their coursework and stories. The course, 'Life Stories', aimed to help refugees build capacity to tell and write their own stories, or the stories of other people, groups, or places; to introduce them to higher education systems in the UK and relevant other countries; and to encourage them to continue their education once their circumstances permitted (Squire, 2017). More than 60 students attended the course in Calais.² Many also engaged in further writing projects, including a co-authored book, *Voices from the Jungle* (Africa et al., 2017). Some produced films and participated in photography workshops – work that again, they have often continued.³

Our teaching was not linked to research, and no research interviews were conducted with our Calais students. Instead, this chapter draws on broadcast media reports and other publicly available information about the camp, as well as social media accounts, and published accounts and art by refugee residents themselves. The chapter is also based on our field notes about camp organisation, made while we were teaching, as well as personal reflections on the camp.

Politics of human rights, human rights as politics

Human rights are frequently at the core of political activism and citizenship struggles, of national and broader kinds, globally. As An'Naim (1999) states, whether human rights are considered to be culturally and

socially fitting to the context of the activism or not, the concept of political rights is necessary in creating the conditions for political participation and citizenship. For refugees in the 'Jungle', human rights presented themselves as paradoxical. Most had fled dire political situations, war, and persecution in countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan, and Eritrea to seek safety in Europe. Arriving in Calais, they were incredulous that such a lack of rights and freedom could be found in the middle of Europe (Africa et al., 2017). Police violence and arbitrary arrests and detention, as well as hostility and violence from local people, a few of them allegedly connected to the police, were common experiences for 'Jungle' residents. For example, the *Independent* reported on 14 October 2016 that the French police were taking refugees' shoes to prevent them from leaving the Jungle ahead of the registration and processing of all camp residents prior to demolition (Bulman, 2016). In April 2016, the *Independent* reported that 75% of Calais refugees had experienced police violence, a figure that tallies with anecdotal and written reports from our students (Africa et al., 2017; Yeung, 2016).

Postcolonial and decolonial critics of human rights frameworks have argued that human rights are a Western concept and thus cannot be applied directly in non-Western contexts (Clapham, 2007). Robins (2012) has shown how, in the context of post-conflict Nepal, a global human rights agenda that prioritises transitional justice over economic rights serves to maintain inequality and political marginalisation, instead of critically engaging with the structures that create these disempowerments. Human rights are prioritised in global discourses and serve the global political elites, leaving local political activists trying to fit their agendas into these discourses. Rights-based activism is defined by Hamm (2001) as activism that posits the achievement of human rights as the objective of development; it is prioritised by both funding bodies and political institutions. In this form of activism and development work, the immediate material and structural needs of the community may be considered secondary to the pursuit of human rights for their own sake.

These dilemmas of fitting human rights language into local contexts are usually presented around non-Western and particularly post-conflict situations, where rights, seen as either Western, or as a culture in themselves

(Cowan et al., 2001), constructed around the large international machinery of development and civil society, do not fit the local cultural and social constructions of what makes up a just society. But as Dembour and Kelly (2011) have noted, and as we have witnessed through our work in the 'Jungle', human rights do not seem to apply either to irregular migrants in the West – in Europe or in the United States. In the 'Jungle', residents suffered, in addition to the aforementioned police and third-party violence and intimidation, lack of adequate shelter and resources, inhumane sanitary conditions, inadequate access to health care, including mental health provisions, and lack of access to schools for children. Dembour and Kelly (2011) ask whether the lack of access to human rights of irregular migrants, such as the residents of Calais 'Jungle', is a question of implementation, or whether it is a question of how human rights have been defined. In their introduction, Dembour suggests that human rights have been co-opted by Western states in such a way to form a framework for regulation rather than protection, and that defining national citizenship, the exclusive right of states, remains the core of this regime of regulation and inequality (Dembour, 2011: 11).

Despite these obvious limitations and the constant human rights violations by the state, residents and volunteers in the 'Jungle' camp consistently used rights language when demanding further provisions and protection. For example, in 2015, MSF used health and environmental rights arguments to secure garbage disposal and water provision for the camp. During the French government demolition of over half the camp in March 2016, a local voluntary association led the legal fight to protect camp schools, libraries, and cultural venues by advancing arguments for sociocultural rights. Many of these structures were then marked by residents and volunteers in large script as *lieux de vie*, places of social sustenance, to preserve them from demolition. Children's rights arguments were deployed by a wide variety of actors to promote minors' resettlement and continued service provision for them in the camp. Rights to safety and security were effectively claimed by residents' committees and voluntary associations in relation to elements of the local and national state, particularly the police and the fire brigade. More broadly, rights to full national citizenship were

asserted by some camp residents who developed educational provision as the basis of a secular republic, a kind of perfected mirror of the existing French state, at the lieu de vie of the *Ecole Laïque du Chemin des Dunes* (Chemin des Dunes Secular School) (Ducatteau, 2017). This proposal had some impact within French civil society, being widely transmitted by centre and left newspapers and broadcasters, and by some international media. However, it is important to note, as perhaps Dembour and Kelly (2011) would, that these rights-based initiatives had limited success. Legally-mandated provision of requirements for human life in the camp was always minimal and under threat; arrangements for child residents were honoured more in terms of their breach than their observance, with around 1,000 unaccompanied minors the last to be transported and housed after the camp's final demolition; and the increasingly loud claim of the *Ecole Laïque du Chemin des Dunes* and other camp organisations to constitute an alternative republic was said to be one reason why local and national actors thought the increasingly well-functioning, rights-regulated camp had to go.

The way in which rights language was evoked in relation to the conditions in the 'Jungle' camp resonates with what Miller (2010) calls rights-framed activism. Framing is a theory that suggests that actors choose between different frames to look at a particular issue and choose the most appropriate language and strategies to address it in different political platforms. Frames do not need to fit together and are not necessarily based on the ideology of the organisation, but can be used strategically, as with the language of 'rights' (Mbali, 2013; Robins, 2012) to address a certain audience or to discuss sensitive issues that might not be open for discussion outside of that reference point. An organisation could thus strategically opt for a human rights approach in one campaign, without committing to the principles of that frame in their wider activism, or assuming that the rights approach would be a necessary or sufficient element of their politics.

Another way to think about the use of rights in political activism is by understanding rights language as a form of translation. According to Merry, human rights "need to be translated into local terms and situated within local contexts of power and meaning" or "remade in the vernacular"

(2006:1). This approach accords closely with Homi Bhabha's (2000) argument that a fundamental right, necessary though not sufficient, is the 'right to narrate'.

The rights claims in relation to the 'Jungle' were made locally and directly to the relevant authorities, as well as by using international channels to put further pressure on the local authorities. These translations of needs into norms - together with the complex media strategies used to communicate them - were often created in co-operations between residents, and between volunteers and camp residents. Such co-operations are the second object of this chapter.

Cooperative politics: Coalitions, commons, and associations

The cooperative political strategies pursued in the 'Jungle' and explored in this section are not less strategic than those examined above. They, too, may be pursued in concert with each other, and/or alongside rights strategies. What distinguishes them from the rights practices discussed above, however, is first, that their principles of operation relate to recognised practices of action between the cooperative partners, which instantiate their political aims, unlike rights strategies which may or may not foreground rights-framed means of pursuing rights as aims. Second, and relatedly, these cooperative practices have varying aims. While in the case of the 'Jungle' in 2014-2016, such practices' aims were overwhelmingly politically progressive, they are not universally and fully so by definition, although it seems likely that consistently cooperative practices are never completely consonant with far-right or totalitarian political aims. This potential variability, conflict, openness, and pragmatism in cooperative political trajectories is explored below (Derrida, 1996; Mbembe, 2016; Mouffe, 1996). We start by examining strategies of coalition, involving explicit combination and some degree of unification, albeit temporary.

A *coalitional* politics made of strategic alliances was built in the 'Jungle' between residents and voluntary associations both for delivering services and advocacy purposes. These coalitions were often highly effective in improving service delivery, such as in distributing goods, construction, mounting arts

and educational projects, and gathering data. Longer-term objectives and strategies, however, were more complex and problematic. The constraints of such coalitional citizenship emerged very strongly in situations of high resident mobility, variable volunteer investment, and large imbalances of economic, social, and symbolic capitals between the partners.

In one much-debated conflict, the ‘organic democracy’ (Dewey, 1916) of the camp residents’ committee, which at the start of 2016 was said to be functioning well to resolve tensions within the camp and to some degree to negotiate with local political actors, broke down. Some of its external volunteer allies and attenders did not accede to the committee’s call to stop what it described as degrading, inefficient, and often unjust line-based goods distributions, which had become the ongoing practice of some small NGOs. Other NGOs had transferred to ticket-based systems operating through dispersed distribution points staffed by camp residents, which could reach in-need recipients not able to queue. In this circumstance, both coalition partners, resident committee members, who were at this point also criticised for not fully representing camp residents in terms of age, gender, educational background, nationality, or views, and some volunteers – who were at this time said to be assuming the ability to ‘speak for’ refugees from their own positions of privilege and ignorance, and to be assuming the authority to judge refugees’ self-governance – failed to resolve the issue within their coalitional framework. Among residents themselves, another breakdown threatened: committee members’ solidarity with mainly Iranian resident hunger strikers (Marlowe, 2016) started to fracture as the hunger strikers weakened, though that solidarity was maintained publicly till the hunger strike’s end. The exigencies of such moments ceded to other crises, and the issues receded in significance, allowing renewed coalitional activity. But such merely successional resolutions of difficulties still point to the limits of this model of political citizenship. Different socioeconomic interests – those of people dispossessed of economic, social, and symbolic capitals, as well as national citizenship, by forced migration, versus those privileged if precaritized by European citizenships, and different conceptual framings – contradictory models of social help, and different,

organic and representational, models of democracy – cannot be resolved within the explicitly laid down conditions that a coalition requires. It is notable that accounts of coalitional politics in refugee and migrant contexts tend to focus on situations of greater stability – for example, longstanding immigrant US faith communities as coalitional services providers (Ebaugh and Pipes, 2001), or relatively settled migrants and refugees within Europe (Agustin and Jorgensen, 2016). Perhaps in these circumstances, the kinds of ‘transversal’ dialogues about difference that feminists have made integral to coalitional politics (Cockburn, 2015) have greater potential.

The carryover of coalitional political processes after the camp’s demolition was difficult, as people dispersed to different geographical and social locations – the latter both exacerbating and clarifying power differences between, for instance, camp residents who became UK asylum seekers living in small towns in the north of England with €40 a week plus accommodation, other asylum seekers supported by family members or friends, and UK volunteers who returned to relatively high levels of disposable income. At the same time, some coalitions between resident and non-resident volunteers who had worked together to provide physical and psychosocial support continue, in the case for instance of the Hopetowns network,⁴ which aims to provide similar support for refugees in the UK.

Another model of politics that can be distinguished from the above is a politics of ‘commons’, perhaps better articulated in relation to the camp in the more contextualised terms of religious conventions of sanctuary, and/or anti-colonial articulations of deliberative democracy (see for instance Mbeki, 1999 and Shoukri, 2011). Such common frameworks were often developed between residents, sometimes, again through the residents’ committee, but also in collective educational and cultural endeavours, and in religious settings. These articulations worked to allow joint, but not necessarily fully or explicitly deliberated action across, for instance, different political and religious views and national and cultural backgrounds, in favour of commonly held goals, for example in order to resolve internal camp conflicts between national groups over resources, and to negotiate with social service agencies, the police, and the local authority in the Calais

region. More simply, some such commonings supported collective living arrangements that worked across the (already fairly loosely held) national and language affiliations that structured the camp geography. For instance, group living spaces set up by Darfuri Sudanese refugees also worked as common spaces, including Black African Muslim refugees from other countries. Large tents and containers provided by the prefecture after the first demolitions became occupied by groups of friends from divergent national and religious backgrounds who looked out for each other, going to ‘try’ (to cross to the UK) together, for example (Africa et al., 2017). Against frequent criticisms of the politics of commons as vague, fetishistic, even nostalgic fantasy, and despite not having available the intensity of digital migrant commons (Trimikliniotis et al., 2014), or, generally, the basic conditions of life that would allow the imagining of a new European commons (Amin, 2004), these were highly practical and mobile imaginings and livings of collectivity, though they could indeed be inattentive to differences between subjects and their resources, and inadequate to the external challenges of state and other forces (Berlant, 2016; De Angelis, 2017). For these reasons, the practices of ‘commoning’ citizenship also proved fragile, in relation to external actors to whom residents had differential powers of access – such as smugglers, asylum lawyers, and voluntary associations – and in relation to refugee residents’ overall different resource levels – for instance, national and class differences in mobilisable capitals available to them. In addition, age differences and language groups cut across apparent national and cross-national commons. And even more than in the coalitional model, in which gender was widely discussed, though women’s integration was little performed, the masculinities of the ‘Jungle’ commons tended to go unquestioned.

Such commoning political practices were again hard to maintain in the aftermath of the camp’s demolition, when resource differences between residents accentuated and links attenuated; although it may be that online commoning provided some continuity of this kind. In the UK, groups of asylum seekers housed together in many instances also continued practices of commoning, particularly around buying and cooking food on very

limited incomes, not just across national or ethnic groupings, but where sufficient commonality of language and food taste allowed this. Support events bringing together ex-Calais residents and volunteers now in the UK to make and eat food⁵ could be said also to derive from a ‘commoning’ politics of sociality.

Finally, another form of political citizenship emerged from some specific camp institutions that gathered people around them *associatively*, both physically and socially - particularly schools, food distribution points, places of worship, art and legal services, and shops. The burgeoning associative politics of lieux de vie micro-neighbourhoods within the ‘Jungle’, based precisely in *places* rather than functions of living, intersected and coexisted with the cooperative practices previously discussed.

Such associative practices might seem, when considered separately, a weaker, more minimal politics, driven by metonymy rather than the stronger, metaphorical conceptual framings of coalitional, commoning, or indeed ‘rights’-based political practices in the camp. The resituating of the youth service provision in an available space closer to Jungle Books Library, for example, later generated additional service provision across the two organisations; while the resituating of the Ecole Laïque Du Chemin des Dunes was driven from the start by the aim of meeting the rights requirements of child and family as well as adult residents, and the proximity of family residences to the new location.

The camp’s associative political practices could perhaps be seen as underpinned by *minimal* forms of coalition and commoning, based on the general assumptions about human connection and similarity, without explicit elaboration of either, that simple place links signify: who people were, and where they were. However, given such minimal articulations, it seems useful to treat associative political practices as distinct.

One example of such associative practices is how collaborative efforts between refugees and volunteers who had established the Jungle Books Library, close to and battenning onto the stability of the early-built Eritrean church, then extended more widely, link by link, place by place: first, by creating a larger room for meeting and conversation; next, by building

a children's space close to the library; after that, by setting up a radio station which recorded camp events alongside mainstream media, made programmes broadcast across the camp, and was often staffed by children; subsequently, by housing hunger strikers within the children's space; later, by supporting a mobile information and wifi hub, housed in an old horse trailer; and finally, by opening a free café for children that also functioned as a protective and legal advice space for them. Throughout this time, the library also became associatively differentiated within its existing spaces, by intension rather than extension: it served as the core of a small amount of safe housing and sometimes as housing itself; as a place for food and clothing distribution; and as a place to relay legal information - early submissions of data on children with a right to UK family reunification and adults with histories of working for UK military forces with a right to settle there - were made here, as well as a centre of education.

The diversification of functions via associative extension or intension was not unique to the functionally relatively open space marked out by the library. Schools in the camp, distribution centres, and restaurants, all at times operated similarly. For example, the *Ecole Laique du Chemin des Dunes*, which started as a small wooden classroom, was rebuilt in late 2015 to include a large adult classroom, a children's classroom and playground, a meeting room which also showed movies, a clinic used by volunteer nurses, and small shelters that housed volunteers. While this constellation of buildings and functions had clear rights justifications, it also generated associatively, with no explicit rights warranting other activities within the spaces, such as a poetry and writing group, and musical events; it hosted visiting academics from Lille University for whom it served as the recruitment centre for an access course that in 2016-2017 educated 80 ex-Jungle residents. During the October 2016 demolitions, when most of the rest of the camp had been burned down, it was used as an emergency shelter for unaccompanied minors for whom no other provision had yet been made.

Smaller patterns of association also developed. The short course, and photo and other workshops we taught were distributed to communal spaces across the camp, including the Jungle Books Library, the *Ecole Laique du*

Chemin des Dunes, *l'Ecole des Arts et Métiers* (The School of Arts and Crafts), the Darfuri School, and other educational organisations established by residents – and so it became associatively linked to other possibilities, particularly around education (Lounasmaa, 2016). Our last workshop on university opportunities across Europe, delivered as a series of small group discussions across most of the above camp sites, and some others, in October 2016, was probably the most valued additional intervention we made. Course teachers and students also became involved with collecting information for Safe Passage, the organisation facilitating family, as well as referring residents to other services across and outside the camp and supporting some students' writing and filmmaking activities. A small-scale, intermittent, dispersed initiative of the kind with which we were involved had little chance of becoming fully embedded in the coalitional or commoning politics of the 'Jungle', but at times it did deploy strategically the language of refugees' 'right' to higher education. However, its strongest framings of citizenship were, perhaps inevitably, associative.

Such associative politics joined spatial, sometimes only occasional, neighbours as friends – the term 'friend' indeed being used and preferred, as a broad signifier of association rather than extreme closeness, to describe links between residents, between external volunteers, and between those two groups (although more familial terms were also sometimes used). These extended 'friendship' networks were similar to the 'weak' ties which have been widely shown, across the global south and north, to promote health, wellbeing, and social cohesion, including for refugees (Wells, 2011). In themselves, such weak associations can be transitory and contradictory. They may, though, generate 'bridging' social capital – rather than the bonding social capital produced by closer links, including those of commoning and coalitional practices – which can support their positive effects. However, such capitalisations cannot be said themselves to maintain and extend this form of politics. It seems, rather, to be the diversity, fluidity, and contradictions of 'weak'-associative political practices that have allowed them, after the camp's demolition, to 'migrate' to new political contexts and be sustained there: their heterogeneity and improvisational character lets them change.

Such habits of associative practices seem, then, to have been especially likely to carry over into post-Calais contexts; the citizenships they generated have spread. For instance, the Hopetowns network forged by refugees and volunteers in the UK to support asylum-seekers isolated by the country's dispersal system, originally drawing on camp coalitions, became a more open and associational site of political practice, considering how to ally with people who are homeless, and working particularly now through language education in sites where this appears as a demand, not only from refugees. The broadening of food-based organisations to improvise responses to other needs show how groups based on a commoning politics of food can also start to articulate politics more associatively. Another example is the French online post-demolition network Info CAO Refugees, sharing information and solutions for the dispersed residents of the 'Jungle', working across ex-residents and volunteers, French and British, to consider issues of housing, food, education, legal services, and community relations. The 'Phone Credit for Refugees' group's development from provision within the camp to provision for those flung out of it, to much broader, now-global provision, with concomitant changing patterns of priority and validation, and growing webs of links to, for instance, safeguarding and youth provision, is an ongoing associative practice emblematised even in its fundraising, which deploys the associative powers of social media platforms to generate chains of posts to friends, and friends of friends (Phone Credit for Refugees, no date). The Refugee Buddy Network's name itself instantiates such associative politics. Our own educational networks from the Life Stories courses have been sustained, and have helped generate new education initiatives within the UK, supported by prior students, as well as providing continuing support for ex-residents seeking other education, finding accommodation, and pursuing legal cases, and for public campaigns.

It seems then that associative political practices can develop frames of citizenship with some autonomy from immediate political forces. Even when such forces prevent these politics operating in their first contexts, they can move to, survive in, and appear in others. They thus display some of the creativity and adaptability often now described as 'horizontal democracy'⁶ in relation to the Occupy movement (Maeckelbergh, 2011) for

instance, but they are much more tied to diverse materialities of political engagement, and to attempts to reform specific structures of power, than that movement. As a counter, we could relate these associative political engagements to Paul Hirst's (1994) associative democracy, suggested for perhaps more conventional settings of economic and social governance. Such an approach would allow us to see camp and post-camp structures of individuals, voluntary groupings, and small NGOs as working in loose alliance - not to expand democracy from state centrism, as in Hirst's examples, but rather to build such expanded democracy from the ground up, in situations and for people for whom there is none, that is, in a space where no formal politics obtains except for the very considerable bordering power of the state. Such associational politics does not so much doubly speak from the margin to occupy and reconstitute the centre, as it turns about that axis to create a multidimensional space for conflict and dialogue.

The future of new forms of 'European' politics

Thus far, we have argued that the politics of the camp can be understood as emerging from the experience of the denial of human rights for the camp residents. To the extent that this politics is itself articulated in the language of human rights, it can be thought of as a 'strategic framing' (Miller 2010) or 'translation' of particular needs into norms (Mbali, 2013; Robins, 2012). The insistence that the language of human rights be translated into the vernacular is not simply an issue of cross-cultural communication but a central tenant of cultural justice relating to the 'right to narrate'. To claim a right, or protest its deprivation, it must be meaningful and relate to the experience of the person claiming the right.

We have also suggested that camp residents' needs and demands generated cooperative processes that could be understood as coalitional; commoning; and associational. If the first is the typical political process of interest-brokering in order to create a coalition, the second relates to forms of organisation emerging from shared resources. The third associational processes relate to the creation of forms resembling civil society organisations in democratic states.

We found the most compelling evidence for the recovery of the right to narrate in the creation of associational forms in the camp that not only sought to secure the welfare of camp residents but also to make a shared life possible. These associational forms made possible elements of civic participation and citizenship generally unavailable to migrants as members of transitory communities in camps. They augmented agency. And even though this agency is dwarfed by the bordering power of the state, it nonetheless begins the work of translating abstract norm into lived reality. Through the creation of a school with differentiated space for adult and child learners, the organisation of volunteers and so on, the right to an education and to family life is given meaning and transformed from an ethical imperative devolving from, for the most part, those with agency to a politics for camp members recovering their agency. This is why the closure of the camp was such a brutal act, forcibly dispersing the people gathered there and erasing the schools, cafes, and libraries that gave its residents the semblance of a human flourishing life.

We return now to the broader questions raised in the introduction about the significance of this experience and what it might mean for European politics – the practice of politics in Europe – today. The camp has now gone but as indicated above, there seem to be ways in which the forms of politics that began to flourish there live on and have survived the physical destruction of the camp. This *survivance* is not restricted to the inspiration that the camp's history provides for citizens or inhabitants of European states. Rather, the repertoires of practice innovated in the camp themselves continue. Do they potentially question and ultimately extend the conceptions of 'citizenship' in Europe and perhaps elsewhere?

What was striking for us as volunteers, teachers, and researchers was the degree of self-organisation in the camp and the range of different forms of politics that were beginning to flourish there. This activity and heterogeneity problematised traditional distinctions between active citizen and passive recipient of humanitarian aid. As we encountered inhabitants of the camp they were active, engaged and, in many cases, co-producers of the services that they utilised. Excluded from the rights and the protections of

citizenship of European states, they nonetheless manifested and practiced many of the most broadly recognised attributes of ‘citizenship’. Camp residents were not simply interned in the camp, they were, to a certain degree, citizens of the camp capable of exerting a degree of control over their lives. As members of associations that they themselves created, their ability to act was both amplified and diversified. Their creativity and productivity stood in stark relief to the spasmodic and faltering response of the EU and its member states to the refugee ‘crisis’, the all-too predictable response of national governments fearful of the backlash from disaffected voters, and the conflicted local state.

The politics of the camp was exemplary in multiple ways: as an example of what is possible in the most unpromising of situations – unpromising because of the very real need and vulnerability of camp residents and because of the bordering activity of the state; as a repertoire of practice that does not simply reproduce the existing regulatory frameworks; and in the creative and imaginative ways in which camp residents framed their protests and met their needs, drawing on the most slender bank of resources. The setting up of a library led to the creation of meeting rooms, differentiated spaces for young and old, wifi hotspots, and so on. Such creativity, it might be objected, is necessitated by the prior absence of facilities and infrastructure usually to be found in developed states. Yet still, the ingenuity with which residents of the camp self-organised to meet their needs bears resemblance to, and could provide strategies for, the way settled populations respond to, say, the decline of the universal welfare state in the European polities (Hirst, 2013; Mbembe, 2016).⁷

The politics of the camp is therefore exemplary in three ways: as an inspiration and resource for settled citizens of European states that mobilize around their experience of the camp to help resettle refugees and migrants and oppose governments and policies hostile to them; as a resource for refugees and migrants themselves for whom direct or indirect experience of the camp’s political processes progressed or kickstarted their continuing political development; but just as importantly, as a generally though still differentially accessible repertoire of practices that extends what citizenship can be.

It would be a mistake to romanticise the politics of the camp or to demonise the responses of government. Not only would this ignore the instances in which politics broke down along national, racial, gender, or indeed political lines in the camp, for instance, but also the many laudable initiatives at local, national, and supranational levels in France, the UK, and elsewhere. Throughout the European ‘refugee crisis’ and across Europe, civil society in particular has attempted to respond in ways that outstrip the responses of states. There have been progressive responses by national governments, most notably of Germany and Sweden, in accepting hundreds of thousands of migrants in 2015/6. The EU has also responded positively by attempting to ensure that the burden of resettling refugees is shared amongst member states – though this sharing has not been extensively implemented (European Commission, 2017). It is also important to note the ways in which civil society actors have used supranational government to hold national governments to account. The appeal by civil society groups such as Safe Passage to the Dublin Accord to ensure that children in the camp could be reunited with their family is a case in point; it has driven UK government policy, for example (though that policy has again not been fully implemented - Safe Passage, 2017). To describe the politics of the camp as exemplary is not to oversimplify or ignore the many positive responses from European civil society, states, and the EU itself.

It is, then, neither a romanticisation nor an oversimplification to speak of the exemplarity of the politics of the camp. But the attempt to delimit the space of the political and restrict the practice of citizenship through the constitutive power of the sovereign state is perhaps especially likely to give rise, outside these limits, to an expanded and resistant conception of democracy and citizenship with ties and obligations that transcend those owed to co-national citizens. The existence of such spaces – in this case within the literal space of the Calais camp, in post-Calais places, and in other similar camps and refugee spaces, within the body-politic of European democratic states - gives lie to the claim that the rights of states harmonize effortlessly with the safeguarding of human rights for individuals. Not only can the rights of national citizens coexist alongside the complete absence of rights for migrants, but it is an open question as to whether the former is to

some extent predicated on – and therefore complicit with – the withholding of rights from the latter. The suggestion, then, is that the example provided by the camp is the basis for an extended concept of citizenship, moving beyond the ties and obligations that define national citizenship to a more plural, mobile, and decolonised conception.

It is also important that it is ‘citizenship’ that is extended, rather than the more general and more abstract concept of the acting subject. The rights and obligations of citizens have usually been restricted in traditional liberal thought to the relations of individuals in and to the bounded society. This restriction generates the opposition between the reciprocal rights and obligations of citizens and the non-reciprocal, supererogatory actions of individuals acting essentially *for* others who lack the power to act for themselves. But this opposition is not what is being proposed here. At a minimum, the exemplary character of the politics of the camp problematises any understanding of practical agency along these lines. The burgeoning civic, associationalist, and political life of the ‘Jungle’ repudiates the accepted definition of camp residents as mute and passive recipients of aid and puts pressure, in turn, on any restricted understanding of ‘citizenship’ in these circumstances.

Finally, it is this capacity to extend our conception of citizenship that represents an opportunity for the politics of the periphery both to react back on and alter the politics of the centre, and to give volume to that flat conceptual plane. By acting *with* rather than *for* refugees, the opportunity presents itself to extend our understanding of ourselves – whether national citizens, European citizens, or those without state citizenship – as political actors. Instead of seeing ourselves as settled citizens of a bounded state, we come instead to view ourselves as members of an open polity, constantly mobile, in the process of reinterpreting ourselves and what it means to be a ‘citizen’ of such a state. It further follows from this fluidity that who ‘we’ are is not fixed but is itself constantly open to being extended, re-thought, and re-interpreted.

This process by which the conception of citizenship comes to be extended does not impute a universal significance to the experience of the camp and the politics practised there. It does, however, undermine the

claim to universality for the conception of citizenship operative in European democracies, and for most of the modifications of that concept – opposing its gendering, its classed character, its age limitations, for instance – that are proposed. The extension of the concept of citizenship is on one level just that; the extension to non-citizens, to those excluded from the rights and privileges of citizenship. At another level, however, it is the extension of what citizenship might be; what it might involve. The forms of citizenship appearing within the ‘Jungle’ and persisting thereafter come much closer to the expanded, continuing pursuit of questions about democracy, and the decolonial repossessions mobilised from within, that have been proposed, in very different contexts, by Mbembe (2016) and Joseph-Gabriel (2015), as well as the renegotiations of ‘Mediterranean’ citizenship (Amin, 2004; Solano, 2016) – not as central versus marginal, but as ‘becoming-European’, or as at a crossroads.

