

Social Inclusion

Open Access Journal | ISSN: 2183-2803

Volume 6, Issue 1 (2018)

The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies

Editors

Ulrike Hamann and Gökçe Yurdakul

Social Inclusion, 2018, Volume 6, Issue 1

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Published by Cogitatio Press
Rua Fialho de Almeida 14, 2º Esq.,
1070-129 Lisbon
Portugal

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Available online at: www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion

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Editorial

The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies

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Submitted: 16 March 2018 | Published: 29 March 2018

Abstract

In this thematic issue, we attempt to show how migrations transform societies at the local and micro level by focusing on how migrants and refugees navigate within different migration regimes. We pay particular attention to the specific formation of the migration regimes that these countries adopt, which structure the conditions of the economic, racialised, gendered, and sexualized violence and exploitation during migration processes. This interactive process of social transformation shapes individual experiences while also being shaped by them. We aim to contribute to the most recent and challenging question of what kind of political and social changes can be observed and how to frame these changes theoretically if we look at local levels while focusing on struggles for recognition, rights, and urban space. We bring in a cross-country comparative perspective, ranging from Canada, Chile, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and to Germany in order to lay out similarities and differences in each case, within which our authors analyse these transformative forces of migration.

Keywords

citizenship; migration; refugees; transformation

Issue

This editorial is part of the issue “The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies”, edited by Ulrike Hamann and Gökçe Yurdakul (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany).

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Migration has deep impacts on social structures and socio-political power relations in departure, transit, and arrival countries. Migrants and refugees contest and transform dominant notions of the nation-state, state control, national sovereignty, citizenship, and participation. In migration processes, both newcomers and citizens address issues of equality and inclusion while renegotiating the meaning of (national) belonging and citizenship in terms of social and civil rights. Such processes can bring up unexpected alliances between social actors and new definitions of “who we are.” We observe processes of transformation of migration societies through such everyday practices and state decisions on who belongs and who does not belong to polity.

In this thematic issue, our focus lays on the challenges to and transformation of societies, which are

shaped by migration, the regimes that try to regulate it, and by the struggles of migrants, refugees, and solidarity movements for social inclusion and participation. In this framework, social transformation has two main components, one is how newcomers transfer society, this is what immigrant and refugee-receiving countries are experiencing. The other is how societies create specific subject positions through their legal, political decisions and through engaging with social boundaries and cultural repertoires (Lamont & Molnar, 2002; Yurdakul, 2013).

Depending on the specific socio-political and legal context of the destination country, the relations between immigrants and their new societies change dramatically. In this thematic issue, we attempt to show how migrants and refugees navigate within these migration regimes, specifically, in times of neoliberal transfor-

mations of the welfare state and with right-wing strategies of Othering in terms of class, gender, and racialization present. We also pay particular attention to the specific formation of the migration regimes that these countries adopt, which structure the conditions of the economic, racialised, gendered, and sexualized violence and exploitation during migration processes. This interactive process of social transformation shapes individual experiences while also being shaped by them.

Building on our previous work (Hamann & Karakayali, 2016; Yurdakul, Römhild, Schwanhäusser, & zur Nieden, 2018) and the inspiring work of others (see e.g. Ataç, Rygiel, & Stierl, 2016; Fiedler et al., 2017) on the issue of transformation since the long summer of migration (Kasperek & Speer, 2015), we aim to contribute to the most recent and challenging question of what kind of political and social changes can be observed and how to frame these changes theoretically if we look at local levels while focusing on struggles for recognition, rights, and urban space within societies shaped by migration. We bring in a cross-country comparative perspective, ranging from Canada, Chile, and Spain to Sweden, Turkey or Germany. Such a cross-country perspective is useful in order to see how each country case differs from or resembles each other in terms of their historical shifts, policy changes, and their reaction towards immigrant struggles. Many contributions have applied a methodological approach developed in critical migration studies that goes “beyond the established paradigms of both traditional and critical migration studies to create different relationships with migrants and migrants’ struggles” (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015, p. 57). The analytical “perspective of migration” (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015, p. 69) shifts the focus of traditional migration research, in which migration is defined as “a peripheral phenomenon that appears at the margins of society” (Römhild, 2009, p. 225), to a perspective that regards migration as a constituting force within societies. This perspective can open up new ways of looking at the internal make-up of a society by seeing it as inevitably and irrevocably shaped by migration.

We focused on answering three major questions in our thematic issue: The *first question* focuses on the change of political discourses and practices that accompany the arrival of refugees and immigrants in their destination countries. The authors of this issue paid specific interest in political-economic discourses in arrival countries (Scarpa & Schierup, 2018) or discourses on citizenship (Koser Akcapar & Simsek, 2018), the practices of citizens in solidarity (Rast & Gorashi, 2018; Schmidtke, 2018) or those of the struggles of migrants (Bouali, 2018; Wilcke, 2018). In focusing on these three fields of change, we put them in a conversation on central social conflicts. Relatedly, the *second question* is how economic conditions and social and civil rights have changed after the arrival of refugees and immigrants. Authors showed how citizenship policies change, how austerity measures are forming the conditions of the crisis of administration after the long summer of migration, and

how social rights and local administrative reality conflicted with each other in the realm of housing. *Thirdly*, we focused on the transformation within the cities. In this way, we saw the effects of specific urban politics regarding the struggles of refugees and immigrants in the cases of sanctuary cities (Bauder & Gonzalez, 2018), or refugees’ housing problems (El-Kayed & Hamann, 2018). The cross-cutting issues in answering these questions have been dealing with racist politics and attitudes; the effects of neoliberal policy-making on immigrants and refugee/immigrant struggles in negotiating their rights and fighting against racism, and for acceptable labour conditions (Bouali, 2018). The answers to these questions are overlapping in each article, but cross-cutting all of them.

These three questions can only be framed in a solid theoretical base. Engin Isin (2018) starts a new stream of thinking society not from a static geography, but from the mobility of people. Centuries of migration, diaspora, traveling, and flight have made mobility the norm rather than the exception, a reflection leading him to a new concept of thinking society through migration. From this crucial turn of perspective he asks: why were ‘mobile peoples’ constructed as an exception in the first place? His new concept is a logical step from his influential work on citizenship that can rather be seen as a practice, as acts, practised by people who are present with or without a formal state membership (Isin & Nielsen, 2008). With his new concept of ‘mobile peoples’ Isin goes one step further. He not only theorises the way of practicing participation in a social entity from each status as an act of becoming part of this entity. Now he conceptualises this very social and political entity as constituted by migration itself. His change of perspective from the static territorial nation state as the defining entity for the central social, political, or economic reference towards *mobility* as the driver for political, cultural, and social change helps to question concepts that seem to dominate modern thinking. This detailed unpacking of the processes of creating a people is supplemented by Isin when following the thinking of Agamben, Rancière, and Laclau of how a part becomes a whole or part of a whole entity. Their writings still leave him puzzled with the problem, that in order to become part of a political realm ‘mobile people’ need in this stream of thinking to settle or remain alternatively out of politics. His attempt to approach this impasse is to conceive citizenship, or it’s opposite, not as static, but as a spectrum through which many people move for many reasons. In his view, the epistemic problem of conceiving mobility as constitutive is also a problem of a historiography that binds a people to a (imaginary) territory. What we need is a historiography of mobile people.

The leading theoretical article by Isin as a challenge to the modern theorization of the immigrant as an exception reflects the general concern of this thematic issue. We aim to bring not only this theoretical new approach of mobile people, accompanied by several others, from

ongoing critical debates such as sanctuary cities, immigrant struggles, and multiplication of borders (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). The authors of this issue moreover contribute with their profound, empirically based analysis to these challenging concepts.

The thematic issue continues after Engin Isin's contribution with an article by Harald Bauder and Dayana Gonzalez (2018) on Sanctuary Cities. The term refers to many different practices of urban politics towards federal repressive migration regimes. The authors clarify the concept by categorising Sanctuary Cities by legality, discourse, identity, and scale, and discuss this definition along their empirical work on three cities outside the well-known and discussed context of the USA, Canada and, the UK by analysing the practices of cities in Spain, Chile, and Germany.

Following the urban dimension of this issue, Nihad El-Kayed and Ulrike Hamann (2018) address the questions of where and how to arrive in a society and how the border multiplies into the urban space. The authors analyse the regulatory practices of accommodating refugees in Germany on the local, federal, and state level and study how the arrival of refugees is managed through a diverse set of actors, legislation, and administrative decisions. They follow the question of how refugees find a way out of the camps into independent living in the cities of arrival. Considering housing and accommodation as one of the priorities that refugees talk about after their arrival, (Schiefer, 2017, p. 3) this touches a highly relevant issue for the arrival process.

Oliver Schmidtke (2018), also at the urban dimension of migration, studies the ways of arrival of refugees in Canada by focusing on civil society. Following two specific programs that are in place to welcome newcomers into the Canadian society (*Neighborhood Houses* and the *Privately-Sponsored Refugee program*), he elaborates on how socio-economic dynamics and urban governance can work in favour of refugees to develop their voice and agency within Canadian society.

Holger Wilcke's (2018) work takes us to another form of civil society, that of illegalised workers and labour conditions. He focuses on a struggle of undocumented migrants in Germany in 2002 that resulted in a change in union politics of representation of (illegalised) migrant workers. The successful intervention of a group, usually trying to be an invisible part of society—the undocumented workers—into a national union meeting has resulted in an actual change of the politics of the union. Analysing this struggle with Rancière as becoming a part by those who have no part, Wilcke follows some of the activists of that time and adds additional voices from current undocumented workers and their everyday struggles.

Similarly, by combining the concepts of immigrant struggles and border regimes, Celia Bouali (2018) studies an aspect of labour struggles of migrants in Berlin. Her focus lies in contrast to many other articles of this thematic issue not on refugee migration, but on an often-

neglected migration within the EU, more specifically from the EU-south to EU-north. Bouali demonstrates through the perspective of a self-organized migrant workers' strike group, how the internal workings of the border regime affect the labour conditions of EU-citizens that migrate within the EU.

Immigrant struggles open up the questions on changing social and economic relations in immigrant receiving countries. Sebnem Koser Akcapar and Dogus Simsek (2018) highlight in their contribution the changes in the law on citizenship that Turkish politics is undergoing due to the recent refugee migration from Syria. We can also see how class plays a significant role in migration and citizenship politics, and what they demonstrate based on the interrelatedness of socio-economic status and legal status. Can the changes in citizenship law that follow economic calculations still be linked to a broader change of the notion of citizenship? The authors follow the perspective of migration methodologically by gaining their empirical data from interviews with Syrian refugees.

The discourse of citizenship rights is articulated in the Netherlands through the notion of participation. Maria Charlotte Rast and Halleh Gorashi (2018) are studying—based on empirical fieldwork—what kind of challenges and chances are laid out by volunteering “community initiatives” that are aiming to foster participation and inclusion of refugees. The article shows how the intentions of local initiatives of volunteers can get confused with the intentions and perspectives of newcomers/refugees for whom these initiatives have been created. It can be taken as an example of how the purpose of organising “participation” does not meet the different perceptions, power relations in place, and goals that undermine volunteer work, even though one of the goals is to create an inclusive space.

Regarding economic discourse, Simone Scarpa and Carl-Ulrik Schierup (2018), as economists, shed an analytical light on the narratives of right wing populist discourses against migration. Their contribution builds against a widespread discourse in Sweden stretching the assumed ‘burden’ that refugee migration puts on the welfare state. Challenging that narrative means for the authors to follow the changes of the welfare system into the past, to the neoliberal transformations that have been made in order to establish what the authors call a *consolidation state*. The authors convincingly reveal how the discourse on a “systemkollaps” or “breakdown”, which is allegedly near due to arriving Syrian refugees, is covering a much older process of weakening of the welfare state due to austerity politics beginning in the 1990s.

We believe that the newly introduced or implemented concepts (mobile people, sanctuary cities, multiplication of borders, among others); the combining of solid theoretical framework with recently collected empirical data; as well as the cross-country perspective of this thematic issue make an innovative and important contribution to migration studies.

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Article

Mobile Peoples: Transversal Configurations

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Submitted: 24 November 2017 | Accepted: 12 February 2018 | Published: 29 March 2018

Abstract

This essay is an attempt to think ‘mobile peoples’ as a political concept. I consider mobile peoples as a norm rather than an exception and as political subjects rather than subject peoples. After discussing the tension between ‘mobile’ and ‘peoples’, I draw on Ian Hacking’s historical ontology for understanding how *a* people comes to be. For understanding how *the* people comes to be, or rather, how the tension between a people that constitutes itself as a whole and those peoples that remain as residual parts, I draw on Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Rancière, and Ernesto Laclau as authors who identified this tension as a fundamental problem of ‘Western’ political thought. Yet, their inattention to *territory* draws me to James Scott whose work on early states challenges how we have come to understand the people as *sedentary* in the first place. His account of how ‘barbarians’ (mobile peoples) came to be seen as a threat to sedentary peoples enables us to understand that tension. Then a path opens toward thinking about mobile peoples as a political concept.

Keywords

a people; mobile peoples; territory; the people; state

Issue

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1. Introduction

Over the last two decades research in fields such as migration studies, refugee studies, citizenship studies and mobility studies has demonstrated that human mobility involves complex movements: iterative migrations across countries; massive relocations and displacements within countries and across their cities and regions; intricate combined and uneven geographies; interwoven histories of recurrent and seasonal movements; increasing use of mobile technologies in practices of governance and resistance; intersections of affective, cultural and political identities, and hybrid cultural, linguistic, and social formations (Cresswell, 2006; Elliott & Urry, 2010; Hannam, Mostafanezhad, & Rickly-Boyd, 2016; Merriman, 2012). This research has shifted our attention away from migration as a one-way movement often across and within state borders. Instead, how mobile peoples, of all kinds and in multiple ways, produce novel social, political

and cultural lives, knowledge and practices, and thereby drive political change has become an issue (Adey, Bissell, Hannam, Merriman, & Sheller, 2014; Gold & Nawyn, 2013; Isin & Nyers, 2014).

Thus, scholars regard the often-cited figures such as that nearly a quarter of a billion people live in countries other than their birth (as of 2015) or that this is a 41 per cent increase since 2000 rather sceptically. For these are not mere descriptions of human mobility (UN, 2015). They are also ascriptions that shape how we understand human mobility as one-way movement between or across states. The uses of statistics for public policy in migration and immigration and in general concerning human mobility understood as one-way cross-state migration are fraught with struggles over meanings and functions of such figures (Boswell, 2009). There are increasingly critical studies of the ways in which migration, immigration and mobility are constituted as problems to be managed, solved, and contained rather than

seeing mobile peoples as political subjects who are creating new forms of life (Geiger, 2013; Manderscheid, 2016; Pécoud, 2015). There are also studies critical of constituting mobility as an independent fact from reflexive and agentic involvement of people right across the spectrum from mobile to immobile (Frello, 2008). Perhaps because of this shift national and international authorities, agencies, and organisations are beginning to recognize that, rather than being a problem that can be solved or managed, the mobility of people is shaping and structuring the terms of contemporary political life.

That these critical studies are changing our views of people on the move beyond Eurocentrism and state-centrism is a welcome development (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2014, 2017). Perhaps this is now the moment that we ask a historical question regarding why ‘mobile peoples’ were constituted as an exception (and a problem) in the first place. This might involve thinking big about mobile peoples as Elizabeth Zanoni (2017) put it when describing the pioneering work of Donna Gabaccia (1999). I want to argue here that it requires genealogical investigations of the concept of ‘people’ and the functions it has come to perform. There are certainly different ways to approach this question but a historical approach to ‘mobile peoples’ as a political concept requires two moves.

First, exploring the possibilities of recognizing ‘mobile peoples’ as a norm rather than exception goes against the grain of dominant perspectives. The concept ‘people’ itself already signifies immobile, sedentary, and enclosed body politic bounded within a territory. Thus, seeing ‘mobile peoples’ as a norm requires exploring how ‘people’ has come to acquire its dominant signification in the first place. Second, developing ‘mobile peoples’ as a political concept that restores political subjectivity to mobile peoples requires exploring the conditions under which ‘mobile peoples’ have become objects of government. This means recognizing the difficulties of the concept ‘people’ and the differences between the people and peoples as its parts.

The first move—to consider ‘mobile peoples’ as a norm rather than an exception—may appear easier than the second move—to consider ‘mobile peoples’ a political subject. We can, for example, argue that humans have always been on the move (Feldman, 2015; Panayi & Virdee, 2011). Or, as Jürgen Osterhammel (2009) has argued, the emergence of ‘modern’ population movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were the foundations of our age. Or, we can appeal to the uniqueness of the twenty-first century to argue that the concept ‘mobile peoples’ covers not only those for whom crossing all sorts of borders is decisive for the way in which they live their lives, but also those whose lives are implicated in the lives of those who move. It includes those who move by force or by choice, those who cut ties or stay in touch, those who return once or many times, as well as those who are left behind. We can argue that there are categories of mobile peoples including

diplomats, families, investors, pensioners, refugees, students, travellers, tourists, and workers who dwell or inhabit these various mobilities. We can accept it as a social fact that, for example, grandparents whose livelihood depends on remittances from their migrant grandchildren are as much a part of this mobility as their grandchildren. We can argue that mobility shapes more than just the lives of those who are on the move. Consequently, we can argue that it also has an impact on social and political institutions and practices through which people arrange and govern their lives.

All these arguments are possible. But I wonder if we are not valorizing ostensible facts rather than asking questions about our changing perspectives on peoples living mobile lives? To put it differently, is there not a problem in appealing to autonomous facts without considering the conditions under which such facts have come into being (Buscher, Urry, & Witchger, 2011; Cresswell, 2006; Elliott & Urry, 2010)? Do we not need to become sceptical about making such appeals without considering how, where, and when mobile peoples have become a concern or even a problem for various governmental authorities and under which new modes are mobile peoples being governed? (Endres, Manderscheid, & Mincke, 2016). If we are to articulate the transformative effects of people living mobile lives on political life in the present, we will need to have a critical approach towards the terms under which we are describing mobile peoples. Thus, rather than making an appeal for mobile peoples as a norm rather than an exception based on ostensibly independent facts I want to discuss how we should approach the concept ‘people’ in the first place. That is why the next two sections will make up the bulk of this essay examining political genealogies of the concept of people—first ‘a people’ and then ‘the people’. We shall see that the passage from ‘a people’ to ‘the people’ is not only a passage through which a people becomes a sovereign political subject but also a sedentary (as opposed to mobile) political subject.

2. What Is a People?

What is a people? This is a difficult question because the naming of a people is always a performative rather than a descriptive act. The naming of a people is a double act: as it names a people it also mobilizes the named to act as a people. Here Ian Hacking’s performative approach to how kinds of people appear in language and how this language invites people into becoming one is immensely helpful. Hacking captures this process by using two terms: making up a people and looping effect (Hacking, 2007, pp. 289–290). Both terms owe to a performative understanding of the relations between words and things that Hacking calls ‘historical ontology’ both to indicate his debt to Michel Foucault (1997) and to signify his own approach that he calls ‘dynamic nominalism’. Historical ontology also owes to Friedrich Nietzsche (2001) and J.L Austin (1962) but I leave these influences out of this

discussion and focus briefly on Hacking and why his work is essential for the question I am articulating.

Hacking begins with the assumption that words and things are effects of each other (Hacking, 2002, p. 3). To understand these effects we need to understand beings and coming into beings as historical developments. The beings that become things such as classifications, ideas, *peoples*, or institutions are all objects of historical ontology in the sense that we cannot understand these things without tracing their histories. These objects make sense only insofar as we understand how they came into being and acquired their meanings. For example, Hacking says, 'the idea that peoples just separate naturally into overarching racial, ethnic, or linguistic groups is largely a product of a recent invention, the nation state' (Hacking, 2007, p. 289). There is no reason to assume that we will find these things in the past in the same manner in which we understand them in the present or that these things in the present are evolved versions of the things in the past. Thus, historical ontology considers 'kinds of people' as having come into being historically as invented descriptions through which people constitute themselves as acting beings. Such descriptions become embedded in human practices and provide ways of acting and being in the world. All acts are acts performed under a description. If new descriptions come into being new possibilities for action come into being in consequence (Hacking, 2002, p. 108). It is in this sense that the act of naming a people is an act of 'making up a people'. Unless people take up these descriptions and act upon them and each other a description would not have any performative force. When people act they interact with descriptions and this creates a looping effect where descriptions acquire performative force. The name (words) and the named (things) interact. Hacking insists that this process is dynamic in the sense that there is no static moment in the looping effect where the named can be said to be the effect of the name or vice versa. Instead, the name and the named are constituted dynamically.

Hacking names five dynamic moments through which words and things become effects of each other. First, a description appears about the kind of people. Second, people begin to act under this description. Third, institutions emerge to manage the kind of people acting under this description. Fourth, knowledge about the kind of people in question appears: their characteristics, fierce or docile, artistic or warlike, artisans or hunters etc. Fifth, authorities, expertise, and administration of people emerges that regulate the kind of people acting under this description. A historical ontology of a kind of people means to investigate how and when these five dynamic moments were present and how its description became possible and was transformed. Hacking gives examples of various kinds of people (Hacking, 2007, p. 285). He speaks, for example, about the avalanche of numbers in the nineteenth century on various categories of people: murderers, thieves, prostitutes, drunks, vagrants, insane, poor, and all sorts of deviants. Where did these

people come from? Did they not exist before the nineteenth century in some form? Hacking says things that people *did* to get classified existed historically (e.g., stealing, killing, drinking) but how those things were used to describe, enumerate and classify people are made up and change often. He says 'even national and provincial censuses amazingly show that the categories into which people fall change every ten years. Social change creates new categories of people, but the counting is no mere report of developments. It elaborately, often philanthropically, creates new ways for people to be' (Hacking, 2002, p. 100). The categories that Hacking mentions involve many different 'ways to be' such as those of sexuality or ethnicity or race. Hacking, for example, says 'the homosexual and the heterosexual as kinds of persons (as ways to be persons, or as conditions of personhood) came into being only toward the end of the nineteenth century' (Hacking, 2002, p. 103). Historically there were sex acts between individuals, but it came under familiar and recognizable (sayable and visible) descriptions only in the nineteenth century. And there is no guarantee that these descriptions will live forever. So his claim:

Is not that there was a kind of person who came increasingly to be recognized by bureaucrats or by students of human nature, but rather that a kind of person came into being at the same time as the kind itself was being invented. (Hacking, 2002, p. 106)

So, the argument is not that a kind of people never existed before and came into being at a certain moment. Nor is it that a kind of people always existed and that it was named in a particular moment. Rather, at a certain moment in history people did not experience themselves in this particular way, they did not interact with other people in this way, and were not treated by knowledge, institutions, authorities under this description. Thus, the making up people is a complex performative event that requires historical ontology to investigate.

When Hacking talks about 'making up people' he means kinds of people. These are kinds of people such as murderers, dandies, flaneurs, blacks, homosexuals, and so on that constitute 'parts' of a 'whole'. These kinds of people as 'parts' are unimaginable unless there are kinds of people who have been constituted as a 'whole'. This is a problem that Hacking does not address. A people (or peoples) can be described only when there is a difference between peoples (parts) and *the* people (whole). The people as a whole involves a more complicated historical ontology than Hacking implies including the relation between parts and wholes. This is because the complex interplay between words and things that Hacking addresses involves power relations and there are plays of domination in these descriptions. The description 'black' or 'gay' is not only a description under which a people will act but also an asymmetrical signifier under which a people will be acted upon—will be subjected to government. Moreover, it is one thing to see how the category

of murderers has come about; it is another to understand how the category Jewish or French people was brought into being. The question that opens up here is not only the invention of kinds of people but also with the invention of *the* people. To put it differently, the question what is a people inevitably leads to the question what is *the* people.

Hannah Arendt in the 1940s and Michel Foucault in the 1970s came to this problem of the difference between a people and the people (Isin, 2012). Arendt famously argued that it was in the nineteenth century that the nation as a people conquered the state. Her genealogy of race-thinking, for example, led her to understand the dangers of instituting a state as a nation. Similarly, Foucault investigated how nations became *the* nation in the nineteenth century. For both the making up of peoples in Europe as nations generated peoples as ‘minorities’. What we learned from Arendt and Foucault is that a genealogy of ‘the people’ inevitably leads to the kinds of people it generates.

3. What Is *the* People?

How does a people become a people? Does a people become only that which it is? If so, then what is it? How can we know: (1) What a people in general is? (2) What this or that people is? (3) What we ourselves are? (Heidegger, 2012)

It is not perhaps surprising that before Arendt in the 1940s and Foucault in the 1970s, Martin Heidegger was confronted by a question in the 1930s of the difference between a people and *the* people. For the purposes of illustrating the difficulties of considering the concept ‘mobile peoples’ we would need a historical ontology from ancient Greek *demos* to Roman *plebeians* to medieval Italian *popolo* illustrating how various peoples became remainders or residuals of *the* people. Margaret Canovan (2005) traces precisely this particular history. She reveals a constitutive tension between ‘the people’ which differentiates itself from the unruly, poor, rapturous and eruptive peoples. She notes that the respectable, unified, and virtuous stories of ‘the people’ are always narrated against the unruly mob or herd. Canovan already provides us the view that the difference between a people and the people or even a passage from a people to the people involves domination. Alain Badiou puts this starkly when he says:

The word ‘people’ was only suitable for the conquering powers, elated by the conquest itself: ‘the French people,’ ‘the English people,’ yes....But the Algerian people, the Vietnamese people? No! And even today for the Israeli government, ‘the Palestinian people’? An even louder no. (Badiou, 2016, pp. 22–23)

Yet, it was Giorgio Agamben (2000) who identified this tension as a constitutive question of ‘Western’ politics.

Agamben insists that ‘any interpretation of the political meaning of the term people ought to start from the peculiar fact that in modern European languages this term always indicates also the poor, the underprivileged, and the excluded. The same term names the constitutive political subject as well as the class that is excluded—de facto, if not de jure—from politics’ (Agamben, 2000, p. 29). From the beginning of political thinking about ‘people’ there is an ambiguity whether it means the constitutive dominant (the people) or the dominated (a people) or both. For Agamben then ‘such a widespread and constant semantic ambiguity cannot be accidental: it surely reflects an ambiguity inherent in the nature and function of the concept of people in Western politics’ (Agamben, 2000, p. 31). According to Agamben ‘this also means, however, that the constitution of the human species into a body politic comes into being through a fundamental split and that in the concept of people we can easily recognize the conceptual pair identified earlier as the defining category of the original political structure: naked life (*people*) and political existence (*People*), exclusion and inclusion, *zoē* and *bios*’ (Agamben, 2000, pp. 31–32). Agamben concludes that:

The concept of people always already contains within itself the fundamental biopolitical fracture. It is what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a part as well as what cannot belong to the whole in which it is always already included (Agamben, 2000, p. 32, emphasis original)

Thus, ‘If this is the case—if the concept of people necessarily contains within itself the fundamental biopolitical fracture—it is possible to read anew some decisive pages of the history of our century’ (Agamben, 2000, p. 33). Although Agamben identifies this fracture and insists on reading anew certain events of the twentieth century, he also implies that this fracture is so fundamental that it requires examining the entire ‘Western’ political history. I am aware of the massive debate about Agamben’s interpretations of Arendt and Foucault and concerning his differentiation between *zoē* and *bios* but I consider his point about the fundamental fracture in Western political theory as a serious challenge to think about people genealogically.

I will locate mobile peoples within this fracture after I discuss Jacques Rancière and Ernesto Laclau who have taken up this challenge seriously. Both start from the proposition that there is indeed a fundamental fracture or tension exists between ‘the people’ as a whole and a people or peoples as its parts. I will briefly discuss how each attempts to work this tension to use it critically to think about ‘people’ as a political concept.

Rancière’s description of the whole and parts of ancient politics is well known. I’ll briefly summarize here how he addresses the fundamental fracture of Western politics that Agamben identifies. If indeed we can describe the ‘whole’ as any given polity and ‘parts’ as

its constitutive elements how is their relation decided? For Rancière what gives rise to politics is the dispute about what counts as parts. He says dominant interpretations of ancient politics hitherto read this politics arising from an already constituted polity and its already existing conflicts; however, he says, it is actually the other way around. Any polity is founded on politics that arises from what he calls counting the parts that constitute it. Politics involves counting of parts and its disputes about what counts that constitutes a polity.

Let's recall that for Rancière there are two ways of counting: arithmetic and geometric. These two ways are not so much as descriptions of counting as ways of approaching how one counts. It enables Rancière to schematize two ways of thinking about politics. An arithmetic counting assumes that all is accounted for (hence always a false count); a geometric counting counts those parts that have no part. When counting is arithmetic (as in what is counted) it accounts for what is given; when it is geometric (as in what counts) it accounts for what is not given. Yet, and this is crucial, counts are always false counts as they fall short of considering of what actually counts. Politics arises from this paradox of being unable to and yet need to count parts (Rancière, 1998, p. 6). It arises when those who have no part actually struggle to make themselves count (Rancière, 1998, p. 9). What is political about making themselves count is that the parts that have no part identify themselves to be the whole of the polity. It is this audacious identification that is political. This is, for example, the historical significance of *demos* in Athenian politics. The claim of *demos* is not only to make itself count but also to constitute itself as the whole. So, then the language of those who have no part is not about an essential struggle between the rich and the poor, between this and that class, or between this and that social group. Politics is not an opposition between the rich and the poor. Rather, politics is the interruption of an order of domination by the institution of a part of those who have no part (Rancière, 1998, p. 11).

So far in this account we have spoken about peoples or the people. For translating whole and parts language into peoples and the people categories Rancière introduces two terms: equality and wrong. The struggles of those who have no part to institute themselves as a part is based on their claims to equality and it arises from their declaration of wrong, an injustice. The claim to inequality is necessary for the declaration of wrong and that declaration is impossible without the assumption of equality of speech and capacity, an equal part in dispute. If indeed 'politics exists wherever the count of parts and parties of society is disturbed by the inscription of a part of those who have no part' it begins when the equality of anyone and everyone is inscribed in the liberty of the people (Rancière, 1998, p. 123). And 'this liberty of the people is an empty property, an improper property through which those who are nothing purport that their group is identical to the whole of the community' (Rancière, 1998, pp. 123–124). So, the passage of a people to the people,

its claim, is the origins of politics (or how 'Western' politics perceives its origins).

What is this whole, that a people identifies with? Rancière says that 'the people' has a double embodiment: it is both the name of a whole polity and the name of a part of that polity. The gap between these two names of the people is the site of a grievance (Rancière, 1995, p. 97). From our perspective of thinking about mobile peoples as a people, Rancière's key argument is that while ancient politics understood this gap, modern politics cannot tolerate it. Modern politics cannot accept that the people simultaneously can be both dominant and dominated, whole and part, sedentary and mobile (Rancière, 1995, p. 99). For Rancière in modern politics 'the appearance of the people must be strictly confined to the attributes of sovereignty or the appearance of sovereignty dissolved in favour of the realities of the people as producers' (Rancière, 1995, p. 99). So, then this gap between a people and the people is both a challenge to and trigger of politics; ancients understood it, moderns cannot tolerate it.

