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**Global Migration Crisis and Europe**

Whose Crisis is it?

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At the end of November 2016, in Hungary, a Syrian man known only as ‘Ahmed H’ was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on terrorism charges. These charges amounted to throwing stones at Hungarian police and inciting others to do the same at Röszke on the Serbian-Hungarian border in September 2015. To the authorities, Ahmed H was a part of a ‘migrant crisis’. The narrative of crisis simplified and depoliticised the movement of people through Hungary and across Europe and was for the most part narrated as Europe’s (meaning, variously, a crisis for European culture, for European women, for European religion, for European political systems).

In some ways, Ahmed’s trial was the climax of a spectacle which made tangible a hyper-visible, hyper-real migrant crisis (Cantat, n.d.). The migrant crisis as spectacle spelt out a threatening migrant that at once enraptured and repelled. The state was put forward as protector of a community and a public from this spectre. The spectacle gave the impression of a community directly and urgently involved in a problem, ‘migration’, where migration was represented in images and narratives, of movements and threats of movements, whose emergence or genealogy has been obscured. The spectacle makes migration a curiously isolated and self-contained phenomenon, obscuring those processes of control and exclusion that produce and structure migrant mobility and its ‘illegality’ (Cantat, this volume; De Genova, 2015; 2012; Rajaram, 2003; Mainwaring and Silverman, 2016).

Ahmed H was one of 11 individuals arrested for acts of terrorism following a standoff and clash with Hungarian police at the Röszke border crossing. At the end of the summer of 2015, the Hungarian authorities made crossing the border ‘illegally’ a punishable offence. This was one of a number of measures adopted towards the end of the ‘crisis’, including declaring Serbia a safe third country, constructing a ‘border fence’ straddling the Hungarian-Serbian border, and making damaging that fence a criminal offence. These measures effectively contained the movement of people, with hundreds trapped in grey zones between Hungary and Serbia.

In September 2015 just as the fence was erected and Hungarian police and border guards were closing off other crossings into the country, people scared of being stuck surged towards lines of police and border guards and were met with water cannons and tear gas. A riot ensued which some of the Hungarian media gleefully called ‘the Battle of Röszke’, and during which Ahmed H. allegedly incited people to throw stones at the police. Ahmed H was called a terrorist. In her ruling, the judge could not quite manage to conceal the tortuousness of equating throwing stones with terrorism. The judgement rested on Ahmed H’s acts being tantamount to an attempt to force the police to allow him and others entry to Hungary (Index, 2016) The force of law (Derrida, 1992) creates legal fictions that code reality, and this coding reflects, in this case almost to stereotypical proportions, the interests of power (Pottage, 1992; Genovese, 1976). In most cases, legal fictions have difficulty reflecting in a straightforward way the interests of an elite because the presumptions of any single law

can be and are regularly contested by those who feel unjustly treated by them. The ruling against Ahmed H. is also possibly contestable, but contests over law are not simple linear engagements between pre-formed, unitary, and coherent agents such as the state who implements the law, and those who feel its force.

Contests over law are social processes in which groups try to mobilise resources and capital to sketch a subjectivity that may distort or re-code the way the law operates. The issue then is the capacity of groups to mobilise such resources and capital. Economic, political and cultural relations that structurally pattern society influence the relative access of individuals and groups to capital and resources. The capacity of groups to mobilise against a law reflects to varying degrees embedded cultural and social accounts of privilege and hierarchy. Race and gender as well as class positionalities play a role in determining the extent to which groups can mobilise such resources and capital. Migrants like Ahmed H. are thus, importantly, not anomalies or externalities to territorial power; they are one of many commonly marginalised groups who are in similar positions with regard to the structures that determine capacity to mobilise resources and capital, and thus be politically active. The commonality of this marginalisation is evident when we think about who is able to operationalize resources and capital to make their subjectivities resound publicly. In Hungary, migrants' positionality before the structure of social-cultural-economic power bears similarities to that of racialised groups like the Roma (von Baar, 2016). The spectacularising narratives of crisis externalises 'migrants', making them out to be distinct others to national societies (the othering of Roma took on new forms during the crisis)<sup>1</sup>.

If the question whose crisis this is arises at all, it is because the spectacularising narratives and images, coupled with the force of law and an overdetermining, foreclosing political-economic structure, displaces violence. The crisis is the crisis of those people on the move.

## *History*

We must qualify what we mean by 'crisis' when we say that it is migrants whose crisis this is. The narrative of crisis is juxtaposed against 'normality'; in this case, normal and orderly movements of people against chaotic and disorderly migration. As Kallius and Cantat both note in this volume, the 'crisis' is not new. Common asylum policy and the cultivation of a 'Fortress Europe' mentality and policies have led to deaths at sea numbering in the thousands over the past two decades. The eruption of the migrant crisis in the summer of 2015 was not new or exceptional, but the effect of European border management policies and the logics of exclusion and inclusion that they perpetuate.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hungarian government's spectacularisation of the 'migrant crisis' gave vent to free associations, including connecting migrants with Roma. Victor Orbán noted the following in September 2015 in response to a proposal for a quota system to distribute refugees among EU states: "Hungary's historical given is that we live together with a few hundred thousands of Roma. This was decided by someone, somewhere. This is what we inherited. This is our situation, this is our predetermined condition ... We are the ones who have to live with this, but we don't demand from anyone, especially not in the direction of the west, that they should live together with a large Roma minority." (Rorke, 2015)

These border management policies focus on regulating mobility. The contrast to the perceived disorderliness of migrant mobilities is the EU mobility regime enabled by the Schengen Agreement which created a space of free movement for certain recognised subjectivities. This enabled certain practices of citizenship and denoted an unruly externality to be kept at bay: individuals not yet processed for entry into the political model of the EU. This is what Etienne Balibar has called “biopolitical processing” - the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate forms of mobility and then the use of the conceptual labels (more legal fictions) ‘economic migrant’ and ‘refugee’. As Apostolova explores in this volume, the distinction between economic migrants and refugees points to a ruse or deception that structures liberal politics which maintain an untenable discursive distinction between political and economic realms. The capitalist market is represented as ‘economic’ and distinct from the political. The economic/political distinction is mirrored in the economic migrant/refugee differentiation, with refugees belonging to the political realm, and economic migrants governed by the logics of the market. The political and economic are of course intertwined. The market is not a space of freedom where an agent sells his or her labour under clear contractual conditions, but a space rife with coercion in which one’s race and gender influence how one is employed. This brings us back to the earlier point: individuals make their agency resound to the extent of their capacity to mobilise resources and capital, and such capacity is overdetermined by hierarchies of race and gender.

Attila Melegh in this volume traces the development of a cultural discourse about economic migration. The Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, after the Charlie Hebdo attacks and then again during the height of the crisis in the summer and autumn of 2015, mounted a critique of liberal politics, arguing that the economic indeed must not be separate from the (national) political. Orbán meant that cultural considerations must enter into any assessment of economic migration, and not just cost-benefit calculations, meaning that European states should be careful about allowing people different from ‘us’ to enter our nations because of the stressors on social cohesion and security. This is of course a different rendition of the ‘the economic is not distinct from the political’ argument, but the two arguments taken together point to what I think is one of the most important consequences of the migration crisis in Europe, and it is a point touched on by many of the authors in this Special Issue. This is the argument that the discourse has enabled the re-emergence of an absolutist idea of European culture, absolutist because it locates agency, belonging and virtue to this culture, while juxtaposing an undesirable other. The othering of migrants has long been central to the EU project (Cantat, this volume), but it is perhaps the case that the crisis has contributed to the growth of a culturalist perspective on economy and society that entrenches as commonsensical somewhat nativist ideas of right and belonging.

Melegh (this volume) argues that at its core the culturalist rendition of the economic posits a desirable population whose national virtue (indeed, European virtue) is a bulwark against an undesirable threat. Edward Said, discussing Gaston Bachelard’s poetics of space, argues that imagined geographies “dramatize the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away” (Said, 1978/1985: 55). The imaginary geography being deployed here has two aspects. One

is generative (indeed, transformative), recasting Europe as victim while reminding us of the familiarity of its orderly forms of mobility (and the conception of belonging that this validates) while casting mass movements of migrants as disorderly, the undesirable counterpoint to order. As regards the second, as Said notes, an imaginative geography “can be entirely arbitrary ... because the imaginative geography of the “our land-barbarian land” variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction” (Said, 1978/1985: 54). The evocation of European culture and values is one that must remind us of the foreclosing violence of colonialism. A telling consequence is that ‘Europe’ is established as a space to be cherished by those who belong, helping foster a project that locates agency and subjectivity exhaustively in ‘Europe’, in ‘European history’, in its languages, and increasingly in its political organization. There is a sense of fullness about the imagined geography of Europe, contrasted – actively contrasted – with the lack that is seen in the others it names; Said’s barbarians, or migrant others.

Cantat (this volume) argues that the development of capitalism in Europe operated hand in hand with the development of discourses of nationalism. Cantat argues that nationalism was deployed to stabilise the institutional bases for determining access to rights or privileges, such as private property, and as a means of containing the expulsions and upheavals caused by the production of a capitalist economy (for example, the migrations caused by enclosures and the strategic underdevelopment of certain areas). But, as Cantat shows, state and capital are not naturally in line with each other; the state has consistently put a block on capitalism’s requirement for cheap and malleable labour. While necessary for the reproduction of labour, the state does not readily square its interests with those of capital.

The contradiction between state and capital centres on the state’s production of legitimate and illegitimate subjectivities. This may appear on the face of things to hamper capital’s quest for malleable labour, but in practice in Europe it has fostered the growth of a surplus labouring population. This surplus population consists primarily of groups of people who are cast as illegitimate subjectivities with the consequence that they become employed in a shadowy economy marked by coercion and violence. This inclusion-through-exclusion of migrants as surplus populations is fostered then by the rhetorics and narratives of cultural belonging, such as those put forward by the Hungarian government. The aim is to remove the possibility of solidarity.

Zsofia Nagy (this volume) describes how the Hungarian government attempted to foster anti-migrant sentiment using a large billboard campaign, but she notes also that this gave rise to counter-movements; groups that started their own poster and billboard campaigns. The culturalist narrative promoted by the Hungarian government, as well as other governments in Europe, may be intended to remove the possibility of solidarity between citizens and ‘othered’ migrants, but as Nagy, Kallius and Cantat all show in this Special Issue, solidarity campaigns connecting European citizens and illegalised migrants remain a feature of the European political landscape.

If a key consequence of the narrative of crisis has been the normalisation of a culturalist rhetoric that determines legitimate and illegitimate subjectivities, then another consequence has been the growth of solidarity movements. Hamman and Karakayali (this volume) explore the growth of a discourse on the ‘welcome culture’ in

Germany and its real impacts on social space. The authors show how volunteers worked to cultivate and promote a 'society of migration' centred on the everyday. Volunteers worked with migrants beyond the heightened temporality of the 'crisis' in everyday life to assist their incorporation into society. Bhimji (this volume) conducted ethnographic work with asylum-seekers in Germany with a view to seeing how people negotiated the restrictions of the Dublin agreement which prevented asylum seekers from working. Bhimji studies political activism by migrants who contested the law and also individual and family-centred attempts to restore dignity and a sense of personhood in the face of restrictions: effectively attempts to be perceived as people equal under the law, regardless of status. Kallius (this volume) shows how combinations of migrant and citizen agency led to temporary ruptures in the structure of EU asylum policy, when protests and marches led to migrants being allowed to move from Hungary to Austria and Germany in contravention of Schengen and Dublin agreements governing migrant mobilities. Such counter-movements tend to be reactionary, and can become overdetermined by the institutional and infrastructural strength of the European Union or individual nation states (the ruptures caused by migrants being allowed to move - in Kallius' example - were quickly closed over when the border fence between Hungary and Serbia was built and national, culturalist migration policy gained precedence again).

Cantat and Nagy, however, point to the possibility of different political communities emerging. These are communities in Cantat's example that point to alternative imaginations of Europe, going to the core of the cultural-national narratives that produce legal and illegal subjectivities and posit different modalities of solidarity; modalities that re-imagine Europe.

### *Concluding thoughts*

The papers in this Special Issue all reflect in one way or another on the normalisations of a culturalist approach to the political that has been directly enabled by the narrative of crisis. This narrative of crisis, and the spectacles that have emerged, enabled the sovereign European state to increase its legitimacy as key political actor. The narrative of crisis deployed culturalist arguments throughout Europe, othering migrants, and presenting them as a threat to an increasingly cohesive European culture and subjectivity. The onus came from Eastern Europe, perhaps most tellingly in the form of Viktor Orbán's insistence that Hungarians workers in the United Kingdom should not be called 'migrants' (Melegh, this volume). 'Migrant' came to be associated with illegitimacy and threat, a counterpoint to a virtuous European culture. The aim is the erosion of the possibility of solidarity between European citizens and those called 'migrants'. However, papers here also describe persistent solidarity campaigns. Those that centre on different imaginations of political community, and of 'Europe', question the imagined geography of separation (of which Edward Said) that helps embed the dismissal of migrant subjectivity. It is this project that this Special Issue furthers: understanding how such geographies of separation are maintained, and the coercion that is thereby enabled in capital-labour relations particularly, while also exploring how other communities are imagined in a politics of hope.

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CELINE CANTAT \*

Rethinking Mobilities: Solidarity and Migrant Struggles  
Beyond Narratives of Crisis

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### Abstract

Recent mobilities towards Europe have been framed through a discourse of crisis. This discourse presents migratory movements as illegitimate and exceptional, and calls for the deployment of emergency measures in order to restore putative order and normality. In this article, I propose to think of mobilities beyond crisis. First, I challenge the notion that Europe is experiencing a migrant crisis by relocating recent mobilities in a larger history of confrontation between sovereign power and movement. Second, I draw on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with refugees and solidarity activists in order to bring to the fore wider histories of autonomous migrant struggles against Europe's borders and to uncover alternative accounts of identity and subjectivity that are being enacted within 'Europe'. Last, I examine the discourse of Mediterranean Solidarity mobilised by migrants and activists and assess the way in which it disrupts the dominant European geography of borders. This investigation allows us to perceive and assess existing forms of political and ethical community that transcend the citizen/non-citizen dichotomy and open up the possibilities of non-territorial imagination of identity and belonging.

*Keywords:* Mobility, migrants' struggles, sovereignty, borders, solidarity.

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## *1. Introduction*

Speaking of migration to and in Europe has become inseparable from a discourse of 'crisis'. The notion of 'Europe's migrant crisis' came into currency in April 2015, following four consecutive shipwrecks in the Canal of Sicily leading to the deaths of over 1,200 people. Over the following months, public attention was fixated on a series of confrontations opposing the borders of the European Union (EU) and its member states to refugees<sup>1</sup> attempting to move toward Western and Northern European countries. By September 2015, the battlefield of this confrontation had become remarkably mobile, and seemed to be constantly shifting, moving from the Greek-Macedonian to the Serbian-Hungarian borders, then deeper into 'Europe' to the Hungarian-Austrian border, and back to more peripheral sites of what is now routinely described as the 'Balkan route' (De Genova, n.d.).

European Union member states engaged in disparate tactics of border reinforcement in order to stop and reverse these mobilities. In mid-September, after a brief opening of its borders in the face of the spontaneous and autonomous movement of refugees, Germany introduced checks at its national borders. This was immediately imitated by the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Austria and later by the Netherlands, Belgium, and Sweden. Meanwhile, in Hungary, fences were erected on the borders with Croatia and Serbia. By early December, a proposal that border controls might be reintroduced for two years inside the Schengen free movement area was put forward by the EU's Luxembourg presidency. Eventually, in mid-December, in order to 'save' Schengen, the European Commission proposed the creation of a European Border and Coast Guard, which would inherit from and considerably extend the powers held by the current EU border agency, Frontex. The final agreement for the creation of the new agency was signed in June 2016.

It thus seems that the naming of a crisis authorises a set of strategic actions. The discourse of crisis frames recent mobilities towards Europe as exceptional and out of the ordinary and calls for and justifies emergency interventions – indeed the redeployment of brutal strategies of bordering – in order to restore a putative normality. Moreover, framing mobilities and migrations as crisis invisibilises and renders illegitimate forms of political communities based on solidarity between migrants and European citizens. By invalidating these already existing political identities, it also prevents us from imagining future forms of being political that go beyond state-centred logics of separation.

In this article, I attempt to rethink mobility and solidarity beyond crisis. I first deconstruct the discourse according to which Europe is experiencing a migrant crisis by relocating recent mobilities in a larger history of confrontation between sovereign power and movement. I also comment on the importance of locating this relation within particular historical and material conjunctures. Second, I examine wider histories of autonomous migrant struggles and alternative accounts of transnational solidarity within 'Europe'. By doing so, I hope to move away from binary

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, I use the terms 'refugees' and 'migrants' interchangeably. This reflects the belief that, although state authorities will eventually separate between these mobilities to establish which are 'refugee' and which are 'migrant', they hold more in common than they have differences.

conceptualisation of the political and contribute to imagining forms of political communities and subjectivities that bring together refugees and citizens.

## *2. What do we speak about when we speak about crisis?*

The crisis discourse is performative. It produces representations of the world and of the politically normal and desirable that fulfill particular functions. It relies on a set of binary distinctions between what is orderly and desirable and what is out of the ordinary and in needs of rectification. The autonomous mobilities of people exercising movement in search of safety or of a life beyond survival fall on one side of such dichotomous representations. They become the negative mirror image of what is by the same token re-asserted as the only acceptable form of mobilities – those organised and sanctioned by states (Rajaram, 2015). In turn, framing mobilities as crisis allows and justifies the deployment of emergency measures in order to ‘tackle the crisis’. Since the advent of a migration crisis discourse in Europe, proposals put forward in response have ranged from the re-assertion of national borders within the Schengen Area to calls for military interventions on the Libyan coasts, supposedly to prevent smugglers’ activities. Besides these grand geopolitical gestures, the idea that migrants and refugees represent a crisis and a threat for Europe and its member states has legitimated a set of repressive, brutal practices including detention, deportation and forms of physical and psychological violence.

These representations of autonomous movement as illegitimate tell us something about the relationship between sovereignty and movement and how it plays out in respect to Europe. That uncontrolled mobilities are seen as a threat encourages us to think of the state project as one that relies on the capture and fixation of various fluxes and movements. The nation-state and its territorialised sovereignty are seen as the primary political categories of the modern era. They provide an answer to the question of what constitutes political legitimacy by producing and naturalising a political authority (the state) and a political subject (the national-citizen). This answer relies on a process of territorialisation and spatialisation of political and social life: the state is sovereign over a national body of citizens within the borders of a territory.

However, both the state and the nation are social, historical constructs and their legitimacy relies on ongoing processes of naturalisation and normalisation. The practices through which nation-states naturalise their existence and authority, and successfully monopolise all conceptualisations of the political, have been called ‘practices of statecraft’ (Soguk, 1999). State-crafting requires at least two simultaneous sets of operations. The process of state formation itself, whereby the state gains and ensures sovereignty and authority over a given territory, and the process of nation building, whereby certain representations of the ‘people’ upon which the state’s authority is exercised are constructed. Both are continuous ideological operations through which the state as a practice and an idea seeks reification and normalisation (Abrams, 1988).

State-making thus is a subject-making process: it produces the political subjectivities that it deems acceptable and desirable (the national-citizens) as well as those which it deems illegitimate and undesirable. This is by no means an obvious process, and the construction of the boundaries of sovereignty and of the political

community has been a historically violent and politically contested development. Zolberg (1998) labels state-building 'a refugee-making process'. He shows that the transformation of empires into nation-states in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries led to conditions encouraging the persecution of specific groups along racial, religious or social lines. Building the nation requires conjuring representations of an 'imagined community' that shares socio-cultural traits that separate and distinguish it from others: it is intrinsically linked to the production of internal and external figures of otherness, of those who do not belong. This in turn leads to the displacement of large numbers of people both within and beyond the newly sanctified state borders.

In spite of the violence involved in the making of nations and states, the legitimacy of the state relies on its ability to frame its authority over a territory and a people as self-evident. The contingency involved in the historical process leading to the emergence of the nation-state as the fundamental political category of the modern era, and the ongoing dispute within and between states regarding issues of belonging, authority and political subjectivity, must always appear as already resolved. It is precisely these operations of normalisation that Soguk considers as 'practices of statecraft'. Soguk identifies refugees and refugee movements as a crucial site for the exercise of statecraft. The very notion of refugee and its associated imagery 'strategically converge to point to the world of the definite, self-evident normality of states, of their clearly demarcated territories, and of the domestic communities of citizen-members' (1999: 35). Or in other words, 'the name of the refugee ... serves as an alibi for the existence of the state. Vis-à-vis the name of the refugee, the state seems to exist always *a priori*' (1999: 50).

The assertion of state sovereignty thus relies on the imposition and naturalisation of certain binaries: the citizen vs. the non-citizen, the national vs. the foreigner, the inside vs. the outside. It is precisely the capacity to make these distinctions, to separate what qualifies as 'normal' and acceptable political identities, spaces and practices from what constitutes the exception, the abnormal, which provides the foundation of sovereignty. The concept of the 'state of exception', most famously developed by Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben, is central to understanding how sovereign power is built but also how this is closely related to the production of particular representations of refugee identity and subjectivity. The notion of the state of exception defines these moments when sovereign power legally decides to suspend the law for the purpose of preserving the state and its laws. This power to suspend places the sovereign above the law: it is precisely what attributes it its quality as sovereign. Sovereign power is thus located at the limit between the law and its suspension, at the juncture between the normal and the exceptional.

Refugee identity is constructed through being exposed to the violent limit of the sovereign state (Nyers, 2006). The crisis discourse that is commonly mobilised to describe refugees and their movements testify to this suspension and to the location of the figure of the refugee in a space of exception. But, as explained by Agamben, 'the exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule. The particular 'force' of law consists in this capacity of law to maintain itself in relation to an exteriority' (Agamben, 1998: 18). What is of importance here is that the exception and the rule only ever exist in relation to each

other. The refugee is thus held in a particular relation to the norm and is included within the realm of the sovereign solely by virtue of her exclusion.

The formation of political structures produce excesses that are considered to be outside of the realm of the political, yet are necessary to the very definition and delineation of what constitutes the political. The frames of representations that derive from the state of exclusion and qualify what is created as excessive to the political are depoliticising and dehumanising. This is where representations of refugee identity are produced. As a category and an object of classification, the refugee is confined within the state of exception, the violent limit of the sovereign, and is trapped within a depoliticised humanitarian state or a rhetoric of disorder and threat.

The process through which the refugee is held in the space of exception is not only one of exclusion but also one of seizure and fixation. Territorialised sovereignty is, as noted by Deleuze and Guattari, 'a process of capture of flows of all kinds, populations, commodities, or commerce, money or capital' (1987: 385). It relies on a constant decomposition, recomposition and transformation of movement. The distinction between the 'inside', within which acceptable political, social and economic activities are supposed to take place, and the 'outside' is operated through the ability of the state to appropriate and internalise flows and movements. This process is however always incomplete and contested. From this perspective, the state of exception, which attempts to include through exclusion what is excessive to the political and unappropriable by sovereignty, is not a fixed site but a continuously changing space that illustrates the limited ability of sovereign power to capture and internalise certain movements. Static accounts of the state of exception tend to overlook the fact that the establishment of sovereignty and its limits is a continuous, never finished process, in a dialectic (although often asymmetric) relation with the forms of lives and activities upon which it claims to reign.

Indeed, the power of capture on which sovereignty relies is a reactive power: it constantly attempts to seize already existing activities and flows. The state and its regimes of disciplining and control always come second to the activities and movements it tries to appropriate. There is therefore an intrinsic tension between sovereign power, which tries to integrate within its own logic and relations a set of social and human activities, and those activities and movements that escape such practices of fixation. The production of the category of the refugee and its associated characteristics (depoliticised, silenced, or framed as threatening) therefore is an attempt to capture, immobilise and sanitise a set of human activities that exceed the ability of sovereign power to capture and internalise them. The mobilisation of a discourse of crisis precisely at moments when the state's incapacity to control and discipline movement gains in visibility is in this sense an operation aimed at the reassertion of the binaries on which sovereignty relies in the face of autonomous mobilities which escape its logics.

Rethinking mobilities beyond crisis thus requires problematising perspectives on refugees and refugee movements that remain located within static, state-centric accounts of the political. It entails moving beyond categories and representations of refugees derived from modern conceptualisations of the political, within which refugee identity and subjectivity are constituted through a liminal, exceptional logic and confined at the limit of what is recognised as political and politically desirable.

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One way to achieve this is precisely to start our reflections from a recognition and attentiveness to the experiences, voices, agencies and practices of the people brought together under the category of ‘refugee’. This allows us to destabilise and problematise the putative homogeneity and meaning ascribed to refugees and their experiences through state-oriented discourses of crisis.

It is also important to recognise that the processes of state formation and nation building always take place in particular historical and material conjunctures. In that sense, the sovereign project of particular states is also shaped by economic and political circumstances. In western Europe, the emergence of the centralised nation-state was intertwined with the rise of industrial capitalism.

Since the emergence of the European nation-state, those in power have invested concerted efforts in the establishment of the national idea and in the policing of borders. Nation and nationalism were congenial to the ruling classes as means of stabilising the institutional and legal bases for the entrenchment of particular privileges, including property rights, and to regulate the circulation of groups uprooted by processes of industrialisation and urbanisation (Marfleet, 2016). Importantly, they were also convenient ideologies for the assertion of forms of allegiance that could subvert and neutralise class antagonisms. The ‘imagined community’ of the nation has thus been of prime importance to sustaining capitalist relations. In 1870, Marx already commented on how national sentiment and the politics of exclusion served capitalist interests. Referring to the hostility of the English working class towards Irish workers, he observed: ‘[t]his antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes’ (see Marfleet, 2016).

Yet, on the other hand, these arrangements lead to a number of contradictions. The idea of the nation has not always aligned with the drive for profit and cheap labour of capitalist classes. The nation-state, while necessary to the production and reproduction of capitalist relations, has been at various historical times seen as restricting access to resources, labour force and markets. Disagreements regarding the way in which nationalism and border control should be activated have long divided capitalist classes. In recent years, in the UK for example, a ‘business case’ for immigration was put forward by key actors of the British business sector against the project of immigration reform of the Conservative government of David Cameron.<sup>2</sup> Such debates already divided the British ruling classes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when some politicians argued for unrestricted immigration while other already painted migrants as dangerous and detrimental to the nation (Marfleet, 2016). Similarly, in France, the Minister of Social Affairs said in 1966 that ‘clandestine immigration in itself is not without benefit, for if we stuck to a strict interpretation of the rules and international agreements, we would perhaps be short of labour’ (Fysh and Wolfreys, 1998: 32). In other words, the border (and its control) is, on the one hand, intrinsic to nationalism and capitalism, and holds key significance as a site for the display of the state’s power of capture and of exclusion. On the other hand, it is an apparatus which operationalisation is conditional on economic and political circumstances.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://centreforum.org/live/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/business-case-for-immigration-reform.pdf>

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In this article, I will attempt to rethink the binary produced by states' separation between legitimate and illegitimate political subjectivities by observing solidarity practices linking refugees and activists in several sites of the European Union and examining the emergence of discourses and identities that challenge statist and bordered accounts of belonging.

### *3. Migrants' and solidarity struggles against the European Union's borders*

This permanent state of 'crisis' thus corresponds above all to the enduring tension and struggle that oppose states and their borders to people attempting to move outside state-sanctioned or tolerated migratory channels. What does it mean, then, to speak of 'Europe's migrant crisis' and what forms of tensions and struggles does it refer to?

In the EU, frameworks governing migration (which types of migration are legitimate and which are not, and how they should be organised) have been increasingly harmonised since the mid-1980s and the 1985 signing of the Schengen Agreement. The rationale for Europeanising immigration and asylum policies was that free movement of people within the EU space could only happen if, on the one hand, all member states applied identical criteria regarding entry requirements into their territory for 'third country' nationals and, on the other hand, the controls which had been waived at the EU's internal borders were replicated and reinforced at its external borders. In other words, the EU developed a system concerning international and crossborder movement which aims at operating as a single state and relies on conceptualisations strikingly similar to those underpinning state building processes. The justification informing the EU's immigration and border frameworks very much echoes traditional views on the border and mobilises bounded understandings of territories and identities. The border is still represented as a territorial demarcation between an 'inside' and an 'outside', between those perceived as legitimately belonging to Europe and those considered as not. The EU mobilises national traditions of exclusion, and reproduces aggressive bordering practices associated with the local state.

In preparation for the implementation of Schengen, originally planned for 1993, but which in fact occurred in 1995, the then European Community drew up a series of measures, such as the 'Common Manual' for border guards and the 'Visa Information System', which regulated the management of the Schengen Area's external borders as well as entry requirements and permitted duration of stays (Peers, 2012). These pieces of legislation, which had started as inter-governmental regulations, were fully incorporated into European legislation with the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, which enabled the EU to legislate on migration. The Treaty of Amsterdam was implemented at the 1999 Tampere Summit, which was supposedly about creating an area of 'freedom, justice and security' but was strongly criticised by European civil society organisations for its secrecy, lack of transparency and the association it made between 'immigration' and 'security' (Bunyan, 2003). In other words, all EU member states were encouraged to adopt the exclusionary policies and practices of some of the core European nation states. Paradoxically – though not surprisingly – this has encouraged the resurgence of nationalisms across the EU and has led to an increasing

scepticism towards the 'European project' itself. Aggressively exclusionary agendas and the politics of the border have again gained centrality in national and regional politics in Europe.

Soon after the formation of this harmonised border regime, migrants' struggles against Europe's new borders emerged. In 1999, a migrant centre was opened in the town of Sangatte, only a few kilometres away from Calais and the Eurotunnel, to host some of the several thousand people stranded in the Calais region on their way to the UK. The centre, designed to host a maximum of 900 people but which often accommodated over 2,000, was precariously run by the local Red Cross in an attempt to provide food and shelter to the many migrants (temporarily or permanently) unable to continue their journey to their chosen destination, the UK. The centre was closed in 2002 by then French Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, after an agreement with then UK Home Secretary, David Blunkett. This followed a relentless anti-immigration media campaign in France and even more so in Britain (Article 19, 2003).

The main argument behind the closure of the Sangatte centre was that a 'migration crisis' was mounting in Calais. British media in particular claimed that the centre had become a hub for 'illegal migration' towards the UK, encouraging disorderly and illegitimate mobilities (Article 19, 2003: 6-8). The coverage of the situation in Calais was already dominated by the populist notion that governments were 'losing control over borders' and that emergency measures were necessary to re-establish order (2003: 7). Since the closure of the Sangatte centre, refugees have lived in squats and outdoor camps, which have been dubbed 'jungles', around Calais. Despite the French authorities' regular dismantlement of these camps, at times through bulldozing or using teargas against residents, thousands of refugees still live in the Calais area and regularly succeed in entering the UK.

Since then, Calais has become a notorious site where refugee mobilities experience more or less protracted periods of deceleration, but also where they organise forms of collective life and prepare onward journeys. Although up to fifteen years have passed since the discourse of a migration crisis in Calais was first formulated, it remains a key site of confrontation between refugee mobilities and states' and the EU's attempts to immobilise and return them. In July 2015, a few thousand refugees charged the Eurotunnel barriers in an attempt to board vehicles on their way to the UK. In response, French authorities deployed riot police and planned yet another dismantlement of the southern part of Calais' largest jungle which took place in February and March 2016. The UK invested in the construction of a new razor-wire fence in an effort to prevent further border crossings.

The Sangatte 'crisis' of 1999-2002 was also a key turning point in the organisation of resistance to the European border regime among European activists. French pro-migrant activists I interviewed explained that they had rising concerns since the 1985 signature of the Schengen agreement, particularly as it did not mention what would happen to third-country nationals and started to refer to the reinforcement of Europe's external borders. In 1992, the Treaty of Maastricht created the European Union and 'European citizenship' as an exclusively derivative status (leaving out all EU residents who were not already citizens of a member state). Activists soon developed critiques pointing out that the aim of the European project to produce political belonging beyond static and statist forms manifested in national contexts were

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not being fulfilled. The 1999 Calais ‘crisis’ was one of the first concrete manifestations of these preoccupations. Chantale, who works with French migrant solidarity group Gisti and was a founding member of transnational pro-migrant network Migreurop in 2003, summarises this period as follows:

At Gisti, there was a preoccupation since, I’d say, the late 1980s or early 1990s, regarding what would come out of the Schengen Agreement. Some of our members were paying close attention – in particular because they had informal links with Dutch and Belgian activists – to something which French people, at least the French *associations*, were not talking about, and which was the implementation of this Schengen agreement, which was going to reorganise circulation inside what was then the Schengen Area and which is now the whole of the European territory... and all the consequences it would have on the status of migrants in Europe and in France... But we quickly anticipated that from this system would come many things which would have rather serious implications, and that we had to be ready for what would come next. And in 1999, the Sangatte situation emerged<sup>3</sup>

Chantale’s group, Gisti, had been active in Calais for a few months before the opening of Sangatte’s Red Cross centre. By the time the centre opened, and the media controversy started, these activists had witnessed the situation first-hand, and this experience had led them to develop a critical understanding of the European immigration and border system-in-formation. Chantale explains how activists started denouncing the situation in Calais:

So, we had the Schengen system, which organises the free movement of people within a given space, limited by the external borders of states that are members of Schengen. On the other hand, there is the UK, which is not part of Schengen but is a member of the Dublin system, which allows it to send back asylum seekers to any other Dublin country they have transited through – in this case, France. So people could travel relatively freely from the moment they entered the EU all the way to Sangatte and Calais, and then they became stranded. And even if they could pass, they would be sent back. For us, the only cause of the Sangatte situation was this absurd system<sup>4</sup>

Importantly, Gisti activists started realising that this ‘absurd system’ had consequences elsewhere and that such spaces of deceleration and immobilisation of migrant movements were multiplying across the EU and its borders. For Gisti, these phenomena followed a pattern indicative of a certain model of immigration management by the EU. The contradictions of a system encouraging the free circulation of goods, services, capital and some but not all people were dealt with by using ‘immobilisation as a method’<sup>5</sup>. Simultaneously, they denounced the way in

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<sup>3</sup> Chantale, 17 September 2012, Paris, interviewed by author.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

which the EU, by signing readmission agreements with an increasing number of countries from which migrants came and through which they transited, engaged in a process of externalisation of its borders, which led to the multiplication of formal and informal migrant camps and gatherings beyond Europe's territory.<sup>6</sup> The involvement of the EU in practices of fixation and immobilisation became the object of growing concern for people who had been fighting against border regimes in their national settings and could identify the reproduction of exclusionary dynamics at the supra-national level.

Through their experience in Sangatte and the analysis they produced of the EU border regime, Gisti activists also concluded that there was an urgent need for crossborder activist collaboration in order to better understand how the new EU border regime impacted on the experiences of migrants and refugees:

At that point, we looked into getting in touch with organisations in Europe which were facing the same kind of issues. We first met up with Italian groups, because of what was also starting to happen in Sicily, and with Spanish organisations, as Andalusia was experiencing the same type of phenomenon with an increasing number of informal gatherings of stranded people... We spoke with people involved in similar cases in Greece... And we started to see where were the fixation points, and where we could act together.<sup>7</sup>

It is through such links, weaved first and foremost pragmatically and in response to an urgent need for information sharing and concrete joint action, that activists from various European countries came up with the idea of a more formal structure to coordinate activities around the EU border regime and its consequences. When the first European Social Forum (ESF) took place in Florence in November 2002 under the slogan 'Against war, racism and neo-liberalism', pro-migrant activists made sure a session around migration was scheduled and they brought the issue of the Europeanisation of immigration and asylum policies to the agenda. The creation of Migreurop, a pan-European network of groups and activists involved in migrants' rights and anti-border struggles, was the outcome of the 2002 ESF session.

This timing is of importance. For Sandro Mezzadra, in the European context, the first encounter between migrant self-organised struggles and the emerging alter/anti-globalist movement occurred in 2001, during the Genoa anti-G8 protests (Mezzadra, 2004: 268). On this occasion, the kick-off demonstration was led by irregularised migrant workers, together with anti-G8 protestors. This close connection between migrant workers struggles and emerging forms of anti-capitalist protests meant that reflections on the role of borders and border control in relation to capitalist globalisation were central to some of the migration-related struggles and subjectivities in formation in several EU states. This also brought issues related to the politics of borders and mobility to the heart of anti-capitalist debates in segments of the European left.

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid* and Laura, 6 September 2012, Paris, interviewed by author.

<sup>7</sup> Chantale, interview cited.

The situation in Sangatte centre was one of the first episodes in a series of struggles opposing mobilities and the oppressive, exclusionary conceptualisations of European belonging underpinning the EU border regime. While particular locations have gained in visibility and became symbols of the confrontation between mobilities and borders, migrants trying to make their way to Europe constantly face extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances. The Central Mediterranean also quickly became one of the central stages for the unfolding of so-called migration crises. By November 2012, at least 6,166 migrants had died at sea in the Strait of Sicily alone (Del Grande, n.d.). In 2011 alone, at least 1,822 people lost their lives whilst trying to reach the shores of Italy or Malta, amounting to 77 per cent of all deaths at sea in the Mediterranean that year. This means that an average of over 150 people a month, or eight a day, died in the Strait of Sicily in 2011. People transiting through Sicily were coming from Libya, Tunisia and Egypt to the islands of Lampedusa and Pantelleria, Malta and the Southeastern coast of Sicily, as well as from Egypt and Turkey towards Calabria. The death toll in the Mediterranean rises every year: in 2014, the number of recorded migrant deaths between North Africa and Southern Europe reached 3,419 (Day, 2014). As of August 2016, of the 4,254 deaths recorded globally, 3,171 had taken place in the Mediterranean (Missing Migrants Project, 2016).

The small island of Lampedusa, off the coast of Sicily and only 113 kilometres away from Tunisia, has been at the centre of these struggles and been the focus of acute media and political attention for years. Since the early 2000s, the island (the Southernmost point of Italy) has become a transit point for migrants trying to reach Europe. Its only migrant reception centre, with a maximum capacity of 850, was regularly housing around 2,000 people, leading to criticisms by the UNHCR in 2009 (UNHCR, 2009). In 2011, following the Tunisian and Libyan uprisings, tens of thousands migrants arrived at the island in an attempt to reach mainland Europe. By August that year, it was estimated that almost 50,000 people had reached Lampedusa. Migrants were kept on the island, many living in the streets around the port, surviving mostly thanks to the generosity of the local population. Reception conditions on the island prompted severe criticism from various human rights groups and NGOs, such as Médecins Sans Frontières (2011), Amnesty International (2011) and the Red Cross (Zambello, 2011).

Italian politicians' response to the 2011 situation consisted, unsurprisingly, of a discourse of crisis, underpinned by alarmist declarations about a 'human tsunami' engulfing Italy and a 'biblical exodus' threatening the country and Europe (BBC, 2011). On the other hand, Italian authorities insisted that the refugees were only on the island temporarily and that they would soon be removed, thereby 'bringing life back to normal' (France 24, 2011). By the time I conducted fieldwork on Lampedusa in 2012, Italian activists were already familiar with the process through which crisis discourses are formulated around mobilities. They denounced the spectacularisation of migration as a convenient distraction from the political crisis faced by the then-Italian government, including the various scandals surrounding Prime Minister Berlusconi's private life. The small island of Lampedusa was the perfect place to stage a border spectacle that fulfilled various political agendas. As one of the participants in my research put it:

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The Italian government needed a place like Lampedusa; a small island, so small that it appears overcrowded even with a few thousand people. Lampedusa is perfect to reify the spectacle of the invasion and this serves the purpose of many actors. The Italian government, which needs a distraction from its own failures; agencies like Frontex, which get an excellent opportunity to justify their existence and increase their budget; and even dictators like Gadhafi who gains political weight from appearing as the guardian of EU borders.<sup>8</sup>

For Sandro and Antonio, two migrant solidarity activists whom I met in Italy in 2012, the fabrication of a narrative of crisis manufactured popular anxiety and produced the need for a life-saving intervention. It called for the ‘involvement of a charismatic leader, who could unite Italian society and restore national cohesion in the face of this manufactured external attack’.<sup>9</sup> Berlusconi’s visit to the island of Lampedusa, in late March 2011, seemed to be specifically designed to serve this purpose. The then-Prime Minister paid a short visit to the island during which he promised to ‘get all the migrants out in the next 48 to 60 hours’ and offered ‘solutions’ such as personally purchasing all the boats on the Tunisian coast so as to prevent people from using them, and commissioning a TV series on the island in order to boost tourism. He also decided to buy a villa in Lampedusa as a proof of his ‘personal commitment’ to the fate of the island and its population (BBC, 2011b).

The analysis put forward by Sandro and Antonio echoes De Genova’s study of the ‘border spectacle’ (2005, 2012) and brings us back to points previously mentioned regarding the contradictory working of the border in relation to sovereignty and capitalism. Spectacular scenes of enforcement at/of ‘the’ border serve a double purpose. On the one hand, the border spectacle renders migrant ‘illegality’ hyper-visible and conjures the spectre of a devious migrant against which the sovereign state needs to protect the nation’s integrity. On the other hand, it presents migrant illegality as self-evident, and invisibilises the processes through which this illegality is produced (De Genova, 2015). In doing so, it further naturalises the sovereign logic of inclusion/exclusion. In that sense, the border spectacle seems to be all about exclusion – ‘unwanted’ and ‘illegal’ migrants are to be stopped and returned. Yet, again, this spectacle of exclusion comes with an unspoken auxiliary – the large-scale subordinate and discriminatory inclusion of illegalised migrants. Those who succeed in making their way through these highly militarised, securitised and spectacularised borders are indeed recruited in large numbers as vulnerable and readily exploitable labour (De Genova, 2015). The production of illegality at the border, and the spectacle associated with enforcing the border, thus allow at once for the affirmation of sovereign power and for the production of cheap and precarious labour.

The death toll in the Mediterranean Sea had been the focus of activist work for over ten years, but the escalation of state and media violence, both real and symbolic, during the 2011 ‘Lampedusa crisis’, had a revitalising effect on solidarity practices. As with Sangatte in 1999, the events brought to public awareness the way in which the European border regime operates and provided further tragic evidence of its human

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<sup>8</sup> Nidal, 2 August 2012, Lampedusa, interviewed by author.

<sup>9</sup> Sandro, 4 August 2012, Rome, interviewed by author.

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cost. A number of campaigns were launched to condemn and challenge the fact that national governments and European institutions failed to respect their international commitments and to ensure access to the right of asylum. One example, among many others, was Boats 4 People (B4P), a solidarity flotilla between Italy and Tunisia which denounced events that took place in the Strait of Sicily in 2011. B4P participant Ahmad explains:

We wanted to mobilise people in the Mediterranean, both on the African and on the European shore, so that the Mediterranean becomes a place of solidarity and ceases to be a mass grave for migrants.<sup>10</sup>

Calais and Lampedusa are among the most visibilised borders of the European border regime, and key sites for the deployment of a border spectacle where states and the EU display their putative capacity to exclude, while vulnerabilising people and producing a precarious labour force. They have also been key sites of migrants' and solidarity struggles against this logic of exclusion and subordinate inclusion. As such, they are spaces where pro-migrant and solidarity activities are organised and where new political practices and identities are experienced, created and negotiated through joint struggles between migrants and activists from various European countries and beyond. Such focal points of repression and resistance are of crucial importance to the establishment of solidarity networks and contentious political identities. This can be perhaps understood in relation to their ability to feed into narratives about power and rebellion. In his discussion of revolutionary events, Eric Selbin (2010) raises the question of why certain episodes of resistance and rebellion take place at particular moments in time, in particular places. He emphasises the 'power of story': the importance of developing a framework of analysis of both domination and reaction that successfully compels people to act on their indignation.

Selbin considers this imaginary as a necessary condition for the emergence of new resistance movement and identity (p. 161-183). The composition of a cultural repertoire of claims, tactics, strategies and inspiration is a crucial element in the process of transforming individual indignation into collective mobilisation. The importance of such repertoires has long been a focus of analysis for social movement scholars, who highlight that, in order for a social movement to form, it must be able to offer a catalogue of tools and actions which are compelling and considered efficient in a specific context, as well as reproducible in other contexts (see for example Sidney, 1998; Tilly and Wood, 2004). The narratives that migrants and activists developed around Calais and Lampedusa are precisely characterised by the type of 'associations and connections across time and space' which Selbin shows are necessary for 'people ... to construct a revolutionary imaginary comprising symbols, names, dates, places, grievances, stories, and means and methods, [and] which they then draw on as they consider the world and their options' (p. 166). They rely on a joint understanding of how the EU border regime functions and on detailed knowledge of how it is manifested and operates in particular local settings.

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<sup>10</sup> Ahmad, 22 November 2012, Paris, interviewed by author.

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In the next section, I will draw on ethnographic data collected through fieldwork in Italy to illustrate the process of formation of a sense of Mediterranean identity among refugees and activists involved in struggles against the borders of the EU and its member states. I will show how this alternative account of political belonging becomes the basis for contentious practices of solidarity that challenge the binary logic that underpins state and EU discourses of identity and belonging. This, in turn, signals the possibility of new forms of political subjectivities that place the experience and legitimacy of migrants and refugees at the heart of their conceptualisation of the political.

#### *4. Mediterranean solidarity*

The only reason why we are talking about Europe is because there are lines of movement, of migration, that are converging towards Europe, for various reasons to do with history, imperialist and capitalist relations. They converge *here*, and we are *here*, we respond *here*, from where we stand. But these lines start way before the borders of Europe. Following them would take us all around the world. Ideally, our network would expand all the way – and in all these places, we will also find Europe and have to confront Europe, because Europe is present all around the world as a global power...<sup>11</sup>

This quote by French activist Michel highlights a key point articulating migrants' and solidarity struggles around borders. Michel dialectically links, on the one hand, an identity that does not identify with geographical areas and borders – either national or European – and that is characterised by movement and, on the other hand, a need for a situated struggles that tackles European anti-immigration policies as they are manifested 'here'.

Migrants and activists engaged in contestation of the border regime of the EU and its member states condemn the way in which 'Europe' has been building a (material and symbolic) wall around itself – as reflected in the now commonplace expression 'Fortress Europe'. Of course, as discussed, the border works as much to display the state's exclusionary capacity as to organise various forms of differentiated and subordinate inclusion – it is not, in this sense, an impenetrable wall. Yet the expression of 'Fortress Europe' is a powerful metaphor for activists and migrants, which brings attention to the violence experienced by people on their way to and at the borders of the EU. Destabilising this 'wall' through movement or in support of movement implies challenging the boundaries of the identity proposed by EU and states. As in Michel's quote, migrants and activists produce forms of identity and subjectivity that are, rather, shaped by their experience and engagement with movement and its trajectories. Migreurop activist Laura explains:

[W]e work with a holistic notion of migration that includes departure as much as arrival. Migrating means also leaving, and so many people forget this. (...)