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Notes

- 1 It would be possible and interesting, here, to consider the politics of No Borders and other humanitarian-focused organisations, in relation to the quite disparate political views of residents; or the relations between secular and non-secular NGOs and the residents. Even more specifically, it would be valuable to consider the relations between activists and ‘humanitarian’ volunteers, as well as between those from different backgrounds (national, religious) and relations between different types of volunteering, more or less professionalised. Such discussion is unfortunately beyond the scope of this chapter (but see McGee and Pelham, 2017). We are also strongly aware that the prior political persecution of many residents meant that they were necessarily going to operate politically in implicit ways. We have paid attention to these implicitly ‘political’ expressions by camp residents, rather than their silences about overtly political issues.
- 2 For the work developed in Calais, including Life Stories, please see the Educating without borders website <https://educatingwithoutborders.wordpress.com/> and the University for all ‘Life Stories’ page within it: <https://educatingwithoutborders.wordpress.com/university-for-all-2/#>. This course has since continued in collaboration with the OLIve Erasmus+ open learning initiative for people from refugee backgrounds, now in

process at UEL, the University of Vienna, and CEU; as well as within the Greater Manchester Refugee Support Network, UNITE, the youth group NOMAD, and at other upcoming venues. For OLIVE, please see: <https://www.uel.ac.uk/schools/social-sciences/olive>

- 3 Please see the Educating without borders Displaces page for photography <https://educatingwithoutborders.wordpress.com/displaces-a-project-by-gideon-mendel-and-calais-jungle-residents/> and 'The Bridge' for an example of film. Later work includes a further Displaces 'Beautiful Swarm' project (<https://displacesblog.wordpress.com/>) and a number of videos (for instance, 'Who opens a school...' <http://loudminority.co.uk/?portfolio=who-opens-a-school> by Bhavesh Hindocha of Loud Minority, and Majid Adin's 'Rocket Man' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtVBCG6ThDk>).
- 4 Hopetowns is a refugee-lead informal group providing two-way support for volunteers and refugees from the 'Jungle' camps and elsewhere, and which communicates through social media <https://www.facebook.com/hopetownsUK/> (Accessed 23 July 2018).
- 5 See for example Stories and Supper <https://www.storiesandsupper.co.uk/> (accessed 23 July 2018) and Welcome Cinema and Kitchen <http://welcomepresents.com/> (accessed 23 July 2018).
- 6 This is something Coe and Vandegrift (2014) have described in other contexts as a form of practical utopianism. This framing is also close to the 'prophetic pragmatism' Cornell West (1989) lays out. See also work on horizontal and transversal politics: Maeckelbergh (2012); Massey, 1999).
- 7 Here we are deploying Mbembe's emphasis on repair or reparative, creative skills, in low-resourced African contexts (2016) as well as Hirst's (2013) emphasis on the value of 'associative' organisations and structures.

WHAT'S SO RADICAL ABOUT REFUGEE SQUATS?
AN EXPLORATION OF
URBAN COMMUNITY-BASED RESPONSES TO
MASS DISPLACEMENT IN ATHENS

Tahir Zaman

Introduction

Reactions to the movement of migrants and refugees along the so-called Balkan route since the summer of 2015 have ranged from receptive and embracing to hostile and outright violent. The context is complicated further by the fact that those already resident confront and challenge state-imposed austerity measures as the only viable response to economic crisis. In so doing, they produce welfare safety nets anchored outside state institutional structures - in local community relations. This chapter examines supportive encounters with migrant others in urban locations. A central contention of this chapter is that such encounters are mediated simultaneously through understandings of hospitality, philanthropy, humanitarianism, and solidarity; revealing tensions, ambiguities, contradiction, and contestation over what solidarity work looks like.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork of refugee-led autonomous housing collectives in Athens carried out over the summer of 2016, this chapter investigates whether alternative solidarity initiatives reproduce power dynamics and representations of refugee others inherent in the existing humanitarian architecture or effectively challenge the host-guest relations

underpinning hegemonic understandings of refugee protection and assistance. Here, I seek to contribute to the literature on societal responses to displacement and dispossession in addition to understandings of solidarity and migrant struggles.

The chapter is organised in three parts. First, we begin with a short discussion on what is understood by the term solidarity and consider how it has been mobilised in migrant struggles and activism in recent years. The second part of the chapter develops this discussion further by introducing the reader to the different histories, trajectories, and understandings of actors located in spaces inhabited by displacement-affected communities. The so-called ‘European refugee crisis’ has drawn attention to hitherto peripheral actors who produce new spaces, socialities, and readings of humanitarianism.¹ Amongst the actors found in this milieu are faith-based initiatives (Zaman, 2016; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014); diaspora networks (International Alert, 2014; Svoboda and Pantuliano, 2015; Sezgin, 2016); volunteer efforts (Rozakou, 2012); and refugee-led self-help initiatives (Zaman, 2011; Betts et al. 2014; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). Recently arrived refugees and migrants find themselves at the loci of intersecting social relations that append themselves to an existing infrastructure of hidden forms of welfare outside state-led social support (Rakopoulos, 2015). To better understand these emergent spaces and socialities, I mobilise the example of autonomous refugee housing collectives, or squats, located largely in and around the Exarcheia district of Athens. This case study reveals the potential and limits of migrant solidarity organising - highlighting the competing, conflicting, and at times contradictory discourses and practices of actors involved. The chapter concludes by questioning whether the transience of refugee populations in Athens adds a further layer of complexity to the possibility of enacting egalitarian modes of solidarity. In so doing, I consider how normative readings of hospitality imbue solidarity initiatives with migrants and refugees. The argument presented here is that refugee squats in Athens are embedded in an almost ineliminable hegemonic humanitarian logic and are thus caught between hospitality and abject space.

Untangling the incoherence of a cohering concept

Solidarity in Athens is laid claim to, often exclusively, by a varied range of competing actors including, but not limited to anarchists, international volunteers arriving to support stranded refugees, and faith-based actors assisting co-religionists. Rakopoulos (2016:142) alerts us to the possibility of solidarity being a bridging concept; one that captures “diverse modes of practice, forms of sociality and mechanisms of envisioning future prospects for people’s lives [...] an idea inspiring people in contexts of everyday life in crisis”. It has been argued that it is at this confluence of multiple actors arriving with divergent understandings of encountering the other, oscillating between hospitality and solidarity, in times of austerity and economic crisis that a “‘humanitarian face’ of solidarity” is produced (Theodossopoulos, 2016). While there is no single normative understanding of solidarity, a necessary aspect in response to people on the move has been to heed “a call to aid” (Scholz, 2008:56). The pressing and particular needs of people on the move demand as much. However, to limit solidarity solely as such does not fully acknowledge the mutually reciprocal exchanges that potentially locate the horizon of solidarity work over and beyond that of humanitarian modes of “help[ing] to alleviate poverty” (ibid.).

The manifest demands of sudden mass displacement prompt the question of how understandings of solidarity can be reconciled with seemingly divergent practices of philanthropy and giving. Katerina Rozakou makes the case that in austerity-ridden Greece, where the capacity of the middle classes has been severely eroded, understandings of solidarity with the refugee other have now become imbued with the gift logic of humanitarianism. Where once solidarity activists eschewed charity in favour of emphasising egalitarian approaches to sociality, the scale of movement across the Aegean at the time of economic crisis has today “transformed [solidarity] under the collapse of the gift taboo” (Rozakou, 2016:196). Austerity in Greece means that gift-giving no longer carries with it the obligation to reciprocate thereby bridging understandings and modalities of aid provision and solidarity (ibid: 197). This seems a reasonable reading of the specific context but one that perhaps lays too much emphasis on the

notion that people on the move harbour little desire to be incorporated into Greek society - a point conceded by Rozakou (2016:196). Nonetheless, it says little of situations where pressing and palpable material needs persist, and the prospect of onward movement recedes. Arguably, the breaking of the “gift taboo” itself in turn produces a latent “egalitarian tension” wherein a principled solidarity risks being eclipsed and overcome by a gradual descent into dependency and clientism (Rakopoulos, 2016:148). Expressions of solidarity and hospitality have become increasingly blurred.

Under the rubric of hospitality, the responsibility of who welcomes into the community is transferred away from the state and centred on societal responses. Many residents of the autonomous housing collectives under consideration in this chapter make no demands from the state other than to allow them to transit freely across into northern and western Europe and await a decision from the state permitting them to do so. During this interim period where refugees and migrants await an opening for onward movement, material support for residents of the autonomous housing collectives or squats is made contingent on practices of philanthropy and hospitality afforded by those already present. Yet, the context as established earlier is of a besieged and disenchanted middle class learning to cooperate with an equally discontented working class in formulating an alternative response to state austerity measures - one anchored in communities of self-reliance rather than a reliance on the state.

This point needs closer attention. Far from being dependent and passive recipients of aid as hegemonic modalities of humanitarianism demands, residents of the refugee-led squats are actively re-calibrating their own roles in relation to the material circumstances of so-called hosts to navigate their journey. In the process they negotiate, contest, and re-iterate their rights along with resident “host” others as a set of expectations and entitlements they are due - producing new socialities.

Citizenship thus ceases to be viewed solely as a legal category but is given meaning through acts that disrupt the status quo (Isin and Nielsen 2008) and calls out to those who are in place. Peter Nyers (2015) puts into conversation the autonomy of migration literature (Mezzadra, 2004; Mitropoulos, 2006; Papadopoulos, Stephenson & Tsianos, 2008) with

Engin Isin's (2008) intervention on "acts of citizenship". Nyers makes the case that the former does not adequately consider the possibility of performative dimensions of citizenship as a means to further migrant struggles. Instead, citizenship is seen by proponents of the autonomy of migration as an exclusionary bordering practice that seeks to restrict mobility – privileging those who can make claims to rights and effacing others who cannot. This, he argues, is a narrow reading of citizenship; failing to consider the everyday lived experiences of migrants and those who are resident. He concludes: "Migrant citizens, in short, make claims on the state for rights and recognition, and at the same time they are capable of evading legal capture and, indeed, transforming the legal regimes and institutions of state citizenship". (Nyers, 2015: 25).

While some have argued that the ability of those with indeterminate legal statuses to appropriate secondary rights without recourse to the state challenges our understanding of citizenship (Ager and Strang, 2008; Bojadžijev & Karakayali, 2010), I suggest that in the case of Athens at least, to equate this to "transforming the legal regimes and institutions of state citizenship" remains an overly optimistic reading. Barriers to movement set in place by the legal regimes and institutions of the state heighten the visibility of new arrivals in city spaces; triggering a social and cultural contestation over what it means to be a citizen. This is not to say that citizenship practices are not produced in the interim - they are, but they are done so *outside* and *in spite of* the legal regimes and institutions of state citizenship. Secondly, we have seen that where the state chooses to, it will readily employ violence to dismantle alternative networks and structures. On 27 July 2016, residents of three squats in Thessaloniki were evicted and arrested along with solidarity activists. Such heavy-handedness on the part of the state elicits questions concerning the long-term viability of squatting as a tactic for laying claim to rights in the city and for readings of citizenship practices beyond that dictated by the state. Rather than a transformation of state citizenship institutions and legal regimes, we find in the spectacle of violence employed by the state a re-affirmation of those very regimes that mark the migrant other as belonging outside the container of the nation-state.

However, the state is not always quick to do so as a matter of course. The door is left ajar for refugees and migrants to engage with their context and produce new socialities. It is here that the autonomy of migration literature helps challenge the limits of state-centric readings of citizenship. The insight proceeds as follows. Alongside the social space produced through the performance of citizenship of those already resident is the notion of a mobile commons which privileges socio-cultural relations rather than a legal relation. It is in this world that various categories of people on the move exist. In spite of their uncertain legal statuses, people on the move inhabit and construct along with resident others a “world of knowledge, of information, of tricks for survival, of mutual care, of social relations, of services exchange, of solidarity and [a] sociability that can be shared” (Hardt & Negri, 2011:190). In one sense then, citizenship is located beyond the state. Its practices precede recognition by the state. The state may capture citizenship through exclusionary and selective legal regimes, but it does so retrospectively. Practices of citizenship and new socialities have already been produced *de facto* in the spaces of the mobile commons. The refugee-led squats in Athens, theoretically at least, are the idea of the mobile commons made manifest. What remains unclear are the dynamics underpinning social relations between refugees and resident “hosts” themselves, and a common understanding of a solidarity “that can be shared”.

In Arabic, the word *tdāmon* points more fixedly to the notion of responsibilities reciprocated - for whom and to what are we responsible? This is a line of questioning that much occupied Emmanuel Levinas’ (1991) work on ethics. For Levinas, the self is not only representation and being, but a social self that arises in relation to the Other. It is the proximity of the Other that necessitates a response allowing for the possibilities of an ethical encounter. Thus, it is a response, first and foremost, to the call of the Other - an exchange between the one in place and the one who arrives. In reflecting on solidarity in the context of Athens as *mutual* responsibility - we must ask several questions: What is the call of the Other? Who hears the call? How do they respond? And is there a territorial limit to responsibility?

This latter question has been addressed most notably by Doreen Massey who reminds us that territorial readings of place have held sway

over geographical imaginations pertaining to responsibility. Using the analogy of a matryoshka doll, Massey (2004:9) explains that the hegemonic narrative of the nation-state fosters “a kind of accepted understanding that we care first for, and have our first responsibilities towards, those nearest in”. To shatter this ossification and broaden the discussion over meanings of citizenship, Massey (2004, 2005) advocates a more relational approach to understandings of place and responsibility. Encounters with the other should not only be considered on the basis of proximity but also connectivity – the spaces in-between the matryoshka dolls are thus far from empty but act as corridors for the shuttling of people, information, material, and non-material resources. Ethics borne of a relational understanding of place risk being hemmed in and still-born if we only hold ourselves responsible for strangers among us and not distant unseen strangers. The arrival of refugee others alerts us to responsibilities that are located beyond our immediate lived worlds. Prompted through daily exchanges and encounters with refugee and migrant others in the spaces of the squats, distant unseen strangers are made visible and knowable through the sharing of family photographs and personal (hi)stories with volunteers/activists.

An emic reading of solidarity produced by Syrian and Palestinian refugee research interlocutors concurs with the idea of reciprocated responsibilities. Rather than use the term solidarity to describe the networks and spaces of support they had helped produce, they articulated their rapidly changing and dynamic matrix of relationships with volunteers, self-labelled solidarity activists, and other refugees and migrants through the idiom of fictive kin relationships and the village. In the absence of support from the formal humanitarian architecture and the state, refugee residents of squats drew on collective and personal memories of both the village and the *hāra* - the urban neighbourhood street wherein understandings of conviviality, mutual aid, and neighbourliness are integral to longstanding socio-cultural traditions (Zaman, 2016). This vernacular of solidarity resonated and was made intelligible to local Greek activists who themselves had extrapolated practices of mutual aid found in the village - underscoring a “recontextualisation of village-hood” to locate horizons of solidarity in the city (Rakopoulos, 2016:143).

Such recontextualisations have become increasingly visible in neighbourhoods across Athens following the financial collapse of 2008. Sustainable and collective social practices in the form of neighbourhood associations and self-help initiatives characterised by voluntarism and donations have proliferated – and with it, the idea of a shared commons has re-emerged. Commoning as a gerund, Peter Linebaugh (2008: 45) reminds us, denotes activity – one anchored in “human deeds”. It is a “customary activity” rather than a natural resource (ibid: 79). The remedy of austerity prescribed by the EU to the economic crisis in Greece has meant that for many Greeks and resident migrants, access to key welfare provisions such as healthcare has been severely eroded - resulting in the re-emergence of malaria and tuberculosis as commonplace (Kentikelenis et al., 2014). With both market-led and state social insurance redistribution mechanisms for healthcare provision out of reach for many, it is at the level of community localities that relationships between caregivers and care-seekers is recalibrated and transformed. Whereas austerity, and the neoliberal framework underpinning it, produces atomised individuals, commoning and solidarity work reconfigures people in a web of active social relations. Heath Cabot’s work on the burgeoning phenomenon of informal neighbourhood social clinics as a response to crisis wrought by austerity measures in Greece reveals how relational-selves emerge from practices of commoning; underscoring how group participation is contingent on “bilateral, deeply inter-subjective, modes of reciprocal exchange, which have an elevating, and even healing, potential” (Cabot, 2016: 162).

However, reciprocity or the notion of mutual responsibility remains at best muted in Athens’ refugee squats. Despite space being physically made for refugees and migrants, the language of crisis favoured by humanitarian actors permeates. While an egalitarian solidarity demands mutual exchange, it is humanitarian logic seeking to govern and control the everyday of refugees and displaced people that predominates. Here, moments of domination are embedded in so-called solidarity exchanges. In the following section, the presuppositions on which the squatter settlements are based are unpacked a little further.

A taxonomy of collective housing arrangements in the city

Let us begin by thinking about the city of Athens as being simultaneously both a site of conflict and segregation, and a site for encounter and interaction. This becomes evident when we examine a little more closely the number of municipalities in Athens wherein alternative accommodation for spontaneously self-settled refugees - squatted or otherwise - are situated. The vast majority are concentrated either side of the Patision thoroughfare that carves its way through the heart of Athens; either in the Exarcheia neighbourhood or in the vicinity of Acharnon street. A third welcoming space is the Prosfygika site housing eight apartment blocks in the Ampelokipoi neighbourhood.²

That is to say, accommodation for self-settled refugees is limited to a very few neighbourhoods of one from 59 municipalities of the city. While these neighbourhoods are conveniently located in the city centre and border onto other neighbourhoods densely populated by migrants, it would be a stretch to suggest that the recently arrived refugees are connected to the city. One resident of the Acharnon School squat told me, “the squat is great, we live like a real community here. My family is here, my friends are here. It’s like a small village”. When pressed further on whether there was much interaction with the neighbours he replied, “there’s nothing to do, we don’t really know anyone out there. We spend most of our time smoking argileh in here”.

A shared sociability is clearly circumscribed here. The degree to which encounter and interaction is possible for the residents of the squats is thus heavily contingent on the networks of volunteers and activists choosing to visit and contribute their time and resources at the squats. This can be attributed in part to a lack of connectivity with the economic life of the neighbourhoods where the squats are located. While the squats were arguably conceived as an iteration of the mobile commons, their relational sense of place remains hemmed in rather than being centrifugal and allocentric. Opportunities for residents to reach out to other neighbours are limited and constrained to the physical space of the squat where activists and volunteers *arrive* to help meet the evident and urgent needs of residents.

We shall return to the question of shared sociability when we consider how residents of squats challenge humanitarian understandings of refugeehood.

I would suggest that a taxonomy of collective housing arrangements is emerging in the city of Athens right now. First, there are those that have entered into agreements with Greek-registered NGOs and civil society actors to help meet the needs of recently arrived refugees and migrants. Favourable leasing arrangements are secured on the open market to repurpose empty buildings for the accommodation of migrants and refugees. Working on principles of volunteerism, the WELCOMMON project has taken a former nine-storey clinic and repurposed it as an integrated accommodation centre for 200 refugees and migrants, while providing paid employment for people from the host community.³ In addition to shelter, the ground floor of the building is used as an information hub for new arrivals, volunteers, and residents as they await news of their asylum applications. Alongside legal advice, residents can avail themselves of the services of social workers, a psychologist, and a health clinic.

The unprecedented autonomous movement of people from Turkey into Europe in 2015 and the closure of the Macedonian border has also led to faith-based organisations such as the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Caritas expanding their operations in Athens. Both organisations have followed the example of squats and established alternative housing arrangements for refugees in the city. Many of the same principles continue to apply albeit with less emphasis on horizontal power structures. In its place, ideas of accompaniment based on Catholic social justice teachings take precedence. A housing shelter has been established by the JRS off Acharnon Street, housing 41 refugees and migrants. Refugees and migrants again cook for the community of residents and are responsible for cleaning the building. Through a partnership programme which the JRS helped found in Portugal,⁴ the JRS in Athens is able to draw on the combined resources of 222 civil society organisations that comprise the Plataforma De Apoio Aos Refugiados (PAR) - Refugee Support Platform. The platform is a broad coalition of civil society actors made up of faith-based actors (largely Christian but also some Muslim organisations), universities, anti-racism campaigns, and local development actors. The primary intervention

of the PAR is to support state agencies in hosting refugee families relocated to Portugal under the EU agreement. A secondary function of PAR is to fundraise, collect, and deliver donations in kind, and provide volunteers for the humanitarian activities of JRS and Caritas in their response to the displacement crisis in countries neighbouring Syria and, by extension, the so-called refugee crisis in Europe.

Second are the squat settlements. One of the most recognised is the City Plaza Refugee Accommodation Centre (henceforth City Plaza). The juxtaposition of thousands of refugees and migrants living homeless in the streets of Athens with an increasing number of abandoned and derelict hotels and office blocks in the heart of the city prompted civil society activists into action. City Plaza was founded by the Solidarity Initiative to Economic and Political Refugees; a broad coalition of refugee, migrants, anti-racist groups, and leftist activists, including some former members of the Syriza movement which is currently in government. The initiative is one of many examples that can be found in Athens of “contagious solidarity” where recognising and acting on “the needs of neighbours and fellow humans, sustain[s] partial alternative worlds within intolerable systems” (Cabot, 2016:163). “Medicine”, Cabot wryly observes, is “composed, in part, of the very illnesses it counteracts” (ibid.). This janus-faced relationship between crisis and response raises implications for our understandings of solidarity when we consider that people on the move are confronted not only with the challenges of austerity, but also the complications of not being in place in accordance with the sedentarist principles of the nation-state.

The self-proclaimed “best hotel in Europe” provides shelter and organising space for around 400 refugees and migrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Each family is given a room and a cleaning roster is devised for residents of each floor. At City Plaza, residents are given three meals a day and have a share in kitchen duties with volunteers, many of whom are internationals transiting through Athens for the short term. On-site language classes are also provided. Regular assemblies are held on a weekly basis; one each for volunteers and for residents and a third general assembly which is open for all. During these assemblies issues are raised, decisions made, and day-to-day needs addressed.

The strapline of the initiative is “we live together, we struggle together, solidarity will win!” It is clearly a ground-breaking initiative - the squat was the first of its kind in Athens and is located in a part of town which until recently was dominated by supporters of the fascist Golden Dawn. The media exposure and branding of City Plaza has meant that in comparison to the other squats, it has a regular flow of volunteers supporting their activities and is well resourced.⁵ City Plaza also makes available several rooms for volunteers to stay in exchange for their efforts. This raises some awkward and uncomfortable questions around solidarity work.

Following the closure of Piraeus port in late July, there was a spike in the number of arrivals in Athens city centre. As mentioned earlier, many had been directed to the squats in search of shelter. Given that the squats were at full capacity, families were being turned away. On one occasion, when I had been offering to translate for Arabic and Urdu speakers, a Syrian Kurdish family arrived and were turned away. I intervened asking whether it would be possible for the mother and her two children to stay in the lobby or cafe area of the hotel while I accompanied the father to the other squats to secure at least a night's rest for the family. The City Plaza management team on that day - made up of Greek volunteers and an English-speaking refugee resident - decided against it, stating it would set a bad precedent, making the squat unmanageable in the future. The mother was told she and her children could wait under the shade of a wall outside the hotel while we went to find alternative accommodation.

The troubling aspect of this anecdote is that European and North American volunteers, including myself, had the privileged freedom to come in and out of the hotel, wait in the lobby, and make use of the cafe area. Such moments that reproduce boundaries of inclusion/exclusion sit alongside a mode of humanitarianism where the contributions of refugees as active agents are recognised. Here, the kitchen space, where meals are prepared for the four hundred residents, is prominent. Yet, the number of residents who are given responsibility to partake in such activities remains limited.

There are also the squats affiliated to the Syrian Solidarity House Initiative (henceforth SSH) which number seven in total, including a squat solely for single men and a squat solely for households with pregnant women

or children under the age of one. A conservative estimate of the number of residents at the six squats stands at around 1,200 people. Here, once again, relations vary from squat to squat. Notara 26 has developed more sustained relations with local Greek activists and the Fifth School also has regular contact and working relationships with *Mano Aperta* - a local Greek initiative which provides a community kitchen over the weekend for the residents of the squats. All the squats make use of the *Nosotros* community space - particularly the Hotel Oniro squat which was dependent on using the community kitchen at *Nosotros* during the summer.⁶ Furthermore, residents of the squats are free to make use of the network of solidarity health services available in the city as and when they are required. However, the level of engagement between local Greek residents and inhabitants of the SSH squats is predominantly channelled through the personal networks of a very small number of local Greek activists. The majority of daily encounters and meaningful interactions that residents of the SSH squats have (aside from with other refugees and migrants) are with British, European, and North American new humanitarians rather than with neighbouring Greek residents.⁷

Long-term volunteers act as vectors for resources coming in from abroad. One volunteer told me she had received over £80,000 in the past year through community-based organisations and voluntary associations in the UK. Many of the donations were sent to her by people she characterised as being motivated by Islamic belief and practice. Donations are often marked as being for *zakāt* or *sadaqa* and have been distributed in the form of cash assistance or to help meet food, clothing, health, and educational needs irrespective of the religious and ethnic belonging of the recipient.

Perhaps equally significant to the material resources are the reciprocal exchanges made possible through the repeated visits of long-term volunteers. This marks the work of volunteers as distinct from formal modes of humanitarian work where the emphasis is on relief delivery. The work of long-term volunteers involves much non-material and affective care work that in some cases can be seen as a nurturing of friendships with residents of the squats. As such, the solidarity work of volunteers is transformative in a way that formal modes of humanitarianism are unable to be. However, resources are not evenly distributed across the squats. Buildings occupied

with a sociable space attached to them are more likely to attract volunteers and therefore resources to their squat. Both the Fifth school squat and the Acharnon school squat have large concrete playgrounds which afford refugees and migrants the opportunity to take on the role of host, and volunteers the role of guest. Here, refugees *are* able to reciprocate in a limited fashion by giving up their time to be with volunteers.

It is also important to acknowledge here that relationships of mutual responsibility and care are being fostered intra squat (see figure 1 below). Surplus donations are distributed to other less well-resourced squats. There have been attempts to better coordinate the distribution of resources between the SSH-affiliated squats but these efforts have proceeded slowly and been sporadic. Facilities available at one squat, for instance a doctor's surgery, is open to residents of other squats within the SSH network. Following the firebombing of the Notara 26 squat on 24 August 2016, suspected to have been perpetrated by fascists, the residents of the nearby Oniro squat arrived quickly on the scene to help extinguish the blaze. In the days that followed, residents from the squats combined efforts along with Greek volunteers to help repair the fire-damaged storeroom. Long-term residents of the squats also help locate and establish new squats to welcome new arrivals to the city.

Figure 1. A barber from the squat at Acharnon offers residents free haircuts, shaves, and beard-trims.



Source: Tahir Zaman

A degree of convergence on broader political objectives can also be found between residents of the squatter settlements, solidarity activists, and volunteers. On the specific issue of migration and free mobility of labour, there has been an attempt by migrant rights activists to coalesce the multiple voices of different groups into a unified speech act - the call to open the borders. This was most noticeable during protests where volunteers, local residents, rights activists, migrants, and refugees marched from Exarcheia to Syntagma square to protest the closure of the borders (see figure 2 below). At a weekly general assembly of the SSH, a resident from a camp in Thessaloniki had come to appraise residents of the squats and locally based activists of the dire living conditions in the camps and the slow registration process of refugees for relocation in the EU and for family reunification. A consensus was reached that there was a need to organise a protest in the heart of Athens at the end of August to coincide with a national holiday. Attendees of the meeting were encouraged to draw up a list of agreed demands for the protest. The very first demand was the opening of the border to all refugees. Syrian refugees were keen to record that the relocation programme should be open to all refugees and not just Syrians. One attendee at the meeting remarked: “we have all fled from war, so Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis all should have the right to cross the border”.

Figure 2. Banner from Acharnon school squat at a migrant-led protest.



Source: Tahir Zaman

The call from migrants and refugees in Athens is clear and unequivocal - open the borders! It is not only a call against the injustice they have fled from - be that the risk of war or the structural violence of long-term unemployment - but also a protest cry against the regime of care and control they are exposed to as they transit through Greece. This call has been heeded by an array of actors. Ironically, it is the solidaristic principles of the European Union permitting free movement for residents of member states that has allowed for the profusion of new humanitarians to respond to the call of migrants and refugees in Greece. This has brought together an unlikely cohort of activists and humanitarians into near proximity to one another - an observation neatly captured in a conversation with a Catholic Priest who told me: "I sometimes feel I am closer to the anarchists of Exarcheia than I am to the Orthodox Church in this country".

In what follows, I attempt to unpack the complex relations and encounters between actors with vastly different histories and trajectories. To do so, I suggest it is useful to consider contributions from the field of human geography to better understand the spaces, flows, and linkages that help produce conditions of possibility for solidarity.

Exarcheia - The solidarity quarter

Here, Doreen Massey's centrifugal approach to understandings of place moves beyond a territorially bounded reading, helping us think more clearly about the spaces and practices of solidarity in Athens. In her seminal sketch of her local high street in Kilburn, Massey (1991:28) observes that: "what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalised history, but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving at a particular locus". Yet, there are particular and powerful histories that emerge over time helping produce "counter spaces" (Yeoh & Huang, 1998:599) and "communities of resistance" (Keith & Pile, 1993:37).

Exarcheia, nestled between the Polytechnic, the National Archaeological Museum, and the well-heeled Kolonaki neighbourhood, has been at the hub of counter-publics in Athens since the student revolts against the military Junta in the 1970s. It brings together an eclectic

mix of autonomists, ecologists, feminists, anarchists, and those generally identifying with the left who locate themselves outside parliamentary politics (Tsagarousianou, 1993; Vatikiotis, 2011). More recently, the December 2008 murder of 15-year-old Alex Grigoropoulos by the police in Exarcheia prompted a series of insurrections, mobilisations, protests, and riots against the police, state buildings, and other symbols of transnational capital. With the crisis of austerity, Exarcheia has become the testing ground for a dense cluster of social enterprises, assembly points, and food and time banks for people whom the state and the market have long neglected and marginalised.

Figure 3. Sign outside a cooperatively run store on the periphery of Exarcheia.



Source: Tahir Zaman.

This infrastructure or ecology of the commons is slowly being extended to people on the move - refugees and migrants. As one local activist at an assembly of a refugee squat succinctly put it: "We Greeks don't need to

have sex any more, the state fucks us each and every morning we get up, and then one more time before we go to bed - so we are with you [the refugees and the migrants]”. It is in this “particular constellation of social relations” that migrants and refugees have been afforded space to insert themselves. In so doing, they attract another set of networks and relations which append themselves to the existing infrastructure. Most notable among these relations are those with informal humanitarians.⁸

While it is perhaps facile to say that sites of resistance such as Exarcheia offer a counterbalance to the hegemonic, I am making the case that there is a pressing need to consider the different trajectories of actors located in sites of resistance. For many of the activists in Exarcheia, inspired by principles of anarchism and autonomism, there has been a conscious political journey which has seen them gravitate towards the district. Activists choose to be there and to be part of an anti-establishment milieu. In so doing, a space of belonging is produced and shared with like-minded others. On the other hand, there are people fleeing from arenas of war and conflict for whom stability is much sought after: people who have little choice other than to be in state-controlled camps which, by and large, have been declared “unsafe and unsanitary” for human habitation (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

Often overlooked in discussions on solidarity are the myriad ways in which those who identify as belonging to spaces like Exarcheia engage in practices of “territoriality” to produce social control; delineating what action is permissible and who the legitimate actors are (Sack, 1986; Agnew, 2007). The counter publics in Exarcheia, through their everyday interactions and material practices, impose their rules of the game such to organise spatial practices. In so doing, they generate the production and reproduction of a habitus in accordance with anarchist and autonomist ways of being.