Although not concerned with the ancient origins or lineages of modern politics, Laclau is very close to Rancière in his attempt to work this tension for understanding something key about politics. At the centre of his argument is the concept of socio-political 'demands' articulated by the dominated to the dominant (hegemonic) order. The dominated articulate an exclusion or deprivation as their grievance and this articulation as a demand constitutes a people (Laclau, 2005, p. 123). As with Rancière then a people is not a given sociological concept but something that arises from within politics. This recognizes that there is a constitutive asymmetry between a polity understood as a whole (the *populus*) and the dominated as its part (the plebs). For Laclau, as for Rancière, it is crucial that the plebs identify themselves with the *populus* as the polity as a whole (Laclau, 2005, p. 224). Thus, as in Rancière, the plebs function both as part of a whole and a part that is the whole (Laclau, 2005, p. 225). The logic of hegemony that arises from this tension between the part and the whole implies that the whole is 'contaminated' by the part and the part contains the whole. The analytical distinction between the universal and the particular as though they are mutually exclusive opposites is thus false and belies the logic of hegemony (Laclau, 2005, p. 226). For Laclau the ambiguity of 'the people' both as the *populus* and the plebs is not a logical contradiction but expresses the logic of hegemony. Where Laclau differs from Rancière is that while Rancière seems to assume that the constitution of the part that has no part will always invoke a politics of emancipation Laclau does not think that can be determined theoretically (Laclau, 2005, p. 246). Laclau also differs from Rancière in insisting on limits of philosophical analysis and the necessity of sociological investigation of the ways in which the logic of hegemony constitutes a people (Laclau, 2005, p. 248).

What is important in both Rancière and Laclau, from our point of view, is their insistence on taking the ten-

sion between parts and the whole as the constitutive tension of politics. But I find it difficult to accept their insistence that politics inevitably if not essentially involves the construction or formation of a people as a whole—the people. More specifically, the requirement that parts must identify with the whole to take part always justifies becoming a kind of people that the people already is. If, as Rancière says, there is no politics beyond and outside this configuration of the whole and its parts and that ‘there is only the order of domination or the disorder of revolt’ then how does the configuration itself gets disrupted (Rancière, 1998, p. 12)? If we follow Rancière and Laclau in insisting that the whole (the people) and its parts (peoples) are implicated in each other then to what extent can we imagine a people that *will not* identify with *the* people? Both Rancière and Laclau define politics as rupture in a given order but why this rupture should be conceived as the formation of the people, as identification with the whole, is never explained. Laclau says that the formation of a people involves an act of institution and as an act it does not derive its force ‘from any logic already operating within the preceding situation’ and that ‘what is crucial for the emergence of “the people” as a new historical actor is that the unification of plurality of demands in a new configuration is constitutive and not derivative’ (Laclau, 2005, p. 228). It sounds like Laclau is overcoming the tension and we can, with some modifications, agree with him. But he then adds ‘it constitutes an *act* in the strict sense, for it does not have its source in anything external to itself’ (Laclau, 2005, p. 224). Whether we work the tension between a people (or peoples) and the people as a gap that constitutes politics (Rancière) or a contamination that constitutes polity (Laclau) we are still left with a fundamental fracture that is always signified against a whole that is already constituted. This leaves mobile peoples with no possibility beyond either becoming sedentary or remaining outside politics.

4. Mobile Peoples: Transversal Configurations

There are two obstacles to understanding mobile peoples with Rancière and Laclau and, for that matter, with Agamben and perhaps even Hacking. First, in all their theorizing a people remains without geography. Each emphasizes the importance of understanding a people *with* their history, but their peoples remain without geography. Warning against writing peoples *without* history, each practically treats peoples without geography. What I mean by this can be illustrated by James Scott’s remark that ‘a great many apparently ethnic names turn out to be, when translated literally, a description of a people’s geography, applied to them by state discourse: “hill people,” “swamp dwellers,” “forest people,” “people of the steppes”’ (Scott, 2017). Or, we can add contemporary examples: people without permanent address, people without papers, people without property, people without nationality, and most troubling of them all

people without states. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) said ‘history is always written from the sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus, at least a possible one, even when the topic is nomads.’ We need to see that geography—the ways in which people constitute themselves through space—is just as constitutive as history for how a people comes to be. What distinguishes peoples such as hill peoples or forest peoples or people without papers is that they are described by sedentary peoples, that is, from the perspective of states organized as a bounded territory. For all the tensions, contaminations, gaps, and fractures that are identified between the whole and its parts by Agamben, Rancière, and Laclau what is not recognized is that from the perspective of the state a ‘proper’ people is always seen as coextensive with a given territory. Stuart Elden’s (2013) genealogy of the concept of territory painstakingly documents its social production. He traces how juridico-political discourse produces state as a bounded territory as the name of that space. We need to see that ‘Western’ political thought takes *that* concept of territory as granted, perhaps seeing it like a state as Scott (1999) describes it. But seen from another perspective (more on that below) the parts that don’t count often are mobile peoples who were subjected to domestication to become a part of the people. The territory that bounds the people as a whole differentiates mobile peoples as residual or remainder parts. The remainders of the whole, the parts that don’t count remain as mobile peoples: nomads, seafarers, pirates, travellers, migrants, refugees, itinerants, gypsies, wanderers. These mobile peoples find it impossible to constitute themselves as political subjects precisely because they cannot be coextensive with a territory as they remain peoples without geography. The idea of territory as a bounded space under the control of a people organized through a state that constitutes them as *the* people of that state remains the dominant image in political thought and overcoming it (i.e., thinking differently about histories and geographies of peoples) is a difficult task.

The second obstacle to understanding the fracture between peoples and the people is that the difference is seldom between a people that constitutes itself as the dominant (the people) and the other as the dominated (peoples). It is often more fine-grained than that opposition implies. It is more like a spectrum of various peoples and how individuals take (and give) positions across this spectrum: strangers, outsiders, and aliens. Often people move through (or find themselves in) multiple and intersecting positions across this spectrum (Isin, 2002, 2017). As Scott (2017) puts it ‘a great many barbarians, then, were not primitives who had stayed or been left behind but rather political and economic refugees who had fled to the periphery to escape state-induced poverty, taxes, bondage, and war.’ Citizens can become barbarians and barbarians can become citizens.

Scott’s work on the history of early states is a major contribution to thinking about how a people comes to

be and how a differentiation between the people and peoples is often established along sedentary versus nomadic, state versus non-state, and civilized versus barbarian lines (Scott, 2009, 2017). Scott (2017) recognizes that what we most know about historical geography of peoples have been written from the perspective of sedentary peoples settled in each territory as a state. How these peoples developed control over a territory by knitting together various patchwork of hinterlands and peripheries and subjugating peoples in these spaces into state peoples provides a glimpse of how subjugated peoples are almost invariably mobile peoples—barbarians—who were not simply outside the state but were subjugated in various differentiated categories. Scott uses ‘barbarian’ as a generic concept of mobile peoples whom states were either not able to subjugate or, more interestingly, actually created as residual peoples who escaped subjugation. Scott’s seemingly simple but effective narrative is about how we might see history from the perspective of those whom were subjugated to states—a historical geography of mobile peoples. Scott repeatedly reminds us that history has been written from the perspective of sedentary peoples as a norm. Yet, as he illustrates, since the emergence of early states (not only between Euphrates and Tigris rivers but also along Yellow River and the alluvial plains of South America over the last ten thousand years or so) only in the last three or hundred years that states and their sedentary peoples could be said to have established a norm. But as far as a ‘deep’ history of states is concerned this is relatively recent and exceptional. However, we need to be careful about recognizing sedentary peoples as a norm in the last four hundred years. The proliferation of the migrants and refugees especially in the last two hundred years and the violent displacements and dislocations of millions of peoples should give us a pause to think twice before we accept states of sedentary peoples as a norm (Jones, 2016; see also Mazard, 2014). Moreover, Scott draws too sharp a difference between barbarians as non-state peoples against state peoples. Yet, as he illustrates, barbarians included various peoples whose relationships to states were always in flux such peoples, as I have stated above, came in and out of various barbarian positions: nomads, savages, pirates, and others. That is one reason why I would prefer considering mobile peoples as ‘transversal configurations’ whose affiliations, belonging, affinities, and movements traverse and intersect various borders and boundaries, establish associations, assemblages, and solidarities through which they act as political subjects. Nonetheless, Scott’s critique of the grand narrative of states as sedentary peoples gives us a *longue durée* historical ontology of mobile peoples that paints a very different picture.

If we are to see mobile peoples as a norm rather than an exception and as political subjects rather than subject peoples we need to start with an image of thought that sees how mobile peoples constitute themselves as political subjects not in bounded territories but through

transversal configurations. This, as I said earlier, requires that we address the question how mobile peoples have become an exception in the first place. How did sedentary peoples become a norm that constituted mobile peoples as an exception? But, it also raises the question why we are now constituting mobile peoples as a norm. If indeed, we cannot appeal to autonomous facts concerning mobile peoples becoming a norm as it also reflects how we collect, collate, assemble, and interpret those facts. This means we cannot be outside the dynamic process that Hacking describes how kinds of people come into being: beginnings of a description, people acting under it, formation of institutions managing people acting under it, accumulation of knowledge about people acting under it, and regulation of people with expertise, authority, and power. If we are now *making up* mobile peoples as a norm rather than exception we are participating in this dynamic process through which mobile peoples are becoming political subjects of and subject to new modes of government.

Acknowledgements

This essay builds on a Leverhulme Doctoral Scholarship project proposal developed at Queens Mary University of London. I am grateful to all my colleagues across several schools and departments who commented on earlier versions of the proposal that we submitted to The Leverhulme Trust. I would like to thank especially Kim Hutchings and Jef Huysmans for helpful discussions that led to the development of the project. I am also grateful to my colleagues in the School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR) for their comments on a lecture based on this paper. I am also grateful to The Leverhulme Trust for allowing us to develop the project. I would like to thank the three anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and criticisms and the editors of the thematic issue for their guidance.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Municipal Responses to ‘Illegality’: Urban Sanctuary across National Contexts

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Submitted: 19 November 2017 | Accepted: 6 January 2018 | Published: 29 March 2018

Abstract

Cities often seek to mitigate the highly precarious situation of illegalized (or undocumented) migrants. In this context, “sanctuary cities” are an innovative urban response to exclusionary national policies. In this article, we expand the geographical scope of sanctuary policies and practices beyond Canada, the USA, and the UK, where the policies and practices are well-known. In particular, we explore corresponding urban initiatives in Chile, Germany, and Spain. We find that varying kinds of urban-sanctuary policies and practices permit illegalized migrants to cope with their situations in particular national contexts. However, different labels, such as “city of refuge,” “commune of reception,” or “solidarity city” are used to describe such initiatives. While national, historical, and geopolitical contexts distinctly shape local efforts to accommodate illegalized migrants, recognizing similarities across national contexts is important to develop globally-coordinated and internationally-inspired responses at the urban scale.

Keywords

migrants; municipalities; refuge; sanctuary cities; scale; solidarity cities

Issue

This article is part of the issue “The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies”, edited by Ulrike Hamann and Gökçe Yurdakul (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany).

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1. Introduction

In light of the Trump administration’s threats to cut funding to sanctuary cities, the mayors of Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and many other US cities have reaffirmed their commitment to accommodating migrants who do not possess full federal status (Robbins, 2017). In Canada, Toronto, Hamilton, London (Ontario), and Montreal, have also declared themselves sanctuary cities (Montpetit, 2017). In the UK, cities of sanctuary, such as Sheffield, are welcoming refugees.

These cities respond to the disjuncture between exclusionary national migration and residency policies, and the need to be inclusive at the local scale. They address

the problem that national governments issue visas, permits, or permanent residency documents to some migrants but deny these documents to others already living in the country, effectively “illegalizing” persons who are de-facto residents of the cities (Bauder, 2014). This problem also arises when failed refugee and asylum claimants resist deportation and stay in the country, and when migrants cross the border irregularly. Sanctuary cities implement municipal policies and practices to accommodate these inhabitants.

Urban sanctuary policies and practices have their origin in church-based sanctuary that has sheltered migrants and refugees throughout Europe and the United States from law and immigration enforcement authori-

ties. In the late 20th Century, municipalities began offering “sanctuary” to refugees and later to illegalized inhabitants (Lippert & Rehaag, 2013; Ridgley, 2013). Today, sanctuary cities are transforming urban society in various ways: not only are municipal governments defying exclusionary national immigration policies and citizenship laws, but urban sanctuary communities are changing the discourse of migration and belonging and are reimagining the city as an inclusive space. In this way, sanctuary cities are reframing the meaning of belonging and membership at the urban, rather than the national, scale.

Sanctuary city and cities of sanctuary are common—albeit contested (Bagelman, 2016; Caminero-Santangelo, 2013; Lippert, 2005)—terms in Canada, the USA, and the UK (Bauder, 2017). In other countries, similar municipal policies and practices are typically not labelled “sanctuary.” In this article, we examine local policies and practices to accommodate illegalized migrants and refugees in national contexts outside of Canada, the USA, and the UK. We are interested, in particular, if there are common local responses to the problem of exclusion, illegalization, and disenfranchisement caused by national policies. We realize that nation-states have different migration laws and policies, frame their relations to municipal governments in distinct ways, find themselves in various demographic, political, and economic situations, and are situated in unique historical and geopolitical circumstances (Mayer, 2017; Spencer, 2017). Nevertheless, illegalization is a common structural problem across territorial nation states in which political membership is defined by national residency and citizenship rules.

Research on urban sanctuary across national contexts is important because it highlights possible synergies between local responses in countries with different political systems and traditions. Urban sanctuary policies and practices can be seen as part of a “new municipalism” that has been adopted by cities in different parts of the world to assert control over their own affairs in light of national and regional austerity, privatization, carbon-consumption, unfair migration, and other repressive policies (Cassia, 2018; Russel & Reyes, 2017). Recognizing the synergies between urban sanctuary policies and practises in different parts of the world is vital to facilitate international exchange of municipal policy options and ideas, and encourage international networking among urban policy makers, activists, organizers, and other stake holders. In this way, this article aligns with a recent call made from a predominantly US perspective to think of sanctuary in global terms (Carney, Gomez, Mitchell, & Vannini, 2017).

2. Background

Newcomers tend to gravitate to cities to take advantage of perceived labour market opportunities, the existence of a settlement and integration infrastructure, proximity to co-ethnic communities, and, in the case of illegalized migrants, the opportunity to live in relative anonymity. In

light of a trend in many immigrant-receiving countries towards downloading integration services from national to lower levels of government and civil society (Shields, Drollet, & Valenzuela, 2016), cities and regions have become “laboratories” for integration and the development of innovative migration policy (Schmidtke, 2014). Sanctuary cities are such an innovation in response to restrictive national migration policies and increasing responsibilities assumed by municipal governments and civic society.

Sanctuary cities do not offer absolute protection from federal immigration authorities in the sense that they nullify federal law. Rather, illegalized migrants remain subject to detection, and possible detention and deportation even in sanctuary cities (American Immigration Council, 2015; Tramonte, 2011). Although sanctuary cities are unable to offer complete protection, they commit to including all inhabitants—independent of federal status—in the local community and improving the lives of those without full national status.

Sanctuary-city policies and practices are highly context particular (Strunk & Leitner, 2013). In the United States, sanctuary cities date back to the 1980s, when the City of San Francisco refused to cooperate with federal authorities and chose to protect refugees from Central America (Mancina, 2013). In subsequent decades, sanctuary cities focused increasingly on illegalized migrants settling more-or-less permanently in a municipality rather than on refugees requiring temporary protection (Ridgley, 2008, 2013). Among the concrete sanctuary measures in US cities are municipal laws and policies that prohibit municipal service providers, including the local police forces, school boards, and health and recreational offices, to cooperate with federal migration enforcement authorities and to collect information on residents’ federal status and/or exchange this information with federal authorities (Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell). To establish whether a person is a resident of the municipality, some sanctuary cities accept utility bills, municipal ID cards, or *matriculas consulares* in lieu of federal or state documents (Varsanyi, 2010).

Sanctuary cities also exist in Canada, where Toronto adopted Don’t-Ask-Don’t-Tell policies in 2004, which was followed by a vote in City Council in 2013. Although the local police and front-line municipal service workers have not always implemented sanctuary policies properly (Hudson, Atak, Manocchi, & Hannan, 2017), these policies send an important symbolic message that all inhabitants are included in the local community (McDonald, 2012).

In the UK “cities of sanctuary” do not focus so much on policing or non-cooperation with national authorities as on the symbolic inclusion of refugees seeking protection. These cities change the imagination of the city as a place of welcome and in this way shape the manner in which inhabitants interact with each other (Darling, 2010; Darling & Squire, 2013; Squire & Bagelman, 2012).

In the context of the USA, Canada, and the UK, four aspects define a sanctuary city (Bauder, 2017): (1) *le-*

gality, i.e. an official commitment by the municipal legislative body to support sanctuary policies and practices; (2) *discourse*, i.e. challenging exclusionary narratives that portray migrants and refugees as criminal and undeserving; (3) *identity*, i.e. the formation of collective identities expressing unified membership in an urban community; and (4) *scale*, i.e. rejecting national migration and refugee laws, and articulating policies and practices of belonging at the municipal scale. These four aspects combine in various ways in different contexts. Nevertheless, their presence can be used as a comprehensive definition of what constitutes a sanctuary city. In the below analysis we apply this definition to national contexts where the term “sanctuary city” is not typically used.

3. Research Question and Case Studies

Various aspects of sanctuary-city policies and practices exist around the globe, although the term “sanctuary city” is rarely applied outside of Canada, the UK, and the USA. We therefore ask the following research question: do sanctuary cities de-facto exist outside Canada, the UK, and the USA, although they are not called by this name? To answer this question affirmatively would require all four sanctuary-aspects to be present in a city.

To address this research question, we examined non-English speaking national contexts. Our choice of Spain, Chile, and Germany was guided by the combination of scholarly expertise in Europe and Latin America, and our proficiency in German and Spanish. The three countries have recently received large numbers of migrants and refugees, many lacking or possessing only precarious national status.

In Spain, municipalities are responsible for collecting demographic information irrespectively of migration status. By comparing the number of residence permits issued by the Spanish Home Office (*Secretaría General de Inmigración y Emigración*) with the number of third-country nationals who registered with the Municipal Population Register (*Padrón Municipal*), it was estimated that approximately 600,000 undocumented people resided in Spain in 2012 (PICUM, 2013). In the Spanish context, “refuge city” is sometimes used to describe municipal initiatives to accommodate illegalized migrants.

An estimated 150,000 illegalized people resided in Chile in 2017 (Kozak, 2017). Most migrants enter Chile as tourists and subsequently apply for residency or other form of regularization within the country (Pedemonte & Dittborn, 2016). The term “cities of solidarity” (*ciudades solidarias*) is used throughout Latin America to describe an initiative under the Mexico Plan of Action, signed in 2004, on the 20th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration, by 20 Latin-American countries. This initiative aims to promote the integration of refugees in the region by recognizing municipalities’ roles in identifying migrants’ needs, evaluate the conditions of integration, and establish plans of action (Thayer Correa, Correa, & Novoa, 2014; Varoli, 2010).

An estimated 180,000 to 520,000 “irregular” migrants lived in Germany in 2014 (Vogel, 2015). This estimate includes people living in Germany who are unknown to German authorities, people with false identity papers, and people hiding from authorities. Other estimates suggest that the number of illegalized migrants in Germany is as high as 1 million (Lebuhn, 2016). In addition, there are “tolerated” (*geduldete*) migrants with permission to stay but without long-term perspective to remain in Germany. In light of the massive arrival of migrants and refugees since 2015—many of whom have neither received status nor returned to their origin countries—these numbers are expected to have grown (PICUM, 2015). In the German context, scholars and activists have used the term “sanctuary city” among other terms. However, a barrier to the implementation of corresponding policies at the municipal scale is federal legislation that requires municipalities to register and report all residents (e.g., Heuser, 2017; Scherr & Hofmann, 2016).

We surveyed the academic and gray literature related to these three countries as well as internet-based sources, such as municipal websites, to examine local policies and practices towards illegalized migrants and refugees. We read and analyzed these sources in their original languages. Any quotes presented below that were drawn from non-English sources were translated by us. Once we obtained an overview of national, regional, and municipal legal and policy contexts, we explored if particular cities could be considered “sanctuary cities” based on the four aspects of legality, discourse, identity, and scale. For this purpose, we examined multiple cities in each national context.

In presenting our findings, we focus on one particular city in each country. Initially, our survey did not focus on any particular city. However, the survey revealed that urban sanctuary policies and practices are more prominent in some cities than others. The cities we finally selected are thus not the only cities in their countries that have adopted policies and practices that represent “sanctuary” aspects. For example, in the case of Germany, the city councils of Munich and Cologne commissioned studies to improve the living conditions of illegalized inhabitants; a number of cities, such as Berlin and Hamburg, have experimented with or are considering anonymous medical insurance (*Krankenschein*) to provide illegalized inhabitants with access to medical services; in many other German cities, civil society institutions have formed local networks to support illegalized migrants and refugees (Heuser, 2017; Migazin, 2014). The cities we included in the below discussion were selected because they illustrate how the aspects of urban sanctuary have been addressed in various national contexts. The scope of this article does not permit us to elaborate on more than one city in each of the countries.

4. Results

4.1. Spain

4.1.1. National Context

The multi-level governance of Spain provides municipalities with decentralized self-rule (Keating, 2000). The Spanish constitution (Article 148.1.22) recognizes the municipal autonomy in matters of police presence and requires the municipal and local police (*policía municipal/local* or *guardia urbana*) to report to local town-halls in municipalities with a population over 5,000 inhabitants (Granda, 2014). Since municipal police forces operate largely independently from the national police (*policía nacional*) and the civil guard (*guardia civil*), they can be included in sanctuary-city policies.

Illegalized residents acquire access to municipal services through the Municipal Population Register, which requires all residents by law to register regardless of their immigration status. This register provides proof of residency in the municipality but is not an identification document confirming legal residence in Spain (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2016). Given the autonomy of local governments granted by the Spanish constitution, the municipal registration process (*enpadronamiento*) varies considerably by municipality. Some migrants may not register because they fear that national authorities could access municipal databases, or they lack knowledge of or are misinformed about the requirements, benefits, or process of completing the registration (Arango & Jachimowicz, 2005). However, when successfully completed, the registry has been instrumental in granting illegalized migrants access to social services, compulsory education for minors, and health identity cards (*tarjeta sanitaria*) required for medical appointments (Cimas et al., 2016; Escandell & Tapias, 2010).

Access to health services illustrates the interplay between various levels of government. Prior to 2012, Spanish law provided inhabitants registered with municipalities similar access to health care, irrespective of citizenship or legal status (Cimas et al., 2016). A 2012 reform linked access to health care to citizenship or registry with the Social Security department (*Seguro Social*). Spain's autonomous regions responded by introducing various pieces of legislation, enabling municipalities to provide at least some degree of health care to illegalized migrants (Smith & LeVoy, 2017).

4.1.2. Barcelona

Barcelona exemplifies how the sanctuary-city concept applies in Spain. Barcelona is located in Spain's Catalonia region and has a population of approximately 1.7 million. The city has advocated on the international stage for illegalized migrants and refugees, stressing the role cities play in this respect (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2014). It has also undertaken concrete steps to promote the rights

of all city inhabitants, including illegalized migrants and refugees (Gebhardt, 2016; Smith & LeVoy, 2017). In particular, it has extended access to all municipal services through the municipal register. Barcelona's "refuge city" initiative (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, Redacció, 2017) clearly addresses all four aspects of a sanctuary city:

1. *Legality*: In September 2015, the municipal government launched the "Barcelona, Refuge City" plan. On October 2, 2015, City Council further strengthened its commitment to sanctuary policies by officially declaring Barcelona a "Refuge City" (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, Secretaría General, 2015);
2. *Discourse*: In 2010, City Council launched the Anti-Rumour Strategy (*Estratègia BCN Antirumores*), which aims to dispel rumors, stereotypes, and myths about the "other" through organizing a variety of awareness-raising campaigns. Some of the main anti-rumor campaigns include: "they don't pay taxes," "collapse of the health care system," "they get all the social benefits," "they take our jobs," and "they are uncivil" (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, BCN Acció Intercultural, 2017). Moreover, under Barcelona's Refuge City Plan, City Council has advocated for "economic migrants" to obtain access to the system of international protection set up for refugees, "as refugees and migrants alike have left their country of origin or residence in search of safety" (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2017a). These activities challenge the exclusionary discourse around economic migrants and highlight the need for equal protection;
3. *Identity*: The City of Barcelona and its residents have been proactive in imagining the city as a space of co-belonging. In February 2017, tens of thousands of demonstrators filled the streets of Barcelona following a call from mayor Ada Colau to challenge the Spanish government's failure to meet its pledge to accept more refugees (Agence France-Presse, 2017). The group *Casa Nostra, Casa Vostra* (Our Home Is Your Home), which organized the protest, has long advocated for the protection and the right to a dignified life for refugees and illegalized migrants (Casa Nostra, Casa Vostra, 2017);
4. *Scale*: Barcelona has created institutions at the local scale, mitigating exclusionary national migration and refugee policies. The city's Care Service Centre for Immigrants, Emigrants, and Refugees (*Servicio de Atención a Inmigrantes, Emigrantes y Refugiados*)—run jointly by the City, Barcelona Lawyers' Association, Red Cross, and various other civic-society organizations—provides free services to all city residents regardless of status. In 2014, the City of Barcelona hosted the first Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration, and Development, which resulted in the "Declaration of Barcelona." This declaration stresses the role of cities in receiving migrants, demanding comprehensive leg-

isolation regarding immigration, and calling for decent living conditions (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2014). The Declaration and Barcelona's subsequent Refugee City initiative rejects national approaches towards migration and refugee intake: "towns and cities receive and integrate refugees but in Spain [these town and cities] are not involved in asylum policies, nor do they receive any funding to implement them" (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2017b). By establishing a European network of Cities of Refuge (*Red Europea de Ciudades de Refugio*), the Barcelona, Refugee City Plan aims to create "an inter-municipal space," which would provide the necessary local services for the arrival and reception of refugees through bilateral agreements among the municipalities in the network (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2017c).

4.2. Chile

4.2.1. National Context

Immigration law in Chile mostly derives from the 1975 security decree (*Decreto Ley 1.094*), which intrinsically views migrants as potential subversives and therefore grants excessive discretion to the armed border authority (Pedemonte & Dittborn, 2016). After dictator Pinochet's fall, Chile welcomed refugees from South-American, Caribbean, and European countries (Leo, Morand, & Murillo, 2015). In recent years, however, there have been growing anti-refugee and immigrant sentiments (Teletrece, 2017).

The Constitution of 1980 is still in force. However, the tight administrative, fiscal, and regulatory framework of the central state has been questioned and in 1992 the Organic Law of Municipalities (*Ley N° 18.695, Orgánica Constitucional de Municipalidades*) established municipal autonomy. This legislation progressively transformed municipalities into self-governing entities. In 2014, the appointment of the Presidential Advisory Commission for Decentralisation and Regional Development by Chile's president sought to modernize and strengthen municipal functions and transfer new competencies to the new self-governing regions in the areas of economic, social, infrastructure, and housing development (Organization of American States, 2008; UCLG, 2016).

The Chilean national police (the *Carabineros*) have jurisdiction over the entire national territory. Chilean municipalities do not possess independent police forces. During the Pinochet regime, the *Carabineros* became highly militarised and gained considerable autonomy. Since then, police reform has been largely delegated to the *Carabineros* themselves, which continue to retain substantial autonomy from civilian governance (Bonner, 2013). Preventive identity checks are an autonomous faculty of the *Carabineros*, regulated in Article 85 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (*Código Procesal Penal*) (Irrazabal González, 2015). In 1998, this power

was restricted (through Law No. 19.567). However, in 2015 the Citizens Security Commission of the Chamber of Deputies (*Comisión de Seguridad Ciudadana de la Cámara de Diputados*) approved legislation that reinstated the *Carabineros*' power to carry out preventive identity checks based on suspicion of committing or attempting to commit a crime or concealing one's identity (Irrazabal González, 2015; Rivas, 2015). Although these developments obstructed the inclusion of the police in sanctuary-city initiatives, the increased decentralization and growing autonomy of regions and municipalities has resulted in innovative local initiatives granting inhabitants access to education, health care, and other social services independent of national status (Thayer Correa, Correa, & Novoa, 2014).

4.2.2. Quilicura

Quilicura is located in the Santiago metropolitan region and has experienced rapid population growth. In 2012, it had about 204,000 inhabitants. Since 2000, Quilicura has received substantial numbers of Haitian and Palestinian migrants and refugees. Given the language and cultural barriers between the new and established residents, the municipality approached UNHCR for help to develop innovate local programs within the framework of the Mexico Plan of Action (Leo et al., 2015; Thayer Correa et al., 2014). These programs address the four aspects of a sanctuary city, although the preferred local label is "Commune of Reception" (*Comuna de Acogida*).

1. *Legality*: In 2014, the municipal government launched the Action Plan for the Reception and Recognition of Migrants and Refugees (*Plan de Acogida y Reconocimiento de Migrantes y Refugiados*), which offers a sustainable and democratic policy for all inhabitants regardless of their administrative status. These initiatives represent official commitments by the municipal legislative body to support sanctuary policies and practices;
2. *Discourse*: Quilicura's reception initiative is founded on the promotion of equality: equal rights and duties, and full civil, cultural, and social participation of all inhabitants. The municipal government has articulated corresponding policies within a human rights framework, breaking away from an emphasis on the contributions migrants make to society (Thayer Correa et al., 2014). Furthermore, the municipal government is vocal about its dislike of the term "illegal" when referring to non-status residents, and explains that some residents are rather in irregular administrative situations (Lizama, 2013);
3. *Identity*: Quilicura has organized an annual Migrant Fest, which is centered on the idea that culture and diversity are a source of pride and strength in the community. The festival enables all community members to share experiences and

culture over food, music, and dance, thus fostering a unified community identity (Municipalidad de Quilicura, 2016);

4. *Scale*: The Municipal Office for Migrants and Refugees (*Oficina Municipal para Migrantes y Refugiados*) was created in 2010 to provide orientation, support, and information about education and health services, and employment and training opportunities for migrants and refugees (Leo et al., 2015). Quilicura also cooperated with other municipalities to replicate and expand local programs that include all inhabitants (Thayer Correa et al., 2014). In May 2015, Quilicura, with the assistance of the International Maritime Organization (*Organización Marítima Internacional*), organized Chile's first migrant consultation. This consultation intended to develop ways to register inhabitants of the municipality in regular and irregular situations, create policies that address access to fundamental services and rights, and encourage other levels of government to recognize the benefits of local actors taking initiative (Municipalidad de Quilicura, 2015).

4.3. Germany

4.3.1. National Context

With the exception of the city-states of Berlin, Bremen, and Hamburg, German municipalities do not possess independent local police forces that could be included in sanctuary-city policies. Instead, policing authority rests largely with the federal police (*Bundespolizei*), which are responsible for border security, and the regional police (*Landespolizei*), which assume many other policing functions that require identity and status checks of individuals. German municipal offices have stringent legal reporting obligation (*Übermittlungspflicht*) to national authorities. National law requires all residents to register at their local registration office (*Einwohnermeldeamt*), which assesses the identities of residents and reports foreigners to the municipal foreign office (*Ausländeramt*), which in turn reports visa and status violations to federal authorities. Municipal registration offices can also request from landlords to provide information about their tenants. Federal law and administrative regulations thus provide a relatively restrictive context for the implementation of sanctuary-city policies (Buckel, 2008; Scherr & Hofmann, 2016; Schönwälder, Vogel, & Sciortino, 2004).

Despite the restrictive legal and administrative context, illegalized migrants engage in German public life: they use public transit, join faith-based communities, and participate in organized social clubs (Shinozaki, 2015). Many civic and faith-based institutions offer "safe spaces" (*Schutzräume*) to illegalized immigrants, where they are treated with respect and dignity, not as anonymous statistics (Just, 2013; Zabel, 2001, p. 93). In many cities, hospitals and organizations like *Malteser*

Migranten Medizin provide medical services for free or reduced fees to people requiring anonymity (Malteser Migranten Medizin, 2016; Misbach, 2008). Schools are exempt from the requirement to report the status of students to authorities (Köbler, Mohr, Habbe, Peter, & Fodor, 2013). Germany's civic and institutional context is evidently supportive of accommodating illegalized migrants and refugees.