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<sup>11</sup> Michel, 19 September 2012, interviewed by author.

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[And] Europe controls the movement of people way beyond its borders (...) Basically the EU is creating a big line of division, a wall, in some places an actual real concrete wall, between its member states and the rest of the world. (...) The fight is to keep creating links, connections, lines of solidarity and contact. The solution will not come from just one or the other of these spaces.<sup>12</sup>

Thinking of migration as a 'holistic' experience also leads activists to critically reflect on the reasons behind people's journeys. Participants in the research engage with the matter on two levels. On the one hand, they identify capitalist globalisation and global inequality as a key cause for mass displacement and condemn the contemporary order that pushes people into migratory journeys in order to sustain their economic and social reproduction. They also connect this with the process of illegalisation of migrants and its role in the constitution of a cheap army of labour beneficial to European capitalist classes. On the other hand, participants assert that the reasons behind people's journeys are infinite and irreducible. In this sense, they contest the narrow categories of classification of people on the move used by governments and the EU (e.g. asylum-seeker, refugee, economic migrants and so on). They also challenge mainstream representations of migrants as either victims or threats. This is of importance: as noted by De Genova (2015) such representations 'effectively eras[e] the kind of agency that might count as self-determination'. Representing migrants as being either victims or criminals thus implies that they are not capable of achieving the status of politically autonomous subjects or citizens. In turn, as highlighted by De Genova, their illegalisation and exploitation only comes to confirm this inferiority. Against this subjugation, the production of connections and links between activists and migrants attempts to challenge the politics of difference operationalised by border regimes and to produce common struggles.

Similarly No Borders UK activists Sean and Alex speak of their interest in building a collective identity that links localised struggles across space in a way that defies the territorialised identities ascribed through binary conceptions of belonging developed by states and the EU.

The way I think of it, and at least some other No Borders [activists] think of it: we are not interested in creating a new Europe, or a tolerant Europe or whatever Europe. I am not interested in this idea of Europe as a territory. In terms of theory, Deleuze speaks of the notion of territorialisation - so, here, of Europe as a political project linked to a territory with borders and boundaries around it. And, at No Borders, I think we're thinking much more in terms not of territory but of lines of movements. When I am talking about a network, it is about the routes around which people move, routes of movement (...) It is about a space defined by how people move...<sup>13</sup>

At stake, thus, is the emergence of collective identities and political subjectivities that bring together local struggles against particular expressions of borders in a way that

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<sup>12</sup> Laura, interview cited.

<sup>13</sup> Sean and Alex, 15 December 2012, London, interviewed by author.

follows the lines of movement of people and defies state-enforced lines of separation. Focusing on movement as a complex process that both results from and subverts the capitalist and nationalised organisation of the world encourages migrants and activists to imagine alternative narratives of belonging. One remarkable example of such an identity I came across during fieldwork was the notion of ‘Mediterranean Solidarity’. As mentioned, Lampedusa has long been at the heart of media and political discourses concerning a migration crisis and an imminent catastrophe. Yet, on the island, the stories one can hear about the situation of migrants moving towards the island and attempting to continue northward often mobilise very different representations. Responsibility regarding the difficult situation that had taken place on the island in 2011 was primarily identified not with refugees but at the governmental and European levels.

In contrast to authorities’ lack of compassion and cooperation, Lampedusani I spoke to highlighted their own popular ethics and sense of solidarity. Numerous episodes of local solidarity practices, ranging from clothes distribution to food sharing and hosting people but also including local residents collectively organising to rescue people at sea, were recounted. A narrative revolving around the idea of a Mediterranean identity forged at sea, precisely in the in-betweenness of that sea, and bringing its two shores together, was formulated. One of the subplots of this narrative revolved around the traditional activity of fishing. For centuries, the island’s economy had relied primarily on fishing (though tourism has become the first source of income in the last 20 years). The practice of fishing came with that of encountering fishermen from other countries and more particularly from Tunisia, which is a mere 70 miles (113 km) across the sea. Lampedusa’s local residents were mobilising these local memories and histories to develop a popular frame of contention that articulated their opposition to the treatment of refugees by ‘Europe’ and called for forms of solidarity and openness towards the southern shore of the shared Mediterranean Sea. While seemingly anodyne, the conjuring of common identities also critically challenges the subordinate and incomplete subject positions ascribed to migrants in governmental discourses. The evocation of an existence based on forms of work not associated with industrial labour also constitutes a call for the preservation of economic relations less shaped by capitalism. For some politically engaged residents of Lampedusa, the image of a Mediterranean Sea providing livelihood to small fishermen is also a counter-point to global capitalism. One participant told me:

Capitalism always wants to expand, it needs to steal, to consume – land, resources... It needs to enslave people for profit. No one person can stop this on their own, and migration is part of this, it produces the slaves of capitalism, it is inevitable within this system. But Lampedusa tries to resist on a small scale. We try to practice alternative solutions. We see the whole Mediterranean as a space where to try out alternatives.<sup>14</sup>

While these traditions and practices are local, their formulation in terms of a Mediterranean culture gives them a larger dimension and the potential to be

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<sup>14</sup> Nidal, interview cited.

replicated in various sites in Southern Europe. Within the EU, the sense of a common Mediterranean historical experience was further reinforced by the perception that the Southern European countries were now sharing the same fate and were relegated to a peripheral position. Another participant in the research, Zak, told me:

Us people of the Mediterranean are not seen as equal in Europe. For those in Brussels and in the North, we are PIGS<sup>15</sup> (...) Northern Europe is trying to impose its cold mechanical way of dealing with humanity all the way to Ceuta, Melilla and Lampedusa.<sup>16</sup>

This comment, which was echoed in other interviews, illustrates the feeling of a shared destiny among Southern European countries within the EU project, which contributed to cementing Zak's sense of 'Mediterraneanness'. In this context, positioning himself as Mediterranean was used by Zak as a way to propose a counter-narrative based on a counter-positioning to the official discourse on European identity and to the role he perceived as assigned to him in this respect.

The discourse of Mediterranean solidarity was actively relayed, appropriated and mobilised by migrants and activists. It features in the leaflets and campaign literature produced by pro-migrant associations, such as local Lampedusani organisation *Askavusa*, which is also part of a network called 'Mediterranean Hope'. It was a prominent framing reference for the Boats4People (B4P) campaign, which called for 'Freedom and Solidarity in the Mediterranean'. Activist Gabriele del Grande, who created the blog *Fortress Europe*, said in an interview, 'I'm not just an Italian; the Mediterranean Sea is part of my identity and it has two shores: North and South. It's my sea, these are my people, and we have to show solidarity' (cited in Zafeiri, 2014).

A common expression was that of a 'two-shored Mediterranean', which was used to reject the creation of a divide between its northern and southern coasts and the terrible consequences of the enforcement by Europe and its member states of this new border. Calling for a common Mediterranean space, through a discourse drawing on local experiences and memories of circulation and encounters, was thus a way to oppose the idea that 'the sea becomes a border' or, worse, 'a collective grave for migrants'. This act of counter-positioning asserted a common history and destiny between migrants, residents and activists, and redrafted identities along inclusive lines. B4P organiser Nino explains that the discourse of a Mediterranean identity allowed for a more open political identity to be developed precisely because

... the Mediterranean is not related to one political entity or authority – be it a state or a supranational authority like the European Union. So the Mediterranean doesn't have enforced borders: it is an open space, one which can include many different people. When I say Mediterranean, I include; when

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<sup>15</sup> The acronym PIGS (Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain) was coined by European mainstream media to refer to Southern European countries.

<sup>16</sup> Zak, 23 July 2012, Rome, interviewed by author.

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I say Europe, I exclude. That's one thing. The other one, I mean, it is linked to this, but of course the Mediterranean is a divided and segregated space politically - it includes Palestine and Israel, Turkey and Cyprus, Algeria and Tunisia - but at the same time it has not been used, there hasn't been a real dominant discourse developed about the Mediterranean. And that gives it flexibility, it gives us freedom to define it, to expand it, to make it synonymous with solidarity and freedom, as we said in B4P. We cannot do this with the term European, even with the term African, they are terms with borders...<sup>17</sup>

What was also striking was that this sense of Mediterranean solidarity and identity travelled much further than the Southern parts of Europe. References to Lampedusa, as a key passageway that migrants went through and where they endured a common experience, but also as a symbol of resistance and solidarity, have been used in widely different contexts. An interesting illustration of this can be found in the sustained series of protests that started in May 2013 in different German cities under the original name of 'Lampedusa in Hamburg'. The protests quickly spread to other cities, giving rise to a series of 'Lampedusa in ...' and leading to a session called 'Lampedusa in Berlin, Hamburg and Bielefeld' at the yearly festival of Lampedusa in 2014. Migrants who transited through Lampedusa and had by then reached Germany, where they struggled to obtain status and a decent level of living, organised with German activist groups (notably the German No One Is Illegal) to claim their right to a dignified life and to denounce the situation of migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea.

The expression 'Lampedusa in Germany' refers to the trajectory routes of those involved in the protests. But, an activist involved in 'Lampedusa in Hamburg' explained, it also reflected that 'we want to be linked to Lampedusa not just as a place where tragedies occur but as a place where solidarity takes place'.<sup>18</sup> In other words, Lampedusa has become one of the symbols of resistance to anti-immigration European policies and of the possibility of renewed concepts of solidarity based on a regional yet non-geographically bordered identity defined as 'Mediterranean', in reference to a cultural and historical tradition of exchanges and tolerance.

The emergence of new political subjectivities that bring together refugees from a range of horizons and activists in solidarity with them challenges the geography of borders and separation promoted by the EU. For some of the participants, it is also integral to anti-capitalist struggles in the contemporary era: fighting processes of migrant illegalisation is seen as an indispensable aspect of worker solidarity under condition of global capitalism. This contests the binary conceptualisations of politics underpinning state power. Where migrants are spoken about as exterior to political communities in Europe, these joint struggles and their use of the narrative around Mediterranean identity in sites as far away as Germany insists on the interiority of a migrant presence and claims their possibility of and right to belonging. It is a statement against Europe's and its member states' practices of bordering, othering and marginalisation and a denunciation of the instrumentality of these practices for the

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<sup>17</sup> Nino, 24 October 2013, Skype, interviewed by author.

<sup>18</sup> H., 2012-2013, email exchange with author.

purpose of economic exploitation. Migrants' and solidarity struggles thus bring what has been produced as geographically (but also in the symbolic realm as socio-culturally) external to Europe inside its territory and signal the possibility of new inclusive political identities and subjectivities that reject the discourses of crisis and emergency usually surrounding migration. In their most radical form, the fights against neoliberal globalisation and its effects worldwide, the associated inequalities producing mass displacement and the process of migrant illegalisation and exploitation come together in the form of a joint anti-capitalist, anti-racist and pro-migrant struggle.

### *5. Conclusion*

Contemporary narratives of 'crisis' in relation to migration present migrant struggles against the European border regime as exceptional and chaotic. This privileges sanctioned and 'orderly' mobilities, and suggests a coherent European space and identity that can be separated from non-European groups and subjectivities. At the same time, illegalised migrants are routinely tolerated on the territory of states, where they are desirable as vulnerable and exploitable labour.

A study of the broader histories of refugees' struggles against the EU and state borders, and of the practices and discourses of solidarity enacted by pro-migrant activists in Europe, points to the existence of alternative accounts of political subjectivities. These challenge the binaries upon which modern conceptions of sovereignty and the political rely. They open up new imaginations of political communities where the differences enforced by statist and European regimes of borders and mobility governance lose their relevance. Instead, forms of identity and belonging that recognise the centrality of movement to our experience of the contemporary era and that call for solidarity-base responses are put forward. They also imagine alternative forms of economic relations.

Taking migrants' and solidarity struggles as a starting point to rethink the political allows us to move beyond state-centred accounts of the sovereign and dichotomous narratives of crisis. In turn, it enables us to perceive and assess existing overtures to forms of political and ethical community that transcend the citizen/non-citizen dichotomy and privileges non-territorial forms of belonging.

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RAIA APOSTOLOVA \*  
The Real Appearance of the Economic/Political  
Binary: Claiming Asylum in Bulgaria

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### Abstract

The paper examines the distinction between ‘economic’ migrants and ‘genuine refugees’. I argue that the economic/political migrant binary belongs to a particular ideological presupposition which is present in classic economic liberalism. In migratory systems, this ideology construes the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ vis-à-vis violence and lays the ground for subject differentiation. This logic, furthermore, imposes itself on the migratory system and its empirical reality (e.g. detention and reception centres). The struggles that we witness at borders and detention centres attempt to disintegrate definitions of what constitutes violence. The struggles against the imposed categories take place at two interconnected levels: at the border and in the repositioning of migrants from detention to reception centres. I empirically trace these levels within the practice of the asylum-system in Bulgaria.

*Keywords:* economic/political migrants, asylum, Bulgaria, liberalism, violence.

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## *Introduction*

In 2015's 'refugee crisis', a language came about that was missing before. It is the regular use of the words 'refugees' and 'migrants' side by side.<sup>1</sup> This language is an effect of the differentiation between political and economic migrants, which is embedded in the ways liberal thought empties the economy of political content and perpetuates a separation of two distinct spheres; that of the political and that of the economic. When migrants reach European shores, they need to demonstrate of which type they are: of the type that is running away from political violence or of the type that is escaping economic misfortunes.

Although the so-called refugee crisis was temporarily situated in the summer of 2015, the context of the above events is common and has long taken root within the European Asylum System. We are right to conclude with Prem Rajaram (2015) that the 'crisis was fabricated' and with Bojadžijev and Mezzadra (2015) that it was in fact a 'crisis of the European migration policies'. I shall add a layer, however, and insist that the crisis was also a crisis of liberal definitions of what constitutes violence and who has the right to escape it. I will look into this specific aspect of the European asylum system: the separation between genuine refugees and economic migrants. This mechanism of separation embodies the rationale behind the European asylum system in its entirety and is related to larger historical formations whose content structures the appearance of violence in liberal democracies. I approach the separation from a position at the edge of Europe, Bulgaria. The country's (geopolitical) location is such that it is burdened with the obligation to secure Europe and hence, to strain the 'economic' from the 'political'. The process of straining reproduces a specific type of what I will refer to as 'trickster', who is arrested between the two distinctions of 'economic' migrants and 'genuine refugees'. Identifying tricksters is the basis of the current asylum infrastructure in the country.

This paper is as much about the formation of the possibility to think migrants as either political or economic, as it is about the struggles that we witness at European borders (i.e. at the physical borders, but also in detention and registration camps). These struggles unfold accordingly on the ground, in order to either defend or disintegrate the effects of contemporary definitions of violence. I trace them within the practice of the asylum-system in Bulgaria – firstly, at the level of border crossing and

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<sup>1</sup> The conclusions here are based on data that were collected between 2011 and 2015. Interviews and in-depth conversations have been conducted with diverse parties ranging from refugees, asylum-seekers, illegalized migrants, activists and volunteers, UNHCR, human rights organizations in Bulgaria, IOM Bulgaria, experts in the field of asylum, and lawyers. The interviews with asylum-seekers that appear here were taken during a research trip to Pastrogor and also as part of a research for the project 'Trapped in Europe's Quagmire: The Situation of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Bulgaria', written by myself, Neda Deneva, Mathias Fiedler and Tsvetelina Hristova, and sponsored by Stiftung:do and BMU. See Hristova et al. (2014). I have entered the field both in my capacity as a PhD researcher and as part of my political work. The stories collected here do not follow a chronological order. The separation between 'economic' and 'political' migrants does not concern solely the field of migration per se. It is part of larger forms of historical oppressions. Its representation as arrested in the field of migration happened to be the clearest at this point of time.

secondly, at the level of detention and the subsequent relocation to reception camps. The body of the trespasser in our case is always already perceived as the body of an economic migrant, and therefore guilty of illegal crossing. After a successful crossing, the asylum-seeker, who is always assumed to be an 'economic migrant', is placed in detention. The struggles here consist in the desire to reposition oneself from detention to reception. This guarantees that asylum-seekers will have the chance to prove that they belong to the 'political' category of migration and erase their 'economic' and hence 'illegal' appearance; a process that takes place at the reception camp.

### *The logic behind violence and its historical position in the production of political/economic migrants*

The possibility to segregate economic migrants from refugees at the European borders stems from the tendency to maintain that there is a non-correspondence between the 'political' and the 'economic'. In our contemporaneity, it seems, we cannot talk of one of the sides of the political/economic migration binary without necessarily negating its opposite. Why?

The economic/political migrant binary is oxymoronic in its nature, and it belongs to a particular ideological presupposition readily available to liberalism, i.e. the ways the latter construes the 'economic' and the 'political' vis-à-vis violence.<sup>2</sup> Economic liberalism disembods the 'economic' from the 'political' by detaching coercion from processes of production, distribution and allocation, which makes 'the economy' appear as force-free. The elements that enable this particular ideological presupposition have been translated by the economic/political migrant binary so as to accommodate the two central notions of the political and the economic under liberalism: that of the political being violent and that of the economic being voluntary.

Building on Marx's account on private property's historical development into a pure economic form, Ellen Wood (1981; 2007) presents us with an explanation of the stakes and historical developments concerning the separation of the 'economic' sphere from the political. Partially, one such separation concerns the ways in which (the appearance of) violence is being structured. What Wood demonstrates is that the uniqueness of capitalism shall be traced in the ways in which 'property-and-class-relations, as well as the functions of surplus appropriation and distribution, so to speak liberate themselves from - and yet are served by - the coercive institutions that constitute the state, and develop autonomously'. Such 'liberation' implicates the extraction of surplus labour (see Rioux's critique) which suddenly undertakes a solely

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<sup>2</sup> Liberalism here refers to the ideology that calls for free markets and private property in the means of production. This idea model is characterized by depoliticization of the 'economy', as grounded in classical economics. Simultaneously, the regulation of movement has been critical for the formation of liberal thought (for an exhaustive account on this, see Kotef [2015]). Relying on the development of the asylum system in Europe, we can see that the separation of spheres dictates the inner logics of movement regulation. In contemporary liberalism, movement regulation has been translated accordingly to the desired disintegration of the economy from the political and the asylum systems throughout European liberal democracies are reproducing this distinction.

economic form and the political coercion previously at work in its extraction is now removed from the relation between capital and labour. In this sense, economic categories such as ‘poverty’ and ‘unemployment’ (of which economic migrants are often accused of escaping) appear as if free of violence. Rioux (2013) argues that political Marxism (or the characterization of capitalism as marked by economic coercion in surplus extraction and of which Wood is representative) presents us with a ‘sanitized conception’ of capitalist relations and reproduces a bourgeois understanding of the market – or precisely one such understanding that the economic is marked out of the political, where extra-economic violence disappears from capitalist relations. Rioux’s critique is crucial. When one is to consider the existence of different forms of labour and surplus labour extraction in relation to capital, the persistence of different forms of dependence and slavery under capitalism, then, indeed, speaking of ‘economic’ and ‘extra-economic’ coercion becomes dubious<sup>3</sup>.

The ‘economic migrant’ is the representation par excellence of this dubiousness. If we place the notion of the economic migrant in the midst of debates of whether economic coercion is a feasible notion that describes the structure of violence under capital relations, then we see that the ideal-typical conception of the European liberal state and its migration regime are here to convince us that the social has two parts. One is marked by political violence only and the authentic refugee escapes that. The other part is constituted by economic relations that are political-violence-free. These economic relations are preserved for those who consciously migrate out of an entity (e.g. nation-state) in order to better their lives<sup>4</sup>.

Despite Rioux’s critique, however, we can see that this construction persists in its real effects. The separation of the ‘economic’ from political coercion, thus, becomes a field of struggle. The economic/political migrantness is its real appearance (Marx, 1857/1993; Hall, 2003), i.e. the effect of the ideological construction that the market is violence-free. The aforementioned struggles unfold in the terrain of this real appearance. This allows us to think of the European migration regime and its concrete practices in the state forms of detention, push-backs, and asylum procedures as the attempted sustaining of the apparent separation of violences. These relations structure the appearance of violence, which now emerges as possible to define only when its manifestation is of ‘political’ nature. Yet, the economic migrant/refugee binary is oxymoronic in a sense. It is oxymoronic not because it is paradoxical but because it creates its own terms.<sup>5</sup> As Rioux applies it, the separation of economic and political is an impossible dualism but it is also a desirable condition of freedom under

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<sup>3</sup> For details on the debate see *inter alia*, Thompson (1978), Anderson ([1980] 2016), Barker (1997), Banaji (2010).

<sup>4</sup> The UNHCR defines the economic migrant as follows: “Global migration patterns have become increasingly complex in modern times, involving not just refugees, but also millions of economic migrants. But refugees and migrants, even if they often travel in the same way, are fundamentally different, and for that reason are treated very differently under modern international law. Migrants, especially economic migrants, choose to move in order to improve the future prospects of themselves and their families. Refugees have to move if they are to save their lives or preserve their freedom (UNHCR website, accessed February 2016.)”

<sup>5</sup> I borrow this insight of the ‘oxymoronic’ from Lecercle’s (2016) review of Virno’s *Grammar of the Multitude*, who in turn relies on Simondon.

liberal ideologies. If the process of 'creating terms' assumes the existence of conflict and struggle, then let us read the relation between the economic and the political as an oxymoron, as always antagonistic. The surplus of that conflictual relation is locked in the 'economic migrant', explicitly defined by the UN refugee convention as the opposite of the refugee; a construction that creates the possibility to divide moving bodies into such that exhibit economic voluntarism and such that exhibit political coercion. Then, we can treat the political/economic (migrant) binary not as a 'real' separation but as an illusion to be sustained.

This illusion was persuasive during the time of the development of the so-called refugee regime. According to Karatani (2005), two approaches to migration confronted each other in 1951 and produced the model of migration management that was to govern international movements in the next decades. Namely, the International Labor Organization's 'international coordination approach' and the US 'functional operation principle'. In 1947, the common understanding regarding 'migration problems' was that the ILO, in cooperation with the UN, shall have the permanent mandate to deal with 'problems of an economic and social nature' stemming from migrating populations (ILO as cited in Karatani, 2005). The secondary organizations (e.g. International Bank for Development and Reconstruction, World Health Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization) were supposed to take control over 'incidental' situations (*ibid.*). One such secondary organization was the Preparatory Commission of the International Refugee Organization, which speaks of *generality* as a defining feature of migration and *incidental* as a defining feature of refuge. This approach towards international movements has permanently settled<sup>6</sup>. In a way, migration was acknowledged in its permanency, its particularities, however, (i.e. workers' transfers, refugee movements) were framed as 'incidents' to be dealt with by secondary organizations.

Eventually, the Secretariat Levels of the UN and the ILO agreed upon division of labour between the two bodies as follows: 'I. The competence of the International Labour Organization should include the rights and situation of migrants in their quality as workers...II. The competence of the United Nations should include: rights and situation of migrants in their quality as aliens.'<sup>7</sup> We see that from the very coining of the separation, the aliens, later to become refugees, were scrutinized as if they do not hold labour-power. In this way the refugee was disarticulated from the worker and the violence attached to political persecution erased from movements of labour power<sup>8</sup>. The alien retained the 'political' and the worker retained the 'economic'. As Karatani (*ibid.*: 524) writes, 'the rights and situation of "migrants" were compartmentalised into two: those aspects of migrants as *workers* fell under the mandate of the ILO, whereas those as *aliens*, the UN' (*italics of the author*). In the

<sup>6</sup> Just think of the way the Guestworker programmes in the 1950s in Germany were organized - namely with the idea that eventually the foreign workers would leave and not settle down.

<sup>7</sup> ILO, 'Note concerning the Co-ordination of International Responsibility in the Field of Migration, Agreed on the Secretariat Level between the United Nations and the International Labour Organization.' 1947. 30 *Official Bulletin*: 419

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to point out that this approach is retained in the political movements that organize around issues of flight.

next few years, international coordination was to be organized under the above mandate. Additionally, the notion of the refugee was for the first time individualized, meaning that the supposed collective basis as implied in previous conceptions of the term withered away<sup>9</sup>.

More than 60 years later, we see that the implementation of the regime has left undeniable historical traces. The asylum systems in Europe are sustained through it. 'Safe countries', 'bogus asylum-seekers', 'genuine refugee' are all notions that bend under the weight of liberal ideologies, whose legitimacy is sustained in the validity of almost impossible border crossing, detention and reception camps. The countries at the so-called external borders are the first instances where one's political or economic appearance is being determined. One such external border is Bulgaria; a country that did not receive much attention during the so-called 'refugee crisis'. Yet, fence building, men hunting, push-backs and long term detention were all practices that unfolded between 2013 and 2015, making Bulgaria the prototype of what took place elsewhere a year later.

### *Tracing economic migrants in Bulgaria*

Asylum-systems have been studied as border regimes (Tsianos et al., 2009; Tsianos and Karakayali, 2010; Kasperek, 2016), approached from the perspective of the autonomy of migration (Papadopolous and Tsianos, 2007; Mezzadra, 2011; Cortes-Casas et al., 2015), from the point of view of its contradictions (Guiraudon, 2003), as humanitarian reason (Fassin, 2012; Ticktin, 2011), externalization/Europeization in its normative dimension (Toshkov and de Haan, 2013), to name just a few approaches. These paths have informed tremendously our knowledge of asylum systems but my goal here is different. I assume that the knowledge practice of distinguishing economic migrants from refugees is instrumental in the asylum knowledge formation from the perspective of two modes of hoping. One is the point of view of the border custodians (e.g. border guards, translators, interviewers, judges) who hope to protect against economic migrants. The other is the point of view of those who cross the border and hope to convince the former that they are not economic migrants. These two modes of hoping clash. After Bloch, Benjamin and Rorty, Miyazaki (2004) notes that hope is a method that serves 'radical temporal reorientation of knowledge'. The clash between these two seemingly different, yet subordinated to the same rationale reorientations of knowledge, between the practice of the guardians and the migrants perpetuate their antagonistic counterparts. These two hopes form an antagonistic terrain, where they 'unite different ways of knowing' that are nonetheless informed by the attempts to sustain or disintegrate the difference between what is 'economic' and what is 'political'. Asylum-systems throughout the EU are built to accommodate space for such reorientation.

Bulgaria's transition to a liberal-democratic state required a substantial change in its definition of asylum. Rositza Guentcheva (2012: 12) demonstrates that the excitement accompanying the initial debates regarding the notion of a refugee, did not

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<sup>9</sup> We see that such predicaments do not hold water, however. The concept of SIA (Syrian-Iraqi-Afghani) is a prime example of states' failure to attain to universalistic claims.

last for long. Already in 1991, the fear of the possibility to have ‘economic’ migrants entering Bulgarian territory captivated members of parliament<sup>10</sup>. Guentcheva argues that, ‘[such fears] would form the basis for a new understanding of refugees as bogus [*фалшиви*] refugees’ (ibid: 14). Bulgaria’s transition was conditioned upon a specific understanding of who is to be admitted and perpetuated the economic/political binary from the very beginning.

In 1992, Bulgaria ratified the Geneva Convention on the status of refugees and that same year it opened the National Bureau for Territorial Asylum and Refuge, which was renamed to Agency for Refugees in 2000 and to State Agency for Refugees (SAR) in 2002 (SAR, 2016). After a series of legal and infrastructural changes (e.g. the introduction of detention centres that hold foreigners only in 2006), Bulgaria is now part of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). As other countries within the System, its asylum procedures and policies are subordinated to international and EU law precept. According to Bulgarian and international law, every foreigner has the right to submit an asylum application, in both cases of legal and illegal crossing. This can be done before every state representative but only SAR officially registers applications. According to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC, 2016), the majority of the asylum applications are submitted to Border Police (at the border) and to the Migration Directorate (in the detention centres). This is due to the fact that for the most part asylum-seekers cross the state border illegally (usually from Turkey by land) and are subject to arrest and detention. Prior to 2016, the detention of asylum-seekers was against the norms required by Law, yet, in 2016 the latter was amended in order to introduce such a possibility (Ilareva, 2015; 2016). The amendment followed a regularly reported malpractice from previous years where asylum-seekers were regularly detained despite their submission of an asylum application (which can take place both in a written and oral form). Even though Bulgarian law did not provide any explicit basis for detention of asylum-seekers (Global Detention Project, 2011) this was a common practice in the country, and one that pertained mostly to the grey area of the law. This grey area is now legitimated and in it the conflict that pertains to the political/economic migrants unfolds spatially.

The asylum system in Bulgaria is not centralized. The two main institutions responsible in the field of asylum are SAR, which is under the auspices of the Council of Ministers, and the Ministry of Interior, which guards the borders and manages the detention centres for foreigners. There are such centres in Busmantsi (near Sofia), Elhovo and in Lyubimets (close to the border with Greece and Turkey). Their name, Special Homes for the Temporary Accommodation of Foreigners reveals a juridical system that does not like thinking of itself as if it ‘detains’; instead it provides shelter. SAR, on the other hand, manages the so-called reception centres, which accommodate people whose asylum application had been accepted. There are seven of these centres: four of them in Sofia (Ovcha Kupel, Vrajdebna, Voenna Rampa, Kovachevtsi), two of them close to the Turkish-Bulgarian border (Harmanli and Pastrogor) and one situated in Central Bulgaria (Banya). SAR is also the institution that decides whether or not one is a true refugee in the first instance. There is, indeed,

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<sup>10</sup> Bulgaria was declared to be a safe country that same year, ultimately turning thousands of Bulgarian asylum-seekers abroad into economic migrants.

a strong institutional relation between these two despite their relative autonomy, which often ends in the practice of migrant exchange. Here, I deal precisely with this type of exchange; the repositioning of people from the border to the detention centres and afterwards to the reception centres. This reposition captures the manifestation of the political/economic binary and its effects on migrating bodies<sup>11</sup>.

Once captured, people can stay in detention for months before being placed in a reception centre, where eventually their request for asylum will come under scrutiny. In the meantime, a definitional vacuum is established, as in most cases people who are detained have expressed their desire to claim asylum in Bulgaria: an utterance that, by law, is enough for one to be considered for refugee status.<sup>12</sup>

Moving a migrant from detention to reception repositions one from being considered an illegal migrant to legalized asylum-seeker. The asylum infrastructure in the country can be said to be comprised of temporal and spatial loops that bring one closer to the possibility to claim asylum. The reposition between these loops brings migrants closer to a point of potentiality, the not-yet-actual asylum, yet, the very possibility that one has the chance to be considered a 'genuine' refugee. This type of practice is necessary in order for supposed 'economic migrants' to remain, they have to change their appearance from an economic to a political migrant<sup>13</sup>. The appearance could be changed by the stories that they would eventually present to the state in order for the latter to declare them true or false. These stories have one goal: to convince SAR that one is not an economic migrant. This boundary also shapes political struggles to a large degree as it creates a vacuum within which a competition is being established between the different categories of migrations as they are differentially included within legal systems, labour markets, healthcare services and the welfare state.

The asylum infrastructure at place in Bulgaria has been developed in order to track economic migrants. This is especially pronounced in light of Bulgaria's role as a guardian of the external borders of the Union; a role that has been taken very seriously by all political parties in the country. Such asylum systems employ forms of knowledge that speak to the old anthropological archetype of the figure of the trickster: 'complicated characters, as they easily slip and slide between one extreme to the next' (Nadelberg, 2008: 8). This type of knowledge practice, both in terms of facilitation and outward effects, valorizes different forms of intelligence within the asylum system itself: interviewers, translators, detention and reception camps, psychologists, and even smugglers and 'story sellers' that operate before the reaching of the border. The above is what comprises the 'asylum-seeking' process: a temporal framework set aside for being potentially pronounced a refugee or being turned into an economic migrant. This temporal space is constituted by knots which progress

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<sup>11</sup> In order for this crude repositioning to take place, the state needs to dehumanize and render the crossers as bodies that are only distinguishable by their migratory category (i.e. either political or economic).

<sup>12</sup> It is often the case that an asylum-seeker can be arrested at a reception camp and brought to SHTAF without realizing that she has been refused status.

<sup>13</sup> This is captured by the notion of the bogus refugee. For a detailed engagement with the concept see, Kaye (1998), Neumayer (2005), Diop (2014), among others.

towards declaring one worthy of protection. Two of them are under scrutiny here: crossing the border and repositioning from detention to reception.

### *Border crossing*

It was a group of four of us and we hid in the bushes before we crossed [from Turkey to Bulgaria]. We crossed and after some time we were stopped by police. They made us sit on the ground, our hands behind our backs and wait. They took our luggage. Two cars came. We were taken to a police arrest in Svilengrad. We stayed two days before we were taken to Court. We said we were refugees. After that we were placed in buses and told 'Camp Sofia'. We were very happy. We celebrated in the bus. We were going to a refugee camp. After just a few minutes the bus made a turn into a secondary road. We realized we were not being sent to Sofia after the police told us to get off and brought us in a yard behind tall walls with barb wire on top of the walls. We were not happy anymore. We realized we were in prison now. Why? We are just refugees... (interview Hasan, 2013)

Hasan is from Afghanistan and he told me the above in 2013 in Pastrogor. When travelling in a group, the risk of being fooled is reduced. Hasan was part of one such group. He was just transferred from the detention centre in Lyubimets to the reception centre in Pastrogor. I have heard the same story repeatedly for at least a year.

Bulgarian border police came to take us. They told us 'Camp Sofia' but instead brought us [back] to the border. It was two policemen, then six or seven more came... On the Turkish side of the border they started beating us because the boy wanted food. 'No, no, go away, don't come to the Bulgarian side,' they were screaming and beating us. (interview Mikita, 2014)

My conversation with Mikita took place over the phone as at the time of the interview she was in Edirne, Turkey. She explained to me that she and her four children started towards Bulgaria as they wanted to reunite with family members. They walked two days and got lost in the forest. Eventually they were able to reach the town of Voden, Bulgaria, where a local man called the police. Mikita was pushed back to Turkey. Border crossing can be terrifying. The violence at the Bulgarian border, however, cannot be scrutinized without examining its relation to the prescriptions of who is to be allowed in (i.e. the politically persecuted) and who not (the economic migrant). Hasan and Mikita are the victims of this configuration.

Angered by the supposed slackness of Border Police, right-wing formations and civil militias also started patrolling the border in order to chase alleged economic migrants. For a couple of years, National Resistance and the Patriotic Front (the far-right coalition partner in the current government) have been encouraging the protection of the border by civil patrols. There have been a few instances of self-organized groups along the Bulgarian border who go and 'hunt' illegals. Hunting is not only metaphorical in this case. Hunting has become a concrete practice and enlived by

the simultaneous use of the words catching (*zalaviane*) and illegal migrants (*nelegalni migranti*).<sup>14</sup> The persistent use of the phrases has led to the effective reduction of migrants to prey to be caught. One such instance was the civil arrest of fifty border crossers that took place on October 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 by a group of thirteen game hunters who, 'admired the courage of the three border police officers' who had killed an unarmed Afghan just a few days previously.<sup>15</sup> When hunters hunt, they look for economic migrants, 'who [do] not look like refugees'.

Dinko Valev is one such head of a hunter gang who chases economic migrants at the southern border. In 2016, he became an international star as he had significantly improved the hunting practices.<sup>16</sup> He uses dogs, horses, off-road bikes and even military vehicles to trace 'illegals'. Valev is either recognized as a hero, despised, sanctioned by NGOs or even ridiculed as a low-educated man from the countryside. Yet, the propositions on the part of intellectuals with regard to the European borders were not far from Valev's own. Andrey Raichev, a well-known public sociologist and Mihail Konstantinov, a professor of mathematics both called for the army to be able to 'shoot' in cases of mass influx and potential acts of disobedience. The intellectuals were invited to speak about the 'refugee crisis' on the occasion of Donald Tusk's making yet another statement that 'economic migrants shall not come to Europe'.<sup>17</sup> Raichev and Konstantinov became the radicalized versions of Dinko Valev.

Unlike the surgical precision that we witnessed in the organization of the movement of migrants during the so-called 'summer of migration' (2015) in other parts of Europe however, the crossing into and through Bulgaria at the time was completely different. There was a dispersal of the movement of people through the acts of constant escaping: escaping border guards, escaping fingerprinting, escaping refugee camps. As we saw, shootings, push backs, and hunts figure well in one's decision to escape. The above is an escape from the *politics of death*. It is right to recall here, the opening sentence of Mbembe's work 'Necropolitics', 'the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die' (2003: 10). A deep analysis of Mbembe's work is beyond my goal here. Yet, I would like to consider for a moment the possibility that *the plurality of the border* (e.g. dispersal practices, hunters, push backs, but also the possibility to delegate the decision of who is an illegal, and who is not) has something to do with the way enmity is worked through in Mbembe's conceptualization of power

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<sup>14</sup> There is an abundance of this combination in Bulgarian media. For example: Boyko Borisov's statement from June 2016, here <http://www.focus-news.net/news/2016/06/01/2248016/premierat-boyko-borisov-dnes-i-poslednite-zaloveni-nelegalni-migranti-na-balgaro-gratskata-granitsa-sa-varnati-vgartsiva.html>. For a detailed media analysis on the 'refugee crisis', see Dodov (2015), in Bulgarian.

<sup>15</sup> Novinite. <http://m.novinite.com/articles/171406/Bulgarian+Hunting+Party+Captures+50+Illegal+Immigrants+Near+Border+with+Turkey> Accessed 08-12-2016.

<sup>16</sup> For more information on Valev, see the following articles: in the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (<http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg/novini/press/single/20160307-signal-dinko-valev/> Accessed: 29-11-2016.); in the Mail Online (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3485501/Bulgarian-gangster-organises-migrant-hunting-patrols-Turkish-border.html> Accessed: 29-11-2016.); BBC (<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35919068>, Accessed 29-11-2016.)

<sup>17</sup> The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/03/donald-tusk-economic-migrants-do-not-come-to-europe>. Accessed: 08-12-2016.

that 'refers and appeals to exception, emergency, and fictionalized notion of the enemy' (ibid: 16). Hasan and Mikita are such enemies whose pushing back, abuse, and eventual detention are the primary objectives of the border guardians. Marina Gržinić's (2012) reading of Mbembe's is of interest here. The author proposes a reading of Foucault's biopolitics and Mbembe's necropolitics as captured in the differentiation between their main propositions in regards to governmentality. Accordingly, between 'make live and let die' and 'let live and make die'. Mbembe's necropolitics, according to Gržinić's reading, radically transforms the 'make live' into 'let live', where the former is a form of making a 'better life' and the latter a 'pure abandonment'.

The ideological condition, which allows for a distinction between 'true refugees' and 'economic migrants' pluralizes the border and rather captures a 'make disappear and if not, let live' composition. 'Make dead' could be part of 'make disappear' or it could not. The power of 'make disappear' does not necessarily work through rendering one invisible or refusing and masking existence but through turning one into an 'economic migrant' and banalizing the violence against her. In other words, preventing the potential of remaining within a territory (i.e. asylum-seeking) to develop in its actuality (i.e. granting of a status) and hence, to become part of the political.<sup>18</sup> In our case, the 'make disappear' strongly concerns one's appearance as either an 'economic' or a 'political' migrant. What needs to disappear from our side is the potential that one could be a body injured by political persecution; the body has to always appear as if 'economic' and hence, hutable. 'Let live' in the border context is not subsumed under 'pure abandonment' however, but is instead arrested by the monotony of maintaining the minimum of biological reproduction and the leftovers of what Fassin (2012) eloquently called 'humanitarian reason'.

Importantly, we should not set aside the struggles staged by the very subjects of the plurality of the border. They aim to reorganize knowledge that would allow for their consideration of being 'true refugees'. Let's recall Miyazaki's anthropological reading of hope. Namely, as reorganization of knowledge and may I add, the attempted distortion of knowledge boundaries (e.g. the boundary between the political and the economic). After all, 'tricksters challenge the status quo and disrupt perceived boundaries' (Smith, 1997).

As any other peripheral EU border, the Bulgarian one is like a swing. It oscillates between life and death. Guarding the EU, Bulgaria does not offer death only at its entrance but it extends it also at its exit. Those who have made it to the anteriority of the asylum system in Bulgaria, i.e. to a detention centre, have crossed a border illegally. There is no other way around. Embassies never issue visas to people deemed 'undesirable' and the transfers of people that the UNHCR is supposed to perform are a rare occasion. Border crossing is the first step one needs to undertake in order to enter the negotiations over her migrant category. The next step from that negotiation comprises the process by which one is transferred from a detention facility to a reception facility.

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<sup>18</sup> Certainly, we cannot dismiss the contradiction of the border, where securitization and humanitarianism work in concert. Often, rendering one invisible fails precisely because of the humanitarian scandals this nexus sparks.

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### *From detention to reception*

What has brought about the majority of the protests on part of asylum-seekers in Bulgaria is the demand for relocation from detention to reception. This demand stems from narrowing the temporal gap between the potential and the actual mentioned above. I have observed the unfolding of such relocations numerous times between 2011 and 2015. Here, I will stop my attention to a specific transfer that took place between Lyubimets (detention) and Pastrogor (transit/reception).

In 2012, the detention centre in Lyubimets was nearly empty, yet, it was sharply criticized by its inhabitants. Not enough walking time, not enough meals, no medical attention, lack of trusted translators and lawyers, no privacy, beatings, frequent imprisonment in solitary confinement cells are among the most common complaints. What bothers most those who are detained is the knowledge that being held in such facility precludes them from the possibility of being considered for refugee status. There are certain strategies, however, that are employed inside in order for one to reposition herself from detention to reception. The latter is a subversion strategy which attempts to delete the 'economic' appearance of one. To achieve this, there are a couple of stages. First, one tries to accelerate the tempo of seeing a lawyer by individual acts and if that does not work, collective tactics come into play.

As the detention (Lyubimets) and reception (Pastrogor) facilities are separated by only 13 km, the observation of such repositioning is easy. The purpose of Pastrogor is to serve as a transit station, where Dublin decisions and fast procedures take place<sup>19</sup>. In the summer of 2012, when conducting research in the village of Pastrogor, the number of people who were crossing the border with Turkey was increasing already. One night in mid August that same year, I was having dinner with about 15 people. The crowd comprised activists from Sofia and people who were accommodated at the time at the transit centre. A phone rang at some point which interrupted the monotony of it all. 'They have declared a hunger strike', said Alaa, a Syrian in his late 30s. 'They' were 21 Syrians and four Iraqis, four minors among them, who found themselves in Lyubimets, the detention facility nearby.

Five of us - three Syrian men, a Somali and I - went to the detention centre the very next day. A taxi driver left us at a desolated parking lot that was easily seen from the prison's cells. A valley of thorns and a tall concrete wall separated the lot from the prison. Yet, the long distance between the two, paradoxically, eased the communication between those on the inside and those on the outside. Indeed, a closer proximity would have hindered the otherwise visible lot (because of the tall

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<sup>19</sup> The Dublin decision consists of taking one's fingerprints in order to identify the first European country of entry. If indeed it turns out that this country is Bulgaria, then a Dublin decision is taken that the foreigner's asylum status will be considered by the Bulgarian state. From there, the asylum procedure goes into its second stage or to the so-called *uskoreno proizvodstvo* (accelerated production [of status]). During the fast procedure, an interviewer of SAR assesses the validity of the reasons behind one's departure from their home country. If enough evidence is presented at the SAR interviewers that one fits the description of a 'politically persecuted person', then she is granted the status. If not, as indeed in the majority of the cases, she is considered to have escaped a place for illegitimate reasons and hence, in pursuit of economic gains. From the above the reader could already sense the importance of finding oneself in a transit camp; it is the first stage towards the possibility that one is proclaimed a real refugee.

walls) on the one hand and would have too easily attracted the attention of the prison guards on the other. The parking was often used as a communication stand. One-on-one communication was only possible, however, because cell phones were allowed inside the detention camp.

Standing in the parking lot, Alaa called somebody inside. In just a few seconds we saw a person climb the window grid of the third floor and wave a white t-shirt. As we looked closer, we could see around 40 more people, all waving their white t-shirts. On one of them, with a black, thick sharpie 'Freedom' was written. We waved back. The conversation was conducted over the phone and it became clear that the only demand the prisoners held was that '[they] want out of Lyubimets!' The hunger strike was declared in order for the group to be transferred to Pastrogor, where they could go on with the asylum procedure. The painfully known phrase of 'we are all refugees' was uttered again and again. The people inside were tired of waiting. In fact *waiting* was always uttered in its Bulgarian imperative form *chakai!* [wait]. The word had become inseparable of one's dictionary even when not much contact with the outside world existed.

Hunger striking is not the only strategy used by detainees. Self-injuries of all sorts, rioting, refusal of going outside, and breaking property all take place as a demand for repositioning at a reception centre. Kawe, a Kurd in his late 20s was showing off his self-made arm wounds that he slowly carved into his flesh breaking a window in order to provide himself with a sharp edge. He was punished. A doctor carefully washed his wounds and then the prison guards threw him in the confinement cell. Kawe wanted out of Lyubimets. He escaped Bulgaria not too long after he was transferred to the transit camp in Pastrogor when he realized that even harsher punishment awaits him for breaking the property of the centre. Namely, refusal of refugee status. Such punishment is in fact possible. The arbitrariness of the political/economic binary sustains that same arbitrariness in the asylum-system as well. Articles 17 and 18 from the self-made rules in a reception centre in the country read:

(17) You have to be patient in receiving status. The impatient ones may not receive status if they break relations with the administration;

(18) Those who do not wear badges... will receive status at a later point (interview volunteer 2014)<sup>20</sup>

This was not the first or the last such hunger strike and Kawe was not the last one to impose self-harm. These are the most widely spread forms of protest in Bulgarian (and not only) detention facilities for foreigners despite the risks such tactics breath as the general invisibility of the inside often precludes one of the most important sides in hunger striking, and namely the audience. Hunger, in our case, accelerates one's chances to end up in the transit centre in Pastrogor and thus, to be repositioned as a *potential* refugee. The physical repositioning from detention to reception brings possibilities for a suspension of one's appearance as an economic migrant.

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<sup>20</sup> This information was given by a volunteer in one of the reception camps in the country. The name of the volunteer and the camp are withheld purposefully. The information was collected as part of the writing process for 'Trapped in Europe's Quagmire'.