The identity of Exarcheia, as with any place, is a social construct made and remade through struggle and contestation. These struggles have long been contested, often violently, with the state. As we have seen, Exarcheia is a site for political mobilisation. Exarcheia evokes certain emotions, dispositions, and values concerning what the appropriate way of being ought to be: “This is an anarchist place!” “NGOs not welcome!” “Fuck the

Police!” “ACAB!” “This is the devil’s place!” “Wild resistance to industrial taming!” and “No State, No Capitalism!” These are just some of the refrains I have seen and heard in Exarcheia. Refugees and migrants arriving from Moria camp in Lesbos are familiar with some of these sentiments (see figure 4). Syrian refugees I spoke to complained about the prison-like conditions they had to endure in the camp during their stay there in April and May 2016. Others are visibly bewildered on coming across the strangeness of Exarcheia for the first time.

Figure 4. Graffiti on the walls of an outbuilding at Moria Camp, Lesbos.



Source: Tahir Zaman

The conundrum of Massey’s intervention on privileging the intersection of social relations over and above the very real emotive histories of a place can, to a certain degree, be resolved by Ash Amin’s idea of a “politics of propinquity” where places are identified as “sites of heterogeneity juxtaposed within close spatial proximity, and as sites of multiple geographies of affiliation, linkage and flow” (Amin, 2004:38). Histories are not only fixed in a place but are carried and embodied by those who arrive, stay, or move through sites such as Exarchia. When we consider these sites in the context of a competitive humanitarian field, relations of power and moments of domination are never far from the surface.

For many refugees arriving in Athens, their journey was in part prompted by the impasse wrought by the formal humanitarian system in their country of first asylum. This first-hand experience of the functioning of the humanitarian system allowed several refugee interlocutors to formulate a nuanced critique of humanitarianism, seeing it as embedded in broader market dynamics (Carbonnier, 2015; Krause 2014). They were keenly aware of how the humanitarian marketplace conceives the displaced person as an invisibilised yet integral component of humanitarian projects that prospective donors finance. Exarcheia thus presented an opportunity for some to formulate their own rudimentary *mshārī* (projects) - to build relationships with international volunteers arriving with material resources and become producers of projects in the humanitarian marketplace themselves. This created tensions with other local Greek and international volunteers more committed to egalitarian understandings of solidarity and wary of any attempt to formalise their commitment to supporting refugees and migrants in the form of a project.

Some refugees distinguished little between the manifold actors attracted to the loci of the autonomous housing collectives; viewing them equally as self-interested rational actors. H, a young man from Aleppo, had already failed several times in his attempts to reach Austria where he had an uncle. When I asked him why he kept returning to use the services of smugglers he told me: “*Houn bi Atina bass al-mharrib ibn halal* [Here in Athens, *only* the smuggler is legit]”. For H, an encounter with a smuggler is straightforward and transactional - pay him once he has successfully facilitated the onward journey.

Put plainly, there are competing and often antagonistic agendas here, as actors jockey for position in the emerging humanitarian field (Zaman, 2016). Conflicting positions are perhaps more explicitly articulated as the field is not subject to state power. That is to say, in the face of austerity-afflicted Athens, displaced people have extricated themselves from the rules of the humanitarian game set by the state. Alongside this official game an alternative rulebook for humanitarian action is being formulated; widening the number of participants and reconfiguring the basis underpinning humanitarian action. Contested understandings of what solidarity means

and looks like rise to the fore as participants in the new game bring to bear their own personal histories and trajectories to differentiate their work from the official humanitarian field. As Brown and Yaffe (2013:8) observe, “solidarity actions can face in more than one direction and seek to intervene at more than one scale simultaneously”. How the politics of propinquity is managed is integral to any project of solidarity.

The prioritisation of some activists’ agendas over and above the concerns of migrants and refugees echoes paternalistic attitudes of humanitarians who are adamant in knowing what is best. The same attitude is prevalent in some of the squats where any discussion of NGO involvement is ruled out by some activists as a matter of principle. This was captured in an exchange between a self-identified anarchist and the director of a small NGO⁹ who had offered to provide mattresses for residents in one of the squats, and was told: “they can sleep on the floor - they don’t need mattresses”. Absent in this exchange were the residents of the squat themselves. Given the complex web of relations between local activists, international volunteers, and refugees, the following section interrogates the notion of host-guest relationships. It considers the degree to which hospitality presents an obstacle in encountering the migrant and refugee other through modalities of egalitarian solidarity.

Humanitarian subjects or refugee solidarians?

As described above, the discussion on solidarity in the context of the autonomous housing collectives in the Exarcheia neighbourhood has fallen short of the *mutual* care and responsibility that is needed to establish a “mobile commons” that can effectively challenge the hegemony of the nation state. To be clear, there have been acts and everyday practices of mutual care and responsibility *amongst* and *between* refugee groups. However, in considering relations between international volunteers, local Greek activists, and refugees, it becomes clear that the overwhelming majority of actors in this scene continue to be framed within the lens of hospitality. For the most part, refugees continue to play the role of guest - the same logic under which humanitarian action operates (Zaman, 2016a; Brun 2010).

While there is a recognition that forced migrants are “attributed the power and agency that they typically lack in other contexts” (Rozakou, 2012:574), many people I spoke to said life in the squats was immeasurably better than in camps - that agency remains constrained. The squats are largely serviced by others who maintain control over resources arriving. In one of the squats, certain groups of volunteers have been described by refugee residents as being “monopolists” of care regimes for refugees. The lead activist - a mid-twenties white male from north-west Europe, explained to me how he and other activists were “teaching horizontal organising and democratic decision-making to the residents”. The fact that activists rather than residents were leading assemblies and decision-making processes seemed lost on him. It also served as a stringent reminder of how the crisis of displacement since 2015 has been made intelligible and recalibrated through the histories of privileged white Europeans - in this case the pedagogy of European anarchism. It purposefully hides and makes invisible the histories and trajectories of others who have had experiences of organising and transparent decision-making that lies outside of European ways of doing. In other squats, there was pushback from refugees who asserted greater control over resource distribution.

Where unchecked, the caregiving role can be wholly appropriated by volunteers. At the Acharnon school squat, some parents lamented how they were no longer good parents. The lack of a disciplined routine for children means that parents struggle to cope in a fast-changing context where different groups of volunteers arrive to fill the gaps in informal education programmes. One long-term volunteer described the situation as “the theft of parenting skills”, echoing findings in other contexts where young men felt emasculated as the role of breadwinner was usurped by NGOs and humanitarian agencies (Turner, 1999; Jaji, 2008). She explained further:

As soon as parents try to put down some rules and boundaries for the children, volunteers come along and take over. They smother - all with good intentions. Mothers begin to feel demotivated and frustrated. The volunteers fix a routine which is geared around meal times for adults. Children are

not stupid, they see this. They see that volunteers come in and provide the security they need. It is not uncommon to see young children affectionately hugging volunteers. The volunteers end up becoming the parents.

The regular arrival of well-resourced international volunteers has meant there has been little in the way of building economic self-reliance for the residents of the squats, with the preferred model being aid in kind. The areas where residents have a measure of greater agency are the cooking of meals and the distribution of goods kept in on-site storage rooms. To date, little attention has been paid to questions of work outside of the spaces of the squats. Aside from employment laws preventing new arrivals from participating freely in the labour market, this can be attributed to the fact that many residents consider themselves as only transiting through Athens and therefore guests. One resident told me: “You can’t expect people to put their hands and minds to work when they are thinking about their future being elsewhere. I’m not going to spend time learning the language if I don’t expect to stay here. You can’t make plans for the unknown”.

One exception has been the networked humanitarianism undertaken by a team of refugee volunteers supported by the Jafra Foundation. The refugee volunteers are a group of 35 former residents of the Lagadikia camp in Thessaloniki who moved to Athens to hasten their claims for relocation or family reunification. In self-identifying as volunteers, the Jafra group challenge the perception that all refugees are vulnerable and in need. They not only stake a claim as active producers in the humanitarian field, but also reconfigure the underlying principle driving their understanding of humanitarianism to be neighbourliness. The lead coordinator of the team, J, explained:

We have cities and streets back home just like what you see here in Athens. We have skills and capacities that need to be tapped into. We don’t just want to sit around waiting until we are given relocation. We have teachers, engineers, doctors among us. We don’t need volunteers coming from Europe to come and

hug our children - we can do that ourselves. We can make the children happy. We can show Europe another face of what it means to be a refugee - one which isn't asking and in need but one that is giving and sharing with their new neighbours. This is what we did in Lagadikia - we grew vegetables and made knafeh which we shared with the people from the local villages. We want to do the same here in Athens to show that we can give something back.

Here, refugees are creating space for a shared sociability. It is not enough to produce for themselves alone but refugees from the Jafra team are actively searching out opportunities to reciprocate for the hospitality that has been afforded them. In so doing, they seek to move beyond the imposed role of guest that has been consigned to them. Instead, they designate themselves as neighbours; present, visible, and resident. Acts such as these are explicitly political in that they seek to transform the discourse and narrative of what it means to be a refugee. A lead volunteer, M, described the volunteer team as: "refugees working for other refugees. We were in the camps in Greece like everyone else. Jafra is a symbol for us - we work under its umbrella. It shows that we can work and change our own conditions".

There is limited financial support for the volunteer team from the Jafra foundation based in Lebanon and Syria, but it is linked to that organisation through past experiences of the volunteers (some of whom worked for the organisation in Lebanon and Syria) and through knowledge-sharing. To compensate for this lack of financial support, the team meets the cost of its activities through donations collected on their behalf by other activists in the Diaspora. Material resources, including both food and non-food items, are attained through a network of relations with other new humanitarians who operate distribution centres in the north of Greece. Through such relationships, the volunteer team from the Jafra foundation serves as a reminder that there are no hard and fast binaries of refugee and volunteer humanitarianisms. The former is dependent on the latter for knowledge of and access to the mobile commons.

Aside from the efforts of the refugees, there has been little in the way of attempts to integrate the refugees into the wider social and solidarity economy that has emerged in Athens in response to austerity. There have been two notable exceptions. The first was a theatre performance put together by residents of the Acharnon School Squat. Here, they made use of the Nosotros community space in Exarcheia for rehearsal purposes every afternoon over a period of six weeks and performed a play on two occasions at a newly established community day centre for refugees and migrants. The second was a promotional event organised by the residents of Oniro squat with the assistance of a Greek activist and international volunteers. Here, they raised money from a group of Spanish volunteers to prepare *knafeh*, a popular Levantine dessert, which they distributed to passers-by at Exarcheia Square along with details of the location of the squat. They also set up a sound system and introduced the local neighbourhood to the joys of *dabkeh*. The event was successful in attracting the attention and resources of local activists and international volunteers.

Between hospitality and abject space

The paradox of hospitality as rightly identified by Derrida (2000:14) is that it is only by “surmounting” itself can it be realised. In ceding “the mastery of the house” (ibid.) to the guest, the host-guest binary is effaced. I believe there was an opportunity to do so in Exarcheia, but one which was not fully grasped. Had the squats been alternative accommodation for both Greeks battling against the ravages of austerity and refugees on the move, then the possibility for encounter and interaction would arguably have been greater and more meaningful. Under such an arrangement, neither local Greeks nor refugees would have been configured as guests but rather as neighbours. Instead, the squats form what can be described as an archipelago in a sea of intra-Greek solidarity. Their engagement with Greek local activists has largely been limited thus far to being recipients of aid and as fellow participants on demonstrations. The one location where local Greeks and refugees share a space for accommodation is the Prosfygika site. Here, refugees have indeed been transformed from guests to neighbours, but the numbers remain small.

Isin and Rygiel (2007:182) have helpfully introduced a three-fold taxonomy of “abject spaces” comprised of “various frontiers controlled by state authorities, zones where special rules or laws apply, and camps where laws are suspended”. They are designated as abject because the existence of those located in such spaces “is rendered invisible and inaudible” (ibid:184) and “*this is nothing less than a rendering of these people as inexistent*” (ibid:189, emphasis original.) It is their understanding of zones that demands further treatment here. “Zones”, they tell us, “are spaces where abjects live under suspended rules of freedom as spaces of inexistence [...] zones are spaces nestled within state and city territories. These include zones within cities to which various subjects are dispersed but then live under some form of conditional freedom and surveillance” (ibid:193).

For the squats in Athens, the state renders them invisible and inaudible by not formally recognising their existence. In so doing, the state not only seeks to foreclose their ability to access rights through virtue of being in the city, but also effectively filters out the squat population from the care and protection regimes afforded by recognised NGOs and humanitarian agencies - exposing residents of squats to further vulnerabilities and insecurities. This approach complements the fear and loathing of NGOs and agencies on the part of the autonomists and anarchists in Exarcheia. Some refugees are left wondering why there is no support for the squats from the larger humanitarian actors. One resident told me: “God Bless K, he does a lot for all us refugees here, but it’s not like it was in Kara Tepe. The camp manager was a good man - he made sure we got everything we needed”.

Squats may also be conceived of as “zones” in that they are waiting rooms for people who are in transit. Here, claimants may be transitioning across legal statuses, that is, awaiting approval of their asylum application in Greece, or they may have made a claim either for relocation for asylum in another EU state, or relocation under family reunification regulations. During these temporal blockages and while awaiting news of their asylum claims, refugees are provided a range of basic needs and services by a willing corps of international volunteers and local activists. Until the emphasis is shifted from aid and towards self-reliance, the squats, rather than being

fully spaces of solidarity, arguably follow more in the tradition of the camp. That is to say, they are spaces for filtering, segregating, and administering care - albeit spaces where the retreat of the state and the limited presence of humanitarian agencies and international NGOs has made way for a diverse group of non-institutional actors to engage.

I would suggest that the squats are not fully abject spaces for three reasons. In the first instance, the state has not corralled refugees and migrants into such spaces - but it is through their own initiative along with support from local activists that they have opened the squats.¹⁰ Secondly, the state, despite its attempts to render the squats invisible and inaudible, has not been fully able to curtail their access to rights and social networks. Lastly, the squats have emerged from space provided by civil society actors. The squats have been established on the basis of *filoxenia* or hospitality. This is most marked in the guises of the City Plaza and the Oniro squats that have been transformed from spaces of market framed hospitality (hotels) into a community welcome where “guests” do not pay.

Figure 5. A banner at the entrance of one of the SSH squats reads: “Ministry of Refugee Hospitality”.



Source: Tahir Zaman

Conclusion

Exarcheia offers an interesting window into the contradictions, ambiguities, and opportunities of migrant activism and solidarity organising. This paper has attempted to make sense of solidarity work in a humanitarian context. It asks whether solidarity is at all possible where people are living under conditions of liminality. Migrants and refugees are temporally oriented towards a future elsewhere, making it difficult for them to reciprocate. This absence of mutual responsibility and care often subsumes solidarity efforts under the logic of humanitarianism. This, I have argued, is epitomised by the host-guest binary that continues to shape relationships between local residents and refugees.

The autonomous housing collectives for spontaneously self-settled refugees or squats demonstrate in practicable terms the way in which a community-based model of humanitarianism can operate independent of the larger humanitarian architecture. Here, refugee-to-refugee solidarity is alive and well, typified by acts of mutual care and responsibility. However, there remains the hierarchical relation between host and guest that characterises interactions between refugees and resident civil society actors in Exarcheia. This, I have argued, preempts reciprocity between those who are in place and those who are on the move. Furthermore, it diminishes the possibility of realising a politics of propinquity.

It is at the intersection of migrants and refugees, international volunteers, and local civil society actors who meet and weave at the locus of Exarcheia that helps produce a dynamic and autonomous response to questions of mass displacement in an urban context. The squats, I have argued, are akin to an archipelago in a sea of intra-Greek solidarity. The community of Exarcheia provides the ecology for a mobile commons into which these refugee housing collectives can connect. However, the actual interactions and encounters between Greek civil society actors and the refugees remain limited. For many of the refugee squats in and around Exarcheia, the mobile commons is to an extent mediated through transient and itinerant groups of international volunteers.

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Notes

- 1 Here I take sociality to be "a dynamic and interactive relational matrix through which human beings come to know the world they live in and find their purpose and meaning within it" (Long & Moore 2013:2).
- 2 The Prosfygika of Alexandros Avenue carries immense resonance for refugee solidarity in Athens. The site was constructed by the Greek state for refugees following the population exchange between Greece and Turkey. Today it is comprised of several squatted communities comprised largely of anarchists and Maoists. It is also home to several Afghan and Syrian refugee families who make up a quarter of the total number of inhabitants.
- 3 WELCOMMON: A Model Center for Housing and Social Inclusion", <http://anemosananeosis.gr/en/aboutwelcommon/> available [online], accessed 3 March 2019
- 4 Among the 29 founding members of the Platform are the Islamic Community of Lisbon, National Confederation of Solidarity Initiatives, and the European Anti-Poverty Network (Portugal). See <http://www.refugiados.pt/sobre/#membros> available [online], accessed 7 January 2017.
- 5 City Plaza promotional video available [online]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKuHLSJuNGI> (accessed 4 November 2016).
- 6 The arrival of the winter season meant that the roof terrace bar closed and moved into the space formerly used by refugees.
- 7 A small number of individual refugees with a modicum of English have developed friendships with local Greeks.
- 8 I choose the label informal humanitarian to describe those who are outside the formalised humanitarian system. This includes, amongst others, people

affiliated to religious congregations or faith-inspired groups that have not formalised their work as an NGO, volunteers belonging to community associations, and professionals from the fields of education, healthcare, and social work in their country of origin who have volunteered their time and expertise to support refugees and migrants.

- 9 The NGO in question was the Humanitarian Support Agency which had formalised itself as an NGO in the past year. The organisation had begun as a volunteer-led effort in response to the unprecedented number of people crossing the Aegean in the summer of 2015.
- 10 In July, the closure of the Piraeus port camp saw a number of the refugees transferred to camps across Greece. Some refugees opted not to go to the camps and headed for the town centre. Refugees I spoke to claimed that state officials had signposted them to the squats. Refugees and migrants would arrive at overstretched squats who were unable to accommodate the new arrivals.

THE RISE AND FALL OF MIGRATION SOLIDARITY IN BELGRADE: MARGINALISING SOLIDARITY AND INSTITUTIONALISING AID

Céline Cantat

Introduction: A walk along the Sava waterfront

One afternoon, a friend and I are taking a walk along Belgrade's Sava riverfront. This has become the site of a controversial development project pushed forward by Serbian ruling elites, and particularly president Aleksandar Vučić, as part of a plan to give the city "a new identity" as the "Dubai of the Balkans". Known as the Belgrade Waterfront, the project will include luxury apartments and the largest shopping mall in the Balkans. As we walk along the banks where construction started in October 2015 (Eagle Hill, 2015), my friend points to some derelict houses. These were the state-owned homes of workers of the national railway, regrettably located near the site of the future project, right where the Serbian government envisaged the construction of a boulevard for its future users and inhabitants. Over 230 families were evicted from their homes to pave way for the construction of the Belgrade Waterfront. When some refused to leave, the state did not shy away from heavy-handed methods. One night in April 2016, thirty masked men armed with baseball bats and machinery turned up to enforce the demolition of several buildings that stood in the way of the Belgrade Waterfront. By the morning, several witnesses and passers-by had been brutalised, and the obstructive (mainly residential) buildings had been razed (OCCRP, 2016; Surk, 2018).

In the same area, at the time when families were being evicted, another social drama was unfolding. Over the course of the previous years, and most strikingly since spring 2015, Serbia had become a crucial passageway for hundreds of thousands of people trying to make their way to Western and Northern European countries. With the closure of the so-called “Balkan route” in March 2016, travellers found themselves stranded along the way – including in Serbia. In Belgrade, the area around the central bus and railway stations, close to and affected by the Belgrade Waterfront project, became a gathering point for immobilised travellers. During 2016, in several locations, migrants¹ started occupying some of the area’s emptied, mainly publicly-owned buildings as temporary accommodation. For several months, migrants, with the support of solidarity actors, ran and lived in these self-managed spaces which, in spite of the harsh conditions, offered a degree of autonomous organising and a sense of community. All were evicted over the course of 2016 and 2017.

These series of evictions were similarly underpinned by ideological and cultural discourses that masked the structural violence of the state and privatisation with narratives of modernity, urbanism, and Europeanity.² In the celebrated process of turning Belgrade into a “great city” on the “European model”, various groups have been constructed as obstructive: “backward people ... unwilling to step into modernity” or people deemed as “surplus” to this transformation (Waterfront: A Post-Ottoman Post-Socialist Story, 2018; see also Rajaram, 2015). In order for the Waterfront project to be built, the municipality has effectively handed over publicly owned space to a private company. Groups that do not have the capacity to engage in the practices of consumption promoted through the restructuring of Belgrade’s public space will see their right to public space reduced or invalidated.

It is in this context of urban violence and neoliberal restructuring that I conducted four months of fieldwork in Belgrade between April and July 2018, exploring the emergence and gradual marginalisation of migrant solidarity initiatives in the city over the three previous years. This paper is based on testimonies by a range of people who had arrived in Serbia as asylum seekers or who were immobilised on their way to further destinations,

and individuals who have been involved in supporting migrants and refugees in the country since 2015. I discuss the experience of migrant self-organised spaces and migration solidarity groups in Serbia (particularly Belgrade) between 2015 and 2018, against a background of neoliberal urban marginalisation. I first look at the emergence of migration solidarity practices, discourses, and socialities in 2015 and 2016 in Belgrade, when the situation was characterised by the fast transit of migrants and refugees. I also examine their gradual marginalisation and criminalisation by the Serbian authorities. I then “zoom into” the situation that emerged around the occupation of the so-called barracks, and their residents’ subsequent eviction, which I identify as a crucial turning point in the process of institutionalising refugee aid field in Serbia. The last sections of this paper investigate this institutionalisation process from several perspectives. First, I present some brief considerations regarding the political economy of this field and its relation to the European Union (EU). Second, I look at the disciplining mechanisms that have become inscribed in this field, and the way they are operated by the Serbian authorities. Finally, I look at the effect this has had on organisations, and at some attempts to circumvent these constraints. Ultimately, through a careful examination of the mechanisms through which migrant solidarity has been disqualified in Serbia, this paper seeks to contribute to larger debates about the disciplining of solidarity and political activism.

Solidarity socialities in transit: The opening and closure of the Balkan corridor

In 2015, large-scale movement beyond state-controlled channels successfully pushed open European borders along the so-called Balkan route, which takes people from Turkey into Greece, and across Balkan states into Western and Northern Europe. These mobilities subverted the various legal frameworks and regulations developed by and around the EU in order to control, order, and regulate movement. Such regulations, which together may be called the EU border regime, include among others: the Schengen agreement, which has lifted the internal borders across several member

states at the cost of heavy reinforcement of the EU's external borders; the Dublin Convention, which has made it possible to return asylum-seekers to the country of first entry into the EU, hence protecting core member states from undesirable mobilities; as well as the restrictive European regulations regarding who does or does not need a visa. These mobilities were promptly declared a "crisis". The designation of a "crisis" called for measures towards restoring what was dialectically produced as a natural order – characterised by the upholding of the exclusionary and heavily racialised rules of the EU border regime (Cantat, 2015a). Essentially, the depiction of a crisis was a call for states to restore their capacity to organise, channel, sanction, and discipline movement.

What is perhaps most striking in the case of the Balkans is that states' attempt at regaining control over migrants first took the form of the opening of the "Balkan corridor", a quasi-legal pathway along the Balkan route, along which states temporarily suspended the restrictive rules and regulations of the EU border regime, allowing people to travel relatively freely. In November 2015, states restrained movement along the corridor by excluding some travellers on the basis of nationality (only Afghanis, Syrians, and Iraqis were able to travel). In February 2016, people from Afghanistan were also excluded from free movement. Eventually, on 8 March 2016, it was announced that the Balkan corridor would be closed: this would be achieved through the implementation of the infamous EU-Turkey deal, an agreement aimed at preventing departures from Turkish coasts, and the official closure of the border between Greece and Macedonia and other borders along the route.³

The announced closure of the state-organised corridor did not however halt migratory movement along the "Balkan route". People kept attempting to cross borders, increasingly forced to recourse to smugglers' services. Since the route was never fully sealed, people would continue entering (and sometimes exiting) Greece and become stranded in various countries along the way. Serbia kept receiving high numbers of people who often thought of their presence as transient, until the next border could be crossed. Yet with the construction of heavily patrolled razor-wire fences by

neighbouring Hungary in September 2015 and the reinforcement of Serbia's border with Croatia, westward journeys were made considerably harder. By late spring 2016, an estimated 7,000 people were trapped in Serbia.⁴ Serbia thus emerged as a "migrant-holding" country, in line with the function attributed to (internal and external) peripheral countries within the EU (El-Enany, 2013; Cantat 2015b). As I comment later in the paper, this insertion of Serbia within the EU border regime has produced a particular political economy around migration.⁵

In 2015 and early 2016, the Serbian government's narrative in relation to migration was one of humanitarianism – whereby authorities emphasised their good treatment of people on the move, and contrasted their behaviour with that of neighbouring countries such as Hungary and Bulgaria, renowned for their ill treatment of migrants (Jovanović and Avramović, 2015). This official pro-refugee discourse was in large part aimed at the EU, as a means of demonstrating Serbia's capacity to uphold human rights and hence of ridding the country of certain stigmas connected to its 1990s image. At the same time, the authorities also insisted on their capacity to "deal with" migration in order to show their willingness to abide by the role of border guard of the EU's external borders.

On the ground however, the situation was experienced in different terms: authorities tended to appear both unwilling and unable to support people on the move. This lack of organised official support in 2015 and 2016 was evoked as a key motive for spontaneous solidarity initiatives. Participants in this research located their initiatives in support of migrants in a context that they characterised with the fact that "the government was doing nothing" (interview with Fidel, 23 April 2018) and "the government was turning a blind eye: there were hundreds of people but they did as if no one was around" (interview with Serdjan, 25 April 2018).

As of 2015, public parks and unoccupied buildings of downtown Belgrade, in close geographical proximity to the site of the Belgrade Waterfront, had become hubs where travellers passing through the country would gather and attempt to organise their onward journeys. These social spaces were created and used by migrants, but also partly relied on the

support and solidarity work of a number of volunteers and activists, who provided clothes, daily food, and other items to their temporary residents. These volunteers and activists were part of a diverse grouping of actors and organisations concerned with supporting migrants and refugees. As in other contexts, this *ad hoc* aid community included politicised activist networks (such as No Border Serbia), groups of independent volunteers acting individually or in loose formations created in response to the arrival of people in Belgrade and mostly concerned with humanitarian provision, as well as a range of local NGOs who were often pre-existing and either had been working with refugees since the 1990s or had been working with different groups and redirected their activities towards refugees. There were also a number of UN bodies involved (primarily UNHCR and UNICEF), as well as large international organisations such as the Danish Refugee Council, MSF, and the International Federation of the Red Cross, among others.

Volunteer and activist groups significantly varied along ideological lines, previous experience (if any) and political background, as well as operational modes. They also held a range of motivations for involvement (Kerr 2018). The activist groups and volunteer networks were composed of both Serbian and foreign individuals. Some of the foreign volunteers and activists who came to work in refugee support in Belgrade over 2015 and 2016 belonged to a rather novel phenomenon, which may be labelled mobile volunteerism or activism. This new form of volunteer or activist engagement indeed relies on the hyper-mobility of young people (particularly from the global North) able through a variety of arrangements to travel for weeks, months, or sometimes years at a time, and who follow the lines of movement of migrants and refugees and become active at points of immobilisation in order to provide basic services such as food, clothing, and other items. A participant whom I met in May 2018 in Bosnia, where migrants have re-directed their journeys as part of a so-called “new Balkan route” (Annibale, 2018), explained:

I first was in Lesvos in 2015, the situation was appalling, we were organising our own search and rescue missions to save people from dying in the sea! ... Then in 2016 I was in Idomini

... and then I spent the winter in Belgrade and I stayed till the summer last year [2017]. I arrived in Sarajevo this March [2018] as people now pass by Bosnia and they need support here (discussion with Jonathan, 6 May 2018).

In spite of the heterogeneous background of the volunteer and activist groups, what seemed to bring them together in this earlier period (2015-2016) was the claim that they enacted a way of relating to migrants and refugees that significantly differed from large institutional actors and aid providers. Volunteers and activists I interviewed insisted on their work going beyond – or being different from – the mere distribution of goods due to their engagement in social interactions with people on the move, and participation in the construction of solidarity socialities around migrants' living spaces.

By socialities of solidarity, in line with Rozakou (2016), I refer to the types of connections and meanings that develop between individuals and groups who are engaged in a relation where aid and support are given and received in ways that attempt to subvert the top-down, securitised forms of humanitarianism organised and deployed by states and official humanitarian actors. Activists from No Border Serbia, for instance, were present in the parks every day to provide warm tea, mostly in order to engage in conversations and build connections with people. When asking a volunteer from another group why giving out tea seemed important, he explained that it was not about the tea in itself but about the meaning and symbol of sharing a cup of tea: "it makes people feel comfortable, it is a part of culture: you share tea or coffee with someone, it is like saying: 'tell me, I am interested', let's speak" (interview with Mario, 26 April 2018).