4.3.2. Freiburg

The case of Freiburg illustrates how the sanctuary-city concept may be applicable in Germany. Freiburg is located in the state of Baden-Württemberg and has a population of approximately 220,000. In recent decades, Freiburg's civil society has undertaken concrete steps to accommodate refugees and illegalized migrants, and has raised the issue of illegalized migrants publically (Buckel, 2008). Although, activists favour the term "solidarity city," they have used the term "sanctuary city," calling "upon municipal politics, local institutions (day-care centres, schools, businesses, chambers, hospitals,...) and civil society, that Freiburg joins the sanctuary-city movement" (Freiburger Forum aktiv gegen Ausgrenzung, 2016). Freiburg meets most aspects to be considered a sanctuary city:

1. *Legality*: At the time of writing, Freiburg's City Council has not formally acknowledged the local sanctuary-city campaign. The missing aspect "legality," however, is precisely the aim of the current campaign. In 2012, City Council did pass a resolution in support of "tolerated" (*gedultete*) Roma threatened by deportation. This resolution indicated that "communities have become the point of departure for a successful pan-European integration strategy for the inclusion and equal participation of all in political, social, and cultural respects" (Freiburger Gemeinderat, 2012);
2. *Discourse*: Local initiatives challenge exclusionary national migration and refugee discourses and status categories. The *Freiburger Forum aktiv gegen Ausgrenzung* (Freiburger Forum aktiv gegen Ausgrenzung, n.d.) calls on readers to reject politicians who "want to make people believe that deportations are necessary [and who] distinguish between deserving and undeserving refugees." Local campaigns also contest the state-imposed illegality of persons and stress the common humanity of all inhabitants of Freiburg, and public media outlets, such as Radio Dreyeckland (<https://rdl.de>), challenge narratives that depict migrants and refugees as criminal, undeserving, and predatory. An anti-migrant demonstration organized by a right-wing party in the wake of the murder of a 20-year old university student drew only 15–20 attendees but was met by a counter-demonstration of 300 people, in which Anti-Fascists and representatives

of mainstream political parties marched together (Mauch, 2016);

3. *Identity*: Expressions of solidarity with illegalized migrants are common among activists and civic institutions in Freiburg. These expressions are often complemented by calls for a united urban community that does not distinguish between people based on national status. For example, a prominent support project for illegalized migrants proclaims as its central idea to “live in direct communal solidarity” and demands “cohabitation in the city without discriminating state regulations” (Rasthaus, 2017);
4. *Scale*: Freiburg possess a highly effective local infrastructure of civic institutions—including *Aktion Bleiberecht*, the *Freiburger Forum aktiv gegen Ausgrenzung*, *Medinez* (medizinische Behandlung für papierlose MigrantInnen), *Rasthaus*, and the *Südbadische Aktionsbündnis gegen Abschiebung* (SAGA)—that provides a range of services to local residents without or with precarious national status. The initiative *Rasthaus*, which is a housing complex centrally-located in Freiburg, serves as a hub for accessing medical services, housing, legal and financial aid, German language courses, and other supports to illegalized migrants. These organizations and projects are closely networked with each other and external support groups. Collectively, they aim to include illegalized migrants in the local community in light of exclusionary national migration and refugee laws and policies.

5. Conclusion

Although our empirical research focused on only three countries and three cities, urban-sanctuary initiatives are also advancing in Brazil, Italy, Switzerland, and other countries. Accommodating illegalized migrants and refugees at the local scale is not an isolated but a global phenomenon. However, different terms are used in different countries to describe similar urban policies and practices: the term “sanctuary” is popular in Canada, the US, and the UK. This term has historically had religious connotations and meaning (Caminero-Santangelo, 2013). Today, “sanctuary” cities involve largely secular urban policies and practices. In other countries, preferred terms include “refuge cities,” “commune of reception,” or “solidarity city.” Different terminology can even be used within a single city. In Freiburg, both “sanctuary” and “solidarity” city have been in circulation. In Toronto, the key organization that advocated for the sanctuary city was the Solidary City Network. While it may be tempting to attribute “sanctuary” with a managed top-down approach and “solidarity” to bottom-up activism, a common feature of the urban policies and practices to protect illegalized migrants and refugees is that they blend bottom-up and top-down approaches. In this way, sanctuary-city policies and practices align with the new municipalist movement that can neither be conceptual-

ized as strictly top-down nor bottom-up (Russel & Reyes, 2018). Adding to the complexity, urban policies and practices may not only focus on illegalized inhabitants but also on resettling refugees and on accommodating other vulnerable populations.

The article highlighted the different national contexts in which urban sanctuary policies and practices are implemented. These differences also pose important challenges for transferring urban policies from one national context to another and for applying experiences with aspects of sanctuary to cities located in different countries. For example, in Chile and Germany, where local municipalities do not possess their own police forces, law enforcement usually cannot be included in sanctuary-city policies. In addition, the absence or presence of municipal registries in different countries and the associated reporting obligations to national authorities have profound effect on the types of local policies that can be enacted to accommodate illegalized migrants and refugees. Furthermore, the characteristics of illegalized and precarious migrant and refugee populations vary between countries that are historically, economically, politically, and geopolitically in different situations. Thus, not only policy makers but also civil society institutions and activists operate in very dissimilar environments in different countries. However, this article also highlighted that various municipal, civil society, and activist actors can complement each others’ efforts and play various roles to collectively adapt to their unique national context in providing sanctuary to illegalized inhabitants. When municipalities are legally constrained to offer a particular type of service, civil society institutions may be able to step in to provide this service and vice versa.

The language surrounding sanctuary policies and practices is highly politicized and context particular. However, that various terminologies are used internationally and contexts differ between countries should not distract policy makers, activists, and decision makers from realizing the commonalities among urban policies and practices to protect and include illegalized migrants and refugees. It is important to look beyond particular labels and existing national idiosyncrasies to realize how urban municipalities and local civic society are using the scope of their possibilities to enact policies and practices along the four “sanctuary” dimensions to tackle the common structural problem of the illegalization and disenfranchisement of people at the national scale. Building on initiatives, such as the Declaration of Barcelona, the Mexico Plan of Action, and EUROCITIES’s Solidarity Cities initiative, this realization can facilitate further information exchanges and networking activities between urban actors, with the ultimate aim to establish a global urban strategy towards including all inhabitants.

Acknowledgments

We thank Tim Freytag, Annika Mattissek, and their colleagues at the University of Freiburg, and Cristián

Cornejo, Ulrike Hamann, Lorelle Juffs, Janika Kuge, Marie-France Russo, Albert Scherr, Inga Schwarz, Holger Wilke, Gökçe Yurdakul, and the anonymous reviewers. Support was provided by the Ontario-Baden-Württemberg Research Exchange Program, the Konrad-Adenauer Research Award, and Ryerson University's Yates School of Graduate Studies. An earlier and condensed version was presented to the International Organization for Migration.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Refugees' Access to Housing and Residency in German Cities: Internal Border Regimes and Their Local Variations

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Submitted: 30 November 2017 | Accepted: 5 March 2018 | Published: 29 March 2018

Abstract

This article examines how state regulations, market barriers, racist discrimination as well as NGOs interact and create internal border regimes by enabling, as well as restricting, access to social and civil rights connected to housing and the freedom of movement and settlement for refugees. Our contribution builds on an analysis of federal and state regulations on housing for refugees who are either in the process of seeking asylum or have completed the process and have been granted an asylum status in Germany. The analysis aims to dissect the workings of these regulations in order to develop a detailed understanding of how these internal border regimes define barriers and access to social and civil rights. In addition to legal and regulatory barriers at the federal, state, and local levels, we identify several other barriers that affect if, how, and when refugees are able to enter local housing markets. We will examine these barriers based on an exemplary analysis of the situation in the cities of Berlin and Dresden, whereby we will apply concepts from border as well as citizenship studies to obtain a deeper understanding of the processes at hand. While contributions to the realm of border studies have so far mostly concentrated on national or EU borders, our approach follows recent literature that emphasises the need to analyse the workings of borders *internal to* nation-states but has so far not addressed local variations of the ways in which refugees are able to access their right to housing. In taking up this approach, we also stress the need to look at local dimensions of an increasing civic stratification of refugee rights, which past research has also conceptualised primarily on the national level. In both cities, we have collected administrative documents and conducted interviews with refugees, NGOs, and representatives from the local administration. Based on this material, we analyse the workings of administrative barriers at the state and local levels along with market barriers and discriminatory practices employed by landlords and housing companies at the local level. In most cases, these conditions restrict refugees' access to housing. We will contrast these obstacles with insight into the strategies pursued by refugees and volunteers in their efforts to find a place to live in the city.

Keywords

border studies; civic stratification; differential inclusion; Germany; housing; internal border regimes; refugees

Issue

This article is part of the issue “The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies”, edited by Ulrike Hamann and Gökçe Yurdakul (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany).

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1. Introduction

When refugees enter the territory of The Federal Republic of Germany and apply for asylum, they are confronted with a number of multi-layered regulations that affect

their ability to reside in and move freely around the territory. This includes obligations to live and/or be present in specific municipalities and types of accommodation. We are interested in the ways in which these restrictions of civil rights related to housing and residency are struc-

tured. In this article, we will focus on the transition process that refugees undergo from being obliged to live in state-organised forms of mass accommodation to the actual ability to rent their own apartment, and we will examine which factors affect this transition. In our analysis, we identify several layers of internal border regulations that create barriers and access to individual housing, which notably differ across federal states and municipalities. The length of time that refugees are kept waiting (Oldfield & Greyling, 2015) in regard to housing thus depends, among other things, on the state and municipality to which they are allocated.

In connection with recent theoretical developments in the field of border and citizenship studies, we stress the potential to understand these processes as part of the multifaceted and complex workings of border regimes beyond and within nation-states. We find it useful to link to approaches that go beyond the usual interest of border studies in national borders and that understand the border as an epistemic angle as well as a research object. We find these approaches beneficial as they grasp the violence and exclusion that borders produce while also taking into consideration the imperfection and porousness of border regimes (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). This expands the concept of border from a physical demarcation of a geographical entity, such as a nation-state, to issues of how states try to govern the mobility of people within their territory. The manner in which states try to regulate the residency of refugees before and after they enter the territory of a state is an obvious example of these complex workings of borders. In this article, we look at the issue of refugee housing, specifically the process by which refugees go from being housed in camps to having the right to move into individual housing. We consider this transition to be a crucial condition for refugees' arrival in society. In order to understand this process, we will analyse the methods of the state—which are often uneven—to regulate the housing of refugees, as well as their freedom of movement and settlement. We argue that the legal rights of refugees are undergoing increasing stratification, whereby elements such as a refugee's legal status and country of origin, as well as the different localities in a nation-state where refugees are placed, are emerging as particularly significant. While past research has already pointed to the increasing stratification of access to rights and practices on the national level (Kofman, 2005; Morris, 2003; Torres & Waldinger, 2015), we seek to add to this debate by demonstrating the need to trace this stratification across multiple levels—national, federal state, local—and by showing how the resulting design of the system of (restricted) access is further affected by factors including local administrative practices, housing market actors, and civil society actors such as NGOs and refugees.

We will begin by presenting our theoretical approach and research methodology and proceed to discuss the regulations at different state levels. To demonstrate how these regulations play out at the local level, we will go

from top to bottom in our analysis, starting at the federal level and moving on to the state and then local level in order to assess how they interlock. Due to this multi-level governance structure (García, 2006), the means by which these regulations can interlock at the local level are highly varied and complex. To illustrate this range, we will focus on two local examples, Berlin and Dresden, and show how these regulations interact with local conditions, such as differences in local administrative processes, the housing market, and discriminatory practices on the housing market. These internal borders stand in contrast to the strategies and perspectives of refugees and NGOs. The combination of all of these factors shapes refugees' ability to access individual accommodation.

2. Theoretical Approach and Methodology

2.1. *Autonomy of Migration, Differential Inclusion, and Civic Stratification*

Within the broad range of border regime studies (see Horvath, Amelina, & Peters, 2017), most of the studies conducted to date have mainly looked at border spaces as sites of struggle, regulation, and exclusion, concentrating on the geographical border space of nation-states or focusing on the EU border (i.e., Donnan & Wilson, 1999; Hess & Kasparek, 2017; Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe, 2007). In this article we argue that there is a need to also look at local dimensions and variations of border regulations in order to understand how refugees are affected by such regulations *after* they have entered a national territory. In this regard, we refer to recent efforts that have been made to broaden the perspective on border processes in order to include analyses of how borders continue to operate internally, in the territory of a nation-state (see e.g., Leubhn, 2013; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). We see this development as especially fruitful for understanding the legal and practical situation of refugees and asylum seekers in terms of accessing housing, as this group of people is placed in a specific migration regime designed as an internal border zone, one that is characterised by mass accommodation camps, restrictions on movement, and residency requirements. We will follow this shift by applying the thesis of the *multiplication of the border* (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013, p. VI) to regional, local, and urban situations of bordering and by examining the mechanisms at the federal, state, and local level involved in achieving the differential inclusion of refugees.

Our theoretical approach is based in the field of critical migration studies, which criticises the “mechanistic or hydraulic” (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015) perspective on migration that considers mobility to be the sheer result of push-and-pull factors. In contrast, the *autonomy of migration* approach takes into account the fact that, despite strong and militarised attempts to regulate migration towards the EU, these regulations have not succeeded in turning Europe into a “Fortress Eu-

rope”, sealed off against migration. On the contrary, and as the long “summer of migration” (Kasperek & Speer, 2015) demonstrated in 2015, people on the move interact with these attempts to regulate mobility, undermine them, and act within them. These interactions lead to a “complex system of limitations, differentiations, stratifications, and partial inclusions of migrant groups” (Bojadžijev & Karakayali, 2007, p. 204, translation by the authors), resulting in a border regime that is not only repressive and exclusive, but also inclusive in a stratifying way, while continuously being challenged by the practices of migrants and constantly changing in order to keep up with them.

This interrelational aspect of power is central to Mezzadra and Neilson’s (2013) approach to theorising the border in *Border as a Method*, in which they understand the border as a political space that multiplies into various other spaces and is both a geographically situated concept as well as one that stratifies society. This theorisation of the border is an “epistemological viewpoint that allows an acute critical analysis not only of how relations of domination, dispossession, and exploitation are being redefined presently, but also of the struggles that take shape around these changing relations” (2013, p. 18). If we define the border as a site of struggle in the context of migration regimes, we can identify the sites where the border has been multiplied within the geographical space of the nation-state and where migration regimes continue to operate, such as in the form of camps and other segregated housing sites for refugees. This “proliferation and heterogenisation of borders” (2013, p. 18), has led to various kinds of differential inclusion. The concept of differential inclusion, borrowed from feminist critical approaches, has been used, for example, in the analysis of migration regimes (Casas-Cortés et al., 2015, p. 79). It “draws attention to the effects of negotiations between governmental practices, sovereign gestures, the social relation of capital, and the subjective actions and desires of migrants” (2015, p. 79). For our research on the situation of refugees in the transition from being placed in camps and shelters to participating in the housing market, the concept of differential inclusion provides us with a broader view on the “tensions, encounters, and clashes between the practices and movements of migrants and the workings of the various apparatuses of governance and governmentality that target them” (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013, p. 165). This mirrors recent developments in the extensive literature on camps. Recent contributions to this literature have stressed that the camp is often not just a state of exception which strips camp residents of the right to have rights—as argued in influential analyses by Agamben and others (Agamben, 1998; Minca, 2015)—but frame the camp differently as a space of emerging new political subjectivities which can also open up limited access to citizenship dimensions (Maestri, 2017; Sigona, 2015). Our research, however, does not focus solely on the camp but on the

possibilities and restrictions related to leaving the camp. Therefore, the political subjectivisation of refugees we are looking at here is shaped not only by the experience of the camp, but also by questions regarding access to housing outside of the camp and the kinds of barriers that must be overcome to achieve that access (e.g., related to local housing market specificities or discrimination). Literature on German housing markets, on the other hand, has only partly addressed the specific conditions that migrants face in the housing market (see e.g., Barwick, 2011; Faist & Häußermann, 1996; Kiliç, 2008). The point where both fields overlap, the moment when refugees leave the camps and try to access the housing market, is, however, still a blank spot. Our study seeks to fill this gap.

The concept of the border as an epistemological lens, including the concept of differential inclusion, can be connected to discussions on the stratified access that different categories of migrants and non-citizens have to a number of rights. It is often argued that membership or access to rights and practices is increasingly detached from formal national citizenship status, resulting in forms of post- or denationalised membership forms based in globalisation processes such as human rights (Soysal, 1994) as well as in—often local—practices and actors that realise aspects of membership that divert from the concept of state membership (Sassen, 2005). While it is true that in many countries, social rights (rights to economic welfare) and civil rights (rights of individual freedom, cf. Marshall, 1950) in particular are not exclusive to formal citizens, such a perspective has been criticised for underestimating the continuing relevance of nation-states (Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008, pp. 165–166). Parts of this debate have furthermore focused—explicitly or implicitly—on resident aliens with a permanent resident status. Opening the perspective to migrants with less stable statuses, such as refugees, shows that the situation is much more complex and often enmeshed with border regulations (see Faist & Häußermann, 1996). Lydia Morris (2003) argues that there is a need to analyse the “increasing diversity of ‘outsider’ status” (p. 79) by understanding “the qualifying conditions of access, and the nature of the interplay between domestic, transnational and supranational law” (p. 77). She proposes to use the term “civic stratification” to analyse partial membership as “a system of inequality based on the relationship between different categories of individuals and the state, and the rights thereby granted or denied” (p. 79). We use the term civic stratification particularly with regard to the legal differentiations that apply to asylum seekers, who are put in a number of categorisations (e.g., the stage of their asylum-seeking process or their country of origin). In this sense, civic stratification is part of the process of differential inclusion and contributes to the specific outcome of it. We thus understand the latter as a more encompassing notion in the sense that it focuses more specifically on the realisation of rights. Similar to border studies, studies on civic strati-

fication focus mostly on national variations in civic rights (Morris, 2003; Torres & Waldinger, 2015). We would like to add to this research by showing that there is a need to include regional and local variations of civic stratification, as access to rights and practices can be different for migrants with the same legal status depending on their location in a nation-state.

While there have been efforts to examine how citizenship rights and practices are shaped in different cities (see e.g., Varsanyi, 2006), these attempts have so far tended to neglect the role of internal border mechanisms on the local level (for a critique see e.g., Leuhn, 2013) and their embeddedness in multilevel governance structures (see e.g., García, 2006). In most cases, literature on local or urban citizenship(s) tends to depict local forms of membership and participation as more inclusionary than national ones and to disregard exclusionary local processes (see e.g., Holston, 2008, for a critique see Purcell, 2006). We therefore argue that it is especially fruitful to focus on local dimensions of citizenship rights and practices with approaches of civic stratification, border regime studies, and differential inclusion to analyse how refugees access housing and show how heterogeneous processes of differential inclusion play out on the local level.

In the following, we would like to add to these discussions by analysing the local internal border regimes regarding housing, residency, and freedom of movement with which asylum seekers are confronted. In this vein, we will analyse civic stratifications regarding access to social and civil rights in interaction with administrative, market and civil society processes on the ground that produce complex situations of differential inclusion.

2.2. Methods

In this article we use empirical material from a study carried out between May and December 2016 which focused on the housing situation of female refugees in Berlin and Dresden (Foroutan, Hamann, El-Kayed, & Jorek, 2017). We aim to compare the barriers that refugees with different legal statuses face when it comes to accessing housing rights in two different cities. Our comparison takes into consideration two dimensions that are significant within this context—legal status and locality. In pursuing our research question, we conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives from federal state and municipal administrations, with politicians as well as with representatives of NGOs, social workers, and volunteers who work in the field of housing for refugees. Furthermore, we interviewed 16 female refugees who were living in different types of camps, shelters, or apartments. These perspectives counter the administrative view while providing specific insight into the prospects of people with refugee status for housing and living in the city. For the purposes of this article, we combined three sets of data retrieved from the interviews with an analysis of administrative documents. The

interviews with state officials provided administrative perspectives on how the housing of refugees should be organised in the respective city and gave us the chance to question state strategies. The other two sets of interview data—with NGOs and refugees—counter the administrative portrayal of refugee housing programs. NGOs represent another perspective, mostly that of German citizens who have the privilege of knowing the language and the local setting. NGO members lobby for refugees and are familiar with the practical outcomes of government regulations. The interviews with refugees provide the opportunity to question and control the information expressed by government actors and NGOs. However, as our article deals mostly with barriers that refugees face when looking for housing, we will mostly present findings based on our interviews with administrations and NGOs. At the same time, our analysis is based on our knowledge regarding the perspective of refugees, on which we have published more extensively in Foroutan et al. (2017).

3. Federal Regulations

The regulation of refugees in the Federal Republic of Germany is embedded in a multilevel system that includes laws and regulations at the EU level, the federal level, the federal state level, and the municipal level (Aumüller, Daphi, & Biesenkamp, 2015; Schammann & Kühn, 2016; Wendel, 2014). The laws and regulations from these various levels combine to affect the way refugees are housed in the asylum-seeking process and when and how refugees can enter the housing market. In the following section, we will discuss regulations on the German federal level that grant and restrict access to the right to housing and the right of free movement and settlement. These regulations exemplify the status of refugees as a specific category of migrants who are deliberately being held in unique situations of “waiting for the state” (Oldfield & Greyling, 2015) by placing them in extended border zones manifested in both spatial and temporal dimensions.

While laws and regulations offer access to legal rights and a basic provision of social rights, they simultaneously erect internal temporal borders (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2012). These regulations not only establish a particular legal position for asylum seekers and differentiate them from other categories of immigrants, denizens and citizens, but also create a wide range of differentiations among asylum seekers themselves as different regulations apply to specific subcategories of asylum seekers. The latter differentiation is the product of laws and regulations that establish the subcategorisation of asylum seekers and furthermore introduce tension between humanitarian and economic categories of “worthiness” that determine who can escape the border zone of waiting (earlier) and who cannot. Temporal border zones internal to nation-states are thus shaped by the inclusion and exclusion of certain groups of people to and from rights in multifaceted ways.

3.1. During the Asylum-Seeking Process

When asylum seekers arrive in Germany, they are allocated to a specific federal member state through a distributional process based on the tax income of the federal member states as well as their population size—a process known as the ‘Königsberger Schlüssel’ (§45 AsylG). This mechanism handles the distribution along administrative rationalities while refugees themselves have little to no say in the matter of where they are placed (Wendel, 2014, p. 9). Asylum seekers are then housed in *Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen* (EAE; ‘initial accommodation facilities’) where they must stay for up to six months (§47 AsylG). During the stay in such a facility, asylum seekers are usually subject to a ‘residency requirement’ (*Residenzpflicht*), which means that they are generally not allowed to leave the district (*Bezirk*) in which the local department of the Foreigner’s Office (*Ausländerbehörde*) to which they have been assigned is located (§55, §56, §57, §59a AsylG). Persons from countries that have been labelled ‘safe countries of origin’¹ even have an ‘obligation to reside’ (*Wohnverpflichtung*) in the EAE throughout the full duration of their asylum proceedings and are thus subject to the residency requirement during the entire process (§47 Ia AsylG). This keeps them in a space of “limbo” while they wait for the state to decide upon their application—a situation regarded by legal experts as a severe violation of basic civil rights (Pelzer & Pichl, 2016, pp. 99–100). While they fall under this requirement, asylum seekers are only allowed to leave the district with permission from the Foreigner’s Office. Violating the ‘residency requirement’ can lead to detention and a criminal record (§59 II AsylG; §95 I Nr. 6a AufenthG; §95 I Nr. 7 AufenthG), and for some refugees from so-called ‘safe countries of origin’, even to a termination of their asylum application (§33 II, §33 III AsylG.). This requirement is considered disproportional and in contradiction to European Law by legal experts (Pelzer & Pichl, 2016, p. 100). Furthermore, the ‘residency requirement’ can be reinstated after its termination and used as a punishment, for example, in cases where an asylum seeker has been convicted of a criminal act (§59b AsylG). The ‘residency requirement’ is therefore an extreme example of how refugees are held in designated border zones after their arrival on a nation-state’s territory. The regulation restricts the freedom of movement and traps refugees in specific areas within the territory of the nation-state—temporarily and, in some cases, for the entire duration of stay—a situation that contradicts several international and European laws and regulations that establish the right of free movement for refugees (Pelzer & Pichl, 2016, pp. 100–101).

From the EAE, asylum seekers are allocated to a specific municipality or district in the same federal state as the EAE in which they were first housed. Once again, asylum seekers have no say in the matter (§50 IV AsylG).

According to §53 I 1 AsylG asylum seekers should generally be housed in shared or mass accommodations in municipalities (*Gemeinschaftsunterkünften*; GU). This rule, however, is currently being interpreted differently across the federal states: some see it as an obligation to house asylum seekers in such GUs, while other states instead see no obstacle in this rule to house asylum seekers in apartments or other types of accommodation (Wendel, 2014, p. 11; Schammann & Kühn, 2016). Many experts evaluate the legal situation to the effect that it is up to the regional and local administrations to decide how to accommodate asylum seekers (Wendel, 2014, p. 11). This is a first instance of leeway for differences in civic stratification across federal member states regarding the conditions of accommodation for refugees and their transition from state-organised housing to the housing market. In regard to several legal regulations, German federal law deliberately allows for differences in the internal border regimes in different federal states, and the implementation of these regimes can diverge further between municipalities in the same federal state. The federal law therefore co-creates—together with other administrative levels—“different (local) border regimes” that are the result of contradictory practices of the many different (institutional) actors on each level and conflicts of interests among them (Lebuhn, 2013, pp. 44–47). This multiplication and extension of the border can therefore not be adequately conceived as a coherent, strict border in a one-dimensional sense, but must be understood as multidimensional and uneven as it varies along a) government levels, b) geographical entities (federal states/regions/municipalities) in the same nation-state, and c) legal categorisations of migrants. Furthermore, it is shaped by local practices of administrative and civil society actors as well as refugees themselves, as we will show later on.

The regulations depicted above apply to refugees in the process of seeking asylum. In the next section we will focus on policies that apply to refugees once they have acquired an asylum status, and we will examine how these affect border arrangements and the situation of differential inclusion.

3.2. Internal Borders after the Acquisition of an Asylum Status

Since 2016, German federal law restricts the place of residence not only of persons in the asylum process, but also that of persons who have received asylum status and are therefore in possession of a residence permit. Prior to this date, recognised refugees could take up residence in any federal state or municipality in Germany. The newly introduced regulation of ‘abode constraint’ (*Wohnsitzauflage*) restricts the freedom of settlement and requires all refugees to take up residence in the federal state where his or her asylum procedure took place and to re-

¹ The countries currently defined as ‘safe countries of origin’ are: EU countries, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ghana, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Senegal, Serbia. (<http://www.bamf.de/DE/Fluechtlingsschutz/Sonderverfahren/SichereHerkunftsstaaten/sichere-herkunftsstaaten-node.html>)

main there for three years.² This regulation is, however, only partly a prolongation of the residency requirement discussed above, as the residency requirement prohibits refugees from physically leaving a certain area while the abode constraint prohibits refugees from taking up residence in a different federal state than the one to which he/she was allocated. The abode constraint does not, however, restrict a person from physically leaving the state temporarily (as the residency requirement does). The federal states have the power to introduce more detailed regulations that can require refugees to move either to or out of specific municipalities within a given federal state (§12a AufenthG), which opens up room for differences in civic stratification across federal states.

The official goal of the abode constraint is to “support sustainable integration” (§12a I 1 AufenthG), and this wording ensures that the regulation is in line with European law which allows such restrictions for that specific reason, but not for others such as financial rationalities (Lehner & Lippold, 2016; Thym, 2016, pp. 247–248). However, one of the abode constraint’s major rationalities is, in fact, to distribute the financing of social welfare for refugees evenly across federal states and to facilitate regional and local administrative planning by making numbers more predictable (for a critique, see El-Kayed & Hamann, 2016).

Generally, the abode constraint expires after three years, at which point refugees can choose their place of residence in Germany independently. There are, however, possibilities to be freed from the restriction prior to the end of this period, such as when a person’s spouse and/or children live in a different federal state, or when a person or his/her spouse or children is employed, takes up vocational training or enrolls at a university in a different state (§12a I 2 AufenthG; §12a V AufenthG; Thym, 2016, pp. 245–246). Thus, specifically those who are able to enter the labour market or the educational system acquire access to the basic right of free settlement while others do not.

While the residency requirement physically holds asylum seekers in areas that can be described as demarcated by temporal borders, the abode constraint creates an internal border by restricting housing market access for persons with asylum status. Enforcement of the abode constraint functions through its linkage to social welfare rights, as taking up residency outside of the allocated federal state results in refugees losing their entitlement to social welfare. This creates a tension between the access to social and civil rights, as accessing either one can result in the loss of the other. In sum, civic stratification and differential inclusion regarding the civil right to choose the place of residency are present even after an asylum seeker has been recognised as a refugee. Through the federal regulation of abode constraint, differential inclusion has become institutionalised on the federal level in the name of ‘integration’ and better governability of refugee migration at the lo-

cal level. This development emphasises the need to examine this increasing civic stratification and differential inclusion across not only different migrant groups, legal statuses, or nation-states, but also different regions and localities.

4. Federal State and Local Regulations

As depicted above, German federal law creates leeway for federal states as well as municipalities when it comes to shaping refugees’ access to housing. In the following, we will demonstrate how these federal regulations play out at the level of federal states and municipalities by taking a closer look at two municipalities in two federal states in Germany: Berlin, which is a city-state (and therefore shaped by a particular mix of federal state as well as municipal levels of government), and Dresden, a city in the federal state of Saxony. By describing the housing situation and the different barriers that exist for refugees in relation to entering the housing market in these two cities, we will illustrate the possible scope of local differences and will exemplify how these different regulations and practices on the ground affect refugees’ access to the right to housing.

We selected Berlin and Dresden to account for different interpretations of federal law that currently exist on the federal state level. One major difference is that Berlin and Saxony have applied very different strategies for accommodating refugees in the past: Berlin had a rather liberal interpretation of federal law and implemented a possibility for asylum seekers to access private, individual housing (Wendel, 2014, p. 61). Saxony holds the opposing view and allows accommodation in private apartments only in the case of special humanitarian situations, such as a severe illness (Schammann & Kühn, 2016, p. 12; Wendel, 2014, p. 63). Regulations on the federal state level, however, do not necessarily mean that there are indeed unified practices on the municipal level within a single state (Schammann & Kühn, 2016, p. 12). This is also true for Saxony, where a range of accommodation concepts exists across municipalities. These differences in local regulations within a federal state sometimes originate in a deliberate attempt by municipal authorities to create a system that differs conceptually from that of the federal state. At other times, the wide range of accommodation concepts is a result of what many localities experienced as a state of exception during and after the height of refugee immigration to Germany in 2015. As a result of this extraordinary situation, many existing regulations and practices were abandoned (Schammann & Kühn, 2016, pp. 11–14) and actors on the local level often switched to implementing ‘whatever works’.

The administrative state of emergency led to bizarre situations: In Saxony, for example, some municipalities made long-term contracts for mass accommodation facilities in 2015, at a time when many refugees were arriving. This created a problem later on, as the numbers of

² This law was introduced for a limited time of three years and will remain in effect until August 2019 (§104 XIV AufenthG) if it is not renewed.

refugees decreased afterwards. Now, cities like Dresden, which are housing some asylum seekers in apartments, which are under short-term contracts, are moving them out of the apartments and back into camps in order to save money.

4.1. Berlin

Berlin has had massive problems accommodating newly arrived refugees since the start of the main phase of refugee migration in 2015. This administrative crisis has resulted in, among other things, long periods of waiting for registration and in the instalment of emergency accommodations in structures such as former office buildings, school gyms, exhibition or airport halls, and the like. These emergency facilities have been in use much longer than originally planned due to the city administration's problems in arranging accommodation in regular mass accommodation facilities or apartments. At the end of 2017, 5,000 refugees were still living in emergency shelters.³

Berlin is one of few federal states that allow refugees to seek their own apartment in the housing market after they have moved out of the EAE while still being in the asylum application process (Wendel, 2014). In 2016, the administration installed an information centre to support refugees in the process of finding an apartment. However, despite this administrative effort, in our interviews with refugees we often encountered a lack of knowledge or the presence of misinformation regarding the possibility to move out of the mass accommodation camps. It is therefore likely that this administrative information measure only had a limited impact.