### *Migration studies and the political/economic distinction*

Building crude lines between who is an economic and who a political migrant continues to interest social scientists long after its formal separation in the 1950s. There are studies that do play with the difference and speak to its discursive and practical implementations. Adelson (2004) for example takes the UK's asylum system and speaks of the subjective sides in the determination of one's status according to this particular taxonomy. The author concludes that by 'crafting the difference', the UK government displays hesitation in upholding responsibility for political and economic developments abroad. The legal separation has also proliferated in the formation of somewhat peculiar sociological questions and methodological approaches. Kalena Cortes (2004) obediently applies the taxonomy in the US context in order to explore the different market outcomes according to one's status as either a refugee or an economic migrant. Stepping on a human capital investment research schemes she tells us that refugees make greater market gains as compared to economic migrants. Estimating the determinants for annual Jewish migration between 1881-1914 by applying economic variables, exploring chain migrations and indicators of religious violence, Boustan (2007) asks 'Were Jews Political Refugees or Economic Migrants?' Such a theoretical question, however, is methodologically dubious as the distinction did not exist at that time.

There is almost a scholarly consensus on the necessity to separate so-called *labour migration* from *forced migration*. This necessity is an effect of the ways in which the particularities of migration have to be studied (see for example Diner, 2008). Migration studies tend to preoccupy themselves with the *determinants* and *consequences* of people's moving. This necessity comes about partially because of the uneasy relation between migration in general and migrations in particular. In Demuth's account (2000), 'the refugee is an involuntary migrant, a victim of politics, war, or national catastrophe... In short, every refugee is a migrant, but not every migrant is a refugee' (27). Demuth leads the reader to the proposition that such categories are legitimate and shall be used as a ground for methodological approaches in the field:

Categories therefore have their worth as an analytical tool. As opposed to some academic, judicial, or administrative delineations of such categories, it must be clear that in real life there are mixtures of migration types... Also, academic categorization does not *per se* have other objectives than clearing a path through a jungle of difficult academic terrain: explain the complicated (ibid: 27).

Following such paths gives an epistemic primacy to legal categories and provides them with a science-like form and precludes the conflictual nature of such taxonomies I explored above. Migration studies tend to reproduce the boundary between what is 'economic' and what is 'political', which is implicit in what is termed to be 'voluntary' and 'forced'.

Yet, what I demonstrated in this paper is that the economic/political migrant binary is an effect of the way the 'economic' sphere is separated by the 'political'

sphere. European asylum systems use the typology of 'economic' migrants and 'genuine' refugees to reproduce such abstractions. The very notion of the 'economic' migrant and the refusal to offer her protection erases coercion as a possible characteristic of the market, or the sphere that 'economic migrants' supposedly escape. This point is important in identifying the distinctive character of the forms that govern migration today in order to grasp their inner logics and not treat them as separate from larger ideological presuppositions and historical forms. Furthermore, I demonstrated that such separation is a relation of domination. In other words, the political/economic migrant binary is not simply an abstract structure. Asylum systems throughout Europe have enclosed their own coercion stemming from the binary itself into pockets of alienation and exclusion: border arrests, detention camps, registration camps, where the prime function of the European guardians is to isolate the 'economic' from the 'political'; the 'bogus' from the 'real'. This confronts people in a very real way and they resort to hunger strikes and self-harm so as to eradicate such boundaries. This is a terrain of struggle, where those who are subjected to such differentiation act in relation to it. The desired repositioning between detention and reception centres in Bulgaria is an instance of this struggle.

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Contesting the Dublin Regulation: Refugees' and Migrants' Claims to Personhood and Rights in Germany

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### Abstract

This study demonstrates how an EU law, Dublin 111, affects a heterogeneous group of refugees and migrants in Germany who first enter the EU through States such as Italy, Spain, or Hungary. The Dublin regulation allows refugees (with the exception of refugees from Syria) solely to make asylum-claims in the EU country through which they first enter and where they are initially fingerprinted. Therefore, if authorities find asylum-seekers' fingerprints in the database and can thus confirm that they have been in another EU Member State, then according to the Dublin regulation, they can be deported to the first country. The study illustrates the ways in which many refugees and migrants in Germany negotiate the Dublin law in differentiated ways, which subsequently enables them to claim their rights to personhood and dignity. More specifically, this study interrogates how some refugees are affected by the Dublin legislation and how they negotiate this law. This group of refugees have varied status in Germany – some have claimed asylum, some fear imminent deportations, others have not claimed asylum within Germany, while there are others who are in the process of 'getting out of Dublin'. The study explores how these refugees with differing positions, status, and background negotiate their stay and personhood in Germany.

*Keywords:* Migration, Refugees, Dublin Regulation, EU Law, Germany.

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## *Introduction*

This study demonstrates the ways in which refugees and migrants negotiate the Dublin legislation in Germany. Deportations to EU member states have been based on an agreement between the countries of the European Union (Dublin 111). According to the agreement, asylum-seekers are to be returned to the country of arrival in Europe and thus they have only one chance to claim asylum. Therefore, if authorities find an asylum-seeker's fingerprints in the database and can confirm that they have been in another EU member state, then according to the Dublin regulation, the asylum-seeker can be deported to the first country. This law works in conjunction with the EURODAC regulation, which provides for a fingerprint database to identify asylum-seekers.

As a consequence of the Dublin law, the status of the groups of refugees and migrants tends to vary. Some of the refugees and migrants have limited rights if they elect not to apply for asylum in Germany. While others include asylum-seekers who are waiting for decisions from immigration authorities and thus have access to basic rights such as food and accommodation, but at the same time fear deportation upon discovery of their fingerprints in the first EU member state. The study explores how this heterogeneous group of refugees and migrants with differing statuses who arrive from differing EU countries negotiate their position in Germany. This study also allows for a rethinking of migrant struggles – as struggles inclusive of and for personhood rather than simply as collective political actions. The study demonstrates that refugee and migrant activism needs to be recognized as a heterogeneous process. Refugees' resistance needs to be understood beyond politics since their acts, tactics and strategies and their struggles may additionally focus on attainment of sense of self, dignity and personhood.

Various thinkers relate the concept of personhood to notions of personal autonomy, self-hood, reflexivity and personal identity (Higgs and Gilleard, 2015). Ohlin (2005) notes that personhood and the necessary constituents, such as possessing consciousness determines moral status and in turn confers rights. Taylor (1992) connects personhood with the notion of moral agency. He argues that it is the very fact that people can experience guilt and shame and possess the capability of wanting to be other than what they are, form the very basis of personhood. Beverly Skeggs discusses the ways in which the abject inhabit personhood. Skeggs (2011) argues that personhood is found in the repeated attempts of the working-class to attach value through respectability such that their claims for value are not necessarily acquisitive but protests against moral denigration and misrecognition.

Legal scholar, Linda Bosniak's discussion on personhood is particularly useful for understanding non-citizens' acts for personhood, since she argues it is the *law*, which denies undocumented immigrants their sense of dignity. Bosniak argues that undocumented immigrants experience diminished personhood because of stringent laws and border controls and suggests that people need to strive for personhood because it is not automatically granted. She bases her argument on the fact that historically, large classes of human beings were denied recognition as equal – legal and moral persons –, treated as property, objects or otherwise less-than-persons. Bosniak, alluding specifically to undocumented immigrants, highlights three constitutional

constructs that threaten significant evasions of personhood, which includes territoriality, peoplehood and enemy status. Bosniak argues, 'recognition of their status of personhood means that they are *within* the pale, *within* the law, for purpose of basic functioning in contemporary liberal society' (2011: 208). However, constitutional personhood is evaded and constrained for immigrants through the government's immigration enforcement authority of 'the border' and the 'ever present threat of deportation' (Bosniak, 2011). In this regard, I argue that refugees and migrants in Germany with limited and shifting statuses contest for recognition of personhood when the European Commission diminish their personhood through imposition of restrictive laws. Even more significantly, several of the refugees' struggles, which form part of this study, need to be understood to extend beyond collective contestations for territorial rights since they struggle in individual ways to be counted as a person.

The study addresses the following questions: How do the refugees and migrants entering from southern EU countries manage to continue to survive in Germany? Under which circumstances do they manage to stay? Does the Dublin law affect differing groups of migrants and refugees in different ways?

### *Migrants and Mobilisation*

Mobilisation among refugees and migrants has been the focus of much scholarship. With prevailing policies resulting in the exclusion of legal migration, recent scholarship has attended to the ways in which refugees and migrants engage in every day acts of resistance. Immigrants often negotiate their everyday lives in their host states in the absence of formal citizenship. Nevertheless migrants and refugees without formal status are not left entirely without resources and in many cases seek out lawyers, agents, teachers, priests, journalists, activists and shopkeepers to help facilitate their migration process and to further help reverse their irregular status (Castle et al., 2012). In this regard, several scholars have demonstrated the ways in which regular and irregular refugees and migrants transform the idea of formal citizenship through their resistance (e.g. Isin, 2009; Anderson, 2010; Chimienti, 2011). Scholarship on refugees' mobilisation has understood their agency and activism as substantive citizenship such that migrants and refugees may continue to participate in polity, unions and religious networks even though they may not hold formal citizenship (e.g. Bhimji, 2010; Bhimji, 2014; Bhimji, 2016; Galvez, 2010; Moulin and Nyers, 2007; Rygiel, 2011; Isin, 2009; Lowry and Nyers, 2006). Migrants' struggles are generally understood in scholarship as collective claims for citizenship rights and inclusion rather than quests for individual dignity and respect. These struggles need not be regarded as mutually exclusive, but as this essay demonstrates that migrants' struggles against disrespect and dehumanisation needs further understanding as contestations against laws that deprive them of their basic rights.

Migrants have additionally been understood to engage in everyday acts of resistance or to 'subvert the rules of obedience of which Foucault speaks as they cross borders and prioritize their own basic needs and requirements' (De Genova, 2013). De Genova recognises migrants' struggles for a government of human mobility at large as well as state formation, sovereignty, citizenship, nationalism and racial formation.

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Scholars have also understood irregular and regular migrants as agents of political change and have understood their actions as 'ruptures' in the system (e.g. Balibar, 2004; Gordon, 2007; Isin, 2009; Nyers, 2008; McNevin, 2009). For example, Isin and Nielson introduce the notion of 'acts of citizenship' - a concept, which 'aims to disrupt habitus, create new possibilities, claim rights and impose obligations in emotionally charged tones' (p. 10). Drawing on this perspective of acts, Nyers argues that when non-citizens resist, they can be understood to be claim-making and rights-taking political beings.

Thus, much of this scholarship has understood immigrants' struggles and protests as quests for systemic changes, ruptures and participation in the polity. In this regard, migrants' activism is consequently understood in political collective terms, without much attention to the specificities of their individual struggles. In some cases, scholars have discussed migrants as idealized political subjects. However refugees' and migrants' everyday lives are lived out in complex ways and their acts of resistance need to be understood beyond the lens of citizenship (Chiementi and Solomos, 2011). There has been less discussion of refugees' and migrants' individual and differentiated struggles for dignity, respect, and humanity. Ellerman (2010) notes that even though resistance strategies are often part of a shared body of knowledge, resistance is usually exercised by individuals, rather than collectively which at the same moment is exercised towards short-term, rather than systemic change. In this regard, the notion of personhood with its constituents such as reflexivity, morality and respectability, provides a lens to understand heterogeneous and individual struggles, which do not necessarily always seek to challenge systemic structures or broader concerns of citizenship and state power but rather remain focused on the self.

Refugee activism has additionally been understood in categorical ways - those migrants who have legal status vs. those who are irregular (e.g. Galvez, 2010; Anderson, 2014). Migrants and refugees affected by the Dublin regulation cannot be easily categorised in this manner. Some of them may have refugee status in the first country with permission to visit the second country on a short-term basis, but they may not have rights to work. Others with fingerprints in a member state are based in the second country with decisions pending on their asylum cases. Yet other individuals with deportation notifications may be in the process of abiding six months so that they can 'get out of Dublin'. Thus, because of the complexities of refugees' and migrants' formal status, their differentiated struggles must be recognised in their full complexity.

### ***Methodology***

This essay is based on participant observation and interviews. I conducted 19 interviews in English and Urdu and held informal conversations with several people in languages such as French, Spanish, Urdu and English. Although I interviewed a smaller number of people formally, I did meet, speak and spend much time in Berlin and the surrounding areas with many more refugees from differing countries in less formal situations. The refugees had travelled into Germany through various routes such as Italy, Greece, Malta and Hungary. The refugees and migrants were a heterogeneous group in terms of their formal status, countries of origin, education

level, and ages. Their countries of origin included Nigeria, Ghana, Pakistan and Syria. I conducted these interviews over a period of five months. The interview questions were open-ended and I focused on the ways in which the refugees were affected by the Dublin regulation and their everyday modes of survival since the aim of the study was to examine the specificities of their struggles and activism. Several of the interviewees mentioned that they were striving for dignity and respect and I asked them to provide examples and explain their understandings of these concepts.

The ages of the interviewees ranged between 20 and 41 years. Some of the refugees and migrants had attained formal education in their home country. The migrants also differed in terms of their status in Germany. Some refugees had claimed asylum, others had chosen deliberately not to claim asylum, while others had claimed asylum and had their cases rejected and were facing deportation. Among the people I spoke with, nine refugees had not applied for asylum in Germany, eight refugees were in the asylum process and two refugees' asylum claims had been rejected.

I had spent much time in Berlin as a researcher and as an activist over a period of two years prior to conducting research on this specific project. Therefore, I had the opportunity to repeatedly meet several of the migrants and had established friendships, which I maintained through social media. There were other refugees whom I met for the first time with the specific purpose to conduct interviews. I met the people I interviewed in demonstrations, meetings, theatre performances, and at their respective *Heims* (refugee shelters). Thus the data are based on participant observation and interviews. I employed a snowball technique such that the refugees and asylum-seekers introduced me to people who had their fingerprints taken in bordering European countries. Participant observation formed a significant aspect of my methodology. I volunteered twice a week for five weeks with a group, which helped find temporary residence for homeless refugees. Volunteers and political activists from this group met refugees on a daily basis in the evenings for two hours at a public square, 'Oranienplatz' in Berlin, and arranged temporary accommodation in activists' and residents' private homes as well as in emergency shelters. In this context, I met several people who were affected by the Dublin regulation and held interviews and informal conversations with them. I attended public meetings, demonstrations, and discussion sessions followed by theatre and screening events. In these spaces, several individuals offered personal accounts of how the Dublin regulation had had an impact on them. I had further discussions with human rights lawyers as well as German activists in order to gain further clarification about the Dublin law. Finally, I consulted various reports and websites, which explained the law in accessible terminology. De Genova (2002) contends the need for scholarship related to undocumented immigrants and refugees to deploy ethnographic methods or other qualitative research techniques 'to elicit the perspectives and experiences of undocumented refugees themselves, or to evoke the kinds of densely descriptive and textured interpretive representations of everyday life that sociocultural anthropologists tend to relish'. Hence, by employing a qualitative and ethnographic methodology, this study aims to contribute to scholarship relating to refugees and migrants whose legal statuses are not clearly defined.

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### *Differentiated Status in Germany*

Refugees and migrants who arrived in Germany from the Southern European states had varied statuses, which shifted over a period of time. Consequently, their experiences within the EU states tended to differ over time. For example, the refugees and migrants who possessed 'Italian documents' decided to apply for asylum or simply tried to survive in Germany without asylum status. These refugees already had documents in one EU country and they understood that they would not be eligible to claim asylum in Germany. However, many of these refugees and migrants found themselves on the streets or in shelters. These refugees and migrants were allowed to travel within the Schengen states, but were not allowed to work outside the first EU member state that they had entered. Thus, once in Germany, the refugees and migrants experienced a shift in their legal status and lost their rights to work. For example, Fifi who came to Germany with 'Italian papers' decided not to apply for asylum in Germany. He told me, 'if I apply for asylum then most likely at the end of asylum they will tell me to return to Italy'. Alice Bloch et al. (2011) argue, 'people move in and out of different status - some enter in an irregular way, regularise their status through the asylum system and then become undocumented when their asylum case is refused' (p. 1294). In this context, the refugees' status changed not only because their asylum case was refused, but also because they moved from one EU member state to another.

There were multiple reasons why people decided not to reside in the first EU country they entered and decided to come to Germany. Several of the refugees stated that they were unable to survive the economic situation and live a life of dignity in countries such as Italy or Spain or Hungary since they were unable to find employment. They stated that they were not provided with accommodation facilities and were consequently left to survive on the streets. Nevertheless, they struggled to survive in the country where their status was compromised.

While some refugees decided not to claim asylum in Germany and get what they described as 'small small jobs', find shelter through some networks, and pay minimum rent in shared housing, there were others who decided to apply for asylum. However, in such circumstances, the German courts would eventually detect their fingerprints and they would receive a letter of rejection. In the letter, the court asked the applicant to provide reasons for making claims in a second European state given that they already had an asylum claim in a member state. For example, Asad had spent only a day in Italy, but was fingerprinted and thus became ineligible for asylum in a second country. Nevertheless, he claimed asylum in Germany, which was unsuccessful. Refugees and migrants who had arrived in Germany from EU states strove to negotiate their positions in different ways. Upon arriving in Germany, they were forced to make several life altering decisions. They needed to decide whether to claim asylum and risk deportation, but to have the opportunity to eventually regularise their status or to simply find work and shelter and remain in Germany with limited rights and irregular status. Upon rejection of their asylum cases, they needed to decide whether they should resist deportation or simply to agree to return to the first country. Thus, it becomes useful to examine migrants' activism through the lens of personhood as explained by several thinkers as the concept relates to autonomy,

reflexivity, moral agency and self-hood. The Dublin regulation affected refugees' and migrants' decision-making processes and subsequent actions in differing ways. Thus, because the law became instrumental in affecting their lives in differing ways, the refugees were compelled to resist and negotiate the law in differing and individual ways.

### *Migrants and Refugees without Asylum Claims*

The group of refugees and migrants who did not claim asylum needed to independently seek food, shelter and work, but these basic necessities were not always their end-goals since they spoke of attainment of dignity and humanity. The following sections demonstrate these different processes of struggles for basic rights and personhood.

#### *Seeking Housing, Health and Dignity*

Several of the refugees and migrants without asylum encountered housing problems. They arrived in smaller towns, but decided to move to Berlin to further their survival chances. Several refugees were forced to seek help from charity groups such as *Caritas*, but those who sought assistance from such groups did not understand this to be a long term-solution. The refugees realised that many of the people who lived in charity housing suffered from substance dependencies and mental health problems and the refugees and migrants who found themselves in the midst of such conflicts felt decidedly uncomfortable.

Sylvia of Nigerian origin who was forced to leave Libya with her two children for Italy recounted her situation. In Italy, she had worked as a hairdresser for several years. When the economy declined, she decided to come to Germany. When she came to Germany, she went to Caritas with her two children. However, she was only able to stay there for three days since she did not feel at ease there and ultimately became homeless. She realised that she could not possibly live on the streets because children were not permitted to reside on the streets. Fearing separation from her children, she sought help from activists. As she stated:

I went to Oranienplatz. I met some powerful women who were supporting refugees. They took me to the occupied school where I lived with my two kids. When I was there I participated in political actions and demonstrations until the day of the eviction.

Thus, many of the refugees who did not seek asylum tried to find support among German activists who helped organise temporary accommodation either in their private homes, shelters or spaces of activism. When they were unable to find spaces with residents in Berlin, the activists often sent them to emergency homeless shelters. However, the conditions in these shelters were very difficult. They were only allowed to stay overnight and were forced to leave early in the morning. Subsequently, they had to put in a fresh request for accommodation on the following day, travel back to the shelter, and pay an extra day of public transport fares. The refugees encountered

much racism from the authorities managing these shelters. The managers conveyed an unfriendly demeanour and often directed the people to apply for asylum – thus treating them with little dignity and respect. Many of the refugees found it difficult to reside in these shelters but did so because they had no options. As many of them stated, 'well we have to sleep somewhere...we cannot sleep on the streets'. The refugees and migrants spoke favourably of their experience in private accommodation since they believed that they were respected in such situations. However, such accommodation did not always help to provide a long-term solution. Many of them strove towards and succeeded in finding a shared housing situation over a longer period of time since sharing housing in this way seemingly restored their sense of dignity and personhood. As Skeggs demonstrates in her study that working class women 'spent enormous time attempting to attach value to themselves to defend against devaluation, through the performance of respectability' (p. 8). When refugees resisted living in inappropriate conditions and sought to find appropriate and respectable living spaces, they arguably resisted denigration, through their negotiations and strategies.

Several of the refugees stated that sharing living space with hosts in this manner allowed them to integrate into the wider society since the people whom they lived with provided them with a sense of inclusion. Yasir, who had resided and lived in Manchester, U.K. for six months and worked as a security guard, stated that he felt particularly comfortable in Berlin because 'people here include refugees in their daily lives and social activities'. He said that during his stay in Manchester,

'I realised that the city was very segregated and that the English people did not even enter into conversation with me let alone invite me into their houses to live with them. But even though it was easier to find work in England for me, I felt more comfortable in Berlin since it was a relatively more open city where I lived with German activists and also participated in local refugee struggles. I also believed I had a better chance of eventually gaining formal citizenship status in Germany and thereby I stood a better chance of acquiring social status within a wider society.

As Bosniak puts it, people need to strive for personhood because it is not automatically granted. The above accounts demonstrate that several of the refugees sought to acquire respect since the Dublin regulation denied their chances of living in better circumstances. Yasir derived his sense of self through participating in refugee struggles together with German activists and feeling part of society. The actual State ceases to be significant for him and it is his interactions with members of the larger society which he finds more valuable. Thus, refugees value and prioritise their struggles in individual ways – but they demonstrate evidence of autonomy, self-reflexivity and quests for dignity.

Several studies have defined migrant activism through forms of struggles, which focus on regularising their status within the State (Nyers, 2008). However, such struggles for personhood cannot be solely understood as struggles between the state and the migrants nor can these acts be understood to disrupt the habitus, because to seek appropriate housing and to make connections with the wider society is to

normalise one's life. Furthermore, actions of refugees and migrants under the Dublin law, need to be also regarded as individual contestations for personhood since it is this law, which makes it difficult for them to live a life of dignity. For example, Sylvia, who was initially staying at a refugee-occupied school, and who had not claimed asylum in Germany displayed much resistance. When the City Councillor of Kreuzberg did not provided her with an *Ausweis* (identification card), which would have allowed her to relocate to an assigned hostel or refugee *Heim* she contested this decision:

After much negotiation with the City Councillor, I approached his assistant security man and said, 'sir if Panhoff doesn't help me move from the school, then I will move into his house with my bag and my children. So then he will have to explain to his wife, how he knows a woman with two children?' In the end I had the card and was able to move to the *Heim* like the others.

Thus Sylvia struggled to live in dignity. She was homeless at one stage but she then managed to find shelter at an occupied school – which she found difficult to stay in because of constant police raids. Subsequently, she was able to move into refugee accommodation and became eligible to stay independently with her children. However, in the absence of Dublin law restrictions, she would have qualified to apply for housing in Germany upon arrival.

What is of significance here is that not all refugees and migrants resisted in a uniform manner but they all struggled for a life with dignity. They refused to stay in situations, which caused them distress and where their personhood remained threatened. For example, Sylvia participated in collective protests for a certain duration, but later she contested the Dublin legislation at an individual level, such that it enabled her to move forward with her particular case and she eventually obtained the rights to an individual apartment with her children. Similarly, for Yasir, maintaining his sense of self, gained priority over material concerns since he refused to continue to stay in Manchester even though he had a steady source of income there. For refugees, the notion of seeking shared housing in Berlin with activists needs to be understood as acts of preservation of dignity since they refused to stay without support on the streets of southern European states, which were affected in dire ways by the economic crisis. Rygiel (2011) recognises the ability of migrants to enact themselves as citizens by making claims to have presence within a social space, whether in the city proper, or in other global spaces, including that of the camp. However, arguably, for the refugees who formed part of this study, the state and citizenship had less significance in their everyday lives.

In addition to housing concerns, refugees and migrants did not have access to medical care unless it was an acute emergency. When they suffered ailments, they could only go to the *Apotheke* (pharmacy), describe their conditions to the pharmacist and hope to get the adequate medicine. In this regard, the refugees strove to access medicine on individual basis.

The refugees understood this situation as discriminatory since the 'citizens' with documents were eligible for health care. Although there was not an EU member state that specifically prohibited health care access, publicly subsidised care was not guaranteed across the region and undocumented immigrants were more likely to use

NGO clinics or emergency systems and were generally unable to pay medical fees (LeVoy and Geddie, 2010). In such situations, refugees and migrants who arrived from a first country – many of them with refugee status in the first EU member state – did not possess an EU health insurance card and thus depended on pharmacists or NGO clinics to provide them with the correct treatment.

Much scholarship has discussed how undocumented immigrants demonstrate the dire conditions they encounter when they lack formal status as their protection under international law is limited in a given state (e.g. LeVoy and Geddie, 2010; Bloch et al., 2011). Thus, the refugees and migrants had legal status in one EU member state, but needed to struggle for basic rights such as healthcare and housing, which they equated with a dignified way of life, in another EU state. As Omar stated, which echoed the voice of many refugees and immigrants, ‘we can only compare ourselves to Italians and Spanish who could elect to leave their own countries in favour of a better economic situation within the EU’. As Bosniak argues that undocumented immigrants experience diminished personhood because of stringent laws and border controls. The denial of health care to immigrants and refugees arriving from EU member States supports Bosniak’s constitutional construct that immigrants and refugees are treated ‘less than persons within the *pale*’. Nevertheless, despite the regulation, many individuals sought to access the healthcare system in differing ways.

### *Work and Personhood*

Refugees and migrants who came through EU member states struggled to find work since they were not permitted to work in an EU member state of their choice. The group of refugees and migrants who had not sought asylum struggled to sustain themselves. They were pushed into what they called ‘black’, ‘light’ or ‘small small jobs’. The refugees and migrants often equated work with dignity. For example, Fifi expressed his thoughts to me in the following way:

I wake up in the middle of the night and ask why can't I find work? Why am I not allowed to work here? I don't do marijuana. I don't do crimes. Because of paper I cannot work. Because of paper I cannot get my life together. This is not peace in the world. I'm here because I'm in danger. And then people look at us in a bad way because we don't have much work.

Akbar told me that when he arrived in Germany, he immediately found work doing construction work. He gave the following account:

When I find work I see that people exploit me. Some pay me. Some don't. Simply because my papers are not valid here. I can work in Italy, but in Italy there is no work. I put leaflets into people's letterboxes and they employ me for 30 Euros per day. After that I started construction work. I get 5 Euros per hour and make about 40 to 50 Euros a day. But I used to give to charity when I lived in Pakistan. I do not have the same standard of living in Europe.

Thus the above accounts demonstrate that refugees who had arrived from other EU member states struggled to find work. They believed that the economy in Germany was stronger than in Italy. Thus, the accounts and experiences demonstrate that the refugees' and migrants' persistent endeavours to find work needs to be understood in terms of individual material struggles as well as their struggles to be counted as a person when it was the law that threatened their dignity and respectability (Bosniak, 2011). In this connection, it was the Dublin law, which prohibited refugees and migrants from attaining formal work status. The refugees who could not apply for asylum in the affluent European state were saddled with low-paid precarious work. Consequently, rather than granting value to migrants, the Dublin regulation helped facilitate a richer western EU member state obtain cheap and flexible labour.

### *Asylum Applicants and the Dublin Law*

Despite the Dublin law, migrants and refugees had decided to apply for asylum. Their positions differed somewhat from that of the people who did not apply for asylum. They did not immediately need to find work and shelter and resided in refugee accommodation and received state benefits.

Unlike the people who had not applied for asylum, the asylum-seekers had access to shelter, food, and healthcare, but many people elected to work. The policies with respect to right to work for asylum-seekers were rather complex and many asylum-seekers could not work or find *Ausbildung* (apprenticeships). Thus, Bosniak's argument that it is the State which constrains personhood through its' enforcement of particular laws becomes valid. For example, Aslam explained,

you very well know the situation of Pakistan, there is no electricity, there is the constant danger of bomb blasts, one doesn't even know when a person steps out of the house that he or she would be able to return home or die on the streets. And so I really need to work, live a dignified life and send money home. That is all I wish.

Munir, an asylum-seeker, who had his fingerprints recorded in the Italian embassy in Mozambique when he applied for a Schengen visa and who came to Germany after spending some time in Italy stated that he tried to put meaning in his life by selling flowers at the weekends in Berlin. He gave the following account:

I know that I am not allowed to work here. But it's like my own business. I am selling flowers. It's enjoyable work. My headache declines. And I am not hurting anyone else in the process. I meet people in this way. I get to chat to people. I feel chilled out then. The atmosphere changes. If I don't work then I think that I would go crazy in this way. Sometimes I go to Club SO36 in Kreuzberg to sell flowers. It's a very welcoming club and they play all kinds of music there. I really enjoy the atmosphere there. So I just want to work in the way that normal people work. I want to pay taxes to the German State.

These accounts demonstrate that asylum-seekers struggled for fuller membership in the wider society, but at the same time their actions could not be understood as overt and collective resistance to State power. The State held minimum significance for these refugees, who were focused on their individual needs, which in some instances extended beyond acquisition of material gains. For Munir, it was not sufficient that he had a place to reside – his aim was to integrate and gain respect in the wider society through work and paying taxes. In this regard, even refugees and migrants, who had some legal status in Germany, desired respect vis-à-vis employment since the notion of work was tied to dignity and personhood. Scholarship has understood refugees' resistance claims for rights as political ruptures (Nyers, 2008). However, there has been less understanding of actions, which can be regarded as refugees' struggles for an improved self. Munir's act of selling flowers cannot be understood solely an act of citizenship since he did not aim to participate in a wider polity, nor did he aim to shift laws which denied basic working rights to individuals affected by the Dublin policy at a collective level.

### *Resisting Deportation and Rights*

Following a period of six months, from the time of their deportation proceedings or the expiration of their visa, an asylum-seeker with fingerprints in another EU member state could not be deported from Germany and could become eligible to apply for permanent asylum if they managed to stay in the second country. However, in the first six months many refugees and migrants experience the ever present threat of deportation, thus 'diminishing their sense of personhood' (Bosniak, 2011).

Many asylum-seekers contested the Dublin regulation individually by resisting deportation. In several instances, refugees were taken to an airport and put on a plane. In such situations, they often refused to board the plane because they knew that ultimately the pilot made the final decision about refugees' flight out of the country. As Michael from Cameroon, told me that at the airport he simply refused to board the plane. He gave the following account:

I told them, 'I am not here to leave Germany but I am here to find a solution'. The flight was ready, but I said I don't want to go up. I simply refused and they couldn't use force. I then explained to them about the difficult situation in Cameroon. So, I came back to the *Heim*. But no one has come back for me yet. Then the police told me that I needed to come back again. Many people then advised me to leave the *Heim*, but I continued to stay there letting everyone know that I would not run. I said, 'I am not a thief so why should I hide or run? I will just wait here till Dublin is finished for me. If I can stay here for six months then I don't have to go back'.

Michael's refusal to get on board can be understood as an act of resistance against injustice. Walters (2015) understands resistance located within commercial vehicles as 'viapolitics', arguing that acts of struggle within vehicles and their routes will continue as long as regimes of migration control continue. Thus, Michael's anti-deportation resistance could be understood in political terms – against the conditions of the

Dublin regulation and against regimes and migration policies. However, Michael did not participate in any collective action. He continued to strive for his dignity by continuing to stay at the *Heim* since he refused to be criminalised for his particular actions.

While some asylum-seekers resisted deportation at airports, there were others who simply tried to find networks, which helped them survive the six-month period. There were many who decided to resist deportation by leaving their *Heim* following a deportation notification. Ali who had arrived from Malta resisted his deportation by taking a train from Gissen to Berlin. Since he had participated in some of the refugee mobilisation in Berlin for a year, he had established networks in Berlin. When he received his letter notifying him about his deportation proceedings, he contacted these networks and found a room in privately shared accommodation. He explained, 'I stay in a small room which I share with three women. I come to Kotti Café every evening, talk to people and drink ginger and mint tea, which helps me. I don't smoke much anymore'. Similarly, Osman upon receiving a letter rejecting his asylum case immediately left his *Heim*, met German activists and requested accommodation in a private house. He received some assistance in this regard for a week and ultimately decided to return to Italy to renew his documents. There were several refugees with documents from Italy who followed a similar procedure, ensuring that their Italian documents would remain valid while they tried to carve out a living in Germany. In this regard, many would travel back and forth between Italy and Germany three to four times a year. Taylor explains personhood in terms of moral agency and contends that people select from a range of options to live their lives because they experience affective responses. Refugees and migrants who protest against deportations as described in the above accounts enacted moral agency since they refused to experience the moral consequences of deportation and elected to survive in extremely difficult circumstances. For example, Ali of Pakistani origin resisted deportation to Austria by deciding to come to Berlin, finding some networks, and participating in various political actions and demonstrations with refugee activists. Ali's fingerprints were recorded in Austria. However, he decided to apply for asylum in Germany. Unhappy with his living conditions in his refugee accommodation and fearing deportation following the rejection of his asylum application, he ultimately found residence in a former squat house in Berlin and lived in a community with German citizens. He stated his plan was to stay there for six months and then to reapply for asylum. In the meantime, he also worked 'black jobs' and managed to survive economically.

Zainab a woman who arrived with her family from Syria through Hungary at the time when the Dublin regulation applied to Syrians became ineligible to apply for a second time in Germany. However, she managed to receive church asylum for six months, which was also very difficult to obtain since there were very few churches, which actually did offer church asylum in Germany. Zainab explained that she had stayed under church protection under very difficult conditions. She was not allowed to leave the premises as and when she wished, was not allowed visitors, and thus suffered much isolation during this process. She was informed that the consequence of leaving the church grounds would result in police arrests followed by deportation to Hungary. She pointed out that she had little choice since the option was to either to be deported

to Hungary and to face detention for illegally leaving and entering the country or to remain within the grounds of the church and ultimately 'get out of Dublin'. Zainab chose the latter option and selected church sanctuary.

These accounts demonstrate that many asylum-seekers whose cases were rejected found differing ways to tide over the six-month period to 'get out of Dublin'. Their accounts show that they resisted against deportations from Germany in fragmented ways. Although many of the asylum-seekers tended to 'act' upon receipt of the letters informing them about their deportation proceeding or questioning them about the validity application, they had managed to form social networks through collective activism prior to the receipt of these letters. It is these social networks that helped them with struggles for their rights. Thus, refugees' collective agency and actions must not be entirely disregarded, but at the same time individual and differentiated resistance for their rights and personhood need recognition. Their acts demonstrate that they all struggled for personhood since they refused to be deported and in the process resisted being criminalised, isolated, or being left without resources and means.

### *Collective Actions and Personhood*

In addition to individual ways of resistance refugees participated in collective actions. These acts could be understood to be relatively overtly political and the people who participated in demonstrations were concerned about changes in laws, which put them in difficult positions. However, at the same time these refugees had concerns about being counted as a person and for equal respect. For example, after receiving the rejection letter from the German courts, Ismael joined a protest bus tour and the protest tent group in Berlin with the aim to contest the asylum-policy in Germany. However, within 18 months, the tents were dismantled and many of the refugees who were affected by the Dublin law were then allowed to stay temporarily in a hostel, but then they received eviction letters within six months of their relocation. Included in this group were some migrants and refugees who had arrived in Berlin directly from another EU member state. Although there were several political actions against the evictions, they did not succeed. Finally, several refugees occupied a church and ultimately received church protection. They received church sanctuary after members of the church and the refugees entered into a prolonged and deliberate discussion concerning the topic of accommodation. For more than six months this church group has been providing refugees with accommodation in the church's meeting offices as well as in various community housing projects. However, it was not an easy task. The 120 refugees were forced to relocate constantly between offices in churches and community housing. The refugees additionally received 5 Euros per day. Ismael like many other refugees ultimately became involved in a series of political actions. Even after receiving church accommodation, some of the refugees organised a 'We are still here...' demonstration in May 2015, and an arch symbolising the boat on the Mediterranean Sea was carried on the demonstration route. Ismael commented that he was happy to see many black people participate in the demonstration, 'because this demonstration is about refugees and if a demonstration is dominated by Europeans, then people ask where are the refugees'.

What is significant here is that even at a collective level, the refugees were very focused on individual concerns such as housing and their presence. The refugees resisted sleeping on the streets or to be deported to the first country where they would potentially encounter ill conditions. In this regard, their collective actions must also be understood as claims to personhood and dignity. Linda Bosniak raises the following point: 'The very fact that undocumented are *here* in itself entitles them to significant constitutional rights and recognition. The territoriality principle accords legal and ethical significance to 'hereness', appropriately focusing on the social fact of *a person's* presence rather than on the legal formality of status to anchor basic constitutional recognition' (p. 211). Thus, the demonstration with the banners and the symbolic arch demonstrated refugees' individual presence in Berlin in addition to their struggles for constitutional recognition.

There were also groups of refugees from Lampedusa, who were involved in self-mobilisation. These groups, 'Lampedusa in Berlin' and 'Lampedusa in Hamburg' collectively demanded recognition of their refugee status, the right to work and residence in Germany. With support from activists, they organised public meetings and protests. However, at the same time, apart from such collective actions, individual refugees who formed part of this group went to several church groups, theatre discussions and student organisations in Universities where they raised awareness about the Dublin regulation. They aimed to counter the adverse messages about refugees and asylum-seekers in the mainstream media. Nadir pointed out that it was important for him to speak to people directly rather than to the media:

We know who we are and the media do not. And people can respond directly. For example, this young school student aged thirteen was asking very intelligent questions. They told me that we are all equal and that not all people are bad. Many of these children are German citizens who have fathers and mothers from different countries such as Turkey so they also understand the situation.

Thus refugees and asylum-seekers self-mobilised in differentiated ways, because they participated in public spaces, public gatherings and theatre. Actions undertaken by refugees and migrants affected by Dublin regulation remained fragmented because the law affected them in varying ways and their strategies led to different results. In this regard, they were compelled to act in differing ways. Some refugees and migrants were more dependent on their social networks while others acted more independently, but nevertheless the accounts demonstrated that many strove for a sense of self and conveyed moral agency.

### *Concluding Comments*

Drawing on the concept of personhood as expressed by several scholars and Bosniak's idea that there is no guarantee of personhood for undocumented immigrants in the *pale* this study has shown that for many refugees and migrants affected by the Dublin law, personhood remained at stake. Scholars of refugee and migrant activism contend that migrants collectively contest wide-ranging issues such as State power, borders, and citizenship status (e.g. De Genova, 2013; Nyers, 2008; Chimienti and Solomos, 2011; Galvez, 2010). Several scholars have argued that it is through their collective activism and contestations of their spaces that non-citizens

enact citizenship (Rygeil, 2011). The refugees who had entered through European Union member states such as Italy, Hungary and Spain and had decided to relocate to their preferred EU State such as Germany, decided to stay and respond to the restrictions imposed by the Dublin law in individual and varied ways. Several refugees participated in political actions, theatre groups, community events and discussion sessions with the hope of bringing change in the asylum laws and policies thus depicting moral agency. Many refugees aimed to negotiate the law at an individual level and focused on attainment of personhood and dignity. In this way, refugee activism cannot always be understood in terms of struggles for rights to citizenship and contestations of border regimes and power, but rather their actions need to be understood inclusive of, and for personhood. In this regard, non-citizens' migrant activism needs reconsideration since the laws do not only deny them access to formal citizenship but rather to a host of basic rights that are connected to an individual's sense of self and well-being. Struggles for citizenship may need reworking since personhood in many instances may overshadow broader concerns of migrants' formal citizenship and border contestations such that the latter, though significant, may not be as urgent.

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Practicing Willkommenskultur: Migration and  
Solidarity in Germany

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### Abstract

During the ‘long summer of migration’ (Kasperek and Speer, 2015) a set of collective practices of solidarity with refugees in many European cities became (gradually) coined in public discourse as a ‘culture of welcome’. This article focuses on the volunteers in Germany who created structures out of the first spontaneous practices by building so-called welcome initiatives. Based on empirical research about these initiatives in Germany we share our first reflections about the attitudes toward migration policies, right-wing protests and the notion of integration held by these volunteers in order to illustrate what they think of the society of migration and its potential chances and conflicts.

*Keywords:* migration, solidarity, civil society, Germany, welcome culture, ‘Willkommenskultur’.

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## *1. The Culture of Welcome - a Paradigm Shift?*

The editors of a recent publication about the welcome culture speak of a paradigm shift (Szukitsch et al., 2014: 11). German society, they claim, is moving away from the imperative of integration (Hess et al., 2009), which focuses on migration and migrants as problematic for the rest of society, towards a perspective which monitors the capability of institutions and society to open up to immigration and migrants. Ideally, this involves a move away from framing migrants as deficient subjects who lack certain qualities necessary for adapting to the host society to a culture of claiming rights and equal opportunities for migrants.

Through a process of incorporating a cautious consideration of the history of migration and discrimination in Germany, Friedrich Heckmann identifies four levels of a welcome culture: the individual, interpersonal relations, organizations/institutions, and society as a whole.

On the personal level, a welcome culture means, according to Heckmann (2012: 13), having a preferably unprejudiced attitude towards people from another group. On the level of institutions and organizations, it is necessary to evaluate whether there exist regulations that foster discrimination. Finally, on the societal level it includes the existence of opening and welcoming practices towards new members. In order to become a welcoming culture, society must fundamentally acknowledge society itself as a 'society of immigration'. Heckmann highlights that one important component of a successful welcoming culture is the space it gives to immigrating cultures (Heckmann, 2012: 14-15).

## *2. An Empirical Approach*

In this paper we present an analysis based on empirical data about volunteering for refugees which has been under collection since 2014. The analysis is largely based on three datasets. The first two originate from online surveys that were conducted among volunteers. The third dataset was collected among volunteering and professional coordinators. The first survey was conducted in 2014 with 466 volunteers and 79 representatives of organizations in the field of refugee work, while the second survey was conducted one year later, with 2291 volunteers. Both of them were carried out online. Because according to representative survey data on volunteering in Germany the number of volunteers who dealt with migrants from 2009 onwards was so small (0,72 per cent) (FSW, 2009), it would have required considerable effort to reach out to a significant number of them, which was beyond our capacity. However, there is some plausible evidence that indicates that the rise in the number of participants between the first (EFA 1) and the second survey (EFA 2) can be explained by volunteers newly mobilized in 2015 (respondents in both surveys were asked to state the year in which they had started participating). Another way of controlling the quality of the sample is to compare the results with the first (and so far the only) similar study based on a random sample. The Social Sciences Institute of the Evangelical Church undertook one survey in December, 2015 which shows that during the fall of 2015 more than 10,9 per cent of Germans older than 14 years had volunteered to help refugees (Ahrens, 2015). The survey was repeated six months later, remarkably

showing that the rate of volunteers had not dropped. The EFA surveys, which were conducted by Karakayali and Kleist, do not claim to provide estimations about the share of individuals who volunteered in relation to the general population. Instead, they rather estimate the distribution of activities and attitudes within the volunteering population itself. The data published by the Evangelical Church Institute appear to support these estimates because the relative share of certain types of activities – such as accompanying refugees in their visits to authorities, or language courses – are quite similar (Ahrens, 2015; Ahrens, 2016; Karakayali and Kleist, 2016).

The third and the most recent set of data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with coordinators of volunteering activities (mostly volunteers themselves) in 30 communities throughout Germany. The semi-structured interviews took place in the first months of 2016, when media coverage about refugees had changed into a stream of negative images and the notion of a welcome culture had almost disappeared from the public scene.

In our analysis we focus on three aspects to explore the political dimensions of the volunteering movement for refugees that emerged across Germany during the summer of 2015. These are, first, volunteers' attitudes towards asylum law and how this relates to consequences for their clients. Second, we address the notion of integration by looking at who is considered responsible by volunteers for the task of integrating refugees. Third, we study volunteers' experiences with right-wing activities or anti-refugee protests in the regions where their volunteer activism took place.

Data collection is based on a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data from two surveys provided general information about socio-demographic composition, types of activities and attitudes of volunteers. The combination of data from two subsequent surveys was particularly useful for identifying changes in the volunteering movement which we not only attribute to the events of summer 2015, but simultaneously develop further research questions about. These ideas were then employed in the qualitative phase, for which a semi-structured questionnaire was composed, comprising of four sections. Questions addressed were: 1) the founding moment of the initiatives, 2) the organizational structures the initiatives had resulted in, 3) the challenges they faced, and 4) the future and continuity of their work. Related interviews were conducted with three different kinds of coordinators of volunteering work: coordinators who were volunteers themselves, those who worked for local governments, and coordinators who were professionals in established NGOs. We undertook 25 interviews in cities of different size, location and socio-economic status, while most of the selected locations also have different histories of immigration.

The interviews were transcribed and coded according to Mayring's Qualitative Content Analysis (2000). In this article, we examine answers from the first, the third and the fourth sections of the interviews. The content we describe is thus partially a result of the semi-structured format itself which asked participants to react to certain topics without suggesting any particular direction. For instance, when we asked respondents about how their initiative had emerged, a considerable number of interviewees started to talk about a rise in hostility towards migrants in their city, which they had managed to turn into welcoming attitudes. For this article, we also focus on those interviewees (the majority of our sample) who talked about having negative experiences with administrative offices and the Foreigners' Registration Office. These

experiences also provide a more comprehensive picture about volunteer work and an explanation for some of the results from the two surveys about volunteers' motives (including in what sense they consider their work to be political). Additionally, we reflect on their understanding of 'integration' - a concept that was voiced during the interviews, but did not seem to play an important role according to the surveys. The notion of integration was brought up by the interviewees themselves and elaborated in a variety of ways. For the purpose of this article, which is to study and explore the pro-migration attitudes of volunteers, these topics can be considered plausible operational frames, insofar as they shed light on volunteers' views about a 'society of migration'. However, in order to contextualize how 'welcome initiatives' relate to the notion of a society of migration, it is first necessary to provide some historical background about contemporary migration in Germany.

### *3. A Brief History of Contemporary Migration in Germany (after 1945)*

Contemporary immigration, in the conventional sense, started after a recruitment program for bringing guest workers and their families to Germany (and all over Europe) ended in around 1973. Although German authorities tried to restrict the settlement of immigrants, their attempts were largely futile due to intervention from the constitutional court. While in practice immigration continued to take place, there was no political consensus about Germany being a country of immigration. It was only at the end of the 1990s, almost a decade after the end of confrontation with the Eastern Bloc and German reunification, when the new government announced that Germany was actually a country of immigration (1998). Meanwhile, it was around that time that Federal German institutions employed the term integration at governance level.

At the same time, patterns of migration also started to change. Due to the enlargement of the European Union and the Schengen Agreement, which grants free movement within the borders of the EU, new member states like Poland became the main source of labor migration. Migration became normalized within Europe due to EU treaties and now EU citizens have obtained equal rights in almost all realms. However, this did not stop public debates from problematizing migration, just as occurred in Britain recently where part of the Brexit campaign was built around the stereotypical figure of the 'Polish Plumber' (which already has an equivalent in France: the 'Plombier Polonaise').