In other words, according to participants who were involved at the time, solidarity in the context of providing aid in Belgrade was mostly understood as attempts at building alternative modes of relating (see also Kerr, 2018). In this context, it seems that what organised the field and its rationales was mostly the way actors related to migrants and refugees on the one hand, and their relation to Serbian authorities on the other. Unlike other sites where the field of non-state actors is mainly divided along the lines of official status (e.g. between those working independently and those acting

as registered NGOs, with the assumption that solidarity can only come from the former – see Cantat, 2018), for participants in the refugee support field in Belgrade in 2015 and early 2016, organisational form appeared less important than political positioning towards the authorities and mode of relating with refugees. Small local NGOs were often perceived as belonging to the solidarity movement, unless they had a record of cooperating with the Serbian government. Large NGOs would be assessed on their individual actions. More politicised organisations such as MSF were seen as part of and supporting solidarity work, because of the organisation's perceived antagonism to the state and its attempts at connecting differently to people on the move. A participant in the research explained:

In general what we understand as solidarity groups are those who refuse to implement the state's plan about the migrants, which has been one of not well-hidden racism... People like Vučić are playing on a double front: you know, they do everything to trigger hatred and defiance towards the migrants... but in the same time Vučić, he came sometimes to have his photo taken with refugee kids and stuff like that, to look as if he is a good humanitarian person. Oh yeah like he gave some people citizenship and he made a lot of noise for it... So for me all the groups who see this hypocrisy and denounce it, they are with the solidarity. All the groups that they close their eyes and promote this agenda, they are you know, like fake civil society, they are called NGOs, but they are just working with the state... (interview with Karika, 2 May 2018).

Similar readings of solidarity as mostly articulated in opposition to the Serbian government and a top-down mode of relating to people on the move were echoed in interviews with other participants. Particularly in time of fast transit, the focus of solidarity work was not on the building of common struggles but rather on the provision of temporary relief for passers-by and on the performance of alternative modes of connection, based on care and support, in opposition to governmental representations and practices (see Kallius, this volume). As one participant put it:

When you only meet someone for 48 hours, there is not much space to talk with him or her. When the Balkan route was open, this was the situation. What does solidarity with that person mean? In my case, it means to show that unlike this government, I care about people, wherever they come from. You know, we will give some food or tea with a smile, which says I relate to you and I know we have something in common and I value it. We will speak and chat and share what we can. In this context, this is what solidarity will look like for me (interview with Fidel, 23 April 2018).

It must also be noted that among groups mobilised in solidarity with refugees in Serbia, some emerged from or were connected to longer political struggles, such as anti-nationalist fights or the anti-war movement, with a particular and significant history in the post-Yugoslav context. An activist with one such group explained that the provision of material aid in which his organisation participated was understood in terms going beyond humanitarian support. It was strongly connected to a political and social vision that they had developed over more than two decades of work, including with refugees from across Yugoslavia in the 1990s. At the time, speaking of issues linked to displacement in anti-war terms was highly contentious. As explained by this participant, his group was banned from working in state-led refugee camps in 1993 because “they were doing something very dangerous: they were talking about peace, that war is pointless; they were undermining the war efforts of Serbia” (interview with Mario, 26 April 2018). This framing of solidarity with refugees as grounded in opposition to war was thus also deeply connected to political positionings in the Serbian context, and to rejection of the nationalist and militaristic tendencies of the current government.

The criminalisation of solidarity and the open letter

The Serbian authorities started showing clearer hostility towards self-organised migrant spaces and solidarity actors in mid-2016. In July, the city of Belgrade engaged in an impromptu renovation of parks, which soon

turned out to be an ideal pretext to ban the refugee presence. Arguing that the grass needed to be replanted, parks were dug up, and areas where people had previously been able to plant tents were covered with plastic, making any camping in the park effectively impossible (Obradović-Wochnik and Mitrović, 2016). Some of the derelict buildings used as shelters by refugees located around the site of the future Belgrade Waterfront project were also forcibly evacuated. And that summer, the group Miksalište, which had emerged as an important provider of services and central hub for the organisation of various activities, was also displaced from its location as part of the evictions anticipating the Belgrade Waterfront project (Zaba, 2016). The Serbian state forced the organisation out before destroying the building entirely. Shortly after, a refugee aid kiosk run by the volunteer group Info Park, located in the colloquially named “Afghan park”, was shut down by municipal authorities. The kiosk provided daily updates to refugees and migrants about the situation at the borders and was coordinating some of the food distribution.⁶ There were several protests led by migrants and their supporters to contest evictions and marginalisation over 2016. For instance, in response to rumours about their impending eviction from the park, a group of about 150 refugees and migrants began a hunger strike on 22 July 2016. In October, around 400 migrants started a march toward Hungary, calling for the re-opening of the border (Associated Press in Belgrade, 2016).

Towards the end of 2016, the criminalisation of solidarity further intensified. In November 2016, an official Open Letter was circulated to refugee aid groups by the authorities, which deemed the spontaneous provision of care and material aid outside official refugee camps “no longer acceptable”. The letter said that “all necessary assistance” would be provided through state-run reception and asylum centres. One part of the letter read:

[...] assistance and support in the form of food, clothing, footwear, encouraging migrants to reside outside the designated permanent asylum centers and transit reception centers are [no] longer acceptable, this [particularly] on the territory of the Belgrade city municipality (quoted in Border Monitoring Serbia, 2016).

The Open Letter was issued as the situation of migrants stranded in Serbia further deteriorated following the reinforcement of border control along the Balkan route. People faced a situation of immobilisation and stagnation with serious implications for their mental and physical wellbeing. Although not subject to the direct violence that many refugees experienced in neighbouring Bulgaria and Hungary, people stuck inside Serbia faced indirect violence and neglect through living in extreme poverty, intense social exclusion, and lack of access to care (among other things), and many developed complex forms of trauma as their experience in Serbia came to exacerbate already existing psychological conditions.

The Letter seemed to serve a range of purposes. It forcefully re-asserted state control over areas where autonomous organising had started happening. By attempting to remove refugees from public spaces, it set out to foreclose the possibility of future solidarities. It was also part of a discourse aimed at being seen and heard by the EU. Adopting a securitising camp-based approach to migration portrays Serbia as willing and able to implement EU control-centred migration policy, thus engaging in a performance of the suitability of its application to European membership. Importantly, it also made Serbia eligible for vast amounts of EU funding dedicated to the running of camps, as I will come back to later.

Although the Open Letter was not a formal piece of legislation, it came with important consequences for groups supporting migrants. The implicit message was that groups would either conform the new camp-based securitised model of care provision, or they would sever their relationship with the state. As one participant explained:

It was more blackmail than law, but it scared us to be honest. We could have, like, lost our status as an NGOs, which you know is quite a big risk to take, because this is where people work and their livelihood and so on (interview with Serdjan, 25 April 2018).

The Open Letter came together with an increase in police harassment of independent activists, and threats addressed at international volunteers, which sometimes resulted in their deportation from the country. In

this sense, although the process of criminalisation through law was not complete (the Open Letter remained an informal regulation), in practice, participants experienced virtual illegalisation. Moreover, while the official discourse was that camps and centres were able to host all refugees and migrants in the country, research participants explained that even in the cases where migrants had attempted to be accommodated in camps, it had proven difficult due to limited capacity. For single men in particular, who fell off priority lists based on vulnerability criteria broadly oblivious to masculine vulnerabilities, access to shelter in state-ran camps was virtually impossible. Homelessness among migrants and particularly single men was common and increasing (Obradovic-Wochnik and Mitrović, 2016).

This also points to an ideological shift. Rather than banning material aid and food distribution solely to deter people from staying in parks, the government in fact declared that the refugee population outside the camps was legitimately negligible and unworthy of care. By stating its capacity to take care of those willing to abide by its rules (something which was in fact impossible considering the lack of reception capacity in the camps), the Serbian state engaged in a traditional tactic of statecraft. It produced a legitimate public deserving of attention, while justifying its negligence towards others: by doing so, it moved the authority to govern away from society, thus authoritatively reasserting the primacy of sovereign power over popular power. In response to the type of criticism put forward by volunteers and activists, Serbian authorities would reply by insisting that camps had space to host all those who wanted to reside in them. This implied that migrants and refugees who lived on the streets out of choice were thus responsible for their own neglect and were legitimate targets of criminalisation and harassment.

The barracks and their eviction

This Letter was sent at the time when an important site of self-organised migrant accommodation had emerged in central Belgrade: the barracks were a series of abandoned warehouses behind the city's central bus and train station that were occupied by migrants in late summer 2016. They subsequently hosted between 1,000 and 2,000 people through one of

the harshest winters in decades. The buildings lacked windows, heating, or hygienic facilities. Whilst conditions were extremely tough, often negatively compared to those of the Calais jungle (Corner, 2017), a self-organised community emerged. People installed tents, makeshift toilets, and collective kitchens, and organised life in the barracks with the sporadic support of the few volunteers and activists who broke the governmental order not to help. In spite of the Open Letter, a number of individuals and groups indeed kept providing street-level help to migrants, especially in and around these barracks. The groups that remained active were a mix of politically subversive Serbian activist networks, whose relationship to the government was already severed, and independent non-Serbian groups who were less dependent on their relation to the Serbian government. In spite of the Open Letter, participants explained that the government still tolerated some support activities taking place, in their view in order to avoid a catastrophe such as barrack residents dying due to cold or starvation.

The barracks were eventually evacuated in dubious circumstances on 10 May 2017, as spring returned following a terrible winter. The previous day, representatives from the Commissariat came to the barracks together with police officers and warned people they would be coming to spray what later was confirmed to be toxic insecticide. According to interviews, the residents were told they would have to leave for a few hours but would then be able to come back. Commissariat officers arrived early on 10 May 2017, some of them wearing chemical protection outfits, and started spraying the barracks, although many people were still inside and most had not had time to retrieve their belongings. The events were recorded on video.⁷ Officers and security personnel started destroying tents and social spaces inside the barracks, such as the collective kitchens and shower areas, and eventually announced that all residents would be transferred to camps. Several officers reportedly acted and spoke aggressively, pushing people around, and forcing them into nearby parks under police surveillance from which camp transfers were organised. A participant noted: “the atmosphere that day was highly tense. These Commissariat people looked like professional security guards or bouncers... They were wearing Commissariat uniforms but looked like bodyguards” (interview with Mario, 26 April 2018).

Reportedly, many refugees did not trust the Commissariat and were unsure whether to follow their orders. At this point, the Commissariat mobilised people from refugee aid organisations and asked them to mediate with the refugees in order to convince them to gather in the parks and board buses to the camps. Mario went on to explain: “although the Commissariat told people they could choose where they would go, I was sure they were lying. And I was right as later we found out that they would just bring everyone to one camp until it was full, and then bring everyone to the next camp until it was also full and so on and so forth... Some NGO people were repeating the Commissariat’s words to the refugees, although no one knew whether it was true or not, and then it was of course not true” (interview with Mario, 26 April 2018). Eventually, the vast majority of previous barracks residents were put on buses and sent to official accommodation centres, many of them in distant locations.

The encampment of the majority of the barracks residents had an important impact on how support could be provided to refugees and migrants, as well as on the structuration of refugee aid field. In line with the vision articulated in the November 2016 Open Letter, informal street level distribution of aid, and the friendships and socialities that may emerge from these encounters, became *de facto* impossible. In order to remain operative, aid groups had to register as official NGOs and gain access to camps through the Serbian state. In other words, the possibility to provide support and care to refugee and migrant communities became conditional on approval from the state. Informal groups and registered organisations with oppositional politics effectively saw their possibility to provide aid invalidated. A participant explained:

Just before destroying the barracks, the Commissariat had called a meeting which they had in the Miksalište office. They wanted to tell us how it would work from now, and what we could do as NGOs in their new system. First of all they told us some lies, they didn't tell us the truth of how they would evacuate the barracks. But they were somewhat being nice, you

know, they were kind of saying that if we help them with the situation then we can keep working with the refugees... but in the camps ... (interview with Serdjan, 25 April 2018).

Serbian authorities were thereby institutionalising a particular field within which they were able to exercise pressure and use “access” as a leverage to ensure compliance and mute criticism on the part of refugee aid groups. This move had practical implications but also discursive and ideological ones; it was now expected that “civil society” would add its voice to that of the state in claiming that the only appropriate way to help migrants and refugees was through guiding them towards the state-controlled system. Institutionalised support became the only legitimate form of support. By forcing groups and individuals to become NGOs in order to remain operative, and by tying these NGOs to the securitised camp approach, the Serbian state has thus established a system where all involved actors participate in reproducing a model within which the state has control, primacy, and priority. Following the period of relative autonomy that had emerged as of 2015, when the lack of interest or ability of the state in supporting refugees in the country had led to the multiplication and growing importance of more informal, somewhat untraditional aid actors, this eviction marked the final shift towards a period of securitisation and control over migration in Serbia.

Access to camps and funding as disciplining mechanisms

The encampment of migrants and the establishment of a care system strictly linked to state-run camps brought about further control over both migrants and those non-state actors who had decided to continue their aid activities by registering and seeking approval from the government. Additionally, registering as NGOs means that groups entered the competitive field of civil society, where access to funds also operates as a disciplining mechanism by encouraging groups to frame their activities and objectives in ways that are congenial to donors’ interests.

A participant employed in a group that started in 2015 as an independent volunteer network and registered as an NGO in 2016 explained the radical change his organisation experienced following the closure of the barracks:

For two years, their [his organisation, before he joined] entire work was taking place in Belgrade, first in the parks and then in the barracks... They provided material aid in these places and they also had education activities for people living there. In a few days, it completely changed as these people we were helping were taken far away from Belgrade. We had access to the camps through an agreement with the Commissariat, so we started doing some activities there and that was all we could do (interview with Simon, 9 May 2018).

In turn, running programs as NGOs also has a specific impact on these groups. The literature around NGO-isation and professionalisation has powerfully documented the disciplinary effects of these processes and their association with neoliberal modes of governance in a range of contexts (see Omvedt, 1994; Hearn, 1998; Alvarez, 1999; Hanafi and Tabar, 2002; Jad, 2003; Stubbs, 2006). Strikingly, Arundhati Roy (2014) has equated NGO-isation, by which she means the phenomenon through which the field of social change becomes characterised by a proliferation of funded, registered NGOs, with a denaturation of resistance and, in fact, politics. One aspect highlighted by Roy is the coincidence of the emergence of the NGO field with the opening of markets to neoliberalism. As states withdraw from providing public services in a range of areas, NGOs appear to “fill in the gaps” in ways that are limited, unaccountable to the people served through these services, and biased by dependency on donors.

In other words, the institutionalisation of political work through NGO-isation has deep structural implications: it “dictates the agenda... turns confrontation into negotiation... depoliticizes resistance” (Roy, 2014). These depoliticising dynamics are exacerbated for refugees and migrants, who are turned into aid recipients within a camp-based system of humanitarian aid administration. As powerfully illustrated by critical

scholars and activists, such modes of intervention based on charity and humanitarianism also have de-politicising and disciplining effects (Ticktin, 2011; Fassin, 2011; Malkki, 1996, 2015). In the Serbian situation, “becoming an NGO” was a process marked by the injunction to perform a depoliticised sense of professionalism (see also Sapoch, 2018). When I asked participants to reflect on what guaranteed access to camps and funding, they pointed to the need to present their organisation in a way that seemed in line with particular representations of civil society and professional aid providers. Spontaneous forms of relating to refugees and migrants, for instance, became increasingly discouraged within this model, where the appearance of professionalism seems connected to the assertion of a distance between the NGO and its “beneficiaries”. One participant explained:

[My organisation] started professionalising before the eviction [of the barracks], towards the end of 2016. This shift changed our way to work in the first place. But after the eviction, when we started working more in camps, then I can really say it changed a lot... in the way I speak with, work with, even I think “deal” with the refugees. The context of the camp, I mean the setting, is different and it doesn’t feel the same as if we are sitting on a bench in a park, even if the situation is hard, it is more like speaking to a neighbour for instance. But just also now we are not like doing this as volunteers, we are staff and we need to act in the way of staff (interview with Serdjan, 25 April 2018).

Unlike the solidarity interactions that Serdjan was previously engaged in, the relations he develops with refugees and migrants in camps as an employee of an official NGO that has secured camp access through the Serbian state and funding through international aid agencies, are inherently “hierarchical, non-reciprocal, non-dialogical and mediatised” (see Pendaki, forthcoming). They are in this sense thoroughly de-politicised.

Besides the behavioural changes associated with “becoming NGOs”, organisations working with refugees in Serbia now also had to negotiate their access to funding. With the multiplication of migration-related NGO

structures in Serbia between 2015 and 2017, access to funding became a site of competition between organisations. The first way this was alluded to in interviews regarded the effect of this competition on the relations between organisations. An employee of a recently registered NGO that started as a network of volunteers providing assistance in Belgrade's public spaces remarked:

Sometimes we are really walking on eggs... If other groups perceive that you are trying to infringe on their territory, they can become very nasty... In 2016, we had a conflicting relationship to the Commissariat, but now things are better... They need us, so they have calmed down... But in 2016 we had a good working relationship with almost all the other groups, we could share information and resources like storage spaces and stuff like that... Well now, we don't see it like we need each other, rather we see each other as enemies or like competitors... (interview with Simon, 9 May 2018).

Competition, a consequence of these organisations' entry into a neoliberal professionalised field, has thus had a deep impact on the relationships between groups that used to work broadly on a cooperation model. As Serdjan put it, "helping refugees is only part of the job now... we still do that but also it is about making your space in the market" (interview with Serdjan, 25 April 2018).

In turn, survival within the "market" also influences the way organisations speak and think about their work, and report on their activities. Some participants complained that other organisations inflated their activity reports to "look as if they do more than the truth" and thus secure more funding, or satisfy their donors (interview with Danika, 30 April 2018). As mentioned earlier, there are strong incentives to join in the official discourse over the desirable way to distribute aid. Some participants explained that the pressure to find a particular organisational "niche", a service area within which the organisation could present itself as competent and attractive to donors, became more important than the work done with

migrants and refugees. This point was regularly repeated in relation to the criteria of vulnerability that often underpins calls for projects from large donors and institutions. A researcher who has also worked with numerous INGOs and local groups noticed:

Donors only focus on pre-defined vulnerable groups, mostly women and children. As a consequence, all NGOs who want to access funding have to create projects addressing the situation of women and children primarily. And so there is nothing for young men, including accompanied minors in their late teens. If you constantly ignore a group on the basis that it doesn't fit your vulnerability criteria, then you actually produce the most vulnerable group of all! Today in Serbia young men are among the most at risk, and still NGOs do projects with other groups because no one sees young men as vulnerable (discussion with Jelena, 25 August 2018).

This process must also be analysed within the broader context of Serbian/EU relations. Serbia has been in official accession negotiations with the EU since 2014, yet reforms in view of integrating into the EU started in the early 2000s.⁸ The accession negotiations, as for other countries, have been characterised by the strong ability of the EU to shape domestic policies (Tomić, 2013; Vetta, 2018). These dynamics have also been at work in the development of a migration management framework in line with EU's concerns in Serbia and based on an increased control of borders and preventing "unwanted departures" towards EU member states. Since 2015, the EU has officially disbursed close to 100 million Euros for this purpose. According to the European Commission, this money has been allocated "to ensure the accommodation of migrants and refugees in accommodation centres; to support the delivery of health and other primary services to refugees, migrants and host communities; and to reinforce its border control capabilities" (EC Press Release, 2017). Serbian authorities have shown commitment to align their migration policy to the EU's regulations and approach, a position which is instrumental to their accession negotiations

and makes the country eligible for vast amounts of funding. There is thus a convergence of interest between the EU and the Serbian government, which has translated into the institutionalisation of assistance to refugees through the establishment of a state-run camp system.

Governmentality and attempts at resistance

One of the consequences of the institutionalisation of the field is that the prescribed identity for refugee aid groups has become a purely humanitarian, non-political one. NGOs find themselves subjected to particular forms of governmentality and disciplining. In order to survive, they develop an interest in projecting and performing their alignment with official discourses and practices. In turn, they become key elements of the Serbian (and European) border regime, which brings together gendered and racialised border controls and securitised forms of humanitarian assistance. Some participants working for NGOs seemed to embrace the apolitical identity of their organisation, yet more expressed their frustration with this assigned position.

However, there were a number of people and groups who refused to integrate into the highly controlled sphere of state-led refugee assistance and found ways to circumvent its rules. This can be achieved through more individual-level activities: Mario, for instance, continues to support a refugee family now living in one of the reception centres, by arranging for them to visit Belgrade on a weekly basis and spending time with the family members, mainly the children. Yet this has become disconnected from larger political activities or advocacy on behalf of refugees and migrants in Serbia. People previously involved in (the now dissolved group) No Border Serbia are also still active as independent activists, and support people on a more individual basis.

Besides, the mode of governmentality imposed by the Serbian authorities and the EU has a differentiated effect on different groups, depending on their ambitions, politics, relation to the state, and sources of funding. Local groups were more thoroughly affected due to their dependence on the local context, and the importance of preserving relations with the state. To this

extent, foreign organisations have been less exposed to such pressure. On the one hand, some large groups hold particular institutional credibility and visibility which provides them with a form of protection: this could be seen in the case of MSF which retained a critical tone towards the authorities but could effectively not be pushed out due to its international profile. On the other hand, smaller organisations of foreign volunteers were able to push back against the state's injunction, partly because the risk associated with entering in conflict with the authorities were lower for foreign than for local volunteers and activists.

No Name Kitchen (NNK) is a good example. Originally a network of mainly Spanish volunteers involved in providing food in the Belgrade barracks, the group registered as an NGO in 2017 in order to continue its activities, focusing on Šid, at the border with Croatia. Even after registering, they retained a strong politicised identity and did not shy away from denouncing the situation and criticising the authorities, including on social media. They also tried to preserve a solidarity-based mode of operation, whereby refugees are involved in the preparation and distribution of food, and to the extent possible, to the everyday decision-making of the group, and where producing temporary encounters based on respect and equality is seen as central. As a result, however, NNK members have faced issues, including what they report as police harassment and being targeted by stigmatising discourses (No Name Kitchen, no date). Two NNK members were deported from Serbia. Nonetheless, NNK members always retained the possibility of ending operations in Serbia, and leaving the country – an option often unavailable to Serbian activists.

Among local groups, taking strong political stances and denouncing governmental practices and policies towards refugees and migrants has been more difficult for the reasons explained above. As a result, groups who accepted not working with migrants and refugees anymore, thereby not requiring camp access, found themselves in a better position to criticise governmental practices towards migrants. This was the case for example with the organisation Women In Black (WiB), an international network of women's groups primarily mobilised against war, militarism, and other

forms of violence, and which has occupied a highly oppositional position towards the government for decades. WiB had been active in supporting migrants and refugees in public spaces including the barracks over 2015 and 2016, yet they do not operate as service providers and never sought access to the camps. This allowed them to retain an openly critical position towards the government, and to organise events and rallies calling for a change in policy. Finally, in spite of the strong disciplinary effects deployed by the authorities, there remain – as always – areas of circumvention and creativity, spaces of alternative socialities, which NGO workers still manage to navigate, in spite of the official approach.

Conclusion: Common marginalisations and future solidarities?

The solidarity movement that emerged in support of migrants and refugees in Serbia since 2015 has been to a great extent neutralised and co-opted by the Serbian authorities and the EU, through the establishment of a highly controlled and regulated field of operations. Refugee aid activities can now only take place within official, state-run camps, where migrants and refugees are stranded in isolation from the rest of society. These camps, supported through EU funding, have become part of a lucrative migration industry in Serbia, which suffers from serious transparency issues. In order to assert and maintain control over refugee aid, and to establish this profitable migration business, the Serbian government has skilfully discredited and disqualified forms of support occurring outside its realm of control.

What may we learn from the rise and fall of migration solidarity in Serbia? As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, until people were transferred to the camps, the stage where much of the solidarity unfolded was right in the centre of Belgrade, close to other spaces of struggle. One of the most significant was the site earmarked for the construction of the Belgrade Waterfront project, a luxurious mega urban development project that led to the evictions of over 230 families. These evictions took place at the same time as migrants were being forcefully dislodged from public parks and abandoned buildings only a few hundred meters away. Both migrants and impoverished urban residents that stood in the way of the Waterfront

project were described as “surplus” that hindered the development of Belgrade into a “new European capital” on its way to EU accession and were thus swiftly removed to make space for a new vision of the city and its desirable residents.

Some activists at the time thought and fought as one the violence exercised by the Serbian state against migrants and social groups deemed as obstructive to its project of urban redevelopment and privatisation (interview with Karika, 2 May 2018; interview with Fidel, 23 April 2018). It is at this intersection, they believed, that new grounds for solidarity, understood as a process of identifying with one another and organising together on the basis of shared material circumstances, could have been more forcefully recognised. To a large extent, the political movements that emerged against the Waterfront project and in support of people threatened by eviction failed to engage with the situation of migrants and refugees, and to develop a discourse that emphasised the commonalities of those situations. Reciprocally, migrant solidarity groups – especially due to their professionalisation process which neutralised their political criticism – now tend to reproduce humanitarian discourses of exceptionalism that isolate migrants and refugees from the circumstances they inhabit.

Yet, as elsewhere, and without overlooking the specificities of the local context or the particular relationship between civic groups and the state in Serbia, it seems that the future of solidarity and the hope for its meaningful intervention on the political scene is located precisely at the intersection of apparently separated struggles, which need to converge in order for a more systematic critique and resistance to emerge.

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Interviews

Interview with Nino, 20 April 2018

Interview with Fidel, 23 April 2018

Interview with Serdjan, 25 April 2018

Interview with Mario, 26 April 2018

Interview with Danika, 30 April 2018

Interview with Karika, 2 May 2018

Interview with Simon, 9 May 2018

Interview with Commissariat officers, 22 May 2018

Discussion with Jonathan, 6 May 2018

Discussion with Jelena, 25 August 2018

Notes

- 1 I refer to people engaging in cross-border movements in search of safety or a life 'beyond mere survival' either as migrants and refugees, whether or not they have been recognised as such by state-enforced legislation. This comes from the belief that, in spite of official separation and ordering of people's mobilities, they hold more in common than they are different.
- 2 For further insights into ideological discourse around the project, see the site of the Belgrade Waterfront: <https://www.belgradewaterfront.com/en/construction-progress-january-2018>
- 3 The first borders to be officially closed in September 2015 were the border between Hungary and Serbia and Hungary and Croatia, where Hungarian authorities constructed razor wire fences. See Beznec, Speer and Stojić Mitrović, 2016.
- 4 Although hundreds of thousands have passed through Serbia on the way to western Europe, the UNHCR estimated the number of refugees in Serbia in May 2017 at around 7,400.
- 5 Although Serbia became a de facto host country in March 2016, asylum processes remained highly exclusionary, leading to situations of prolonged limbo for people stranded in the country. According to MSF statistics,

in 2017, there were 6,199 declared asylum intentions yet only 236 actual applications. These resulted in 158 interviews and only three people were granted refugee status (interview with Nino, 20 April 2018). When questioned about such low numbers, authorities tend to justify their exclusionary practices by saying that people do not want to stay in Serbia and that the country is one of transit only (interview with Commissariat officers, 22 May 2018).

- 6 Both events were also reported in updates by local and international NGOs. See Inter-agency Update November, 2016; Serbia Update 31 October - 2 November, 2016.
- 7 A video can be seen at <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/serbia-refugee-camp-insecticide-video-forceful-eviction-spray-a7732761.html>.
- 8 Reforms included, as elsewhere, massive cuts in public spending, large-scale privatisation, and the liquidation of public enterprises (Vetta, 2019).

Part III:
Contesting and Challenging
“Solidarity”:
Alternative Solidarities,
Varying Struggles

EMPLOYING REFUGEES, DEPLOYING HUMANITARIAN AID

Eda Sevinin

Introduction

In the fieldwork I conducted on faith-based, Islamic humanitarian networks and actors (formally or informally) affiliated to these networks in Denizli, in southwestern Turkey, I repeatedly came across one practice: securing jobs for refugees without legal work permits was framed as an important part of humanitarian action. Jobs for refugees were found through informal networks; these were low-paid, labour-intensive jobs on the informal labour market, mostly in the textile sector. Even after the job was secured, aid-givers did not stop delivering aid (exclusively in-kind but sometimes in money, too) to the refugees, most of whom were families. In fact, they did not even consider stopping aid provisions to the families whose members had started working.

The reason behind this is twofold. First, the actors participating in humanitarian aid provisions understood their practices (mostly aid in-kind) not as a form of temporary action. Even though giving aid was initiated for the “immediate relief of (refugees’) suffering”, it was not materialized as temporary aid-giving but rather formulated as a regularized way of relating to refugees and keeping in touch with them. Therefore, humanitarian practices turn into a platform (or medium) of sociality where relations established through aid-giving and aid-receiving become a way of knowing

each other and making sense of the world(s) in which they relate to each other (Long and Moore, 2013 cited in Rozakou, 2016).

Along with the sociality, humanitarian aid in Denizli today is founded on certain moral conditions to which those involved in the relational matrix of sociality were expected to commit. These moral conditions are not only based on religious or cultural convictions of what morality entails but also on ideas of productivity and work ethic. Work determines one's deservingness of aid and vouches for the hard work of the humanitarian actors (volunteers) in Turkey. This brings me to the second reason, which is related to the first: finding a job for someone who is, at the same time, an aid recipient challenges the nexus of work and self-reliance. Humanitarians and aid recipients continue their aid-oriented relations and wage labour does not provide self-sufficiency for the refugee workers. Hence, the scale of "neediness" becomes extended to the wage labourers.

Not only do the refugees as aid-receivers become integrated into the informal labour market (in this case, the textile industry), they also remain within the sociality constructed in and through humanitarian relations. Given that many textile industry employers are the biggest donors to many of the (Islamic) humanitarian networks, labour relations also become entangled with aid relations in the sociality established. In this paper, I propose to look into how the refugees are located within the broader entanglements of political economic relations first, as a part of the informal labour market and, second, as aid recipients. Throughout the paper, I will argue that the two (informal wage labourer and aid recipient) are not mutually exclusive.

Incorporation into the labour market is usually understood as a way of refugees' "integration" into the host society. This understanding shows no difference in humanitarian networks I worked with in Denizli. Being part of employment relations, for the actors in humanitarian networks, denotes not only labour relations but also relations of hospitality, of embracing the "newcomers". However, such a way of thinking obstructs the relations of power and asymmetry embedded both in humanitarianism as well as in labour and work configurations. In this paper, I start by questioning the moral values and discourses of productivity attached to work in the given locality.