Other measures taken by the Berlin administration included, for example, permission for refugees to spend 20% more on rent than what is possible for other social welfare recipients (Evangelisches Jugend- und Fürsorgewerk, 2016, p. 5). Another support measure consisted in a small number of flats provided by the municipal housing companies via a program called "Apartments for Refugees" (*Wohnungen für Flüchtlinge*, which provided 550 flats in 2016 and 270 in 2017). Due to the very limited number of units available, they were mainly used to house refugees who are considered to have a 'special need of protection', such as single-parent families and persons with disabilities or severe illnesses. But even for this group of refugees, this contingent was by no means sufficient. In our research we were furthermore confronted with statements that indicate that the municipal housing companies that provide these flats are less responsive to inquiries from refugees outside of this program. In this case, the provision of an insufficient housing contingent would have created the partial closing of a crucial affordable housing market sector for refugees. This border mechanism can again be conceived of as 'differential inclusion' as the politically marketable provision of an (inadequate) housing program specifically designed for refugees is connected to a limited general market ac-

cess in return. Thus, the provision of a program framed as humanitarian co-creates a border that prevents equal housing market access and therefore access to the provision of a basic civil right.

4.2. Dresden/Saxony

After being accommodated in the EAE in Saxony, refugees are sent to municipal districts and cities where they are housed for the duration of their asylum proceedings. A number of housing concepts exist within the different municipalities, ranging from the predominant mass accommodation (e.g., in Bautzen) to housing in privately rented flats (e.g., in Leipzig). Due to the allocation mechanism in Saxony, 13.5% of all asylum seekers in Saxony are distributed to Dresden. In Dresden, it is generally not possible for asylum seekers who are still in the application process to enter the housing market and rent an apartment on their own. The predominant forms of housing in Dresden are therefore mass accommodations and shared flats, which are rented by the city. For these shared flats, there are regulations that also apply to mass accommodations (Landeshauptstadt Dresden, 2016, pp. 11–13). This means that in practice, six people share a three-bedroom flat with two people per room.

For refugees, entering the housing market in Dresden is—contrary to Berlin—only possible after the acquisition of an asylum status. Once a person has officially been recognised as an asylum seeker, a close cooperation with a large private housing company offers access to social housing apartments. However, according to our interview partners, the apartments that are allocated to refugees through this cooperation process are often in areas outside the city centre that have a reputation for being less welcoming to immigrants due to instances of openly communicated racism and racist violence.

So far, Saxony has not implemented an abode requirement that would oblige refugees to stay in the districts where their asylum proceedings took place. However, this type of regulation is being heavily discussed at the moment, as some politicians argue that more and more refugees are moving to urban centres in Saxony, such as Dresden and Leipzig, which would make it much more difficult for the federal state and municipal authorities to plan and administer their policies regarding refugees (Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, 2017).

In addition to being shaped by these local administrative contexts, refugees' ability to access individual housing in these two cities is also affected by the local housing market, including incidents of discrimination, as we will show in the next section.

5. Market Barriers and Barriers of Discrimination

Over the course of the last decade, Berlin and Dresden have both developed from cities with a stagnant

³ Sascha Langenbach, press spokesperson of the Berlin state agency for refugee matters (LAF) 11.12.2017, telephone interview.

or shrinking housing market to cities with a new housing shortage that particularly affects low-income households (Schönig, Rink, Gardemin, & Holm, 2017, p. 51). This urban housing crisis currently afflicting most of the larger cities in Germany is caused by several processes, such as the privatisation of parts of the communal housing stock, and it will not be solved in the near future, even though the cities are taking on new measures to mitigate this issue. There are indications that the urban housing crisis is having a disproportionate impact on migrants' chances to find housing. This is especially due to the withdrawal of the state from social housing programs that provided housing for low-income immigrant families, among others, and partially shielded them from discrimination in the private market (Bremer & Gestring, 2004; see also Holm, Hamann, & Kaltenborn, 2016).

Dresden used to have a large supply of vacant accommodation, but this supply has decreased significantly over the course of the last few years (Kofner, 2014). A significant number of private owners reject refugees as tenants, which is also true for the local non-profit housing companies that do not offer housing for refugees or social welfare recipients (Horvath et al., 2017, pp. 27–30, 50). The only major housing market actor who currently provides housing for refugees both during and after the asylum application process is a large private housing company that bought the municipal housing company WOBA in 2006. As part of the deal, the buyer agreed to guarantee a contingent of apartments which the city of Dresden can use for social housing (Mieterverein Dresden & Umgebung e.V., 2016).

According to local NGOs, there is no considerable market in Dresden where refugees could find housing beyond this guaranteed contingent of social housing units. Different NGOs that support refugees in the search for housing in the city ascribe this fact to racist discriminatory practices among private owners and other housing companies in Dresden. The activities of these NGOs range from offering counselling to refugees in order to support their search for housing to providing financial guarantees for refugees to owners who doubt a foreigner's financial accountability. While some landlords cite concerns about refugees regarding language, communication, or social compatibility with other tenants, many of our interview partners relate these concerns to racist prejudices. A recent paired ethnic testing study on discrimination in the housing market in Saxony (Hummel, Krasowski, Midelia, & Wetendorf, 2017) provides an empirical foundation for this observation of refugees and NGO activists. This study noted a significant number of cases of discrimination due to nationality, immigration status, and the lack of German language skills (2017, p. 25) by testing the reaction of landlords towards interested tenants with asylum status or their supporters, compared to German natives. In sum, the combination of a limited housing market and the discriminatory practices of landlords results in a situation where refugees are overwhelmingly dependent on the negotiated con-

tingent of apartments that the city has agreed upon with one private housing company. According to local actors, the high prevalence of discrimination among landlords makes the housing market in Dresden extremely inaccessible for persons with refugee status.

In Berlin, access to the housing market for low-income households has been dwindling since 2008. In 2016, urban sociologist Andrej Holm calculated a deficit of 275,000 affordable apartments for households on social welfare (Holm, 2016, pp. 34, 44–45, chart 27), a number that increases further if we include refugees who are still living in shelters and camps (cf. Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten, 2017). The situation for refugees in Berlin's housing market is extremely tough due to the extreme lack of affordable housing in general. Several additional obstacles prevent refugees from finding an apartment. One is the prevalence of incomplete or incorrect information among refugees about the possibility to move out of the camps after six months, which we encountered in our interviews. Furthermore, there are indications that social workers at camps and shelters were told by camp operators to not inform their clients about their housing rights. Besides this lack of correct information and the distribution of false information, there is a fraudulent shadow broker market where huge sums of money are demanded from refugees to secure an apartment, which in the end often turns out not to exist (Foroutan et al., 2017; Tagesspiegel, 2016).

The lack of affordable housing in the city is a major barrier to the Berlin housing market and one that also structurally enables possibilities for discrimination, as landlords and housing companies are able to choose among an increasing number of people applying for apartments. While there is a lack of standardised studies on Berlin, antidiscrimination counsellors have observed increasing discrimination in the Berlin housing market (Droste, Knorr-Siedow, Dobrusskin, & Domann, 2017, pp. 16, 54).

The two cities differ in their civil society attitude towards migration. As many parts of Berlin have a longer history of migration going back to labour migration from countries such as Turkey in the 1960s, the capital has fewer neighbourhoods which are dominated by racist street violence. Dresden has become a destination for significant numbers of migrants since 1989, but in comparison to Berlin, it still has a low percentage of residents with a migration history (10.6%). Furthermore, and concerning the difference in civil society attitude to migration, Dresden is the place of large, regular right-wing demonstrations by the movement known as PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident) since 2014. While thousands of racist protesters march through the inner city each Monday, People of Colour avoid the inner parts of the city. Refugees sent to reside in Dresden learn about this danger soon after arriving, as stated in interviews (Hamann, Karakayali, Höfler, Lambert, & Meyer, 2017). Whether this situation is connected to landlords' reluctance to rent to refugees requires further investigation.

The situation sketched out here demonstrates the state of differential inclusion that is constructed for refugees through the German refugee care system. Many newcomers, especially those in larger urban centres, are bound to an interim space that multiplies the nation-state border within urban spaces and keeps refugees in camps due to a combination of the lack of housing, the lack or mismanagement of information provided to refugees, and discrimination in the housing market. Each of these factors contributes to creating the situation of a deferred social arrival for refugees.

6. Response Strategies and Refugees' Perspectives on Housing

In our interviews with refugees—who mostly still lived in mass accommodation camps—all stressed the urgent desire to move out of the camp and into individual housing. Their wishes and expectations regarding housing are comparable to that of the average city dweller: priorities included the availability of infrastructures such as public transport, access to social and family networks, a wish for centrality and the desire not to be isolated in rural areas, and often a preference for mixed neighbourhoods in terms of spoken languages and migration histories. These expectations meet classic demands articulated in urban right-to-the-city-movements such as the right to centrality and difference (Holm, 2011; Lefebvre, 1968). These needs and wishes to centrality and difference face—as already depicted—legal restrictions, tight housing markets, and discrimination by housing market actors.

Despite this situation of a multiplied border produced by mechanisms rooted in the asylum system in Germany as well as market barriers such as the lack of affordability and discriminatory practices among landlords, some refugees find ways of gaining access to the urban housing markets. They often do so with the support of social networks or NGOs and volunteers. This state of affairs underlines the fact that borders are not strict, but always porous, and that their effectiveness is co-shaped by non-state actors. A considerable number of newly founded initiatives of volunteers support refugees in the search for housing. There are different models of support, from finding a room in a shared flat to providing help during the search process or providing a guarantee for a landlord. Each of these models seeks to engage with one or more of the aforementioned barriers created by the state, the market, or discrimination, but in doing so they face and, to some extent, also produce new problems. Across the board, these efforts are all highly time- and/or resource-intensive.

One example of such an initiative is a web-based matching platform that collects offers for rooms in shared flats and tries to match them with refugees who are searching for housing. The service is active in both cities, Berlin and Dresden, as well as in several other German cities. The process is intensively supported through counselling from local staff and volunteers. In our in-

terviews with members of the organisation, they emphasised that while this program is a good fit for some refugees, it also has its downsides. A problem they frequently encounter is a mismatch between the needs and wants of the people offering a room and those of the refugees looking for a room. A common issue is that those who are willing to share a flat are often looking for a female or LGBTI person, whereas most refugees who are registered on the platform are single, most likely heterosexual men. Another issue that comes up is different ideas about privacy and living together. Those offering a room in their shared flat are often looking for someone who is interested in participating in everyday activities such as cooking meals together, etc., whereas many refugees are more often looking for a room where they can find rest and privacy. Besides conducting the matching process itself, the organisation is involved in counselling when such issues come up.

Another model that we encountered is the provision of support during the search for independent housing in a one-on-one counselling process provided by volunteers in NGOs as well as on the basis of individual volunteering not connected to NGOs. This approach pragmatically engages with the limited market situation and the discriminatory attitudes of landlords, especially in Dresden. The model takes into account that a search for housing in many urban centres in Germany requires German language skills, a high level of administrative skills, prompt reactions, and a certain type of knowledge about the social composition of a city's neighbourhoods. The volunteer's job includes communication with the landlord and neighbours, the time-consuming filling in of the needed documents or help with acquiring furniture and other household goods. It is a model that is especially time-consuming for supporters.

This model of accompanying the search process on a one-on-one-basis was often described by NGOs and individuals as effective, not least because the organisation or individual volunteers provided a kind of symbolic guarantee for the landlord. Interviewees stated that they often had the impression that the fact that a potential tenant with refugee status is accompanied by a German citizen works as a signal that can help dissipate the reluctance of private owners to rent to refugees based on racist prejudices. In some instances, volunteers also provided financial guarantees for the apartment to overcome doubts by landlords. Some supporter groups were also renting apartments on their own in order to sublet them to refugee tenants. This model is one of the most pragmatic ways of dealing with the discriminatory reluctance of landlords to rent their apartments to refugees.

All models are rather small-scale and therefore cannot cover the actual need for housing compared to the number of refugees waiting in camps and shelters. They furthermore depend heavily on the capacities of volunteers to donate their time—and in some instances financial guarantees and resources. A high input of resources is therefore needed in order to reduce barriers

that refugees encounter and to increase their access to the housing market. While these supportive structures can be crucial for a limited number of refugees, we would argue, however, that they are not able to change the dynamic of differential inclusion regarding refugees' access to housing in a fundamental way.

7. Conclusions

In this article we argued that refugees' ability to access civil and social rights related to housing and residency in Germany is affected by a multiplication of borders in urban and local spaces. We traced how the border regime regulates refugees' access to rights to housing from the federal to the local level as well as across different legal statuses during their process of seeking asylum. The transition from state-organised accommodation to housing market access is one of several transitions in different realms of civil and social rights that refugees undergo when changing between legal statuses during the asylum-seeking process (i.e., in the realm of the labour market or residence permit statuses). These transitions are, however, not linear, or always linked in a coherent way, and furthermore often organised along different rationalities—e.g., humanitarian vs. economic—that converge in some aspects and compete in others. This, in connection with regional and local differences, creates a system of vast differentiations—between different stages in the asylum-seeking process, federal states, regions, municipalities, as well as the categorisation of refugees according to their country of origin, their migration route, when they entered the territory, etc. This multiplied border regime therefore creates different “degrees of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’” (see Mezzadra, 2009, p. 208), where the instances of control of refugees are carried out by a range of actors, both public, including authorities at the federal, state and local level, and private, such as gatekeeping actors in the housing market. On each level, we identified barriers to social and civil rights, such as the free choice of housing, that specifically apply to different types of asylum status and that vary not only from state to state but also across municipalities within the same state. The range of variation leads to an unequal treatment of refugees who hold the same legal status in different federal German states and cities. These internal local border regimes are marked by tensions between social and civil rights—e.g., when the provision of social welfare to refugees is linked to restrictions on their freedom of movement and settlement.

The right to free settlement is affected by a range of restrictive regulations, challenging market conditions, and discriminatory housing market actors that make it extremely difficult for refugees to find housing. This is particularly the case in urban centres, where many vulnerable and low-income groups are being shut out of the housing market.

Our findings point to the need for more systematic and encompassing studies on local variations of border

regimes, including which factors influence these variations. Such an approach would also require more systematic research on the rationalities, strategies, and processes in administrations and of housing companies and landlords as well as on the strategies of resistance and circumvention by refugees and supportive civil society structures.

Acknowledgements

The research behind this article took place in the context of the *Research-Intervention-Cluster on Flight and Solidarities* at the Berlin Institute for Empirical Integration and Migration Research (Humboldt-Universität) which was funded by the Federal Government's Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration. We thank all members of the cluster for fruitful discussions and questions, especially Susanna Jorek, Nassim Mehran, and Jinan Abi Jumaa. We thank Leoni Keskiniliç for her careful editing and Diana Aurisch for proofreading.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

The Civil Society Dynamic of Including and Empowering Refugees in Canada's Urban Centres

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Submitted: 6 December 2017 | Accepted: 23 February 2018 | Published: 29 March 2018

Abstract

This article addresses the critical role that civil society at the urban level plays in integrating and empowering immigrants and minorities in Canadian society. From a place-based approach, it investigates how key agencies in the local community have been instrumental in including immigrants in general and refugees in particular into the fabric of Canadian society. Empirically the analysis focuses on Neighbourhood Houses in Greater Vancouver and the Privately-Sponsored Refugee program in Canada. With the interpretative lens on the urban context, the article shows how immigrants and refugees have gained agency and voice in the public arena through place-based communities. The insight into these two empirical cases provides the basis for conceptualizing the socio-political dynamics of immigrant settlement and integration in terms of the effects generated by urban governance structures.

Keywords

Canada; civil society; immigration; integration; refugees

Issue

This article is part of the issue “The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies”, edited by Ulrike Hamann and Gökçe Yurdakul (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany).

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1. Introduction: Place-Based Approaches to Integration

In public and scholarly debate, the meaning of integration is controversial with respect to both its underlying conceptual-normative understanding and its implications for policy-making. At first sight, there is a considerable degree of consensus among scholars, policy-makers and the public at large that the full, equitable and fair ‘integration’ into the fabric of society is the desirable outcome for immigrants. Yet, the very concept of integration is challenging to define and implement (e.g., Ager & Strang, 2008; Esser, 2010). Integration seeks to describe how a successful process of—to use less contested terms—inclusion or incorporation of migrants ought to unfold and where it is supposed to lead: Is success in the labor market or the education system a sufficient criterion for accomplished integration? To what extent does successful integration require the adoption of the culture and values of the host society? The concept of integration generally seeks to describe a neutral process of socio-structural and political “inclusion” (e.g., Freeman,

2004; Habermas, 1996). However, the social and political meaning of integration is contested, in particular regarding the underlying notion of cultural belonging. In addition to the complex reality that this concept claims to describe, ‘integration’ has become the vehicle for often normatively-backed expectations about the relationship between immigrants and the host society.

In the scholarly debate, there have been two approaches aimed at arriving at an empirically more accurate conceptualization of immigrant integration. First, recent scholarship has started to question the disproportionate focus on national models and accommodation of diversity that research on the integration of immigrants has traditionally adopted (e.g., Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003; Jacobs & Rea, 2007; Parekh, 2006). The supra- as well as the sub-national levels of governance have become meaningful arenas in which integration is addressed in terms of policy development and integration outcomes (e.g., Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008; Erdal & Oeppen, 2013). At its core, integration is a place-based practice that is shaped by territorially specific social, po-

litical and cultural environments (e.g., Bradford, 2005). Most importantly, research on the role of the local context has underlined that integration processes are essentially rooted in communal practices and forms of urban or regional citizenship (e.g., Hepburn, 2011; Penninx, Kraal, Martiniello, & Vertovec, 2004). The local and regional contexts provide a central arena for how the need for integration is translated into concrete programs and how successful these initiatives are (e.g., Bertossi & Duyvendak, 2012; Leo & August, 2009; Duyvendak & Scholten, 2011; Schmidtke, 2014; Siemiatycki, 2012; Tossutti, 2012).

Second, the politics of integration has received notable scholarly attention, shedding light on the structural power imbalances in defining the normative expectations and societal practices of integration. Can and should immigrant integration simply be understood as a state-sanctioned practice in which those who are expected to live up to its expectations have no voice? In particular, the European context provides ample evidence of how the state-centred request for 'integration' can be employed as a vehicle for demanding assimilation and reproducing exclusion (e.g., Brubaker, 2001; Joppke & Morawska, 2014; Li, 2003). In this respect, integration is regularly based on unspecific expectations and cultural norms that immigrants deem impossible or undesirable to meet. Immigrants and minorities find themselves as objects of integration requests rather than as subjects in the process of co-determining their meaning and socio-political practice. The result can be paradoxical: The very term that is meant to guide the way for equitable and fair social inclusion becomes a device for reproducing social and symbolic exclusion (e.g., Joppke, 2007; Triadafilopoulos, 2011).

This article starts from the theoretical assumption that successful integration of immigrants and minorities is critically dependent on providing them with opportunities to be meaningfully included in public debate and policy-making. The focus of this investigation into the civil society dynamic of including refugees and migrants is guided by a place-based approach. In a first step, I will depict how the Canadian legacy of promoting the integration of its immigrant population has opened new opportunities for negotiating social and political inclusion through civil society governance structures. This claim will then be substantiated by two brief analyses of community-based engagement. The first relates to Neighbourhood Houses (NHs) in Greater Vancouver and the role they play in providing modes of effective integration and an entry point for public engagement to immigrants and minorities. The second investigates the dynamic generated by Canada's privately sponsored refugee program with a focus on its broader socio-political implications.

2. The Effects of Canadian Integration and Multicultural Policies on the Ground

Over the past fifty years, Canadian society has been shaped by the transformative impact of migrants in fun-

damental ways. This dynamic is critically associated with a far-reaching policy shift in the late 1960s and early 1970s, namely the introduction of a point-based immigration policy (resulting in high and sustained levels of immigrant recruitment), the expansion of integration policies, and the introduction of multiculturalism as a mode of governing the increasing cultural diversity of Canadian society. Over the past five decades, this commitment to publicly supporting diversity and to equitable opportunities for newcomers has guided policy-making and, from a broader societal perspective, the expectation of what successful integration means in practice. In this respect, the multicultural ethos of the Canadian immigrant regime is also based on the promise of equitable social inclusion and the commitment to fighting discrimination (e.g., Triadafilopoulos, 2012).

At the same time, and this will be the focus of the subsequent analysis, with its immigration, integration, and multicultural policies, Canada has embarked on a path to empowering immigrants and refugees in civil society. In the Canadian context, it is striking to see how advocacy groups representing different immigrant communities have become an articulate and influential voice in the public arena. The decentralization of settlement services and the partnership with community organizations in delivering them has—regardless of severe cuts to the funding of settlement associations over the past years—provided an opportunity for active engagement in governing integration on the ground. Immigrant and settlement organizations have become critical stakeholders in urban governance structures: They have intimate knowledge of integration challenges in the community, interact regularly with municipal authorities in program development, and are of critical importance for program implementation (see for a case study of immigrant integration in the health sector: Falge, Ruzza, & Schmidtke, 2012).

According to a Citizenship and Immigration Canada report from 2001, integration requires the active participation of both the newcomer and citizens of the host country; "rather than expecting newcomers to abandon their own cultural heritage, the emphasis is on finding ways to integrate differences in a pluralistic society" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001, p. 4). I interpret the successful societal integration and political inclusion as mutually reinforcing processes. In this respect, state-centred settlement and integration policies have set in motion a dynamic in civil society that has had effects far beyond what was initially intended by some of the state-orchestrated, top-down initiatives (e.g., Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009).

The federal policy on multiculturalism has also had an impact on the mobilization of ethnocultural communities. Particularly in the period after the 1970s and 1980s, federal multiculturalism policy was intended to increase the capacity of immigrant communities to take collective responsibility for dealing with the causes of inequality and for developing mobilization strategies, including ju-

dicial recourse, in order for newcomers and minorities to be able to exercise their rights at all levels of government (e.g., Bradford, 2005). The activity of civil society groups has contributed to making diversity and cultural pluralism principal issues in public debate and, from a normative perspective, principles endorsed in Canadian society and politics. In this regard, multiculturalism no longer merely celebrates folkloristic differences but has also evolved to address matters of power-sharing with some of the critical challenges facing Canadian society for instance regarding modes of governing diversity and addressing inequality (e.g., Siemiatycki, 2012). What we can observe in the Canadian context is a self-reinforcing cycle of ethnocultural mobilization and political responsiveness within the political system—a cycle decisively driven by civil society organizations in urban contexts.

This dynamic is also structurally sustained by decentralizing and outsourcing settlement services to community organizations as part of Canada's integration policies (e.g., Stasiulis, Hughes, & Amery, 2011). Beyond merely attending to these tasks as administrative agencies, civil society organizations have also taken on the role of political advocates for migrants, for minorities, and as influential agents in developing integration programs on the ground. The formation of integration policies at the local level is driven by a broader governance network, of which migrants' and minorities' organized interests have become a constitutive part (e.g., Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009). As Ley observes:

Bringing mainstream civil society closer to immigrant everyday life, these programs are delivered not by bureaucrats but by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with co-ethnic staff, and provide not only services but also jobs and volunteer positions to recent arrivals. The intent here is to create bridging social capital with immigrant groups through their NGOs and thereby aid the integration process. (Ley, 2007, p. 186)

At the same time, this community-based engagement unfolds in particular institutional and political-discursive contexts. It is worth highlighting that there are considerable differences in this respect between big urban centres, with well-organized migrant organizations, and smaller cities. In the latter, the task of representing these groups' interests and acting as agents of political advocacy is constrained by a limited number of settlement agencies and the relative absence or weakness of smaller ethnocultural community groups. Traditionally, political advocacy and (at least partial) access to the decision-making process in policy formation was afforded to those organizations that provided settlement services in the community.

3. NHs in Greater Vancouver—Place-Based Governance: The Role of Civil Society Organizations

The context of Greater Vancouver and the role that NHs have as place-based, community-governed, and non-profit organizations, provides a pertinent illustration for the dynamic of promoting migrants' and minorities' societal inclusion and political empowerment. NHs have a long-standing history in the Vancouver context dating back to 1938 and have traditionally served less privileged groups with a variety of social services. The central role of NHs is to work towards greater social cohesion and inclusiveness through grass-root initiatives. There are 14 such NHs across Metro Vancouver, which are united by the core mission of helping to build welcoming and inclusive communities at the neighbourhood level. Over the past two decades, NHs have taken on a pronounced role in supporting the settlement and inclusion of newcomers, providing them with access to the community.

In a multi-year study focusing on Greater Vancouver,¹ we investigated to what degree NHs provide the leadership role in building local community capacity for promoting integration and addressing social exclusion. The most straightforward way in which NHs have contributed to this agenda is through the scope and nature of the community services they provide. In 2013, NHs in Metro Vancouver provided a total of 444 programs/activities. In total, 208,664 participants took part in these activities many of which catered to newcomers providing low-barrier and affordable access to services in the community (employment support, daycare, after-school care, senior day activities, parent groups, recreational programs, sociocultural events, youth leadership, and more). NHs are part of the broader infrastructure of settlement providers. In this capacity, they play an essential role in addressing social isolation and the lack of social capital as impediments to successful integration (Yan, 2004; Yan & Lauer, 2008).

One key element of this research was a survey among users of services and activities offered at NHs. Table 1 provides an overview of responses regarding individuals' perceived changes in their social skills and their ability to relate to a community setting. The survey is based on a random sample of 675 respondents from 14 NHs comprising Canadian- and foreign-born users (65% newcomers; 77% women; 54% employed; 30% university degree).

The results of this survey shed light on the capacity building of a community-based organization such as NHs (Larcombe, 2008) both at the individual and the collective level. At the individual level, NHs prove to be valuable sites for the formation of social capital in the sense that Putnam (2000, p. 19) used the term as "connections among individuals' social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them."

¹ The research results are based on the four year project *Neighbourhood Houses in Metro Vancouver*, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (lead: Miu Chung Yan, UBC). We conducted an analysis of all 14 NHs in the lower mainland and would like to thank them for their time and support of our research; for more detailed results of this research see the project website: www.nhvproject.ca and Yan and Lauer (forthcoming).

Table 1. Perceived changes in social skills through involvement at NHs.

(%)	Place of Birth					
	Total		Canada		Outside Canada	
	Increased a little	Increased a lot	Increased a little	Increased a lot	Increased a little	Increased a lot
Change in social skills due to involvement in NHs						
Has your ability to work with people from different backgrounds changed?	42	34	34	29	46	38
Have your decision-making abilities changed?	42	26	30	19	48	29
Have your skills in organizing or managing events and programs changed?	36	21	24	17	42	23
Have your skills in speaking in front of other people changed?	35	27	22	19	42	32

Based on the self-assessment of the participants, NHs create the capacity to engage with others in the community and to develop skills to do this in a meaningful and competent way. This empowerment of immigrants and members of the minority community is also facilitated by simple facts. For instance, all NHs operate in a multi-linguistic environment (with a majority of employers being bilingual) and one is widely run by immigrants and minorities themselves.

In this regard, the seemingly mundane practice of interacting at NHs and participating in community-based activities can allow for the learning and practice of important civic and political skills. The effect on the skills and confidence of the respondents is particularly pronounced for those born outside of the country. The local community at the NH validates and recognizes a person's contributions. These civic skills learned through the experience of involvement and relating to others are a pivotal resource that contributes to overcoming social isolation and to encouraging engagement in the wider community. In a survey of 687 users,² we found a significant increase in civic and community engagement directly related to being involved in NHs. Similarly, qualitative interviews with this group underlined that social isolation is a major concern and one that can effectively be addressed by NHs. For instance, over 60% of respondents stated that they made at least one close friend through the NHs.

One critical way in which immigrants and minorities find themselves isolated and unable to contribute to public debates is the absence of low-threshold opportunities for engagement. NHs offer precisely this entry into communal engagement in a non-threatening, service-based environment. The project conducted oral histories with participants about their personal experiences of NHs. One recurrent theme in these interviews is how the use of services gradually built trust and turned NHs into 'safe places' (for a detailed account of these findings see: Yan & Lauer, forthcoming). Instrumental in this respect is also

NHs' reliance on volunteers; in 2012–2013, over 3670 people registered as volunteers in NHs in Metro Vancouver. In the same vein, NHs have become socializing agencies that regularly allow immigrants to become leaders in their community and to take on prominent roles in public life. In 2013, over 60% of staff members at NHs were either current or former resident service users. As an active part of the NGO community at the urban level, NHs provide ample opportunity for paving the path towards professional careers with third sector organizations, community engagement, and leadership.

At the collective level, NHs facilitate residents working together to achieve collective goals. NHs provide a physical and social framework for social networks, dialogue, and collective-communal empowerment. The skills that community members acquire in taking part in or organizing events can easily be transferred to other forms of active engagement. Through low-cost, family-friendly services and social events, NHs offer tangible incentives to overcome the alienation from communal life in particular for those who have a more precarious social status (low income, seniors, immigrants/ minorities). These self-governed community associations can be interpreted as entry points and networks facilitating democratic participation in a basic, yet essential way. As Yan (2004, p. 58) puts it, "motives of democratic participation, sharing, and reciprocity are actualized through services" offered at NHs (e.g., Yan & Lauer, 2008).

The results of the survey provide us with an interpretative lens into the broader socio-political function that such civil society associations can take on in giving a voice to newcomers and minorities. By investigating the role that NHs play in municipal and provincial policy-making, our research found consistent evidence of how these self-governed associations in Greater Vancouver establish an institutional infrastructure for building and strengthening urban communities and nurturing their collective capacity. The case study of NHs emphasizes

² For a summary of these findings see the research brief by Sean Lauer at <http://nhvproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/7.-Civic-and-Community-Engagement-Survey-findings.pdf>

the importance of *bridging* social capital—establishing vertical social networks between socially diverse groups or organizations. The role of these organizations in the urban context shows that, when previously unrelated or dissimilar community organizations and groups connect with one another, the created ties strengthen the overall social fabric (e.g., Gittell & Vidal, 1998). For instance, one prominent initiative of the Mount Pleasant NH is the support of a food network (<http://www.mpnh.org/food>), which has led the collaboration of a host of stakeholders such as community groups, NGOs, and city administrators. Thus, bridging social capital also expands the possibilities for inter-sectoral collaboration.

It became clear in our interviews with the NHs' executive directors that it is a contested idea whether and to what degree NHs have a mandate to be a political advocate of the community. However, in practice, NHs have proven to be instrumental both as a vehicle for community engagement and as a partner for NGOs and policy-makers primarily at the municipal level. In Vancouver, NHs have established themselves as critical for effective policy initiatives and implementation, or as one director put it, NHs are the "eyes and ears in the community."³ In practice, the border between political advocacy groups and networks of professionals can become blurred concerning the circle of activists and targets of public campaigns.

Their position in driving the integration agenda is centrally linked to the NHs' role as catalysts for community collaboration. In one of our focus group sessions, an NGO representative stated:

What the NHs have done for us is sort of allow us to network with the community, and brought us into projects that we wouldn't necessarily have been involved in....And how we, as an organization...can provide assistance or help or advocate as partners at City Hall when we need to advocate for certain things. When we are trying to advocate for certain things, they come and support us.⁴

NHs are the hub of an extensive service network through which untapped community assets are mobilized and nurtured.