It is noteworthy that the enforcement of the current situation (in which Europe has sought to protect its borders since the 1990s as a result of the Schengen Agreement and the Dublin Regulation - which can be seen as an attempt to keep those who manage to arrive in Europe inside peripheral states such as Greece and Italy) is mainly the result of Germany's influence. The Dublin Regulation can in fact be considered a form of Europeanization of the measures that were taken during the reform of the asylum-related content in the German constitution in 1992. After its first 'refugee crisis' in the 1990s, when around 400,000 Yugoslavian refugees arrived in Germany, the parliament voted to add a paragraph to the constitution according to which asylum seekers could only apply for asylum when they had not crossed a safe country on their way to Germany. This reference to safe countries in the regulation is

the principle by which main destination states such as France, and predominantly Germany, have established a *cordon sanitaire* both within and outside the borders of the European Union. While Germany may appear to be the most migration-friendly country in Europe (especially since the summer of 2015), it did not have this reputation earlier when it came to refugee policy.

Politically, although Germany came to terms with its historical flows of immigration in around 2000, it still has no proper migration law.<sup>1</sup> Entry requirements for potential migrants are designed in such a way that only highly qualified individuals, whose incomes are higher than average, are actually able to successfully immigrate. This is partly the result of a political impasse, to which trade unions also have contributed in their attempt to prevent a decline in average wages.

In conclusion, this is the background environment in which the term ‘welcome culture’ became prominent in the German context – years before the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ actually took place. The failure of immigration law to attract foreign labor and increasing concern about demographics and a shrinking German population led to demand for a reform of the labor laws, predominantly by economists and employers’ associations. Thus, the term ‘welcome culture’ was largely introduced to the German debate by organizations such as the VDI (Verein deutscher Ingenieure; Association of German engineers) and the BDA (Bund Deutscher Arbeitgeber; Federation of German Employers), and the political parties CDU (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands; Christian Democratic Union of Germany) and the FDP (Freie Demokraten Partei; Free Democratic Party). It is striking that the term is often mentioned only in connection with the recruitment of specialists. The demand for a broader welcome culture which would encompass the existing population with a migration-related background or refugees did not exist when this specific term first emerged. In other words, the demand for a welcome culture seems to be a consequence of negative experiences with the so-called ‘green card’ model and bureaucratic obstacles in Germany. As a result, the question now becomes whether the unconditional engagement of refugee-assisting volunteers is reformulating the notion of a ‘welcome culture’ in a less utilitarian sense.

#### ***4. The Event – the ‘Long Summer of Migration’***

The willingness to deal with refugee issues in 2015 that parts of the German establishment shared is not entirely surprising. Some of the economic elite consider migration to be a strategy for labor recruitment and beneficial to the economy for three reasons: 1) the lack of qualified workers in certain segments of the German economy, 2) the need to increase the profitability of some sectors through exploiting migrant labor, and 3) the fact that immigration could help counter the long-term shortage of labor caused by the demographic recession (Georgi, 2016). The chairman of Daimler AG, Dieter Zetsche, for example, immediately claimed that refugees “could trigger a new economic miracle” after the opening of the border (Spiegel

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<sup>1</sup> The “Zuwanderungsgesetz” law is not much more than a reformed version of the previous “Foreigners’ law” (Ausländergesetz).

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Online, 2015).<sup>2</sup> It is therefore also not surprising that scholars of migration are associating the term ‘welcoming culture’ with utilitarian aspects of German migration politics. Mariá do mar Castro Varela (2014), for instance, is reminded by the gesture of greeting guests that throughout history German society has treated migration movements as a source of labor that has no effect on society. She underscores the fact that both economic migrants from Turkey and from other countries in southern Europe were framed temporarily using the term ‘guest workers’. The author identifies similar lines of discourse in the current debate about welcoming refugees, as it is often framed in terms of what economic benefits they provide.

Nevertheless, the recent boom in groups of German citizens who seek to show solidarity with refugees has gained international attention mainly because of its magnitude. On the very surface the need to address a number of practical problems creates the ground for the current solidarity movement. The search for new accommodation facilities, the establishment of emergency facilities and the increase in the distribution of asylum seekers to smaller municipalities (where the presence of refugees was to many a novelty) led to very different reactions. In many cases citizens reacted angrily and in some cases even with racist protests and riots. However, Germany also witnessed the unprecedented willingness to help of local residents, an increase in interest in volunteering at organizations which assist refugees, and the involvement of citizens in innumerable new initiatives designed to offer a variety of support to new asylum seekers.

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that this rise in support did not come from nowhere. Even during the First World War volunteer relief organizations existed to help refugees fleeing from the German army. During and after the Second World War, when Europe was a ‘continent of refugees,’ displaced persons could not have been helped without the support of volunteers. In Germany after the Second World War, despite prevailing skepticism, displaced persons and refugees obtained a wide range of support from relief organizations and volunteers. After the arrival of Vietnamese refugees in West Germany in the late 1970s, many Germans gave practical and financial assistance to the so-called ‘boat people’. In the 1990s, many voluntary aid organizations emerged to support refugees from the Balkans and elsewhere. They also evolved in response to racist attacks on asylum-seekers which resulted in many deaths and created an increasingly hostile political atmosphere. This atmosphere further led to the reform of asylum procedures in 1993, which was allegedly implemented to solve the political crisis that had arisen around these events. The current refugee solidarity movement in many ways is an outcome of the experience and the general social knowledge of these grassroots organizations and parochial networks of solidarity (Mehlhase, 1999; Dünnwald, 2006; Kühne and Hüßler, 2000).

In contrast to this, for many political and academic observers the temporarily hegemonic atmosphere of welcome in 2015 came as a surprise. Every major political

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<sup>2</sup> The Term “economic miracle” (“Wirtschaftswunder”) has mythical connotations as it is commonly used to refer to a phase of economic growth after the Second World War. (Werner, 2004) In fact, contemporary sociologists such as Helmut Schelsky suggested in the 1960s that the wave of German post-war refugees – seen as a flexible and mobile workforce – were partly responsible for this process.

party, trade union, company, all kinds of associations and the media joined in the welcoming campaign (even the populist and rather right-leaning tabloid “BILD”). The events themselves, and the positive attitude of the government and mainstream media together mainstreamed the movement that already existed.

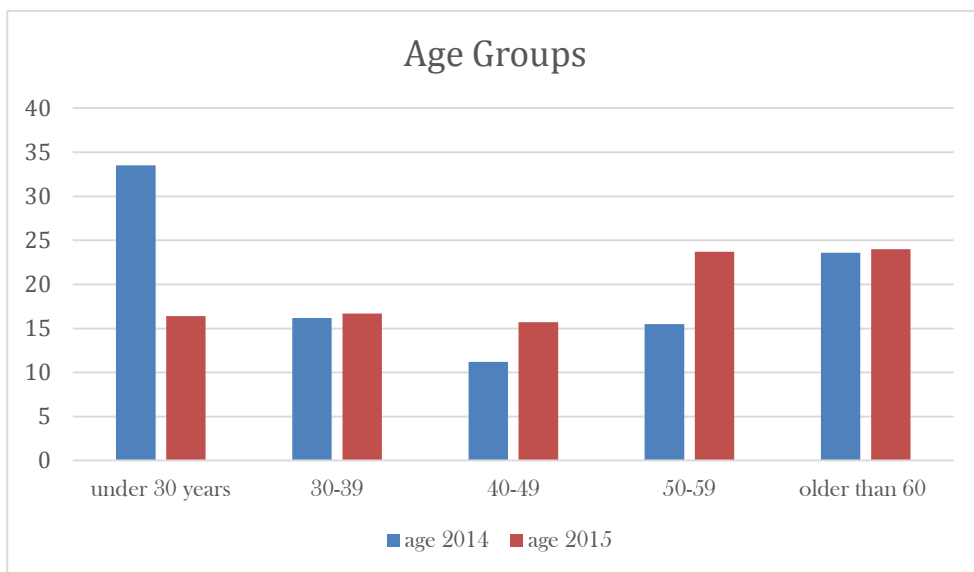


**Graphic 1.** Screenshot of a “BILD” newspaper supplement in Arabic welcoming refugees to Berlin.

Moreover, not only did institutions and the political establishment respond in such a way, but millions of Germans went to train stations, shelters and other places where refugees were arriving. Some volunteers from Southern Germany and Austria even went directly to Hungary or Croatia to pick up refugees during the ‘long summer of migration’ (Kasperek and Speer, 2015; Misik, 2015). But, as already mentioned, this atmosphere of welcome did not come ‘out of nowhere’. A survey from 2014 (Karakayali and Kleist, 2015) shows that, according to the employees of organizations in this field, volunteers had already increased in number from 2011 by around 70 per cent (Karakayali and Kleist, 2015). Almost parallel to this increase, the number of asylum seekers continued to rise (after 2008). We assume that this new interest in volunteering was piqued in relation to the historically low number of asylum seekers: In 2007, only 20,000 people applied for asylum in Germany, the lowest number for decades. Younger people in particular have not been confronted with the situations and struggles of refugees in their lifetimes, which may explain the high percentage of younger people engaged in the early movement. When asked when they started becoming interested in the subject of refugees and asylum, only 30-40 per cent of those above 30 years of age said 2011 (the year that the Syrian civil war erupted), while 65 per cent of younger individuals picked that year.

### *5. The Transformation of the Volunteer Movement and its Attitudes towards the Asylum Law*

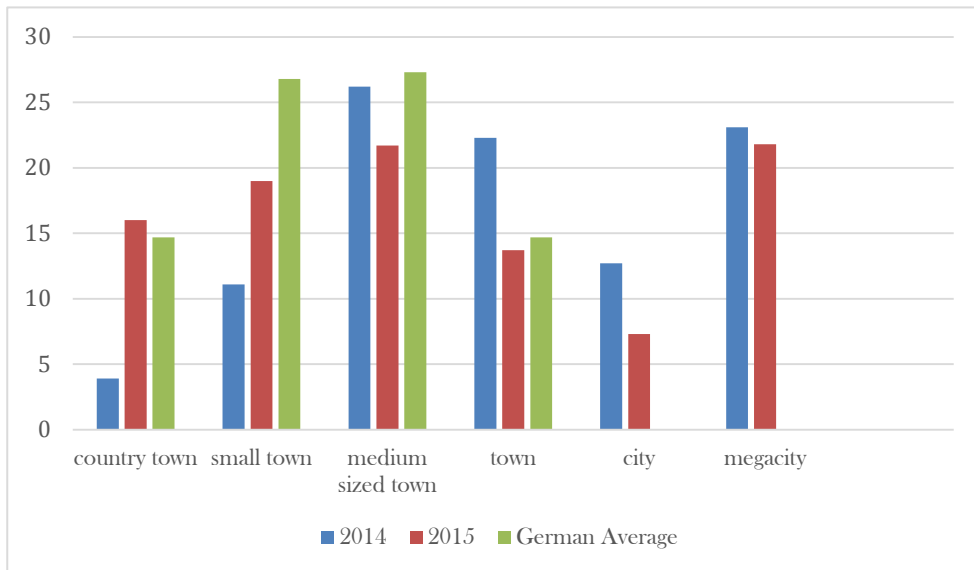
With the massive mobilization of volunteers in August and September 2015, mainly triggered by the media coverage and the government's initial reaction, the composition of the volunteer movement changed almost overnight. Data from a second survey among volunteers (Karakayali and Kleist, 2016) conducted before the end of 2015 (n=2,293) suggests that the composition of the volunteers had changed with regard to age, occupation and the size of the town in which they were active. For example, the relative share of younger volunteers had declined from almost 30 per cent to around 16 per cent, whereas the relative share of people older than 40 had increased (see Chart 1).



**Chart 1.**

The proportion of volunteers in country towns is especially striking (see Chart 2), having quadrupled from nearly 4 per cent to 16 per cent. The increase in the proportion of volunteers in smaller towns also increased from 11.1 to 19 per cent. With the exception of the metropolis, the share of volunteers in larger cities decreased. This is an interesting development, not only in terms of the normalization of the movement (since the majority of Germans live in mid-size and smaller towns), but also with regard to the likelihood of such engagement because the populations of non-urban environments usually tend to be less migration-friendly.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Some of the volunteers in the east of Germany may be non-native themselves, especially since Berliners move to the countryside for numerous reasons. For example, in an interview with a group of volunteers for a new (ongoing) research project in the region of Brandenburg participants identified themselves as

*Chart 2.*

While these numbers could be interpreted as evidence of the mobilization of completely new sections of the population and ‘refugee solidarity’, another item from this survey suggests that this claim should be treated cautiously. When asked whether helping refugees was ‘important’ in their social environment, half of all respondents answered that their environment was already refugee-friendly. With slight differences according to the size of settlement (a more pro-refugee environment in middle-sized cities, less in country towns), this creates an interesting picture and demonstrates to what extent the new engagement may really be considered ‘mainstreaming’. The observation holds for both volunteers who were involved for a longer period of time, and those who only become active in 2015. Thus, rather than mobilizing a group of citizens being entirely indifferent to the cause of refugees and migrants, the events of 2015 seem to have triggered a shift from passivity to activity.<sup>4</sup>

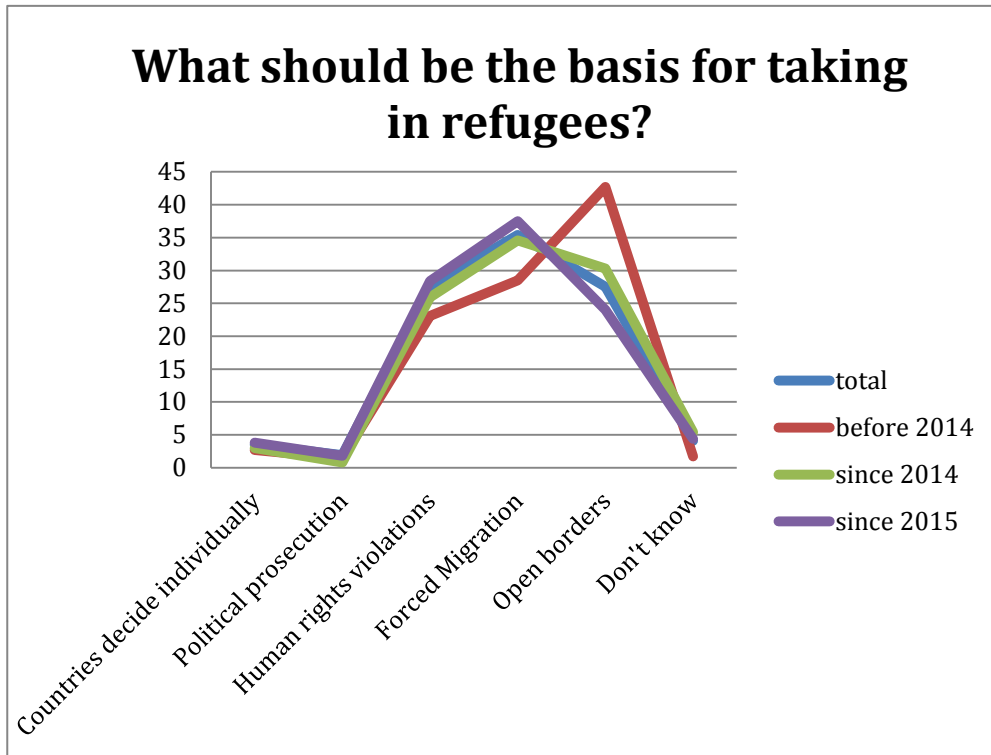
But this larger group is not homogeneous with regard to their ideological or political views. One of the indicators of the ways volunteers frame their activities in political terms is their understanding of the legitimacy of migration. In the most recent survey (Karakayali and Kleist, 2016) participants were asked to identify the grounds according to which refugees could be legitimately ‘taken in’. We consider the answer to this question to be an indicator of the relative distance of volunteers from the

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‘West Germans’, attributing the hostile attitudes of the majority in the village to their ‘East German’ heritage. However, there are many groups of volunteers from eastern Germany as well.

<sup>4</sup> We tested the assumption that social environments are an indicator of the political positions of volunteers by examining the correlation between the social environment and a specifically political question (by asking questions such as ‘under what conditions should refugees be accepted?’). While only a few volunteers answered that supporting refugees was regarded as important in their social environment, many of them agreed with the statement that countries should have the right to decide themselves which sort of migrants they agree to accept.

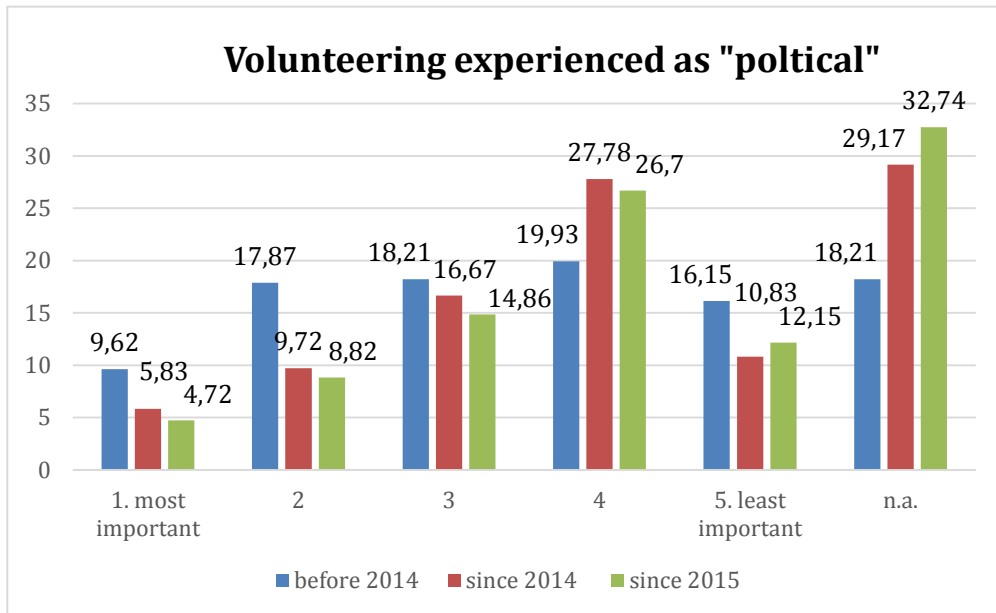
political movement of refugee solidarity, since fully accepting refugees is clearly much more controversial than engaging in most conventional volunteer activities. Although in many regards the most recent cohort of volunteers does not appear to be differentiated, there are slight variations in their attitudes. The majority of volunteers have very extensive ideas about asylum, but they still only ‘conditionally’ accept immigrants. Findings suggest that the relatively small share of volunteers who would agree to ‘unconditionally’ accept refugees and the demand for ‘open borders’ has significantly declined since the rise in participation of 2014.



**Chart 3.**

Only 25 per cent of newcomers support the notion of ‘open borders’, whereas more than 40 per cent of older activists share a worldview associated with the ‘no border movement’. Support for open borders is a very particular claim that is only voiced by a tiny minority of the political spectrum. From this data, the question whether volunteering can be seen as a political activity *per se* cannot be answered in a clear-cut way. Concerning the question of the legitimacy of refugee migration, it is noteworthy that the majority of volunteers today understand migrants through the rather generic notion of ‘forced migration’ which is not a legal but a moral concept. The notion of ‘being forced’ contrasts with the currently dominant humanitarian disposition towards migration in which migrant agency can only be framed and conceived of as ‘economic’ or utilitarian (Vis and Goriunovaet, 2015). This broader definition is more open as it does not define particular criteria (although it may include ‘economic’ reasons) and because it is conditional concerning the motivation of migrants. There is evidence that

this generic notion is correlated to having an ‘apolitical’ attitude. Moreover, newcomers more often describe their engagement as apolitical (see Chart 4).



*Chart 4.*

## 6. 'Integration' as a Common Challenge

Against this background, we explore how volunteers' activities can be analyzed with regard to these different levels of sociality. In general, the role volunteers play in German society goes far beyond facultative engagement and offers additional opportunities of encounter for both refugees and residents. In many cases the volunteer groups tend to use the basic tools of access to society, such as offering German language courses, organizing transport in rural areas and opportunities for work, and so on.

While 40 per cent of all volunteers offered German language lessons, the share was higher in country towns where 55.2 per cent were involved in language teaching programs. The share decreases in relation to the increasing size of the settlement. A similar picture emerges when it comes to accompanying refugees during their encounters with authorities (55.7 per cent in country towns, 24.7 per cent in megacities) and assisting them in their relations with public authorities (35.6 per cent in country towns, 10.2 per cent in megacities). These figures suggest that the activities of volunteers are more comprehensive in smaller towns, which largely seems to be due to the lack of supply in the countryside.

The conclusion we also can draw from this is that volunteers often engage in activities that are typically thought to be the responsibility of the state. Discussion is ongoing about whether this is a problematic tendency: some argue that this phenomenon further accelerates neoliberal policies of privatization; others fear that the services provided by volunteers might actually be harmful to refugees (especially as

concerns provision of legal and medical advice, translation or language teaching). Volunteers tend to think that their activities are only partly the responsibility of the state. Through their assistance they have created a network of social relations and bonds (and even new kinds of communities) in and around refugee shelters and other facilities. These communities are symbols of the failure of the state to care and provide to refugees the necessary access to society. In this sense, the praise offered to the volunteer movement by state authorities can be seen as a withdrawal of state responsibility and an expression of the government's desire to activate the individual in the field of public work (Rose, 1996). The situation has also been criticized for exactly this reason (van Dyk and Misbach, 2016).

Nevertheless, the same authors also stress that the self-organization of active citizens (of whom a majority declare that they are active in informal groups) has the potential to enhance reflection and self-observation. It also has the potential to constitute a space from where resistance and a struggle for rights can emerge (Rose, 1996: 336), as we seek to demonstrate in this text. As many of the volunteers have a middle-class background, their engagement involves experiencing, sometimes for the first time in their lives, the structural violence that people of foreign backgrounds with low professional profiles face in the German welfare system. An example will serve to illustrate this phenomenon: A former German school principle accompanied a Syrian family to a job center to discuss how the cost of renting an apartment would be covered. Coverage had been hitherto refused on the grounds that the rent was higher than legal regulations provided for. The volunteer knew of a regulation permitting payment to be made on condition that the additional cost of renting was less than 20 per cent above the normally applied threshold, and insisted that this rule be followed. He was confronted by the clerk who initially persisted in the original rejection, but eventually approved payment for the new apartment, admitting she had done so only because the volunteer knew about the legal provision.<sup>5</sup> According to the data we collected, there have been and still are innumerable similar situations. The experience of middle-class citizens may be described by the concept of 'becoming minor,' as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari put it in their theoretical work (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986).<sup>6</sup>

In fact, volunteers often have detailed knowledge about legal issues, about fundamental rights and procedures, and are capable of voicing frustrations about the inability of authorities to fulfill even their basic duties. We argue that these experiences raise the awareness of certain sections of the middle class in Germany about institutional racism, and therefore harbor the possibility of new alliances of solidarity.

While volunteers and refugees voice frustration about the constant denial, obfuscation or absence of services concerning housing, schooling or work, the

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Hansjörg Behrendt, Coordinator of the network *W i R - Willkommen* in Reinickendorf, Berlin, 10-2-2016.

<sup>6</sup> 'Becoming minor' implies a change in perspective in social theory. Generally, the assumption is that on the level of micro-power the subject can only be considered as a field of reproduction of societal power relations. Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) approach, however, is that developments at this level of the social (frequently and incorrectly considered as 'microsocial') have in fact the potential to displace, transform, or in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, 'deterritorialize' the whole network of the social.

German coalition government passed a law on the ‘integration’ of refugees under the motto ‘support and demand’ (fördern und fordern). This is more or less a subliminal message to the German audience who are increasingly exposed to populist discourse that refugees should not only receive welfare benefits but also be pushed to actively participate. The genealogy of these policies can be traced back to the development of the success of a ‘new labor’ type of arrangement, in which social democratic political parties adapt to the political economies of neoliberalism. Bob Jessop called this phenomenon the ‘workfare regime,’ which ‘subordinates social policy to the demands of labor market flexibility and employability and to the demands of structural or systemic competitiveness.’ (Jessop, 2003).

Volunteers we interviewed for our qualitative study are often critical about the dominant notion of integration that was prevalent in Germany long before the new law was passed. They witness the great efforts by refugees to obtain access to society in terms of language, work and housing. Whenever refugees do not display such an attitude of ‘willingness’, volunteers tend to explain this (under normal circumstances ‘problematic’) behavior by pointing to the multitude of barriers that face them, their lack of cultural knowledge and traumatic experience of flight. Meanwhile, publicly voiced suspicions about refugees’ willingness to integrate are mainly related to behavioral attitudes such as punctuality, continuous participation in activities provided by host communities (such as language or integration courses), and more generally in regard to the adoption or rejection of the dominant social norms in German society. This goes even further in suggestions that refugees’ access to individual housing should be restricted when they do not demonstrate a willingness to separate garbage or act as ‘quiet neighbors’ by social workers.

In contrast to this increasingly dominant approach, volunteers for the most part demonstrate openness to the unknown social practices, norms or behavioral patterns of refugees. For instance, there is constant demand for intercultural training, including learning how to deal with birth and death, joy and grief in different societies, and so on. Instead of demanding the rapid adjustment of refugees to an imaginary ‘German lifestyle’, the volunteers acknowledge their own ignorance of others’ social practices. Thus, volunteers tend to reject the earlier described conceptualization of migrants as lacking certain values that Germans all (supposedly) share, and develop, on a personal and interpersonal level, a culture of recognition of differences,<sup>7</sup> as well as a perspective of the institutional obstacles to integration. Many volunteers consider integration to be a reciprocal process that includes not just immigrants but also members of the host society. They see their volunteering as a contribution to creating the conditions ‘to let them [immigrants] become part of society,’ as one volunteer from Berlin put it.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This can take the form of a general interest in other cultures: ‘Also ich möchte auch gerne was von denen hören und von ihrem Land, von ihrem Leben und die haben sich ja nicht nur abgewendet mit Widerwillen, sondern es ist auch ihre Heimat und mich interessiert auch die Heimat.’ (“Well, I want to hear from them about their country, their lives; they not just have abandoned them with disgust, but it’s their home and I am interested in their home country” (Interview with a volunteer in Dallgow, Havelland, 23-07-2016). But it also often takes the function of an explanation, when an inability to perform certain tasks is associated with a difference in cultural habits.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with a volunteer from THF-welcome, Berlin, 27-07-2016.

## *7. The Transformation of Anti-immigration Sentiment*

The German discourse about the refugee situation changed immensely during the first months of 2016. After a widely discussed event in Cologne on New Years' Eve in which young men (some of them asylum-seekers, others German citizens) were accused of criminal activities as a group, public interest in the volunteering movement declined. In contrast to the media coverage, which ceased reporting on the activities of the 'welcome culture,' many of our interviewees reported that the movement was still growing. Most of them declared that the influx of new volunteers was still high, and the number of initiatives was continuously growing. All of them reported an overwhelming willingness to help. An example from Nürnberg illustrates this situation: 5,000 people downloaded an application for three volunteer positions in a few days.<sup>9</sup>

Even though one of our interviewees stated that the events in Cologne had affected the motivation of some volunteers, resulting in a decrease in the influx of new volunteers,<sup>10</sup> ultimately the majority of organizations still had more new volunteers than they needed for their work, and thus further recruitment was unnecessary. Many of the coordinators we interviewed insisted that the negative press had in fact actually motivated people to volunteer, and that they had recently been able to enlist even more people to their initiatives. One of the most common motives for volunteering that respondents stated was based on a neighborhood-focused desire to decrease the amount of negative propaganda against refugees and migration within their close environment.<sup>11</sup> Many initiatives were founded in the situation that a new camp was going to be established in a neighborhood and some citizens started raising concerns about the expected effects on the locality. The head of the division for volunteer coordination of the city of Nürnberg explains: '[...] the more problematic the atmosphere at these events (information evenings organized by local authorities), the bigger the circle of helpers becomes. People don't feel comfortable with the idea that so many negative and critical opinions are voiced in their neighborhoods, so they get involved. They come to register more often than in the neighborhoods where this is not a big issue.'

Some of the coordinators described their initial motivation for founding a welcome network as a desire to act in response to attempts to radicalize sentiments of insecurity in order to create a hostile atmosphere for refugees. We heard some similar stories about how the work of the initiatives had helped to marginalize the articulated racist sentiments of some residents.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Uli Glaser, Head of the Division for Volunteer Coordination and 'Corporate Citizenship' of the city of Nürnberg, Nürnberg, 15-2-2016.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with the coordinator of Refugees Welcome Flensburg, 8-2-2016.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., interviews with Gerhard Spitta, Volunteering Coordinator of "Unterstützerkreis Flüchtlingsunterkünfte Hannover e. V.," Hannover, 12-2-2016, Uli Glaser, Nürnberg, Hans-Jörg Behrendt, Berlin-Reinickendorf, Petra Steffan, Equal Opportunities Officer (Gleichstellungsbeauftragte) of the city of Wismar, 8-2-2016.

## *8. Volunteers against Right-Wing Protests*

In the regions where right-wing parties have considerable presence and right-wing extremists organize protests against refugees, refugee support groups are nevertheless frequently organized. On the local level, the volunteer movement is sometimes even able to repress the right-wing activities that are occurring in regions in which right-wing extremism has not taken hold. With the new law on integration, refugees cannot choose their own place of residence. The federal government decides on the place where each applicant should live for a minimum of three years. This regulation is called a 'constraint of residence' ('Wohnsitzauflage') which restricts the freedom of residency immensely, and ensures that even unpopular and economically underdeveloped regions have to host refugees.<sup>12</sup>

There is convincing evidence that the existence of these initiatives, even in underdeveloped regions, reduces the ground for political activities from the far-right, and involves more people without a history of migration into a society of migration. This happens especially in cities and areas in which right-wing extremists have a partial hegemony over some citizens who do not entirely agree with them but who feel unable to turn their protest against the right-wing movement into political action. They thus become engaged in supporting refugees.

When it comes to the framing the volunteers' motivation for supporting refugees, there is significant variability in relation to age and motivation: Older people tend to say that they want to do something against right-wing populism, while younger people see their activity as a form of support for asylum rights. The difference between the youngest group and the oldest group regarding this particular question is marked: 60 per cent of young people agree with the statement "we want to protest against how the state treats refugees", whereas only 30 per cent of older people support this statement.

While in Dresden the Pegida-movement<sup>13</sup> repeatedly demonstrates in the streets, the number of volunteers who register to support refugees remains stable, and is even growing in some regions. Based on our qualitative interviews with refugees, volunteers and NGOs through two ongoing research projects<sup>14</sup>, we believe that the activities of volunteers are important as they offer safe spaces for refugees, even though they cannot completely guarantee their safety within the public space. In some

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<sup>12</sup> El-Kayed, N. and U. Hamann (2016).

<sup>13</sup> Pegida is a right-wing movement that started in the city of Dresden in 2014. In 2016 it was still mobilizing about 2000 protesters every Monday in the inner city of Dresden. One of its main points of protest is the migration-related policies of the federal government, especially the open-border politics related to the summer of 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Both projects are part of a research cluster of BIM (the Berlin Institute for Empirical Integration and Migration Research) financed by the federal chancellery. The first is called "Between Camp and Lease - Different housing conditions and their potential for integration. A study on the housing situation of refugee women" by Ulrike Hamann and Nihad El-Kayed. The second is "Structures and Motives for the Voluntary Support of Refugees" and is being conducted by Serhat Karakayali and Ulrike Hamann.

cases, even the volunteers themselves become targets of right-wing extremist terror.<sup>15</sup> In small cities, the position of the city authorities in relation to refugees can have a huge impact on the safety of both refugees and volunteers, and thus positively influence the conditions for volunteering. In other cities, the number of volunteers may even increase if there are right-wing protests because inhabitants can protest against such demonstrations through their volunteering work.<sup>16</sup> In conclusion, it appears that through the presence of support groups for refugees, right-wing dominance can be prevented, especially when volunteers take on their role consciously. One statement by a volunteer explains the impact of their work: “We truly have the hegemonic position, because we make it public, with the help of the media. Nobody dares to confront us.”<sup>17</sup>

The volunteer groups have identified some common practices to dampen down the hostile attitudes and anxieties of the German population and turn them into welcoming neighborhoods such as organizing social encounters between refugees and their local social environment. All kinds of social and cultural activities are organized, the most relevant of which to this discussion are neighborhood festivities and the running of so-called encounter cafés, where refugees and neighbors can meet without commitment but out of general interest in one another. These kinds of activities create a space where prejudices can be reduced through personal encounters and potential connections can be established. The example of a neighborhood in Hannover illustrates this scenario: When a plan to establish a shelter for refugees in a neighborhood was announced, neighbors started to collect signatures against the shelter. In reaction to this mobilization, another group of neighbors organized a public gathering where they discussed the related concerns and established a refugee welcome group. After two years of work, most of the first signatories of the anti-camp list had become active within the welcome group. They organize neighborhood events and the refugee camp is now a well-accepted part of the community.

## *9. Conclusion*

In this article we have discussed the attitudes and motives of volunteers who are part of the so-called ‘welcome culture’ in Germany, especially regarding their notion of state politics and right-wing protests. We demonstrated how the movement has changed in terms of age, motives and goals. Further, we offered insight into the potential for change that is induced by new flows of migration within parts of society that actively engage with refugees. Those volunteers not only practice solidarity with refugees, but also develop a sense of a society of migration. In some regions of Germany, the volunteer movement is preventing negative reactions towards migration and refugees from arising through their presence and activities. In other regions where right-wing activities are dominant, volunteers represent a part of society that is standing up against racism and working to foster a more open society.

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<sup>15</sup> Mentioned, for instance, in an interview with Claudia Poser-Ben Kahla, coordinator of “Akzeptanz! e. V. Gera”, Gera, 3-02-2016.

<sup>16</sup> This statement was made, among others, by the city administrator for volunteering from Nürnberg.

<sup>17</sup> Interview, Gross-Schönebeck, 23-08-2016.

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ATTILA MELEGH \*  
Unequal Exchanges and the Radicalization of  
Demographic Nationalism in Hungary

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### Abstract<sup>1</sup>

This paper analyzes the structural and discursive context in which Hungary is becoming a low fertility emigrant country during the refolding of the Hungarian society into the direct competitive mechanisms of global capitalism. These changes include the increasing demand for labor within the internally open European Union and other longer-term local developments which have uprooted and continue to uproot a large number of people in Hungarian and East European societies. Following the logic of structure versus discourse interplay in a global and local context, we first carry out a historical structural analysis of the key demographic processes. Then, policies and institutionalized norms are reviewed. Finally, we analyze the radicalization of wider and popular political discourses in order to complete a complex and dynamic analysis of Hungarian demographic nationalism and panic in the second decade of the Millennium.

*Keywords:* nationalism, demography, migration, European Union, Hungary, biopolitics, refugees, population discourses.

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<sup>1</sup> The original version of this text was prepared for the forthcoming volume entitled *Brave New Hungary*, edited by János Máttyás Kovács and Balázs Trencsényi.

## *Introduction*

In January 11, 2015, after the attacks in Paris against Charlie Hebdo, the Hungarian prime minister went public with the following statements: “*We need to talk about immigration and related cultural questions more openly, honestly and in a more straightforward manner....Economic immigration is a bad thing in Europe, it should not be seen as having any utility, because it brings trouble and danger to the European man, and thus immigration is to be stopped, this is the Hungarian standpoint....We do not want to see a substantial minority having different cultural traits and background among us, we would like to keep Hungary a Hungarian land.*”<sup>2</sup> At the first moment, this just looked like a provocative statement, but later it proved to be a successful formulation from a discursive point of view as it successfully combined and revised various major discourses on nationhood and Europe or Europeaness understood in a hierarchical space. Orbán utilized the nationalist critique of pro-Western liberal discourses: Hungary has always been European and a defender of Europe and we need no ‘Europeanization’, or liberal preaching about anti-racism.<sup>3</sup> He combined this reclaimed and conservative Europeaness with the social exclusion and social competition discourses of the previous socialist governments against immigrants, who, according to these public discourses, are supposedly taking jobs from local Hungarians. And then, with a stress on defending Hungarians within and outside Hungary, the prime minister amalgamated all the above with the topics of securitization and the dangers of the ethnic/racial/religious mixing of populations via referring to the special status of Hungary and Eastern Europe within Europe. This use and recombination of discursive traditions has led to a hegemony in which counter-discourses remain suppressed or unsuccessful (silent), a fact which can be demonstrated not only by the dominance of the above discourses, but also by the knowledge that the 2016 ‘anti-quota’ referendum and the positions of the government were counterbalanced by the silence of opponents and abstentions from voting.<sup>4</sup>

How should we understand such changes? How should we understand and very importantly interpret demographic and migratory discourses which combine selective anti-immigration discourses and regulations with straightforward selective state-sponsored pronatalism and the radicalized defense of Europeaness and nationhood? This approach we term here as radical, East European demographic

<sup>2</sup> "A bevándorlásról és az azzal összefüggő kulturális kérdésekről az eddigieknél sokkal nyíltabban, őszintébben, teljes egyenességgel kell beszélni. (...) A gazdasági bevándorlás rossz dolog Európában, nem szabad úgy tekinteni rá, mintha annak bármi haszna is lenne, mert csak bajt és veszedelmet hoz az európai emberre, ezért a bevándorlást meg kell állítani, ez a magyar álláspont. (...) Nem akarunk tőlünk különböző kulturális tulajdonságokkal és háttérrel rendelkező jelentős kisebbséget látni magunk között, Magyarországot szeretnénk Magyarországgként megtartani." Magyar Hírlap 12-01-2015. [http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/14193/Orban\\_a\\_gazdasagi\\_bevandorlas\\_rossz](http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/14193/Orban_a_gazdasagi_bevandorlas_rossz) Accessed: 28-12-2016. (Trans. Author)

<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of these earlier types, see: Melegh and Hegyesi, 2003; Melegh, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> For a description of the event and its results, see:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/02/hungarian-vote-on-refugees-will-not-take-place-suggest-first-poll-results> Accessed: 28-12-2016.

nationalism, which is a specific form of competitive political demography aimed at controlling and developing a specific group of the 'population' who are seen as a source of economic and cultural advancement, the 'strength' of the 'nation,' as opposed to 'other' groups which represent danger in this respect.<sup>5</sup> This tradition has an intellectual history going back as far as the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, including authors like Herder.<sup>6</sup> The Hungarian case described below is one of these 'demographic' competitions, but it has some special features, which we analyze. This paper argues that within this complex dynamic there is interaction between various global and local changes (e.g. the emergence of 'new authoritarianism' from India to the United States, after a longer liberal phase) among which factors we now focus on the historical interplay between an evolving radical demographic nationalism, and the demographic and migratory structural context.

Thus we analyze the discursive traditions in a structural context in which Hungary is becoming (again) an emigrant country as a reaction to the refolding of the Hungarian society into the competitive mechanisms of global capitalism. These changes include the increasing demand for migrant within the internally open European Union and other longer-term local developments which have uprooted and continue to uproot a large number of people in Hungarian and East European societies. This process has been going on in a new economic context in which global (and within it, Western) capitalism operates using various forms of unequal exchange and path-dependencies and is replacing older methods of securing an appropriate labor force in the midst of the massive cyclical and structural problems that European economies face.<sup>7</sup>

Following the logic of structure versus discourse interplay in a global context, we first carry out a historical structural analysis of demographic processes. Then, policies and institutionalized norms are reviewed. Finally, we analyze the radicalization of wider and popular political discourses in order to complete a complex and dynamic analysis of Hungarian demographic nationalism and panic in the second decade of the Millennium.

### *Historical-structural analysis: Regional challenges and dependencies related to migration and demographic change*

Since the late 1980s, due to increasing competition in the world economy evolving EU integration, changes in the international environment, and the shifts in demographic and labor market processes, the role of migration as a source of labor and human capital has increased, in contrast to fertility rates. There has been a 45 per cent increase in the global stock of people born outside their country of residence since 1990, while the increase in the global population was a little above 30 per cent, with

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<sup>5</sup> The topic of radical nationalism has been addressed by a large number of scholars. For a shorter review of literature and possible interpretative frameworks see the Introduction in Feischmidt and Hervik, 2015. Demographic nationalism is best understood using the framework of Weiner and Teitelbaum, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> See specifically Weiner and Teitelbaum, 2001: 46.

<sup>7</sup> For one definition of dependency, see Böröcz, 2014.

the historical turning point being in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>8</sup> More and more regions and people have become involved in global systems of migration, which process has also become very intensive within the European Union. On a macro level, these processes are linked to an increase in the flow of capital (the relative rise of FDI compared to GDP) and other historical-macro structural changes due to, most importantly in the long run, persistent and (in the 1990s) increasing economic inequality (Chase-Dunn, 1999; Böröcz, 1999; 2014; Fassmann, 2014; Melegh, 2011; 2013; Melegh and Sárosi, 2015).

The net rates of migration (i.e. balances between emigration and immigration) in Southeastern Europe have become increasingly diversified over the course of the past sixty years. In the 1950s the region was more or less homogeneously one of net emigration (with the exception of the countries in the south west of the Soviet Union). After changes that took place between the 1960s and 1990s, it lost this homogeneity and some regions became areas for immigration, while others became, or remained, centers of emigration. Hungary for a while followed a path towards becoming an immigrant country, but since the mid-2000s it has started to develop an emigrant pattern, a pattern which we observed in the case of Romania and Bulgaria for a longer period of time. In Hungary this increasing outflow leads to a loss of a younger, better educated and/or skilled labor force towards Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom (Blaskó and Gödri, 2014).

In terms of economic well-being, Hungary was a relatively rich country in the South-East European region in the 1950s, and increased its wealth with regard to the world average until the 1980s, when it entered a period of stagnation. This slowing of developmental dynamics is especially visible when compared to the trajectory of other, previously migrant-sending countries such as Austria and Italy, which improved their relative positions dramatically after the 1970s and became predominantly migrant-receiving countries (Melegh, 2012). Around 1980, a new cycle of globalization of the world economy began which resulted in an increase in the foreign indebtedness of Hungary and the stagnation which also characterized most East-European socialist planned economies in the region in the 1980s (Chase-Dunn, 1999; Böröcz, 2009: 134-35). The economic restructuring which took place in the late 1980s and 1990s followed neoliberal economic policies (evident, for instance, in an increase in the role of foreign direct investment) and the consequent decline in GDP (from 140% of the world average it had declined to 100% around the time of the change of the regime), job losses (more than 1 million) and most importantly, job security, the memories of which have had major long-term consequences concerning migration.<sup>9</sup> Based on mirror statistics, a growing trend towards emigration has been ongoing since the early 2000s. According to SEEMIG estimates which utilize UN migration matrices based on censuses and stock data on country of birth, Hungary has had an increasingly

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<sup>8</sup> See the following databases: United Nations, WPP 2011: World Population Prospects 2011. <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm> Accessed: 16-08-2016.

United Nations, WPP 2015: World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. DVD Edition. See also Melegh, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> For employment figures, see: Zádor, 2010: 266 (from 4.527 million to 3.484 million). See also Melegh, 2012.

negative migration balance since 2008 (Földházi et al., 2014). This rise in emigration and the parallel economic restructuring has also led to greater dependency on remittances, a situation which may also be observed in other former socialist countries (Böröcz, 2014).

The target countries of emigrants from Hungary have not really changed during the last 60 years, which shows how important historical links are in mass migration. As the key destination countries, Hungarian emigrants have always chosen Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom, North America (USA and Canada) and, to some extent, Australia and in the 1970s, Israel (Melegh and Sárosi, 2015). Regardless of this striking resilience, we can also argue that Hungary, just as with the whole region, has become more Eurocentric in its external relationships, and has become more loosely connected to non-European emigration destinations. Even when looking at the flows of asylum seekers since 1989, when Hungary signed the Geneva convention, and especially from 1997 (when geographical limitations were lifted in accordance with the convention) until early 2015, the cyclical inflows were based on inflows of Hungarians (in the early years), Bosnians (1994-95) and Kosovars, while Afghanis, Pakistanis, and Iraqis played a smaller role.<sup>10</sup> What is more, until early 2016 only an extremely small percentage of asylum applicants obtained some kind of protection status, or remained in Hungary and completed the whole process of applying for asylum. Thus Hungary did not establish migratory links in this way. Even the massive outflow of refugees due to the dramatic crisis in Western Asia mainly produced by the USA along with some West European, and local middle-ranking powers (Turkey, Saudi-Arabia and Iran, and now also Russia) did not change the migratory picture, and almost no migrants stopped in the country. For instance, in 2015 between January and November from a total of 138 997 registered cases 135 963 applications (98%) for asylum were dropped by the Hungarian authorities due to cancellation as the applicants had left the country.<sup>11</sup>

The key feature of these patterns of immigration is that the whole region and Hungary, while sending massive flows of people using historical links to the “West,” receives migrants only from the region immediately surrounding it, while further links are rare and relatively weak (such as China, Vietnam, or other areas of the world).<sup>12</sup> Thus from the late 1980s until the early 2000s, Hungary’s accumulated relative richness increased the country’s attractiveness for prospective migrants from poorer ex-state socialist countries in the neighborhood which faced even deeper internal crises (such as Romania or the Soviet Union), leading to an increase in immigration from these countries. In this context, due to the especially strong ethnic-historical links, Transylvania in Romania became a key source of migration to Hungary during and after the collapse of state socialisms in the region, which was followed in

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<sup>10</sup> See Demográfiai Évkönyv, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> See the statistics of the immigration authorities:

[http://www.bmbah.hu/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=177&Itemid=1232&lang=hu](http://www.bmbah.hu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=177&Itemid=1232&lang=hu) Accessed: 28-12-2016.

<sup>12</sup> For an actual statistical analysis of the migratory and demographic processes, see Melegh and Sárosi, 2015. Also, see the following lecture at which the relevant UN and World Bank matrices were analysed for the longer term: Melegh, 2015.

importance by neighboring areas inhabited by people of Hungarian origin (Ukraine and Serbia). Starting from an early high level, immigration stabilized at a lower rate in the 1990s with an inflow of 20-30,000 people per year. The diversification of the migration patterns of Hungarian speakers from neighboring countries (like Romania) and the previously massive outflow of Hungarians toward the kin-state Hungary led to a situation in which the main immigrant groups did not counterbalance the trend to emigration, and also did not match the 'lost population' in terms of their age composition (primarily young), better-than-local-average educational levels, and employment rates. Thus even with migration there has been and continues to be an 'emptying' process, or in other words, unequal forms of integration into global flows which create challenges for Hungary and the surrounding region within the current competitive systems. One of the potential 'remedies' for this unequal exchange would be an increase in migrant flows from outside Europe such as China, and most importantly, Vietnam, but these immigration flows have remained rather low throughout the period and their potential has not been utilized. Vietnam, for instance, is a country which sends such migrants with such characteristics to Hungary who (in a fictitious migratory 'exchange' within global capitalism) could 'compensate' for the lost population.<sup>13</sup>

Since the 1960s fertility rates in Hungary have decreased or stagnated, as they did globally, but this process started from a much lower level. During certain periods of history the trend followed strange twists (a very quick decline in the 1960s, some growth in the 1970s, and then another quick decline around the change of the regime). Nonetheless, Hungary has maintained a low level of 1.5 TFR or less for a longer period of time which has a huge impact on ageing and age composition. This is a crucial factor in the demographic problems of the country and may prove to be very important in terms of maintaining various systems of social protection.

