

Challenging the Political Across Borders: Migrants' and Solidarity Struggles

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ABSTRACTS

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

Chapter 1 Philip Marfleet

Remembering and forgetting refugees - Forced migrants, inclusion and exclusion

Why are refugees excluded from dominant discourses and from the historical record of most states? Under what circumstances do refugees appear as social actors and as people who have meaningful relations with the wider society? This paper examines practices of exclusion, their implications for the study of forced migration, and for the construction of “official” histories. It considers when and how refugees enter the mainstream of national discourse and the rare occasions on which they have been represented as celebratory figures. It examines relationships between forced migrants and institutions of the nation-state, and the meanings of exclusion within ideologies of national belonging. The paper also looks at practices of solidarity in relation to the wider society and their implications for current efforts to contest racism and exclusion. The paper considers experiences of refugees from the early modern era until the 21st century, mobilizing examples from Europe, the Americas, and South Asia, and offering comparative observations. It proposes that assertion of the refugee presence in history is a key element in establishing citizen status for forced migrants in contemporary society.

Chapter 2 Martina Tazzioli

Counter-mapping the borders of Europe: Towards a non-cartographic counter-mapping approach

This intervention analyses what a counter-mapping gaze on borders could mean in response to the visibility of migration produced by states and the EU. Looking at the ongoing “refugee crisis” in Europe and the Mediterranean, this chapter considers the spaces of control and spaces of mobility generated by migration movements and border implementation practices that are not visible on the map. Particular attention is paid to the channels of deportation, internal transfer, and inverse routes that are connected to the hotspot-system. The second part focusses on the EU politics of externalisation by challenging the traditional geopolitical map of Europe and investigating the spaces of control that are not visible on the map, and which are the result of the technical cooperation between the EU and third countries.

Part II: Practices of Solidarity

Chapter 3 Mikael Spång and Anna Lundberg

In the world: Action and fabrication by and on behalf of undocumented persons

In this article, we analyse initiatives by and on behalf of undocumented migrants through Hannah Arendt's notions of action and fabrication. We take three initiatives from the city of Malmö, Sweden, as our empirical

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examples: a musical, a relay, and a tent-camp action. By showing how these initiatives involve not only action and speech but also a fabrication of things, including works of art, we emphasise how these initiatives contribute to establishing what Arendt calls a space of appearance. Besides addressing the interrelation between action and work, we also address the importance of work in changing relations between things of the world. We argue that this way of looking at action is relevant when wanting to overcome the problems associated with the inclusion/exclusion distinction. Moreover, our analysis allows for new understandings of how undocumented migrants release themselves from the circumstances of undocumentedness through political action.

Chapter 4 Tim Hall, Aura Lounasmaa and Corinne Squire

From margin to centre? Practising new forms of European politics and citizenship in the Calais 'Jungle'

This chapter discusses the emergent political formations that took shape in the Calais 'Jungle' refugee camp in 2015-2016 when the camp reached its peak population. We consider four ways in which the politics in the camp emerged at this time: (1) the use of 'rights' language in constituting the camp residents as political citizens; (2) coalitions between residents and volunteers as a political practice; (3) the politics of commons and deliberative processes; and (4) associative spaces linked to political practices within the camp. Although the camp was demolished and some of the politics that emerged within it dissolved, these practices have some potential to extend the concept of citizenship in the European context, and problematize assumptions of what makes up European politics. This chapter is informed by our own associative and educational work in the Calais 'Jungle' between October 2015 and October 2016 when we taught a university course and ran other educational projects in the camp – the media reports, social media discussions, and our field notes from this period.

Chapter 5 Tahir Zaman

What's so radical about refugee squats? An exploration of urban community based responses to mass displacement in Athens

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. Recently arrived refugees and migrants find themselves at the loci of intersecting social relations that append themselves to an existing infrastructure of less-visible forms of welfare outside state-led social support. To better understand these emergent spaces and socialities, the chapter mobilises 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.

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Chapter 6 Céline Cantat

The rise and fall of migration solidarity in Belgrade: marginalising solidarity and institutionalising aid

This paper discusses the experience of migrant self-organised spaces and migration solidarity groups in Serbia (particularly Belgrade) between 2015 and 2018. It first looks at how solidarities in a situation of migrants' fast transiting emerged in the country over 2015 and 2016 and examines their gradual marginalisation by the Serbian government. It then explores how the Serbian authorities established an official, heavily controlled, and regulated refugee aid field from which politically subversive actors and practices are excluded. The paper argues that within this institutionalised field, gaining access to the camps and funding have become essential aspects of refugee aid work, which in turn functions as leverage through which pressure is exercised upon organisations willing to support migrants and refugees, with strong disciplinary effects. The paper concludes with examples of counter-practices and a call for the recognition of the common state and neoliberal violence experienced by migrants and other social groups in Serbia, which could provide the ground for the building of future solidarities. Ultimately, this paper seeks to contribute to larger debates about the disciplining of solidarity and political activism and ways in which this might be resisted.

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

Chapter 7 Eda Sevinin

Employing refugees, deploying humanitarian aid

This paper sets out to examine the implications of finding a job as part of humanitarian aid: the first implication pertains to the understanding of humanitarian aid in a constant form. Humanitarian actors understand aid (mostly in-kind) not on the basis of temporariness. Even though giving aid was initiated for the “immediate relief of suffering (of the refugees)”, it was not materialized as temporary aid-giving but rather formulated as a regularized way of relating to the refugees and keeping in touch with them.

Based on the fieldwork I conducted in Denizli, known as the textile capital of Turkey as well as a satellite city for refugees waiting until their resettlement in third countries, I discuss how moralities of humanitarian practices play out not only in the socialities between refugees and humanitarian workers, but also in labour relations. I examine how refugees are located within the broader entanglements of political economic relations as, first, a part of the informal labour market and, second, as aid recipients.

Chapter 8 Guillermo Merelo

Imagining the other: the symbolic construction of political entitlement and exclusion among Mexican migrants in Sweden

Drawing upon 47 semi-structured interviews with Mexican migrants in Sweden, this paper focuses on the different ways in which people construct culturally mediated imaginaries of inter- and intra-group Otherness. Using a semiotic approach, it explores the influence of culturally rooted discourses in the creation of an image of the self and how this affects the perceptions held over specific migrant groups. Traditional markers of class

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were found to play a pivotal role in the acculturative process of most participants; nonetheless, their stories reveal complex and opposing forms of cultural reconstruction to secure a place on the Swedish social ladder. Narratives are therefore embedded with contradictory feelings of empathy, solidarity, neutrality, resistance, and resentment upon which notions of Otherness are constructed. The paper concludes that symbolic representations of migration are relevant for understanding the types of support and opposition that irregular migrants can obtain from other migrant groups.

Chapter 9 Annastiina Kallius

Transit migration: Hungary as centrally peripheral

Imageries and discourses that portray migration as a process unfolding from “the periphery” to “the core” of the EU reproduce a misleading conception of Europe. They rely on a rhetoric and depiction of transit migration as one of linear progress, and are used by governments to justify restrictive migration policies. By investigating an actual experience of transit, this chapter disrupts the dominant economic, geographic, and moral hierarchies of European space. In the story of Sami, a man in his 30s who has refugee status in Hungary but ended up living an undocumented life in France, the messy reality of transit becomes apparent. The otherwise peripheral Hungary appears as a central but undesirable location to where one might be deported back. Solidarity in transit appears in relation to the struggle to avoid centrally peripheral Hungary, and emerges as ephemeral instances that open doors at crucial conjunctures.

Afterword Prem Kumar Rajaram