In this respect, NHs are an integral part of "place-based" governance in Metro Vancouver. As our interviews and focus groups underline, NHs are in an ideal position to provide an institutional capacity for community governance, to foster mutual learning among community members, and to permit community input and direction in the development and implementation of integration programs. In Metro Vancouver, NHs have established themselves as a critical link between the people, governments, and private stakeholders that make up communities. NHs provide social infrastructures and networks of democratic participation, thereby giving voice

to those who often feel alienated from government processes. The focus groups and interviews with staff persistently highlighted the role of NHs as a forum for community-based governance, and as an important two-way conduit between community members and the different levels of government.

Even though it is difficult to stipulate the kind of impact that migrant organizations have on public policy formation, I argue that the local and regional levels have generated some marked opportunities for civil society input and initiatives. In this respect, immigrant or minority communities gain—as Winders (2012) puts it in his study on urban politics in the US—"institutional visibility" in local contexts, thereby allowing them to make political claims. The growing incorporation of immigrants into the political process at the local level has a marked effect on political framing and the institutional logics on which policy formation is based. One could speak about a *circulus virtuosus* set in motion by mainstreaming immigrant integration into the practices of public administration and governance structures. The inclusion of immigrant organizations into program design and policy formation can lead to institutional learning processes and, as an effect, better service provision. This process in turn is likely to strengthen the willingness to see immigrants and minorities included into the deliberation and, in some cases, decision-making procedures regarding integration programs and policies (e.g., Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Scholten, 2013).

4. Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: Community Mobilization

Another dimension of how Canada governs immigration speaks to how the communal inclusion and participation of newcomers is built into Canada's refugee policies. In the following section, I shed light in particular on Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program and its societal and political effects. The concept of immigrant and refugee sponsorship was first introduced in Canada in the late 1970s as a provision within the Immigration Act. The Act, signed and adopted in 1976, put into place specifications which allowed groups of five or more individuals to sponsor immigrants or refugees privately (Lanphier, 2003). Based on revisions introduced in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) in 2002, there are various tracks in Canada's refugee policy; the two most important ones are the Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) and the PSR programs. Each of these programs provides refugees with settlement support and services for one year. This support structure is either offered through designated non-governmental service provider organizations or through the network of private citizens who raise the resources and provide assistance independent of state institutions (e.g., Hyndman, Payne, & Jimenez, 2017; Simich, 2003).

³ Interview conducted at Collingwood NH, March 2015.

⁴ Focus group conducted on September 14, 2014 in Vancouver.

Over the past decade, Canada has vastly expanded the number of refugees that are resettled in Canada through the PSR program (see Figure 1). This process has led to criticism of the PSR program as an attempt to delegate and download responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers from the state to civil society. It is not by accident that this shift in how refugees resettle in Canada has happened mainly under the neoliberal auspices of the Conservative government led by Prime Minister Harper (e.g., Silvius, 2016).

However, rather than discussing the driving forces behind the expansion of the PSR program and its meaning in the wider transformation of Canada’s immigration policies, this article focuses on the—unintended—effects that PSR has had on the societal integration of refugees. Considering the interest in the transformative power of migrants, I concentrate on three different dimensions of the broader socio-political implications that the PSR program has had: a) the effects on the integration of refugees; b) the mobilization of community networks and resources (horizontal networking), and c) the political impact on the broader public debate and policy-making related to refugees.

4.1. *The Effects on the Integration of Refugees*

While not conceptualized as its primary objective, the PSR program has had a remarkable effect on the settlement and long-term integration experience of refugees in Canada. Different from their peers in the state-sponsored track, refugees that can rely on a group of sponsors immediately have access to a robust support network in the local community. There is a strong consensus among scholars and practitioners that the program has been largely successful in supporting refugee integration (e.g., Beiser, 2003; Lenard,

2016). For instance, Krivenko (2016) demonstrates how the PSR program has proven effective in linking newcomer refugees with the community and social structures of the receiving country. These networks prove to be instrumental in promoting language acquisition, employment, and the broader familiarity with public-administrative life in the receiving country. Based on these experiences, Krivenko suggests that the PSR program provides valuable lessons for broader integration policies, such as accessing the local community, building social capital, and connecting refugees to the full array of services available to them.

In the past there has been criticism about the effectiveness of PSR program concerning the promotion of the integration of refugees. For example, a 1989 study of the experiences of privately sponsored Southeast Asian individuals and families in Canada found that refugee newcomers often felt over-protected by sponsors, and many expressed frustration with regards to the inequity of support provided across sponsorship groups (Beiser, Turner, & Ganesan, 1989). Arguably the most significant criticism addresses the concern that privately sponsored refugee newcomers tended to have minimal interaction with individuals outside of their own ethnic group in those cases in which the sponsorship group is composed of members of the refugee’s ethnocultural group. The lack of interaction proved to be a particular challenge during the period in which Canada received high numbers of Vietnamese refugees in the late 1970s. Also, the PSR program is regularly under scrutiny regarding whether Canadian sponsor groups are overly assimilationist in imposing their cultural, social, and, in some cases, religious conventions on refugee newcomers and their families (Lanphier, 2003).

Overall, having private citizens raise funds needed for sponsoring refugees for one year and assisting them

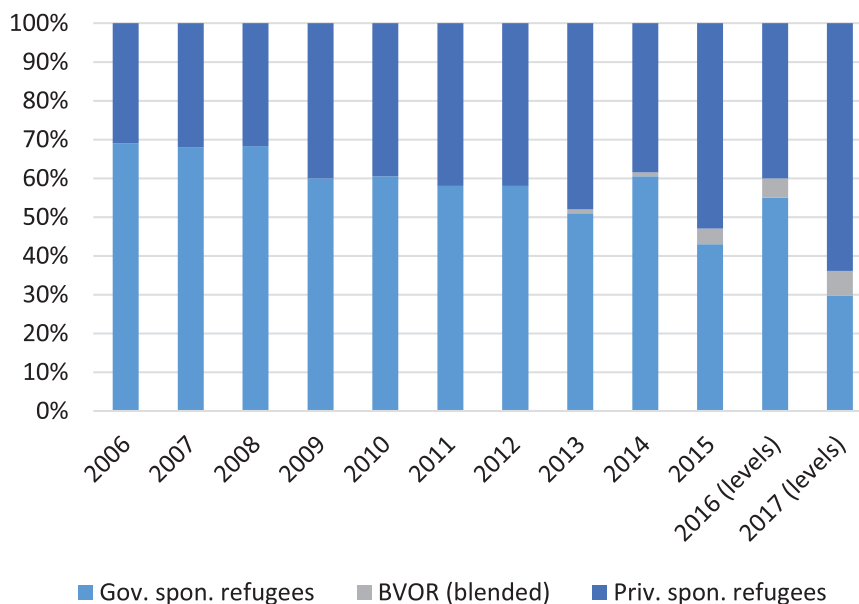


Figure 1. Resettled refugees (2006–2017).

in their settlement efforts can be seen as highly effective in promoting integration efforts. A recent *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada* (IRCC) evaluation of both the PSR and the GAR program sheds light on remarkably divergent integration outcomes.⁵ For instance, five years after landing in Canada, 41% of GAR relied on social assistance, compared to just 28% among those sponsored by private groups. Similarly, those refugees that came through the GAR program had markedly lower employment rates and employment earnings (see Figure 2). A host of factors contribute to the difference in outcomes among the two groups, unquestionably including demographic aspects like levels of education, linguistic proficiency, and country of origin. Yet, research has underlined that access to settlement services and broader community integration also plays a central role (e.g., Wilkinson & Garcea, 2017). Analyzing the results for the recent arrival of tens of thousand of refugees from Syria, the IRCC report underlines how critical the support and guidance offered by sponsorship groups have been for success on the labour market, the educational system or societal integration more broadly. The following graph (Figure 2) illustrates the dramatic difference in employment rates of resettled refugees in their first year and the eventual evening out of this difference after 10 years.

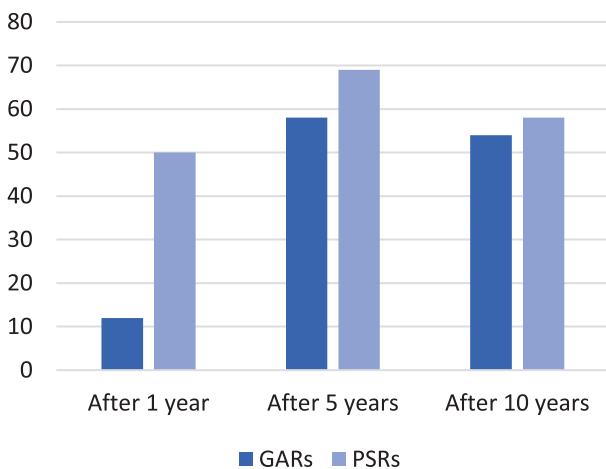


Figure 2. Employment rates of resettled refugees in Canada (2002–2012).

4.2. The Mobilization of Community Networks and Resources (Horizontal Networking)

The success in promoting the settlement and integration of refugees through the private sponsorship program can, at its core, be attributed to how these small groups mobilize community resources and play a central role in linking these newcomers to communal life at large. It is commonly a defining feature of sponsorship groups that its members use their links into the community as bridges for refugees and empower them through these network of stakeholders and organiza-

tions. Ives (2007) and Soroka, Johnston and Banting (2007) have recognized that building strong social networks and bridging diverse communities are essential steps in the integration process. Indeed, urban contexts addressing the issue of settling refugees have become sites for facilitating partnerships and modes of cooperation between government agencies and civil society groups (Biles, 2008, pp. 163–66). Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi and Herremans (2010) stress the importance of community engagement for municipal administrations, businesses and other community groups to bolster support and legitimacy (Bowen et al., 2010, pp. 303–305).

4.3. The Political Impact on the Broader Public Debate and Policy-Making Related to Refugees

The way in which the PSR program, in particular, relies on and engages with the civil society stakeholders also generates a particular political effect. It is through connecting refugees with community members, informing the public (for instance through fundraising or social events), and drawing attention to the broader issue of refugees that the private sponsorship program often promotes important multipliers in the community. Over 275,000 refugees have been sponsored by PSR since its inception about forty years ago. On average sponsorship groups have about ten members which indicates how strong the humanitarian commitment of civil society is and how far reaching the effects of the program are likely to be. This dynamic, generated primarily through local networks and civil society communities, proved to be a major factor in Canada’s response to the global refugee crisis. In the 2015 federal elections, the governing Conservative Party under Stephen Harper decided to keep the numbers for resettled refugees very low despite the mounting urgency to address the effects of the Syrian civil war. Canada’s commitment to addressing the suffering of the refugees became a critical public debate during the electoral campaign. It would be difficult to understand the intense public pressure demanding a greater intake of refugees without the networks built collaboratively with refugees on the ground. In this respect, the PSR program has considerable socializing (and educational) effects. By providing community-based services and support, the sponsor groups create meaningful arenas for engaging with refugees and the wider community addressing responses to the global refugee crisis.

Regarding the broader socio-political implications of the PSR program, there is a remarkable difference between the Canadian and large parts of the European context. Canada has widely been immune to the anti-immigrant sentiments and resurgent populist nationalism. Clearly, this development is driven by the dynamic of the country’s system of competitive politics and the way in which almost 50 years of official multiculturalism has changed the political landscape (Banting, Courchene, & Seidle, 2007). One critical element in this con-

⁵ See for the report Government of Canada (2016).

text is how issues of migration and diversity are politicized and addressed in policy terms. The recent response to the global refugee crisis is a case in point: The issue was primarily debated in terms of Canada's capacity on the ground and the pragmatic challenges that the influx of a large number of refugees would pose. Largely absent was the dramatic, identity-centred discourse that the populist right mobilized in many countries of Europe (Schmidtke, 2015). One key factor that is likely to account for the different logic of politicizing issues of integration and developing policy responses might be Canada's more articulate forms of political inclusion and advocacy at this level of governance. The relative strength of civil society actors and their—partial—inclusion into the political and policy process is likely to produce a less nationalist-populist and a more pragmatic approach.

5. Conclusions: The Transformative Power of Vibrant Local Communities

In the Canadian context, civil society based engagement with immigrants and refugees has created a particular socio-political dynamic promoting effective integration. While the state-driven multiculturalism and integration policies have provided the national framework for governing diversity and including newcomers, local actors and networks account for how these processes unfold on the ground. It is one of the striking features of the Canadian context that, particularly in urban settings, immigrants have gained agency and voice in the public arena through a web of civil society interactions. The Canadian case provides compelling evidence of the power of place-based, community-driven modes of shaping integration and providing newcomers and minorities with real opportunities for engagement and empowerment.

The effects of these networks are twofold concerning the research questions raised in this article: First, providing agency and voice to newcomers and minorities through engagement at the local level gives substance to the regular claim that 'integration' should be based on a two-way interactional process between a host society and newcomers. Immigrants are not simply the objects of the demand for successful integration; rather, they participate in deliberating its meaning and evolving societal practices. There is a sense of agency for immigrants and minorities that emerges out of community-based institutional practices and interactions. In particular, the local level has become an arena for negotiating the meaning of what cultural diversity and successful 'integration' means on the ground. Evidence from both of the empirical cases illustrated here (NHs and PSRs) suggest that the participation in the local governance structure is itself a critical dimension of (political) inclusion as well as a mode of facilitating effective integration more broadly.

Second, this form of participatory inclusion affects the majority culture, its perception of immigrants, and the associated politics of migration. Providing migrants with agency and voice generates a specific political dy-

namic in governing immigration and cultural diversity. The participatory mode of engaging migrants and their full inclusion across the political system has created its own self-reinforcing logic: The more newcomers and minorities find access to public arenas of deliberation, the more difficult it becomes to exploit this group for purposes of political mobilization driven by anti-immigrant sentiments. The broad consensus in Canadian society that immigration and equitable integration are desirable is partly rooted in the ways in which immigrants and minorities have shaped civil society practices. To a substantial degree, this dynamic has immunized Canadian politics to the rhetoric of nationalist exclusion that has taken hold of many liberal democracies.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the support provided by the *Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada* (SSHRC); the findings of this article are partly based on the project *Neighbourhood Houses in Metro Vancouver* that was funded by SSHRC.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Imperceptible Politics: Illegalized Migrants and Their Struggles for Work and Unionization

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Submitted: 30 November 2017 | Accepted: 6 February 2018 | Published: 29 March 2018

Abstract

This article argues that illegalized migrants carry the potential for social change not only through their acts of resistance but also in their everyday practices. This is the case *despite* illegalized migrants being the most disenfranchised subjects produced by the European border regime. In line with Jacques Rancière (1999) these practices can be understood as ‘politics’. For Rancière, becoming a political subject requires visibility, while other scholars (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2007; Rygiel, 2011) stress that this is not necessarily the case. They argue that political subjectivity can also be achieved via invisible means; important in this discussion as invisibility is an essential strategy of illegalized migrants. The aim of this article is to resolve this binary and demonstrate, via empirical examples, that the two concepts of visibility and imperceptibility are often intertwined in the messy realities of everyday life. In the first case study, an intervention at the ver.di trade union conference in 2003, analysis reveals that illegalized migrants transformed society in their fight for union membership, but also that their visible campaigning simultaneously comprised strategies of imperceptibility. The second empirical section, which examines the employment stories of illegalized migrants, demonstrates that the everyday practices of illegal work can be understood as ‘imperceptible politics’. The discussion demonstrates that despite the exclusionary mechanisms of the existing social order, illegalized migrants are often able to find work. Thus, they routinely undermine the very foundations of the order that produces their exclusions. I argue that this disruption can be analyzed as migrants’ ‘imperceptible politics’, which in turn can be recognized as migrants’ transformative power.

Keywords

illegal migration; imperceptible politics; migration; mobile commons; political subjectivity; social change; trade union; Rancière

Issue

This article is part of the issue “The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies”, edited by Ulrike Hamann and Gökçe Yurdakul (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany).

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1. Introduction

I always compare illegalized migrants to superheroes. We are invisible. We work around the clock. We don’t get sick. Even when we do get sick, we continue to work. (Illegalized migrant, field notes, 14 October 2015)

In Germany, life as an ‘illegal’ resident is both legally and socially precarious.¹ This is defined by lack of access to the job market and social welfare² as well as a constant fear of deportation, which can be felt in even the smallest everyday interactions (De Genova, 2002, p. 438). To work against this, illegalized migrants need—as described in the quotation above—the characteristics of a superhero:

¹ In Germany, under the offence “illegal residence” illegalized migrants lead a life of legal and social exclusion as defined by the Residence Act [Aufenthaltsgesetz, AufenthG].

² Living without papers in Germany also means no access (or only limited access) to medical care, education and housing (see Hollstein, 2017; Shinozaki, 2015; Wilcke, 2018).

the ability to work even when they are sick and simultaneously the capacity to make themselves invisible.

Most studies of illegalized migrants living in Germany highlight strenuous living conditions and emphasize the social exclusion faced by those without papers (for example, Alt, 2003; Pater, 2005; Wilmes, 2011). In contrast to these studies, I conceive illegalized migrants as political subjects rather than victims (McNevin, 2013, p. 185; Squire, 2017, p. 255). This is not to argue that illegalized migrants have an easy life. On the contrary; pain, anxiety and desperation are often part of their daily experience. However, in this article I have decided to focus on the political practices with which illegalized migrants master the art of living; they are also active subjects who organize their lives under complicated conditions of disenfranchisement. They develop tactics and strategies to deal with their situation and many ultimately find ways to access the labor market, sharing information and knowledge about employers. Illegalized migrants are active participants in society, despite being denied many—although not all—civil rights. In their everyday struggles, illegalized migrants take these rights, even if they are not formally entitled (see Schwenken, 2006; Shinozaki, 2015; Wilcke, 2018). The focus of my argument here is that they refuse to passively accept social exclusion.

In this article I contribute to an ongoing debate about political agency of migrants, which takes into account illegalized migrants' everyday struggles and resistance. In this field, Davide Panagia (2006), Anne McNevin (2011) and Walter Nicholls (2013) demonstrate how illegalized migrants in the US and France become political subjects through their claims to equality through hunger strikes, civil disobedience, occupations or rallies. In a similar vein, Peter Nyers and Thomas Nail analyze illegalized migrant's practices in the Sanctuary-City-Movement as 'acts of citizenship' (Nyers, 2010, p. 140ff) or 'migrant cosmopolitanism' (Nail, 2015, p. 188). This body of work is often influenced by Engin Isin's critical thinking on citizenship. For him, acts of citizenship—such as that enacted by Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, or the hunger strike of Marion Wallace Dunlop (Isin, 2008, p. 18)—rupture prevailing perceptions of formal citizenship. Consequently, those people staging acts of citizenship "transform themselves (and others) from subjects into citizens as claimants of rights" (Isin, 2009, p. 368). The examples above are similar in the sense that the political subjectivity of the migrants is constituted through representation and visibility. However, scholars of the 'autonomy of migration' approach, have pointed towards the invisible political practices and interactions of migrants, conceptualizing them as 'mobile commons' (Trimikliniots, Pansanoglou, & Tsianos, 2015) or 'imperceptible politics' (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, & Tsianos, 2008). For the everyday life of illegalized migrants the question of (in)visibility is a crucial one, as Kim Rygiel has elucidated:

If visibility and voice are a key part of the struggles of some irregular migrant group...others have found

it necessary to navigate the increasingly restrictive regime of border controls through strategies of disembodiment and invisibility. Here, irregularity becomes a resource to remain outside of the reaches of state authorities. (Rygiel, 2011, p. 157)

I would go further and argue that subjects use both strategies of visibility and imperceptibility; paradoxically this can even occur simultaneously. The aim of this article is to resolve this binary and demonstrate, via empirical examples, that the two concepts are often intertwined in the messy realities of everyday life. Further I examine the extent to which illegalized migrants—as the most disenfranchised subjects produced by the European Schengen border regime—carry the potential for social transformation in their acts of resistance and in their everyday practices. I take the concept of 'social transformation' as my theoretical starting point by drawing on Jacques Rancière's (1999) differentiation between politics and the police. To analyze the migratory strategies of invisibility I confront his ideas with the 'autonomy of migration' perspective already mentioned.

In my first case study, I demonstrate that illegalized migrants transformed society in their fight for union membership, but also reveal that their visible campaigning simultaneously comprised strategies of imperceptibility. In the second empirical section I scrutinize everyday practices of illegal work, examining these in terms of their potential to transform society. To conclude, I discuss the difficulties that arise in capturing the transformative character of imperceptible politics and reflect on the ability of the theoretical concept to grasp the complete repertoire of migrants' political practices.

The research was based on a qualitative design. I interviewed 20 people who live (or lived) undocumented in Germany between 2015 and 2016, two of them activists at Respect, an organization campaigning for the rights of migrant domestic workers. Their stories and descriptions provide the basis for the analysis in this article. In addition, I also drew on participant observation, document analysis, and expert interviews with activists and representatives of various institutions whose work intersects with my first case study. Thus, the two empirical sections on which this article is based comprise of a triangulation of different methods and voices.

2. Theoretical Perspective: Migration Transforms Society

Rancière (1999) offers a theoretical frame that links ideas about the constructivist societal order with its exclusionary dynamics. This frame proves fruitful for an analysis of the struggles of illegalized migrants for work and unionization. Essential for Rancière is the fundamental differentiation between the police (*la police*) and politics (*la politique*). According to Rancière, the police organizes, administers and protects the distribution of the sensible (*partage du sensible*), which he regards as the central or-

der of society and determines the forms of participation (Rancière, 2008, p. 31). Rancière argues that the police “defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise” (Rancière, 1999, p. 29). The police is an inevitable structure, which is part of every hegemonic societal formation. It must promise its members universal validity and equality as well as the claim to represent all. However, the police cannot fulfill this expectation; for Rancière, hegemonic orders always show ruptures and contradictions and are therefore never capable of including everyone.

For Rancière, politics (*la politique*) is the counterpart to the police, and can be understood as an act of rebellion by *those who have no part* (1999, p. 14) creating moments in which the contradictions and the constructedness become visible. Rancière argues that it is precisely in these moments that the police order is questioned and renegotiated. According to his analysis, political moments are therefore neither conflicts of interest in the existing order, nor the efforts to create an external, co-existing order—but rather a fundamental dispute about the order itself. These political moments occur for Rancière at the point of conflict where there is a demand for *a part by those who have no part* (Rancière, 2008, p. 32). This demand—which can be understood as a claim for equality—holds the possibility of social transformation.

A body of ‘autonomy of migration’ literature proves valuable for determining more precisely how the existing order is expressed in the field of migration. The concept of ‘regime’ is central here, as it makes it possible to think about the state’s dealings with ‘illegal migration’ by unpacking the concept itself and discussions surrounding it. Rather than assuming the state’s dealing with illegal migration is a rigid corset, the autonomy of migration perspective analyzes the materialized regulations themselves as an expression of changeable compromise (Karakayali & Tsianos, 2007, p. 14). The emphasis on contingency is important here, as it opposes the idea of migration as a something that can be turned on and off depending on the political situation. On the contrary, with this perspective migration can be attributed a certain power that is part of the conflict, and thus it becomes evident that migrants themselves continually challenge the institutional compromises surrounding (illegal) migration (Karakayali, 2008, p. 50). In addition, the concept of ‘regime’ brings focus to the subjectivities and the subjectivization processes of illegalized migrants. This makes it possible to discuss, in particular, whether political subjectivities are only generated in moments of visibility, or to what extent the political (as Rancière understands it) can also be situated in the process of becoming invisible (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2007, p. 223). This proves valuable because the struggles of illegalized migrants for work and unionization often proceed without obvious

breaks and contradictions in the existing order and understanding these struggles therefore requires conceptual expansion. The concept I draw on to make this step is ‘imperceptible politics’ (Papadopoulos et al., 2008).

Through the imperceptible politics lens, migrant struggles do not necessarily have to become visible to be theorized as politics; they are recognized as politics even if they escape visibility. The existing order is not openly challenged, but rather deceived, cheated, and infiltrated and thus silently and persistently ruptured. For this, invisibility is indispensable: “Becoming imperceptible is the most precise and effective tool migrants employ to oppose the individualizing, quantifying and representational pressures” (Papadopoulos et al., 2008, p. 217). Thereby migrants escape and simultaneously confront what Dimitris Papadopoulos and Vassilis Tsianos call the ‘double-R axiom’, which describes the stabilization of the nation-state’s order through regulation of relations between rights and representation—by becoming imperceptible (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2007). At this point a theoretical antagonism becomes clear. While for Rancière political subjectivities emerge in the moments of disruption in which the invisible and voiceless become visible and audible (Rancière, 1999, p. 30), Papadopoulos et al. argue that imperceptibility is central:

Becoming imperceptible is an immanent act of resistance....Instead of being perceptible, discernable, identifiable, current migration puts on the agenda a new form of politics and a new formation of active political subjects. (Papadopoulos et al., 2008, pp. 217–218)

In the next section I demonstrate via an empirical case study that these two contradicting approaches can both be understood as migrant strategies. While they may have an ambivalent relationship to each other, both constitute the politics of illegalized practices and also contain within them moments of societal transformation.

3. Trade Union Representation: Visibility and Invisibility

In this section, my first empirical case, I demonstrate that even in the most visible struggles for representation migrant strategies of invisibility also occur.

Since 2008, official trade union advisory offices in Germany have supported illegalized migrants. Their existence marks a shift in how trade unions deal with undocumented work and illegal workers. Although it might have been unimaginable 20 years ago for unions to support people without a residency permit (and thus without a work permit), this perspective has now largely shifted—even if there are still contradictory positions within the trade unions. How did this shift occur? This article argues that the societal shift cannot be conceived without migrant and anti-racist struggles, which claimed rights for illegalized migrants and demanded these in a perceptible manner.

The Gesellschaft für Legalisierung (GfL),³ which was formed in 2003 as an alliance of different political groups and organizations, played a decisive role in this process. When the alliance formed, their focus was on the rights of illegalized migrants and their goal was both simple and radical: they demanded a society in which migration is not judged in terms of economic interests, in which life is not organized hierarchically along racist lines, and where freedom of movement is possible, disenfranchisement and illegalization are impossible (see GfL, 2003). Against this background, the alliance launched a legalization tour in 2003, in which different forms and effects of illegalization were made visible and modes of resistance were emphasized. In autumn 2003, during this tour, the GfL intervened in the federal conference of the trade union ver.di in Berlin, demanding that people without residency status and work permits be included as members.

The need for illegalized migrants to be able to unionize was communicated to the conference participants in various ways. One of the more creative examples was an audio recording that could be heard coming from large suitcases. In this installation, the voices of illegalized migrant workers could be heard making demands for political and social rights. Pamphlets were also distributed to conference participants, which called for a trade union for *all* workers, regardless of their legal status. In parallel, in the foyer of the International Congress Center (ICC) in Berlin, negotiations were being carried out to make the political goals of the alliance public. The negotiations were successful, but they were agreed on the condition that no one without papers would speak (Respect, 2003). The Respect activist, who went on stage remembers the situation as follows:

We wanted to do something artistic, but also something to provoke the audience, so that people notice that we're here. And that's why we were loud. Then someone came over and said: 'Enough now. We'll give you 10 minutes [on stage]'. I was right there when someone asked: 'Do you want to go in?' And I said 'Yes'. But I didn't expect it to be so packed, that so many people would be inside....I also didn't know that Angela Merkel was inside. I only realized that later. (interview, Respect Activist A)

Part of the success of this intervention is illustrated in the quotation, namely that the activists themselves did not expect to be able to gain the right to speak, nor that their demands would have such positive resonance with the participants. The speech of the activist—who herself lived in Germany for a long time without papers—are detailed in the conference minutes:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here. I ask you to listen to us. Please hear us. There are many of us, and we already live among you. We work in this coun-

try. Since we already work here, we also have rights. We hope to find support among the delegates here; we hope they will make our issues their cause. We also want to receive our salary regularly at the end of each month. We don't want to be sexually abused during work. We don't want to be vastly underpaid for our work anymore. Finally, we just want to work normally, with dignity, just like all of you do. (Applause). We are workers. We need the support of the trade union. We need someone who will carry our voice to the outside. That's why we want to be members of the union (Shouts of bravo. Applause). (ver.di, 2003)

As noted in the minutes, the speech was very popular with the conference participants and can be regarded as a political moment (Rancière, 1999). The speech provided decisive impetus for further discussions within the union and was evaluated as a success by the activists. But how can the intervention, specifically the speech, be evaluated in tension between visible and invisible politics? Firstly, it is necessary to clarify the existing social order of the trade union organization and whether the activists can be understood as those *who have no part*.

The literature on German trade unions reveals that unions historically had restrictive (and even hostile) positions with regards to migration (see Ağtaş, Amler, & Sauviat, 2008; Bojadžijev, 2012; Trede, 2015). More recently, the situation has become ambivalent. During the crisis of the trade unions (broadly characterized by declining membership figures, lower revenues and general loss of meaning) there were attempts to approach potential new members. However, while new members were needed, projects that focused on including illegalized migrants remained marginal, best illustrated by the lack of funding for a legalization campaign within the metal workers union in Germany⁴ (see Ağtaş et al., 2008) and the decline of the European Migrant Workers Union (see Mitrović, 2009). This demonstrates that there remains a (deeply entrenched) hegemonic understanding that regards illegal work as the decisive factor in decreasing wages.

Accordingly, in Rancière's terms, illegalized workers can be understood as those *who have no part*. In 2003, when the GfL staged its intervention at ver.di, none of the official members were without residency status or work permit. The hegemonic positions regarding illegalized migrants, as described above, determined the existing order—to the extent that membership without residency status or work permit would have been unthinkable. Therefore, the moment at which the activist walked onto the conference stage and made her demand for membership within the union can be understood as politics in Rancière's sense. By encouraging the audience not only to "listen" to her, but to "us" as illegalized migrants, the activist made the existing order visible and created a moment in which the boundaries between participation and exclusion, language and noise, visibility

³ Which can be translated as 'Society for Legalization'.

⁴ IG Metall.

and invisibility—were questioned. The speech—in which union membership is visibly claimed as illegalized migrants *part*—thus provoked a fundamental discussion about social order itself.

The question arises, whether this speech can be seen as the starting point for a fundamental change in the existing order of the trade union organization, or whether the existing order is merely reaffirmed. A political moment in which the existing order is questioned does not necessarily produce a new order in which there is a different distribution of the sensible (Rancière, 1999, pp. 41–42). The GfL disbanded shortly after the tour described here, as the group did not manage to unite the different perspectives nor create one productive joint platform (John, Panagiotidis, & Tsianos, 2008, p. 29). In order to further pursue the question of (in)visible politics within this case study, it is useful to consider Respect⁵—one of the political groups which was part of the GfL.

Respect was founded in 1999 with the goal of organizing women in paid housework. Its membership comprised women of different origins and different residency status’—many of them previously active in migrant organizations, counseling centers, feminist contexts and support groups (Respect, 2012). Respect was decisive not only for the GfL activities at the federal conference but also for the more specific development within ver.di. Respect activists were already holding talks with ver.di conference participants about the potentials and challenges of cooperation and integration of illegalized migrants into the trade union. This resulted in personal contacts, which formed the basis for further cooperation (see Respect Activist B, 2005, p. 56). In the subsequent collaboration between Respect and ver.di the main focus was to explore the possibilities of illegalized migrants becoming members and thus to implement the main goals of Respect. With overwhelmingly positive reactions from the conference, concrete results came relatively quickly:

Then two or three months later we had the opportunity to become members. It was incredibly fast. ver.di wanted new members, of course. And we said, if it’s alright with you, then we’ll become members. (interview with Respect Activist A)

This marked the first major change in union regulations. The official recognition of illegalized migrants as trade union members represented a novelty in Germany. In addition, Respect succeeded in combating inter-union resistance and bureaucratic hurdles to establish an official trade union advisory office for illegalized workers. The successful fight for membership, legal protection and an advisory body (which not only informs and advises illegalized migrants, but also institutionalizes the opening up of the trade union) in sum mark a changed perspective on illegalized migrants. This opening continues to be highly controversial within the trade unions, as many still believe the unionization of workers without residency

permits and work permits is an affront against the traditional values and politics of the union. However, in the struggle described here, illegalized migrants fought for a *part*, which was not foreseen by the existing order of the unions. Therefore, the speech described here and the process that followed can be described as politics.