Kathi Weeks (2011), in her book *The Problem with Work*, argues that we live in a “work society”, the conditions of which are largely constituted by capitalist modernity. Rejecting the social and economic theories that see work as a private, natural, and apolitical activity, Weeks argues that work goes beyond mere economic implication: it is “a social convention and disciplinary apparatus rather than economic necessity”. As such, it is a social, public, and political issue. Weeks (*ibid.*, pp.7-8) asserts that in the liberal imaginary pertaining to the individual, work occupies a central position as it is the force that transforms “subjects into independent individuals”. This process is also intertwined with citizenship rights. Therefore, she contends: “Work produces not just economic goods and services but also social and political subjects. In other words, the wage relation generates not just income and capital, but disciplined individuals, governable subjects, worthy citizens, and responsible family members” (*ibid.*:8). Weeks calls these societies in which the liberal imaginary of the independent working individual assimilates citizenship the “work society”. Subjects of the work society are positioned within the moral economy of labour and are expected to embrace the moral values of work. These values render work into an “individual moral practice and collective ethical obligation” (*ibid.*:11).

Work society assumes a moral economy intertwined with economic activities. This moral economy serves as a guide for the “ways of thinking about the purposes of economic arrangements and legitimizing specific modes of exploitation (of labour and resources)” (Rajaram, 2015:74). This moral economy, I argue, plays a double function: on the one hand, it attaches moral significance to work and renders subjects within it productive, efficient, and exploitable labour power. On the other hand, the moral economy of labour and work harbours moral judgements by and large derived from gendered and racial hierarchies. It ascribes moral values such as productivity/unproductivity, and hard work/laziness to various subjects in the social configuration. Moral discourses attached to work within this moral economy allow for a hierarchical organization of gendered, classed, and racialized subjects and de-valorises their labour power within capitalist labour relations. Refugees, ethnic and religious minorities, racialized people and women are usually the subjects of this double function. Therefore, this

moral economy not only implicates power relations that incorporate people into capitalist modes of production, it also defines their differentiated places within this moral economy and imaginary of productivity.

In Denizli, integrating refugees in the informal textile sector as wage labourers bears this double function of the work society. Refugees are expected to become income generators and productive independent individuals as the work society commands. This plays out in conjunction with a discourse that values hard work and productivity. Together with the work contracts, refugees are expected to shoulder the moral economy of work society. On the other hand, work found for refugees is on the informal market, highly open to exploitation, low-paid, and labour-intensive. Volunteers and humanitarians in humanitarian networks expect refugees to play their part in the moral economy of the work society regardless of the working conditions. In fact, the textile sector (and also the marble sector to a lesser extent) is presented as the best option available for refugees who do not hold working permits and citizenship rights. Thus, forcibly displaced and dispossessed subjects are positioned in the multi-layered and intersecting hierarchies of the work society.

The incorporation of refugee subjects into relations of capital is mostly associated with the processes of displacement and dispossession. According to this readily “linear” linkage, displaced and dispossessed subjects find themselves detached from their means and capabilities of (social) reproduction. This detachment compels people to sell their labour power on the labour market, thus resulting in the commodification of labour. Accordingly, people who have lost the ownership of means of (re) production become wage labourers or surplus populations, whose potential for productive function is sustained within social relations. Refugees, in this process, are regarded as the most vulnerable, as those who have (at least temporarily) lost their membership of a nation-state, and hence their access to certain social rights. Displaced and dispossessed, refugees are presumed to be incorporated into exploitative capitalist relations more easily as cheap labour or surplus populations. Although I agree that these processes propel displaced people to be integrated in the global restructuring of capital accumulation, the link between the two is too readily assumed.

Based on my research in Denizli, an urban space that is a destination point for various migrant populations and the textile capital of Turkey, I argue that the link between the displacement/dispossession nexus and the incorporation of refugee labour into the capitalist labour relations is a non-linear and much fragmented one. For Jason Read (2003), this link cannot be followed solely through legal or institutional regulations; the production of subjectivity is necessary for the incorporation of new subjects into capitalist regimes of accumulation. He argues that for this incorporation or a new mode of production to become dominant, it would not suffice “to simply form a new economy, or write new laws, it must institute itself in the quotidian dimensions of existence – it must become habit”. Following this line of argument, Read (2003:36) reminds us that

Marx’s critique of so-called primitive accumulation [the violence necessary to destroy pre-capitalist social relations] begins to point to a specific problem within the mode of production: the manner in which a mode of production is constitutive and constituted by desires, forms of living, and intentions: subjectivity.

In a similar vein, Foucault’s theories regarding the capillary powers point to how “capitalist modes of production rely on the minute powers that create and institutionalise ways of knowing about the self and about work in order to ensure the reproduction of a labouring class” (Rajaram, 2018:2). Thus, beyond the formal configurations enabled by law and institutions, other discursive and material forms of power relations become part of the link between displacement/dispossession and labour.

Refugees who live in Denizli are the main subjects of this intersection of humanitarianism and labour relations. They are rendered (potentially) productive labour forces through humanitarian discourses, which advance and reproduce the moral economy. Along with it, refugees are positioned as racialized subjects whose labour power is de-valorised through the moralizing discourses attached to work as well as the ways in which the work is presented as a gift, as an act of benevolence. Humanitarian relations

that “help” refugees to enter into relations of employment—simply through finding a job in the informal textile sector—simultaneously function as the reproductive force behind the double function of moral economy attached to labour and work.

In the following section, I will introduce a methodological note. Then, I will discuss how humanitarian spaces are constituted and rendered enabling for the reproduction of the workforce. In the third part, I will provide an ethnographic account of the moral economy of labour and work in Denizli and show how employment is presented as an act of benevolence. Finally, in the conclusion, I will discuss how power relations incorporate humanitarianism into capitalist labour relations.

Methodology

I conducted a year-long fieldwork in Denizli, Turkey, where I collected the field data through in-depth interviews with the volunteers and workers of (especially) Islamically oriented humanitarian networks.¹ These networks and the actors affiliated to them were the main focus of my research for two reasons: first, they epitomized the state’s discourse of “benevolence” informed by Islamic and cultural narratives regarding the Syrian refugees. Secondly, they have been strikingly active in providing to the needs of Syrian refugees, probably more than any other organizations since 2011, the beginning of the turmoil in Syria. Besides these networks, I also conducted interviews with state actors involved in migration management, municipality officials, and local partners of international organizations such as the UNHCR and Mercy Corps. Besides interviews, I attended the regular and one-time aid-giving events and had the chance to accompany humanitarian networks’ house visits to aid-receiving households to be able to observe the encounters on site and in-time. Moreover, the ways in which these encounters are articulated and narrated by the primary actors of humanitarian networks provided me with the background to these relations I will map out.

I would like to mention a few notes pertaining to the scope of this research. Firstly, I conducted this research during the state of emergency

in force between 20 July 2016 to 16 July 2018. The state of emergency was declared following the attempted coup d'état by a faith-based organization, the Gülen Movement, a previously well-known and reputable Islamic political organization also involved in charity. This being the case, all Islamic networks (civil society organizations, neighbourhood associations, humanitarian NGOs, etc.) found themselves in a highly securitized² environment.

Additionally, the government was pointing at the “Western powers” as accomplices and instigators of the attempted coup d'état (Sarı and Dinçer, 2017). In such a setting, I was approached quite warily. I was coming from a “European” university and asking questions about how organisations were establishing relations with refugees and what aid activities they envisioned. This, I realized, cast doubt on me and my research. A couple of times I was introduced as a “journalist” in meetings even though I had informed everyone more than once that I was doing my research on humanitarianism and these interviews and field visits were for research purposes.

Moreover, the state of emergency and its political repercussions paved the way for further repressive measures and centralization of politics at the hands of the ruling party. Not only Islamic political and civil society networks were securitized. The government “also seems to use the emergency rule to also criminalize, silence, and eradicate other opponents, including pro-Kurdish, Alevi, LGBTI, feminist, and leftist politicians, academics, journalists, and activists” (Sarı and Dinçer, 2017). Any articulations of opposing ideas were readily featured as “elements of terrorist organizations”. Even people who were not content with certain aspects of the country's migration regime did not wholeheartedly share those ideas with me. For that reason, it was important for me to supplement interviews with actual encounters between humanitarian network actors and refugees. This, I hope to have compensated, through actively participating in the house visits, one-time, or regular aid deliveries.

Along with these relatively macro-political reasons, another part of the story concerns my position. I was coming from a different social and political background – a “secular looking” young woman from a university

in a European country which most approached suspiciously. Thus, the distance between myself and the actors in the field sometimes seemed unbridgeable to me, even in the moments I felt very much welcomed. By distance I mean not only the differentiations in our lifestyles, everyday relations, and practices, but also in terms of the political, moral, and ethical approaches as far as the migration regime is concerned. However, I was also aware that it is not only our perspectives regarding the migration regime that differentiated us. Borders drawn between me and the interviewees were reflections of the broader political entanglements which locate each of us at different corners of a bipolarized politics. Recent political debates in Turkey reduced political engagement to bipolarized and, so to speak, mutually exclusive boulevards: Muslim and secular, pious and non-believer, and so on. Sometimes, these poles did not allow me to ask the questions I had been struggling with. Similarly, the interviewees politely avoided some of my questions, laying claim to “mutual unintelligibility”. Although for most of the time I felt welcomed, what I came to realize at the end of the fieldwork was that borders as well as the potentialities of mutual intelligibility between researcher and interviewees are conditioned very much by the political, social, and economic dimensions that are far beyond the goodwill of either party.

In order not to overlook what is embedded and glossed over in a relation shaped and conditioned by humanitarianism, and in order to pay due attention to the differences, histories, asymmetries, powers, as well as potentialities embedded in these relations, I take humanitarian relations not as unilateral humanitarian practices between the giver and the receiver. What I attempted to do is to provide a more nuanced picture of the relations that, at first sight, render refugees depoliticized subjects of compassion. Humanitarian *encounters* between refugees and locals through which the different (politicized) subjectivities are constructed and interact with each other were the main point of departure for the analysis mapped out here.

Enabling humanitarian encounters: The Denizli cityscape

This section focuses on one particular form of aid offered—finding a job—by Islamically oriented humanitarian networks³ to refugees in Denizli. Since Turkey upholds a geographical limitation to the 1951 Geneva Convention, people who are not nationals of Council of Europe countries are not granted refugee status and are settled in satellite cities until their resettlement. Denizli⁴ is one of these cities. This temporary settlement is marked by precarity and rightlessness. Lack of an operational⁵ work permit is one such precarising effect. Thus, refugees in Denizli are usually employed in the textile (and marble) industry which has a very large degree of informality.

The so-called Syrian “refugee crisis” had its own repercussions in Denizli as well. The city developed quite a rich scene of humanitarian networks which derive their organizational and motivational identity from Islamic narratives and convictions. Although Denizli is a satellite city for various refugee groups, “the genuine refugee” (i.e. the ones that deserve to be “the refugee”) among them has been an abstracted figure: “Sunni Muslim Arab Syrian families”. Islamic humanitarian networks that had neglected the refugee populations residing in the city (Afghans and Iranians, mostly) thus far mobilized while developing a distinct figure of refugeehood: the universal victim of (religious) persecution.

This distinct figure of the refugee, that is, Sunni Muslim Arab Syrian family (members), is partly a reflection and representation of Turkey’s migration regime which has been coupled with the language of the “refugee crisis”. During the heated debates on the “refugee crisis”, the Turkish state developed a relatively distinct language of “crisis management”. This language of “crisis management” has juxtaposed Turkey vis-à-vis the West, in that Turkey was realizing what the West has failed or rejected: “protection of those (Muslims) in need of protection”. Such a representation of Turkey’s position vis-à-vis the “West” and the Syrian refugees allowed the Turkish state to present itself “exceptionally humanitarian” while reconciling “transnational human rights norms with nationalist objectives” thanks to the language of crisis management (Williams, 2015).

This language contained the debates and regulations on the migration regime under the framework of “humanitarianism” and “hospitality”. The rights and right claims of refugees were largely neglected and the Turkish state’s “benevolence” was located at the centre of what could have been highly politicized debates (Kaya, 2016). Islamic language has been overwhelmingly effective in the development and deployment of this discourse of crisis management. “Humanitarianism” which, to some extent, can be framed as the moral command for the “care of the other who is in need” has been enmeshed with the Islamic and cultural command of “hospitality”.

Another repercussion of this language of crisis management outlined above has been to pin down the debates on migration to a point where only the (Sunni Muslim Arab) Syrians were regarded as legitimate and deserving figures of refugeehood. Although it would be expected that the arrival of a considerably large number of refugees would stir up a debate on Turkey’s migration regime that is predicated on uncertainty and negligence (Biehl, 2015; Yıldız and Sert, 2015), debates on migration were rather delimited to a very narrow framework which concerns only one (albeit large) segment of the refugee population in Turkey. This exceptional hospitality towards the Sunni Muslim Arab Syrians concealed the exclusionary migration regime of Turkey towards different refugee groups.

Turkey implemented an open-door policy for the Syrian refugees between April 2011 and March 2015 and mobilized religiously driven sentiments regarding the persecution that the Syrian people have been subjected to. Concurrently, discourses of inclusivity and solidarity were supplemented with the potential arrival of the Syrian population as surplus cheap labour. For example, the deputy prime minister stated that in border cities such as Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, Adana, and Osmaniye, no one wants to work as blue-collar workers. He added: “If the Syrians leave, factory production in these cities will stop” (Anadolu Press, 6 October 2017). Similarly, on 1 October 2017, the minister of agriculture and rural affairs stated that: “Even if the Syrians want to leave, we cannot let them go” (T24, 1 October 2017). This statement referred to the need for Syrian labour in seasonal agricultural work, the most precarious and informal

sector in Turkey (Taşdemir, 2017; Kavak, 2016). These two discourses, although sounding contradictory, have gone hand in hand for more than six years now. I argue these two discourses are not mutually exclusive but rather mutually reinforcing and enabling. The connection between the two lies in what Didier Fassin (2012) calls “humanitarian government”: the interplay of politics of solidarity and politics of inequality.

Fassin (2012) argues that compassion mobilized vis-à-vis the suffering of others upholds a politics that is double-edged: on the one hand, compassion is directed at the most vulnerable, at the ones who should be “saved” from their current predicament. On the other hand, he argues, the presence of such moral sentiments purports to recognise others as “fellows”. Therefore, inequality and solidarity go hand in hand in humanitarian encounters. The co-existence of the two is the constitutive aspect of “humanitarian government” (Fassin, 2012:3). Their interplay should be the starting point for us to analyse humanitarian reason, a political rationality that “governs precarious lives”.

Partly reflecting and reproducing what has been experienced nationally and transnationally (i.e. the universal image of vulnerable and speechless refugees), and partly developing its own relations to the refugees, Denizli displayed quite a rich scene of sociality with refugees. The main tenets of this sociality are based on networks gathered around Islamic narratives of humanitarian aid. In Denizli, this Islamic narrative that reflects the state-centred discourses mentioned above is mobilized very often, given the precarious and disadvantaged position of refugees. This discourse either created new humanitarian networks or further revived the existing ones. It produced new forms of socialities as well as new figures of power located at the centre of these networks either due to the information they held or the humanitarian generosity they displayed.

In Denizli, in the literal absence of a common language, encounters with the refugees were established as and conditioned by humanitarian relations of giving and receiving. Refugees are imagined and framed as the most vulnerable, as those who have lost everything they once had back in their home country. After processes of displacement and dispossession, they need to construct a “new life” – but this time as a “refugee”. The

main tenets of this new life are constructed within humanitarian relations. Compassion mobilized for refugees pushed them towards a setting where, first, their vulnerability and “neediness” become the primary characteristic and, second, the needs of refugees are “defined” and “satisfied” through humanitarian relations – thus, the politics of inequality (Fassin, 2012).

On the other hand, the Islamic narrative stipulates a “politics of solidarity” (Fassin, 2012), in other words, mobilization of sentiments towards fellowship. What makes a politics of solidarity possible in Turkey is not only the presence and mobilization of compassion as a testimony to the possibility of fellowship and solidarity (Fassin, 2012). Solidarity is also established through religious commands: first, solidarity is a moral duty for Muslims. President Erdoğan [then Prime Minister] expressed this entailment in his own words in 2013:

We are the grandchildren of a muhajirun generation, but at the same time we are the grandchildren of an ansar generation [. . .] my siblings in Reyhanlı should serve as ansar to the muhajirun who fled from the brutality of al-Assad. They should fulfil the same duty, they should also open their homes exactly like it happened at the time [of the Prophet]; and they should not see them [the refugees] as a criminal element against themselves. (Hurriyet Daily News, qtd in Zaman, 2016:31)

Second, this politics of solidarity is intermingled with anti-Western sentiments prevalent in the discourse of Islamically oriented humanitarian networks, and is gaining dominance in Turkey’s political language. This appeal to the *Ummah* as the imagined community (Anderson, 2006) of Muslimhood and anti-Western political engagements opens a space for transnational solidarity with the Syrian refugees and enables the politics of solidarity. Humanitarians in Denizli regarded themselves as moral figures who take care of those “abandoned to death” at the borders of the West. This abandonment was immediately attached to “Islamophobia in the West” and “the West’s reluctance to save the Muslims”. Instead, as a recurrent theme among humanitarians, Muslims should shoulder each other’s causes, and should not trust anyone but their fellow Muslims.

On the other hand, this potentiality of transnational solidarity does not level out the hierarchies. Transnationalized notwithstanding, the ways in which different categories assigned to people are largely predicated upon and conditioned by the nation-state. The nation/state/citizen nexus (Soğuk, 1999) is not undone, nor are the hierarchies between refugees and locals. This solidarity does not eliminate the “politics of inequality” which renders refugees precarious, cheap members of the workforce, or subjects of “humanitarian government” (Fassin, 2012). What is discussed here is the ambivalence produced by the coexistence of the two: how the politics of inequality and politics of solidarity can co-exist; what this coexistence enables; and what tensions lie between them.

These questions will guide the discussions pursued in this chapter. I will focus on labour relations and how these relations play out at the intersection of the politics of solidarity and politics of inequality. I will depart from a particular practice quite common in humanitarian networks in Denizli: finding a job for refugees in the informal textile sector.

I focus on the scalar peculiarities of the city rather than taking it as a mirror reflection of Turkey. Denizli, as an urban locality, has its own history of industrialization, its own relation to capital, to displacement as well as to humanitarianism. It is more than “a straightforward repository for the policies of the state” (Darling, 2017:184). As Glick-Schiller and Caglar (2015:3) argue, “cities have their own governance regimes, economic and spatial development plans and powers (...)”. Thus, building on a scalar analysis allows for a more nuanced approach to the relation between humanitarianism and labour relations, which, in this specific locality, enable and reinforce each other. This being the case, they require specific contextual attention. Another important social dynamic I will discuss is city’s relation to (internal and external) migration.

Making of humanitarian spaces

Thank God, our city is both rich and generous. No one sleeps hungry in this city. We haven't lost the sentiments of neighbourhood, of philanthropy in our city.

The quote above is one of the narratives I heard most often in the field. Almost everyone I talked to at least once articulated their pride in the charitable capacity and potentiality of “their” city and how this attests to their commitment to valuable religious and cultural traditions. After some time in the field, I came to realize how important this charitable field is, not only for people deemed “needy” but also for almost everyone in the city. Charitable acts were deemed to be important acts of being a local/native of Denizli, and, second, performances of reputation, respect, and social status. Philanthropic people are well-known and respected by everyone; almsgiving is a never-ending cycle of the city’s everyday life (especially on Fridays – the holy day of Islam).

The field of humanitarian aid and social assistance is so ubiquitous that it is enmeshed with labour relations and the way in which the working class is related to. Employers and industrialists deem themselves devoted Muslims and constitute their relations both to capital and the workers through an Islamic lens. This Islamic lens is most visible in charitable relations in Denizli. Employers engage in charitable activities in factories before religious holidays. It is very common in the textile industry for employers to distribute “aid packages”, sometimes as a replacement for unpaid salaries. Being pious people, employers and industrialists deem charitable activities to the workers as part of their religious duty. Such a replacement is regarded as a laudable practice by some workers I talked to since the employers keep up with their religious duties.

Denizli, a medium-scale city with a population of approximately 1 million, is one of the most industrialized cities of Turkey. As a part of the attempt to present Denizli as a global brand in textiles, it is now called the “textile capital of Europe”. This industrialization is rather a result of the post-1980 neoliberalisation in the global and national economy (Unluturk-Ulutas, 2015). The transformation from an import substitution economy to export-led industrialization has changed not only the character of the national economy but also the organization of labour at the local level, which requires more nuanced attention in order not to lose the peculiarities of the local within the broader “national” (Bedirhanoglu and Yalman, 2009).

As early as the 1970s, labour organization in Denizli already provided the conditions for such a de-regulation of labour due to the historical development of industrial organization in the city. The reasons underlying this are manifold: first, the character of the city's labour organization has always been based on the family and rural ties where people's main production site is their houses (Türkün-Erendil, 2000). Since the main production site of sub-contract manufacturing was the household, certain workers' benefits historically have not been recognized. Even after heavy industrialization of the textile industry as a result of the governmental development projects, (sub-)contracted, precarious employment represented the larger part of labour organization in Denizli's textile industry.

The presence of a large and well-developed textile industry has ensured the city remain a centre of attraction for migration since the 1960s. Rural to urban migration allowed a large reserve army of labour for the city, and internal migratory movements have not stopped since for numerous reasons (agricultural policies leaving the farmers unemployed and dispossessed, repeated military operations in Turkey's Kurdish regions which pushed the Kurdish population out of their villages and cities, and finally the high rates of unemployment in Central Anatolian cities). Allowing constant waves of internal migration enabled the textile sector to sustain itself with cheap and precarious labour. The character of the textile industry, the main sector in the city, remained precarious and low-wage (Unluturk-Ulutas, 2015). Moreover, contract manufacturing continues to be the main industrial organization; small and medium-scale textile workshops alongside big factories are important business sectors. This allowed the city to grow faster economically while the low-wage textile sector did not improve the living conditions of textile workers.

Denizli, as an urban space, is integrated into global production chains through textile manufacturing. It is also one of the destination points for distinctly grounded yet overlapping processes of displacement (due to internal as well as external waves of forced displacement). As such, Denizli attaches itself to the production, reproduction, and accumulation of global capital (Miraftap, 2014). Faranak Miraftap (2014) argues that when seeing

localities as isolated geographies of stability and immobility, we cannot understand the global restructuring of production, capital accumulation, and (social) reproduction. In a similar vein, Denizli, stands at the intersection of processes of overlapping displacement and dispossession stories as well as capital accumulation relations.

In such a context, solidaristic relations, the ethos of which is religiously motivated charity, stand at the very constitution of the city. The city's labour relations by and large disable the social reproduction of workers by their wages. Therefore, the work/self-sufficiency nexus is broken. The conditions for such a humanitarian government to flourish are intimately linked to the city's labour relations as well as to how city's inhabitants position themselves at the intersection of religiously oriented humanitarianism and labour relations. In such a context, the subjects of humanitarianism in the city are as diverse as the forms of vulnerabilities: the urban poor, working class, orphan families, the elderly, people with disabilities and poor health, and refugees. Not all of these groups are part of labour relations in the city; however, almost all of them are integrated into the discourses of productivity and moral economy of labour that are carried out by the humanitarian networks. In the next section, I will discuss the ways in which this moral economy of labour is embedded in humanitarian networks and how discourses of productivity allow for a mutually enabling and reinforcing relationship between humanitarianism and various forms of labour exploitation.

Moral economies of labour and work

We help the youth get married; furnish their apartments. We help people [locals or refugees, regardless] with their new born children. We help children with their school expenses. It is just you send me a message. If I myself cannot catch up, I'll refer to someone I know. (Interview with Rabia)

I swear, I stopped finding them [Syrian refugees] jobs. I find the job, thanks to employer acquaintances, it is very easy for us to find jobs. The other day I see him [the Syrian worker] in the

street, ask about the job and he says “I was sick. I didn’t go to work”. But this is not how it works. I swear, I stopped finding them jobs. They don’t work. Our people [Turkish] are more hardworking; they deserve these jobs more.

The quotations above are from an interview with Rabia. She is very well-known for her and her family’s charitable practices. Everyone in the field of charity in Denizli calls her “*abla*”⁶ (elder sister) regardless of their age. She knows by heart who needs what in her neighbourhood where the Syrians are most densely populated. She is the first point of contact for humanitarian networks as well as for people in need. Downstairs from her apartment, there is a storage room where she stores in-kind donations such as clothes—even a wedding dress—, furniture, domestic appliances, and smaller kitchenware like pots and pans. Her apartment and the storage room downstairs function as the centre for collecting and distributing donations as well as a social centre for encounters.

After retirement and the marriage of their children, Rabia and her husband started investing their time and energy in charitable work. In 2013, she encountered three Syrian children playing on the street. They looked like “Roma children” with their skin colour and dresses. However, they were not speaking Turkish. She approached them, wanted to go to their home and visit their family at their own place. She said she had never witnessed that level of poverty and vulnerability before the arrival of Syrians in that neighbourhood. Although there was poverty and people in need, Syrians, especially the kids, were the most vulnerable. After that moment in 2013, she and her fellow humanitarians directed a very large part of their charitable energy and activities towards the Syrian refugees who were, according to Rabia, doing much better at the time of our interview.

Whenever I visited her in her apartment, I could easily see that charitable work is at the centre of their daily lives. She receives phone calls from people who “know someone in the neighbourhood who need” certain things. Or she accepts visitors who bring new donations and who stop by for help. As the quote above and her daily life suggest, for her, charitable work is much more than an immediate relief from suffering. It is a form

of sociality where she keeps an eye on the people she cares about; through which she can maintain her social relations and social status where she is known as the “pious, respectable, generous and sacrificing sister” of the neighbourhood, if not the urban centre.

Rabia has been a very important person for me to understand many things in the field. She has been very sincere with me from the very beginning. She was at the nodal point of many important religious charitable networks in Denizli. However, there was another significance I attached to Rabia: she had a very strict understanding of deservingness which, I later figured out, was widely shared by many humanitarian actors in the field. She was attaching a very significant importance to (the will to) work. Her standard of deservingness, the criteria of neediness so to speak, needed to be supplemented with hard work, or, at least, with the willingness to work hard.

She told me that she earned everything she had today by her own labour. She had been knitting underwear in their shop for more than 30 years and she never stopped knitting even when her children were newly born. She taught her children to knit so that they could help with the shop in their free time. Today, if she could live in a three-story apartment, it was thanks to her and her husband’s hard work. Based on her own life trajectory, she was expecting the same willingness to work and ambition toward self-sufficiency in the people she was helping through charitable work. For Rabia, although the main motivations for charitable work were her convictions and God’s commands to help fellows in distress, this did not necessarily eliminate the criteria for deservingness of humanitarian and charitable socialities.

These conditions of deservingness have been discussed rather widely in the literature on humanitarianism (Ticktin, 2006; Ticktin, 2011; Hyndman, 2000; Harrell-Bond, 1986; Fassin, 2012; Malkki, 1996). Recently, it has been argued that these conditions are intimately attached to the new forms of subjectivities that neoliberal governmentality has enabled (Pandolfi, 2008). Neoliberal subjects are pictured as “responsible selves capable of their own development” (Redfield and Bornstein, 2010). Those who refuse, fail, or are prevented from demonstrating the will to improve are categorized as “morally suspect”. On the other hand, the ways in which

neoliberal subjectivities are produced could never be as strictly regulated and neatly implemented as they are anticipated. In this case, too, there is a tension between the religious command to help the “universalized figure of neediness” and the distinctions in interpreting this neediness. After spending some time in Turkey, the refugees are expected to work, to ensure “self-sufficiency” since “they are neither sick, nor old” to be “dependent” on humanitarian aid (Fraser and Gordon, 1994). On the other hand, the sector where they are mostly employed is informal, precarious, low-wage, and has harsh working conditions. To make people show willingness to work in such a sector, a moral language regarding work comes into play.

Like many other actors in the humanitarian networks in Denizli, Rabia was mobilizing her networks not only for in-kind aid but also for finding jobs for refugees. Finding a job, of course, is rather for later stages. The priority is to ensure shelter and food. Thus, aid activities for refugees start with finding an apartment, making it habitable because they are usually in a very bad condition, and ensuring daily subsistence. Only after daily subsistence is ensured and healthcare is taken care of—thus, only after “make live” interventions (Li, 2009)—does employment come into the picture. Working gains another significance from self-sufficiency: it implies the “will to improve” (Li, 2007).

The first quotation is Rabia’s. It attests to how relations of aid (humanitarian or philanthropic) mean much more than the immediate relief from suffering, but rather, they are weaved as forms of permanent socialities. Moreover, it refers to everyone who is in need, regardless of nationality, citizenship, and so on. There is a reference to an abstract “everyone”, an imaginary figure of “humanity” that shouldn’t “sleep hungry” and who is “measured through basic needs and dignity” (Redfield & Bornstein, 2010). The second quotation is also Rabia’s. It came out while she was complaining about the Syrians and how they are “used to laziness”. Articulated within the cultural framework, what Rabia was telling me was that the Syrian refugees were not used to working back in their country. They were allowed to be “lazy” there. Especially Syrian women, she stated disapprovingly, were never willing to work. However, here, in Turkey, she contended, one could not be lazy. One would have to work for subsistence.

She was collecting this information from the Syrian people with whom she had established humanitarian relations. What I could infer, however, was that her interlocutors were telling her how harsh working conditions were here in Turkey. Rabia was interpreting this as a form of laziness, as a way of avoiding work and sustaining life through “dependency” (for an analysis of the genealogy of dependency and the moral meanings attributed to it, see Fraser and Gordon, 1994). After her own observations as well as what she had been hearing from fellow humanitarians, she decided to stop finding jobs for Syrians. They did not deserve jobs because they were not demonstrating any willingness to work. “Her” people, being the citizens of Turkey, were much more deserving because “they would not skip the job even when they are sick”.

As much as capitalism itself (Rajaram, 2015), hard work is also a cultural construct (see Weber, 2005; Weeks, 2011), if not an ideology, and it is very conducive to moral discourses that allow one to be located in a position of the undeserving. I encountered a slightly different yet still moralizing approach to refugee labour in my visit to Leyla. Leyla is the head of the local women’s branch of the ruling party, AKP, in Denizli. She is also the founder and president of a woman-only NGO. This NGO provides various trainings to lower-class unemployed women, local or Syrian. These trainings include Qur’an classes and courses on the basics of Islam, skills training such as nursing, needlecraft, childcare, elderly care, as well as domestic work. During the trainings, women participating in the courses are also paid a small stipend. For the Syrian women, the NGO also offers Turkish language classes. Trainings usually take 6 weeks to 6 months. Once the trainings finish, women receive certificates and are helped to find a job through the networks of the NGO. Women who complete the trainings are usually employed in jobs that comply with the gendered division of labour, and Leyla said special needs are also taken into consideration. These special needs refer to situations in which women with children are employed in part-time jobs in order not to obstruct her “main responsibility towards her own children and family”. Leyla’s party connections allow her to extend her network much more easily.