Mortality, of course, has been seriously gendered, showing different paths and levels in the long run. The country was above the global average in terms of male and also female mortality in the 1950s and early 1960s, and maintained this advantage with regard to European levels, while improvements in male mortality rates (in particular) started stagnating and diverted from global trends later. The trend caught up with global improvements only in the early 2000s. Female mortality followed European patterns until the mid-1970s, and it was only in the mid-1990s that it started to follow global trends, which it has followed until the present day. Overall, we can say that increases in male and female life expectancy have not showed a tendency to counterbalance the decline in the population since the early 1980s, and, very importantly, that they indicate rather dramatic social inequalities (Kovács and Bálint, 2014; Meslé, 2004).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Witness the proportion of employed people working in jobs that require higher education by country of birth in 2001 and 2010, and among migrants who arrived between 2001 and 2011 (%) in the Hungarian censuses. The figure among immigrants who arrived during the period 2001-2011 was 7%, as opposed to the local Hungarian population's 16% (see also Melegh, 2016). Such labour market tendencies have been aptly analysed by Ágnes Hárs (2012).

<sup>14</sup> For the actual data, see the UN's World Population Prospects. <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataSources/> Accessed: 28-12-2016.

Thus the country is facing rather serious demographic and migration-related challenges. The consequence of this potential increase in more extreme forms of dependencies (outmigration can cause various losses in terms of labor, skills, social and tax payments, especially combined with the overall process of ageing) may prove to be rather serious and lead to unequal exchange, meaning dependency.<sup>15</sup> In addition, according to the SEEMIG population projections and forecasts, the demographic shift towards a pattern of emigration may lead to an even greater drop in population of as many as an extra one million people by 2060, creating an unfavorable age pyramid in terms of ageing (Földházi et al., 2014). We also need to recognize that the outflow of labor is related to counterflows of capital, which indicate the presence of structural inequality, as suggested by Sassen.<sup>16</sup>

In the next analytical step we must look at how Hungarian polity faces these challenges, examine what population and migration policies have been institutionalized, and what discourses are in operation in the light of the above-described process of demographic ‘emptying’, historically fixed migratory links and related unequal exchanges. We argue below that, following discursive traditions, social selective population policies have focused on providing financial and housing-related support for childbearing (for ‘quality groups’), while, most importantly, no overall migration policy has been developed and there has been little initiative to address the structural and relational elements of the unequal exchanges within a space open to flows of labor. This indeed may be reason for the current biopolitical panic, and the further development of a new authoritarian version of nationalism.

### *Population policies and institutionalized discursive traditions*

In order to understand the development of population policy measures and institutions we need to go back at least to the 1960s, when the Hungarian state socialist system introduced a rather developed set of social and population policy measures to counterbalance the rising costs of bringing up a child.<sup>17</sup> Thus among other benefits, during the 1960s family allowances were increased and made universal, and paid one- and later (from 1973 onwards) three-year leave for mothers was introduced, guaranteeing a fixed monthly allowance. In addition, families who were having or planning to have children were also given extra public housing privileges in a rather imbalanced housing market. These measures and the labor market’s continual over-

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<sup>15</sup> The issue of development and larger-scale outmigration has been a controversial one, but we can clearly recognize some of the key features identified by authors who work on countries and regions with high rates of outmigration: a loss of revenues, the failure of remittances to boost development, a loss of skills and local production capacity, and labour shortages - especially if there are no explicit policies to counterbalance losses (as is the case with Hungary and the region): See the analysis in Castles and Wise, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> For the theory, see Sassen, 1988; 2006. The key migratory target countries of Hungary mainly overlap with the key investor countries as seen from the average inflow of FDI based on World Bank data (WB WDI database), World Bank (2016) *World Development Indicators & Global Development Finance*, <http://databank.worldbank.org/ddp/home.do?Step=12&id=4&CNO=2> Accessed 16-08-2016. See also Melegh, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> For the literature on this development, see: Szikra, 2010; 2014; Tárkányi, 1998; Kristó, 2015.

demand for labor force together ensured that Hungarian fertility levels only slightly declined throughout the whole period (with some rise in the early 1970s).

In the 1980s, with the introduction of a special form of help for working mothers, the country set out on a path of institutionalizing inequalities and developing a new type of pro-natalism that supported 'higher quality' (i.e. better-educated and better-paid) parents, as opposed to the less educated. Thus when Hungary opened up and became trapped between the jaws of a rise in consumerism and the increasing difficulties of the Hungarian economy, it just continued down this path toward selective pro-natalism, a policy which became fully fledged under the second and third Orbán government. This path involved various twists and turns. First, there was a major shift towards reducing budget spending and removing support from higher-income families. This involved a collapse in the universal system of family allowance and restriction of the payment of a certain percentage of the mother's salary after childbearing. It was finance minister Bokros who in 1995 introduced an income-based threshold for determining various forms of support (e.g. family allowance), which move deepened the substantial decline in fertility that had started in 1992.<sup>18</sup> This preference for reducing social spending and just providing for the lower classes and the poor was reversed by the first Orbán government (1998-2002). The reintroduced universality of the key forms of family policy support reintegrated the middle and upper class into the system, and at the same time started to penalize 'undeserving' lower social groups if they, for instance, took children out of the school system. In addition, the Orbán government did not increase family allowance; a key form of income among poorer groups. At the same time, the government started providing tax allowances to families with children, which meant that those families received support who had taxable revenue. This above-described preferential support also appeared in state-sponsored housing loans which could be utilized by families who had good enough background to start such family projects. This combination of universality, middle-class preferences and utilitarian elements remained after the first Orbán government, and in certain ways was strengthened by the following governments, but the second and third Orbán government very clearly radicalized and extended the same logic. The continuity is striking, even in the case of migration policy.

In 2010, the new Orbán government was faced with dramatic economic challenges, including the indebtedness in foreign currency of hundreds of thousands of families who were burdened with rising interest and a worsening exchange rate. This pushed the ratio of foreign debt (in terms of GDP) to above 100 percent, indicating direct dependency in terms of macro finances.<sup>19</sup> The related housing loans were enabled by unregulated financial markets and the wish to provide families with financial support, and to create demand within the economy. Actually, the first Orbán

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<sup>18</sup> The process started earlier, but fertility declined dramatically in various groups (most importantly, among those staying home on some of form of paid maternity leave). See: Spéder, 2004. Also, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) fell again in this period and later only compensation for the cessation of support was somewhat able to halt the decline in fertility - as we can see in the adjusted TFR, taking into account postponement effects (Kapitány and Spéder 2015: 43-47).

<sup>19</sup> For an analysis, see the following report Miklós, G. (2011) A magyar eladósodás és válság hatásai (The Hungarian indebtedness and its effects). *International Relations Quarterly*, 2 (7). [http://www.southeast-europe.org/pdf/07/DKE\\_07\\_M\\_V\\_Miklos-Gabor.pdf](http://www.southeast-europe.org/pdf/07/DKE_07_M_V_Miklos-Gabor.pdf) Accessed: 28-12-2016.

government initially started this process, but the socialist governments clearly supported the opening for the banking products which created a situation of financial emergency during the financial crisis of 2008. Gaining control over this situation was of great importance for the Orbán government, not only because of its financial and economic consequences, but also because of the impact on the population policies they had initiated much earlier. The middle class was under stress, and the government wanted to present itself as the ‘savior’. After ‘saving’ some of the groups burdened with the improperly regulated loans of commercial banks, the Orbán government turned back to the original idea of promoting the ‘working’ and ‘middle classes’ and propping up the housing market with substantial support from the budget. These measure include new types of housing support in the form of so-called family housing support (in Hungarian, CSOK) and very soon afterwards the so-called National Housing Communities (in Hungarian, NOK) were also approved. The family housing system with all its (not insignificant) risks is designed to provide variable free or low-interest (subsidized) money mainly for building new houses, and is differentiated according to the present (or promised) number of children in the family. NOK is simply a high-risk pooling group which may provide financial resources outside the banking system. This represents an altogether newer (and riskier) system than tried under the first Orbán government, but one with the clear aim of boosting fertility and economy on national grounds, with a focus on ‘working’ or ‘middle-class groups’ which are able to gain access to the specified resources. The bias is also clear in the system of provision of extra help for those who return to the labor market and obtain better jobs.

Major maneuvering has been also going on to exclude the ‘undeserving’ poorer groups from these measures in order to ‘disincentivize’ higher levels of fertility among them. At the same time, at least during the first phase of the initiatives, the government also tried to build in various other conservative family policy goals, such as promoting more and longer-lasting marriages. However, social reactions and the wish to avoid a backlash in public opinion meant that most (but definitely not all) of these ‘hidden’ attempts failed during the policy making process and legislative steps. It is also important to point out that some of the effects of these policies did not reach their original goals, and family support reached social groups for which it was not targeted.<sup>20</sup> However, provision of an analysis of social outcomes is outside the scope of this analysis. This situation of unintended consequences is very clear in the case of the family tax allowance, which not only changed during the rule of Orbán governments, but also became more inclusive toward groups with reduced incomes.

The social bias of the Orbán government is much clearer from the perspective of the penalization of lower status groups via changes in social policy measures, pushing them into an almost compulsory public work system and maintaining the original idea of not increasing the family allowance and linking this to the ‘proper’ behavior of the lower classes (including schooling, but also other ‘behavioral’ elements). So the key issue is not the complete exclusion of lower groups from

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<sup>20</sup> See about this the perspective of Balázs Kapitány who analyses the impact of population policy measures: <http://www.nepesedesikerekasztal.hu/files/2014nov/Kapitany%20Balazs.pdf> Accessed: 28-12-2016.

middle-class oriented policy measures, but the taking away or freezing of non-work-related income and thus the burdening of the family life of the very poor. This shows the selective pronatalism of the Hungarian government and its aim of disciplining, penalizing and selectively supporting the national population body, instead of changing the social relations which would restructure the demographic behavior of the targeted groups.<sup>21</sup> In this respect, the institutional system of population policies reflects the approach (not the concrete measures of) the regimes which existed between the two world wars (and which combined pro- and anti-natalism and also aimed at disciplining the nation in order to increase performance in terms of global competition for various resources and territories).<sup>22</sup> The current measures mainly provide support and only indirectly or very mildly penalize fertility behavior, but the overall idea is strikingly similar. As there is evidence that fertility rates are not changing due to longer-term structural factors (TFR has now been below 1.5 since 1992), even the hope of significantly raising fertility levels seems to be weak.

It should also be mentioned that longevity and mortality have not become key targets of the Orbán government, and basically only discursive support has been given for changing lifestyles and diets to reduce mortality. Additionally, the healthcare system and the working conditions in health care have deteriorated substantially to crisis levels, which conditions definitely do not improve the health of Hungarian society.

Overall, we argue that the established institutional framework has been rather stable and the process of demographic decline has been addressed via increases in social bias and exclusion and the idea of selective support and demographic nationalistic disciplining, without substantially changing the structural conditions that support underlying social stresses that arise from the existence of an open, competitive and unequal social space. But let us now turn to the institutionalized migration policies which have come to the forefront of political discussions. Here we will show that while they may be linked to some of the key structural migratory processes, they have not been part of the establishment of an integrated approach that covers all the migratory links; and what is more, following discursive traditions, such policy has established a combined historical-ethno- and a West-centric hierarchical system which bears no reflection to the relational unequal exchanges with the 'West', and with the exception of Hungarians and some special 'Eastern' groups there is only a basic idea of direct closure and control.

### *Migration policies and institutionalized demographic nationalism*

Before the fall of the socialist system in Hungary, migration policy, and most importantly, discourses, focused on the Western diaspora and the dissidents, while little attention was paid to migrants coming from the neighboring countries or the Soviet Union (Tóth, 1997, and for the analysis described below, see Melegh et al.,

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<sup>21</sup> This refers to the key debate in demography between the so-called Malthusian supply side and the Condorcet-promoted demand-side approach which has existed since the 18th century. For an excellent summary, see: Sen, 1994.

<sup>22</sup> For these, see Quine, 1996; Melegh, 2006.

2016). The first legal change was initiated to speed up the return of Hungarians living in the West who had left the country, or who may even have lost their Hungarian citizenship due to restrictive policies (Act XXXI of 1989). The Hungarian government assumed that returning migrants were ethnically Hungarian and refugees fleeing from repressive political systems. Also, Hungary received larger numbers of refugees from neighboring countries, notably Romania, who crossed the border illegally and asked for asylum in Hungary due to ethnic and political repression in the sending country. This was based on Hungary's joining the Geneva Convention in March 1989 (with geographic restrictions on non-European areas, which were lifted only later). Also, Hungary received a larger number of migrants from Eastern Germany who later obtained specific permission to go to West Germany. Legislation also had to be changed in 1993 - in one aspect - due to the effect of the war in Yugoslavia (1991 onwards) as the number of immigrants and asylum seekers radically increased, and the regulations that were in place could not manage the situation. In 1993 the Act on the Entry, Residence and Settlement of Foreigners in Hungary, or Aliens' Act (Act LXXXVI of 1993), came into force to tighten up the law of 1989. As a result, the process of becoming naturalized for a foreign citizen (the obtaining of a settlement permit) required eight years' residence in Hungary and at least three years of living and working in Hungary with a residence permit (Gödri et al., 2014; Melegh et al., 2016).

Finally, in 1997 an Act on Asylum entered into force (Act CXXXIX of 1997) which ended the geographical restriction on refugees. The first phase of legal changes thus demonstrates that Hungary (from the late 1980s onwards) started opening its migratory space, mainly within Europe, but it also started joining international legal regimes, and some global features were even integrated into policy. But from the late 1990s, a focus on the West and ethno-centrism returned.

In the next period, Hungary constructed a four-tier system of immigration congruent with relevant EU regulation with special regulations for EEA citizens and third country nationals without Hungarian ethnic-historical background, while for foreign citizens with historical-ethnic ties to Hungary it created a special system. For asylum seekers, at least until the refugee crisis, it followed EU and international legislation, which it signed up to in full extent during the process of accession to the EU, although the loyalty to this supranational system has very recently been questioned.

During the EU pre-accession period national rules and legislation on migration were adapted in harmony with EU legislations and norms. The 2001 Act on the Entry and Residence of Foreigners (Act XXXIX of 2001), which was the legal basis of the free movement of EU citizens in Hungary, divided the legal status of immigrants into EU citizens and third-country nationals. However, it preserved the requirement to obtain a settlement permit, even for EU citizens (namely, a minimum of three years working and living in Hungary with a residence permit in order to obtain a settlement permit, or immigrant status). For third country nationals this period was eight years of residence prior to naturalization. Certain ethnic privileges were also built into the system; most importantly, social and educational support for ethnic Hungarians living outside the country, and also certain forms of legal support when applying for Hungarian citizenship (Kántor et al., 2004). This already indicates

how Hungarian immigration policy and the legal framework followed the previously existing German model of selective exclusion and maintenance of ethnic privileges. In the same period, Hungary, just like other applicant countries, signed up to all the relevant EU legislation concerning refugees and human rights.

By joining the EU in 2004 both regulations and the institutional system for handling migration were transformed. Act XXXIX of 2004 established the Office of Immigration and Nationality (Bevándorlási és Állampolgársági Hivatal). Act I of 2007 on the Entry and Stay of Persons with the Right of Free Movement and Residence defined the rights of EEA citizens. Act II of 2007 on the Entry and Stay of Third Country Nationals defined the rights of third-country nationals. In addition, there were several attempts to further enhance the ethnic privileges of people of Hungarian origin, including a referendum (2004) on automatically providing them with citizenship if their ancestors had lived on the former territory of the Hungarian Kingdom.

In 2011, an amended citizenship law was established. This offers full citizenship to anyone who knows the Hungarian language, can claim historical Hungarian background, and had one ancestor who lived on the territory of historical Hungary (namely, the Hungarian Kingdom before 1920, or in Hungary between 1941 and 1945). This law does not support the immigration of ethnic Hungarians, although it does provide them with rights which enable them to move freely and to settle down – even if they come from non-EU countries. In contrast, for third country nationals without such background the process of naturalization still takes 11 (3+8) years in total. Thus ethnic rivalry is built into the Hungarian system of immigration.

In 2012 the government created a special process for immigration in the national economic interest; the so-called ‘national settlement permit’. All individuals are entitled to apply if they have held a residence permit for any purpose for at least six months prior to the submission of the application, and they provide and register security to a total nominal value of 300 000 EUR which should be invested into a special personal treasury bond issued by the Government Debt Management Agency. This new piece of legislation was introduced in order to finance government debt and to provide privileges not justified on the basis of ethnic-historical factors.

For a long time Hungary had no overall policy document concerning migration policy and the integration of migrants. There was an attempt in 2007 to produce a government document but the leaking of the document led to outrage from right-wing opposition politicians as they panicked over the potential immigration of a supposed one million Chinese (Melegh, 2007). This outrage was based on the false claim that the then-ruling socialist government was actively seeking the immigration of millions of Chinese people. In 2013 the Orbán government produced a ‘Migration Strategy’ paper, mainly to justify programs based on the various migration-related funds supplied by the European Union (Government Decree 1698/2013 (X.4.)). This paper focused only on immigration and mainly on non-Hungarians from so-called third countries (non-EU, nor Norway and Switzerland) and, very importantly, it concentrated on the security issues and adaptation requirements that apply to migrants. Thus, the increase in emigration was ignored, and, very importantly, the integration of immigrants and other policy elements were either covered very briefly

or contained in promises of further governmental action, including an Integration Strategy, which has not yet been finalized.

Concerning refugees, through accession to the EU Hungary fully implemented EU regulations. Following the arrival of a large number of asylum seekers from Kosovo, from 2014 onwards Hungary started experimenting with various symbolic and real legal changes in order to slow down and even to stop entirely the incoming flow. First, Hungary tried to change the legal status of Serbia and various other countries as safe countries.<sup>23</sup> In the summer of 2014, following the examples of Bulgaria and Calais, Hungary built a border fence<sup>24</sup> along the Hungarian-Serbian border<sup>25</sup> and restricted the number of entry points for refugees. Then Hungary started criminalizing illegal border crossing attempts which damaged the fence.<sup>26</sup> Hungary also introduced a so-called crisis situation (a 'state of exception') due to extreme migratory pressure (09-03-2016). In addition, Hungary restricted many of the rights of people who were seeking and receiving international protection.<sup>27</sup> Plus, Hungary commenced (to a large extent) a symbolic battle against the 'forced settlement' of immigrants by the EU, which ended in an inconclusive referendum and an attempt to change the constitution in 2016.

### *Hierarchies in the institutionalization of migration*

As analyzed above and as viewed as a set of institutional practices and norms, Hungarian migration policy can be understood as a hierarchical system based on various discursive traditions. The first one is that of cross-border nationalism. The Hungarian state clearly endorses migratory and other links with Hungarian minorities living in neighboring countries. In building special relationships it is not alone as many states maintain preferential treatment for individuals linked to the homeland. This preferential link can be ethnic and/or colonial and/or historical (including, for instance, groups who have previously emigrated and their offspring) and in terms of migration policy we can now see an increase in such measures as many countries are trying to establish preferred reservoirs for labor markets which might face overall or relative shortages in the future. In Europe, most Eastern, Southern and South Eastern states follow a somewhat similar strategy, but in Hungary it seems that the motivation behind such an approach is a complex attempt at nation building across borders. Hungary declares itself to be a state fully responsible for the maintenance of 'historical' Hungary in terms of ethnic composition and cultural historic legacies, even

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<sup>23</sup> Government Decree no. 191/2015 (VII. 21.) on safe countries of origin and safe third countries.

<sup>24</sup> Amended by Act CXL of 2015 on the amendment of certain acts related to the management of mass migration: criminal proceedings in connection with the border barrier

<sup>25</sup> Amended by Act CXXVII of 2015 on the temporary closure of borders and amendment of migration-related acts

<sup>26</sup> Amended by Act CXL of 2015 on the amendment of certain Acts related to the management of mass migration: criminal proceedings in connection with the border barrier

<sup>27</sup> Amendment of the Asylum Government Decree (from 1 April 2016.) including restrictions on various forms of support.

beyond its borders, and in a gradual process has built up direct, legal links with affiliated people living outside Hungary.

Before the coming to power of the 2010 Orbán government there had already been various attempts to legally prescribe privileges (e.g. the so-called status law in 2001, or Act LXII.), and a failed referendum in December 2004 to establish dual citizenship for Hungarians living outside Hungary in neighboring countries, which was severely attacked by the Socialist party who claimed to be defending local labor markets by utilizing a discourse of social exclusion (for example, calling incomers a 'black army'). In 2011 special legislation was passed with the aim of offering citizenship without the need to reside in the country itself. Now the country offers full citizenship to any individual who can provide evidence that their ancestors once lived on Hungarian territory and that he/she can speak some Hungarian. The procedure has been made very short, and since its implementation the government has received 710,000 applications, while 670,000 people have completed the process, which beyond making the immigration of these people a mere formality (they now only need to have a registered address in Hungary), also provides them with passports which allow them to enter labor markets, and in certain cases the Schengen Zone, which would not be open to them via their original citizenship.<sup>28</sup>

Beyond the ethnic-historical, nation-building process using trans-border legal and citizenship linkages, the country is supporting institutionally the free movement of people within the EU and fully respects the Schengen agreement. The maintenance of a privileged zone of 'Europeans' has been a clear priority of the government as it also allows the free movement and free labor market maneuvering of Hungarian citizens.

For the last two decades Hungary has followed a rather hard and non-supportive policy toward Third Country Nationals (TCNs) of non-Hungarian origin. In this respect, it basically followed the logic of EU legislation, which was implemented quickly. But by not establishing institutionalized integration policies and maintaining further discriminatory practices, it has increased the separation of certain pillars which has led to a rather segregated system. This also occurs in visa policy, which even in 2009 proved to be discriminatory toward various regions of Asia and Africa (Illés et al., 2010). Concerning individuals from these areas, numerous security and law enforcement screening processes are applied. Other forms of disadvantage include, for example, in the case of family reunions, the fact that (except until 2015 those who are refugees and for beneficiaries and subsidiary protection or people with tolerated stay) third-country nationals do not receive any support towards the housing or livelihoods of families (i.e. no temporary support, social housing, language courses or help with finding employment) (Tóth, 2011; 2013). Discrimination also appears in the provision of citizenship and/or long-term residence for non-Hungarian TCNCs (Kováts et al., 2011) unless applicants agree to pay huge sums of money to various private 'agent' companies contracted by the government to obtain preferential treatment in the form of national settlement permits. Thus this form of demographic nationalism handles non-Hungarian 'Easterners' mainly as a security risk; it provides

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<sup>28</sup> For statistics see: <http://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-miniszterelnok-helyettes/nemzetpolitikaert-felelos-allamtitkar/hirek/eddig-710-ezer-kulhoni-magyar-adott-be-egyszerusített-honosítási-kerelmet> Accessed: 28-12-2016.

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little legal or linguistic support; it is biased against non-European and/or lower class immigrants, and migrants with family members.<sup>29</sup>

And this is the last issue which deserves some attention with regard to the Hungarian experience. Empirical analyses have shown that in education and in various institutionalized cultural encounters, the local population and teachers are basically trying to downplay the importance of cultural diversity and especially the need to handle such problematic social relationships.<sup>30</sup>

In terms of discrimination, the most clear institutional closure relates to the case of refugees. A (sophisticated and internationally and EU-level approved) institutional system was basically utilized by Hungary in its complete entirety until 2014. But Hungary (like the whole East European region) established this system rather formally, unaccompanied by an authentic solidarity-promoting discourse. It is telling that before the crisis out of the estimated 1.5 million refugees living in Europe in 2013, Eastern European states were providing shelter for fewer than 30,000. Countries from this region, including Hungary, have always acted in a discriminatory way towards refugees, and even before 2015 the applications for asylum of refugees were increasingly rejected and they faced an increase in institutional hostility.

During the European handling of the global refugee crisis in 2015 (and somewhat following British policies at Calais) Hungary basically deconstructed its asylum system and replaced it with the building of fences, making it institutionally almost impossible to hand in an asylum application, thereby disregarding humanitarian considerations. In other words, Hungary treats almost all refugees as illegal migrants, criminals who need to be under severe control. This is a dramatic change, and shows that discursive traditions have become somewhat rearranged and that securitization is being combined with discourses of social exclusion and that of 'Europe'. This can be seen in how Hungary presents itself as the defender of 'Europe'.

Overall, even on an institutional level, this migration policy is a manifestation of radical demographic nationalism that is open only toward kin groups and 'Europeans', which sees as its most important task the building of effective walls to protect privileged European spaces and which guarantee Hungarian nation-building. Together

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<sup>29</sup> Concerning institutional integration practices as measured by MIPEX, it can be clearly stated that the country is lagging behind some other countries in the region such as Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia in developing an integration policy. But there are also very positive elements. Hungary scores 45 overall on the MIPEX scale, a composite index of integration in 2015. It is located in the middle of the ranking concerning labour market access, family reunion and long-term residence policies for legally-resident third-country nationals. Regarding political participation and access to nationality, there are, however, serious problems. In contrast, anti-discrimination policy stands out as a definite area of strength, which is mainly based on the number of actual complaints of discrimination, which of course can also be a sign of mistrust or repression. Hungarian authorities seem to have taken a formalistic and legalistic approach which may clearly be clearly alienating and repressive, but may also be pursued in the interests of neutrality.

<sup>30</sup> Eszter Szilassy and Zsuzsanna Árendás, in their qualitative analyses of the narrative handling of 'otherness' among teachers of refugees and the children themselves, found a large variety of ways of facing the conflicts and problems that emerge. It appears that even the idea of 'otherness' is avoided at Hungarian schools, as also occurred when Orientalist frameworks were established (Szilassy and Árendás, 2006).

with other population policies, we can clearly see that institutional inertia and institutional developments are at odds with the structural processes described above. The country is facing massive changes, and, being opposed to the idea of opening up toward the non-West and in order to achieve major demographic revitalization, the institutional framework limits its efforts to financially promoting higher fertility, creating a panic around defending these rights and disciplining lower classes and incoming 'illegals' in order to gain the support of the local middle-class and the well-integrated and non-marginalized working classes without promoting structural reform.

### *Panic, and the discursive fights over hierarchies. Concluding remarks*

Looking at the cognitive and political structures in relation to the above-described structural developments, then we see that in this increasingly competitive world economy, and within the hierarchically structured EU block, the key driver of this radical demographic nationalism that builds on a combination of discursive traditions is to show internally and externally that 'order' must be created within Hungary and Europe to strengthen them, and thus to make them more competitive via formal, population-focused interventions. The goal is to rebuild national pride and to discipline the postsocialist, postliberal 'political chaos' related to the 'jungle war' of global capitalism. Without offering large-scale structural change, it stresses the need for the defense of collective national interests in various fields via formally and directly handling some of the side-effects via direct intervention into population processes: e.g. engaging in selective pronatalism, recalling emigrants, penalizing emigrating students, and building fences against refugees. The promise is that society can escape these problems and dependencies if they follow the government in dispensing with 'liberal taboos'. In principle, this may appear to be a national emancipation discourse against hierarchies, but in reality it is purely a campaign that promotes panic, and without systematic measures of implementation simply flags up certain problems symbolically, with the aim of introducing disciplinary measures.

Concerning the pronatalist campaign, in an emblematic interview in 2015 (December 15) László Kövér, President of the Hungarian Parliament, gave an interview about the 'demographic decline' of the 'European natives': "*The world as it existed for thousands of years on the basis of traditional types of values is falling apart, and this is leading to dramatic consequences; namely, the vision of the death of the nation which inspired the literature of the reform period is actually very close. Not only in the case of Hungarians: the situation is more or less is the same for all native populations of all European member states; namely, that we are so close that we cannot stop going down the demographic slope and, practically, we will die out. (...) Now we can see that when the global population increases, thus in a certain way there is overpopulation, population decline occurs only in Europe, and sooner or later this will lead to an invasion by those who see a living space for themselves here. This decline is related to the lack of stable social support (or in a contradictory manner, the overly high level of well-being), social disorientation, especially of women and 'genderism' and the attack on our 'living space' by other civilizations. The key idea is to fight for survival, and against the proponents of death on a collective level via*

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*changing attitudes back to 'normalcy,' in which gender disciplining is one of the key tools.*"<sup>31</sup>

On a discursive level, this form of radical nationalism clearly calls for the protection of the privileges of East European emigrant workers (as opposed to 'illegals' and 'outsiders'), and of those West European states which also struggle with 'overly high' immigration. This exchange is clearly exemplified by the exchange between Britain and the Orbán-led Visegrád countries in early January, 2016 in the midst of the global refugee crisis. It is worth citing a few sentences from that exchange to show how such East-West exchanges happen among conservative and/ or radical nationalists, and in what ways the Hungarian government wants to export its ideas for the sake of a new Europe. According to the Guardian, David Cameron was told by his Hungarian counterpart, Viktor Orbán, not to treat Hungarians in the UK as migrants. Orbán said this was very important to people in his country: *"For us it is very important that we are not considered as migrants. Words matter here. (...) We would like to make it quite clear that we are not migrants into the UK. But we are the citizens of a state that belongs to the European Union who can take jobs anywhere freely within the European Union. (...) We do not want to go to the UK and take something from them. We do not want to be parasites. We want to work there, and I think that Hungarians are working well. They should get respect and they should not suffer discrimination (...). Cameron said he was still pushing his plan to stop EU migrants claiming work benefits in the UK for four years. But he stressed that he was open to alternative proposals that might reduce the immigration 'pull factor'."*<sup>32</sup>

So we learn from this exchange that migrants are 'parasites', but Hungarians (and other EU members) are not migrants, and they work, while others want to take something from the 'locals'. Hungary is thus anti-discriminative, but only in the case that other 'Europeans' are hurt. 'Mobile' East Europeans are thus competing with 'migrants,' and thus this form of nationalism seeks to identify 'relevant' (i.e. underpinned in a racist manner) claims against them. Only East Europeans should be entitled to occupy the side of labor in the capital-labor relationship in Europe, while there is a need to fight against inequality in the system of benefits among migrants and non-migrant workers in host countries. In a paradoxical way, 'migrants' therefore

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<sup>31</sup> The speech can be watched at: [http://indavideo.hu/video/InfoRadio - Arena - Kover Laszlo - Iresz\\_1](http://indavideo.hu/video/InfoRadio - Arena - Kover Laszlo - Iresz_1) "De ma megfordul, és ez önmagában is mutatja azt, hogy az a világ, ami több ezer éven keresztül létezett, egy bizonyos fajta tradicionális értékrend alapján, ez a világ, ez felbomlóban van, és ennek iszonyatos következményei vannak, egész pontosan, ha valamikor, a reformkor irodalmát megtermékenyítő nemzetelál víziója, az elég közel van. Nemcsak a magyarok számára egyébként, hanem az európai tagállamok minden őslakos népe számára nagyjából úgy néz ki a helyzet, hogy belátható időbe tehető az, amikor már nem tudunk a demográfiai lejtőn megállni, hanem gyakorlatilag előbb-utóbb el fogunk fogyni. ... Most már látható, hogy miközben az emberiség lélekszáma nő, tehát bizonyos értelemben túlnépesedés van, csak Európában van népességfogyás, és ez előbb-utóbb azzal fog járni, hogy ide beözönlenek azok, akik egyébként itt életretter látnak maguk előtt." This text reminds writings by Corrado Gini, who was the key advisor to Mussolini: "The future of the white race arouses anxiety among students of vital statistics and the ever growing public interested in population problems caused by two diametrically opposite opinions...overpopulation...our race will cease to increase...danger which threatens the white race of submerged by the coloured peoples". (Corrado, 1930:3)

<sup>32</sup> The text is from this article: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/live/2016/jan/07/osborne-interest-rates-speech-cameron-eu-for-an-interest-rate-rise-politics-live> Accessed: 09-04-2016.

become common enemies within the 'European family', although the discursive angles and thus even the groups themselves are different according to the above-described hierarchical exchanges.

In sum, this demographic nationalism also attacks intra-European and interregional prestige hierarchies as it argues that Hungarian demographic and migration policies should not be formulated according to the interests of greater powers like Germany (and its large-scale capital), or to support their social welfare systems. Thus it also attacks the internal Orientalism of the EU according to which 'East Europeans' should be passive and dependent objects of Western policy making.

Overall, based on a combination of certain selective discursive traditions, this demographic nationalism has developed a set of ideas about how to make Hungary far more competitive and to eliminate its dependencies via direct disciplining without structural changes. In theory this development can be seen as an ideological formulation of some kind of nationalist developmental state, as seen in various countries in the 1970s and 1980s (South Korea, Japan, and partially in Brazil). However, in Hungary, due to ideological inclinations and the preference for political control and the hidden reallocation of resources, we do not see the development of more complex policy measures for understanding and managing complex global dependencies and inequalities. As opposed to the claimed ideals, leaders have not been able to build even the basic elements of any real developmentalism in terms of relevant organizations and adequate initiatives for managing structural problems and opportunities (see: Evans, 1996).

We may call this the trap of demographic nationalism in the semi-periphery, the inefficiency of which is counterbalanced only by a conscious demographic and/or biopolitical hysteria and panic. This hysteria can be understood as claiming to 'defend' the population against various 'enemies,' without actually formulating substantial policies to handle structural problems, or their negative consequences. Even more, the discourses have the function of just symbolically pointing at some of the problems, but they appear to be actually trying to legitimize non-action and passivity to hide the incongruences with structural reality (the actual need to counterbalance 'demographic emptying' and the related financial and social challenges of social development) and to hide the unrelated accumulation of power and the reallocation of various resources to a pool of 'national capital'. We certainly need to understand the full complexity of such mechanisms in order to see how, via the global and local interplay of various factors, the liberal phase of global capitalism is developing into the now-emerging authoritarian cycle.<sup>33</sup> Obtaining a fuller understanding of such cycles may be the real objective when analyzing such cases in a comparative way.

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<sup>33</sup> As Antonio Gramsci proposed it when he wrote about the concept of passive revolution (Forgacs, 2000: 263-66).

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## Repertoires of Contention and New Media: The Case of a Hungarian Anti-billboard Campaign

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### Abstract

The so-called refugee crisis has had a profound effect on discourses all over Europe. While the issue of migration is a contested one everywhere, discourses are quite different in Central Eastern Europe than in the ‘old’ EU countries. A sharp increase in the number of refugees crossing Hungary during 2015, coupled with the Hungarian government’s agenda-setting strategy, led to a powerful and public anti-migrant campaign which sought to frame asylum-seekers as external threats to the country. While this campaign was by and large unchallenged by the Hungarian parliamentary opposition, the Two-Tailed Dog Party, a mock Hungarian political party, launched a counter-billboard campaign, attacking the governmental discourse. Taking the latter as a case of digitally supported civic action, the paper first discusses two theoretical problems related to digitally enabled social movements: the problem of voice, and the problem of participation. In both areas techno-pessimist authors have made strong claims: namely, that the internet creates ‘echo chambers’ that function as discursive enclaves, and that it leads to ‘slacktivism’ – a form of feel-good activism without significant impact. Afterwards, the paper presents the case of the Hungarian counter-billboard campaign and through the examination of its repertoire of activities reevaluates the above claims. It argues that the campaign’s action repertoire innovatively connected acts of feel-good activism in order to address wider audiences. With the help of the counter-billboard campaign, people with minority opinions were given a platform and visibility in the public. It also challenged official statements about the governments’ campaign through revealing inconsistencies in government communication. Through a process of mimetic engineering the original messages were altered and mocked in a satirical manner and the outcomes were brought back to the streets of Hungary. The campaign used an innovative combination of several low-cost activities, which proved to be a successful strategy. On a deeper level, the counter-campaign challenged hegemonic views about public discourse. The campaign effectively contrasted the government’s one-to-many, top-down approach to political communication with one that relied on many-to-many communication and a bottom-up approach.

*Keywords:* social media, social movements, refugees, Central Eastern Europe, memes.

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## 1. Introduction

Migration has become a central political issue on the agenda of the European Union, and the different approaches of its member states raise a number of significant questions as they are often closely linked to domestic political issues. These domestic issues, on the other hand, are often parts of another international trend: the rise of autocratic politicians in the West. Country case studies help us examine these interlinked issues in the light of the discourse on refugees.

Anyone arriving in Hungary during the summer of 2015 would have been surprised to find a significant number of billboards on the streets that targeted newcomers. Messages stating 'If you come to Hungary, respect our culture!', 'If you come to Hungary, don't take away our jobs!', and 'If you come to Hungary, respect our laws!' could be seen on the streets nationwide. The newcomer would have been even more dumbfounded to find that - mocking the style and visuals of these billboards - a similar number of very different messages were also framed in posters along the streets, one of them simply stating: 'Sorry about our prime minister!'.

The apparent addressees of the message were people who were indeed arriving in Hungary in the hundreds of thousands: refugees taking the Balkan route and crossing the country towards Western Europe, whose arrival led to significant public reaction in Hungary. Nevertheless, both campaigns specifically targeted Hungarian audiences in a political debate that played out not between host populations and asylum seekers, but among Hungarians against the backdrop of 'the refugee-problem'. Given the strong anti-migrant sentiment of the Hungarian public (Sik, Simonovits and Szeitl, 2016) and the overwhelming government campaign that was built on it and fueled it, the fact that this campaign was openly challenged was an unexpected development. Other than being a curious political event, the counter-billboard campaign initiated by the Hungarian mock political party, the Two-Tailed Dog Party, suggests a number of implications for scholars of social movements as well.

There appears to be general consensus within social movement scholarship that Eastern European social movements are considerably weaker in all aspects than their Western counterparts in Europe (Howard, 2003). Even when social movements do emerge, they tend to be oriented towards less disruptive, lower-threshold activities (Jacobsson and Saxonberg, 2013). Emergent forms of civil activism in Eastern Europe are therefore an important field of study as they provide insight into how some initiatives can overcome such obstacles.

Social movements often start off from a disadvantageous position in the public discourse, given that they lack the resources and discursive opportunities that the power they aim to challenge has access to. Classic works about the coverage of the anti-Vietnam movement (Halloren et al., 1970) and the anti-Iraq War movement (Murray et al., 2008) provide an empirical basis for understanding this matter. The phenomena is also explored in the classic work by Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching* (1980), in which Gitlin convincingly explores how the media frames social movements, focusing on their radical elements. What is often articulated in the academic literature is that the media representation of social movements is driven by an asymmetrical relationship between two actors: movements need to rely on media in order to meet their goals, but the same is seldom true for the media ('most

movements need the media, but the media seldom need movements' (Rucht, 2004: 35). Accordingly, numerous empirical studies have investigated how the mainstream media trivializes the messages of social movements, offering a negative interpretation of their activities.

This is even more true in the case of Hungary where the unbalanced nature of the public sphere has raised significant concerns in previous years. Freedom of press metrics show that the growing concentration of power in the media and the near-zero opportunity for dissident voices to appear in the media indicate a move away from a pluralistic towards a hegemonic public sphere controlled by the government (Karlekar and Dunham, 2014). It is not a coincidence, therefore, that notable protest movements in the past years have often been internet-supported, trying to make up for their disadvantages by utilizing affordances provided by social networking sites. The counter-billboard campaign itself was no exception: it heavily relied on and innovatively used social media for its purposes, from inception through to execution. Therefore the present paper argues that this digital context is central to understanding the campaign.

The rapidly expanding academic literature that deals with the relationship between social media and social movement organizations is quite often conceptualized as a debate between techno-optimists (Castells, 2012) who regard the emergence of social media as providing voice and organization affordances to social movements and therefore having a liberating effect on social movements, and techno-pessimists who contest the above statements (Morozov, 2011). These two opposing views can be further broken down into radical and moderate stances. Those who accept the innovation hypothesis within the optimist camp believe that the positive aspects create novel, never before existing tools and opportunities for social movements (Benkler, 2006), while those who agree with the reinforcement hypothesis only go as far as to claim that new affordances strengthen previously existing strategies and action repertoires (Van Laer, 2010). Within the techno-pessimist camp, a radical viewpoint emphasizes the ways in which social media allows for oppression and surveillance and the creation of 'echo chambers'; phenomena that in fact weaken the power of social movements (Morozov, 2011). The skeptical viewpoint, meanwhile, is more moderate and calls attention to the surviving barriers and obstacles to social movement organizations (Gladwell, 2010).

While the above-described dichotomy has had a large and lasting effect on scholarly discourse about the issue, some authors have called for a more nuanced view, claiming that binaries are themselves misleading as they often result in overgeneralized and oversimplified approaches (Lim, 2012). For the sake of the present article I will highlight three such approaches that focus on critical approaches, context and content, thereby attempting to bypass the optimist-pessimist dichotomy.

First, the critical approach put forward by Kellner argues that online spaces are neither benevolent nor malevolent in themselves, but are places of contestation and conflict. In such spaces of contestation repressed individuals and groups take advantage of the democratic potential to enhance their visibility and organizational opportunities, but these spaces of contestation are neither free nor fair because of the structural inequalities they involve (Kellner, 1999).

Second, those who stress the importance of context argue that one of the shortcomings of the aforementioned debates has been caused by an artificial distinction between online and offline spheres, or what Treré calls a ‘one media bias’, where a single platform of communication – social media in the present case – is singled out and studied, disregarding other communication channels (Treré, 2012). In this article I instead propose that an empirical investigation of hybrid movements that operate both on- and offline and their use and presence on different platforms give us insight into the complex relationship between technologies and collective action.

Finally, one analytically useful approach is a focus on content – on the message of the social movement and how it is affected by social media. Bennett and Segerberg (2014) argue that movements that originate from social media are examples of ‘connective action’, where participants engage with issues on highly individual terms. The key to such a common sense of direction, in their view, is therefore the use of personalizable action frames shared on social media. This personalization of content is central to understanding the transformations that social media allows.

This article presents the case of the Hungarian anti-billboard campaign organized by the Two-Tailed Dog Party with the above considerations in mind. Therefore it aims to take a critical approach which situates the case in the Hungarian discursive field in which preexisting power structures and powerful players primarily shape the outcomes of the activities of social movements. Second, the paper situates the campaign of the Two-Tailed Dog Party, which relied heavily on social media, within the media ecology that surrounded it. Finally, the personalized content at the center of the campaign took the form of memes that provided not only an understanding of the issue on individual terms, but strategic advantages for the movement, as we will see.

Notwithstanding the general disagreements in the field, there appears to be consensus in the literature that social media capacities affect social movements in more than one domain. This situation is summed up by Sandor Vegh’s classification (2003) that distinguishes between awareness and advocacy effects (the potential to bypass traditional media gatekeepers) and mobilization and organization effects (the lowering of risk thresholds and organizational costs).

Based on this distinction, the paper first discusses two theoretical problems related to digitally enabled social movements: the problem of voice and the problem of participation. In both areas techno-pessimist authors have made strong claims; namely, that the internet creates discursive enclaves, and that it leads to ‘slacktivism’: feel-good activism without significant impact. Afterwards, the paper presents the case of the Hungarian counter-billboard campaign and through an examination of its action repertoire re-evaluates the above-described claims. It argues that the campaign’s action repertoire innovatively connected instances of feel-good activism in order to break out of the counterpublic’s enclave and address wider audiences.

## ***2. Echo chambers - The problem of ‘voice’***

The problem of ‘voice’ in the present context refers to whether the internet and social media have democratic potential for pluralizing the public sphere.

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The concept of the public sphere, as elaborated by Habermas, describes a space where ideas are deliberated through communication. Central to the concept is that the exchange of thoughts in the public space takes place in a non-coercive manner. According to Habermas, twentieth century developments, and most notably the rise of mass media, have led to the deterioration of the public sphere as described above. The question is whether digital platforms bring us closer to the Habermasian normative idea of a public sphere (Habermas, 1989).

One of the central tenets of the Habermasian concept that has received considerable criticism is the claim that there exists a singular public sphere. Instead, as Nancy Fraser and others have argued, we should conceptualize discourse as consisting of a plurality of publics in which counterpublics that resist hegemonic discourses emerge and exist as well. According to Fraser, the assumption of a singular public sphere is both analytically mistaken and normatively undesirable (Fraser, 1990).

Habermas himself responded to critiques regarding the concept of a singular public sphere and expanded the notion of the 'public sphere' to capture the possibility of a 'pluralistic, internally much differentiated mass public' (1992: 438).

In her discussion about counterpublics, Fraser differentiates between stratified and egalitarian multicultural societies (1990). Following this distinction, the Hungarian case appears to be closer to the former situation, whereby the government's hegemony in public discourse and in the media and a strong public anti-migrant sentiment leads to subaltern counterpublics, as opposed to a peacefully coexisting plurality of publics. As Fraser claims, '(...) in stratified societies, subaltern counterpublics have a dual character. On the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment; on the other hand they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics' (Fraser, 1990: 124). Dahlberg emphasizes the need for a space of withdrawal, claiming that counterpublics succeed if and when they can use 'critical-reflexive spaces of communicative interaction' to 'contest dominant discourses that frame hegemonic practice and meaning' (Dahlberg, 2011: 861).

Whether a counterpublic becomes an enclave or enclaved is also strongly interrelated to the question of a movement's media strategy. In Rucht's conceptualization (2004), the choices a movement faces in this regard are abstention (keeping away from mainstream media), adaptation (accepting the rules of the game and participating in the mainstream media), attack (explicitly challenging and criticizing mainstream media) or alternatives (creating the movement's own media platforms). The factors that influence these choices are many, ranging from endogenous ones - like the identity and strategy of the movement - to exogenous factors - such as the available resources, or the society's degree of openness. Rucht himself concludes that the emergence of digital platforms has made the option of creating an alternative media platform more probable and favorable for social movements (2004). Rucht's conceptualization, like any other, is context-dependent and fits better into a pre-internet era media ecology than that of the present, but is analytically useful as it points to how movement strategies appear in a terrain of contestation.

Indeed, proponents of digitally enabled protest movements often emphasize the internet's ability to broaden the repertoire of communicative action. Such optimistic viewpoints usually posit a direct positive relationship between digital

communication affordances and deliberation (Benkler, 2006; Holt, 2004; Singh, 2013). Techno-pessimists, on the other hand, claim that the affordances of digital media lead not to more but to less deliberation. Gromping states that social networking sites polarize users and lead to the emergence of ‘echo chambers’, where critical reflection is seriously hindered (Gromping, 2014).