Nevertheless, with Rancière’s understanding of political subjectivation it is not possible to grasp all of the political dimensions of the struggles for unionization. Thus far the discussion of a concrete case demonstrates that contradictions arise. Firstly, there were no illegalized migrants present at the ver.di conference intervention, at least not physically. Therefore, *those without a part* were not themselves on site to make the demands for a part. Their presence and visibility could only be produced by an audio installation:

We have set up ‘sacs tati’, they’re big suitcases from which you can hear recorded voices. They are the voices of people without papers who are demanding social and political rights. It is only with the suitcases that they can claim the space, which they did not want to take directly on that day for fear for imminent criminalization. (Respect, 2003)

The quotation addresses the ambivalence that is constantly present for the illegalized migrants in their struggle for visibility. The absence of residency permits is a constant threat, so that even before the intervention took place, unwanted control measures, which are relatively likely during an intervention of this sort, were preempted. Thus, the aim was that visibility—or more specifically audibility—would be established without physical presence. In the speech of the Respect activist there was a similar aim; she talks in plural of ‘we’ the illegalized, without being illegalized herself. She speaks as a representative for illegalized workers, as a former illegalized migrant who in the meantime has successfully secured residency status in Germany. Furthermore, as became obvious in the negotiations about the right to speak with ver.di representatives, the union insisted that no illegalized migrant would be allowed to speak as this could be considered a provocation for both the legislative and for many of the delegates (Respect, 2003). While the activist making the speech was not an illegalized migrant when she stood on stage, as a former illegalized migrant she demanded recognition *for those without a part*, and therefore created visibility for illegalized migrants. The situation was paradoxical precisely because they themselves were not present.

The paradox can also be found in the second example, related to the demand of union membership itself. One of the key objectives of the unionization was representation by a socially relevant institution.

It was important to be with ver.di because it’s recognized as official. We wanted to say there are ille-

⁵ Respect is a political group in Berlin, which is organized in the European network of migrant domestic workers also called Respect.

galized migrants at ver.di, so it becomes more confrontational for society. We entered without permission. And if ver.di is part of the state, then we also belong here. (interview with Respect Activist A)

Becoming visible through the organization and membership in a German union and able to carry the concerns of illegalized workers into wider society *simultaneously* provides invisibility on the individual level—and here the ambivalence becomes obvious. How can this apparent contradiction be explained, which Respect Activist A conveys as a fundamental conflict:

The [illegalized] migrants are always afraid and that was our conflict. How can we do something? ver.di gave us the opportunity to do something different without fear...the right to unionize. We have the right to be here. And we have the right to use the lawyers. (interview with Respect Activist A)

This dual function of visible-invisible has the advantage of being legally represented by ver.di, and thus the ability to claim and enforce labor rights, while simultaneously providing the safety of invisibility, which can be of vital importance for life in illegality (see Rygiel, 2011, p. 157).

In Rancière's understanding, the political, which lies within the struggles described here, emerges in the moments in which the existing order is visibly challenged. The question arises as to how far invisibility, remaining invisible, or becoming invisible can also be understood as political—or whether societal change is only conceivable with a visible political subject. Theoretically this question has already been discussed above. To answer this question on an empirical level, in the next section I will focus on everyday resistance practices and struggles of illegalized migrants.

4. Everyday Struggles for Work: Inevitable Invisibility

In this section, my second empirical case, I analyze illegalized migrants' everyday practices of working and sharing specific knowledge. This empirical-theoretical investigation analyses whether, and in how far, illegalized migrants change society, even when they remain imperceptible.

I have to be invisible. If I attract any attention, the consequences could be disastrous. In the end they will put me on a plane and send me back. (interview with Andrew)

Andrew⁶ gets to the crux of the matter. The ever-present danger of deportation—which De Genova (2002, p. 438) understands as deportability—is embedded in the everyday lives of illegalized migrants. Invisibility is the defining

feature of illegality, and at the same time, a prerequisite for life in as illegal. Invisibility does not mean that bodies are imperceptible in everyday life. On the contrary, they live and move about in the city-center, travel on the train, or like Isaac,⁷ work in the centers of political power:

I worked for a catering business. And once I even had to work at the Bundestag....It wasn't a problem. I went there with my friend's passport. You have to be sure of what you are doing. (interview with Isaac)

And yet, Isaac becomes an inconspicuous caterer with his friend's passport and with the self-assurance and certainty that the physical differences between him and the passport holder will not be noticed during the check. In the performance, the process of "being everyone" and "becoming imperceptible" take place (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2007, p. 228).

Carrying and using the borrowed ID documents is a cunning strategy, in which Isaac refuses to accept the label "illegal migrant" and is able to earn money. Ekuwa,⁸ who lived in Germany for several years without papers, pursued a different strategy of invisibility.

I knew the police wouldn't come to a private home. They raid hotels or companies, but I have never heard of private homes. Although I knew the family wouldn't do anything. (interview with Ekuwa)

From the outset Ekuwa aimed for employment in paid housework, as she knew these jobs would be less likely to be subject of workplace controls. In addition, she trusted the family, as two of her friends had already worked there and reported "positive experiences". Key to Ekuwa's strategy of invisibility is her prior knowledge. On the one hand is her knowledge that property rights in Germany are taken so seriously that raids—for example those carried out by customs authorities on illegal employment—are very rare compared to raids in other workplaces such as building sites. On the other hand is her knowledge of trustworthy employers who, like in this case, pay well and do not run the risk of telling authorities about their employees lack of residency status. This 'situated knowledge' (Haraway, 1995) is generated by experiences and the subsequent exchange and sharing of these experiences with others. It is a specific knowledge, which is produced by the individual position of illegalized migrants in relation to the societal conditions they find. As 'mobile commons' this knowledge offers basic resources for living (and surviving) and everyday participation in society (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013, p. 190). These mobile commons circulate within transnational social networks and are thereby continually updated and expanded. They are invisible goods that belong to no one and which cannot be controlled by anyone. Accordingly,

⁶ Name altered.

⁷ Name altered.

⁸ Name altered.

the migrant-situated knowledge is not only a product of reoccurring experiences of migrant life, but also the prerequisite for everyday practices that allow (and produce) alternative forms of life (Bojadžijev, 2012, p. 147; Trimikliniotis et al., 2015, p. 1040). In this sense mobile commons facilitate life in illegality, for example when people are able to avoid police controls of the labor market, or evade particularly exploitative working conditions such as unreliable pay or unpredictable employers.

In sum, mobile commons facilitate work in illegality. This can be understood as politics because there is no designated place for illegalized migrants in the existing order. Yet illegalized migrants such as Ekuwa or Isaac take their right to work—which is denied by the police order—via different strategies of invisibility. Fundamentally, they demand *a part*, which was not intended for them. Importantly, these actions are a form of politics that do not need to be intentional; the illegalized do not organize a conscious and collective struggle for their share. Rather, the political is generated from the fact that there is no choice; they must work (“You just have to work”, interview with John⁹) to earn money (“You need money, life in Germany is expensive”, interview with Andrew). And yet, as those who have no part, they take their part by working in an imperceptible manner. In this sense their work can be understood as invisible politics—despite ambivalent employment conditions and moments of exploitation and disenfranchisement.

This second empirical section demonstrates that both illegalized migrants working without a permit and the sharing of migrant-situated knowledge can be understood as imperceptible politics. Over and above this analysis, on a theoretical level, this means that the everyday practices of illegalized migrants have transformative potential. However, precisely because of the imperceptibility of those practices, it is difficult to conceive the transformative character on an empirical level. The concrete transformation on the ground cannot be captured, until the practices become visible. In the next section I scrutinize this tension by means of an example from the past.

5. The Transformative Power of Imperceptible Politics

How can the transformative potential of illegalized migrants working without a permit be proven beyond an abstract theoretical discussion? This is a difficult task due to the inherent invisibility of the illegalized workers. As argued above, the politics of invisibility emerge in the deception, ambiguity and infiltration of the existing order, rather than in open confrontation. The argument that the politics are socially transformative will be demonstrated with an example from 2001. At the time, more than 200 illegal domestic helpers from East European countries, which were not yet part of the EU, were deported. There was a large-scale raid carried out by the federal police in Frankfurt am Main, in which over

350 homes were searched (see Bojadžijev, Karakayali, & Tsianos, 2003). A journalist was amongst those who were involved, as he had employed a care-worker without papers from Slovakia to care for his father in law. The care-worker faced deportation as part of the raid. The journalist made his loss public and thus paved the way for a public debate about the necessity of migrant care-workers in private homes. *Der Spiegel*¹⁰ described the lack of German care workers (with work permits) and their relatively high cost as a main reason why Polish or Czech women are often the only option for families who want to keep their elderly relatives at home (Hielscher, 2001).

The Eastern European migrants had proven indispensable as care workers. Consequently, the ministry of labor reacted by amending the regulations and, under certain conditions, permitting migrants from five selected EU countries to work in households that required care workers. It is interesting to note that migration processes had already somewhat changed the societal terrain, even before the political attempt to regulate migration by securing migrant workers with jobs protected by social insurance (see Bojadžijev et al., 2003; Karakayali, 2007). This makes it clear that illegalized migrants take their place in society by working and changing their everyday practices. Yet they do not demand their part openly; they appropriate it in clandestine, imperceptible ways. The fact that the politics are imperceptible is also shown in this example. It was only through the raid, the deportations, and the subsequent public discussions that the transformation of society occurred. It was only through the work of illegalized care workers that this process became visible and empirically tangible.

6. Conclusions

As demonstrated in the previous sections, invisibility is a fundamental strategy in the everyday life of illegalized migrants. The politics of invisibility can be seen even in the struggles for visibility and representation, as described in the campaigns for union membership. In the demand for union organization, as demanded by the *GfL* and *Respect*, this can be analyzed as a double-strategy; the presence of illegalized workers as a group (their rights and social exclusions) are made more visible, without risking the potential deportation and residency controls of individual illegalized migrants. While this struggle for membership might be criticized from the perspective of imperceptible politics as outdated politics of representation, which are easily absorbable by the existing order, Rancière’s idea of political subjectivization would omit the importance of invisibility. Both concepts—*perceptible* and *imperceptible* politics—help to understand illegalized migrant as political subjects. However, it must be noted that neither perspective is capable of grasping the full spectrum of political migrant practices, as the analysis of the empirical cases

⁹ Name altered.

¹⁰ A German weekly news magazine.

in this article demonstrates. The concepts need to be combined on an empirical and theoretical level (see Nyers, 2015; Schweitzer, 2017). While Rancière's differentiation between police and politics might be useful to analyze social transformation, his conception of political subjectivization is limited to the process of becoming visible. This needs to be reconsidered. Becoming imperceptible is—as discussed theoretically—a crucial aspect of the politics of illegalized migrants, which can be confirmed on an empirical basis.

Isaac works as a caterer for a company that does not know about his lack of residency papers. For this work he uses a friend's identity. With the help of his friend's passport and his knowledge about the rules that dominate society he is able to overcome all the barriers, which usually prevent illegalized workers the formal entry into work. Ekuwa has deliberately chosen work as a housekeeper in order to minimize the risk of official controls. The avoidance of certain places and employment that are heavily controlled, which illegalized workers expect pose an increased danger for them, is a further strategy of invisibility. And it is precisely deportability, which makes imperceptibility essential for life in illegality. None of the strategies—whether a focus on specific employers or borrowing identity documents—have the aim of visibly calling into question the exclusion mechanisms and respective modes of disenfranchisement, nor do the strategies demand participation for the workers. The aim of these strategies is for illegalized migrants to become imperceptible, to enable participation in society. This is precisely where imperceptibility becomes political; the social part that is not foreseen for illegalized migrants in the police order is not demanded at the moment of their visibility. Rather, the social recognition is appropriated performatively in everyday life. Illegalized workers work, *despite* the existing order and its exclusionary mechanisms. They are active, and participate in society, and simply take those rights, which are not foreseen for them. As demonstrated by the example of the illegalized care workers who were deported after police raids in 2001, social order is transformed in imperceptible ways by illegal work. The care workers made themselves indispensable through their invisible work, which became visible through the deportations and then expressed itself in the changes in law.

Illegalized migrants, as the most disenfranchised subjects that the European border regime produces, transform society. They develop diverse strategies to deal with the conditions they find and to participate in social processes from which they are formally excluded. Thus, they routinely undermine the very foundation of the social order that produces their exclusions. This is the transformative power of illegalized migrants' imperceptible politics.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Germany.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Facing Precarious Rights and Resisting EU ‘Migration Management’: South European Migrant Struggles in Berlin

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Submitted: 30 November 2017 | Accepted: 6 March 2018 | Published: 29 March 2018

Abstract

In this article, I trace struggles regarding EU internal mobility and migrant labour as they emerge in the mobilization of South European migrants in Berlin. The effects of the 2007–2008 financial crisis and European austerity politics have reoriented migration flows within the EU, increasing South-to-North migration with Germany as a prime destination. German public discourse on the matter reveals a view on (EU) migration that focuses on its economic ‘usefulness’ and tries to regulate it accordingly. EU citizenship turns out to be a key instrument of such EU internal ‘migration management’. The emergence of migrant activist groups, however, hints at another force at play. In their fight for social rights and better working conditions, migrant activists show they will not allow themselves to be easily ‘managed’ into precarious ‘productivity’. Against this background, I argue that EU internal mobility is a field of struggle where attempts to control migrant labour clash with moments of autonomy and resistance. My aim is to explore this field from a migration perspective, analysing rationales of EU ‘migration management’ and their impact on migrants’ lives as well as investigating the strategies that migrants develop in response. Based on an analysis of EU legislation and interviews with Italian activists in Berlin, I trace conflicts around EU internal mobility and migrant labour. Against the background of critical migration studies, I analyse EU internal ‘migration management’, especially regarding the role of EU citizenship. Then, I look at EU migrant struggles in Berlin through the lens of *autonomy of migration*, drawing on the example of the Italian activist group *Berlin Migrant Strikers*.

Keywords

autonomy of migration; border regime; differential inclusion; migrant labour; migration management; migrant struggles

Issue

This article is part of the issue “The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies”, edited by Ulrike Hamann and Gökçe Yurdakul (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany).

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1. Introduction

The effects of the 2007–2008 financial crisis and European austerity politics have reoriented migration flows within the EU, increasing South-to-North migration with Germany as a prime destination (IMIS & bpb, 2013, p. 3).¹ The various narratives of the German public discourse on the subject, for instance praise of the ‘brain gain’ or the ‘fear’ of ‘benefit tourism’, boil down to a view on (EU) migration that focuses on its economic ‘useful-

ness’ and tries to regulate and filter it accordingly (Riedner, 2015). EU citizenship, promising equality and freedom of movement among EU citizens, turns out to be a key instrument of such EU internal ‘migration management’. The emergence of (South European) migrant activist groups in Germany, however, hints at another force at play. In their demands for social rights and better working conditions, migrant activists show they will not allow themselves to be easily ‘managed’ into precarious ‘productivity’.

¹ While this article deals with South-to-North migration within the EU following the 2007–2008 financial crisis and European austerity politics, this is of course neither the only nor the main form of migration occurring within the EU. EU internal East-to-West migration is ongoing and often centre-stage when it comes to debates on EU ‘migration management’ (Schoenes & Schultes, 2014). This goes particularly for migrants from Bulgaria and Romania whose freedom of movement within the EU is often called into question against the background of racist narratives (Schoenes & Schultes, 2014).

Against this background, I argue that EU internal mobility is a field of struggle where attempts to control migrant labour clash with moments of *autonomy* (Bojadžijev & Karakayali, 2007) and resistance. My intention is to explore this field from the perspective of migration, analysing rationales of EU ‘*migration management*’ and their impact on migrant lives as well as investigating strategies migrants develop with regard to it. I seek to offer preliminary results for future research. My focus lies with the specific context of South European, particularly Italian, migration to Germany against the background of European austerity politics and the dynamics between Germany and Southern Europe. How does EU ‘*migration management*’ function in this context and how do migrant (activist) practices relate to it?

Based on an analysis of EU legislation and semi-structured interviews with Italian migrant activists in Berlin, I explore conflicts around EU internal mobility and migrant labour. Drawing on critical migration research, I start with a brief introduction on labour mobility in the context of changing *border regimes*, which informs my analysis of EU internal ‘*migration management*’ and EU citizenship. Finally, I look at EU migrant struggles in Berlin through the lens of *autonomy of migration*, drawing on the example of the Italian activist group *Berlin Migrant Strikers*.

2. Precarious Rights: EU ‘Migration Management’

2.1. Migrant Labour and Border Regimes

This article is based on an understanding of migration as a key factor in capitalistic development, especially regarding the control and exploitation of labour (Mezzadra, 2006; Moulier-Boutang, 1998). Drawing on critical migration research, I conceptualize migration as taking place in a field of struggle where moments of *autonomy* and attempts to control and regulate migration clash, interact and bring about complex, ever-changing *border regimes* (Casas-Cortes et al., 2014, p. 69). In the context of *multiplying and increasingly heterogeneous borders* (Casas-Cortes et al., 2014, p. 57; Mezzadra, 2015, p. 128), critical migration scholars observe a multiplication of status’ and social positions of migrants (Casas-Cortes et al., 2014, p. 79). Using the concept of *differential inclusion*, they describe processes that instead of bringing about clear-cut inclusion or exclusion, produce a stratification of rights, social positions, and belonging (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2012, p. 67). This differential system of filtering and segmentation, which functions as a measure of hierarchisation and control (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2008, p. 7), is linked to specific forms of ‘*migration management*’² (Hess & Kasperek, 2010, p. 17) and entangled with what Mezzadra and Neilson have described as the *multiplica-*

tion of labour (Mezzadra, 2016, p. 40), an increasing diversification of labour regimes and positionalities.

2.2. EU Citizenship and EU ‘Migration Management’

In this article, I look at a form of migration that due to EU citizenship, not only seems privileged but in comparison to other forms of migration completely ‘de-problematized’ since it is legally protected by the freedom of movement which exists for EU citizens. Since the 1990s, there has been ample scholarly debate around the emergence of EU citizenship and its implication for issues of migration:

Although its acquisition remained subordinated to the status of citizens of member states of the EU, the institution of European citizenship appeared to many scholars as the opening up of a process of de-linking citizenship from the principle of nationality that could potentially run parallel to the recognition of migrants’ rights independently from their citizenship or even migration status. (Mezzadra, 2015, p. 132)

In reality, however, it turned out to be different with EU citizenship largely consolidating the differences between EU citizens and ‘the rest’. Furthermore, the emergence of EU citizenship has been accompanied by intensified border and migration control as well as growing right-wing movements across Europe (Mezzadra, 2015, p. 132). Mezzadra also emphasises “that in the wake of the global crisis European citizenship has been stripped of any social and progressive meaning in the eyes of a wide majority of (not only Southern) European autochthonous populations” (Mezzadra, 2015, p. 132). He thus considers the crisis to also encompass a crisis of—specifically European—citizenship (Mezzadra, 2015, p. 133).

So how can we understand EU citizenship in the context of migration (control)? How does it relate to European border and migration regimes? How can we analyse it in the context of the *multiplication of borders and labour* as well as *differential inclusion*?

2.2.1. Legal Framework

EU citizenship was introduced in the context of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. Its current legal basis is articles 9 to 12 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), articles 18 to 25 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) as well as articles 39 to 46 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (EUCFR) (Bux, 2017). Citizens of the member states, thereby, automatically become EU citizens, with EU citizenship functioning not as a replacement, but as an addition to national citizenship (§20 TFEU). Much like the latter, “EU citizenship refers

² Defined as attempts “to govern and manage migration, to operationalize policies of differential inclusion, and to manage the balance between the needs of labor markets, the demands for rights and in some cases citizenship, and the projection of securitization and humanitarianism on the border” (Casas-Cortes et al. 2014, p. 67 with reference to Walters, 2011). I will use this term—that was rightfully criticised for its cynicism—in single quotation marks to describe said attempt because it captures the underlying perspective on migration and migrant labour.

to a relationship between the citizen and the European Union which is defined by rights, duties and political participation” (Bux, 2017). The core elements of this relationship are freedom of movement within the EU, active and passive voting rights in local elections in the place of residence in the EU as well as the right to petition and vote in the EU parliamentary elections in the country of residence (§20 TFEU).

EU citizens’ freedom of movement within the EU has its legal basis in article 3(2) TEU, article 21 as well as titles IV and V TFEU and article 45 EUCFR. The general right as established in the primary law is tied to certain conditions and concretised in the EU Directive 2004/38/EC (Voigt, 2017, p. 9). The directive states that EU citizens have the right to move freely within the EU as well as to reside for up to three months in another EU country without having to fulfil any requirements (except for a valid identity document or passport) (§4(1), §5(1), §6(1) Directive 2004/38/EC). For stays longer than three months certain criteria have to be met:³ EU citizens must either be working or “have sufficient resources and sickness insurance to ensure that they do not become a burden on the social services of the host Member State during their stay” (Marzocchi, 2017; §7 Directive 2004/38/EC). EU citizens may acquire the right to permanent residence in another EU country without further requirements “after a five-year period of uninterrupted legal residence, provided that an expulsion decision has not been enforced against them” (Marzocchi, 2017; §16(1), §21 Directive 2004/38/EC). Furthermore, article 24 of the directive stipulates a requirement for equal treatment in comparison to ‘natives’ in another EU country, for instance regarding migrants’ involvement in the labour market. Restrictions on stays and the freedom of movement such as the expulsion of EU citizens from other EU countries or bans on staying in another member state are possible. According to the directive, such measures may be taken only based on concerns regarding public policy, public security, or public health (Marzocchi, 2017). The directive also states that the measures must not be “taken on economic grounds, comply with the proportionality principle and...[be] based on personal conduct” (Marzocchi, 2017).

2.2.2. Underlying Rationales

As we have seen, primary law establishes EU citizenship and with it freedom of movement within the EU. It provides such rights, however, under conditions and regulations which are in turn elaborated on in secondary law, i.e., Directive 2004/38/EC. There, we note the importance of economic criteria invoked regarding EU citizens’ freedom of movement. These economic criteria,

and on a broader level the range of rights EU citizenship entails (as well as their preconditions), have been subject to controversy. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has played an important role in defining the ‘content’ of EU citizenship, the rights it entails and its relation to certain (economic) criteria (Riedner, 2017, pp. 99-101). While between the late 1990s and the early 2010s its judgements seemed to pave the way for EU citizenship as ‘social citizenship’ (entailing welfare access among other things) (Buckel, 2013), in recent cases the tide has turned. Against the background of debates on ‘benefit tourism’ (see Jobelius & Stoiciu, 2014), the ECJ has validated national (particularly German) legislation that (increasingly) limits EU citizens’ access to welfare and confirmed it does in fact not contradict EU legislation.

In the case of Elisabeta Dano and her son, the ECJ ruled that the exclusion of “economically inactive” EU citizens without sufficient resources “from entitlement to certain ‘special non-contributory cash benefits’” does not contradict EU legislation insofar as those citizens “do not have a right of residence under Directive 2004/38 in the host Member State” (Case C-333/13 Dano vs. Jobcenter Leipzig, 2014, para. 93). In the case of Nazifa Alimanovic and her family, that possibility of exclusion “from entitlement to certain ‘special non-contributory cash benefits’” was extended to EU citizens who reside in another member state solely for the purpose of finding work (Case C-67/14 Alimanovic vs. Jobcenter Berlin Neukölln, 2015). In the case of Jovanna García-Nieto and her family, the ECJ ruled that EU citizens who are not working may be excluded “from entitlement to certain ‘special non-contributory cash benefits’” during the first three months of their stay in another member state (Case C-299/14 García-Nieto and Others vs. Jobcenter Kreis Recklinghausen, 2016).

In short, the ECJ ruling implies that EU citizens’ freedom of movement is neither automatic nor unconditional, their (equal) access to social rights is contingent on their right of residence, which in turn is linked to economic pre-conditions that are up for review by the respective state agencies (Kötter, 2016, pp. 3–4; Riedner, 2017, p. 101). The result is that access to freedom of movement is contingent on economic criteria (Kötter, 2016, p. 4).

Full EU citizenship rights are available only under economic preconditions, i.e., only “economically active” EU citizens have access to social benefits, while “‘unemployed persons’ or ‘job-seekers [with⁴ or] without reasonable prospects of success’ forfeit their social rights and may upon individual review also lose their right to freedom of movement or even be expelled” (Riedner, 2015, p. 18, author’s translation). In other words, being ‘unproductive’ in the context of EU freedom of movement becomes a punishable offence.⁵

³ It is important to note, however, that EU citizens (and their family members) always have a right of residence in other member states (even if the criteria above aren’t met) unless it has officially been withdrawn in a bureaucratic procedure. Unlike third country nationals, they don’t require a visa or residence permit (Voigt, 2017, p. 9). For a more detailed account of the criteria, see Voigt (2017).

⁴ C-67/14 Jobcenter Berlin Neukölln vs Alimanovic, 2015, paras. 52–58.

⁵ Alberti points out how in the UK even the criteria for retaining worker status become increasingly restrictive (2017, pp. 10–12). She also notes: “A paradoxical situation arises: At the same time as work becomes more precarious, uncertain, temporary, and unable to provide for one’s own social reproduction, access to social protection is made dependent on the capacity to demonstrate a full worker status.” (2017, p. 16).

EU citizenship's limited social substance and the link between freedom of movement and being 'economically active' translates to an economization of citizenship and a precarisation of citizenship rights. This reveals a 'productivity' rationale of mobility regulation within the EU. It shows an attempt to control or 'manage' migration in a way that increases its economic 'usefulness', sanctions 'unproductiveness' and disciplines EU migrants into (precarious) wage labour (Riedner, 2015, p. 18).

In her Munich case study, Riedner illustrates the bureaucratic practice implementing this rationale:

Following the struggles of a family of EU internal migrants in Munich it shows how social institutions...turn into border guards, how the foreigners' office becomes a labour activation agency and how this fosters differential zones of equality and precarisation within the richest city of Germany. (Riedner, 2017, p. 89)

She explains how in social institutions EU citizens' requests for social benefits may trigger investigations into their residence status, turning these institutions into border guards to deter 'unwanted migration', while the foreigners' office redefines its role, becoming "a labour activation agency" (Riedner, 2017, p. 89). Riedner gives an account of a meeting she had with a department chief in the foreigners' office who explained the rationale behind their practice of sending out letters to EU citizens threatening the loss of the right of residence or expulsion. Arguing that from an "aliens law point of view" expulsions rarely "made sense" because EU citizens could almost always return immediately, their interventions were supposed to push EU migrants into work, a strategy that, according to Riedner, seems to prove effective (2017, pp. 103–104).

It is against this background that Riedner and others, such as Alberti (working on the situation in the UK) link EU '*migration management*' to workfarist social and labour market policies.⁶ Alberti argues:

These processes appear instrumental to the 'government of mobility' in Europe..., making migrants more available, disposable, and compliant vis-a-vis their employers. It is the reproduction of a precarious workforce, with no social security cushion, under constant risk of falling into poverty, and pushed to accept lower standards that such regulatory restrictions concur to generate (2017, p. 16, with reference to Leeds Solidarity Network, 2015)

EU citizenship, hence, proves to be in line with the above-mentioned attempts to 'manage' migration in a profitable fashion.

In relation to European migration regimes, two aspects emerge. On one hand, as mentioned, the emergence of EU citizenship has been accompanied by increasing the hierarchy between EU citizens and 'third country nationals', a phenomenon Balibar has called "European Apartheid" (Balibar, 2003). At the same time, hierarchies amongst EU countries have been renewed and intensified, and (thus) a multiplication of statuses within EU citizenship has emerged (Nicolaus, 2014, p. 114). Not only are we witnessing "intensified debate around limitations on freedom of movement for EU citizens that mainly targets Rumanian and Bulgarian citizens, but whose concrete implementation would have decisive consequences for EU internal mobility rights per se" (Kasperek & Tsianos, 2015, p. 5, author's translation). Following the 2007–2008 financial crisis and European austerity politics, pre-existent North-South disparities within the EU have also deepened (Nicolaus, 2014, pp. 114–115). Critical scholars from Italy draw:

Comparisons between the current North-South divide in the EU and the historic roles within the Italian economy, where structurally weak and indebted Southern regions were forced to function as a sales market and a source of cheap labour for the industrialised North. (Nicolaus, 2014, p. 115 with reference to Curcio, 2013; Rossi, 2013, author's translation)

The interplay between racist narratives problematizing certain EU internal migration, EU internal economic and political disparities and a 'productivity'-oriented EU citizenship has produced a *multiplication of borders* and a hierarchisation of spaces within the European Union. Through the lens of *differential inclusion*, we can see a stratification of rights emerging alongside multiplied status positions among EU citizens.⁷ (This also—but not only—becomes apparent in the attempts to 'utilize' the 'new' South-North-migrations.) EU citizenship—much like citizenship in general—is revealed to be a "differentiation machine" (Casas-Cortes et al., 2014, p. 84). It not only amplifies the differences between EU citizens and 'the others', its economic character and the precarisation of rights within EU citizenship also creates stratifications—on a different level—along the lines of EU internal (economic) inequalities, multiplies status positions in the context of labour and migration, and contributes to what I refer to as *EU internal 'migration management'*. Drawing on Thomas H. Marshall, one could argue that citizenship initially accomplishes 'equality', which then becomes the point of departure for new inequalities (Köster-Eiserfunke, Reichhold, & Schwiertz, 2014, p. 182, with reference to Marshall, 1992, pp. 52–54).

⁶ Social and labour market policies "based on the principle of fighting 'welfare dependency' by moving claimants into paid work through the introduction of tougher welfare conditionality and sanctions" (Alberti, 2017, p. 2).

⁷ These reflect the economic and political disparities between member states, citizens' financial situations and the labour market position as well as racist discourses. Alberti points out that EU citizenship is "layered" as certain "post-enlargement transitional measures", for instance, specifically targeted EU 2-citizens and the racialization of some EU citizens also comes into play (2017, p. 5). The question of how racist discourses and economic rationales interact within EU 'migration management' is important and should be addressed in future research.

2.3. Migrant Practices

At the same time, perspectives such as İsin's *acts of citizenship* (2008), which refer to political practices of citizenship beyond formal belonging and recognition, raise the question of migrant practices in the context of EU citizenship. Nicolaus, for instance, considers the increase of EU internal South-to-North migration in the context of the crisis a direct-democratic claim to EU citizens' freedom of movement (2014, p. 116). In this sense, accessing welfare benefits in Germany could also be considered an act of recovery of the social rights that (German-led) austerity politics have increasingly restrained in Southern Europe. However, it would be problematic to reduce migrant practices and struggles to 'civic' acts of rights claiming. Not only would such an idea of citizenship as an overall progressive institution, which becomes increasingly inclusive through (activist) rights claiming, mean losing sight of the concept's inherently exclusive nature (cf. Köster-Eiserfunke et al., 2014, pp. 189–190; Mezzadra, 2015, pp. 133–135). The analysis of EU citizenship shows: "Citizenship is not detached from the prevailing social circumstances but contributes to them" (Köster-Eiserfunke et al., 2014, p. 189, author's translation). If one's perspective focuses on 'civic' acts of rights claiming it will be difficult to fully understand migrant struggles that are not about being included into existing structures, but about challenging them. Those struggles do not necessarily refer to rights or the responsibilities of certain institutions (Köster-Eiserfunke et al., 2014, p. 192), rather they attempt to disrupt oppressive and exploitative structures and the processes that bring them about. The question of migrant practices, thus, has to be raised on a broader level while considering (EU) citizenship as an institutional framework, a repressive opponent and an opportune means all at the same time. Therefore, I will address migrant practices within, through, and against the framework of EU internal '*migration management*' through EU citizenship in the following sections.