Leyla's approach to informal labour is very telling in terms of how humanitarianism operates at the intersection of politics of solidarity and politics of inequality. Although she is the head of an NGO that prioritizes women and children, she also engages in humanitarian aid individually and through party connections. In line with the government's policies towards the Syrians, Leyla has a very clear answer to the question regarding her motivation to engage in humanitarian aid to the Syrians, as I outlined above:

We opened the door to them. Turkey is a big state. It cannot fail those who need it. We opened the door because they are our sisters and brothers who fled the war and persecution. When they arrived here, they were in dire conditions. You wouldn't be able to step in their apartments. They were living in such conditions. We lived up to what was expected from Turkish nation: we are hosting them very well.

Although insinuated with nationalist and statist discourses, her motivation to help Syrians is also inspired by sisterhood and brotherhood to the Syrians as well as the mobilization of moral sentiments towards them. Solidarizing with the Syrians for her means two things at the same time: being a good Muslim and being a good citizen. Still, as far as labour relations are concerned, the nation/state/citizen nexus plays out immediately. In Leyla's understanding, the fact of refugees working in the informal textile sector is an act of benevolence on the part of the state. Although this is "illegal", the state turns a blind eye to the informal employment arrangements and helps refugees earn their livelihood. The absence of social security schemes and low-wage jobs is normalized in this refugee/citizen hierarchy through the humanitarian language of benevolence. Additionally, articulating labour relations within the language of charity, she not only renders refugees more unequal in the social relations; she also moralizes the work which should be accepted regardless of the conditions, as in accepting a "gift".

Moreover, for Leyla, configurations in which refugees working in low-wage jobs is a sign of development on the part of the state. She said to me: "Look, refugees are working in jobs that our own citizens do

not want to work, do not like. It is just like the European countries. It shows how developed Turkey has become". Attaching a moral economy of humanitarianism to the political economy of migration, Leyla's words attest to how local relations are integrated into global regimes of capital accumulation and the constitution of uneven geographies – materially and discursively. As Miraftap (2014) argues, displacement and dispossession are integral parts of the global restructuring of reproduction of not only labour but also capital. Where humanitarianism stands at this intersection of displacement and dispossession and the global regimes of accumulation, I think, lies in its two main capacities: the first is related to its capacity for the physical reproduction of labour power. Secondly, and on which I have focused more in this chapter, is its capacity to mobilize moral sentiments regarding work and productivity in the subjects of humanitarian aid, that is, the aid receivers.

Rabia's approach to work is less informed by statist discourses compared to Leyla. Given her position in the locality, as one of the central representatives of the ruling party, it is understandable that Leyla's relation to migrant labour is more intermingled with the discourses of the "strong state" and "Turkey's growing economy" that are prevalent in governmental discourses as well. In Rabia's case, on the other hand, she speaks from her own position as a hardworking, sacrificing woman who had not stopped working throughout her life. Even after her retirement, she continues working, this time in the charitable practices. She believes in the moral power of hard work. On the other hand, these two women, Leyla and Rabia, have a common approach to the place of refugees in the work society: they are located at the unwanted, bothersome site of cheap manpower.

Conclusion

Humanitarian practices, first and foremost, aim at "alleviating human suffering and preserving biological life" (Williams, 2015). However, both the "human suffering" and "preserving biological life" carry deeply political meanings and the means to these ends might justify various forms of violence and inequalities (Fassin, 2007; Ticktin, 2011). Finding a job

for refugees exemplifies such efforts of alleviating human suffering and preserving biological life by ensuring the social reproduction of refugees through wage labour. However, this work is in the informal textile sector which is a low-wage, labour-intensive sector without any social security scheme. It does not allow for the improvement of workers' living conditions. Yet, people are expected to work in these jobs for at least two reasons: these jobs are framed as "gifts", as acts of benevolence to the refugees who could not "legitimately" work otherwise. However, as Mary Douglas (quoted in Hanson, 2014) puts it: "There are no free gifts; gift cycles engage persons in permanent commitments that articulate the dominant institutions". It is only through the manifestation of the "will to improve" inscribed within the dominant rationalities that people can prove themselves worthy of humanitarian aid and benevolence.

This very act of finding a job for a refugee might seem very banal at first sight. However, for the reasons I have mapped out above, it testifies to the complexity of the relationship between humanitarianism and the restructuring of production and reproduction as well as capital accumulation. Humanitarianism's relation to capitalism is a widely discussed topic in the literature. As early as the *Communist Manifesto*, this relationship was problematized. Marx and Engels already argued that "philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organizers of charity" are facilitating the "improvement and stabilisation of bourgeois society" (Marx and Engels, 1848/1997, cited in Cantat, 2018). In a similar vein, historians of humanitarianism, Haskell (1985) argues, were wary of the roots of modern humanitarianism which lie at the dawn of a new regime of accumulation, namely capitalism. For Haskell, capitalism generated a new sensibility regarding the abstract figure of humanity as well as human suffering. It is this sensibility that enabled liberal regimes of care at the wake of modernity (Reid-Henry, 2013).

However, it is also argued that this sensibility for humanity, in turn, reproduced and reinforced what causes the suffering. To take the argument further, Reid-Henry (ibid.:425) contends that "similarly, with respect to the market, humanitarianism worked back against some of the worst excesses

of market exploitation, at the same time as it fed into the reproduction of a system that created suffering in the first place.” Throughout, humanitarianism has also changed. For Reid-Henry (ibid.:425):

what began in the 18th century as a predominantly value-driven, affective moral impulse to improve conditions for those who were less well-off had, by the early 20th century, been formalised into a set of more specific, practicable public relationships in large measure through humanitarianism’s growing relevance to the forces of states and markets and the techniques of government that emerged in their wake.

Humanitarianism, either inspired by the modern imagination of universal humanity and moral values or motivated by religious convictions and faithfulness, comes with various social, economic, and political consequences. Humanitarianism’s relation to imaginaries of productivity, capital, order, and state reveals itself in the most banal forms of humanitarian encounters not only through ensuring the social reproduction of (reserve or actual) labour power. It also mobilizes moral discourses regarding hard work and cultures of productivity. Such moral(izing) discourses manifest themselves at the intersection of the politics of solidarity and politics of inequality in humanitarian encounters with refugees. Articulated within the discourse of benevolence and humanitarian aid, employment relations are materialized in a way that reinforces the politics of inequality.

As discussed above, refugees in Denizli are constituted as subjects whose place in the moral economy of labour is ambivalent: on the one hand, they are employed because this is an act of benevolence, a way of solidarizing with them. On the other hand, stories of laziness are told about them at the same time as they are being punished with exclusion from the moral economy of labour. Incorporating refugees into employment relations in an informal labour market ensures and reproduces capital accumulation at the “backstage of capitalism” characterised by “shadowy markets, unpaid work of all sorts, and irregular recruitment and hiring practices” (Rajaram, 2015). Nevertheless, presenting them as lazy individuals who do not

deserve to be part of employment relations reproduces the racialized and gendered hierarchies which enable differential valorisation of one's labour, in other words, the reproduction of cheap labour. Both of these processes are materialized through the activities and discourses of humanitarian networks. Projecting "work" and "wage labour" as "gifts", as "acts of benevolence" not only translate the labour processes into reciprocating "gifts"; it also immobilizes rights claims and the potentiality of labour politics on the part of the refugees.

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Notes

- 1 I use the term "networks" to tap into both the formal and informal ways of organizing humanitarian aid. Not all actors are members of formally established humanitarian associations; some of them organize through "Qur'an reading groups" or through informal relations with the migrant neighbourhoods.
- 2 Charitable activities, and especially Islamically-informed ones, were seen as "recruitment practices" for the "cultic organizations" such as that which attempted coup. Many Islamically oriented humanitarian organizations were forcibly shut down by governmental decrees. Besides possible cooperation and partnerships, organizations were to be thoroughly investigated not to be "under suspicion" of anti-state activities.
- 3 I use the term "Islamically oriented" for two reasons. First, these networks derive their organizational and operational understandings from their faith, Islam (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011). Therefore, I use the term to refer to their own identification. Secondly, I use not "Islamic" but "Islamically oriented" in order not to superimpose a monolithic and homogeneous identity which might be easily assumed under the name "Islamic". Historically and methodologically, I find it important to leave room for interpretation of various beliefs by their own devotees based on their own temporalities, geographies, and understandings of religion rather than imposing unchanging, ahistorical religious identities (Asad, 1993).
- 4 Denizli is a satellite city for various refugee groups from different countries. It is the satellite city exclusively for Afghani and Iranian Christian, Bahai, and LGBTQI refugees. A relatively smaller population of Iraqi refugees

also inhabit the city. Syrians, who are legally under a “temporary protection regime”, a regulation that is codified for en masse migration, also live in Denizli. For more detailed information on Turkey’s migration regulations see Biehl, 2015; Sarı & Dinçer, 2017; Soykan, 2017.

- 5 In some cases, there are regulations that grant refugees a work permit. But in these cases, either the conditions are too difficult for the employer, or some quotas (such as the rule for employing 10 local workers for each refugee worker) juxtapose refugees and locals in the labour market. For this reason, work permits, even in the cases where they could be legally issued, are rendered de facto absent.
- 6 “Abla” is a form of address in Turkish used for elderly women. However, here, it is used as an expression of respect to her, regardless of her age.

IMAGINING THE OTHER:
THE SYMBOLIC CONSTRUCTION OF
POLITICAL ENTITLEMENT AND EXCLUSION
AMONG MEXICAN MIGRANTS IN SWEDEN

Guillermo Merelo

Introduction

A common assumption informing the literature on migrants and politics is widely given by the simple opposition between the native (*us*) and the foreigner (*them*). Within such a binary construct a number of expectations, almost commonsensical propositions, come to exist; among them is the concept of migrants as a cohesively consistent group bound by common challenges within the polity. From this perspective, migrants are seen either as equally excluded players in the decision-making process, as equally ignorant aliens not ready to take part in such decisions, or as equally contentious entities fighting against the unfairness resulting from this equation. Such broad characterisations serve as cultural positioners distinguishing in a simple manner what are considered to be two relevant and opposing groups in a society. Indeed, it is based on such distinction that political scientists have long constructed acculturative models to illustrate the transformative journey from alien to citizen.¹

Whilst not detracting any merit from such models, it is important to state that the simple notions of opposition and cohesiveness that they normally entail seem to be at odds with the complexities of modern life in increasingly

heterogeneously constituted societies. Indeed, a number of opportunities for cohesiveness and separation occur through the numerous encounters between individuals and the state. In that regard the notions of *who we are* and *who they are* are not uniform reference categories but polysemic constructs with multiple points of entry. In the complex process of living, one is to encounter many *Us* and many *Others* from which an idea of the world and the self is structured and life in the polity is understood. The process of differentiation is quintessentially human and moves beyond the corners of the individual imaginary to permeate the very core of any given political culture.

Schutz (1962) argues that the “home world” we inhabit provides us with comforting notions of familiarity that limit our thinking into what he calls “the paramount reality of everyday life”. Such everyday life is not only deeply cherished but also sought after since it represents a source of stability and continuity essential to social life. Meanings are passed on from one generation to another in order to protect and preserve it, and to provide guidance on its complex system of signification. It is through such guidance that one is expected to act and react in the social and political worlds. In this context, the foundations of any political culture, its actors and institutions are semiotic in nature.

Contemporary semiotic approaches to the concept of culture in general and of political culture in particular entail, at least, three core propositions: first and foremost is that human beings are not simply passive recorders of information but active builders of the worlds they inhabit, therefore their understandings of the social and political worlds are embedded in complex processes of meaning-construction. Second, political cultures are systems of signification ingrained in symbols and meanings.² They are intricate nets of stances, values, and behaviours people collectively adopt to make sense of the world they inhabit in order to manage their daily lives (Ross, 1997; Topf, 1989; Adams, 1986; Chabal and Daloz, 2006). Third is the concept of political culture as a contextually grounded system of signification embedded in the socio-historical factors of a semiotic community, a circle of shared intelligibility of the state where people are able to recognize the same sets of contrasts and engage in mutually comprehensible symbolic action (Sewel, 1990). Within a semiotic community people collectively construct notions

of politics and the state and develop a common language that is mutually comprehensible to its members. It is through that language that meaning is transmitted, reproduced, and gradually modified (Wedeen, 2002).

Shared intelligibility of the state and its forms is, in this respect, first and foremost a source of Otherness in the polity, which divides the national from the foreigner. In order to understand the Other, people must reduce acts and motives to something mutually comprehensible. Otherness emerges through a process of de-familiarisation, what Gurteevich (1998:1182) calls “making the Other strange”. Nationals are entitled to the same political rights because they have been sanctioned by being born and brought up within the confines of a semiotic community. Foreigners are not, and their acts and motives are in that regard ultimately suspicious since their meanings are difficult to grasp. Drawing on Canetti’s propositions, Marino (2015:4) makes a compelling argument when observing that a condition of *anomie* underlies the symbol of foreigners and, based on this, the need to create institutions of power to protect the polity against those *Others* emerges. “The Others are depicted with a sequence of ‘nots’: they do not speak the same language, they do not have a culture, they do not have the same habits and they do not have a clear humanity”.

But beyond the clear-cut categories of foreign and national, other symbolic forms of alterity also coexist in any polity. The need to distinguish between *Us* and *Them* has therefore many forms, and is widely given as a means to maintain an imagined social order in the broadest possible sense. Gender, religion, class, and ethnicity are the usual suspects, although not the only ones, in this quest to construct social categories that hold cultures together. The intricacies of socio-historical factors pertaining to a common political culture in the *longue durée* result in complex hierarchical arrangements that are unique and, as such, mostly intelligible within the confines of a semiotic circle (the intricate Indian caste system is a good example). Being a woman, a labourer, a homosexual, or simply poor results in different understandings of power relations upon which Otherness is structured in cultural terms.

In this regard, Otherness is a discursive construct by which people create hierarchical classifications of the world and within that world, of

the political arena. From this perspective, asymmetric power relations are central to the notion of Otherness (Staszak 2008:3). It is worth noting that encounters with Otherness are socially guided, and through such guidance, individuals learn to differentiate between the self and the strange from early on in life. A Brahman girl, a Maori boy, or an upper-middle class Mexican learn the complex classifications of their social worlds through numerous stances that serve as a means to protect their groups from potential harm. In this context, the presence of *the Other* is, most of the time, an imaginary concept, a warning about a latent threat embedded in the myths, mythologies, rumours, and conspiracy theories holding together the different groups that constitute a semiotic community.

When people move to a new country they don't do so emptyhanded, instead, they bring with them specific semiotic repertoires crafted throughout years of experience in their society of origin. Such repertoires are based on people's positions and trajectories in their own semiotic communities and are important sources for decoding information and acting politically in the new country (Merelo, 2017; 2018). In that regard, not only does migration itself challenge individuals to make sense of a new world, but reiterative contact with a number of unfamiliar traditions, understandings, and symbols also provides numerous opportunities for the creation (and re-creation) of different forms of Otherness. This is particularly salient in multicultural societies where migrants are exposed to a wider diversity in the social fabric.

Conceiving of migrants as an enormous heterogeneous group obscures the fact the within such a group there are many different voices, interests, personal stories, and specific conceptions of the self and others. It also denies the complexities of a receiving culture where concepts of Otherness have also been shaped and applied differently to specific migrant groups in semiotic terms. In the academic literature, the questions of how migrants navigate the intricate corridors of a new polity, and how they construct symbolic forms of Otherness and classify themselves and other migrant groups as legitimate political actors, remain mostly unexplored domains. Stepping up into these domains is becoming more and more urgent given the increasingly convoluted political environment faced by most multicultural

societies at the beginning of the 21st century. Migrants' involvement in collective action, electoral behaviour, party identification, and contentious forms of politics depend to a great extent on the types and strengths of different forms of cohesiveness and Otherness.

In this paper, I argue that the acculturative process³ is one of constant reconstruction, juxtaposition, and hybridisation of social categories through which different notions of *Us* and *Them* emerge. To explore these and other structural implications of such semiotic processes, I dig into the stories—narratives of political acculturation—of 47 Mexican migrants in three different cities across Sweden. My aim is to illustrate how images of Otherness combine to shape complex and sometimes contradictory notions of solidarity, empathy, resistance, neutrality, and resentment through which people see themselves and others as players in the political world.

The field and the study

According to official data, the Mexican community in Sweden is a small group comprising approximately 2,500 individuals, with slightly more men (58%) than women (42%). It is shaped mostly by middle- and upper-middle class migrants, most of whom originate from urban areas of Mexico. Its median age is 36 years old and most Mexicans live in the urban centres of Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores 2015). Many arrived in the country as skilled migrants hired by Sweden-based international companies. Others arrived through a Swedish partner whom they usually met outside Sweden, very often in Mexico. Another important group of migrants arrived in Sweden as postgraduate students who later stayed on in the country as professionals or through partnership with a Swedish national.

My fieldwork took place between 2014 and 2016. During that period, I visited Sweden twice, collecting 47 semi-structured interviews with Mexican migrants living in the country. The mean age of participants was 40, within an age range of 27 to 64. Levels of education were high among all interviewees, with 90% of them having studied at university. In terms of the length of stay in Sweden, the length of residency was 9 years

within a range of 3 to 35 years. 40% of participants were men, whilst 60% were women. Given the size and geographical dispersion of the Mexican population in Sweden, interviewees were selected through a snowballing sample (Coleman, 1958). In order to encompass the wide geographical dispersion of the population, I rolled three different snowballs with participants located in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and the Scania region.

Being a Mexican migrant myself in an established democracy, my positionality in the field was multifaceted to say the least. During the course of the interviews I was simultaneously a researcher, an ally, a curious outsider, and the first recorder of life in the community. To most of my participants, I was someone able to understand their language, their metaphors and experiences; someone capable of empathising with them given the fact that I was experiencing similar doubts, joys, and frustrations in a country thousands of miles away from home. At times I was an enquirer but also a provoker, making people speak about topics they would not normally reflect upon. In this regard, my nationality and my own personal history helped me to open windows into people's worlds and were crucial assets to the completion of this study.

Before moving forward, it is important to acknowledge some of the limitations and particularities of this study. Firstly, it should be mentioned that this research derives from a larger project addressing the political acculturation of Latin American migrants in three European countries. As such, initially, my main objective was not to highlight the importance of otherness and social differentiation in the construction of the state but to provide a more comprehensive view of the political acculturative experience of my participants; nonetheless, these topics were so recurrent during my fieldwork that I decided to pursue them further. From this perspective, this paper is, to a certain extent, limited by its genesis, but I hope that the many unanswered questions triggered by this study will result in avenues for future research on migration, Otherness, and social distinction.

Secondly, it is worth noting that one should be cautious about my use of academic terms since these do not always derive from my participants' experiences but from an intention to frame the discussion from a political

science perspective. As mentioned in this chapter, the encounters between my participants and the state are multiple, rooted in daily practices within the polity, and expressed through very casual Mexican Spanish expressions.

Finally, I would like to highlight the fact that to protect the anonymity of my sources, I do not provide as much contextual information about their lives, positions, and trajectories as would be expected in a full, ethnographically oriented study. This is particularly salient if we consider that given the small size and dispersion of the Mexican community in Sweden, it would be extremely easy to identify participants by adding much contextual information.

Together but not the same

An old saying, deeply embedded in the Mexican psyche states: *juntos pero no revueltos* [together but not the same], which basically means that people may belong to a superordinate category – such as the nation – but social barriers and distinctions should be maintained to protect one's own group. In his analysis of social stratification, Hugo Nuitini argues (2005) that this has been a fundamental principle – a syndrome, he calls it – historically guiding the interactions between social groups in Mexico. Upon such a metaphorical construct, intricate nets of meanings have been historically woven, shaping an extremely complex society where positions of superiority and inferiority, as well of rites of passage, are deeply engrained in the semiotic inventories people use to construct their identities. Notions of belonging, separation, distinction, and alienation are thus widely driven by a series of cultural assumptions of who *One* is and who the *Others* are.

Such cultural understandings of separation and belonging apply to those I studied in the broadest possible sense. To many, the migratory experience was originally imagined as one of improving their overall social and personal conditions. The vast majority of them are professional individuals from the middle classes of urban Mexican society and consequently, their expectations of a “better life” were saturated with distinctive notions of belonging and integration into certain groups. As Scott (2006) observes, accounts of middle-class migration have been traditionally tainted by the notion of the

privileged expatriate, some sort of universal migrant bearing the nebulous cosmopolitan values of post-industrial societies and who, because of that, has little difficulty becoming integrated into a new polity. Such cohesive accounts, he argues, fail to understand the complexities of middle-class migrant groups, as well as the specific ways in which cultural reinvention of their rhythms, routines, and everyday practices takes place in a new geographical (and political) setting. Moreover, as Oliver and O'Reilly (2010) have argued, class and culture play pivotal roles in acculturative processes and are active ingredients in migrants' reconstructions of a new world.

My fieldwork revealed how multiple opportunities to re-enact different aspects of class are present in the daily lives of members of the Mexican community as a means of gaining social distinction, but mostly as vehicles of acceptance in a society held to be extremely difficult to permeate. Getting a better house, driving a "nice" car, or simply "dressing up" for work are often seen as a means to claim what is believed to be an already attained place on the social ladder. As a participant in Malmö put it, "in the minds of many Swedes, being Mexican equals being uneducated or poor so, more often than not, we need to prove them wrong". In this context, cultural and economic aspects of class such as education, occupational background, income, and preferences in art, taste, and lifestyle are commonly present in people's stories revealing how they are used as forms of symbolic capital to assist their acculturative processes.

But as my participants constantly observed, their traditional markers of class and status, such as changing the family car every year, getting a housekeeper, or visiting a private doctor, are most of the time impossible to maintain given the economic differences between the Mexican and Swedish economies. For some, this is interpreted as moving downwards on the social ladder. As one participant from Malmö observed: "in Mexico I used to be kind of rich, here I have no other option but to clean my house and garden my backyard, things I would have never done in Mexico". In other cases, similar markers are recognised as futile rituals that no longer make sense given the fact that "no one here [Sweden] pays attention to that kind of stuff". Stripped of familiar notions of class intelligible in one's original

semiotic community, new markers are adopted, although often they are barely understood. For instance, one of my participants spent almost fifteen minutes talking about the importance of learning how to use a cheese knife in order to be invited to his boss's birthday party. To him, such learning was considered as "stupid and pointless" and did not compensate for the fact that in Sweden, "nice people" (like him) are seen simply as savages coming from underdeveloped countries regardless of who they were in the past.

Even for those with fewer economic resources, the notion of coming from a "good place" on the Mexican social ladder seems to provide enough symbolic capital to differentiate one from other social groups and demand acceptance as a "different type of migrant". For instance, when talking to a young mother in Gothenburg, she explained to me how difficult it was for her family to fit in her new country. "Deep in their hearts these blondes look at us as a bunch of wetbacks", she angrily said, "but we came here legally; my husband is an engineer for God's sake", she continued. Similar perceptions of self-distinctiveness were reproduced in numerous forms by my participants. Indeed, during the interviews, they constantly referred to themselves using adjectives such as "skilled", "well-off", "educated", "professional", "middle-class", and even "white". Narratives are most of the time fragmented and infused with the individual distinctiveness of people's personal histories, trajectories, and choices, yet many find a common place in how such adjectives are used to act and react towards negative experiences ranging from daily micro-invalidations to rampant discrimination.

When recounting his story, a software engineer mentioned having been the target of racial jokes regarding his character based on stereotypical images of Mexicans as *illegal migrants*, drug-dealers, and overall, violent and rebellious people. "I laughed with them, pretending it was not such a big deal, but these things break you inside", he mentioned, continuing that "I went to a better school than most of them". Before finishing the interview, he made strong remarks about how being Mexican has been at the same time a "blessing and a curse". Such a spirit was not uncommon to other participants' stories, who in many ways expressed how being Mexican is sometimes a social category associated both with positive and negative

attributes affecting their roles and positions in the Swedish social context. This spirit is probably better captured in the words of this next participant from Stockholm:

Sometimes I feel like a nice exotic handicraft to dress a living room; the Mexican guy, the one who knows about real tacos and how to dance salsa, but when it comes to talking about serious stuff in this society, that same guy is kind of a minor, a non-white coming from the third world. Who you were in Mexico is totally irrelevant and that is so damn frustrating.

It is under similar assumptions of Otherness that many of my interviewees undertake their processes of semiotic reconstruction in a new polity. To the vast majority, these are silently manifested in everyday practices. A conversation, a gesture – a frown or a smile –, a comment, or an invitation to attend someone’s birthday party can be all interpreted as manifestations of Otherness in an alien environment. Therefore, the multiple demonstrations of class engrained in my participants’ accounts cannot be simplistically seen as shallow expressions of wealth and distinction but as defence mechanisms put in place to deal with the disruptive character of their migratory histories. As we have seen, many such markers perish along the way, becoming empty signifiers, a fading memory of a life once lived. But others markers, in many ways, shapes, and forms are to change and recompose within a new circle of shared intelligibility.

Super Mexicans vs. the others: Civic virtue from the other side

As I immersed myself in the field, I started realising the contradictory and ambivalent feelings underlying the relationships between most of my participants and the Political Culture of Sweden. To many of them, Sweden and its political institutions, are at the same time, something highly regarded, cautiously approached, hesitantly accepted, and not fully understood in terms of their shared meanings. Somewhat unexpectedly though, many of their stories give accounts of extraordinary efforts to be

perceived as “good”, “respectful”, and “honourable” guests of a country that is not their own. Baubock (2003:72) argues that migration creates a “mismatch” between the territorial and personal boundaries of politics. It is in this vein that migrants need to renegotiate and find new compromises between the emotional components of citizenship – feelings of belonging to a new society, pride in one’s nation – and its statutory aspects, the rights and duties of the citizen (Ruget and Usmanalieva, 2008). Defining what is to be kept and what is to be changed is far from easy since it involves a total repositioning of the self in regard to numerous structures of power.

Such intricate negotiations were omnipresent during the conversations I had with members of the Mexican community in Sweden. For most of them, the idea of embracing a full “Swedish identity” – if there is such a thing – seems impossible given the fact that such an act would be equivalent to betraying one’s own culture, nation, and traditions. “We [members of the community] are Mexicans to the core”, a participant in Stockholm proudly observed. Yet, aspirations of belonging in a society, especially in terms of what is considered to be an already achieved place on the social ladder, still leave room for cultural reconstruction upon the basis of class and status. Deprived of some of the assets in their symbolic accounts, many of my participants face the challenge of reinventing themselves and claiming such a place through adapting other aspects of their cultural and class identities. It is here that collective and individual elucidations of the Swedes as models of numerous civic virtues – a common point of discussion during the interviews – meet equally imaginary notions of skilled, professional, white-collar migrants as exemplary law-abiding, responsible individuals, carriers of cosmopolitan values.⁴

In the broadest possible sense, such encounters result in the abstract notion of “being a good citizen” or “proving one’s good character” in the new polity as means of contesting the negative stereotypes in which perceived alienation is structured. The words of a young housewife in Malmö resound vividly in this context: “we may come from a good place, but they don’t see that, so we need to prove it. We need to be some sort of super good members of this society”.

However, being a good member of a society is not a clear and straightforward concept but a blurred notion that allows multiple meanings. Whilst for some, proving such good character may occur at the basis of traditional notions of citizenship such as participating in elections, joining community associations, attending political demonstrations, or signing petitions, for others, many I would dare to say, joining some of these is considered to be stretching the limits of relations with newly encountered power structures. For instance, when talking to a participant in Gothenburg, she mentioned:

I arrived here and got my papers legally, I have a Swedish passport, but that does not mean that I can do whatever I want. On several occasions I have been invited to go and protest for different causes I may agree or disagree with and I always tell people the same: that is not my place. I would never do that. Being legal is not an excuse to be a troublemaker.

To some extent, this testimony captures the essence of the intricate negotiations undertaken by members of the community who are sometimes afraid of being perceived either as too passive – reminiscent of the uneducated third-world migrant – or too political – reminiscent of migrants as carriers of political unrest in a land that is not their own. Moreover, it illustrates how sentiments of belonging to a new polity are reconstructed, reinterpreted, and materialised through new forms of intelligibility. Previous studies have illustrated migrants' complex relationships with their new states. In that regard, it has been argued that being a migrant sometimes requires dealing with two equally derogatory symbolic categories: that of being a traitor in relation to the home country, and that of being an intruder in relation to the host country (Merele 2018; Timotijevic and Breakwell, 2000).

The diverse and sometimes opposed interpretations that can be constructed at the verge of such a dichotomy seem to be related to the personal biographies and trajectories of my participants. Whilst in the fragment above, being a good citizen involves almost blind obedience and restraint towards openly challenging institutions, other stories give

accounts of more balanced compromises reached through this same equation. Moreover, ingrained within most participants' stories is the idea that regardless of the numerous interpretations one may construct, being a good citizen of a country provides an opportunity for differentiating the self and the group from other groups "struggling" to fit in the polity. In other words, being a super citizen involves the notion that other groups are not as good as one's own, and on that basis, new forms of symbolic capital are created, exhibited, and traded in the never-ending quest for acceptance and recognition as legitimate members of the polity. It is from this perspective that Otherness may also arise from the distinction between those who are conceived as different – conflictual, unfortunate, or challenging – players in the political world. Not paying taxes, claiming benefits, or pushing for new rights are just examples of how some interviewees differentiate between themselves from others.