The stance of Habermas himself is rather skeptical with regards to the effects of the internet. The author states that ‘the rise of millions of fragmented chat rooms across the world instead lead to the fragmentation of large but politically focused mass audiences into a huge number of isolated public issues’ (Habermas, 2006: 423).

Simply put, the techno-pessimist claims that if social movements choose an alternative from among Rucht’s options - which is made more likely by digital affordances - they run the risk of creating echo chambers, therefore reducing the likelihood of wider influence on society. In this paper I propose that different media strategies coexist and build on each other: the use of an alternative media platform can become a stepping stone towards inclusion in mainstream media, even if the boundaries between the two are not necessarily clear-cut. Social movements are often hybrid; they function both on- and offline, and through a wide variety of media channels. The question then becomes how can a movement effectively utilize social media in order to make the transition and reach wider audiences.

### *3. Slacktivism - The problem of ‘participation’*

The relationship between activism through social movements and social media has been at the center of academic attention with the rise of such platforms and their use in collaborative action. Some celebrate the coming age of ‘participatory culture’ characterized by (a) low barriers to participation, (b) strong support for creating and sharing creations, (c) the presence of informal mentorship, (d) members believing that their contributions matter, and (f) a feeling of social connection with others (Jenkins, 2009: 5-6).

Critiques of these two techno-optimist approaches argue that the internet only favors activism based on a low-threshold for participation, as it is only able to create weak links (Gladwell, 2010), and that participation generated online cannot have significant political impact. This phenomenon has been referred to as ‘slacktivism’ (Christensen, 2011).

A simple example of slacktivism that costs no more than a few clicks of a mouse is the generation and sharing of memes online. As defined by Shifman (2013), an internet meme is a unit of popular culture circulated, imitated and transformed by internet users, creating a shared cultural experience.

An internet meme, according to Knobel and Lankshear, has three main characteristics: it contains elements of humor, a rich kind of intertextuality and anomalous juxtaposition (2006). An important built-in feature of the internet meme is the humor that derives from the juxtaposition of the viewers’ expectations based on the template and the actual altered outcome. As internet memes are predominantly non-serious, quite rarely political and naturally stay within the boundaries of the online world, their political impact can at first glance be conceptualized as relatively insignificant. However, while relatively under-researched, memes can contain

humorous elements and social critique at the same time, and more importantly, actors can consciously undertake mimetic engineering; that is, can identify harmful memes and release counter memes into the discourse (Godwin, 1994).

This paper posits that the creation of internet memes is indeed what Morozov (2011) would coin as slacktivism or feel-good activism in the sense that it requires relatively little of the participant's resources. Nevertheless, such memes – if and when they go viral – are able to help a social movement break out of its immediate environment and reach wider audiences. Accordingly, they are of value. It is not only the potential for the dissemination of memes that is important from a social activist perspective, but their ability to turn passive audiences into active participants. As Lankshear and Knobel conclude: 'If we don't like their contagious ideas, we need to produce some of our own.' (2003: 37). As we will see, one such innovation in the Hungarian case was the identification of the government's anti-refugee campaign as a harmful meme, the creation of counter-memes, and taking these memes 'offline' – back to the streets.

#### ***4. Data, approach, methods***

A number of significant empirical works have dealt with the case of the Hungarian 'refugee crisis' and how the discourse was shaped by the government during 2015. One of the first studies to analyze the issue, written by Bernáth and Messing, situates the problem in the theoretical framework of 'moral panic' and argues that the strong and rather aggressive campaign was not set back or questioned by agents other than the government, so the inaction of mainstream media and opposition parties should also be considered an explanation for the campaign's success (Bernáth and Messing, 2015). Other works situate the question in a framework of securitization. In a work describing the legal framework of the 'refugee crisis', Nagy introduces six characteristics that describe the government's securitization approach: denial, deterrence, obstruction, punishment, free-riding (lack of solidarity), and breaching superior law (Nagy, 2016). Sik and his colleagues focus on the effects of the securitization discourse and the campaign in general, situating it in a broader historical context and arguing that while xenophobic sentiments are at an all-time high in Hungary, they are relatively unchanged over time, and that anti-immigrant sentiment is strongly correlated to xenophobia in general (Sik, Simonovits and Szeitl, 2016).

As discussed above, this paper takes a threefold approach – a critical perspective, and an emphasis on context and on content – towards the issue of social media and social movement relationships. This approach provides the framework for the methodology as well. A critical approach towards the issue places the emphasis on the discursive opportunity structure, heavily shaped by the government's agenda-setting during the 'refugee crisis'. Accordingly, the paper relies on preliminary press research to provide an overview of the government's approach to the issue, and measures issue salience by comparing important keywords utilizing Google Trends. A focus on context drives the empirical research in its attempt to overcome one-media bias and develop a multi-site ethnography approach. Crowd-mapping was analyzed using data available from Zoomaps, while data about crowd-funding that was employed during the campaign are from a Google Spreadsheet created by the Two-

Tailed Dog Party. Finally, as Facebook was central to the campaign, the Facebook Fan Page of the Two-Tailed Dog Party was analyzed. Data from the Fan Page were scraped using Netvizz, a piece of software that provided important metrics for the study. Through Netvizz both the text contained in posts and comments, the number of post likes and shares, and the so-called 'pages like network' that are discussed below were collected, while images were chosen manually.

To create an overview of the Two-Tailed Dog Party's activities, content analysis was applied (Krippendorff, 1980), which consisted of a close reading of posts, note-taking, and identifying emergent issues and patterns. To identify the potential reach of the Two-Tailed Dog Party on social media, link analysis was used. According to Hogan (2008), one useful distinction in network research is that between the analysis of whole networks, personal networks, and partial networks. The present study's approach fits into the partial network model, as it situated the Two-Tailed Dog Party in the context within which it operated. This approach in general is usually referred to as link analysis. While potential reach would be best measured by identifying linked together individuals who shared the campaign's messages, Facebook's privacy settings do not allow for data collection of this kind. Instead, link analysis provides the organizational network within which Two-Tailed Dog Party is situated. A piece of network visualization software, Gephi, was used to provide an overview of this link analysis.

## *5. Background*

During the summer of 2015 the issue of refugees arriving to the European Union, and especially Hungary, became central to the political agenda. For a number of interrelated reasons the number of refugees heading towards Europe using the so-called Balkan route has been growing steadily in previous years, and increased rather sharply in 2015. While the details and explanations for this increase reach beyond the scope of this paper, one characteristic of this drastic change is that Hungary became an important transit point for most refugees, the majority of whom passed through the country towards Western Europe.

Immigration towards Hungary does not in itself explain the harsh stance of Orbán, since the country - until 2014 - had neither been a target nor a significant transit country with regards to migration. Therefore, in order to interpret Orbán's words, a general and a more specific preliminary point needs to be addressed. Regarding the general trends, while analysts often disagree about the proper definition for Orbán's right-wing government which has been in power since 2010, there is general consensus that it has involved moving from a liberal democratic set up towards a more autocratic regime, in which a consolidated party system, the rule of law, and freedom of the press have all been undermined (Bánkuti, Halmai and Schepelle, 2012; Fukuyama, 2012; Kornai, 2015). Since the latter is of significance for the present study, it is worth considering how the government proactively shapes not only the content but the structure of the Hungarian public sphere. Whether it is the media, intellectual forums or university workshops, Orbán has employed a threefold institutional strategy. First, by creating or taking over preexisting public institutions that are extremely well-financed in exchange for representing government views (the

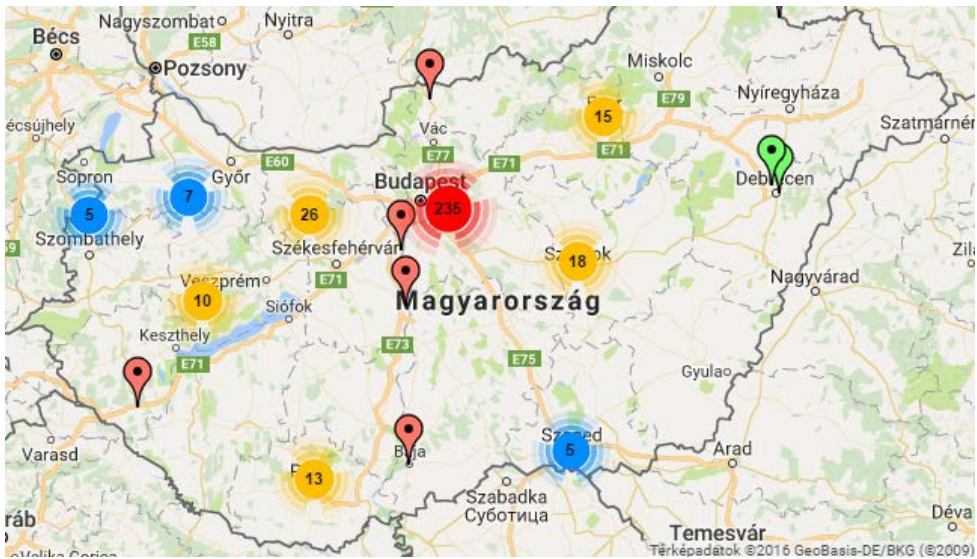
Hungarian Academy of Arts, Hungarian Television, theaters, etc.). Second, by creating or supporting right-wing, pro-government media outlets, blogs, research institutes, think tanks, etc. Third, by identifying leftist-liberal entities and institutions and making sure that their material position becomes unsupportable. Moving from the general context to the specific antecedents of the 'refugee crisis', analysts interpret Hungary's prime minister, Viktor Orbán's words as a communication offensive, triggered in response to the considerable drop in popularity of the party caused by domestic scandals such as the American entry ban of a number of Hungarian citizens, including the head of the Hungarian tax authority, or the failed initiative to introduce a so-called internet tax which mobilized tens of thousands of citizens against the plan (BBC, 2014).

The governing Fidesz implemented a political agenda-setting strategy that framed asylum-seekers as undeserving, threatening, and culturally incompatible with Europeans. Refusing to use the word 'refugee', the Hungarian government's claim is that migrants have become the central problem of Europe, and Hungary in particular. This framing of the issue has also allowed for the construction of internal and external enemies - opposition parties and EU institutions - namely, those who cooperate with or accept the arrival of refugees.

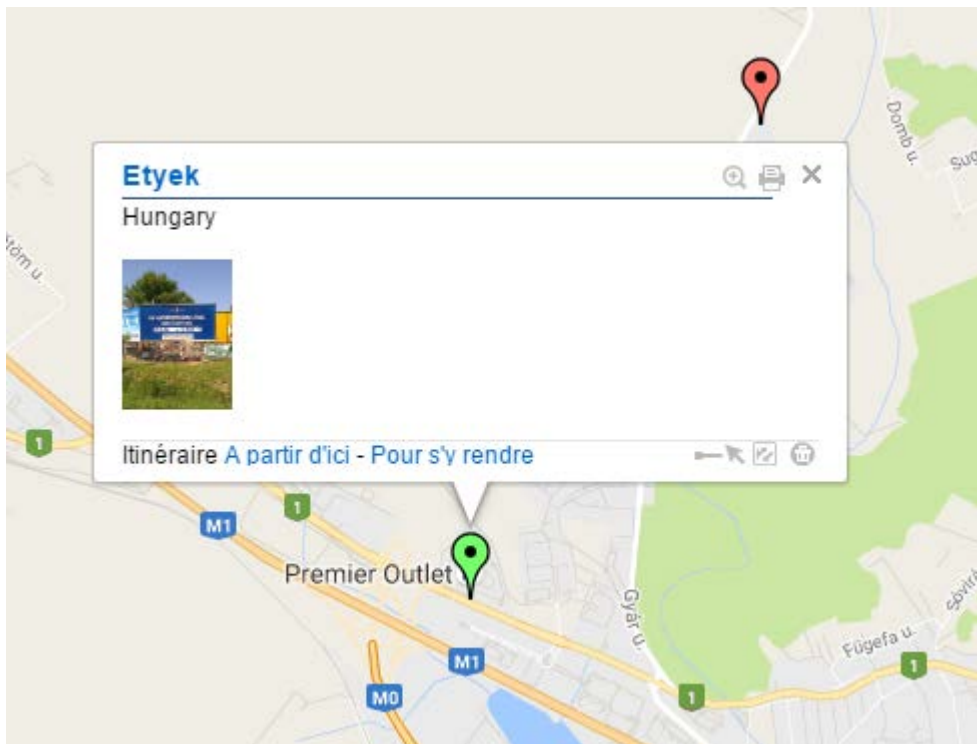
However, this strategy in fact preceded the so-called refugee crisis. Following the terrorist attacks against Charlie Hebdo, two million people took to the streets of Paris to honor the victims. Among them was Viktor Orbán, who was already blaming migration, and economic migration in particular, for the attacks (Reuters, 2015a).

Orbán's words were later echoed by a number of state officials. A number of political and communication tools - a working group, and a so-called process of 'national consultation' - were applied to reinforce this message (Hungarian Spectrum, 2015). A month after this, the government unleashed a major billboard campaign with three basic messages: 'If you come to Hungary, respect our culture!'; 'If you come to Hungary, respect our laws!'; and, 'If you come to Hungary, don't take away our jobs!'. Shortly after this announcement, the government also announced the building of a fence on the Hungarian-Serbian border (Reuters, 2015b).

The government's first billboards were set up on June 6, 2015. When these hit the streets, an outburst of memes followed. But the reaction this time did not stop there. As a prelude to the forthcoming counter-campaign, many of the billboards were damaged or altered by self-appointed street artists. While these acts of outrage were spontaneous in the beginning, they soon gave rise to cooperative activities. First, a crowd-sourced map (created anonymously) made it possible for those who were interested to track which government billboards had already been altered or damaged, and which ones were still untouched (Figure 1). Participants could also upload pictures about the 'results' of their work (Figure 2). Second, those altering messages on billboards often uploaded their work to social media and these photos became widely shared memes in their own right (Figure 3).



**Figure 1.** Crowd-sourced map showing the location of intact (red)/altered (green) /damaged (ble) governmental billboards. Source: <https://www.zemaps.com/map?group=1485171>



**Figure 2.** Picture uploaded to the crowd-sourced map of an altered governmental billboard. Source: <https://www.zemaps.com/map?group=1485171>



**Figure 3.** 'If you come to Hungary, don't take away Viktor Orbán!' Picture uploaded to the crowd-sourced map of an altered governmental billboard. Source: <https://www.zemaps.com/map?group=1485171>

According to press reports, hundreds of the 1,025 governmental billboards were vandalized in one way or another during what the Hungarian public soon nicknamed 'the billboard-wars' (Átlátszó, 2015a). While these acts led to intense discussions about whether billboard vandalism constitutes an act of free speech, they were soon followed by much more sophisticated and contentious activities. On June 8, the Two-Tailed Dog Party, a mock political party specializing in urban performances and street art with a strong emphasis on social satire, announced that it would launch a so-called 'anti-anti-immigrant campaign' for which it was awaiting donations. The party is not a conventional political project but a spoof party established by street artist Gergely Kovács, whose slogans include 'More everything, less nothing!', 'Eternal life, free beer, tax-deductions!' and 'We promise anything!'. Kovács maintains that he has no intention of joining or forming a 'serious' political movement.<sup>1</sup> While at its inception the original goal of the counter-billboard campaign was to set up no more than a few dozen billboards, the initiative soon escalated into a much wider protest. On the very first day, the party succeeded in collecting 6.5 million forints (20,700 euros) through a crowd-funding campaign, and within ten days the amount donated had reached 34 million forints (108,000 euros) which made it possible for the group to create and set up more than 900 billboards nationwide – and a few billboards abroad. The crowd-funding campaign was organized on Facebook, but the digital component of the

<sup>1</sup> Recently, the mock-party has been registered as a political party. See: <http://budapestbeacon.com/news-in-brief/hungarian-two-tailed-dog-party-run-2018-elections/40362>

campaign was not limited to this platform. The content and visuals of the billboards were also co-created: anyone with an idea could upload their version online, and finally, decisions about billboards were also outsourced as people could vote about the best pieces on social media too. This does not mean, nevertheless, that the mock party did not have their say in their own campaign – during the establishment phase they often emphasized that they wanted the counter-billboard campaign to be centered on three core messages. First, solidarity with refugees (Figure 4); second, raising awareness about the nature of the campaign and the need to redirect attention to issues of corruption and poverty (Figure 5); and finally, an apology for the xenophobic messages of the government in the form of a number of messages especially targeting foreigners (Figure 6). The billboards hit the streets in two waves, on July 1 and July 16. Some of the formerly created online memes went to print, but brand new suggestions were also displayed. Famously, the Two-Tailed Dog Party set up billboards in Viktor Orbán's native town of Felcsút with the message: 'Space station to be built here soon!' This reference mocked the prime minister's obsession with football and his go-ahead for the building of a 3,500-seater stadium immediately next to his country estate in Felcsút, a village with a population of less than 1,700.

By the end of the campaign, 1,025 governmental billboards were being countered by 900 Two-Tailed Dog Party billboards. The often satirical messages attracted wide coverage in the press – both Hungarian and international – and on social media, and successfully altered the direction of public discourse.



**Figure 4.** ‘For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you invited me in’, Matthew 25-35. A counter-billboard set up by the Two-Tailed Dog Party. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/justanotherwordpresspage>



**Figure 5.** 'If you're Hungary's Prime Minister, you have to respect our laws!' A counter-billboard set up by the Two-Tailed Dog Party.

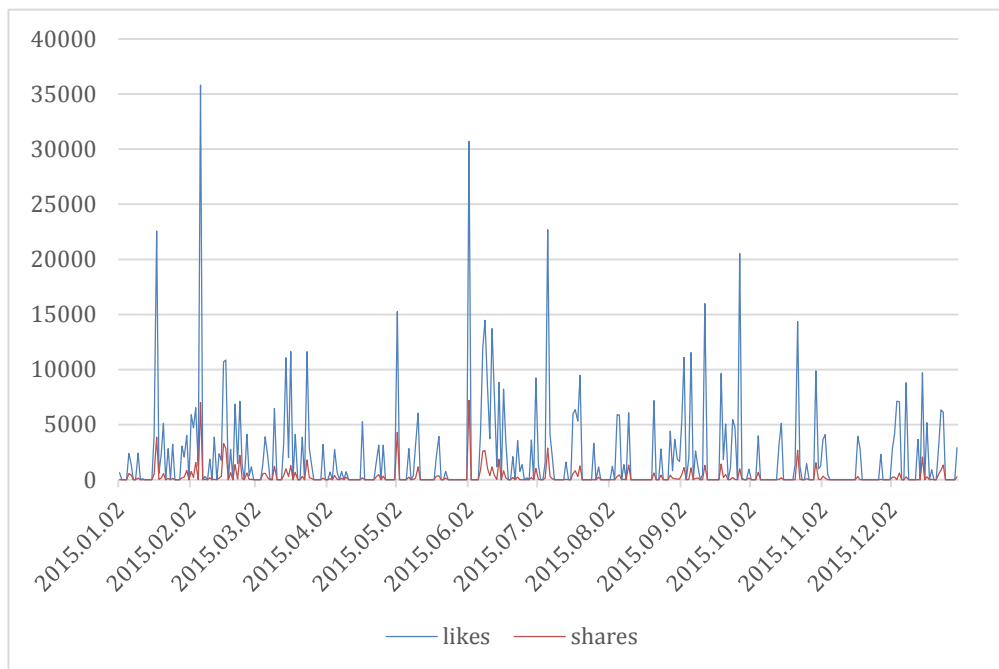
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/justanotherwordpresspage>



**Figure 6.** 'Sorry about our prime minister!' A counter-billboard set up by the Two-Tailed Dog Party. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/justanotherwordpresspage>

## 6. Discussion

A look at the overall performance of the Two-Tailed Dog Party's Facebook Fan Page in 2015 helps us situate its campaign among its broader activities. The present study's focus is on examining 'likes' and 'shares', as these provide sufficient insight into user engagement. The data in Figure 7 show that while the billboard campaign obviously attracted an audience for the Two-Tailed Dog Party, their popularity at this time was far from unprecedented (Figure 7). Staying within the realms of social media, the significance of the campaign is difficult to explain.



**Figure 7.** Number of post likes and shares on the Facebook Fan Page of the Two-Tailed Dog Party during 2015. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/justanotherwordpresspage>

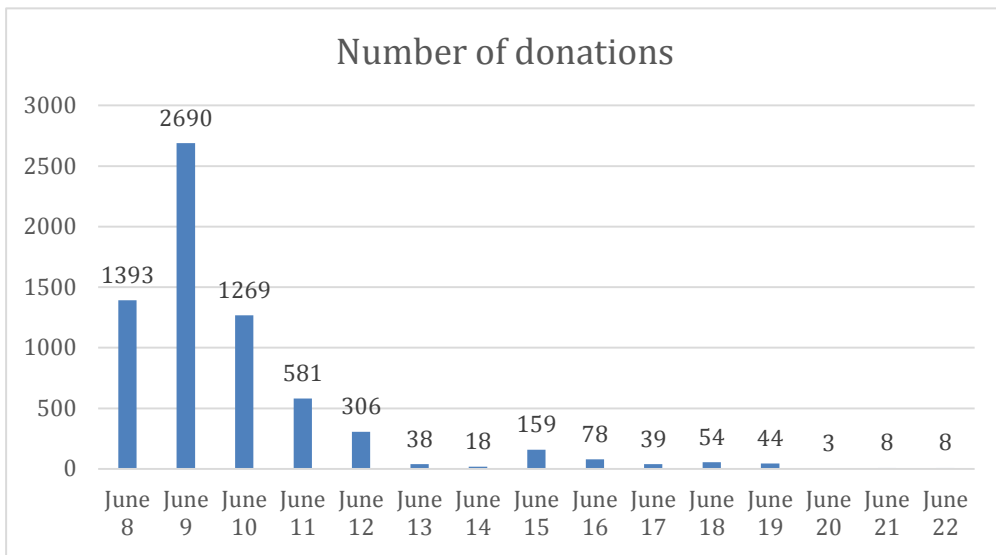
Among the 20 most popular posts on the Facebook Fan Page of Two-Tailed Dog Party in 2015, 15 contain pictures, which is a clear illustration of the visual nature of the party's style of communication. Five from these twenty most popular posts were written within the time frame of a week (the first week of June). The second most shared and liked post by the Two-Tailed Dog Party in 2015 contains no textual content; it is a meme, a variation of the billboard campaign that states: 'Come to Hungary, we are already working in London!' (4572 shares; June 2, 2015). While the third most shared post of 2015 predates the billboard campaign, it is a mockery of the government's national consultation on immigration, aptly titled: 'Who do you hate more?' (3730 shares; May 2, 2015). The post which received the largest number of comments (854) in 2015 and triggered hundreds of suggestions asks the question: 'What billboard should we put up in Felcsút?' (June 12, 2015), referring to the prime

minister's hometown. Responses included: 'Hungary: Closed on Sundays!', 'For a mediocre Hungary!', 'If you're Viktor Orbán, give back the money you stole from us!', and 'If you have come to Hungary, it's not too late to turn back!'. The second most commented-on post of the year (723 comments; July 6, 2015) shares a photo of a poster from the Two-Tailed Dog Party's campaign in Vienna that says in German 'Thank you Austria for not closing your borders in 1956!'. In contrast to the previous examples, this post provoked considerable controversy and numerous people expressed their distaste for the parallel that was being drawn by the message on the billboard.

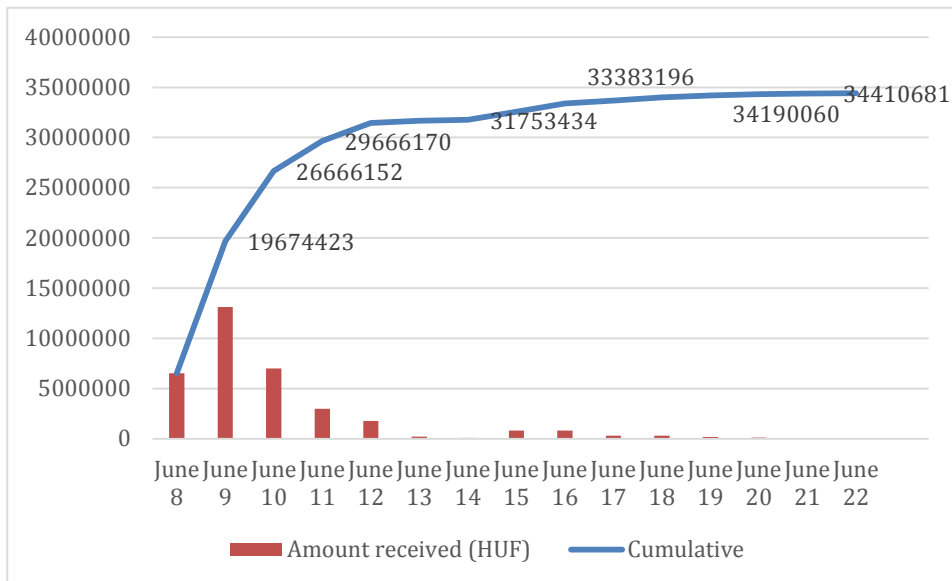
### *6.1 Breaking the 'spiral of silence'*

The spiral of silence in the Hungarian case refers to the fact that on the one hand the government proactively targeted asylum-seekers as potential threats to the country, while those who disagreed with such a stance had little to no representation in public discourse, partly because of the inactivity of opposition parties and a lack of strong social movements in the field. The spiral of silence was also created by the fact that the power asymmetry between anti-refugee and pro-refugee groups was coupled with another fundamental form of asymmetry: the anti-refugee campaign had access to mass communication techniques to reach its wider audiences, while the latter group had rather a limited set of resources to get its messages across. These asymmetries often lead to 'preference falsifications' (Kuran, 1995) when minority groups lack knowledge about others' political preferences and are in turn less likely to speak up. While social media may foster the creation of homophilous groups that strengthen the so-called 'echo chamber' effect, it can also be strategically used to generate resources in order to transcend the boundaries of such counterpublics, as the case of the counter-billboard campaign shows.

In a counterintuitive way, overcoming the barriers of such 'echo chambers' and reaching a wider audience was made possible, not retarded, by such feel-good activism. Participants were encouraged to engage in low-cost and low-risk activities that required very little commitment, while the appeal of the campaign was based on its humorous, satirical nature. As the Two-Tailed Dog Party launched its crowd-sourced, anti-billboard campaign at the beginning of June, 2015, it also recorded each donation in a Google Form; the available data show both features – low-effort contributions and the success of the campaign – rather clearly. In 16 days, the campaign generated 34 million forints from 6,688 donors, the average contribution from each being 5,128 forints (about 16 euros). Data also show that within the first four days, 89 per cent of all donors contributed, and 86 per cent of funding was raised.



**Figure 8.** Number of donations to the Two-Tailed Dog Party during the crowd-funding campaign. Source: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Faqcki4Woh85wOQdl0P9rDKWaCvIG5r4woth0dkCMew/edit#gid=0>



**Figure 9.** Donations collected by the Two-Tailed Dog Party during the crowd-funding campaign. Source: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Faqcki4Woh85wOQdl0P9rDKWaCvIG5r4woth0dkCMew/edit#gid=0>

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### *6.2 Revealing the nature of the governmental billboard campaign*

The counter-campaign had a number of cognitive effects; that is, in itself it challenged a number of assumptions about the government's campaign that manifested itself in the form of a national consultation in May, 2015 and a billboard campaign in June-July, 2015. The official message, that the campaign sought to address asylum-seekers arriving to Hungary, had already been discredited by the very fact that the language of the messages was Hungarian. But the crowd-sourced map created during the so-called 'billboard wars' during May-June, 2015 – during which time individuals vandalized government posters – made it clear to a wider audiences that the placement of the billboards did not correspond to the locations of arrival of asylum-seekers: very few, in fact, were located near the borders or different asylum institutions, while the majority were put up in downtown Budapest. While the strongly manipulative nature of the campaign had always been suspected, the map provided a clear and factual demonstration of it.

The counter-billboard campaign also contributed to uncovering serious inconsistencies in the government's claims of how much it had spent on its own campaign. While the official budget shows that the 1,025 billboards put up by the government cost 74 million forints, the Two-Tailed Dog Party spent less than 50 per cent of this amount on around the same number of billboards (900). This finding further undermined the credibility of the government's campaign which was effectively framed as overpriced for questionable reasons, to say the least (Átlátszó, 2015b).

### *6.3 Memetic engineering*

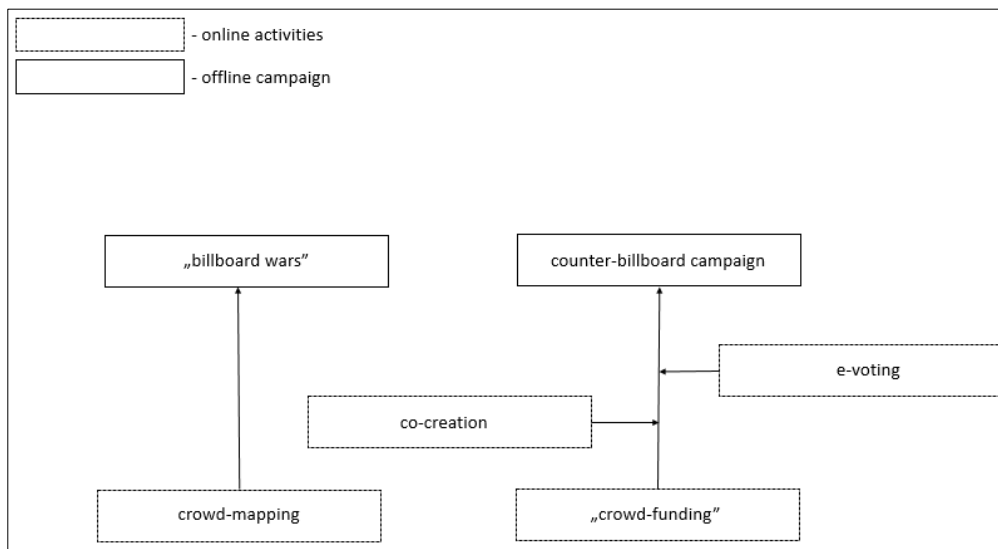
Framing political messages as potentially alterable memes is rather common in the online world. So it is only natural that when the first governmental billboards appeared, memes that satirized the original messages started appearing in social media.<sup>2</sup> The government's billboards proved to be rather suitable bases for mimetic engineering in the sense that the recognizable visuals could be coupled with a simple and easily replaceable sentence. In a way, it can also be argued that it was also in the government's best interest to create such alterable messages, as with each replication the original messages became units of popular culture. What the government did not and could not expect was that, in terms of fecundity, anyone could rival their position and presence on the streets. What the initiative launched by the Two-Tailed Dog Party did was provide two essential spaces that made success more likely: a critical-reflexive space for communicative interaction (Dahlber, 2011), and later, a wider form of visibility through which reflections could be shared with the general public. The innovative element in the campaign was taking the campaign back to where it came from: having identified the government's billboard propaganda as harmful, and having invited people to crowd-fund, co-create and co-select countermemes, the counter-campaign then moved offline and reached out to mass audiences.

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<sup>2</sup> While it is close to impossible to count the number of memes that reflected on the campaign, a Google search for the general term 'Ha Magyarországra jössz...' ('If you come to Hungary...') yields hundreds of related images.

#### 6.4 Combined acts of slacktivism

Examples of crowd-enabled collaboration often include the distribution of a larger task among many participants, who then execute the task from remote locations, leading to a lowering of the personal costs of involvement. The organizational logic of the counter-billboard campaign effectively utilized the advantages of such forms of collaboration, but it also combined them in a way that created a sophisticated chain of activities (Figure 9). During the ‘billboard-wars’ this chain of action was rather short: information about the location of the billboards was crowd-mapped online, and using this knowledge a number of offline activities followed (with the potential to provide feedback about the ‘results’ online). However, the counter-billboard campaign developed and extended this short chain of action: it built on (a) crowd-funding activities that generated resources and hype for the campaign; (b) the co-creation of the billboards that allowed for the mimetic engineering described above; (c) an e-vote about the billboards that strengthened the sense of participation in the campaign; and, (d) the offline campaign that reached a wider audience. This interconnectedness of activities was partly made possible by the new modalities of participation afforded by social networking sites.

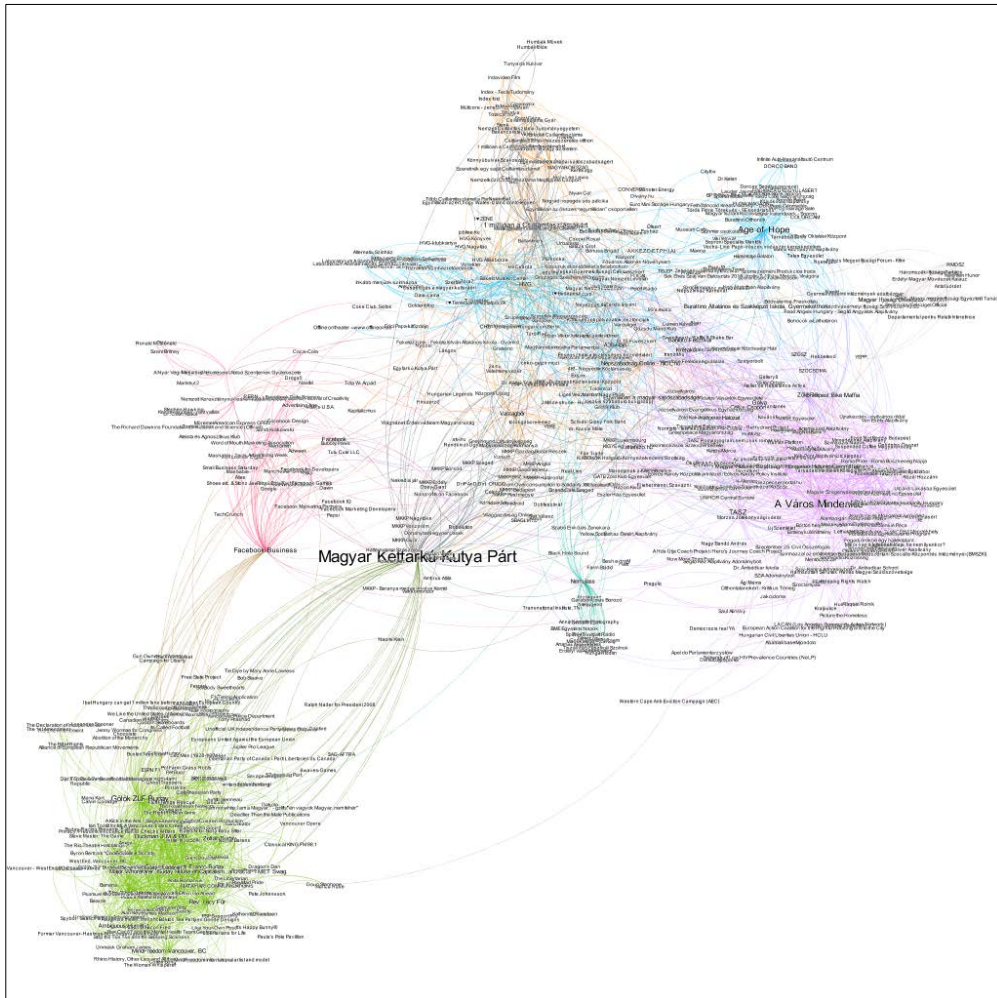


**Figure 10.** Combined acts of slacktivism

#### 6.5 Challenging the structure of the discourse

Neither the average size of the contributions (5,128 forints), nor the number of participants (6,688 donors) are significant in themselves – nevertheless, the combined effects allowed for a national campaign just as large as the one it was countering. While at the surface level the counter-campaign was a non-serious, non-political prank which had unexpected success, it also provided a contrast to the wider public about the nature of the political discourse.

One way to visualize the potential reach of the Two-Tailed Dog Party's messages is through link analysis (Figure 11).

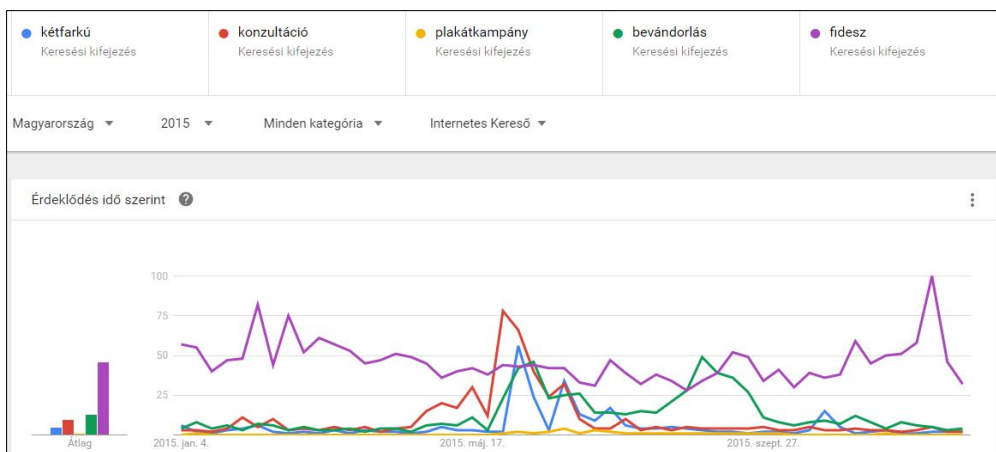


**Figure 11.** Network map of the Two-Tailed Dog Party on Facebook

The network consists of pages liked by the Two-Tailed Dog Party and pages liked by the owners of those pages: it contains 673 nodes and 3063 edges. The average path length is 3,876. The different colors represent clusters of nodes that are more densely connected together than with the rest of the network. Node label size represents influence (the bigger the label, the higher the node's betweenness centrality). The large, rather separate light-green cluster connects mostly non-Hungarian (mainly American and Canadian) libertarian-liberal groups. The purple, densely connected cluster on the right-hand side of the network illustration consists mostly of Hungarian NGOs and social movements critical of the government. The light-blue cluster in the upper-right corner consists of charities whose focus is poverty amelioration. The magenta cluster on the left hand-side of the picture consists of pages with a

technological focus, while the blue cluster in the upper-central side of the network contains pages that belong to the Hungarian blogosphere and journalists. One can clearly see that the network of the Two-Tailed Dog Party is far from being densely connected, and the party in fact is located at the intersection of numerous spheres otherwise remote from each other.

In the Hungarian discursive field of the ‘refugee crisis’ the effects of the anti-billboard campaign are impossible to analytically distinguish from the plethora of other influences, including the original government campaign, the presence of refugees, the international climate and the coverage of the story by traditional media. One way to illustrate the claim that the Two-Tailed Dog Party’s presence indeed impacted issue salience during the ‘crisis’ is to examine data from Google Trends which collected data about search terms used by Hungarians during 2015 (Figure 12).



**Figure 12.** Issue salience measured by Google Trends during 2015 [two-tailed (*kétfarkú*); consultation (*konzultáció*), billboard-campaign (*plakátkampány*), immigration (*bevándorlás*), Fidesz (*fidesz*)]

The Figure compares the salience of five search terms. In order of appearance: two-tailed (*kétfarkú*), consultation (*konzultáció*), billboard campaign (*plakátkampány*), immigration (*bevándorlás*) and Fidesz (*fidesz*). During the launch of the Two-Tailed Dog Party’s campaign, it can be seen that searches related to the party increased significantly until mid-August – at one point (the first week of June), even exceeding those for Fidesz. The term ‘billboard campaign’ is never extensively searched for online, while searches for ‘consultation’ – referring to the national consultation initiated by the government – reach a peak at the beginning of the summer, and declined from that point onwards. The figure shows that the number of searches for the Two-Tailed Dog Party exceeded searches for ‘immigration’ during the summer of 2015 three times. These figures all point to the conclusion that the anti-billboard campaign had a significant influence on Hungarian migration-related discourse.

At a deeper level, the counter-campaign challenged hegemonic views about public discourse. It effectively contrasted the government’s one-to-many, top-down approach to political communication with a campaign that relied on many-to-many communication and a bottom-up approach. Many-to-many communication is, in a

way, inherent to social media discourses, while the bottom-up approach meant that successful authors could see their own billboard-designs appear on streets. The characteristics of participatory culture (Jenkins, 2009) thus create a sense of empowerment and a radically different interpretation of how collective action problems may be approached by political actors. By introducing mimetic engineering into its action repertoire, the campaign also showed at a deeper level the differences between passive audiences and active participants in political discourse. The traditional assumption that the general public's role in shaping the relevant narrative is merely reactive was thus effectively questioned by the counter-campaign. On an emotive level, the counter-campaign also offered an alternative emotive frame – as a built-in feature of the memes, the campaign was humorous and satirical in tone and contrasted with the fear-mongering character of the government's messages.

## *7. Conclusion*

The counter-billboard campaign successfully broke the 'spiral of silence' as people with minority opinions were given a platform and visibility in the public eye. It was also effective in revealing the nature of the governmental billboard-campaign: that it had no intention of addressing asylum-seekers arriving in Hungary, and that billboards were paid for at above-market prices. On a deeper level it challenged hegemonic views about public discourse by contrasting one-to-many, top-down messages about fear with many-to-many, participative messages based on humor. The traditional assumption that the general public's role in shaping the relevant narrative is merely a reactive one was questioned by the counter-campaign. It also challenged perceptions about how to address collective action problems in society, offering a participatory alternative.

However, based on Gladwell's claim (2010) – which does not rule out the possibility of successful digital social movements, but rather states that such movements do not challenge the status quo – the limits of the campaign should not be overlooked. While the campaign was part of a political discourse about migration, it was a rather self-restricted one. It never offered a substantial critique of the government's activities and views, instead focusing on satire and mockery. It was also limited in the sense that it was not part of a sustainable long-term effort to counter governmental discourse, but a short campaign of mobilization and action. (However, during 2016 when the government initiated a national referendum against the EU quota scheme for hosting refugees, its renewed billboard campaign once again mobilized the Two-Tailed Dog Party and its supporters – a repeated call for donations leading to the same enthusiastic support.) Finally, however visible, the counter-billboard campaign did not mobilize a broad spectrum of Hungarian society, the majority of whom are staunch supporters of the government's migration policy. Nevertheless, the innovative action repertoire made possible by digital affordances contributed to effectively resisting the hegemonic discourse about the refugee crisis, and more generally, the 'boundaries' of the political. In a broader context the campaign was an example of prefigurative politics where, instead of making claims that address the government, contentious groups act out practices that are in accordance with their picture of the ideal functioning of politics: engaging in activities that are creative, participatory, critical and autonomous.

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ANNASTIINA KALLIUS\*  
Rupture and Continuity: Positioning Hungarian Border  
Policy in the European Union

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### Abstract<sup>1</sup>

In this article, I locate the efforts of the Hungarian government to close its borders to migrants in the broader context of externalization of European Union asylum policy. I draw on Martina Tazzioli's conceptualization of the production of temporary, divisive migrant multiplicities in border zones in ethnographically presenting the conditions of two protest marches of migrants. I suggest that the relative successes and failures of these marches, one of which resulted in a temporary rupture in Hungary's adherence to EU border policy, relate to the presence or absence of biopolitical border controls and techniques of externalization that stand in parallel with long-term developments of EU border control. In this context, I also question the extent to which an emergence of a collective subject is contingent upon local support, on one hand, and imaginations of the border, on the other. I argue that the analysis of Hungarian state's border control, as well as efforts to counter it, must be situated in the historical development of the EU border policy.

*Keywords:* borders, European Union, Hungary, migration, refugees, autonomy of migration.

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## *1. Introduction*

The Hungarian border policy of deterring migrants must necessarily be located in the wider context of the European Union border regime. In this paper, I question the assumption, as expressed in international media, and by several politicians and policymakers, that the changes in the Hungarian government's asylum strategy in 2015 and 2016 constitute an aberration from the European Union asylum policy.<sup>2</sup> Rather, they are an expression of the logic of externalization of EU border control, meaning political and spatial measures that extend EU border policy, surveillance and control to third countries, thereby fundamentally limiting people's access to asylum procedures in the EU (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009; Andrijasevic, 2010; Casas Cortes et. al., 2015). I suggest that Hungary's strategy, manifested by the construction of legal and physical border fences that result in pushbacks to Serbia and in the blanket rejection of asylum applications based on safe third country regulations, is a continuation of EU policies of restricting access to asylum through similar measures of externalization, gaining a particular regional expression (Boswell, 2003).

In locating a temporary rupture in this continuity of Hungarian border policy with EU border control, I draw on Martina Tazzioli's conceptualization of the generation of temporary, migrant multiplicities in border zones (2016). For Tazzioli, these easily divided migrant multiplicities are produced by bordering techniques, and are decidedly distinct from other migrant communities. They are brought together by biopolitical techniques including visualizations portraying migrants as a spectacle, data that presents virtual representations of multiplicity, and migrants' temporary spatial proximity as a result of border controls. Thus, temporary migrant multiplicities need to be looked at somewhat separately from wider collective migrant subjectivity. The temporary aspect renders migrant multiplicities divisive, as the spatial proximity is underscored by the individualized asylum procedure, as manifested at the Hungarian-Serbian border.

I suggest that a temporary rupture in Hungary's continuity with EU border policy emerged when the Hungarian government organized transportation of migrants<sup>3</sup> through its territory to the Austrian border in autumn 2015. I ethnographically investigate the events that led to this rupture, when a week-long protest of migrants at the Keleti railway station in Budapest, led to a 'march of hope' from Keleti to Vienna. I explore the conditions that allowed migrants to override the individualizing nature of multiplicity, and emerge as a collective subject that succeeded in pressuring the Hungarian government to disregard the Dublin regulation. After this first march of hope, the Hungarian government solidified techniques of border control in the so-called 'transit zone', the border area surrounding the fence on the southern, Serbian border. These techniques, such as safe third country regulations,

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<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, the call of the foreign minister of Luxemburg to expel Hungary from EU for hostility towards refugees (Weaver and Kingsley, 2016). Also, in public debates in the Hungarian media, many have expressed the government's anti-refugee stance to be a deviance from the 'European' norm, with opposition parties campaigning against Viktor Orbán with a rhetoric of 'staying' in Europe. For a legal account, see Nagy 2016.

<sup>3</sup> In most cases, I refer to people on the move with the word 'migrant', although on some occasions when relying on legal discussions and sources, I also refer to 'asylum seekers' or 'refugees'. For a nuanced discussion on these categories, see Apostolova 2015.

represent a continuation of EU border controls, and resulted in the failure of another march of hope from Belgrade to the Hungarian border. Of these two marches as acts of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen, 2008), the first one emerged in the absence of individualizing effects of a biopolitical border, and met its immediate goal of opening the Austrian border to a group of migrants. The second march, meeting the border control processes at the transit zone, failed exactly at the same purpose on the Hungarian border. These different outcomes, I suggest, relate to expressions of EU border control externalization during the time between the two marches, that challenge the emergence of migrant multiplicities as collective political subjects in the Serbian-Hungarian border zone (Tazzioli, 2016). These expressions, I suggest in the second part of the article, are historically anchored in longer term developments in EU border policy and the role of East-Central Europe therein.