3. Resisting 'Migration Management': An Example of EU Migrant Struggles in Berlin

3.1. Autonomy of Migration

In order to underline that migration cannot be reduced to 'objective' economic or political conditions as well as to emphasize the subjective side of migration and "its ungovernable moments of freedom and excess" (Mezzadra, 2016, p.36), Moulrier-Boutang, Mezzadra, and others have developed the concept of *autonomy of migration* (Mezzadra, 2007, p. 180). The idea is to analyse migration not only from the perspective of the institutions and structures, through which it moves, but instead think of it as interacting with them (Bojadžijev & Karakayalı, 2007, p. 210). First, this means acknowledging that migrants and their migration projects (built in the context of transnational spaces and networks) along with their

dreams, hopes and plans attached to them are at the centre of migratory movements (Bojadžijev & Karakayalı, 2007, pp. 210–212). This subjective side of the phenomenon cannot simply be reduced to 'objective' factors such as political or economic circumstances and exceeds attempts to control and regulate it (Mezzadra, 2007, p. 180). This subjectivity is a situated subjectivity. "It is not a given category, but one that develops and changes with the social structures, in which action is embedded. Those structures, however, are not themselves stable, but rather they are vehicles for social contradictions, which are struggled over through and within those structures" (Bojadžijev & Karakayalı, 2007, p. 213). The thesis of autonomy is not meant to romanticize migration or trivialize border regimes. Instead, it points to how we can only understand migration through its interaction with a concrete "*historical conjuncture*" of migration policy:

To speak of the movement of migration and its autonomy, thus, does not mean considering it to be separate or removed from social circumstances. Rather, migrations exist as concrete practices entangled with relations of power and dominance. (Bojadžijev & Karakayalı, 2007, p. 214, author's translation)

Against the background of a series of misconceptions of the notion of *autonomy of migration*, Mezzadra suggests a reformulation of the idea that on one hand emphasizes the link between migration and exploitation while on the other hand puts migrant struggles centre stage in the analysis (Mezzadra, 2007, p. 182 with reference to Bojadžijev, Karakayalı, & Tsianos, 2003). Emphasizing the subjective side of migration also means acknowledging its political dimension and dynamic (Scheel, 2015, pp. 4–5). "Because migrants are the ones who turn *border regimes* into sites of political struggle around the gradual refusal and direct appropriation of mobility and other resources" (Scheel, 2015, p. 5, author's translation).

3.2. Berlin Migrant Strikers

Our focus in this article lies with the 'new' Italian migration to Germany, specifically Berlin, and the conflicts that have arisen in this context. Italian migration to Germany is one example of the renewed increase in EU internal South-to-North migration following the 2007–2008 financial crisis and subsequent austerity politics in (Southern) Europe (see Faraco Blanco, Kraußlach, Montero Lange, & Pfeffer-Hoffmann, 2015, p. 7). The socio-economic and socio-cultural composition of Italian migration to Germany makes it an interesting case to study the logic of EU '*migration management*', especially in the German context and its parallel narratives of 'benefit tourism' and the 'brain gain'. In a recent study, 75,8% of Italian migrants to Germany held a university degree (Kraußlach, Duschl, & Pfeffer-Hoffmann, 2015, p. 65). Yet,

Italians also constitute the fourth largest group of EU migrants receiving social benefits in Germany (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2017). Berlin, in turn, provides an interesting framework regarding the political activism that has emerged in the context of the 'new' South European migration. Over the past years, a number of different political groups of South European migrants have appeared in Berlin's political landscape (see among others 15M Berlin, 2014; Berlin Migrant Strikers, 2017; Oficina Precaria Berlin, 2017). Partly drawing on their political experience of anti-austerity movements in Southern Europe, they address the labour, housing and living conditions of the so-called 'new migrants'. Considering their size and political positions, I do not consider these groups to be representative of South European migrants in Berlin. Rather, I consider them both an expression of and a response to societal contradictions and conflicts between EU 'migration management' and the *autonomy of migration*.

Considering the explorative nature of this study, I decided to draw on semi-structured interviews with EU migrant activists (as experts in the field) for data collection. Through political contacts in the Berlin left, I got in touch with the Berlin Migrant Strikers (BMS), a political group formed in 2014 by Italian activists to address (EU) migrant living and working conditions in Germany. After I presented myself, my political background as well as the research project, five BMS activists, including Giorgio Del Vecchio, agreed to an interview. The interviews were conducted in two different spaces the group was using for its political activities at the time. For the analysis (Mayring, 2015) of the collected data, I also drew on information gathered during participant observation of the BMS' meetings. For this article, Giorgio Del Vecchio offered further insight into the group's political activities.

The BMS' demographic and social composition is heterogeneous. Most activists are between the ages of 25 and 35. Some of them have lived in Berlin for years; others are recent arrivals to the city. Regarding the group's socio-economic composition, Anna,⁸ one of the activists, explains:

We have...a spectrum that ranges...from people who...are here to study or for research purposes, to people who have university degrees, but work in unrelated jobs or receive social benefits, to people who have no formal qualifications and find themselves in a similar situation as the previous group.

Politically, the BMS see themselves as part of an anti-capitalist left. Due to the diversity of their political affiliations in Italy, however, they emphasize their anti-dogmatic political practice.

⁸ The interviewees' names are anonymised.

⁹ I will give an account of the BMS' political practices and goals as per the activists' description in order to illustrate the conflicts that arise around EU 'migration management'. The data, however, does not allow for an evaluation of their effectiveness or scope.

¹⁰ Germany's 'economic success' has become a discursive feature in Italian politics and is used to legitimize labour market or social reforms that cut back labour rights or social benefits.

3.2.1. Information Politics, Self-Help and Organisation of Migrant Labour

The BMS' political activity is informed by their analysis of the specificity of EU migrant lives in Berlin. Much like the author of—and contributor(s) to—this article, they draw on and contribute to critical migration theory, and are thus part of an exchange between academic and activist knowledge (Hutta, Laister, zur Nieden & Hess, 2013). Against this background and their experience on the ground, they consider migrant labour particularly vulnerable to precarious work, low pay and processes of de-qualification, and point out the importance of (precarious) migrant labour within the German economy. Furthermore, they underscore the role the German welfare state and its institutions play in making EU migrant labour increasingly precarious (see above). As described above, the dynamic of increasing access restrictions (that never amounts to a complete exclusion, however, cf. *differential inclusion*) proves to be an instrument in the 'management' of EU migrant labour. Faced with these circumstances, the BMS have adapted three common political strategies to their situation: *information politics*, *self-help* structures and *organization* of migrant labour.⁹

Information politics initially includes self-education concerning labour market dynamics, labour rights and the German welfare system. In the second step, the activists distribute said information by producing informational material as well as by organising events and campaigns targeted towards other migrant workers and the wider public. This (counter)information, on one hand, is supposed to tackle the problem of misinformation or lack of information (regarding German bureaucracy, labour market dynamics as well as rights and possibilities for resistance). According to the activists, many migrants encounter such misinformation which renders them particularly vulnerable to bureaucratic arbitrariness and problematic working conditions. On the other hand, BMS activists view it as a sort of counter-propaganda against reactionary narratives such as that of 'benefit tourism' in Germany or the 'myth' of the '*modello tedesco*' in Italy.¹⁰ The third element of their information politics, the group's social counselling service for Italian migrants, has a number of different functions. First, according to the activists, the users of the group's counselling service provide them with information regarding new strategies of their employers and German bureaucracy. Second, the users receive information about their rights and possible ways of resisting the situations they face, which, third, according to the activists, makes the counselling service an instrument of politicisation.

The BMS' second main strategy is what I have called *self-help*. Based on their experience of individual hardship, they built a collective support net, where resources

are collectivised and made accessible to all. This includes sharing living spaces, work opportunities and organising fundraisers to help group members in financial trouble. According to the activists, it is an attempt to address the problems arising from precarious work and restricted access to social welfare in a collective and solidary manner.

The group's third main strategy is about *organising migrant labour*. Against the background of a lack of union activity in the sectors where migrants frequently work, the BMS support migrant labour struggles through information campaigns as well as active participation in strike pickets and demonstrations. Building on these experiences, they formed a network with other migrant activist groups that specifically supports migrant labour struggles in Berlin.

3.2.2. Transnational Struggles and Hierarchical Spaces

The activists consider the BMS to be a transnational migrant self-organisation that builds on the political potential of (EU) migrants as political subjects emerging from their specific material conditions of life. To them, it is the collective political antithesis to the individualising tendencies of precarious migrant labour and the conforming individualist 'I can do this'-mentalities. They consider their position as EU migrants to be a social perspective, from which they analyse societal structures and dynamics, actively intervene in those structures and dynamics as well as relate to other groups.

A common typology of "migrants' transnational political practices" is Østergaard-Nielsen's (2003) distinction between "immigrant politics" and "homeland politics". She defines the former as "the political activities that migrants or refugees undertake to better their situation in the receiving country", while the latter refers to "migrants' and refugees' political activities pertaining to the domestic or foreign policy of the homeland" (2003, p. 762). While the BMS' political activity addresses both the Italian and the German context, it does so in a way that exceeds those definitions. They address these contexts as interrelated and interacting within economic and political power structures, such as in the case of European austerity politics. Their status as Italian migrants in Germany relates to the role of Germany in Italian austerity politics. The framework, which binds the BMS' various contexts of action and reference, is the EU as a hierarchically structured space, which they navigate through EU citizenship. Their political activity has a transnational dimension which takes the form of a counterpart to the inter- and supranational power structures that they face.

The activists' view on their presence in Germany as well as their political activity in the country is twofold. On one hand, they consider themselves an expression of the crisis and austerity politics in Southern Europe, hence, an expression of existing power relations. On the other hand, they argue, that precisely due to the economic role of migrant labour in Germany, they have the potential to disrupt said power relations.

Our analysis of the BMS' political activities from the perspective of *autonomy of migration* reveals two aspects. In the context of EU '*migration management*', EU citizenship constitutes an institutional framework, a repressive opponent, and an opportune means to their struggles all at the same time. '*Migration management*' through EU citizenship structures their lives in Germany and frames their political project. The latter draws on the instruments at hand, but in a misappropriating way; BMS activists use EU citizens' freedom of movement not (only) in order to find work in Germany, but also to vehemently claim the social rights that they are increasingly denied both in Italy and by German as well as EU legislation. They point to fragments of a social component of EU citizenship, demand those fragments and go beyond them until they find themselves outside its 'productivity' rationale. The BMS' activism is, thus, partly located in between Isin's *active* and *activist citizenship* because their starting point is the precarity of the rights granted to them, but their demands move beyond those rights. However, the notion of citizenship from below does not do justice to their kind of political activity. They do not (just) want to claim a series of rights from a specific state or the EU. Their aim is that of disrupting capitalist rationales beyond the notion of rights. Against this background, the transnational dimension of their political activity becomes important. The BMS activists' use of EU freedom of movement generates potential for a transnationalisation of South European anti-austerity movements which could re-politicise capital-labour contradictions in the economic and political centre of Europe. Migrant struggles, thus, create the possibility of a "*migration of struggles*" (Casas-Cortes et al., 2014, p. 83).

If you create a part of Europe around you that suffers from austerity politics, welfare cuts, unemployment and labour reforms, which destroy workers' rights, you will face a migration that either becomes functional to you, that becomes 'productive', or that becomes a problem. (Anna, 2016)

4. Conclusion

In this article, I have tried to trace struggles around EU internal mobility as they emerge in the political activity of Italian migrants in Berlin. Looking at South-to-North migration following the 2007–2008 financial crisis and European austerity politics, I analysed the dynamics between EU internal '*migration management*' and EU migrant struggles in Berlin.

Drawing on critical migration research, I showed how EU citizenship provides the framework for an EU internal '*migration management*' that on one hand cements the disparities between EU citizens and 'the rest', while on the other hand introduces and valorises differences amongst EU citizens. In the context of 'economic' EU citizenship, EU internal freedom of movement (for EU citizens) is hinged on a diktat of 'productivity' and EU citi-

zenship is, hence, almost ‘free’ of ‘social substance’. This specific dynamic of ‘*migration management*’ amplifies the pre-existing tendency of migrant labour to be precarious. In the context of increasing economic and political disparities emerging from the 2007–2008 financial crisis and European austerity politics, this instrument develops a particular efficacy.

The emergence of (South European) migrant activist groups in Germany, hints at another force at play. In their demands for social rights and better working conditions, migrant activists show they will not allow themselves to be easily ‘managed’ into precarious ‘productivity’. In the face of precarious work and increasingly restricted access to German welfare systems, the BMS make use of information politics, self-help, and organisation of migrant labour in order to strengthen migrant resistance and to intervene discursively. Their political organising is informed by theoretical concepts and reveals links between academia and activism. They consider their organisation a transnational migrant self-organisation that builds on the political potential of EU migrants as political subjects emerging from their specific material living conditions. My analysis is that the transnational dimension of their political activity mirrors the inter- and supranational power structures, which they navigate through EU citizenship. Along these lines, the BMS consider their presence and political activity in Germany both to be an expression of these power structures and to have the potential to disrupt them. We find that their political project makes use of the instruments at their disposal, but in a misappropriating way, which goes beyond their intended scope. From the perspective of the *autonomy of migration*, BMS activists use a ‘productivity’-oriented EU citizenship in subversive ways. Their political struggles and the way they relate to South European anti-austerity movements point to the possibility of migrant struggles turning into a ‘*migration of struggles*’.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Giorgio Del Vecchio for his insights and his contribution to this article. Besides him, Celia Bouali wishes to thank all the *Berlin Migrant Strikers*, especially the interview partners, for their willingness to discuss their political work with her. Their analysis of the issue at hand was an immense contribution to this article. She would also like to thank Folashade Ajayi as well as Ulrike Hamann, Alessandro D’Arcangeli, Susanne Schultz, Thomas Schmid, Stefania Animento, Hêlîn Demirkol, Bafta Sarbo, Henrik Lebuhn, Mona Motakef, Kerima Bouali and Manfred Amedick for interesting discussions that greatly contributed to the research, their insights and comments on the manuscript and their support in general. The reviewers’ and editors’ comments were also greatly appreciated.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author



Celia Bouali is currently finishing her MA in social sciences at Humboldt University Berlin, where she also works as a student assistant at the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research (BIM). In 2017, she won the university's Humboldt Award for her BA thesis on political struggles of South European migrants in Berlin in the context of EU 'migration management'. Her research interests focus on issues around labour, migration and racism.

Article

The Politics of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: A Question of Inclusion and Exclusion through Citizenship

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Submitted: 22 December 2017 | Accepted: 12 March 2018 | Published: 29 March 2018

Abstract

Turkey began to receive refugees from Syria in 2011 and has since become the country hosting the highest number of refugees, with more than 3.5 million Syrians and half a million people of other nationalities, mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. An important turning point regarding the legal status of Syrian refugees has come with recent amendments to the Turkish citizenship law. Based on ongoing academic debates on integration and citizenship, this article will explore these two concepts in the case of Syrian refugees in Turkey. We will argue that the shift in the Turkish citizenship law is a direct outcome of recent migration flows. We further argue that the citizenship option is used both as a reward for skilled migrants with economic and cultural capital and as a tool to integrate the rest of the Syrians. It also reflects other social, political and demographic concerns of the Turkish government. Using our recent ethnographic study with Syrians and local populations in two main refugee hosting cities in Turkey, Istanbul and Gaziantep, we will locate the successes and weaknesses of this strategy by exemplifying the views of Syrian refugees on gaining Turkish citizenship and the reactions of Turkish nationals.

Keywords

citizenship; exclusion; inclusion; integration; refugees; Syrians; Turkey

Issue

This article is part of the issue “The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies”, edited by Ulrike Hamann and Gökçe Yurdakul (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany).

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1. Introduction

In 2011, Turkey started to receive refugees from Syria fleeing the eruption of violence. Since then, the civil war has escalated in Syria, and Turkey has become the country hosting the highest number of refugees in the world. According to the Directorate General of Migration Management of Turkey (DGMM), the number of Syrian refugees under temporary protection settled in Turkey stands at more than 3.5 million as of February 2018.¹ Obviously, there are political, economic, de-

mographic and socio-cultural implications of this mass movement for the wider society and for the refugees themselves. Yet, two important factors are usually overlooked in these flows and missing in mere statistics available on Syrian refugees. The first one is about the diversity of the Syrian population in Turkey, since they come from different socio-economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The second point has to do with their legal status. Turkey adopted a new Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) in 2013 (Law No. 6458) and additional legislation in 2014 that

¹ Excluding the number of unregistered and those living with residence permits, the number of Syrian refugees under temporary protection in Turkey reached 3,531,416 as of February 2018. The majority of Syrians live in urban centers and only 8% live in camps. See recent statistics on the demographics of Syrians under temporary protection in cities and camps at DGMM (2018).

changed their legal status from temporary guests to those under temporary protection.²

Although many Syrians enjoy certain rights under the temporary protection regime, they are still not considered to be “refugees” due to Turkey’s retention of the geographical limitation clause in the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees.³ There are also thousands of Syrians with residence permits without temporary protection status and an unknown number of Syrian irregular migrants.⁴ Their “liminal” situation and temporary status not only automatically limit their opportunities, like permanent settlement in Turkey, but also hinder the political will to put proper integration regimes in place at the national level even after seven years.

An important turning point regarding the legal status of Syrian refugees was the amendment to the citizenship law and the surrounding heated debates on the naturalization of Syrians. As mentioned earlier, Turkey has already provided “temporary protection” to Syrian refugees, which somewhat eased their access to certain rights, including access to public healthcare, education of children, and participation in labor markets via the new law on work permits. The idea of granting Turkish citizenship to Syrians who have found refuge in Turkey was first voiced in 2016 by President Erdoğan in Kilis, a city near the border with Syria with pre-existing close kin ties between Syrians and Turkish nationals (*Milliyet*, 2016). Kilis is an interesting case study to consider, as the number of Syrian refugees has gradually exceeded the number of local inhabitants and the city has *de facto* become a buffer zone between Syria and Turkey. Such public announcements triggered a debate partly due to the lack of legal status of Syrians as “refugees” or as “permanent residents/denizens” in the first place and partly because they fueled nationalist fears that the temporariness of Syrians’ stay would be replaced with permanence (Koser Akcapar, 2018). In order to mitigate the political backlash and public outrage, government officials clarified that granting citizenship to Syrians would require they meet exceptional criteria based on high skill and higher education levels of applicants.⁵

Considering the intricate relationship between integration and citizenship in the case of refugees, this article specifically explores the changing concept of citizenship in Turkey over the years, but especially after the arrival of Syrian refugees, and evaluates the conditions and rationale for extending Turkish citizenship to Syrians. In exploring the linkage between integration and citizenship in the case of Syrian refugees in Turkey, this article exam-

ines the following questions: Why has the Turkish government changed its long-standing citizenship model based on *jus sanguinis* (descent or blood principle)? What factors play crucial roles in the changing nature of citizenship in the Turkish case? What does gaining Turkish citizenship mean for Syrian refugees? How is gaining Turkish citizenship interlinked with the integration of Syrian refugees? We argue that the main reasons for this shift in citizenship policy are a direct outcome of mass migration, particularly Syrian refugee flows. Although Turkish citizenship law seems to have become more inclusive through the amendment, we also argue that the law remains selective, targeting Syrians with cultural and economic capital as well as mostly those coming from a Sunni background. Based on the interrelated citizenship and integration concepts in migration literature and the changing Turkish citizenship regime, we begin the article by setting out a theoretical framework before outlining the research methods implemented for this study. Using interview data, we then examine the life experiences of Syrian refugees in two main cities, Istanbul and Gaziantep, and their views on gaining citizenship in Turkey. As this protracted and mostly urban refugee problem has also generated problems and tensions with the local populations, we will also discuss public reactions towards Syrians’ citizenship acquisition. The final section evaluates the government policies and concludes with recommendations.

2. Theoretical Framework: Integration and Path to Citizenship of Refugee Populations

The terms “citizenship” and “integration” have been used to refer to different stages of immigrants’ settlement in the academic literature. Citizenship expresses different things to many people (Joppke, 2007, p. 37) and its meaning varies among nation-states, migrants and refugees. While for some scholars, citizenship represents the capstone of integration processes (Ager & Strang, 2008), for others it is an important means to secure full inclusion in the receiving society (Massey & Bartley, 2005). In general, it is defined as:

A formal legal status that links individuals to a state or another established polity (such as the European Union or a federal province), a bundle of legal rights and duties associated with the status, including civil liberties, rights to democratic representation, and social rights to education, health care, and

² On 22 October 2014, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Turkey issued a regulation on temporary protection. The law lists six types of residence permits: short-term, long-term, family, student, humanitarian, and victims of trafficking. The LFIP also regulates their access to health, education, social assistance and the labor market. The law was further amended in 2016.

³ Turkey is a signatory of the Geneva Convention on Refugees, but it is one of the few countries retaining the geographical limitation clause lifted in 1967, which is tied to the long-stalled full membership negotiations between Turkey and the EU and the prevalent fear that Turkey will be given the duty of safeguarding the external borders of the EU with no or little prospects for international burden-sharing. Although people coming from outside Europe cannot be given refugee status in Turkey because of political concerns, we have used the term refugee throughout the article.

⁴ The DGMM reports that there are 65,000 Syrians staying in Turkey with residence permits. Although the number of unregistered Syrians in Turkey is unknown, the number of Syrians voluntarily leaving Turkey for Syria via the border gates suggests high numbers (interview with UNHCR official in Gaziantep, Karkamış border gate).

⁵ See *Sözcü* daily dated 6 July 2017: <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/gundem/yildirimdan-suriyeliler-mesaji-1921618/>

protection from poverty risks, a set of responsibilities, virtues, and practices that support democratic self-government and a collective identity that can be shared across distinctions of class, race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, or way of life. (Bauböck, 2008, p. 3)

It basically refers to who is included or excluded in any given society in terms of civil, political or economic rights (Hammar, 1990).

In this day and age, different practices of citizenship highlight the changing nature of citizenship globally. According to Gardner's "new citizenship model," the concept of citizenship has been divorced from that of nationality (quoted in Kibreab, 2003, pp. 44–45). Similarly, Kymlicka (2003, p. 195) notes that while the idea of "national citizenship" is becoming obsolete, there is a new understanding of citizenship that demands rights in return for responsibilities. The traditional understanding of citizenship, which refers to a unitary status highlighting a strong sense of belonging to a single nation-state, is changing due to the emergence of a global economy, the use of new information technologies, free movement of capital and goods, the development of supra-national institutions, universal norms of governance including human rights and democracy, and cross-cultural awareness as byproducts of the process of globalization (Castles & Davidson, 2000). This is especially evident with the increase in cross-border political, economic, social and cultural relationships of individuals. Reforms of citizenship law, paving the way for a dual citizenship option, address the issues exacerbated by globalization and increasing transnationalism and are currently linked with the challenges facing the nation-state model at the end of twentieth century (Castles & Davidson, 2000). Soysal calls this understanding of citizenship "post-national citizenship" and argues that "the state is no longer an autonomous and independent organization closed over a nationally defined population" (1994, pp. 163–164). Instead, what we have is a system of constitutionally interconnected states with a multiplicity of memberships. Soysal's model of "post-national citizenship" is based on universal human rights, which highlights the fact that access to rights is no longer limited by a unitary state-bound citizenship status but instead locates citizenship and its practices in transnational understandings that span the borders of nation-states.

"Transnational citizenship" has been popularized in the literature to describe a concept of citizenship that highlights the cross-border activities of individuals. It can be summarized as "a triangular relationship between individuals and two or more independent states in which these individuals are simultaneously assigned membership status and membership-based rights or obligations" (Bauböck, 2007, p. 2395). This conceptualization highlights that changes in rights to dual citizenship and institutional transformations of membership and legal rights have occurred due to migration, globalization, mobility and diversity. Taking the case of Turkish immi-

grants living in Germany, Kaya's (2012) research illustrates that German-Turks construct transnational spaces where they meet their political, economic, social and cultural needs and perform citizenship practices that cross the borders of sending and receiving countries. These new conceptualizations of citizenship, including "post-national citizenship," "dual citizenship" and "transnational citizenship," express the changing nature of belonging and role of nation-states in the practices of citizenship. As the number of international migrants increases, the number of dual citizens and the countries allowing dual citizenship also increases.

It is important to note that the meaning of citizenship differs among various types of migrants. For refugees, for instance, acquiring citizenship is more about human security, gaining a higher status in the receiving society and having access to more rights. As pointed out by Kibreab, "non-nationals, particularly refugees, are denied many of the rights enjoyed by nationals and are consequently considered as 'other,' removed from the political, social, economic and cultural life of host societies" (2003, p. 47). Therefore, citizenship for refugees is associated with safety and securing a better future (Stewart & Mulvey, 2014, p. 1033).

In traditional immigration and refugee-hosting countries, citizenship access among refugees has long been discussed in relation to their allegiance or as a facilitating factor in integration processes. Similar to citizenship, the concept of integration is also a controversial topic since "there is no single generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration" (Castles, Korac, Vasta, & Vertovec, 2002, p. 112). At a minimum, the concept of integration embodies certain rights and adjustments of refugees (Strang & Ager, 2010). Similarly, gaining citizenship can be regarded as a fundamental part of refugee integration, as it represents one of the key structural factors of refugee integration, i.e., access to rights. Therefore, the path to citizenship for refugees is considered one of the main stepping stones towards integration (Ager & Strang, 2004, 2008). Ager and Strang (2008) proposed a comprehensive approach to integration by focusing on access to health services, labor markets and education as well as the willingness of migrants and refugees to be part of the receiving society. The final stage of integration process is the acquisition of citizenship, usually seen as a "reward" from a nation-state to integrated refugees. However, the relationship between refugee integration and citizenship is complex and remains contested (Koska, 2015; Smyth, Stewart, & Da Lomba, 2010; Stewart & Mulvey, 2014).

Citizenship and integration are indeed interrelated concepts and their intricate relationship is not only influenced by government policies, but also has an impact on many political, economic and socio-cultural aspects of a society. What is usually missing in these debates are the refugees' decisions in response to a given citizenship opportunity. In analyzing the role of citizenship in the integration processes of refugees, two dimensions of the con-

cept of citizenship should be taken into account. The first highlights the legal status that regulates one's membership in a state and the rights associated with this membership that are determined by governmental authority. The other is related to the sense of identity and belonging that members of a particular polity associate with the new citizenship status (Koska, 2015). It is important to recognize that refugees are not passive objects of such legal structures, but rather active agents who make choices between available legal structures (Turton, 2003, quoted in Koska, 2015). For refugees, gaining citizenship mostly means regaining freedom and mobility, having the ability to use the rights that come with this legal status, and gaining access to power structures by ensuring their inclusion in a host society in which they feel safe and secure (cf. Bloch, 2000; Morrell, 2009; Nunn, McMichael, Gifford, & Correa-Velez, 2016; Vertovec, 2006). As argued by Kibreab (2003), access to citizenship status revolves around refugees' decision whether to stay in the receiving country or not. Whether citizenship is understood as the final stage of integration processes or forms the basis of integration by nation-states, for refugees, it simply refers to safety, stability and acceptance by the members of receiving society.

For Syrians, the acquisition of Turkish citizenship would provide a way to reach a safe legal status and stability, as they are under "temporary" protection and are not even legally accepted as refugees. They are usually facing "liminality"⁶ along with a myriad of problems such as racism, discrimination, economic and social problems. Consequently, the acquisition of Turkish citizenship is important for many Syrians, not only to reach safety and attain "ontological security" (Giddens, 1991), but also to have access to more legal employment opportunities and be accepted by the wider society, thereby making it possible to abandon their "liminal" state. In our study, we realized that Syrian refugees also frequently opt for dual citizenship or transnational citizenship, mainly to gain rights and retain privileges in both contexts. The next section will summarize the recent changes in the Turkish citizenship regime and government policies. It also underlines the main reasons why citizenship is used as a reward for skilled and educated individuals, but also serves as an essential tool towards integration, especially in the case of Syrians.

3. The Changing Turkish Citizenship Regime

Apart from refugees' attitudes towards citizenship, increasing migration flows and life in heterogeneous societies have transformed nation-states and forced them to replace earlier fixed concepts of citizenship with more flexible re-definitions. Turkey is no exception. Recently, Turkish authorities have duly accepted that Turkey has

become a destination country for migrants. With the large number of refugees and migrants in its territory, this has become even more evident after the arrival of Syrians. In fact, Turkey started to make changes and reforms in migration policies not only to address pressing issues resulting from the large number of flows over the course of the past seven years, but also for the sake of the EU Accession Process since the early 2000s. Other than laws specifically addressing asylum issues (i.e., the LFIP adopted in 2013 (Law No. 6458) and the Regulation on Temporary Protection adopted in 2014), two laws are directly linked with migration flows. The first one is the law on work permits for foreigners (No. 4817), which was put into effect in 2003. The law mainly addresses the growing number of irregular and circular economic migrants working in the informal sector who were attracted by Turkey's favorable economic position within the region. Wage differentials compared to their countries of origin is another factor in attracting labor migrants from diverse locations, including Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and South Asia. Obviously, not only labor migrants but also asylum seekers need to work to make ends meet. Legal changes continued with the enactment of the International Labor Force (Law No. 6735), which became the primary legislation for foreign labor and replaced the abrogated Law No. 4817 as of 13 August 2016. The purpose of the Law was to determine and monitor a policy regarding the international labor force and to extend work permits according to certain criteria. The current legal framework includes both employer-led and points-based approaches, with an emphasis on selective labor migration. The introduction of the Turquoise Card is an indication of this emphasis; it enables access to permanent work permits for those considered of strategic importance, determined mainly by a high educational level, professional experience, and investments in Turkey. It also extends residence permits for the spouse and children of holders of Turquoise Cards. Because of this law, the LFIP was amended on 29 October 2016 as well, with regard to residence and work permits given to foreign students.⁷

The second significant recent legal change is to the Turkish Citizenship Law. Turkish citizenship practice was primarily based on the *jus sanguinis* principle, as determined under the Citizenship Law dated 1928 (No. 1312), Law on Settlement (dated 1934, No. 2510), and Citizenship Law dated 1964 (No. 403). Under this principle, descent (Turkish ethnicity) and heritage (Sunni Muslims) play an important role in Turkish citizenship (Kirişçi, 2000). In an effort to address increasing trends in irregular migration, trafficking and fake intermarriages, Turkey revised its citizenship laws in 2003 by creating a naturalization option for foreign nationals who meet certain criteria. According to the Citizenship Law (No. 5901), marrying a Turkish citizen made it possible for both men and

⁶ Liminality is a term coined by Van Gennep (1908) in analyzing rites of passage and was later elaborated on by Turner (1974). The liminal state of Syrian refugees refers to the phase between separation (leaving Syria behind) and reincorporation (resettlement in a third country and/or acceptance in Turkey). Their liminality also results from the temporary status given to Syrians in Turkey and it leaves them with a feeling of being neither here nor there.

⁷ For amendments to the LFIP see DGMM (2016).

women to acquire citizenship after three years of marriage. In 2009, further changes were adopted, such as providing protection for stateless children if they are unable to acquire their parents' citizenship (No. 5901, Article 11: 1),⁸ citizenship under exceptional circumstances (Article 14: b), naturalization for adults if stateless and/or after five years of uninterrupted residence in Turkey and/or in possession of immovable property in Turkey, making investments in Turkey and transferring their work place to Turkey (Article 15 (a)(b)(c) respectively), pending approval from the Council of Ministers (Article 21).⁹ These series of amendments *de facto* changed the citizenship concept from one solely based on Turkish descent, thus bringing Turkey more in line with immigration countries of the world. Whilst opening pathways to regular migration, the Turkish citizenship law specifically denies citizenship to refugees and asylum seekers as well as those staying in Turkey illegally. Refugees in Turkey are generally seen as temporary guests who should return to their countries of origin whenever the reasons for displacement cease to exist.