Following this line, the political arena is understood as a convoluted arrangement of understandings in which being perceived as a good and decent player provides an opportunity to prove one's character as opposed to others'. How my participants imagine their multiple political *Others* is sometimes engrained in complex taxonomies through which they classify people's attributes, roles, proximities, and distances in relation to themselves. As seen above, the construction of the "middle-class", "legal", and "educated" migrant then meets its symbolic counterpart: the "poor", "illegal", and "illiterate" newcomer. In some cases, these constructs lead people to define specific groups as *despised Others* with whom one has nothing in common. For instance, a participant in Malmö angrily observed:

Sweden means something to us, that is why we respect its people and their beliefs no matter how square-minded they are. But not everyone is the same. Arabs, Gypsies, and Africans are fighting for more and more, and are always unhappy with what the government does for them. They bite the hand that feeds them well and one cannot say anything because if we do it then we are racists. That is simply unfair.

On a similar note, whilst talking to one of my participants' in Malmö, he expressed harsh criticism of a recent wave of petitions at his daughter's school regarding Muslim dietary restrictions. To him, such petitions were an example of how some migrant groups push the boundaries of a society by introducing points in the political agenda to accommodate their own needs. Angrily, he mentioned: "one makes enormous sacrifices to adapt, we don't come here demanding tacos; now we eat fish every day, even if we don't like the bloody fish, that's what being a good migrant is about". As shown in this fragment, common life in the polity is sometimes tainted by what is conceived as one's and others' roles in a new social space. This is far from being a straightforward equation, but a fertile ground of interpretation based on peoples' positions and trajectories in at least two social contexts. As per these last cases, imagining specific ethnic groups as undisciplined, problematic, or unruly helps reassure the individual and collective good character of a community based on the numerous contrasts and comparisons with others, strategies of alienation and separation from such groups are therefore reinforced; nonetheless, as I will further argue in the next section, participants' narratives also give accounts of multiple expressions of solidarity and empathy with other migrant groups through which Mexicans also demonstrate such good character.

It is complex: The contradictory equation of otherness

A basic assumption flowing naturally from the preceding sections is that Otherness creates Otherness. But how do the many forms of Otherness assisting people's constructs of a new social and political context manifest and coexist? During one of my first interviews in Malmö, I met with a political activist who was eager to talk about her numerous experiences with politics in Mexico and Sweden. According to her story, she volunteers regularly in refugee resettlement programs, organises petitions for environmental causes, and participates in numerous political activities through which she demonstrates that "Mexicans in Sweden are good people". The interview took place in a small café in Rosengård, an area with a large concentration of migrants and refugees. Halfway through our conversation she accidentally

dropped her handbag, which was swiftly picked up and returned to her by a man sat in a table next to ours. Whilst doing so, he spoke some words in Tagalog – most probably thinking that my participant was of Filipina origin – to which she reacted in a clearly unhappy manner. As soon as I restarted the interview, my participant apologetically mentioned that she did not like when Swedes mistook her for a Filipina. “We have learned so much crap about us being better than other cultures that sometimes one can involuntarily be mean”, she observed, and continued “it took me a lot of effort to change, and obviously I am not sure if I did it completely”, referring to the incident that had just happened.

As this story fragment illustrates, Otherness is not a firmly rooted concept with a singular interpretation, but a multifaceted construct that manifests itself differently while navigating multiple social spaces. As the participant later revealed, in Mexico she was politically active, volunteered for NGOs, and maintained a prominent level of engagement with her community. In that regard, as she observed: she “was fortunate to land in a good place in Sweden”, since her husband and circle of friends share her political interests. Interestingly, her expressions of empathy and solidarity with other migrant groups seem to frame new types of Otherness within her story. In her words, “helping others not as fortunate as us” involves a “moral obligation” to act and assist them in their processes of “adapting to live in a real democracy”. Such condescending words depart not from notions of rejection and alienation but from what she calls “a good place in one’s heart”, the idea that social differences are inevitable, but one should behave nobly. Yet, she clearly encounters supplementary types of otherness – some that she even regrets to encounter – flowing from the intricate semiotic inventories she has crafted throughout her life. Apart from the handbag incident, later in the conversation she recalled how, earlier that day, someone had asked her if she was originally from Central America, and remorsefully described the negative feelings she experienced by being compared to what many considered to be poor and uneducated migrants.

The obvious contradictions throughout this story seem to flow from a complex alignment of semiotic repertoires. Yet, the process somewhat reflects a logic line of change between past and present experiences underlying the

meaning-making process. Who this participant was and who she is now merge in convoluted forms that somehow provide a certain level rationality to her story. But in other stories, participants' symbolic contraventions and emotional disruptions were less nuanced. For instance, I visited Malmö for the first time shortly after parliamentary elections had taken place in the country. This provided my participants with numerous opportunities to talk about their and others' political stances and how these were individually and collectively mediated. During an interview with a young participant he expressed harsh criticism about how some Mexicans openly supported the nationalistic anti-migrant discourses of some political parties. "I have seen many politically correct Swedes but also many racist idiots; what is shocking is how some Mexicans bring their own insecurities, hang out with those bastards and become even worse than them". When asked about the alleged reasons for "hanging out with them", my participant emphatically answered: "because they want to feel like they belong".

During my fieldwork, I did not have the opportunity to meet any such anti-migration supporters, but they were constantly present in my participants' stories. Sometimes they were portrayed as insecure individuals fully conscious of trading their symbolic capital as educated, middle-class, legal migrants in order to be accepted or feel integrated into certain circles of Swedish society. Others were described as victims of political discourses they had ended up trapped in because of their partners, friends, work colleagues, or extended families' ideologies. With reference to the latter type, a participant from Gothenburg remarked: "If you get to know them you would realise they did not really mean any harm... they just do it to go with the flow". Aiming to illustrate this further, this participant remembered how on "many occasions" he needed to say yes and "shut" his mouth, pretending to agree or at least not to openly disagree with the political opinions of family, friends, and acquaintances.

In a similar vein, a young mother told me how her Swedish mother-in-law once reprimanded her for giving money to a street beggar: "she explained to me that she [the beggar] was illegally in the country and that by doing that [giving her money] I was encouraging others to follow her".

The story ended with a resentful comment on how Swedes understand solidarity differently and sometimes confusingly, and how migrants sometimes need to take sides and silently agree on notions of Otherness to be accepted by specific groups. Building on this idea, several participants mention that local discourses and everyday practices in Sweden reflect an “utterly perplexing” contradictory character. “An enigma we will never be fully able to understand”, as a participant in Stockholm mentioned. “You learn to go with the flow even if you are not sure where the flow is heading”, he continued. Following the flow, as this participant put it, can be better described as a “ritual of integration” (Merelo, 2018), a tactic to demonstrate social compliance, rather than a genuine expression of adherence to a political stance.

From this perspective, conceiving of the Other as a “trouble-maker”, a “thief”, or an “opportunist” does not simply flow from culturally created notions of exclusion, but also from ready-made labels encountered, transformed, and negotiated within a new polity. The individual and collective aspects of culture may well exert a foundational influence on my participants’ acculturative processes, but more malleable aspects of the self provide them with opportunities to reconstruct their semiotic repertoires in a unique and not coherently aligned manner. Being a middle-class migrant with a legal status in the country presents them with numerous opportunities to selectively open and close doors to sentiments of empathy, solidarity, neutrality, resentment, and resistance whilst transiting the convoluted corridors of their political acculturative experiences. A good education, a privileged pre-migratory history, or the legality of their migratory status are thus condensation symbols providing them with enough symbolic capital to strategically join others in the many imagined scenarios “to make Sweden a better place”.

A common claim among scholars of the emotive character of migration refers to the coexistence of ambivalent and sometimes opposing feelings affecting migrants’ constructs of their new social spaces (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Timotijevick and Breakwell, 2000; Svaesk, 2010). It is in this context that Bathia and Ram (2004) warn that emotions resulting from the

migratory process should be explored carefully, since most of the time they are not harmonious with each other. The above-mentioned stories are clear expressions of such complexity and illustrate how Otherness is a category able to trigger multiple contradictory sentiments throughout the many forums of everyday life.

During my first round of interviews, I had the opportunity to talk to a well-regarded member of the Mexican community in Sweden, someone who had lived in the country for a long period of time. His insights were particularly valuable to my research, so I decided to revisit him a couple of years later to discuss some of my potential results. As part of a very long interview he mentioned:

Most Mexicans in Sweden believe we are an ethnic group with very similar people but in the end, just like any other group, even if we are trapped inside the same sack, such a sack contains many types of grains. I have seen Mexicans coming and going throughout the years and yes, they have similar stories, most are middle-class families, engineers, doctors, university teachers, you name it... and yes, I even understand the claims that many of them lean more towards the right than towards the left [a topic we had discussed previously]. But I also have seen tremendous differences amongst the people coming throughout the years. The ones who arrived here decades ago, and I include myself in this group, were not that politically oriented or active as some of the ones who have come in more recent times. Our idea of Mexico, our idea of politics was different. Also, there was another Sweden, less diverse and less conflictual. As Mexicans, we have always been exotic, but we did not need to compete against so many things as we do these days.

As we have seen, imaginaries of otherness are not fixed in a straightforward equation of class, culture, and ethnicity but are also affected by time, geography, and language. The Mexican community in Sweden may be a small one, but it is composed of diverse individuals whose

interpretations of Otherness are as rich and various as the endless possibilities of life. Imagining specific groups as outsiders pushing political boundaries can be seen as one common interpretation with multiple variations in shade and contrast. So, they are the copious and directly opposing interpretations prevalent in some other stories. These illustrate how, although commonly assumed, Otherness can also lead to alternative understandings of imagined roles and positions in the polity. In other words, the negotiation of difference involves ruling out, but the consequences of such an exercise are sometimes heterogeneous and opposing. Whilst many of my participants made harsh remarks about certain ethnic groups and even criticised their role in the polity, others used such understandings of Otherness as opportunities to express empathy with people undertaking similar acculturative processes in more challenging conditions. As in the case of this section's opening story, some of them contribute in numerous ways to ease the disruptive character of migration through numerous expressions of solidarity. They are proud volunteers, activists, social workers, cause-supporters, or simply empathic individuals willing to help Others navigate the intricate corridors of their acculturative processes. Moreover, embedded in their testimonies is also a different sort of symbolic capital that is constantly used to be perceived as "good citizens" in an alien polity.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper I have argued that Otherness is a polysemic construct that people use to socially – and by extension politically – position the self. As revealed in participants' stories, the social and cultural aspects of life in a common political arena give way to numerous interpretations of *Us* and *Them*. I have illustrated how within such constructs lies a continuous effort to fit into an alien society whilst clinging tenaciously to symbolic categories deeply rooted in one's mind. From this perspective, cross-cultural contact proved to unleash several and sometimes conflicting forces revolving around the issue of *who we are* and *who we want to be*.

Otherness is, in this regard, initially structured as a category of belonging in which different players are to be located in order to find one's

place in the political arena. A category of belonging is thus consubstantially one of exclusion. Indeed, a ceaseless effort to be integrated into a society paradoxically gives way to aspirations of inclusion through strategies of alienation and differentiation. Meaning construction is in this sense a tricky enterprise; one that involves multiple imaginaries of political entitlement based on oversimplified conceptions and assumptions of *who is who*, *who should be who*, and *who should be granted what*. Here, the Other is not just one clearly discernible menace but numerous groups perceived as key players in the field. Sentiments of empathy, resistance, neutrality, and resentment derive from embodied experiences with such players and are essential to understanding social cohesion and solidarity across groups.

As argued in this paper, social classifications of political entitlement embedded in participants' stories did not simply sprout suddenly, like a memory waiting to be used. Instead they proved to be carefully knitted in a distressing environment where people aim to reconcile multiple dimensions of the self. The entrenched systems of meaning through which people give shape to their experiences are thus purposively reconstructed to accommodate new perceived realities, threats, and forms of belonging. People's semiotic repertoires are in this respect a fundamental ingredient not just to elucidate, but also to reconstruct one's world. The soft facts of social existence – what people imagine human life to be, how they conceive their place in society, and how they see the state and other groups – are thus continuously challenged to shape new and intricate classifications that are both cultural and contextual; a type of syncretism that is complex in nature and that would be difficult to explain through the simple opposition between two clear-cut categories.

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Notes

- 1 These are best characterized in the unilinear models of acculturation upon which most propositions of political integration and incorporation are based (Marin and Gamba, 1996; Berry, 1997).
- 2 Here my definition of political symbols follows the Gertzian tradition as any part of the political spectrum that has been disengaged from its mere actuality and used to impose meaning upon experience (Geertz, 1973:45).
- 3 The use of the term acculturation is given in the classical sense coined by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) as the numerous phenomena that result from continuous first-hand contact between cultural groups.
- 4 As argued by several sociologists, political scientists, and social psychologists, there are numerous assumptions of middle-class values that portray their carriers as rational, democratic, law-abiding, active choosers in post-industrialised societies. See for instance Reay (2008); Lange and Meier (2009); Skogen (1996).

SOLIDARITY IN TRANSIT

Annastiina Kallius

Like thousands of others, Sami was fingerprinted upon entering Hungary from Serbia. This, together with being granted asylum in Hungary, turned out to be a major turning point in his life. Beyond a point of transit, Hungary would assume a central place in his geography of Europe, and ultimately result in Sami leading an undocumented life. After he originally arrived in Hungary in 2015, Sami did not continue onwards to the West because he feared a possible Dublin deportation back to Hungary. When the situation escalated in the summer of 2015, Sami was living in Bicske, an open refugee camp just half an hour from Budapest. While Europeans keenly followed the news of an “influx” of refugees along the Balkan route, the number of people staying in Bicske skyrocketed, and Sami became something of a community organizer; it was in this capacity that I first met him.

On a steaming hot Friday afternoon in early September, a protest march resulted in the opening of the Austrian border. The Hungarian government sent buses to transport people to Austria from a motorway where the marchers had stopped, from the Keleti train station, and from all open camps including Bicske. Nearly everyone took the opportunity, and during a dramatic day, Bicske was almost emptied of people. One of those who stayed behind was Sami, who walked around the empty camp and collected teddy bears that children in the camp had received as gifts, but had now left behind during the hassle of state-organised departure.

Sami had received a positive decision on his asylum application in August, and was currently waiting for his new identity card and refugee's travel document to arrive. At the same time, however, things had started to go wrong: the groups in Syria who had followed him in the first place had found out his whereabouts in Hungary. They threatened to come after him in Hungary, as well as his family still in Syria. Before long, he was afraid for his and his family's safety, of facing eviction from the camp, and of not managing to find an apartment in Budapest. As soon as he received his documents that entitle him to travel within Schengen for three months, Sami decided to leave Hungary. He felt that the Hungarian authorities would not protect him from the threat that had found him, and in a few weeks, he would be homeless anyway.

He handed over a plastic bag with the teddy bears to a Syrian friend living in Budapest, packed his bag, and boarded a plane to Finland. In Helsinki, a solidarity volunteer gave him accommodation for the first night. Next morning, he walked into the police station, handed over his Hungarian-issued refugee's travel document, and asked for Finland to consider giving him asylum, explaining the impossibility of life in Hungary as a refugee. Sami entered the Finnish system. He was transferred to a camp in a remote, forested area. He had nearly no connections to Finnish people beyond the staff of the camp, and spent his days reading and learning how to swim in the nearby lake. After nearly a year, the Finnish authorities ruled for Sami to be deported back to Hungary because he has refugee status in Hungary, where he is thus obliged to live and stay.¹ The EU legislation was very clear: Hungarian authorities were expected to protect him, and socio-economic considerations such as the structural homelessness of refugees, play no part.

At this point, Sami asked me to share his anonymized story as much as possible. He recounted the desperation at the cycles of waiting and (forced) movement, and wanted to bring attention to the plight of people who receive asylum in a member state but for one reason or another, cannot stay there. Eventually he was deported back to Hungary. When he arrived at the airport in Budapest, he asked for the police to detain him in order to have a place to sleep for the night. The police refused and told him go on and live his life, so Sami ended up walking around the city aimlessly

through the night. He had lost all connections, did not contact one of the few NGOs that help people in this type of situation, and was not aware of how to access homeless shelters for Hungarians.²

While Sami had been in Finland, the ruling party of Hungary, the conservative-turned-extreme-right *Fidesz* (Hungarian Civic Alliance), had escalated its efforts to dismantle what had once been a functioning asylum system. Originally a conservative-nationalist party dating back to the 1980s, *Fidesz* seized an absolute majority in Hungarian parliament in 2010. Since then, the party has cemented its power through what is known as *Nemzeti Együttműködés Rendszere*, (System of National Cooperation), known by the abbreviation NER (see Majtényi, Kopper and Susánszky, 2018; Bozóki and Hegedűs, 2018). By the time of Sami's return, all state-provided integration support for recognized refugees had been abolished, and streets were decorated with colossal anti-refugee propaganda posters. Without further ado, Sami left Hungary once more – this time to France, where his brother had earlier received asylum. He intended to stay with his brother and find informal work with the purpose of staying undercover in order to avoid another deportation to Hungary. Until the time of writing, he has stayed in France as *sans papiers*. The travel document he received from Hungary has expired due to its short validity of 12 months,³ and the plastic bag full of teddy bears, once given to migrant children by Hungarian families, has found its way to solidarity activists in Budapest. Without a valid official ID that would allow Sami to travel within the Schengen zone, he has no way of returning to Hungary to renew his papers. Although he has been recognized as a person entitled to international protection in the European Union, he nevertheless leads an undocumented life.

Sami's story is just one of many that share a common feature: how people would rather live undocumented in Western Europe than as a refugee in Hungary, as this chapter will show.⁴ In this chapter, I rely on Sami's story as a starting point in order to critically investigate the notion of transit migration as linear movement from periphery to core. As illustrated by Sami's story, this vantage point from Eastern Europe dislocates ideas of centre and periphery, a constellation that often functions as an underlying assumption behind debates on migration and Europe. Secondly, my aim is

to tease out the appearances of solidarity that emerge during the path, and how moments of solidarity appear as decisive moments enabling a path to open, and finally, for Sami to settle down.

I begin with a short literature review in which I look at the parameters of academic and political debates on migration and solidarity structures. I suggest that different historical and political contexts within Europe have not been paid sufficient attention. Particularly, questions of the relation between solidarity structures and capitalism, or configurations of self-representation are not necessarily helpful in the Hungarian context because of the complex dynamics of transit. Rather, solidarity escapes denominations such as “political” or “humanitarian”, may open doors at unexpected times, or be based on kinship networks. I then continue to look at the dynamics of transit from two sides: first, in its common understanding as a spectacle that becomes a political tool that advocates a conservative understanding of periphery and core in Europe, and secondly in its actual, messy reality that Sami’s story illustrates, with potential to dislocate the desirable-core and undesirable-periphery pairing. Finally, I look at the abovementioned forms of solidarity that appear in Sami’s story and explore how transit is both a constraining and a constitutive force for solidarity in areas such as Hungary.

Parameters of academic and political debates on migration

Much of the scholarly literature on migration and related solidarity movements in Europe simply do not resonate in the Hungarian context. Regularly understood to be a peripheral country of European Union, I posit that for a person like Sami, Hungary emerges as centrally peripheral. The central place of Hungary goes against many of the assumptions behind migration, which are notably set in Western and Northern Europe. These assumptions include questions like different directions of movement, and of historical and political framing of struggles. As Céline Cantat (2015, 2016) shows, the origins of solidarity movements in Western Europe evolved together with the global anti-capitalist struggle. Furthermore, influential scholarship on migration has convincingly connected border struggles to structures of capitalism and labour (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). Indeed,

on the macro level, post-socialist EU member states such as Hungary play an important role in these dynamics of labour, borders, and migration. Attila Melegh, for instance, has pointed to precisely these dynamics when relating the economy, the rising rate of emigration, and the issuance of citizenship for ethnic Hungarians from neighbouring non-EU member states. What appears is that Hungarian immigration- and asylum policy showcases relationality beyond the East/West divide, and exposes a further hierarchy of white Europeans over migrants from the Middle East and Africa (Melegh, 2016). When zooming into the micro level of interactions between people and strategies of solidarity movements, however, the story looks quite different. Slogans that disavow capitalism, and connect borders with capitalism, are not necessarily convincing to many Hungarians, and may even alienate others. Although Viktor Orbán's illiberal paradigm employs a fundamentally neoliberal logic, it nevertheless feeds on traumas of structural change brought about by the transition to capitalism in the 1990s. Ideologically, many Hungarians who oppose the government's brutal migration policy still see capitalism and liberalism as fundamentally positive antidotes to socialism or illiberalism.

Similarly, accounts of solidarity and migrants' self-organized, autonomous movements are intriguing in presenting the possibilities of collective action (Ataç, Rygiel and Stiel, 2016). Nevertheless, such accounts often remain unhelpful in grasping the dynamics of migrant solidarity in the Hungarian context, where the end goals of the struggle are to be allowed to leave, or to settle down in dignity. In other words, the country is central to the asylum cases of many people, but relatively few settle down there. Occasions of migrants' self-organization are rather rare, the most powerful example being the March of Hope in 2015 (Kasperek and Speer, 2015; Kallius, 2016). Similarly, in Hungary, the conditions of migrants' political self-representation are remarkably tenuous, not least because since early 2015, refugees and migrants have emerged as the main targets of governmental hate-speech campaigns and related counter-campaigns (Nagy, 2016; 2018). This over-politicized context questions some tenets of solidarity structures, such as the juxtaposition of "political activists" and "humanitarian volunteers". Instead, as also Rozakou (2016) and

Theodosopolous (2016) have argued, solidarity escapes such definitions. More specifically, Hungarian scholars have convincingly argued that solidarity towards migrants cannot be viewed separately from Hungarians' reactions to the establishment of an illiberal regime (Majtényi, Kopper and Susánszky, 2018; Feischmidt 2016; see also Dessewffy, Nagy and Váry, 2018). Consequently, I am prompted to look at instances of solidarity as they ephemerally emerge, instead of seeking out pre-conceived solidarity structures as unfolding in a given context.

By choosing Sami's path of transit as a starting point, this chapter connects to the above literature by providing a perspective where Hungary emerges as a place to be avoided, but nevertheless central. This perspective, I believe, helps to unsettle the concealed assumptions of divides within European space (Cabot, 2014; Dzenovska 2016, 2017; Kallius, 2017) and bring questions of core and periphery into a new light. Quite simply, the aim of the chapter is to answer the following questions: what story does Sami's trajectory tell of the European space? What constellations of core, periphery, and mobility emerge? What forms of solidarity appear during these few years?

Furthermore, for the abovementioned reasons, I have chosen to name the chapter after the concept of transit. In its mainstream understanding, the term refers to countries where people on the move choose not to, or cannot, settle down. Such a discourse on transit implies a linear direction of movement that points towards a particular understanding of European space, in which much of the academic literature on migration is trapped. I follow in the footsteps of Sabine Hess, who has argued that the dichotomy between "transit" and "destination" countries is false, as are their corresponding identities: the opposite of a "transit" migrant is not a "settled" migrant (2010; 2012). Instead, the experience of transit is temporally fragmented and protracted, possibly stretching over several locations over many years. Hess has presciently argued that the "transit" denomination equips governments with reasons to avoid implementing sustainable integration schemes (as in the case of Hungary), and empowers governments to use the transit-denomination as a bargaining chip in regional policymaking by utilizing countries' fear of migration (as has, indeed, become commonplace

in the European Union during the latter half of 2010s). Relatedly, I want to call attention to the risks of a topology of Europe that assumes a linear “flight” of people from the South and the East to the North and the West. Unintended, such accounts may reproduce an image of Europe that includes a desired centre and not-so-desired periphery. While flight is, indeed, the intent of many, in reality this notion is partial, and thus risky. Circling back to Sami’s account: what appears instead is a desired periphery (Finland or France) and a not-so-desired centre (Hungary). Furthermore, I have argued elsewhere how precisely such a conceptual divide of Europe is strategically used by the extreme-right government of Hungary, which relies on a linear spectacle of migration to falsely present itself as a defender of Europe in an attempt to legitimize its brutal migration policy (Kallius, 2017).

Methodologically, I base the chapter on long-term fieldwork on migration-related topics in Hungary between 2013 and 2018, which has included periods of ethnographic fieldwork inside the refugee camp in Bicske, among an anti-refugee camp movement in the village of Vámoszabadi in Western Hungary, and a collection of interviews from people stuck in Budapest’s Keleti train station in summer 2015. To a great extent, the chapter and my research is also informed by my personal involvement in the movement for migrants’ rights in Hungary between 2012 and 2018 as a member of *Migszol Csoport* (Migrant Solidarity Group of Hungary), an informal grassroots activist group.⁵ I am also informed by the Hungarian-language public discourse on migration- and asylum related matters, both by government-related media and propaganda, as well as outlets critical of the government. When not citing the work of others, I generally refer to people on the move simply as people, or if required by the context, as migrants.⁶

The spectacle of linear transit

In spring 2018, a young woman with refugee status living in Budapest told to me in desperation: “I just feel like wherever I go, I will be deported back to Hungary. Even if I go to Mars, they will deport me back here.” Just like Sami, she was stuck in a transit country as far as papers and legislation were

concerned. Moreover, she was acutely aware of her position as a central political target in the government's efforts to establish a regime. The NER and the regime rely on migration-related propaganda, or as argued by Majtényi, Kopper and Susánszky (2018), migration policy is somewhat of a Trojan horse for the dismantling of democratic institutions in Hungary. In this section, I build on their argument by pointing to the ways in which this Trojan horse is dependent on the spectacle of transit through the country.

The spectacle is made possible by recycling images of the events of 2015 in omnipresent government propaganda. Thus it is ensured that that summer still captivates the Hungarian public debate on migration. The images show, first and foremost, a linear movement of people towards Western Europe: thousands of people marching, crossing the bridges over the Danube, and continuing on the motorway. Elsewhere, representations of the flight towards Germany along the Balkan route have included pictures of the famous "72-hour papers" issued by Serbian authorities, or queues of people steadily advancing under the watchful eye of the authorities. To the celebration of many humanitarian spectators across the world, this direction of movement was solidified as governments along the Balkan route began to organize mass transportation to the West in trains and buses.

The linear movement of migrants from the periphery to the core seems, simply, unquestionable. This is all the more curious when considering that the reality of migration is often characterized by extensive periods of waiting (Tazzioli, 2017). Nevertheless, the images of movement live on, having also appeared during the 2016 Brexit campaign and the 2018 Slovenian parliamentary election campaign. In the Hungarian context, a conspicuous photo of a steadily moving queue of migrants was used in the final stretches of Fidesz's 2018 election campaign, together with a red sign that simply read "STOP" (Image 1). In the European context, the direction seems always to be towards Northern Europe: in the case of the Balkan route, from Turkey, Bulgaria, or Greece towards Germany. In other cases, onwards from the shores of the Mediterranean to Italy, Malta, or Spain and onward to Germany and Scandinavia. Uncannily, these directions correspond with European moral and economic hierarchies: from the South to the North, from the East to the West (Cabot, 2014; Dzenovska, 2016).

Figure 6. “STOP” poster on a Budapest tramstop, 5th April 2018



Photo by the author.

I now turn to the ways in which the Fidesz government strategically uses transit migration and this imagined landscape of Europe to its own advantage by positioning itself as a “defender of Europe”. Since 2015, this message is communicated to Hungarians via an absolute dominance over print- and televised media and a series of anti-migration propaganda campaigns that include TV and radio advertisements,⁷ news clips, leaflets distributed to homes, and the like.⁸ These campaigns exploit historical themes, most notably the idea of Hungary as the last bastion of the Ottoman Empire, in an attempt to portray Hungary as the guardian of a Christian Europe now “under attack” by predominantly Muslim migrants steadily advancing from the South.

This civilizational discourse and imagery of migrants’ transit through the country enabled the implementation of the so-called “Hungarian solution to migration” (Rajaram, 2016; Kallius, 2017), which includes, among other things, the normalization of detention in a “transit zone” on the Southern border, violent pushbacks of migrants across the fence to

Serbia (Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2018), the closure of nearly all open camps, and the erasure of all integration support to people recognized as refugees (Nagy, 2016). In 2017 and 2018, these measures escalated to the labelling of NGOs as foreign agents, and possible prison punishment for people who provide assistance to asylum seekers or “produce information” about migration, and a 25% tax on any organizations that engage in “propaganda activities that portray migration in a positive light”.

These developments are quite frequently narrated when Western media writes about the context in Hungary. When one considers the position of people on the move, the picture is, however, far from complete. Parallel to all of the above, migrants continue to enter Hungary, albeit in lesser numbers and under harsher conditions. Fully aware of this, the Fidesz government has carried on turning a blind eye to their onward movement towards the West, irrespective of the stage or result of their asylum case. At the same time, visible acts of solidarity, such as migration-related demonstrations, public humanitarian help for migrants, or counter-propaganda campaigns (Nagy, 2016) have withered to a fraction, even though a small but dedicated group of Hungarians keep on providing assistance or even attempt to keep up political work.

Despite recognized refugees’ obligation to remain in Hungary, the transitory nature of Hungary is, and has been, always agreed upon by nearly all stakeholders. A prominent Hungarian NGO that provides legal assistance to asylum seekers points out that the underlying attitude has always been characterised as “úgyis mindenki előbb-utóbb továbbmegy nyugatra”, i.e. “at some point everyone will go onwards to the West anyway” (Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2017: 4). Goodness, in the words of József Böröcz, stems from the West, as has already been shown by the plea from Hungarian intellectuals for France to grant refugee status for persecuted Roma in the early 2000s (2006). In an ethnographic study of a village on the Hungarian-Serbian border, Margit Feischmidt has captured how villagers witnessed the path of migrants towards the West as a flow that would repeat itself in the future (2016), and in an extensive analysis of the evolution of the Hungarian asylum system from the final

years of state socialism onwards, Boldizsár Nagy (2012) also notes how the approach from the beginning was a policy of letting migrants pass onwards to Western Europe.

This persistence of transit is curious considering how the cornerstone of EU-level migration politics relies on decades of policy-making designed to curb it. The discourse of “transit” was solidified and employed as a policy instrument that manifested the externalization of EU border policy (Düvell 2012). His analysis is substantiated by the later plans of the European Commission to curb transit, absconding, and secondary movement as much as possible in the new designs for common asylum policy in the EU (European Commission, 2016). In other words, a paradox emerges: EU asylum policy is built precisely on halting routes of transit, employing – among others – the largely dysfunctional Dublin regulation precisely towards this end.⁹ At the same time, the idea of linear transit as the foundational dynamic of movement remains as strong as ever, and the fear of transit has dictated EU politics at the highest levels until the time of writing in 2018.