## *2. The context: the long summer of migration*

The events of ‘the long summer of migration’ in 2015 have warranted much attention by migration scholars across the disciplinary spectrum. Authors have explored migrants’ protest movements and activists supporting them (Atac et al., 2016; Atac, 2016; Ikizoglu Erenzu, 2016; Stierl, 2016), as well as long-term existing structures of solidarity (Rozakou, 2012; 2016). Holmes & Castañeda (2016) have looked at the representation of the ‘crisis’, while the emergence of migration and asylum in Europe as a ‘hot’ topic of research has been criticized (Cabot, 2016; see also Papataxiarchis, 2016). Conceptually, I locate my contribution to the emerging body of critical migration research that has documented the productive and counterproductive nature of the European border regime, which by attempting to curb irregularity by externalization instead generates undocumented mobility and precarious labour (Hess, 2010; Andersson, 2014; 2016). Looking at the emergence individual and collective migrant subjectivity in the framework of longer developments of EU border control, I join contributions that explore avenues for the possibility of autonomy of migration (Papadopolous et al., 2008; Casas Cortes et al., 2015; Scheel, 2013). Advocates of autonomy of migration, often like myself embedded in the scholar-activist nexus (Kasperek and Speer, 2013), focus on the agency, adaptability, force and resourcefulness of migration that respond to attempts to curb it. In relation to the Hungarian border controls, I am curious about manifestations of autonomy by collective subjects or singular, individual choices of people. I locate these efforts towards autonomy in the empirical and historical context of Hungary’s position in the EU border policy architecture. Having in the 1990s acted as a buffer zone itself, Hungary occupies a strategic position in the Balkan route, bordering Austria to the west and Serbia to the South. This geopolitical position means embeddedness in the European Union border regime and the Schengen zone, on one hand, and in the transitory dynamics of the Balkan Route, on the other. In advancing an aggressive form of border control and an eagerness to ‘protect’ the European Union from migrants, the Hungarian government has strategically capitalized on its geopolitical position, portraying itself as a proud and tough Eastern European leader who has a ‘historical responsibility’ to protect Europe, unlike liberal and multicultural policymakers in Brussels (Magyar Kormány, 2016c).

In attempting to understand the success of one march and the failure of the other, I discuss legal measures undertaken by the Hungarian government in 2015-16, which in turn bear similarities to older mechanisms of EU border control externalization. To this end, I resurface older scholarly work on how East-Central Europe itself functioned as a buffer zone for externalizing EU border controls in the 1990s. Indeed, there are remarkable similarities between current deterrence mechanisms in Eastern and Southern Europe with those adopted previously in Western and Northern Europe. As with the other new member states of the EU, also the development of the Hungarian asylum policy was inevitably contingent upon the development of the European border regime, and adhering to the constantly developing EU asylum *acquis* constituted a pre-condition for the postsocialist countries to join the European Union in the 2000s. Analysts have remarked on the paradoxical adoption of the asylum *acquis*, including expectations of new member states to receive large numbers of asylum seekers but work with a legislation that is essentially targeted at keeping them at bay (Lavenex, 1999; Nancheva, 2015). I argue that the Hungarian border policy is a continuation of the logic of externalization, and creates temporary migrant multiplicities in border zones. Although migrant multiplicities, as conceptualized by Tazzioli, carry potential of autonomously subverting border controls, they are easily fragmented by biopolitical border control, as in the case of the second march of hope.

Recognizing these dynamics, I refrain from sketching the Hungarian 'case' at first, followed by the European 'context', because the two are chronologically and contextually interwoven and interlinked. I will, however, begin the story from the end, with two ethnographic vignettes that speak to the broader developments of the Hungarian and EU asylum policy and the consequences thereof. The first vignette looks at the march of hope from Budapest to Vienna in September 2015. Following the event, the term march of hope became emblematic of migrants' acts of citizenship, and was used later to describe other marches, e.g. on the Greek-Macedonian border in March 2016, and Serbian-Hungarian border in July 2016. The second vignette fast-forwards to summer 2016 and this second march of hope from Belgrade to the Hungarian border. I suggest that the different outcomes relate to divisive border controls implemented by the Hungarian government after the successful march in September 2015, and as relying to the safe third country concept, reproduce older techniques of EU border externalization. By singling out Hungary as the focal point of analysis, I wish to contribute to the notable absence of analyses on East-Central Europe in migration literature, and join existing literature from the southern and eastern peripheral countries of the European Union (Andrijasevic, 2006; Cabot, 2014; Stojic Mitrovic, 2014).

In the second part of the article, I turn to historicizing the European border regime by focusing on some of the elements of externalization that constituted corner stones for the Hungarian government's restrictive asylum policy changes in 2015-16. These include limiting access to territory with legal and physical fences, safe third country rules and bilateral readmission agreements. Although the focus of the present article lies on migration and the place of Hungarian border policy in the European Union, I would like to underscore that there is an important domestic aspect behind Viktor Orbán's asylum policy (Rajaram, 2015; Fekete, 2016), which stands in a complex interplay with the government's strategic positioning in the European space.

In addition to engaging with the mentioned debates over two decades, I base this article on long-standing anthropological research on migration, mobility and citizenship in Hungary. During the last four years, I have conducted ethnographic research inside a refugee camp and among an anti-migrant movement, as well as witnessed and taken part in the emerging movement for the social and political rights for people seeking protection in Hungary. In 2015, I was present at the Keleti station and conducted interviews with people who were temporarily immobilized at the station (Migszol Csoport, 2016) and was present at the march of hope from Budapest. During 2016, I have continued multi-sited research in the field of migration and mobility in Hungary.

### *3. The two marches of hope*

As if anticipating the events of summer 2015, Keleti Pályaudvar, the international train station in Budapest, is spatially neatly divided: ‘upstairs’ is the hub for transport and the main entrances to the station, located in the heart of the Baross Square and surrounded by magnificent, run-down buildings dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. ‘Downstairs’ the visitor finds a shadowy, although newly constructed, network of subways and tunnels connecting the different corners of the Baross Square to the station. Since the completion of the renovation in 2014, the downstairs tunnels have failed to attract small shops and businesses, and without such development, the setting was ideal for an impromptu refugee camp to develop in the station from June 2015 onwards, when hundreds of thousands of migrants transited through Hungary towards western Europe. As the Hungarian government attempted to even superficially respect EU asylum legislation, most notably the Dublin Regulation, by blocking migrants from taking trains towards the west, by August 2015 there was an estimated one-to-two thousand people at a time occupying the downstairs passageway. At the absence of state agencies, national and international humanitarian organizations, thousands of Hungarian citizens joined together to provide food, clothing and medical aid. The migrants’ frustration at the state of immobilization reached a saturation point after the tragic death of 71 people in an overcrowded lorry near the Hungarian border in Austria in late August 2015. The next day, a vigil was held upstairs on the stairs of the main entrance to the station. Local activists had prepared a cardboard sign with the text ‘Europe, you have blood in your hands’, which a group of Pakistani men took downstairs, rallying others to join. To the surprise of Hungarian volunteers and activists, sometime later around a hundred Pakistanis and Afghans joined the vigil, and began praying en masse, demanding to be allowed to board the trains.

The vigil sparked a week of protests. On Saturday 29th August, a hundred more people emerged from downstairs and began a week-long protest upstairs at the main entrance of Keleti, demanding to be allowed to travel onwards to Western Europe. At the continuing absence of state- and humanitarian organizations, volunteers kept on providing aid to the immobilized migrants, but only rarely joined in with their political demands by joining the protest. The stalemate between the police blocking the entrance to the train station and the protesting migrants was broadcast to the world, as numerous trucks of international media joined the scene and began to follow the situation from one second to another – CNN alone had four crews in Hungary. Volunteers organized a demonstration in protest against the

government's asylum policy, some waving European Union flags, but their protest remained spatially separate from the ongoing daily protest of migrants at Keleti. By Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September, the exhausted, protesting migrants were becoming desperate, and a more and more diverse crowd joined the scene every day to observe the situation. The next day, a football match between Romania and Hungary would take place at a stadium nearby Keleti, and local activists were busy printing leaflets informing the migrants about the possible presence of football hooligans. Rumours of moving the protest to the German embassy began circulating. At 11pm that night, Sami, a young law student from Aleppo with whom I had become acquainted while helping another young Syrian boy to locate his missing parents, informed me that the embassy was not enough.<sup>4</sup> Some of the men were already convincing people 'downstairs' to join the protest, which would take a new form. They planned to start marching the next day, and walk all the way to Austria.

Carrying pictures of Angela Merkel and the German flag, the march of hope set off on Friday afternoon on 4<sup>th</sup> September, after some hesitation. The moment was ecstatic, as thousands of people – some with wheelchairs and crutches, others carrying their children on their backs – along with hundreds of supporters and journalists, impeded the traffic and crossed the magnificent bridges over the Danube. Along their way, the marchers found food and water bottles waiting for them, as Hungarians living along the route expressed their support by whatever means they could. Yet other supporters joined the march by car, providing slow ride for the elderly, for the children, and others who were not able to walk.

It took ca. 25 kilometers, first under a scorching sun and then after a forecast of rain, for the energy to fade. After living on emergency food and sleeping on the stone floor of Keleti with no hygienic settings, near the small town of Biatorbágy the marchers simply stopped. By the dark late evening, it was beginning to rain, and hundreds of people had simply collapsed on the highway and on the surrounding pitch-black fields. Some fell asleep on the asphalt road, while others retreated to the fields. Nearby villagers joined the scene with their *bogrács*, the traditional Hungarian cooking cauldron, and began preparing warm meals for the exhausted marchers, with supporters speculating what would happen next. The situation had quickly deteriorated to a catastrophic degree, and the march of hope had transformed into a march of hopelessness. It was difficult to come up with topics of small talk, as I was sitting on the wet ground next to an Iraqi man who was showing the scars on his wrists and recounting his experiences before managing to escape to Turkey and to the Balkan route. Like many others, he was on his way to Germany. When, after a while, we heard a rumor that there would be 'buses' sent by the government to transport everybody into Austria, we could not believe it. Migrants, volunteers, villagers, activists, UNHCR employees, and journalists from all around the world were gathered around the media vans, where they were charging their cellphones in the electricity generators, and debating whether this rumour would, or could, be true. Would Vienna allow this? What would Berlin say? What about Dublin? When the buses arrived, contrary to the speculation of us all, the relief, surprise and disbelief in the air was tangible. Migrants refused to board the buses unless also journalists, volunteers and activists joined them in order to cover the story in case they would be tricked, and

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<sup>4</sup> All names of informants are aliases.

brought to Hungarian refugee camps instead. After some negotiations, everybody could step on board. The Austrian border would open, and later buses would also be sent to Keleti, to pick up the people who had not joined the march.

The arrival of the buses meant the temporary collapse of the Dublin regulation and a short-lived rupture to Hungarian government's respect of European asylum policy. The march marked the beginning of a months-long escapade of state-organized transportation, or in the lexicon of the state, the 'smuggling' of migrants through the Hungarian territory to the Austrian border. As a response to the protest of the migrants, heightened by the presence of international media, the Hungarian government completely and utterly disregarded the Dublin regulation, that very European Union legislation that had caused the deadlock in the first place. The march signalled that the force of mobility and migrants as a temporary collective political subject is capable of overriding, even if momentarily, the divisive control of the European Union border regime and attempts of immobilization. This, however, was due a particular situation that did not endure.

Right before and after the march of hope, the Hungarian government minimized the number of people seeking protection on its territory by a series of legal measures, as summarized by Boldizsár Nagy (2016). The most important measure was the re-establishment of Serbia as a safe third country, thereby effectively invalidating the asylum request of anyone entering Hungary via Serbia and theoretically enabling deportation of asylum seekers back to Serbia. To ensure the respect to this safe third country legislation, the government created a so-called 'transit zone' on the Serbian side of the border fence. In front of this transit zone, people need to wait for an indefinite amount of time to be allowed to lodge an asylum request at the two available transit points.<sup>5</sup> Relying on a rhetoric that portrays Hungary merely as a transit country, the government also abolished all integration support for recognized refugees in June 2016. The next month, the status of Serbia as a safe third country was consolidated by an 'in-depth bordering' legislation that legalized immediate violent pushbacks of migrants to the Serbian side of the fence with no legal safeguards. In relation to all these measures, in the international media Hungary has been portrayed as a 'rotten apple' in European Union for deterring refugees from its territory, with the foreign minister of Luxemburg going as far as demanding expulsion of Hungary from the EU because of the harsh treatment of refugees. For a while, in some liberal policy-circles and for some media representatives, Hungary came to represent a counterpart to the 'lenient' border policies of German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The rupture to the correspondence with EU border policy that resulted from migrants' protests in 2015 seems short-lived. Indeed, the measures described above, that carry echoes of earlier measures by Western European countries, radically diminished the possibilities of migrants' collective attempts to resist fragmentation. In illustration, I fast-forward to another march of hope that took place in July 2016. At a gas station near the Hungarian-Serbian border in Horgoš, I met Hassan, who had made his way to Europe after being targeted by the Taliban for having previously worked as a translator for the Romanian army in Afghanistan. Hassan was very well aware of the developments in Hungary, and had waited in vain at the transit zone

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<sup>5</sup> For a detailed description of the procedure at the transit zone in autumn 2016, see <http://www.migszol.com/transit-zone-information>.

already for a week. ‘No point going to Hungary, the border is closed. I speak some Romanian, I’ll go to Romania instead’ he told me as he was recounting the disappointing events of the previous weeks. Together with hundreds of others, he had taken part in a hunger strike a week earlier in Belgrade, demanding the Hungarian border to open. They were joined by some supporters and journalists as they embarked from the ‘Afghan Park’ in Belgrade on another march of hope – this time to the transit zones at the Hungarian border, where in Horgoš and Kelebija *ad hoc* refugee camps have emerged. Independent volunteers’ and activists’ access to these camps is severely restricted. It took the marchers five days to walk to the border zone. Although they were close to collapsing on the road, no buses arrived, and media attention was minor. In the end, no border was opened. At their destination, they found a fence, very little media presence, and a crowd of hundreds of migrants too exhausted and divided to join the protest. There was no official communication to the protesters, and the border remained decisively closed. In his disappointment, Hassan, who had been a leading figure in the protest, stopped his hunger strike and relied on his individual resources, deciding to take the route to Romania instead.

This second march, also using the hashtag #MarchOfHope on Twitter, followed a series of heightened border control measures not only by the Hungarian state as outlined above, but also by the European Union. These include the EU-Turkey deal in March 2016, and a new Union-wide proposed policy package in July 2016. The planned policy package included many of the measures, such as detention, regular reviews of statuses, and general restriction of access to territory, that the European Commission had earlier criticized Hungary for.<sup>6</sup> By now, many of the voices that had criticized Hungary’s physical and the legal fence against migrants the previous year, remained silent about the thoroughly documented violence against migrants at the Hungarian-Serbian border (Human Rights Watch, 2016; Amnesty International, 2016; *Átlátszó*, 2016). In fact, several other EU member states actually had continued sending border guards to help their Hungarian colleagues in blocking migrants’ access to the Hungarian territory to seek asylum (Magyar Kormány, 2016a; 2016b).

I wish to contextualize and historicize the establishment of border controls between the two marches, and suggest that they are aligned with the European Union policies at large. The rupture to this congruence, the opening of the border following the first March of Hope in 2015 September, was only temporary, contributing to further generation of easily divided migrant multiplicities at the Hungarian-Serbian border. The efforts of the government to prevent such a collective action by introducing individual selection of migrants’ at the transit zones and relying on the safe third country legislation resulted in remarkably different conditions. With a divided, exhausted group that held no hope, marginal local support and almost a total lack of international attention, individual people like Hassan instead resorted into individual strategies and resources, namely his knowledge of Romanian.

These vignettes substantiate Martina Tazzioli’s concept of temporary, divisible migrant multiplicities that bordering techniques on one hand generate, but on the other hand regulate and fragment via individualized governance and control (2016). The first march followed a week of protest, and conspicuous absence of state- and

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<sup>6</sup> See also the analysis of the ‘Orbanisation of EU asylum law’ by Steve Peers (2016)

migration management agencies, in effect leaving space for the migrants' collective subject to first emerge, and avoid the inherent splintering effect of border control, while being boosted by a significant international media coverage. The second march ended up facing a strong presence of the Hungarian state's border controls, with a limited number of people being allowed to enter the transit zone to seek asylum, and a fence that might be easy to cross, but would result in an immediate, and possibly violent, pushbacks to Serbia. Although both instances demonstrate acts of citizenship, whereby migrants claimed political subjectivity by an act that rendered them visible in the public sphere, the different experiences highlight how subjectivity is constructed in relation to intersectional support, dynamics of hope and desire, media attention and the presence and absence of border controls. Indeed, recalling the week-long chants of 'Germany! Germany!' at Keleti, encouraged by the German state's information that no Syrian would face Dublin deportation from Germany, and finally the pictures of Angela Merkel carried by some of the marchers from Keleti towards Austria, the salience of hope and desire in the build-up to the first march become apparent (Pine, 2014).

To sum up, the experience of the summer of migration in 2015 resulted in tightening border controls that significantly contributed to the failure of the second march of hope. The experience of these two marches points to the direction of Sarah Collinson's decades-old prediction: the integration of East-Central European countries into the European Union economy and space would not be complete before they had pushed the 'migration frontier' further to the east and south, and created a buffer zone for migrants in the same way that they themselves constituted one for Western Europe in the early 1990s (Collinson, 1996: 88). It is to this history of 'pushing the migration frontier' that I now turn to.

#### *4. The logic of externalization*

To start, I would like to point out that the border fence on the entire southern border of Hungary, as it stands at the time of writing, is extremely easy to pass. People regularly cross through, climb over, or crawl under it. While the fence stands as a strong symbol, it also remains just such, and has in itself not contributed much to stalling migration. The real barrier, as also noted by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (2015), is the legal fence that consists of the declaration of Serbia as a safe third country and the push-back law that allows authorities to deport anyone they find in the vicinity of the fence to the Serbian side. These elements in the legislation have produced a considerable migrant multiplicity, with at the time of writing more than 6000 people remaining stuck in Serbia, the majority of them individually looking for ways to move onwards. I posit that the second march of hope's attempt to resist the fragmentary nature of migrant multiplicity, failed because the border control techniques at the Hungarian border. I now focus on these legislative barriers set by the government, recognizing in them parallels with EU border controls in previous decades.

The focus of the seemingly ever-present 'refugee crises' in Europe have, through decades, shifted from Yugoslavia in the 1990s, to Spain and Italy in the 2000s, Italy and Greece in the 2010s and finally to the Balkan route in 2015. Restricting access to territory and the asylum process via readmission agreements and

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safe third country concepts, not to mention the construction of border fences (Spain-Morocco, Greece-Turkey, Bulgaria-Turkey), represents a continuation from earlier similar policies across the European Union, as these building blocks of EU border control have remained similar through time. Although I draw parallels and analogies, I do not aim at an exhaustive history of EU asylum policy. Rather, I resurface some of those characteristics from previous decades that I believe are relevant in order to make sense of the operation of Hungarian border control as part the European border regime today, as expressed by the failure of the second march of hope.

The breakdown of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia resulted in significant numbers of people seeking protection in Western Europe. Yugoslavia's spatial proximity meant to many formerly socialist states, including Hungary, Western European influence that strove to prevent Yugoslavian asylum seekers from entering (Amnesty International, 1993; Lavenex, 1999). Around the same time, the Dublin and Schengen conventions were signed, although they would take effect only much later. In this context, Western European countries aimed at strengthening external borders against asylum seekers, eventually rendering southern EU member states likewise as a buffer zone against migrants seeking to enter Europe from North Africa or Turkey. The deterrence mechanism against Yugoslavian refugees that would enter core member states of EU via formerly socialist countries took the form of a policy and legislative mixture in the early 1990s, including the London Resolution of 1992, whereupon the Prime Ministers of European Union countries agreed on so-called 'host third countries' (Council of the European Union, 1992). Although not legally binding, the London Resolution was of significant political importance and paved the way for the implementation of such rules on national legislations that would later be codified in supranational legislation at the level of the EU. Several academics have analysed the consequent externalization of EU asylum policy from Western to East-Central Europe, as more powerful core member states of the EU (Germany, France) first applied readmission agreements and safe third country rules to the former socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Collinson, 1996; Lavenex, 1999; Byrne et al. 2004). On one instance, the chain of readmissions led to the *refoulement* of Bosnian refugees, who were deported from Sweden to Croatia under a safe third country rule and readmission agreement, and then returned to Bosnia from Croatia (Collinson, 1996: 85).

The 2000s, the decade of the so-called eastern enlargement, saw many of the previous 'buffer zone' countries in Eastern Europe joining the European Union. The countries that had previously safeguarded the Western European member states against migrants, now adopted that very same legislation as a precondition for their EU membership, further internalizing the contradictory character of the *acquis* (Nagy, 2012). The complex web of readmission agreements paved the way for the externalization of EU asylum policy towards the south and the east. The European Union has acquired extensive rights to monitor and deter migration movements most notably in Northern and Western Africa (Boswell, 2003; Neal, 2009; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009; Casas et al., 2011), with Sabine Hess (2010) and Marta Stojic Mitrovic (2014) studying the logic of externalization in the Balkans. Thus contextualized, the Hungarian government's declaration of Serbia as a safe third country and its later declaration that it had reached readmission agreements with countries in the West Balkans, does not necessarily signal an anomaly from EU

border policy, but rather a continuation of old policies (Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister, 2016). The declaration of Serbia as a safe third country is crucial also in the functioning of the transit zone on the southern border, that so successfully divided the collective subjectivity of migrants' second march of hope that I looked at earlier.

Before and after joining the European Union in 2004, the Hungarian asylum policy was based on the premise of in principle following EU legislation, but in practice turning a blind eye to people moving onwards to western Europe (Nagy, 2012). After Dublin deportations to Greece were stopped in 2011, the strategic position of Hungary changed along the so called Balkan route, and the country became the first Schengen country along the route to which people would be deported back to. Accordingly, the government has gradually framed its policies in the European Union frame in claiming to protect the external border of the Schengen zone. This, however, should not be read simply as eagerness to function as a buffer zone for Western Europe, but rather as a strategy of the Fidesz-government to advance its conservative nationalist agenda and European leadership in opposition to the perceived liberalism of western Europe, and against the backdrop of the orientalized Balkans.

Following a brief respite in 2012, Hungarian asylum legislation has gradually tightened, systematizing detention and establishing homelessness as a structural condition for recognized refugees. By summer 2016, along with Hungarian language education, all integration support for recognized refugees was abolished, citing the perceived transit country-status of Hungary. As a self-fulfilling prophesy, these measures have greatly contributed to the onward movement of asylum seekers and refugees from Hungary. Those seeking international protection often leave the country before or after their procedure, even though under EU legislation they are not allowed to. Many are pushed to precarious, informal labour and working illegally in Western Europe, while some attempt to re-apply for asylum in Western European countries even after having been granted refugee status in Hungary. The tightening asylum measures not only legitimize the false dichotomy of a transit vs. destination country (Hess, 2010), but provide a large pool of informal labour for Western European economies, running counterproductive to the official principles of the EU asylum legislation that expects refugees to stay in the country where they have been granted a status.

The situation in Hungary is not exceptional, as is not the only peripheral EU member state that has adopted elements of externalization that are rooted in the EU asylum *acquis*. Nevena Nancheva (2015) analyses the asylum system in Bulgaria, also sometimes dubbed as 'not European' in the media, and notorious for violence at the border, poor asylum expertise, long periods of detention, and poor or inexistent integration support. Nancheva brings forth a similar argument to my own: while the Bulgarian government should not be denied agency and responsibility, the 'inhuman' asylum system of Bulgaria still needs to be examined in the context in which it has been created, namely that of European Union. Nancheva highlights the internal contradictions in the EU *acquis* that constantly balances between security and human rights, tipping towards the former and keeping asylum seekers at bay. Instead of relying on a modernization discourse that would produce Western European members as targets to catch up with for Bulgaria, Nancheva identifies the source for the system's problems in the existing European Union legislation, and shows how the

ambiguity of EU *acquis* in prioritizing security and deterring asylum-seekers is rendered only more pronounced in the Bulgarian case. She concludes by dryly observing that ‘the Bulgarian interior ministry has come up with nothing original by physically blocking the border’ (2015: 451). From the perspective of Hungary, I concur with Nancheva’s analysis and final statement, but explore further the kinds of migrant subjectivity and spaces for subversion this context generates, such as in the case of the two marches of hope.

After the September 2015 march that led to the opening of the Austrian border, the Hungarian government relied on EU asylum practice and *acquis* in finding tools to introduce border controls that emphasize fragmentation of migrant multiplicities, and prevent collective subjectivity from emerging again. In the transit zone, this is managed by strict rules of allowing maximum 10-30 people to apply for asylum per day, prioritizing families and vulnerable people. These border measures with a divisive effect on the migrant multiplicity were not present at the *ad hoc* camp at the Keleti station in 2015, where NGOs and state officials remained absent, and volunteers’ humanitarian control of migrants, although present, was limited to formation of food queues. On the Serbian-Hungarian border in 2016, however, elements of biopolitical control create competition and conflict within the transit zone over who is allowed in, prompting people like Hassan to rely on their individual resources and networks in choosing an alternative migration route. Following Tazzioli’s conceptualization and Hassan’s choice of resorting to an individual strategy, it is consequently the temporary and divisive nature of migrant multiplicity that gains salience.

To sum up, since the 1990s, the European union asylum *acquis* has produced legislation that includes policy transfer and the creation of buffer zones. With the exception of the state-organized transportation of migrants to the Austrian border in 2015 following the first march of hope, the Hungarian government has followed the European Union policy of deterring and deporting asylum seekers. The policy transfer is not, however, one-directional: as Byrne et al. (2004) point out in their comprehensive study on EU asylum policy prior to the eastern enlargement in early 2000s, sub-regional dynamics have significantly effected the form of the asylum *acquis*. Although Steve Peers (2016) has pointed to the ‘Orbanisation’ of EU asylum policy, the more long-standing effects of the Hungarian asylum policy on EU legislation remain to be seen, researched, and related to Viktor Orbán’s domestic strategy of the production of surplus populations (Rajaram, 2016).

## 5. Conclusion

Although Hungarian border policy has, at the time of writing, nearly succeeded in closing the border to people seeking international protection, I wish to avoid an apocalyptic view that reproduces the image of borders as impenetrable barriers, and Hungary as a vigilant watchtower of Fortress Europe. Instead, I will conclude with thoughts on the kinds of subjectivity that these border controls have generated, and what they are relational to. The measures adopted by the EU, along with the Hungarian government, have not managed to stall mobility, only change its form and produced an easily fragmented migrant multiplicity in Serbia. This change in form, however, is crucial in relation to the possibility of migrants emerging as a collective

subject. Many of the formative elements that were present in Budapest in September 2015 are decidedly different on the Serbian-Hungarian border in 2016. In 2015, the situation was characterized by intense international media attention, absence of state organizations as well as established humanitarian NGOs. The emerging collective subject was not managed externally, and although there was a significant number of scuffles and fights among migrants, these were handled internally. After the successful march, that I have termed a rupture, the Hungarian government continued to solidify and implement in practice legislative tools of externalization and biopolitical control, that had been in the making in European border regime over decades. The implementation of these legal measures materializes on the transit zone, and resulting in decidedly different circumstances for the migrant multiplicity that has been produced in the Serbian-Hungarian border zones in late 2016. In other words, the Hungarian government, while portraying itself as a protector of Europe, has been able to spall and atomize the collective autonomous potential, and emphasize the divided nature of migrant multiplicities, resulting in strengthened reliance on individual strategies. As Tazzioli points out, the biopolitical production, division and control of migrant multiplicities in border zones is exactly the factor that prevents them from acting as collective political subjects, to which the first march of hope merely represents an exception.

In addition, two more elements differentiate the two marches from each other. First, the presence and absence of supporters. Although only a few supporters in Keleti joined the migrants in their daily protests, when the time of the march came, hundreds of supporters joined in demanding the border to open. The second march from Belgrade gathered only limited momentum among local supporters. This, I contend, is related to dynamics of imagination, fear, hope and desires associated with the borders in question. The Hungarian-Serbian border has been the source of brutal stories of indiscriminate violence, and has a reputation of local militias attacking people with dogs – standing in clear contrast with the first march, where the general feeling was if all would stand together, the border would be opened, and history would be made. I suggest that these considerations of fear and hope bear consequences for the generalizability of Tazzioli's concept of migrant multiplicities.

The rupture that the first march presented in the Hungarian asylum policy's continuity with the developments and tools of EU border controls, then, remains exactly that. A temporary rupture that has, in long term, only contributed to the further entrenchment of divisive border controls, generative of fragmentative politics and fear. This atomization materializes at the transit zone on the Serbian-Hungarian border, where biopolitical controls have produced the exhausted group of people that did not join the protesting hunger strikers that Hassan marched with. The key difference between the two marches of hope presented, then, lie in the fact that in the first instance the people marching managed to defy the individualizing logic of migration management as a collective subject because of a certain situation that was characterized by a lack of managerial techniques and the presence of media. In the second instance, the marchers faced a strictly managed and controlled arena, enabled by Hungary's declaration of Serbia as a safe third country, and resorted to individual alternative routes. How could the individualizing effects be countered, and what are different forms of migrant subjectivities linked to? In order to understand whether further instances of collective protest against the European asylum policy are possible,

it is these differences and contingencies that need to be better understood. In other words, grounded, ethnographic research remains to be conducted among migrant multiplicities at contentious border zones, such as the Greek-Macedonian, Italian-Swiss, and Serbian-Hungarian borders.

In this article, I have presented two major arguments. Firstly, that the Hungarian border policy in 2015-16 does not present an irregularity from the European Union asylum policy and *acquis*, but rather a direct continuation of the logic of externalization that manifests in the form of restricting access to territory, safe third country and readmission agreements, and thereby the possibility of chain *refoulement*. Secondly, I have suggested that a temporary rupture in this continuation was the government's compliance with the demands of a group of migrants who resisted the individualizing effect of the migration governance and formed as a collective political subject. Around the time of this rupture, the declaration of Serbia as a safe third country, violent pushbacks and the creation of an obscure transit zone on the Serbian-Hungarian border has resulted in a perceived, if not real, closure of the border, with a splintering effect on the temporary migrant multiplicity at the border zone. In order to understand the dialectics between control and autonomy, the form of autonomy within migrant multiplicities emerging as collective political subjects, more ethnographically grounded research among temporary migrant multiplicities is needed.

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The Gender Gap in Public Support for EU Integration  
in the CEE Countries. A Theoretical Overview

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### Abstract

The process of EU integration has been researched in some detail, although while feminist scholars agree that gender is a main organizing principle of social relations, the great majority of the related studies have dealt with integration as a gender-neutral process. The few studies that have examined this problem have applied a gender-centric perspective, mainly focusing on Western European countries, while Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) relations – which are fairly different due to the post-socialist heritage of the region – remain under-researched. The present research note provides an overview of the relevant scientific literature on the models of support for integration, first highlighting the previously neglected aspect of gender, and later on describing the factors that make its study difficult in a CEE context. The article argues that, in contrast to the assumption made in prevailing approaches to the topic, EU integration is a highly gendered process and may have special characteristics in CEE countries.

*Keywords:* EU integration, public support, gender gap, CEE.

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## 1. Introduction

To understand, sustain and potentially recalibrate the process of EU integration, nuanced and multifaceted knowledge is needed (Best, Lengyel and Verzichelli, 2012). Although the topic of EU integration is a well-developed research field both at the theoretical and the empirical level, the great majority of studies have dealt with EU integration as a gender-neutral process (Liebert, 1997). Consequently, feminist scholars claim that although gender is a main organizing principle of social relations, it is fairly under-researched in EU studies (Kronsell, 2005). In order to gain more comprehensive knowledge related to the EU integration process, research into the public opinions and attitudes of EU citizens toward the integration process is fertile ground, while this approach can also provide valuable feedback and information about further expectations, and, potentially, causal relationships at the same time (Gabel, 1998).

Comprising half of the population, women have great potential for shaping and evaluating the integration process<sup>1</sup>. Numerous studies have argued that women and men are differing concerning their general values, attitudes and behavior (e.g. Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Wood and Eagly, 2002; Wood, 2015) and their perceptions of EU integration are no exception. Previous studies on this topic have shown that there is a gender gap in attitudes toward integration (e.g. Liebert, 1997; Nelsen and Guth, 2000; Best, 2012; Vitores, 2015). Nevertheless, the currently available literature on this topic is scarce and the topic requires further, more focused investigation. Discovering and examining the gender gap in EU support is not only a useful process by which to gain multifaceted knowledge about the European integration process, but can also reflect in a highly important way on the effectiveness and success of the EU's explicit commitment to gender equality.

Theorizing support for integration has a broad literature in general, although only a few studies have examined gendered patterns in this regard. Some approaches consider the EU to be an economic entity and explain support for integration using utilitarian-economic reasons (e.g. Gabel, 1998). From this perspective, the gender gap in support for integration is theorized, for instance, using women's different responses to economic vulnerability (Nelsen and Guth, 2000; Vitores, 2015) or their relative deprivation (Liebert, 1997). Other scholars have emphasized the effect of political perceptions and preferences on support for integration (e.g. Gabel, 1998; Inglehart, 1970) and explained the gender gap by referring to the different political behavior and interests of women (e.g. Inglehart, 1977; Norris, 1986; 1999).

Besides these explanations, other research has examined the impact of identity on support for integration and investigated how various group affiliations could influence perceptions of the European integration process (e.g. Hooghe and Marks, 2004). Moreover, previous findings on the topic highlight the importance of political elites by emphasizing their impact on the European integration process concerning the direction of policy making, agendas, and scheduling (Best et al., 2012);

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<sup>1</sup> The power of women's attitudes towards certain political issues is clearly observable, considering, for instance, the Norwegian referendum on EU membership, in which a significant number of 'nos' came from women, and as a result, Norway stayed out of the EU (Liebert, 1997).

additionally, in terms of their role in influencing and shaping public opinion (e.g. Hooghe and Marks, 2008). In the current author's opinion, these theories have not addressed the gender perspective in sufficient depth, despite the fact that a wide range of academic literature provides the theoretical basis for such an examination: on the one hand using knowledge about the different identity of women (Kohli, 2000), or their underrepresentation in political elites (e.g. Krook, 2010) on the other, underline the relevance of the question.

Another problematic issue is that previous research has placed too little emphasis on examining regional conditions; however, the heterogeneous 'composition' of the EU, caused by the various social, political and also historical backgrounds of the states, implies that the investigation of the gender gap in attitudes toward the integration process should focus in particular on this aspect. Some authors have already stated that the formation of gender relations has taken a fairly different and unique path in CEE countries throughout the past century (Zdravomyslova and Temkina, 2005; Havelkova, 1996; Einhorn, 2005). Decades of state socialism - and its legacy after the change of the political system - created quite different perspectives about the issue in these countries compared to those of Western Europe (Gal and Kligman, 2000). As most of the related studies have been dominated by Western feminist theory, this diversity often remains unrevealed and unexamined (Havelkova, 1996: 243).

Consequently, by describing the relevant theoretical literature and previous research findings on the topic, this research note is designed to shed light on the gender gap in attitudes toward European integration and the special character of the CEE region in this respect in order to establish the theoretical ground for a new - and until recently neglected - research direction. The relevance of opening up this new direction is two-fold: firstly, it revisits the scarce literature about the gender gap in attitudes toward EU integration and completes the current explanatory models - namely, those incorporating the effects of economic-utilitarian drivers (e.g. Liebert, 1997; Nelsen and Guth, 2000; Best, 2012; Vitores, 2015; Gabel, 1998) and political behavior and preferences (e.g. Gabel, 1998; Inglehart, 1970; 1977; Norris, 1986; 1999) - with two other relevant, recently neglected elements: the role of the elites (e.g. Hooghe and Marks, 2008), and the effect of identity (e.g. Hooghe and Marks, 2004). In doing so, the new analytical lens should help us to properly theorize the dynamics behind men and women's different perceptions of EU integration. Secondly, to goal is to integrate the CEE perspective into research into the gender gap in attitudes toward the EU, which perspective has been generally neglected, despite the fact that more than twenty percent of the population of the European Union live in CEE countries<sup>2</sup> and gender relations in this region are significantly different compared to those of previously examined Western European countries (Gal and Kligman, 2000).

Emerging from the theoretical basis (e.g. Gabel, 1998; Hooghe and Marks, 2005) and related earlier findings (e.g. Liebert, 1997; Nelsen and Guth, 2000), the present review highlights the gender differences in perceptions of the European integration process and identifies four possible explanations for these: economic-

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Eurostat. see:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00001>

utilitarian drivers, political behavior and preferences, the role of the elites ('political cueing' - e.g. Hooghe and Marks, 2005), and identity: moreover, it also shows why is it important to place this investigation into a regional comparative framework, or more precisely, why CEE countries should be considered a special case in this respect.

The present study is divided into two main sections. The first section describes how public opinion about EU integration is being shaped, and what the factors that could increase support for it are. Furthermore, this section also draws attention to the phenomenon of the gender gap which exists in public attitudes toward European integration. In the second subsection, the relevant conditions in CEE are discussed. The study describes how attitudes toward EU integration are shaped in general in the CEE region, and later highlights why these countries represent a special case in the investigation of the gender gap in public support for integration. The paper focuses on gender-related regional peculiarities of CEE countries compared to the other countries - or regions - of the EU.

## ***2. Support for integration and the related gender gap: Theories and earlier empirical findings***

In order to construct proper theoretical ground for the subsequent investigation of the gender gap in attitudes toward integration, in the following part of the paper the most oft-cited explanatory models of support for integration are described. The relevance of studying public attitudes to the process of European integration is guided by the insight that these public opinions serve as a foundation for integration: they form and constrain the integration process through mass political behavior such as lobbying, protesting, or elections (Gabel, 1998). As already mentioned above, borrowing from the relevant literature on the topic the paper identifies four models for explaining public support for integration; namely, economic-utilitarian drivers, political behavior and preferences, the role of the elites, and identity. In the following, these models are briefly described. Gender-specific differences are highlighted in relation to the explanatory models. For each model, preexisting empirical findings about the topic are also included as an integral part of the discussion.

### ***2.1 Political behavior and preferences***

Researching public support for EU integration has been a priority issue since the early times of the integration process (Hooghe and Marks, 2005). Early studies often explained citizen support using models based on concepts of political behavior and preferences (e.g. Inglehart, 1970; Inglehart et al., 1991; Franklin et al., 1994).

Inglehart's theory of cognitive mobilization assumes that (generally more educated) citizens with a 'high level of political awareness and well-developed skills in mass communication' are more likely to identify themselves with a political community existing on the supranational level (Inglehart, 1970: 47). Inglehart, Rabier and Reif (1991) examined data from Eurobarometer surveys from 1973-1986 and found that cognitive skills and a high level of political awareness increase support for EU integration.

Other scholars (e.g. Franklin et al., 1994) have highlighted the importance of a citizen 'partisanship effect' on attitudes toward integration. Class partisanship supposes that citizens' insight into European integration is shaped by and reflects on their preferred political party's attitudes. Inglehart, Rabier and Reif (1991) also examined the impact of class partisanship – a research direction also taken by Franklin et al. (1994) – and concluded that supporters of left-wing parties are more likely to demonstrate Eurosceptic attitudes than supporters of right-wing parties. In contrast, recent work has presented contrasting – and even country-specific – findings concerning the effect of party locations on the left-right spectrum: data from The Chapel Hill expert survey shows an inverted U-curve, meaning that parties on the center-left and center-right are generally most supportive of the EU (Bakker et al., 2015).

Inglehart's different explanatory approach assumes that support for integration emerges from a citizen's value-orientation concerning economic and political issues. The author confronts materialist and post-materialist values and supposes that citizens with post-materialist attitudes – which refers mainly to an individual's need for intellectual fulfillment and self-actualization – are more likely to support integration than those with materialist values such as prioritizing economic and physical security (Inglehart, 1990; Gabel, 1998).

The gender gap concerning support for integration is also often explained through reference to women's different political behavior and preferences. The theory of 'women's deficit' assumes that women are either more apolitical, or – if they show an interest in politics – are more conservative and/or nationalist than men, which results in a more Eurosceptic position. The varying extent of the gender gap among the European states is correlated with the level of 'structural gender advancement' of the countries under investigation (Liebert, 1997). In contrast to Inglehart's 'female conservatism' theory, Norris (1986) offers a new viewpoint. She suggests that a 'reverse gender gap' has emerged in Western societies; namely, a liberal-leftist turn by women voters.

Although these theories mainly focus on the national level, and in a few places contradict each other (e.g. female conservatism (Inglehart, 1977) versus the liberal left-turn (Norris, 1986)), they generally agree that there are differences in male and female political behavior and preferences (Liebert, 1997). According to these approaches, women may be considered less likely to support integration than men. Even though 'female conservatism' has been challenged, the literature shows that women's apolitical stance results in them (compared to men) 'admittedly suffer[ing] from a lack of political information, even on those specific national and EC-policies that should be in their proper interest;' a situation which is liable to decrease their support for EU integration (Liebert, 1997: 8).

## *2.2 Utilitarian - economic approaches*

Utilitarian theory – proposed and developed by Gabel and Palmer (1995) – suggests that citizen support for integration is firmly shaped by – and positively correlated to – the welfare benefits they receive from pro-integration policy. This approach recognizes and emphasizes the importance of the different socioeconomic

backgrounds of the investigated citizens – or even the nation states – in the formation of attitudes toward integration (Gabel, 1998). Hooghe and Marks (2005) also see this theoretical approach to cost-benefit analysis as a potential explanation of support for integration.

Gabel (1998) examined five theories of support for European integration – namely, the theory of cognitive mobilization, the theory of political values, the theory of utilitarian appraisals of integrative policy, the theory of class partisanship, and the theory of support for government – in order to investigate the reason for the varying nature of citizen support for integration. Through the empirical testing of these theories (conducted using Eurobarometer survey data from 1978 - 1992) Gabel found that, although citizen support for integration is a flexible feature, the strongest influence on opinion-formation is utilitarian theory. Gabel also notes that support may have a ‘fluid’ nature: citizens can change their strength of support depending on certain factors such as the impact of integration on their perception of welfare, their political partisanship, and their support for the government. It is also worth noting that, according to Gabel, in the ‘new’ member states<sup>3</sup> the political elite has a greater influence in shaping public opinion than in the ‘old’ member states (Gabel, 1998).

Regarding recent results, Levy and Phan (2014) – using data from the Eurobarometer 2009 survey – examined the effect of citizens’ economic perceptions on attitudes towards EU integration. They find that citizen support for the EU tends to be driven by sociotropic rather than egocentric economic evaluations, particularly as concerns individuals with an exclusive national identity.

The vast majority of studies of the gender gap in attitudes towards the EU have employed utilitarian explanatory models. Working on Eurobarometer survey data from 1994, Liebert (1997) finds that the gender gap in public attitudes to the EU is caused by women’s relative deprivation. She defines this phenomenon as a psychological condition in which a perceived negative discrepancy exists between a current position and future gains regarding social, political, and economic achievements, or, to put it differently, that women were afraid that EU unification could relatively deprive them of the achievements they had already obtained at a national level (Liebert, 1997: 21). The author argues that the perceptions of female relative deprivation vary between countries, and that such variation depends on ‘how feminist discourses are able to articulate their critiques of the EU within the context of inter-party conflict and public controversies on issues of European integration’ (Liebert, 1997: 42). Liebert concludes that where the impact of critical feminist discourses is significant (e.g. Denmark), the gender gap is large, in contrast to countries where the effect of these feminist discourses is limited (e.g. Spain) (Liebert, 1997: 41-42).

Other scholars have approached the topic of the gender gap in attitudes toward EU integration from the perspective of economic vulnerability. Nelsen and Guth (2000) also examined Eurobarometer data from 1994 and clearly confirmed that a gender gap exists in attitudes toward integration. More specifically, they find that women tend to be less supportive than men in this respect; and, agreeing with Liebert

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<sup>3</sup> Gabel uses the term ‘old member states’ for Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands and West Germany, and ‘new member states’ for those which joined later, until 1992 (Gabel, 1998: 345).

(1997), also underscore that the extent of the gender gap varies between nations. Nelsen and Guth also agree with Gabel's (1998) perspective, considering EU citizens to be rational actors whose acts and attitudes are shaped by individual cost-benefit assessments of integration (Nelsen and Guth, 2000). The researchers used multiple regression models to predict support for EU integration. Results indicate that economic uncertainty is the strongest explanatory factor of women's lower level of support: women's attitudes are significantly affected by objective characteristics (such as number of children, social class, education and the existence of women-friendly welfare state policies, which are indicators of the state's engagement in supporting the role of women as caregivers) and subjective economic vulnerability - such as economic optimism (Nelsen and Guth, 2000).

In her recent study, Vitores (2015) worked on the 8<sup>th</sup> wave of the European Election Study (carried out in 2014), examining the 14 member states which made up the EU before the 2004 accession<sup>4</sup> and obtained results that contradicted previous studies in several respects. She found that women tend to trust the EU more than men when they perceive it offers satisfactory economic conditions, but their trust declines when they perceive economic vulnerability. She also found that the perception of economic vulnerability is connected to marital status and number of children: single women consider themselves less vulnerable. Nevertheless, the overall effect of the economic situation of women remains stronger than these other factors: women with families and no livelihoods face serious difficulties yet are still more supportive toward the EU than men (Vitores, 2015).

In another recent piece of work on the topic, Glüpker-Kesebir (2015) also emphasized the effect of utilitarian dynamics in explaining the gender gap in public support for the EU. This author examined Eurobarometer data from 1995 - 2012 covering the EU-28 (and also other candidate countries such as Iceland<sup>5</sup>, Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey) using a multi-level regression model. She found that, with increasing age, women tend to be less positive toward the EU than men, and also that women in higher occupational positions are less supportive than men in similar positions (Glüpker-Kesebir, 2015).

### *2.3 The impact of European identity*

In contrast to approaches that deal with the EU as an economic or political entity, Hooghe and Marks (2005) apply an approach which highlights the effect of national identity on support for integration. They focus on how group affiliation and, in connection, identity affects individual-level support for European integration (Göncz, 2010). However, later work by Hooghe and Marks (2008) applies a 'post functionalist' approach, highlighting the increasing impact of mass opinion (besides the elites'), noting that identity has the greatest impact on mass opinion.

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<sup>4</sup> Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece, The Netherlands, UK, Ireland, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria.