To sum up, although European asylum policy is particularly designed to stop transit migration, Hungarian policy is built on precisely this notion. Since 2015, the government has employed a double-faced strategy: imagery portraying migrants passing through Hungary allows the Fidesz government to domestically and internationally portray itself as a defender of “Christian” Europe against what it calls an “invasion” of migrants. At the same time however, the government turns a blind eye to the onward movement of migrants from Hungary towards the West. However, the actual reality of movement questions the assumptions on which this propaganda lies, and is essentially formative for solidarity.

The reality of transit and solidarity opening doors

Next, I return to the reality of transit beyond the representations and policies outlined above. Sami’s story exposes how the crisscrossing paths of transit to, through, and from Hungary, with their related temporalities, are far from linear. EU asylum policy produces countless similar stories

of complex routes in the face of such policies. The choices for Sami also hold policy denominations as modalities of transit, which are either desired or undesired by policy makers. In EU-talk, in order to avoid a *Dublin deportation*, Sami chose not to *abscond*. He received refugee status in Hungary, and exercised his *right to travel* in Schengen for three months in order to move on to another member state, in this case, Finland, legally. He then faced a *bilateral deportation* back to Hungary, and decided to resort to illicit *secondary movement*, and again with his right to travel in Schengen, travelled to France where he works in the informal economy.

In essence, Sami's struggle was also one *against* movement (Apostolova, 2017:269) that can be traced to the EU legislation that forces him to return to Hungary. As such, his struggle dislocates dominant imaginations of modalities and directions of transit. For a person on the move who is seeking a safe place to settle down, Hungary appears as centrally peripheral: a second EU country, where she will possibly be deported back to, or be deported further away from. If she is granted asylum, she is stuck in Hungary despite government-sanctioned hate speech against her. If she obtains a visa in order to move into another member state, she will have to return annually to renew the refugees' travel document.

Transit thus appears as complex and multi-directional. Considering, then, that the whole positioning of Hungary's Fidesz government as the "protector" of Europe that "stems the flow" not only provides a skewed idea of Europe that effectively excludes the Balkan peninsula, but is also based on a false idea of transit and direction. Consequently, I claim that in order to counter this discourse and revisit the political and academic parameters of debates on migration, the actual paths and directions of transit, exemplified here by that of Sami, need to be taken into consideration. What emerges is a picture in which Europe's peripheral areas, such as Hungary, are not just locations of compassion deficit or bad governance, but core areas where the dynamics of EU-wide asylum policies unfold.

The choices that Sami made in the face of official policies were, to a large extent, influenced by the presence or absence of solidarity structures. To conclude, I now turn to these appearances. Forms of solidarity figure

during these few years, and are often decisive in the twists and turns of his life. They are, however, present ephemerally and often disconnected from Sami's immediate environment. At first, he himself took up the role of a community organizer, using his English-language skills to help bring the grievances of fellow Arabic-speakers to the attention of solidarity volunteers in Hungary. When the situation escalated, it was the self-organized March of September 2015 that led to Germany and Austria signalling the green light to open the border. The March, which was widely supported by Hungarians, was something distant for Sami, but resulted in the camp being emptied around him. His decision to collect the teddy bears brought to him the tangible representations of humanitarian solidarity that Hungarian volunteers had shown (Bernát, Kertész and Tóth, 2016).

Meanwhile, solidarity structures in Finland had given birth to *Kotimajoitusverkosto*, a movement of home accommodation for people on the move. Something that made an appearance in Sami's life for just one night has since evolved into a long-standing movement that attempts to create alternatives to housing of people in alienating reception centres. When Sami was deported back to Hungary, much of the earlier humanitarian structures had diminished, and the remainders operated out of sight in tightly knit systems, which he had no access to. The bag of teddies, however, found its way to activists, including myself, who began wondering whether they could be an inspiration for a subversive exhibition in the new context where earlier work had become illegalized and by and large ceased. Finally, the ultimate facet of solidarity that became the defining feature in Sami's life was perhaps the most persistent, strong, and also often overlooked: that of kinship. In France, it was family connections, originally torn apart by EU asylum policy, which ended up being the solution to finding a precarious and undocumented, but still relatively safe life.

Especially with regards to Hungary, these instances paint a good sketch of solidarity structures. Although locals' solidarity initiatives along the Balkan route and Hungary predate the events of 2015, the appearance of thousands of humanitarian volunteers that year was spectacular and transformative. These volunteers who, with no prior experience set up

large-scale humanitarian operations in Budapest and in the border area, were unquestionably reproducing vertical power structures and biopolitical control over refugee populations (Kallius, Monterescu and Rajaram 2016). On the other hand, in the midst of an aggressive and explicitly xenophobic anti-refugee propaganda campaign, acts of humanitarianism were inescapably political (Majtényi, Kopper and Susánszky, 2018). The year also marked the arrival and growth in the numbers of foreign volunteers and activists all along the Balkan route, although to a lesser extent in Hungary. On occasion, the different encounters of expectations, experience, and ideologies of solidarity went smoothly. Yet on other occasions, these meetings resulted in implicit and explicit tensions between local and foreign solidarity activists and volunteers (for a lengthy report, based not only on self-reflection of the authors but also on the feedback of locals along the Balkan route, see *ReflActionist Collective*, 2016). Without exaggerating the dividing lines between West and East, and remembering the different historical and ideological contexts of solidarity movements, I claim that contextual, ideological, and first and foremost strategic differences appear when Western solidarity structures “travel” east, vocal critiques of capitalism or expectations of self-representation being conspicuous examples.

In the case of Hungary, I contend that the modalities of solidarity fundamentally relate to the question of transit also prior to 2015. The evolution of *Migszol Csoport* illustrates this point. An explicitly political group that does not engage in humanitarian work, the group was formed in 2012 in support of a large group of Afghans who had been given refugee status in Hungary. Upon facing homelessness, they ultimately successfully demanded to be allowed to move onwards to Germany. Over the years, *Migszol* campaigned for seemingly contradictory messages: on one hand, documenting the deteriorating conditions in Hungary in order to demand that EU member states cease Dublin deportations to Hungary. On the other hand, this created difficulties for a parallel discourse intended for the domestic audience, namely to work towards a society where migrants have equal opportunities with Hungarians. As mentioned, the onward migration of migrants also meant different dynamics of self-organization

and the participation of migrants in the activism: while Migszol claims to be a diverse and representative group, in practice, the number of activists who were themselves refugees always remained small.

With the formation of humanitarian solidarity groups in 2015, the formative force of transit over solidarity became crystallised in relation to the “internal others” in Hungarian society. When thousands of people were stuck at Keleti station, the question whether or not the Hungarian poor should also be helped appeared repeatedly. But for how long, and in what capacity, would the humanitarian operations be around? Officially, none of the volunteer or solidarity groups denied also helping the Hungarian poor. In practice, however, there were several instances when migrants were preferred over Hungarians. For instance, after the March, homeless people were denied occupancy of the tents left empty by migrants who by now had proceeded towards Austria. Sometimes free volunteer medical care was denied to locals. Another time, when helping out a group of humanitarian solidarity volunteers in giving out food, I was explicitly instructed that the daily portions of food were “meant for the refugees”. Similarly, although Migszol Csoport publicly advocates for class-based alliances, in practice, there have been almost no campaigns that would truly address the common marginalizations of different “surplus populations” (Rajaram, 2015; 2018). Having said all this, there was at times, and particularly in 2015, intense cooperation with professionals working in the Hungarian homeless care system. After the majority of migrants had departed, some groups immediately began to distribute food and clothing to the Hungarian poor, while others redirected their humanitarian efforts in other countries along the Balkan route. Some of these groups are still operating until the time of writing, organizing regular food provision for Hungarians.

Nevertheless, these efforts do not negate the stranglehold that transit holds over solidarity, as the following statement by a coordinator in one of the volunteer groups suggests: “If it had turned out that everybody wanted to stay in Hungary, and we would have to take care of them, integrate them, and not simply provide them with food for two days, dress their wounds and then wave goodbye to them as they get on the trains... that would

have been a different story” (quoted in Bernát 2016:93). At the same time, cultural intimacy and insecurity about Hungary’s negative reputation were manifest in the rhetoric of some volunteers. Many would proudly declare their work to be exemplary Hungarian hospitality. Nevertheless, aware of practical difficulties and a hostile government, they would at the same time encourage migrants to leave the country, believing it would be impossible for them to integrate.

To conclude, transit in the context of Hungary has the potential to hold horizontal class solidarity in check by adding an element of temporality to the equation – how long one sticks around matters greatly. The recognition of these conditions and trajectories, on the empirical level, is crucial in order to grasp the forms in which solidarity appear and disappear. For Sami, the family support network ended up being of chief importance in comparison to other instances of solidarity that emerge at crucial junctures in his life, opening some doors, while closing others.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have put forward a relatively straightforward argument: commonplace ideas of transit migration from the “periphery” to the “core” provide an incomplete picture of Europe. People’s actual trajectories across the European space paint a much more complex topography of Europe, where the place one might want to avoid might emerge as central due to constant threats of deportation. Such linear depictions also cloud the relational aspects of transit, and as shown by the struggle of Sami, how policies designed to curb transit are, in fact, formative of movement. Consequently, I have argued that transit needs to be understood from the relational perspective that transcends an idea of linear movement. This is crucial, as the image of linear movement is hijacked for political purposes, as exemplified by the Fidesz government of Hungary. Building on this, I have looked at risks related to solidarity formations’ possible facilitation of the idea of “flights” from periphery to core. At the same time, however, solidarity structures have the potential to disrupt ideas of core and periphery by supporting struggles such as those of Sami. They also appear

as short-lived conjuncture points, but also as long-standing networks such as kinship. In other words, more attention should be paid to the messy reality of both transit and solidarity, not only in relation to Hungary but other “centrally peripheral” areas alike, which have the potential to disrupt the mainstream imaginations of Europe. Considering the tightening space and active oppression of migrant solidarity in Hungary, such an alternative imagination is acutely needed.

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Notes

- 1 According to the statistics of the Finnish Immigration Service, in 2016 and 2017, a total of 159 people had their asylum applications dismissed because they had earlier received protection in another EU member state. For details, see <http://statistics.migri.fi> (accessed June 2018).
- 2 As of summer 2018, Hungarian NGOs' emergency housing schemes for refugees have also withered due to the governments' decision to freeze all EU funding for migration-related projects.
- 3 Hungarian authorities issue the refugees' travel document for a record short period in the EU, 12 months (ECRE 2016).
- 4 Sami's story is one of several that I encountered between 2012 and 2018.
- 5 As a member of Migszol, I have collected testimonies from people on the move, and organized events and demonstrations related to migration issues. During the summer of 2015, I was part of a team that conducted interviews among migrants stranded in public spaces in Budapest (Migszol Csoport, 2016), and was present at the March of Hope of migrants from Budapest to Vienna. Since January 2018, the group has significantly decreased its activities in the face of Hungarian government's criminalization of solidarity by means of the so-called "Stop Soros" legislation.
- 6 This stems from my normative conviction to counter the rhetoric that creates a false binary of "economic" migrants versus "political" refugees (see Apostolova, 2015; 2016).
- 7 For a sample of a TV advertisement, posted on YouTube by the Hungarian critical news site Vastagbőr blog, see "Új kampány: 'Ne hagyjuk' / New ad: 'Don't let Soros have the last laugh!'" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30AEBSTcK7w> (accessed 28 June 2018).
- 8 For a sample of communications of the Fidesz-KDNP government, see its English-language official website www.kormany.hu/en, or the English-language propaganda page run by the Prime Minister's Office at www.abouthungary.hu.
- 9 Since 2015, Dublin deportations of asylum seekers from other member states to Hungary have withered to a fraction, while bilateral deportation of people who have refugee status in Hungary remain commonplace.

AFTERWORD

Prem Kumar Rajaram

The editors and authors of this volume study three phenomena. The first is the empirically observable growth of struggles at and along borders by migrants or groups working with or for migrants. These are conceptualised as solidarity struggles, meaning practices and discourses in which supporters and migrants find some form of commonality. The second is the idea that these solidarity struggles are political. Which is to say that these acts of refusal and rebellion constitute a politics that, in Sara Ahmed's words, "keep coming up against histories that have become concrete, histories that have become walls" (Ahmed, 2017). The third idea then is that these acts of refusal and rebellion chip away at the concrete resolutions of what we understand as politics which typically harden around a notion of the citizen as the primary political actor whose ethical and political obligations are seconded to an overarching state that reproduces and legitimises some affinities, while marginalising others.

Migrant struggles may be usefully understood as forms of "local critique" (Foucault, 2003:6). This type of critique has two dimensions. (1) It is in opposition to "established regime[s] of thought" which prioritise the universal and the general. Being in opposition, it does not, or should not, need a "visa from some regime to establish its validity". Local critique seeks to destabilise dominant forms of knowledge by positing the validity of specific experiences, criticisms and insurrections in ways that can show the limits of the theoretical unity on which dominant knowledge regimes

are built. (2) Local critique may be seen as an “insurrection of subjugated knowledges.” Subjugated knowledges are of two types. There is that form of knowledge whose historical depth and character have been buried or simplified in “functional arrangements or systematic organisations”. Then there are “knowledges that have been disqualified” because they are “insufficiently elaborated”, they do not conform to or refer to the norms of truthfulness that we take as rigorous knowledge (Foucault, 2003:6-7). Foucault does not tell us how these struggles may be realised, which is to say that he gives us local critique - a mode of refusing the generalisations of dominant political knowledge - but without positing the possibility of the establishment of another transformative system.

In order to understand migrant struggles and the challenges that these may pose to the political, an understanding of the political architecture that reproduces and concretises certain histories and ways of doing and thinking politics is important. These struggles must involve thinking through problems and issues whose vocabulary, agenda, and presumptions foreclose their very legitimacy or perceptibility (Brown, 2005; Spivak, 1999; Ranciere, 1999). The political architecture is not adequately accounted for in accounts that describe the political as centring on the citizen-state-nation relation. Each of these individual terms - ‘citizen’, ‘state’ and ‘nation’ - are made up of specific histories relations and processes, and relate to each other or are made to relate in particular ways so that politics becomes constrained, and relations that perpetuate hierarchy, privilege, and inequality are reproduced over time. They take on a durability, such that histories become walls, and the ideologies and interests that they depend on become difficult to parse out.

The challenge for the solidarity struggles articulated in this book is how such struggles may escape the fragmenting and isolating effect that can occur when going up against the complex political architecture. This can lead to a broad and general critique of a totality - the citizen-state-nation nexus -; it can find a rethinking of the politically possible in local critique (Brown, 2005; Foucault, 2003); and it can combine the first two moves by insisting on understanding local constellations of power as relationally connected to historically complex global political and cultural

processes - while remaining focused on how these play out in the present in specific contexts. It is this third move that allows us to move away from Foucault's local critique, turning perhaps to a Freirian idea of the struggle of the dispossessed that centres on the realisation of themselves as subjects of history whose identity and positionality have been determined by power structures that seek to restrict and direct their economic, political, and social participation (Freire, 1970/2005:67).

My aim then in this afterword is to think with the authors and editors what is to be challenged when we challenge the political. This involves two steps which a number of the authors - and the book as a whole - takes. First is a recognition that the solidarity struggles by or on behalf of migrants are only isolated and fragmented from the perspective of the political architecture's dominant ways of seeing and framing. Such ways of seeing are not easily overcome; they are intended to name 'others' and to contain and localise their histories and what these may reveal about the inequalities on which the political architecture rests. Dualistic and manichean binaries - such as citizen/non-citizen - enable the production of seemingly unitary and coherent subjects - citizens and non-citizens - with clear relations to the law and state who are responsible for their naming, birth, and reproduction. A focus on histories by which such terms emerge and their representation as unitary or coherent and through what sorts of ideological instruments (Marfleet, this volume) is important.

The second step is very much connected to the first and involves conceptualising migrant struggles and the solidarity movements around them - the challenges to the political - as complex social processes embedded in histories and politics of marginalisation and stratification that go beyond the political, economic, or social marginalisation of migrants. This is about addressing the modes of representation that reduce political and historical complexity, often through the deployment of discourses and practices of 'othering'. These practices of isolation and fragmentation reduce and contain struggles as fragmented and isolated, local difficulties that do not reverberate onto broader political systems.

The first issue then is about conceptualising the complex power relations in the political architecture - the 'political' in 'challenging the political'. The

second is to do with the challenge, how might migrant solidarity struggles resound in ways that address structures of power and oppression and refuse dismissal as mere local difficulties? A third point may be added: is there something particular about 'the migrant' so that their challenges to the political is particularly cogent? Are migrant struggles particularly placed to reveal the oppressive dynamics of dominating political architectures? I will pre-empt my argument by saying essentially yes: there is something specific about migrant struggles in this particular time in the present that may reveal something particularly important about the structure of dominating political architectures. I also think it is important - moving away from Foucault and towards Freire or Gramsci - to say that the particular import of migrant struggles is not the local character of their critique, but their capacity to say something general about structures of domination and oppression that impacts on a variety of marginalised or subjugated groups.

Political architectures

My aim in this section is to think through key features of dominant political architectures - those that foreclose the possibility of other histories, indeed of the historical relevance of dominated groups, and of their subjugated knowledges. It is important, following Foucault, to consider subjugated knowledges as "blocks of historical knowledges that were present in the functional and systemic ensembles, but were masked." (Foucault, 2003:7). I understand this to mean that these systemic and functional ensembles that normalise and reproduce particular ways of arranging societies, politics, and economics and the subjects permitted within them, rest on relations of exclusion. Such exclusion is specific and targeted at particular groups, and a general outcome of a system that renders imperceptible the histories and challenges of others so that at a systemic level, little changes. Keeping this in mind, it is also important, following Freire, to think about the broader systemic reverberations of migrant struggles.

The first point then about the political architecture that I am seeking to address is that it is built on the identification and indeed reproduction of the 'enemy alien' (Marfleet, this volume). The enemy alien has a specific

function: their histories may be strategically forgotten and they may be both excluded and included as props to the creation and maintenance of a ruse of a coherent national community. Forced migrants - refugees - have a particular role in this; their existence is both a by-product of and essential to the reproduction of the territorial state and its political system. Marfleet notes that the histories that migrants bring become secondary to their simplified status as means by which nation-states are built. Their historical role in the constitution and reproduction of the systemic ensemble of the nation-state (its political architecture) is actively - consciously and by political design - forgotten. Additionally, the possibility that the mobility of migrants to the nation-state may point to historical dynamics other than the emergence and reproduction of the nation-state is also 'forgotten'. Tazzioli (this volume) shows how state-centred ways of seeing present the migrant as a particular type of problem and only recognisable as such.

Marfleet's argument in the first chapter of this volume pays attention to the *active* forgetting of migrants and their histories. This adds another layer to Foucault's argument - it brings in the question of ideology and in doing so, asks what Foucault does not: whose interests do these 'systemic ensembles' serve and how are they structured to allow the durable reproduction of privilege and inequality?

The second point about the political architecture that is thus worth considering is how privilege, inequality, and marginalisation become reproduced. Althusser argues that the principle role of ideology is interpellation - the naming and reproduction of concrete subjects (Althusser, 2001). This concretisation is backed up by the materialisation of ideology in different apparatuses and their practices that conduct how we conceive, speak about, and act on an imaginary reality. The polis as Hannah Arendt says (and as Spång and Lundberg write in this volume) arises through speech and action. Althusser's account of ideology has it that the realities in which we live - the subjectivities we inhabit and the polis in which we act - are constantly being produced and performed. The so-constituted polis establishes a space where there is the likelihood of consistent action in service of hierarchies and class privileges over time (Spång and Lundberg,

this volume). Althusser points to the existence of a complex architecture that seeks to frame legitimate and illegitimate forms of political action and discourse through everyday controls (Althusser's famous example of the subjectification that arises when one is hailed on the street by a policeman) that connect back to material practices which perpetuate and naturalise specific economic, social, and political practices and privileges.

The complex way in which ideology operates means that the interests that are served through the reproduction of privilege and inequality become concealed in a set of everyday practices, where certain arrangements are taken for granted, including the exclusion of the historical and political relevance of subjects who are interpellated as others. Albert Memmi, in his account of the relationship of coloniser to colonised, adds to this framing by arguing that fundamental to this dyad is an ideological aggression, a myth of racial superiority that takes concrete form in establishing the cultural, political, and economic reproduction of racialised privilege, but has its root in deep-seated distaste coupled with an innate sense of the superiority of oneself and one's community: "A colonized driving a car is a sight to which the colonizer refuses to become accustomed; he denies him all normality." (Memmi, 1974/2003:130).

A focus on ideology points to the ways in which political architectures constitute a complex universality within which some groups are interpellated as 'other', and whose histories and knowledges are subjugated, while other practices are normalised and become everyday. The entrenchment of political and economic privilege - and concomitant inequality - is one such normalisation. Sevinin (this volume) shows how humanitarian actors in southern Turkey insist that the migrants they assist are able to demonstrate a work ethic. Althusser's account of ideology allows us to focus on the privileges and inequalities that are reproduced, and on how some groups are cast as others to the norm, enemy aliens, people whom the ideological apparatus refuses to become accustomed to. To the extent that migrants and refugees are among these, then they are injunctioned to perform and demonstrate certain values to show their worth - for example the insistence on a performance of a work ethic that Sevinin shows.

Another key feature of the political architecture that I am tracing here then is the collusion of state and capital (Cantat, 2016). The systemic nature of the interests and privileges that capitalism serves is concealed as subject performances become normalised. Mezzadra and Neilsen (2103) argue that migrants are included into nation-states if they demonstrate their value to capitalist systems. Capitalism requires the ready availability of cheap labour, indeed it may be argued that the cheapening of the bodypower of specific others is integral to the maintenance of political architectures. Connecting back then to Foucault, the systemic ensembles that dismiss or simplify the histories of subjugated knowledges enable the reproduction of class privilege by ensuring the reproduction of racialised and cheap labour.

I have outlined three features of the political architecture against which migrant struggles rail and in relation to which they might be thought. The first is the reproduction of enemy aliens that enable the constitution of a ruse of a coherent national community. The histories of the enemy alien - migrants often - must be actively forgotten. This points to a second feature - the role of ideology in normalising the reproduction of class privilege in ways that lead to the continuous fragmentation, localisation, and subjugation of different knowledges and histories. The third feature is the collusion of state and capital, by which I mean the idea that the nation state was set up as a way of entrenching class privileges - an important part of which is the regulation of the mobility and labour-value of others (Cantat, 2016). Migrant 'integration' often means their valorisation in capitalist systems (Sevinin, this volume). As subjugated others or enemy aliens, migrants are often cheap labour and included into economic systems as such, as are others whose social presence the ruling classes refuse to become entirely accustomed to.

It is this commonality between how migrants and others are integrated into capitalist systems that may allow us to move beyond Foucault's local critique. This involves cognisance of migrants as part of groups oppressed by capitalist power and the ideology that normalises this (Freire, 1970/2005). This cognisance allows for an account of the relation of migrants and others to histories of the state - and the political architecture on which the state is based - in ways that can have systemic reverberations, as I will explore in the next section.

Migrant struggles as local and historical critique

Zaman (this volume) studies migrant struggles as performances of politics and political subjectivity, essentially acts of citizenship that can call into question the limits of political community. Such performances can remake the polis (Spång and Lundberg, this volume) and they can call to mind decolonial practices of rethinking the terms of political community (Hall, Lounasmaa and Squire, this volume). Localised action in spaces seemingly fragmented from the dominant political architecture - such as refugee squats in Athens (Zaman, this volume) or the Calais Jungle (Hall, Lounasmaa and Squire, this volume) - are seen by the authors in this volume as ways of re-performing how ostensibly distant spaces relate to the normative political community centred on the citizen-state-nation nexus. Kallius' (this volume) topographical argument notes that mobilities and solidarities are not formed in linear lines nor do they construct a clear set of political possibilities centred on settled forms of community. A topological approach (Allen, 2003) is helpful here. Topological accounts argue that spatial relations determine the relative proximity or distance of different spaces to each other. Thus the performance of politics in neglected and marginal spaces draws lines of connection between the exclusionary political architecture and those it would exclude. Rather than localised and fragmented critique, the performance of citizenship in neglected and marginal spaces calls to mind the boundary work that is required to establish the edges and limits of political community and reminds us that these are historically emergent, and probably serving specific interests (Brown, 2005).

The edgework that stabilises social and political formations is brought into question by solidarity movements that the authors here trace. Citizens acting in solidarity with migrants and refugees call to mind differently constituted relations of community (Cantat, this volume; Marfleet, this volume; Zaman, this volume). People on the move create connections, relations, and new forms of knowledge and ethical co-existence with others who are often more sedentary. Cantat (this volume) explores the way groups in Belgrade sought to subvert the hierarchical distinctions that come from providing aid, consciously undertaking "attempts at building

alternative modes of relating”. Through simple acts of taking the time to share tea and converse, social relations of care took precedence and enabled the cultivation of different ways of relating between citizens and migrants. Citizenship, Zaman (this volume) argues, is “located beyond the state ... its practices precede recognition by the state”. It is this gap between practice and recognition that is important and not easily transgressed. Calling to mind the historicity and immanent unboundedness of social relations of care, ethics, and solidarity - the alternative modes of relating Cantat describes - is to suggest that the dominant political architecture does not - or should not - have the right to discern between legitimate and illegitimate (or local and fragmented) accounts of these. But does the performance of citizenship by those who do not have citizenship constitute a systemic challenge to the norms that foster the exclusions of political community, or are they simply a claim to enter this political community, closing the borders (again) behind them?

Subaltern practice is not of course simply about joining or not joining a community. The politics and social relations that are generated by migrant struggles cannot be easily coded, otherness can be a basis for symbolic self-representations that generate new politics (Merelo, this volume). The difficulties however of making localised struggles resound onto the ideological and repressive state apparatus needs to be considered. There is no formula for this, there is no political endeavour that can ensure that migrant struggles and the relations of solidarity they produce can take durable form.

Migrant struggles point to the possibility of recognising and overturning the dynamic of power and its attempts to constrain action. Foucault is not able to consider how such struggles may constitute something more than local critique. Paolo Freire’s (1970/2005) work shows a way of thinking the historical dynamics inherent in such local critique and that have led to the entrenchment and reproduction of particular systems of normalisation and hierarchy. Freire’s work centres on an account of history as contingent and of power as a process of normalisation that tries to occlude or conceal this contingency. Beginning with the idea that there are groups systematically

oppressed by capitalism and its ideological apparatus, Freire argues that what is needed is an overhauling of an entire system. In his reading, citizenship is not only about relations of care and solidarity, but also about access to rights. Thinking about unequal access to rights involves thinking not only how such rights are distributed but also how they may be exercised in ways that do not reproduce systematic conditions of oppression.

Beginning with the idea then that citizenship is a problematic concept because the enactment of rights reproduces hierarchies and class privileges, we may point to connections between migrants ostensibly excluded from the rights regime and marginalised citizens whose command over access to rights over time is fragile (Sen, 1986), and whose enactment of such rights in derogated form entrench their inequality. Freire points to the historical contingency of such arrangements, and both he and Althusser show that their durability and reproduction rests on the capacity of the political architecture to naturalise, normalise, and so ahistoricise these arrangements. The reproduction of hierarchy and systems designed to entrench class privilege requires fragmentation and localisation of different struggles. Cantat (this volume) shows how the Serbian state actively marginalised groups acting in solidarity with migrants by exerting its institutional capacity to forcibly prevent assisting migrants in public space. Aid was to be provided exclusively in state-run centres. The effective outcome is the invisibilisation of migrants - no longer present in public spaces - and the criminalisation of solidarity and aid work. Connective and articulating work between the struggles of migrants and other groups similarly marginalised by capitalist-state collusion and their normalising ideology may lead to a re-historicising of local critique. This means an awareness that the localising, the forgetting, and the subjugating that are integral to the reproduction of the dominant political architecture are active modes of ensuring the perpetuation of particular power structures and the constrained histories on which these depend. Connecting and articulating work may point to common histories and knowledges subjugated in different ways but as a result of similar modes of marginalisation before state-capitalist collusion (Cantat, this volume).

Conclusion

In this afterword, I have tried to think with the authors and editors of this volume what the political is and what challenging that political may entail. I have tried to show that the political is a complex social architecture whose perpetuation depends on systems of repression and representation that subjugate knowledges and histories and, importantly, the connections and affiliations between these would-be localised and fragmented subaltern forms. Migrants and refugees may perhaps have a special specificity in our contemporary time as embodiments of the cheap and disenfranchised bodypower that capitalist systems have long cherished - they are perhaps the most obvious contemporary manifestation of the dispossession and the normalisation of dispossession on which capitalist structures rest. As I have hopefully shown, 'capitalism' is not here taken as a mere economic system. It is a complex social formation involving cultural and political practices and representations to entrench specific ways of seeing and governing while concealing the ideological interests so served. Challenging this political is a complex business but may perhaps come from the refusal to accept localisation. This might take the form of drawing connections between groups similarly marginalised - migrants and others. That which would be mere local difficulties reverberate onto the dominant political architecture by pointing to the historical contingency of their social, economic, and political marginality. Freire speaks of the need for systems of non-hierarchical learning to further this connective work, a critical pedagogy based on fostering consciousness of mutual connections and marginalisations.

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While recent years have seen the reassertion of exclusionary, anti-migrant politics and discourses, migrant-led and solidarity struggles contesting migration and border regimes have also risen and gained in visibility. How new are those struggles? What do they mean for our understanding and practice of politics and the political? What possibilities for change do they open up, and what limitations may they face? Based on chapters by a range of academics and activists engaged in border and migration struggles, *Challenging the Political Across Borders: Migrants' and Solidarity Struggles* examines the practices, structures, and meanings of solidarity with and by migrants and refugees in Europe and beyond. Bringing together empirical, conceptual and historical insights, the volume interrogates struggles unfolding on the ground and situates them within a critical analysis of historical and current mobility regimes, and how these have been resisted. This collection will be of interest to students and academics working on migration and social struggles, as well as to activists, volunteers and those interested in new forms of solidarity.

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