<sup>5</sup> Finding is not valid more recently. See: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/iceland/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/iceland/index_en.htm)

According to Best (2012), attitudes toward integration are linked to the level of an individual's 'Europeaness', which may be classified into three dimensions: an emotive dimension, which covers the notion of identity, a cognitive-evaluative dimension, which covers perceptions about representation, and a projective-conative dimension, which is represented by attitudes toward the scope of governance (Best, 2012).

Hooghe and Marks (2004) empirically examined what drives public support for EU integration in earlier studies when they investigated data from the Eurobarometer survey (2001) and World Development Indicators Database (World Bank, April 2003.). They find that citizens' identity appears to be more powerful than their economic perceptions in influencing opinions about EU integration (Hooghe and Marks, 2004: 4), a finding which greatly contradicts that of Gabel who emphasized the effect of utilitarian considerations (Gabel, 1998). However, it is worth noting that both investigations assumed that – besides economic and identity-based explanations – the impact of political elites is a key factor in shaping citizens' attitudes (Hooghe and Marks, 2004; Gabel, 1998).

Recent work has also confirmed the great impact of identity on attitudes toward integration. Maier and Adam – using experimental methods with the participation of 1379 individuals from nine countries – find that exclusive national identity is the strongest predictor of Eurosceptic attitudes (Maier and Adam, 2011: 24).

From a gender-centric perspective, studying the impact of identity on support for integration is also important and fruitful. Women gained political, civil and social citizenship rights later and in a different way to men (Lister, 1997; 2012; Walby, 1994) which certainly affects their formation of national identity, and also might impact their supranational identity. For instance, scholars have already noted that women are less likely than men to consider themselves European (e.g. Kohli, 2000: 125).

#### *2.4 Role of the elites*

According to the theory, support for integration is tied to citizens' support for their own government, because of the pivotal role of the political leaders – the political elite – who represent member states' interests vis-à-vis the EU (Gabel, 1998). Hooghe and Marks (2005) also highlight the role of the elites, but from a different angle. Their theory of 'political cueing' draws attention to the elite's role in shaping and forming public opinion. This approach is also supported by the assumption of the mutable nature of mass opinion (Zaller, 1992) which is firmly shaped by elites.

In their empirical research, Hooghe and Marks put political cueing into focus and attempt to synthesize economy-based and identity-based models – which mainly reflect on the psychology of group membership – in order to construct a third way of understanding and demonstrating how 'political cues mediate the effect of economic calculation and community membership' (Hooghe and Marks, 2005: 420). The authors examine Eurobarometer data from 2001; their findings confirm their earlier conclusions that identity has a greater influence than economics in explaining public support for EU integration. Additionally, they provide considerable evidence about how identity and the role of the elites – in the form of political cueing – interact. They find that when political elites reach consensus about their support for integration,

exclusive national identity and supportive attitudes toward EU integration tend to coexist, but when national political elites are divided about Europe, national identity creates Eurosceptic public attitudes (Hooghe and Marks, 2005: 437).

Maier and Adam (2011) also examined the impact of political cueing during their above-cited experimental research. While investigating the effect of party campaigns on individual attitudes, they confirmed Hooghe and Marks' results; namely, that when political elites are divided according to their perspectives about EU integration, citizens show significantly less support for the EU than in countries where the political elites are more united (Maier and Adam, 2011: 25).

From a feminist perspective, the role of the elites regarding support for integration is fairly closely connected to women's underrepresentation among the elites (e.g. Várnagy, 2013; Clavero and Galligan, 2005), which might also affect mass opinion. While Best (2012) claims that the women who are part of the elite demonstrate a higher level of 'Europeaness' because of the gender equality and mainstreaming policies promoted by the EU, other scholars assume that women of the economic elite are liable to support integration less strongly due to male domination in supranational affairs which is perceived as having a negative effect on their career chances (Nelsen and Guth, 2000).

### ***3. CEE peculiarities***

As can be seen from the above, previous empirical research on the topic has mainly dealt with utilitarian models. Nevertheless, the literature infers the existence of other relevant differences among genders, such as identity (Kohli, 2000), political interests (Coffé, 2013) and women's underrepresentation in political elites (e.g. Várnagy, 2013; Clavero and Galligan, 2005), which also make the investigation of the issue using other explanatory models relevant. It is clear that the gender gap in public attitudes toward EU integration is a relevant problem that is worth examining. The following section lays emphasis on why CEE countries represent a special case in this regard. First, the article discusses how public opinion about EU integration is shaped in CEE countries generally, while later it focuses on the gender relations in the region to show why this CEE perspective is relevant and interesting in research into the gender gap in attitudes toward the EU.

#### *3.1 Attitudes toward EU integration in the CEE countries*

Attitudes toward EU integration in the CEE countries are fairly complex and variable. Although the CEE region's changing relations to the EU from the beginning is an interesting topic in itself, because of space limitations and interpretative frames the present study will only focus on the period starting a few years prior to the enlargement to the East - specifically, from the millennium - until the present time.

Before the enlargement, a piece of qualitative research<sup>6</sup> investigated perceptions about the EU involving 15 member states and 8 acceding countries (plus Romania). The results showed that CEE citizens consider the EU as a symbol of Western-Europe and economic prosperity. The findings generally show that support for EU was mainly driven by expectations regarding economic development, and therefore the newly-acceding CEE countries tended to be more positive about EU integration than the 15 member states (Göncz, 2010: 37).

A subsequent study conducted 3 years after the Eastern enlargement - which examined data from the Intune survey 2007 that contains information from 16 countries, using both general population and national elite samples - found that, *ceteris paribus*, Western Europeans and citizens of Mediterranean countries tend to have more positive attitudes to the Europe<sup>7</sup> than Eastern Europeans. The study also noted that these positive individual attitudes are cued by political elites (Lengyel, 2011: 128).

Regarding attitudes toward integration in the CEE countries, it is also important to consider the effect of the financial crisis that started in 2008. Eurobarometer data show that positive attitudes toward the EU generally decreased from 2007 - 2011 (albeit with a small increase in 2009), stagnated from 2011 - 2013, and have started slightly increasing since then (Eurobarometer 83, 2015). These results could be interpreted to mean that the decrease in support for the EU is driven by utilitarian factors (namely the deteriorating economic situation), but Serrichio, Tsakatika and Quaglia (2012) - while examining Eurobarometer data from 2007 - note that the actual causal relationships are far more complex. The authors find that, although the data show a positive correlation between utilitarian perceptions and the decrease in support for the EU for a few counties on the eastern periphery (e.g. Hungary and the Czech Republic), support for integration is increasingly driven by identity and institutional trust.

Recent work examined data from The Chapel Hill expert survey from 1999 - 2010 regarding the effect of party positions on attitudes toward EU integration. Findings indicate the considerable differences between Western states and CEE countries. Bakker and his co-authors (2015) found that by 2010 among the Western EU member states anti-EU parties had entered the center of the political space<sup>8</sup>, while in contrast in CEE countries the central space is dominated by the pro-EU parties, while the most anti-EU parties are located on the far-right.

From the above-described results it appears clear that the four explanatory models in question (namely, the economical-utilitarian approach, political behavior and preferences, the role of the elites ('political cueing'), and identity) are worth being applied in the CEE context.

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<sup>6</sup> Optem S.A.R.L. (2001) *Perception of the European Union. A Qualitative Study of the Public's Attitudes to and Expectations of the European Union in the 15 Member States and in 9 Candidate Countries. Summary of Results.*

[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/quali/ql\\_perceptions\\_summary\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/quali/ql_perceptions_summary_en.pdf) Accessed: 28-10-2016.

<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting that Lengyel distinguishes between 'attachment to Europe' and 'attachment to the EU' and finds that Europe is generally better supported (Lengyel, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> As considered using a generalized, left-right ideological spectrum (Bakker et al., 2015).

### *3.2 Gender relations in the CEE countries*

As discussed above, previous studies which have attempted to theorize the gender gap in public attitudes toward the EU have not reflected regional differences in detail or have generally neglected the CEE perspective (e.g. Vitores, 2015). In order to verify the relevance of incorporating this factor, this paper now highlights the theoretical considerations behind the specificities in the gender relations among CEE countries, compared to the other EU member states.

The peculiarities of gender relations in the CEE countries can be fruitfully captured through the notion of citizenship, which here is considered an appropriate tool for examining the changing gender relations across Europe. Citizenship represents a 'relationship between the individual and the state, in which the two are bound together by reciprocal rights and obligations' (Heywood, 1994: 155). Women's relationship to citizenship has followed quite a different pattern compared to men's throughout the twentieth century on a national level (Lister, 2012). Furthermore, the gaining of rights and development of a national identity has been a central issue in the transformation of gender relations (Walby, 1994).

As Walby discussed in her influential study, access to citizenship is a highly gendered and ethnically structured process (Walby, 1994: 391), although it is worth noting that the patterns, modes, characteristics and the extension of gendered citizenship may also be variegated as concerns the political, historical and social background of a given society.

In addition, the formation of the civil, social and political elements of citizenship in Eastern Europe have been created in a different way to how they were in Western societies. According to findings by Zdravomyslova and Temkina (2005)<sup>9</sup> and Havelkova (1996), it is clear that the influence of socialism has produced fairly different patterns of citizenship formation for women throughout the twentieth century, and this effect is still observable in post-socialist countries. Thus the application of a Western analytical lens to gendered citizenship is not entirely appropriate in the case of the post-socialist countries of Eastern Europe.

For example, as Zdravomyslova and Temkina (2005) find, women's political mobilization was a conscious process and a key issue during the period of 'Bolshevik experimentation', not a struggle by women for acceptance, as it was in Western societies. Havelkova (1996) also argued that, even in the pre-socialist times of the Czech Republic, the position of women - regarding the civil, social and political elements of their citizenship - was one of more equality with men than in other countries of Europe during the same period.

Consequently, Walby's (1996) notion of 'caring' also needs to be revisited from the post-socialist perspective. In the socialist era, the 'caring' position of women was not essentially distinguished from their role as workers - or, to put it differently, in

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<sup>9</sup> Although Zdravomyslova and Temkina (2005) examine Soviet relations, which are in some practical points different from those of the socialist Central European countries, their thorough and comprehensive understanding of the formation of gendered citizenship in the Soviet and post-Soviet era is relevant to this study because it clearly describes the main ideological environment behind the formation of gender relations, which was also the same in socialist CEE countries.

state-socialist societies the expected behavior of a female citizen was both to care and work (Zdravomyslova and Temkina refer to this using the expression ‘Soviet superwoman’). The question raised by Walby, ‘is being a carer compatible with being a full citizen?’ makes less sense in socialist countries – or even in countries with a socialist heritage. In state-socialist countries the choice between being a carer or contributing economically did not exist for women because they were expected to do both. This double burden experienced by women throughout the time of socialism makes a deeper investigation of the situation in CEE countries even more relevant.

Last, it is worth noting the contradictory explanations and usage of the terms ‘traditional’ and ‘conservative’ in the discussion of post-socialist gendered citizenship. The traditional roles of women in Western discourse are related to women’s function as wives, mothers and housekeepers, while in the socialist era the traditional role of women related to productive and reproductive activity both in the family and in the economic spheres of life (Zdravomyslova and Temkina, 2005).

The mainstream connotations of these terms regarding the civil, political and social elements of gendered citizenship are rooted in Western discourse. Nevertheless, in Eastern European discourse, because of the state-socialist system and its heritage, these terms are interpreted significantly differently from how they are in Western theory.

From the previous argument it is clear what the theoretical considerations and historically constructed conditions are which make the study of the gender gap in EU support from a CEE perspective important. In the following section of this article, empirical results will be presented in order to capture the contemporary consequences of a post-socialist heritage.

As already discussed, the situation in CEE countries<sup>10</sup> is under-researched, although one-fifth of the European Union’s population lives in one of these countries<sup>11</sup>. Earlier studies about the topic were published before the process of Eastern enlargement, but recent work has also failed to address the issue (e.g. Vitores states that she only examines Western European states because ‘Central and Eastern European countries introduced unnecessary complexity to the models’ (Vitores, 2015: 9)).

It is worth highlighting two interconnected characteristics of CEE countries which possibly influence the peoples’ attitudes toward EU integration; namely, the relatively low level of gender equality, and women’s persistent underrepresentation and low interest in politics – when compared to the other EU member states. The Gender Equality Index (GEI) scores are a good proxy for capturing the main characteristics of gender equality among the EU states. The GEI, which is constructed by the European Institute for Gender Equality, measures indicators of gender equality in various countries, such as work, money (income), knowledge, time, power and health, and also deals with two so-called satellite domains called ‘violence’ and

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<sup>10</sup> The CEE countries are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia (OECD glossary. <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=303> Accessed: 10-12-2016.)

<sup>11</sup> Eurostat. <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00001> Accessed: 10-12-2016.

‘intersecting inequalities’. The aggregated GEI index from 2012 is shown in Figure 1. It is clear that the GEI scores of all CEE countries except for Slovenia are significantly below the EU 28 average. The countries with the two lowest values in the EU are Romania (33.7) and Slovakia (36.5), while the highest scores – not surprisingly – are awarded to Scandinavian states.

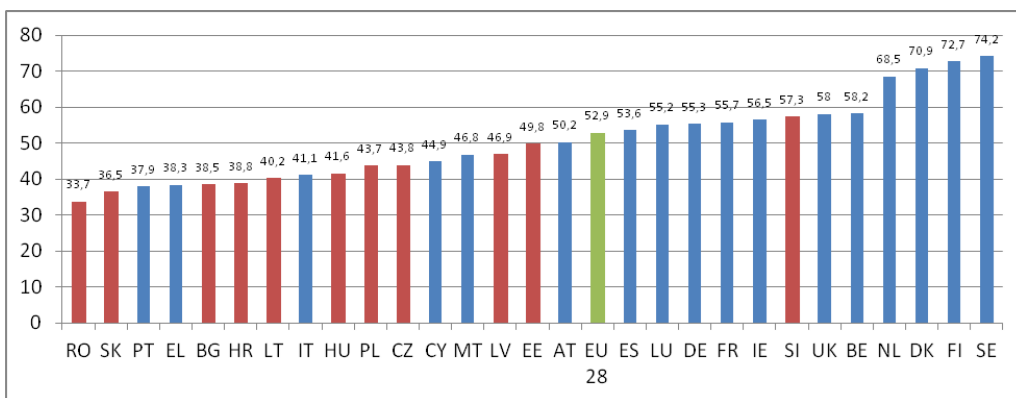


Figure 1. Gender Equality Index scores<sup>12</sup> (2012) - EU 28 (source: EIGE/GEI)

The level of gender inequality in 2012 among the CEE countries can be explained from two perspectives. First, recent studies have argued that the effect of the transformation shock in the early 1990s is still palpable in the region. Second, the economic crisis of 2008 also hit these countries hard. However, the effect of the crisis is rather complex. Fodor and Nagy (2014) argue that, although in the Eastern periphery job segregation has protected women more than men (as compared to the core – i.e. Western – countries), women’s unemployment and poverty rates still increased more rapidly than among women in the core countries of Europe. The authors find that, considering core countries, the position of women has not changed significantly, and the distance between genders has decreased. In the Eastern region, this decrease happened under different conditions: in contrast to the core countries, the position of women also declined, and the gap between genders lessened under these general conditions of deterioration (Fodor and Nagy, 2014: 19).

Besides the general issue of gender equality, another important feature should be recognized: namely, women’s underrepresentation in politics, which is mostly incorporated in the gender equality score, although it is also discussed in itself. Earlier research findings from the Enlargement, Gender and Governance (EGG) Project<sup>13</sup> from 2002, which analyzed female visibility in political and civic decision-making, find that there was a significant decrease in women’s political participation after the transition in the early 1990s which is still having an impact. They also argue

<sup>12</sup> Interpretation of GEI scores: 0 means total inequality, while 100 means total equality. For further information, see: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/gender-equality-index/about>

<sup>13</sup> See: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/egg/>

that women's relative share of representation is considerably higher at lower levels of governance (EGG WP2, 2002)<sup>14</sup>. Recent data<sup>15</sup> from the Inter-Parliamentary Union<sup>16</sup> about the share of parliamentary seats among genders in national parliaments also indicates the low number of women in political elites in CEE countries<sup>17</sup>. The EU 28 average share of women MPs is 26.6 percent<sup>18</sup>, but 9 of the 11 CEE states have less than this. The two exceptions are Slovenia (36.7 percent) and Poland (27.4 percent), while the smallest proportion of women MPs in a national parliament is found in Hungary (10.1 percent).

What clearly emerges from these briefly described findings is that, in terms of gender relations, CEE countries are distinct in several ways compared to other parts of the EU, and this may be impacting the gender gap in attitudes toward the EU. This conclusion validates the application of comparative, regionally focused research.

#### *4. Conclusion and further directions for research*

The relevance of the above-outlined research problem is manifold. First, consideration of gender issues in the study of public opinion towards EU integration is important for obtaining deeper understanding of the issue, as well as sustaining and even modifying the European integration process. Understanding how women see the integration process and what factors shape their attitudes represents valuable input – and feedback – for European gender policy making and mainstreaming, which are considered key issues in the EU.

Consequently, the CEE perspective is also highly relevant in this context: scholars have already noted that the issue of gender equality raised by the European Union and preexisting research on the topic is shaped by Western feminist theory, thereby neglecting the CEE perspective and decreasing the relevance of the findings to the post-socialist context (Einhorn, 2006; Havelkova, 1996). As described in this paper, earlier research has argued for the effect of economic factors such as vulnerability (Nelsen and Guth, 2000) and relative deprivation (Liebert, 1997) regarding the gender gap in public support for European integration, while other scholars have emphasized the effect of women's different political behavior, interests (e.g. Inglehart, 1977; Norris, 1986; 1999) and identity (e.g. Kohli, 2000). All of these factors should be examined in a CEE context due to the differences that exist with economic performance and gender relations – such as the different level of gender equality (e.g. GED) and women's underrepresentation in politics (e.g. Várnagy, 2013; Clavero and Galligan, 2005) – compared to Western European countries.

Given the above, and in consideration of the broader context, the present review article seeks to highlight the fact that EU integration is not gender-neutral but is

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<sup>14</sup> Recent studies support this assumption that 'woman stay local' (e.g. Coffč, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> The data show the situation as of 1<sup>st</sup> Feb. 2016.

<sup>16</sup> IPU (2016) Women in National Parliaments. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> Accessed: 10-12-2016.

<sup>17</sup> Although the present research focuses on CEE countries, it is also worth noting that the Mediterranean countries and Ireland show similarities concerning objective gender equality indicators.

<sup>18</sup> Considering only the lower or single house seats.

rather a highly gendered process. To reveal *how* and *to what extent* gender may be influencing attitudes towards integration in the context of CEE – so as to deepen understanding of the actual state and process of integration – more relevant empirical research is needed.

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## Book Review

### **Veselý, Arnošt; Nekola, Martin and Eva M. Hejzlarová (2016) (eds.) *Policy Analysis in the Czech Republic*. Bristol: Policy Press at the University of Bristol. 352 pp.**

As one of the volumes in the *International Library of Policy Analysis* series, the book is a useful tool for anybody who wants to understand how and why policy analysis, both as a discipline and a practice, has evolved in Central and Eastern Europe. The volumes in the series follow the same structure, making it easy to compare policy analysis in Germany, the Netherlands, Israel, Japan or Brazil.

*Policy Analysis in the Czech Republic* collects nineteen studies arranged in five sections, with the aim of providing 'a more or less coherent "macro-view" of policy analysis in the Czech Republic' (p. 8). Out of the twenty three authors of chapters, only two contributors are not academics, reflecting accurately the predominance of academia in the field of public policy analysis, as is characteristic of Czech public policy.

The volume starts with Arnošt Veselý's *Introduction* which, besides providing a short overview of the book's structure, conceptualizes the term 'policy analysis'. In the Czech context this is particularly important since in the Czech language there is no clear equivalent for the term. The expression used in Czech has four meanings: policy analysis as 1) policy studies, 2) institutionalized methodological practice, 3) policy advice based upon relevant knowledge, 4) policy-related work. The term policy analysis in the book is used in a broad sense, encompassing all these different meanings.

In Part I, *Styles and Methods of Public Policy Analysis in the Czech Republic*, Martin Poříček expounds the historical development of policy analysis and highlights the historical and institutional factors that shape this field. Next, Vítězslav Novotný goes into detail regarding the development of public policy as a form of science-based policy advice. He describes the roots of Czech policy analysis, stressing the importance of the sociological stream represented by the first statesmen of independent Czechoslovakia (Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Beneš, both academics, both sociologists). He points out the fact that even though the Czech political elite (Masaryk, Beneš, Klaus and Zeman) are deeply rooted in academia and evidence-based social sciences, policy analysis as an academic sub-discipline is less appreciated than economics, law or sociology by politicians. In the last piece on the styles and methods of policy analysis, Eva M. Hejzlarová examines the classification of the various analytical academic styles used in policy analysis, concluding that Czech policy analysis is dominated by the influence of the economy, but 'still the expertise does not fit into either the positivist or postpositivist boxes' (p. 65).

Following the structure of the *International Library of Policy Analysis* series, Part II of the book is dedicated to *Policy Analysis by Government*. Starting from a supranational level and zooming in to the local level, this section is concerned with presenting policy work at the national, regional and local level. Martin Poříček,

*Vladimír Hulík, Klára Hulíková Tesárková* and *Libor Stejskal* show the influence of supranational (European Union, OECD and NATO) actors on national policy development over a span of 25 years through three case-studies. The role of the European Union is stressed in this part by another writer, *Ivo Šlosarčík*, who explores the process of Europeanization from the pre-accession period to the Eurozone crisis and its impacts on national policy. The policy work of the central public administration is described by *Arnošt Veselý* and *Martin Nekola* using empirical data. A detailed profile of policy bureaucrats is provided, along with a description of their tasks. The study brings to light a ‘specifically Czech factor’; namely, the instability of employment caused by ‘the ineffective Civil Service Act’ (p. 122). Next, the level of subnational policy bureaucrats and policy work is examined by *Martin Nekola* and *Arnošt Veselý*. The authors conclude that the majority of regional public administrators perform rather formal duties and take on policy advisory roles to a much lesser degree. Somewhat similar to Hungarian public administration employees, they ‘try to come with the practical problems related to policy implementation on the one hand and more conceptual tasks on the other’. We gain insight into local-level policy work from the study of *Dan Ryšavý* who provides interesting detail about the perceived influence of local decision making and their communication networks.

Czech policy bureaucrats are apparently dealing with policy analysis less than expected by Western policy literature. The next two parts, Part III, *Internal Policy Advisory Councils, Consultants and Public Opinion*, and Part IV, *Parties and Interest Groups*, try to describe the roles of the various actors typically involved in policy making. *Kateřina Merklová* and *Kateřina Ptáčková* examine three governmental and departmental advisory bodies (the National Economic Council of the Government, the Bezděk Committee, and the authors of the White Paper on Tertiary Education) as actors involved in internal advisory councils. While the authors point out several contradictions in the current institutional frameworks that limit the efficiency of the advisory boards, the study concludes that they ‘play a significant role in agenda setting and in the shaping and framing of the public discourse on the reform of particular policies’. *Paulína Tabery* describes using the findings of empirical research how public opinion and policy decisions about building an anti-missile radar base in the Czech Republic influenced each other.

The twelfth chapter, written by *Vojtěch Sedláček* and *Arnošt Veselý*, discusses Czech experiences with outsourcing policy advice. Debating whether outsourcing is always the best or worst solution, the study sheds light on several deficiencies of the Czech institutional setting that limit the potentially beneficial effects of outsourcing. Among others obstacles, corruption, the difficulty of assessing what is ‘good advice’, and the institutional preference for lower price over quality are important to overcome. In addition, bidding and base-line budgeting are also identified as influencing negatively the outsourcing of policy analysis. The fourth part of the book, *Parties and Interest Groups*, starts with a study by *Vilém Novotný*, *Martin Polášek* and *Michel Perottino* who examine Czech political parties using their perspective of a policy advisory system. The authors seek to explore how the two main Czech political parties (the Social Democrats and the Civic Democrats) influence the process of policy making. After examining the two main parties’ formal mechanisms and

organizational structures, the study finds that policy work in political parties is 'institutionally anchored'. Yet, since political parties focus on winning elections, policy analysis and the elaboration of policy recommendations are not the main concerns of these parties.

Another important actor in policy analysis is organized civil society. The chapter by *Karel Čada* and *Katerina Ptáčková* starts with a presentation of the contrasting perceptions of *Václav Klaus* and *Václav Havel* about NGOs and analyses both institutional and grassroots organizations that participate in the policy process. While civil society organizations are a very important element of policy implementation, their role in elaborating policies is rather limited.

The last part of the book, *Academic and Advocacy-based Policy Analysis*, (Part V.), focuses on the media, think tanks, academia and various policy institutions. First, *Vlastimil Nečas* and *Tomáš Trampota* stress the importance of seeing political communication as an interdisciplinary field of study of the relationship between the media and politics, rather than as it is currently approached by either media studies, sociology or political science. While the topic is extremely important, I find it a little disappointing that the article does not include strong empirical analysis in this regard. In the next chapter, *Ondřej Císař* and *Milan Hruběš* introduce readers to Czech think tanks. Empirical research shows a less-than-rosy picture of the field: 'Similarly to other civil society organizations in the Czech Republic "see for example Císař and Vráblíková, 2013", think tanks seem to follow money' (p. 288) and 'orient themselves toward decision-making institutions and funding sources, in other words, they follow influence and money' (p. 290). Next, *Tereza Stöckelová* analyses the opportunities and limitations for academics who participate in drawing up policy. The author points to structural challenges that lead to the clear division between purely academic, and professional, policy-related work. Moreover, the study concludes that the current setting effectively discourages academic expert involvement in policy making and professional practice. The last chapter, written by *Arnošt Veselý*, *Eva M. Hejzlarová* and *Anna Zeliková*, examines academic public policy programs, with a detailed presentation of various programs and an analysis of masters' theses. The study concludes that the 'Prague school' has a strong influence on Czech academic programs, which can be seen in the emphasis on methodology, and the strong sociological perspective. The programs stress the need for the professional orientation of policy work and the provision of the necessary academic knowledge.

While at certain times it seems that the book's individual chapters are only very loosely interconnected, themes recur and bond individual pieces to each other. The intertwined nature of academia, central public administration and policy advisory roles, or the key figure of the National Economic Council (NERV) as a policy advisory institution, are such themes. The book also highlights another characteristic of Czech public policy analysis when compared to Anglo-Saxon practices: the limited role of political parties, NGOs and external partners in providing policy input. Given the historical and political context of Central and Eastern European countries, this fits the pattern of a narrow form of participatory activism (Petrova and Tarrow, 2007).

The editors have achieved their goal of providing to readers an accurate overview of the field of Czech policy analysis. The majority of studies tend to focus

less on policy analysis as institutionalized methodological practice or as policy work, which indicates that policy analysis is regarded more as a form of expert advice and an academic discipline. The broader, theoretical relevance of policy analysis practices (as covered, for example, in the work of Hajnal, 2010) is less pronounced in this volume.

Because of the combination of different styles and analytical levels employed in the individual studies, the book is refreshing reading and a perfect tool for understanding the challenges and opportunities of Czech public policy analysis, and a must-read for those involved in creating and analyzing policy.

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## Book Review

### **Abadan-Unat, Nermin and Gretty Mirdal (2015) (eds.) *Emancipation in Exile: Perspectives on the Empowerment of Migrant Women*. Istanbul: Bilgi University Press. 281 pp.**

*Emancipation in Exile: Perspectives on the Empowerment of Migrant Women* is a collection of articles written by 19 scholars who attended a symposium organized to honor Prof. Dr. Nermin Abadan-Unat by the Paris Institute for Advanced Studies on November 7-8, 2013. The articles are essentially gathered around Abadan-Unat's pioneering article *Implications of Migration on Emancipation and Pseudo-Emancipation of Turkish Women* that was published in 1977. The articles in the volume critically evaluate the main themes of women's migration and emancipation within the framework of the changing global socio-political and economic conditions of the last four decades. On the conceptual level, the scholars discuss whether the main theme of 'emancipation' is still as pertinent as it was when defined in 1977 by Unat. Emancipation was presumed to be a necessary and direct outcome of modernity according to the contemporary approaches; however, as the authors emphasize, in an era of transnationalism, the feminization of migration, and religious and ethnic revivals new perspectives and methodologies are now required. Therefore, the issues involved in emancipation and integration—ranging from assimilation to multiculturalism—demand more comprehensive approaches that can surpass methodological nationalism (p. 34-35).

Nermin Abadan-Unat, in her article from 1977, relates emancipation directly to modernization and proposes criteria for the fulfillment of emancipation process: the decline of extended family relations, the adoption of nuclear family arrangements, fragmentation of the family structure, access to wage-paying work, exposure to the media, a decline in religious practices, and an increase in the adoption of egalitarian values for girls and boys in terms of education and the adoption of consumption-oriented behavior (p. 121). However, Unat also reminded readers that, although migrant women will easily integrate into the economic system, this will not necessarily entail their social and political emancipation.

In the volume under review, Abadan-Unat and other authors underline the negative effects of national integration policies, as well as latent or open xenophobia (p. 36) displayed by the host population. Of course, these are not the only factors behind the failure of 'integration' and "emancipation" discourses based on modernist assumptions. The social and political changes in migrants' homelands, new transnational practices that have arisen due to globally changing methods of communication and transportation, new migration patterns such as 'circular migration', and the revival of political Islam and terrorism (p. 31-32) also contribute significantly to the complexity of integration. Therefore, Western anti-immigration discourse has already undergone a rhetorical shift from an economic framework towards an ethnic, religious, and consequently, a cultural one. This involves political rhetorics of cultural essentialism which can be traced back to Samuel Huntington's

*Clash of Civilizations* thesis and can be clearly observed in the contemporary European Refugee Crisis, which only adds to the discriminatory and exclusionary pressures on migrant women (p. 38).

This reminds us of the importance of focusing on the ‘ethnic/religious resurgence’ and the so-called religion/emancipation paradox. Gender issues and female migrants have always been situated at the intersection of this paradox. For the Islamic movements and countries of immigration, as well as for the host and secular countries, women’s bodies are frequently the symbolic battlefield. The tension between religious and secular rhetoric both in academia and in public debates are indeed centered on the agency of Muslim women, and between the dichotomy of victimization versus resistance (Vasilaki, 2011). Yet this dilemma is also relevant to feminist discourses about Muslim women and Islam.

In this respect, the articles by Yeşim Arat, Sema Erder and Serpil Sancar mainly focus on the Islam-related issues of gender and female agency. As Serpil Sancar points out: ‘Turkey is a crucial test-case for the relation between feminist/secular and religious women’s political agenda...’ (p. 65)–and one in which women’s emancipation has different social and political connotations, surpassing conventional understandings of gender equality and justice. The reconciliation of gender issues and religion/tradition has always been contested in Turkey. However, after the 1980s, and particularly after the coming to power of AKP (Justice and Development Party) in 2002, Islamic conservatism was revitalized and even promoted through various political and social mechanisms. Promoting an Islamic way of life with an emphasis on Islamic family values that are easily intertwined with the existing patriarchal social order has meant that women must face new restrictions on their bodies and life choices (p. 6). The problematic relationship between women’s emancipation and religion has also been one of the topics of heated debate in feminist discourse and women’s movements in Turkey, as recognized by Yeşim Arat in her article.

Likewise, Sema Erder discusses the issue of the religion/emancipation paradox in connection with the visibility/invisibility nexus. Particularly focusing on AKP’s family policies which encourage an Islamic and patriarchal family order, Erder addresses the contradicting demands faced by women. On the one hand, while the government’s Islamization politics and increasing conservatism demand the visibility of veiled women as ‘political subjects’ (p. 63), the family model promoted by AKP asks women to return to their homes and to their traditional roles as wives and mothers. This refers to their ‘not active’ (p. 62) visibility in public life. The visibility/invisibility duality increases the constraints on migrant women living in Western countries, especially in Europe. With the rise of Islamic terror and Islamophobia, veiled women are becoming the embodied presence of Islam and the Islamic threat, but at the same time they are turning into targets of discrimination and racist attacks which distort their sense of selfhood and agency and affect their participation in the public sphere.

Besides demonstrating these unexpected findings with regard to women’s emancipation and migration, the articles are not only supported with valuable empirical data but also highlight the importance of undertaking subjective evaluations

of migrant women and their experiences. Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, using a social psychological approach, investigates the transformations in the family models that influence migrant women's emancipation and their "overall well-being" (p. 101). Kağıtçıbaşı's article is followed by one from Gretty Mirdal and Fatma Küçükıldız. Their analysis is based on the results of a longitudinal study on Turkish migrant women living in Denmark (the study was first carried out in 1980 and was followed up in 2010). Mirdal and Küçükıldız's article is a significant one, since it is the only study that analyses Unat's hypothesis. The results indicate that the Unat's criteria for emancipation have mostly been fulfilled, but also highlight the declines in the psychological well-being of the women. The authors argue for the necessity of including 'subjective definitions of self-fulfillment' and the 'emancipation' of migrant women in academic studies (p. 129). Gretty Mirdal, who co-authors another article with Anika Liversage based on the same study, raises the issue of the intergenerational differences in the experiences of emancipation through a focus on three generations of women from the same family.

Some other articles evaluate the issue from a different point of view, mainly focusing on how migrant women are perceived in host countries, and in what ways structural discrimination and civil xenophobic manifestations towards them affect their integration and emancipation. Czarina Wilpert and Ruth Mandel discuss the effects of migrant women's motivation in the process of emancipation, while Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim raises the issue of how the stereotyping and discrimination of Turkish women migrants by Germans discourages their emancipation. The common point of interest about both articles is that, although we can talk about the increase in the visibility of 'success stories' of women migrants from Turkey, the statistics as well as the media and public discourse still frame Turkish migrants as unsuccessful and unable to integrate, and women migrants as victims of their own religion and family traditions. In other words, they are stigmatized as the 'permanent other' (p. 194).

Ahmet İçduygu and Deniz Karcı Korfalı's article, as well as the chapter by Christiane Timmerman and Kenneth Hemmerecht, are based on different analyses of EUMAGINE (Imagining Europe from the Out-side) data. İçduygu and Korfalı focus on investigating the situation of women who have been left behind in homelands after a relative has migrated to a Western country. In migration scholarship, this is usually a neglected area of study. Focusing on Abadan-Unat's concept of pseudo-emancipation (rather than emancipation), the authors question if the women who live in migrant sending areas are affected more (p. 197). Following this article, Christiane Timmerman and Kenneth Hemmerecht analyze the aspirations to migrate of women and men in contemporary Turkey. The results are striking in terms of the gender-differentiation: while men are mostly concerned about making economic gains, women are motivated more by 'social and democratic opportunities' which will involve more 'equal gender relations'; or in other words, opportunities for emancipation (p. 234).

Following Abadan-Unat's argument that the various freedoms obtained by migrating do not liberate women migrants, and 'indeed create a false climate of liberation' (p. 237), Nancy Foner focuses on women's migration in the United States and reminds the reader of the necessity of obtaining a more in-depth understanding of

the complicated and even contradictory outcomes for women migrants. The argument in the final chapter by Mirjana Morokvasic is similar to that put forward by Nancy Foner and locates the issues in a broader global dimension, while also touching on different forms of female migration. Morokvasic points out some of the other dilemmas for women migrants that were not raised by other articles. One interesting point is that while the increasing feminization of migration opens up new opportunities for mobility and the emancipation of women, prevailing traditional gender roles put the blame on women for the 'disruption of families' (p. 266).

To sum up, *Emancipation in Exile: Perspectives on the Empowerment of Migrant Women* is a rich volume that challenges modernist assumptions about women's process of emancipation by criticizing prevalent conceptual and methodological perspectives and offering new insights. Following Abadan-Unat's pioneering argument, the authors jointly emphasize the dilemmas involved in migration for women: migration and employment sometimes create gains, but at the same time can negatively impact women or strengthen the prevailing position of women as oppressed and subordinated individuals. Due to all the options they have and challenges that face them, women are usually the most vulnerable group to be frequently discriminated against or exploited. Thus, as claimed by the authors, the situation of women migrants cannot be comprehended through a gender-blind scholarship of migration. The gendered aspects of migration demand the analysis of the mutually constitutive relationship between migration and gender. In other words, and as the authors of this volume also suggest, migration affects and transforms gender roles and relations, but it is also crucial to analyze the dynamics of gender as an antecedent of migration. The constitutive relationship between migration and women also necessitates the historical tracing of repercussions across generations, as well as an investigation of affective reflections related to the country of origin.

Such an effort demands the adoption of an 'intersectional approach' (p. 155), as suggested by Czarina Wilpert and Ruth Mandel, and also emphasized by Mirjana Morokvasic (p. 272). I think that this is one of the most significant contributions of the volume. Favored recently by many feminist scholars, a gendered focus on migration also requires an intersectional approach. The positions and experiences of migrant women are difficult to fully conceive of since they involve discrimination in terms of gender, class and race (Morokvasic, 1984). This increases the challenge for the analyst who is required to untangle the dynamics of oppression and exploitation since one form of discrimination can mask others. Taking an intersectional perspective will enable to us to move beyond the established dichotomies of emancipation theories. Also, emerging transnational practices—whether economic or political—entail new patterns of integration and social engagement that subvert the patterns and politics of belonging. Without falling into the trap of cultural essentialism, and at the same time unraveling resistance through the 'cultural hard core' introduced by Dominique Schnapper, intersectionality offers a more flexible approach to observing the diverse and contradictory factors that contribute to emancipation. Pursuing an intersectional approach allows us to deconstruct the overlapping categories of exclusion/inclusion such as race, religion, culture and gender. Such approaches also emphasize the importance of agency (in our case, female agency) alongside the structural factors that

have been ignored in previous approaches. Another contribution of the volume is Schnapper's emphasis on conceptualizing 'emancipation' as a process, not as an ideal outcome of migration and democratization. This enables us to follow the historical and geographical trajectory of emancipation, not only in form of advancement or improvement, but also in other patterns of 'backfiring' (p. 6) such as the well-known 'veiling' dilemmas of Muslim women migrants.

*Emancipation in Exile: Perspectives on the Empowerment of Migrant Women* is thus a valuable academic source, providing significant findings and introducing challenging insights for academics, social science students and policymakers. Consequently, I believe the experiences of Turkish migrant women in Europe represent an excellent example of a historical trajectory and an inspiring case for future studies of women and migration.

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## Book Review

### **Brazzabeni, Micol; Manuela Ivone Cunha, and Martin Fotta (2016) (eds.) Gypsy Economy. Romani Livelihoods and Notions of Worth in the 21st Century. New York, NY: Berghahn Books. 263 pp.**

Distinguished economic anthropologists Keith Hart and John Sharp, the editors of the Human Economy Series, offered to compile Volume 3 of the Series entitled *Gypsy Economy. Romani Livelihoods and Notions of Worth in the 21st Century* by a group of young scholars dedicated to the theme of Romani livelihoods. The volume focuses predominantly on European Roma whose economic practices and ideas Keith Hart in the afterword characterizes as an ‘example of personalized economy’.

Non-European material is represented by contributions about the Calon Gypsies in Brazil. The authors Florencia Ferrari (focusing on the economic strategy of fortune-telling) and Martin Fotta (who discusses the theme of exchange from the perspective of value) complement the bulk of material which focuses on European Roma. ‘Southern’ Europe (Portugal) is represented in the articles of Sara Sama Acedo (about horse dealers), Marco Solimene (about scrap metal collecting in Italy), and Nathalie Manrique (on wealth and identity in Spain). Before going into more detail, particularly about the East European material, basic comments about the editors’ construction of the ‘Gypsy economy’ follow.

The ethnography of economic practices among Gypsy populations has rarely been theoretically conceptualized in anthropology, acknowledge the editors. Embedded within the modern economic system and created in relation to a milieu from which it cannot be dissociated, the notion of the ‘Gypsy economy’ on the one hand illustrates the economic practices and orientations of various Roma people. On the other hand, the term offers an interpretative framework for analyzing ‘how people position themselves in relation to the current economic system and to the changing nature of the roles of states, markets and finance, as well as of interrelationships between these’ (p. 3). The editors use three themes to present and navigate their approach to Roma livelihoods: niches, marginality and personhood.

The interstitial economy is the kind of adaptive niche which specialists such as Roma occupy within the wider economy. This perspective calls for ‘demand’ on the side of the dominant non-Gypsies. The authors of the volume attempt to complement understanding of this ‘demand’ with the ‘supply’ side of Roma economic practices and ideas about economy; i.e., to ‘understand economic activities in Gypsies’ own terms’ (p. 8). The marginal economy, according to the editors, avoids describing the ‘Gypsy economy’ as a product of long-term marginality and looks at this sphere as ‘informed by values and meanings arising from within Gypsy sociality’ (p. 13). The performative view of the economy takes into consideration ‘the way in which social actors enact and represent their lives’ and at the same time treats ‘performance as an “event” and a “process,” showing how people and culture produce their specific and constitutive performances’ (p. 14). This approach to the local economy ‘from inside’ is common of articles that deal with Eastern Europe.

Tomáš Hruštič shows, using a case from Eastern Slovakia, that in the situation of a critical shortage of cash, usury is mutually beneficial for borrowers and lenders. This 'irrational' behavior from the perspective of outsiders in fact makes perfect sense if it secures the means of existence in the short term. This very valuable empirical contribution to the Roma settlement economy in Slovakia would be even more valuable if the theoretical conceptualization of the economy of usury – including the role of the state in this economy (or the lack of it), the relations between usury and 'micro' credits, and so on – had been developed by the author.

Judit Durst discusses the political side of informal lending in Hungary. Her material convincingly shows the moral underpinnings of moneylending while avoiding the trap of perspectives that employ 'moral decline' or an 'anomic state' as the primary reference points. As she shows instead, social norms do play a role in poor Romani communities; borrowers can sanction their debtors if they impose debts upon them that go beyond locally accepted norms. Like Hruštič, Durst shows how lending creates a buffer between the state and poor communities and contributes to local peace.

A theoretically and empirically valuable analysis is offered by Jan Grill. In discussing the phenomenon of 'fixing up money,' he defines it as complementary income strategy to hard labor. For 'fixing up money' various 'soft' skills and knowledge of social systems are needed. Unlike the well-known horse dealers and similar types of 'specialist' Roma, the East Europeans studied by Grill in the UK and in Slovakia do not speak of a specific type of work to which 'they would ascribe some kind of ideological significance.' For these Roma, 'Gypsy work' means the same as it does for their Slovak neighbors; i.e. 'poor-quality work traditionally associated with Gypsies' (p. 92). The conceptualization of the 'embeddedness' of Roma in the formal economy in Slovakia and Europe – the major contribution of Grill's analysis – might have been even more central to the perspective employed by the editors.

A less clearly conceptualized but still ethnographically rich account by Gergő Pulay presents the case of street traders who balance between undertaking formal and informal activities. In contrast to the dominant media image of the street as a peripheral zone, Pulay approaches the neighborhood as the zone of many local and transnational networks. He sees the street's entrepreneurialism as 'acts that create social persons and relationships in which the issues of trust and distrust play a crucial role' (p. 131). Men – usually the Roma and non-Roma peers who form the basic social units on the street – preserve at least some parts of their 'madness'; i.e. special qualities of male peers on the street 'that they keep under control but can potentially burst out if the circumstances or other parties demand it' (p. 135).

Martin Olivera, using the example of Transylvanian Gabori Roma, convincingly shows how the economy produces 'Roma's society'. This 'making of' does not take place via production process per se, but also as a form of ethics. As the author argues, this Romani society is seen as socio-economically marginal and politically dominated, but it manages to establish logics of abundance (p. 147) similar to 'other' economies for which the concept of *homo economicus* does not hold much value. Even though Roma fully participate in the market society – writes Olivera – their conceptions of

economy use a different logic than that of classical economics; for them, 'money is never anything else but a use value' (p. 157).

The theme of the conspicuous consumption of houses and housing among the Cortorari Roma of Romania is analyzed by Cătălina Tesar. Cortorari consider their houses to be a sign of civility, 'all the more so as houses have traditionally been a central idiom of peasant sociality' (p. 184). The mansions the Roma built from money earned abroad represent their social development and economic advancement. This value of a house vis-à-vis the houses of others somehow questions the exceptionality of the 'Roma economy' thesis at first, but at the same time allows the social reproduction of Roma identity from within domestic groups via marriage rituals.

In the afterword, the series editor Keith Hart relates the study of the Gypsy economy to neoliberalism. As he rightly points out, for many anthropologists 'neoliberalism' has become a convenient tag, like *homo economicus* for an earlier generation, and an excuse for not thinking (p. 146). Hart identifies four themes that connect the papers in the volume: money transfers, economic strategies, performance, and wealth and value. He also raises an important point with regard to the state: 'we no longer pretend that we are studying stateless peoples, but we are studying people with history of statelessness who interact with states, global capitalism and the rest' (p. 247).

The lack of theoretical discussion about the state and formal institutions in the 'Gypsy economy' might therefore be considered a weakness of the volume. Although the Roma economy is very much a unique field, and the authors convincingly show it is worth looking at using Gypsies' own perspectives, it would still help to look at Roma identities as being formed due to the particular functioning or malfunctioning of the state and other formal economic and non-economic institutions of modern times. Although there is no doubt about the ongoing 'informalization of economy' - the Gypsy economy to a large extent fits the definition of an interstitial economy - the state still remains the key actor. Micro credits, 'social enterprises' and cooperatives have already influenced the Roma economy on the ground and we should take into account this development as it relates to making Roma money and identity.

Roma cohabitation with peasants and their economies - or in the cases from Eastern Europe, of the remnants left after socialism - and what makes them different from or similar to Roma should also have been incorporated into the theoretical elaboration. Although some papers touch upon the topic of 'peasants,' these two predominantly rural peoples (Roma and post-peasants) who have been the subjects as well as agents of modern transformation deserve more systematic treatment.

The final hesitation with regard to this volume comes from the concept of the Gypsy economy itself. No doubt there are Roma who have personal livelihoods and an understanding of the material world, and no doubt the term is attractive to readers, but the economy of the Gypsies only makes sense in a relational perspective: with regard to non-Roma, to the state, and comparatively to other groups in various parts of the world who fill the space between the formal and informal, the state and the market, the self-employed and wage laborers. Even some of the articles rightly question the notion of the economy as being 'Gypsy-like'.

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Despite these minor concerns, there is an urgent need to promote this volume! Some of the findings – not least with regard to informal lending and ‘fixing-up money’ – should even find their echoes in policies that allow Roma to live their lives as they like. The volume definitely represents the kick-off of studies of whatever is meant by the ‘Gypsy economy,’ and no work that follows this topic – at least in the East European context – will be able to ignore this collection.

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