More recently, on December 12, 2016, another amendment to the Turkish citizenship law was introduced and accepted by the Council of Ministers and signed by the President (Decision number: 2016/9601). First of all, exceptional citizenship criteria were described in detail under Article 12 (paragraph 1b). These are: 1) making a capital investment of at least two million USD in Turkey; 2) purchasing immovable property worth at least one million USD; 3) securing employment for at least 100 workers; 4) having at least three million USD or equivalent deposits in Turkish banks, provided there are no withdrawals for at least three years; and 5) keeping government bonds and bills equaling at least three million USD for three years. Other than the investment and capital criteria, exceptional citizenship acquisition will be made available to those who stay in the country legally and have already contributed and/or have the potential to contribute to the Turkish society in the fields of science, economy, social life, sports, culture and arts. In line with the changes, it seems apparent that Turkey wants to attract more migrants with money and financial capacity by offering them the chance to be naturalized.

According to a new report on Syrian refugees in Turkey, published by the Turkish Parliament's Refugee Rights Sub-commission, more than 30,000 Syrian nationals had been granted citizenship in Turkey as of 2017 (Migration and Integration Report, 2018).¹⁰ Since the majority of Syrians live in Istanbul, almost 80% of all Syrians

who gained Turkish citizenship recently also reside in Istanbul. Another interesting point in this process is that the government does not take applications at this point for Turkish citizenship, but determines who could be naturalized and gets in touch with them directly by calling them for interviews. Before the individual interviews, data obtained from the Health Ministry, Ministry of Education, Higher Education Board, Ministry of Labor and Social Security, and DGGM are evaluated and analyzed based on the following criteria: 1) Entering Turkey legally; 2) Staying under temporary protection and/or with a valid residence permit; 3) Having higher education—an undergraduate degree or above; 4) Having a profession; and 5) Not being involved in any criminal activity.¹¹ Although a good command of Turkish language by candidates is valued, it is not considered a *sine qua non* condition. In line with the criteria of granting Turkish citizenship, the initial evaluation process is carried out in conjunction with the Department of Immigration and Directorates of Population and Citizenship Affairs. Following the evaluation process, interviews with prospective candidates take place. For accepted cases, forms are submitted to the Council of Ministers for final approval.¹²

It is apparent that offering Turkish citizenship to Syrians has come with the change in policies and an understanding that they are no longer “guests,” accepting that most of them are going to stay in Turkey either long-term or permanently. Therefore, we can say that the shift in the Turkish citizenship law is a direct outcome of recent migration flows. Although it might initially seem that the top-down decision to grant Turkish citizenship to Syrians was a simple political move by the governing elite, it did not happen in a political vacuum only, but depended heavily on social, economic and demographic factors. As is, the Turkish citizenship regime can be regarded as a continuation of the age-old policy, as the law still jealously guards criteria of ethnic descent and similar culture. The Syrians in Turkey who are mostly Sunni Muslims are considered “proper” migrants to be accepted because of their similar religious background. Moreover, almost one-third of Syrians already naturalized are reportedly either of Turkish descent, like Turkmen Syrians, or married to Turkish nationals (Sputniknews, 2018). Yet, other newly introduced criteria, such as having cultural and economic capital, are in line with the demands of the global economy and selective migration policies. Following the citizenship model of many countries in the global North, like Canada and the United States, by giving priority to the skilled and educated, Turkey not only

⁸ See Howard (2017) for a detailed discussion on statelessness in Syrian refugee children.

⁹ These changes were put into effect as of 6 April 2010 after publication in the Official Gazette (Decision No. 2010/139) numbered 27544.

¹⁰ The number of Syrians who acquired Turkish citizenship could be as high as 40,000 by the end of 2017 and is expected to eventually include 300,000 Syrians (interview with senior DGMM official on 7 December 2017). There are also other reports stating that between 2011 and 2016, 7,827 Syrians and 1,587 Iraqis obtained Turkish citizenship. See Turkish Interior Ministry's statement at Ministry of Interior (2017). According to an earlier public statement by the Directorate General on Population and Citizenship, the number of Syrians who earned Turkish citizenship between 2008 and 2013 was 3,577 while the number of Syrians who obtained Turkish citizenship through marriage to Turkish nationals by gender distribution was 839 men and 1,704 women.

¹¹ According to the DGMM and Turkish National Security, the number of Syrians involved in criminal activities in Turkey is as low as 1.5%.

¹² Interview with a senior DGMM official on 7 December 2017.

seeks greater acceptance by local populations of naturalized Syrians, but also hopes to meet domestic demand for skilled labor. If given proper jobs, the out-migration pressures on the remaining skilled Syrians will also be limited compared to previous years and can be utilized for the long-term benefit of the country in ways such as doing business with Syria and exerting soft power. Moreover, while giving citizenship to skilled and educated Syrians, Turkey displays its willingness to engage them in the integration processes of unskilled and uneducated Syrians. Demographic concerns regarding the shrinking population of Turkey is another factor. Because of the declining birthrates in Turkey, the country needs a young population. Currently, the demographic trends of Syrians in Turkey clearly suggest a young and dynamic population with 300 new babies born every day. Therefore, in the Turkish case, citizenship is used both as a reward for skilled individuals with economic and cultural capital and as a tool for the integration of other Syrians. It also demonstrates the other social, political and demographic concerns of the Turkish government.

4. Research Methods

The findings presented in this article are based on fieldwork carried out in Istanbul and Gaziantep from January 2016 to December 2017, funded primarily by Koç University College of Social Sciences and Humanities. These two cities were selected for methodological reasons, as each city hosts large populations of Syrians and have historical experience with integrating migrants. We conducted in-depth interviews with a total of 45 Syrian refugees, including those who had already acquired Turkish citizenship. Open-ended questionnaires were designed to enable the respondents to tell their stories in their own words, focusing primarily on their migration trajectories, experiences in Turkey, near-future plans and their thoughts about Turkish citizenship. We used qualitative content analysis to identify a set of common themes from the narratives and then employed a thematic coding system, which helped to create analytical categories. While we interviewed only one member of the household, in some cases group discussions and focus group interviews with Syrian women aged 18–45 and young gay men aged 18–27 enriched the interview data. The interviews were conducted in public places, such as cafes and restaurants, or other meeting points like NGO offices, workplaces and private homes. The length of stay of Syrian respondents in Turkey varied; while some migrated a year ago, others have been living in Istanbul and/or Gaziantep for more than four years. While the majority came to Turkey directly from Syria, others came after living in Lebanon or Egypt. Secondary migration within Turkey, especially to Istanbul, was also prevalent among the respondent group despite the restrictions imposed. Although our respondent group can-

not be representative of the entire Syrian refugee population living in urban centers in Turkey, we made an effort to choose people with different profiles based on gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and religion. The majority of Syrians interviewed were under temporary protection but there were also others who were staying in the country on residence permits. During the in-depth interviews, we worked closely with an interpreter who translated from Arabic to Turkish. We also conducted face-to-face interviews with 70 Turkish citizens to gauge their perceptions of Syrians' acquiring Turkish citizenship. Ethical approval for the project was gained via the university's ethics committee; consent forms were circulated to all participants before starting the interview process. Other than Syrian and Turkish respondents, we conducted interviews with some of the local (Syrian and Turkish) civil society actors working with Syrian populations as well as government officials from municipalities in Gaziantep and Istanbul and at the DGMM headquarters in Ankara.

5. The Views of Syrians Regarding Citizenship in Turkey and Reactions by Local Populations

The majority of Syrian refugees in Turkey experience limited access to proper accommodations and jobs and face problems of social and economic instability. Access to formal employment is often problematic. In January 2016, Turkey issued a new regulation allowing registered Syrian refugees, including skilled workers, to apply for work permits. Yet the number of Syrians with formal work permits remains limited even to this day. There are also further limitations on hiring Syrians: the number of Syrians employed by Turkish companies cannot exceed 10% of the total labor force and Syrians should have been in possession of Turkish identification documents for at least six months.¹³ For skilled and highly educated Syrians, deskilling and underemployment are common problems in Turkey (see Erdoğan, 2014, pp. 29–30; Sunata, 2017, pp. 5–6). Bloch (2004) argues that temporariness exacerbates the problems of refugees' ability to access resources, especially in the labor market, and constructs an obstacle to realizing longer term goals. Emphasizing that the need to find proper employment for skilled people should be a government priority instead of granting citizenship, one respondent underlines that job insecurity is the main reason for the departure of educated Syrians from Turkey:

I hope educated Syrians do not leave Turkey anymore. 5,000 Syrian doctors went to Germany last year alone. Turkey needs doctors and engineers but educated people cannot work in Turkey. In Germany, they start working immediately. Turkey should offer Syrians jobs, not citizenship. (Sunni-Arab, 61, male, Gaziantep)

¹³ Turkish Ministry of Labor and Social Security data indicates that only 4,019 Syrian refugees were granted work permits in 2015. The numbers slightly increased in 2016 reaching 13,298. See Ministry of Labor and Social Security (2015) and Al Jazeera (2016).

Since 93% of all refugees and asylum seekers live in urban centers or semi-urban areas in Turkey,¹⁴ it literally means that in everyday life Syrian and Turkish nationals are in close contact with each other, either in the poor neighborhoods where they reside or in the workplace. While there are immediate benefits to living in cities—support of kinship networks, easier access to informal labor markets, healthcare, aid and cash assistance provided by international organizations and local civil society actors—there is also growing resentment, overt and covert racism, exclusion and social problems in these urban areas. Turkish public opinion and the reactions of local people towards Syrian refugees show similarities to popular xenophobic discourses about migrants in most countries, such as “they will take our jobs,” “the crime rate has increased,” and “they will deplete our resources” (cf. Deniz, Ekinci, & Hulus, 2016; Erdoğan, 2014; Öztürkler & Göksel, 2015; Woods, Benvenuti, & Kayali, 2016). Our Turkish respondents of varying socio-economic backgrounds also find it troublesome to give citizenship to Syrians; some suggested this should happen only if Syrian refugees meet certain high standards. Some also voiced a belief that the government would use Syrians with Turkish citizenship as a voting block and raised concerns that the poor and unskilled would stay whereas the skilled would eventually leave when the war was over:

The government should not have taken in too many refugees. After so many years, our hospitality wears out. Our own citizens have paid the price. Rents have increased and it has become difficult to find jobs. They [the government] brought them for political reasons, mainly to get more votes. As a Kurd from Turkey, it takes me longer to get a Turkish ID. Whatever rights I have, they have even more. They [Syrians] should not get Turkish citizenship. They will always put Syria first. They will commit crimes. Other states are not taking them in. Why should Turkey? They will never go back, there is nothing left in their country. (Kurdish, 55, male, Istanbul)

I believe Turkey has taken this citizenship decision in a hasty manner, like all other issues regarding migration. The EU countries are not taking them [Syrians] in large numbers, not because there is xenophobia, but they have migration policies. The EU wants to accept skilled people only and Europeans think about how to integrate those refugees first. Turkey cannot meet all their social and economic demands. When the war is over, those with resources and property will go back and the unskilled masses will be left in Turkey. (Turkish, 58, female, Istanbul)

Anti-Syrian sentiment in Turkey increased in 2016 after the cross-border intervention and loss of Turkish soldiers’

lives and again following the announcement that Syrian refugees living in Turkey would be granted citizenship. Other than recently occurring clashes between Syrian and Turkish nationals in certain cities, some of the racist discourse continues in various social media, including Twitter under hashtags such as *#suriyelilersınırdışıedilsin* (deport Syrians). Discrimination and violence against Syrian refugees are reportedly on the rise in the border cities of Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Kilis (Simsek, 2015) and have spread to other cities, like Istanbul, Izmir, Sakarya and Konya (see International Crisis Group, 2018, pp. 3–5). Our Syrian respondents also acknowledged that they have become the target of discriminatory remarks and unwelcoming behaviors. The lack of language competence creates further barriers in establishing good relationships with members of the receiving society, leaving them with a feeling of exclusion as stated in these excerpts:

A Turkish man tried to shoot me in front of our restaurant. He tried to kill me. He is a drunk guy, living on the streets. Nobody was hurt. The police came to take him in, but the very next day he was on the streets again. All eyes are on us. (Sunni-Arab, 35, male, Gaziantep)

We don’t have Turkish friends. The language is an important factor. Plus, we don’t share the same culture. We are different. When I talk to a Turkish gay, he is only into sex with me. He doesn’t care about what I feel or try to be in a relationship. They also look down on us as we are refugees. I find people ethnocentric here. They have a prejudice against Syrians. If I talk in Arabic on public transportation, they stare at us. One day, a man shouted, “Go back to your country. Our sons are fighting in Syria, but you are comfortable here in Turkey.” (Syrian-Orthodox, 24, gay, Istanbul)

Regardless of the discriminatory attitudes they face, many of our Syrian respondents stated that they prefer to live in Turkey rather than in Europe. The main reasons they choose to live in Turkey are its geographical and cultural proximity to Syria, the political instability in Syria, and a desire to maintain close links with their homeland through business interactions. Xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments in Europe, the perilous journeys taken transiting Turkey, and the experiences of many Syrian friends and relatives in Europe deterred them from going further west. Today, the public, academia and policy circles have uniformly accepted that Syrians are going to stay in Turkey much longer than initially expected. Offering Turkish citizenship to Syrians, therefore, is part of the change in migration policies and the understanding that Syrians are not “guests” anymore. Returning to their homeland is out of the picture for many, especially those who lost everything in the civil war and those opposing the Assad regime. Repatriation occurs only when the

¹⁴ A total of 227,644, less than 7% of Syrians, stay in the 21 camps located in 10 provinces in Turkey; the remaining Syrians mainly live in border cities and metropolitan areas, such as Istanbul, Şanlıurfa, Hatay, Gaziantep, Mersin, Adana, Bursa, Kilis, Izmir and Kahramanmaraş (information compiled from DGGM, 2018).

problems causing displacement are eliminated; these include lack of employment and markets, losing land and property ownership, unavailability of schools and health care, and inability to access clean water, housing, and sanitation (Kibreab, 2003, p. 39). A Syrian Arab woman in her late 30s working in a shop in Sultanbeyli, Istanbul stated the reasons why she would like to stay in Turkey even if she could not get Turkish citizenship:

We lost everything—our jobs, our house, our lives too. I want to see my children grow up in peace—that’s all I care about. We lived a horrible experience. There was death everywhere. You simply walk on dead people. You smell death everywhere. The streets were like rivers of blood. I could not forget that. We are grateful to Turkey. Oil-rich Muslim countries shut their doors. Europe shuts the door. Return? I don’t have anything there. Why should I go back? For what? No house, no job, no money to fix anything. Our memories are lost. Our lives are lost. They [Asad forces] not only ruined our houses but our idea of home. Turkey is like Syria, the same religion. I don’t expect that they will make me a Turkish citizen. I am not a doctor, I am not an engineer. But I am happy here without being a citizen. Turkey is my home already. I feel that. (Sunni-Arab, 37, female, Istanbul)

Others with more resources also suggest that a mix of social and political problems impede their will to return to Syria for good:

The future for Syria is not very promising. Even when the war is over, it will become worse. We need strong leaders to keep the country united. Nobody trusts the Asad regime anymore. Stories in Syria are horrible. What Asad has done to his own country is without comparison and unprecedented in history. (Sunni-Arab, 61, male, Gaziantep)

Most of our Syrian participants are in favor of obtaining citizenship in Turkey on the condition that they are able to keep their Syrian citizenship.¹⁵ Transnational citizenship supports the relationships between individuals in two or more independent states and highlights membership-based rights and obligations (Bauböck, 2007). Our respondents mainly opt for dual citizenship as they do not want to cut their symbolic and economic ties with Syria:

I do not want to leave my Syrian citizenship. I was born and grew up in Syria. I have worked in Syria and would like to get my pension from Syria. (Syrian-Turkmen, male, 54, Gaziantep)

I want Turkish citizenship very much for myself and for my son. Only then I will not feel different. I will be

like other Turks. No one can use me, and I will have the same rights. My son is stateless as his father was Palestinian. But I cannot leave Syrian citizenship. Syria is my homeland. (Sunni-Arab, 50, female, Istanbul)

The respondents above highlighted the need to be mobile and the importance of not losing the rights that Syrian citizenship offers them. Their determination to retain dual citizenship validates the statement that citizenship is no longer an issue of nationality, but represents “the political mechanisms that make people into citizens which takes account of access to equal rights, the needs, interests and values of citizens as members of social and cultural collectivities” (Castles & Davidson, 2000, p. 24). Citizenship further represents safety and security for most refugees, rather than only facilitating their integration process (Morrell, 2009). Having access to citizenship also confers “normalcy” and access to rights for many Syrians, as their temporary protection status does not guarantee permanent protection and most of them have lost their hope that the war in Syria would end soon. While doing fieldwork, we also met Syrians who have already acquired Turkish citizenship. They also mentioned that despite earning Turkish citizenship, they would like to go back for different reasons:

Vatan [the motherland] is where I was born. Having a nationality is not enough, you need to have rights in your country. My wife earned Turkish citizenship through her mother. Therefore, our children also received Turkish citizenship. I was not interested in having Turkish citizenship at first. Before 2012, I was doing business with a Turkish medical company while in Syria. Asad forces arrested me at the airport. After 9–10 days, they set me free. Then I applied for Turkish citizenship. I had an interview at the Turkish Consulate in Aleppo. Depending on the political situation after the war, I want to go back to Syria. I am a member of the opposition party. (Sunni-Arab, 45, male, Gaziantep)

I became Turkish citizen in May 2016 with the rest of my family and my eight brothers living in Turkey. Our whole village got citizenship. Our ancestors were Ottoman soldiers and some of our family members stayed in Turkey while we stayed in Syria. We feel more secure now and protected by law. But most [Turkish] people think I am still a Syrian. Then I show them my *kimlik* [Turkish ID card]. Now as a Turkish citizen, I have to pay for healthcare and I cannot get cash assistance for education for my kids from international organizations. Plus, I cannot have a second wife in Turkey! As Turkmen, we also have a responsibility to go back to Syria and maintain our existence there. (Syrian-Turkmen, 43, male, Gaziantep)

¹⁵ This is also in line with another qualitative study larger in scale carried out in 10 cities in Turkey in which 74% of respondents showed an interest in Turkish citizenship. See report released by the Human Development Foundation (Sunata, 2017).

These quotes show that citizenship is not associated with a sense of national belonging anymore, especially in the case of Syrian refugees. It instead represents a status which provides protection and access to rights rather than signifying emotional links. In their case, citizenship does not immediately guarantee inclusion in Turkish society, but is an ongoing process. The meaning refugees give to citizenship, their decision-making processes and active participation supports new practices of citizenship which refer to safety, acceptance by the wider society, access to rights and a multiplicity of memberships.

6. Conclusion

This article has presented findings on acquiring Turkish citizenship, both from the perspective of Syrian refugees and Turkish nationals while analyzing the reasons for changes in citizenship policy from the perspective of the Turkish state. As illustrated by the empirical data, Syrian refugees in Turkey are in favor of dual citizenship because of access to rights in both countries, increased mobility, retirement options, and business opportunities in two countries. We suggest that the reasons for the preference of dual citizenship do not only reflect feelings of national belonging, but also highlight the importance of guarding civil, political and economic rights in both countries, thus having more life choices.

Through the use of different regulations, polities have always tried to determine who can be included as a citizen and who should be excluded (Heyman, 2018, p. 45). In the Turkish case, the dramatic shift in the understanding of citizenship and the recent inclusion of previously excluded groups, like migrants, have taken place due to mass migration flows and the pressures to successfully integrate migrants into Turkish society. Policy changes further reflect the necessity of reconciling the need to integrate the Syrian population with the need to facilitate their acceptance by the host society amidst rising tensions in many major cities in Turkey. Demographic concerns regarding the shrinking population of Turkey and political factors, such as the fear of losing all qualified Syrians to the West and the possible backlash if unskilled masses are given citizenship, are other important drivers of these policy changes.

However, as stated by Heyman, “citizenship is not only inclusive but also exclusive, giving rise to social boundaries of insider and outsider” (2018, p. 46). One big question is what will happen to the vast majority of Syrians who will not be given Turkish citizenship? It seems that many Turkish people (86.2%), regardless of their political affiliations and voting behavior, are united in their wish for the repatriation of Syrians once the war is over.¹⁶ In our interviews, we also found that Turkish nationals had no affinity towards Syrian culture despite a common Islamic heritage, whereas for Syrians, the cul-

tural similarity to Turks and proximity to their homeland were cited as major reasons for their wish to stay in Turkey. Nowadays, due to public perceptions and the upcoming 2019 presidential elections in Turkey, official discourse has taken the form of the eventual safe return of Syrian refugees and providing a safe zone for returnees, as Turkey cannot keep Syrians within its territory forever (*Hürriyet*, 2018). So far, 130,000 Syrians have returned to Syria after a safe zone inside Syria was secured in the wake of the “Euphrates Shield” Operation. An ongoing military operation named “Olive Branch” was launched across Turkey’s borders in yet another attempt to provide a safe area that can facilitate repatriation after clearing the area from Kurdish separatist groups. Yet, numerous reports and our study alike suggest that a mass return is unlikely given the social, economic and political situation in Syria.¹⁷

Another question is whether granting citizenship will ensure Syrians’ integration in Turkish society. There is evidence that skilled and educated individuals have more cultural and social capital to integrate. Moreover, they are usually more equipped in claims-making. But, as we have seen in the UK, France, Belgium, and Germany, citizenship alone is not enough to foster integration or eliminate discrimination and social exclusion in society. Integration policies for refugees and natives alike are urgently needed, in addition to good governance in migration management and the provision of direct financial assistance to local administrations that have been proven to play a pioneering role in integration. The Sultanbeyli and Esenler Municipalities in Istanbul and the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality have been doing impeccable work in terms of integration since 2014. Turkey followed an open-door policy until 2017 and indeed adopted a very humanitarian and compassionate approach towards Syrian refugees, spending almost 30 billion USD and receiving limited funds of around 900 million Euro to alleviate some of the burden. There is still much to be done in terms of the education of Syrian children and provision of employment. The schooling ratio of Syrian children has tremendously increased from 30% in 2015–16 to 62% in 2017–18 school year (International Crisis Group, 2018, p. 18). The remaining 38% are currently out of school and should serve as an alarm signal of lost generations and delinquency. As for employment, the number of Syrians with access to decent jobs is still very limited. Although there are 8,000 to 10,000 registered Syrian businesses operating in Turkey, and the number of Syrians legally employed increased to almost 20,000 as of early 2018, it is estimated that almost one million Syrians are currently employed in the informal sector with minimal pay and no social security (International Crisis Group, 2018, p. 17).

The rhetoric surrounding “*ensar-muhajir*” allowed many faith-based civil society actors to actively work to extend humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees out of

¹⁶ Initial results of the survey titled “Dimensions of Polarization in Turkey” conducted by the German Marshall Fund and Istanbul Bilgi University Centre for Migration Research (Centre for Migration Research, 2018). See also *Turkish Daily News* (2018).

¹⁷ See, for example, International Crisis Group (2018, p. 22) and Kirişçi & Ferris (2015).

an Islamic duty towards co-religionists. As recently mentioned by Turkish Prime Minister, Binali Yıldırım, at the Symposium on Migration and Integration on 15 December 2017 in Ankara:

Assimilation policy does not exist in our belief system, in our culture and in our state traditions. Our relationship with refugees was based on *muhajir* and *ensar*. The main duty of migrants is to integrate with the [Turkish] society and to obey the laws. One thing we cannot tolerate is migrants disregarding this country's values.¹⁸

Yet, it is high time to discard this discourse and focus on a rights-based approach instead. No matter how citizenship is defined, it confers civil, social, cultural and economic rights. It is clear that Turkey cannot be expected to give citizenship to all Syrians living in Turkey. Giving them permanent residence, however, could be one way to ensure social inclusion. In any case, a well-structured integration policy is needed to safeguard the rights given to refugees and should be fully implemented. Otherwise, the current social problems and ongoing resentment towards Syrians will only accelerate. As we write this article, a National Integration Plan is underway and is expected to cover major areas like employment, education, healthcare and the elimination of discrimination.¹⁹ Nevertheless, it is almost certain that the integration of Syrian refugees will be among the top three agenda items in Turkey in the coming years.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the editors of this issue and two anonymous referees for their comments on the earlier version of this article.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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¹⁸ See details of Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım's speech at the Migration and Integration Symposium. Retrieved from <https://www.haberler.com/goc-ve-uyum-sempozyumu-10351765-haberi> (15 December 2017).

¹⁹ Personal interview with DGMM senior official on 7 December 2017 in Ankara.

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Article

Dancing with ‘The Other’: Challenges and Opportunities of Deepening Democracy through Participatory Spaces for Refugees

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Submitted: 30 November 2017 | Accepted: 28 February 2018 | Published: 29 March 2018

Abstract

Due to the so-called refugee crisis and the Netherlands’ development into a ‘participation society’, refugee reception there has recently shifted its focus to early and fast participation. In this context, numerous community initiatives have emerged to support refugee reception and integration. Compared to earlier restrictive approaches, refugee reception through active engagement of newcomers in community initiatives seems to promise a more inclusive approach, a deepening of democracy. However, such initiatives have internal and external challenges that might inhibit refugees’ active participation and the initiatives’ adoption of inclusive approaches. In this qualitative research, we have explored the challenges and opportunities for active participation and inclusion of refugees in community initiatives, considering the context of normalizing exclusive discourses and increasingly neoliberal policies on refugee reception.

Keywords

community initiatives; deep democracy; exclusion; inclusion; power; reflection; refugees

Issue

This article is part of the issue “The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies”, edited by Ulrike Hamann and Gökçe Yurdakul (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany).

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1. Introduction

Dutch policies on refugee reception and integration have undergone two far-reaching shifts in the past decades. The multicultural approach that emerged in the late 1970s became rather restrictive by the end of the 20th century (Vasta, 2007). Challenges regarding immigration and cultural diversity incited anti-immigrant sentiments and led to a re-emergence of right-wing parties. Pluralist or multicultural approaches to immigrant incorporation were said to have failed, resulting in the emergence of assimilationist discourses and policies (Vasta, 2007). In this context, starting in 1988, refugee reception in the Netherlands became strictly institutionalized and characterized by seclusion from society, long waiting periods, and dependence on host society support (Engbersen et al., 2015; Geuijen, 2003; Ghorashi, 2005).

In recent years, however, the discourse on and approach to refugee reception have shifted. Several institutions and scholars have criticized the established approach’s negative effects on the (economic) participation and societal inclusion of refugees (e.g., Adviescommissie voor Vreemdelingenzaken, 2013; Engbersen et al., 2015; ten Holder, 2012). Concomitantly, the Netherlands has increasingly developed into a so-called participation society in which governments appeal to citizens’ civic responsibilities and local community engagement (Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling [RMO], 2013). Accordingly, refugee reception has shifted: first, to refugees being responsible for their own integration, which was given formal legal force with the 2013 law on integration; and second, to early and fast refugee participation through specialized programs that have been initiated by Dutch municipalities since the influx of asylum seekers

in 2015 (Dagevos & Odé, 2016). Moreover, since the so-called refugee crisis in 2015, numerous community initiatives have emerged in the Netherlands that now play an important role in refugee reception and integration (Start, 2016).

Community initiatives offer opportunities, such as education courses, that help refugees develop skills. In addition, the literature on citizen engagement (e.g., Ghorashi, 2014a) suggests that refugees' active participation as volunteers in community initiatives might also contribute to a deepening of democracy. However, critical diversity scholars show that minority participation does not necessarily promote inclusion, even if the intention is to include (e.g. van der Raad, 2013). Since the approach to refugee reception has only recently shifted, no empirical research has yet explored these assumptions. We claim that shedding more light on such challenges and opportunities of refugees' active participation in community initiatives is crucial and urgent. If the aim of 'activating' refugees fails, the neoliberal Dutch discourse that stresses refugees' responsibility for their own integration process could easily result in practices of 'blaming the victim' for unsuccessful inclusion (Ponzoni, Ghorashi, & van der Raad, 2017). Our research adds nuance to this discussion by showing that, while responsibilities might shift to individuals and local communities, actors are still very much dependent on and influenced by societal structures and discourses that can undermine community initiatives' aims. Thus, this article also contributes to the literature on power issues and inclusion around cultural diversity in 'created spaces' (Gaventa, 2006). After a theoretical discussion of power issues around participation and inclusion, we will briefly elaborate on our methodological choices. We will then discuss the findings from our four-month qualitative field research in a local community initiative for refugees in Amsterdam East to answer the following question:

What are the challenges and opportunities for active participation and inclusion of refugees in community initiatives, considering the context of normalizing exclusive discourses and increasingly neoliberal policies on refugee reception?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Opportunities for Created Spaces

The recent developments in refugee reception of individual responsibility and community engagement are very much in line with the Dutch trend towards a participation society. Notwithstanding critique of the participation society as a means to conceal governmental budget cuts (e.g., RMO, 2013), community engagement is seen by many scholars as a remedy to democratic deficits. Citizen participation in the democratic system entails the redistribution of power, though the extent of empowerment depends on the type of participation (Arnstein, 1969). Gaventa (2006) distinguishes between

three spaces in which citizens can become active and potentially affect their environment. 'Closed spaces' are exclusively reserved for a set of representatives—usually elites—to make decisions in. 'Invited spaces' are institutionalized spaces for consulting a broader public. These deliberative spaces have been criticized for their failure to enforce the principle of equal consideration, and for their bias towards the deliberative capacities, interests and norms of discourse of dominant groups (e.g., Bohman, 1996; Holdo, 2015; Young, 2001). Finally, 'created' or 'claimed spaces' are established by less powerful actors from or against power holders outside of institutionalized policy arenas. Such spaces are considered the most empowering form of participation, since they are controlled by citizens (e.g., Arnstein, 1969; Gaventa, 2006; Ghorashi, 2014a). In these spaces, previously excluded actors can engage in the public sphere and shape their environment on the local level, thereby deepening democracy (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000; Fung & Wright, 2003; Ghorashi, 2014a). Accordingly, the emergence of community initiatives for refugees might constitute a turn towards a more inclusive approach to refugee reception: they offer a chance for refugees to take an active part in shaping their integration process for themselves.

2.2. Challenges of Created Spaces

There are several challenges that could undermine the potential of community initiatives to facilitate the participation and inclusion of refugees. First, citizen engagement is an intense form of participation in terms of skills, time, energy and resources. Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) have found that newly emerging intense forms of participation might even result in stronger inequalities in participation than conventional forms do. Second, created spaces are not necessarily free of power issues just because they take place outside of institutionalized arenas. In the Dutch participation society, community engagement is stimulated by the government. This means the government exerts influence by defining the goals, conditions and expected results for initiatives that want governmental (financial) support (RMO, 2013). Moreover, one needs to question whether active citizenship can be equated with autonomy at all. Cruikshank (1999) shows how participatory and democratic schemes 'operate according to a political rationality for governing people in ways that promote their autonomy, self-sufficiency, and political engagement' (p. 4). While this does not necessarily deny individuals all autonomy, it still means that democratic citizens 'are both the effects and the instruments of liberal governance' (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 4). Finally, even if equal access, equal participation and independence from governmental influences were ensured, a truly inclusive approach might still be endangered by power issues between participants within the initiative. According to Young (2001), the dominant discourse is hegemonic, meaning that 'most of the people in the society think about their social relations in these

terms' (p. 685). Consequently, images of refugees as a threat to national security and culture and images of refugees as weak victims can both feed the self-other gap between locals and refugees (Ghorashi, 2005; Ponzoni et al., 2017; Reinhard, 2016). An inclusive approach to refugee reception might therefore be undermined at an interpersonal level.

2.3. How to Be Inclusive of Diversity?

When studying power around created spaces, scholars usually focus on relationships between stakeholders in the field (e.g., Gaventa, 2006), giving limited attention to power within initiatives. Adding cultural or ethnic diversity to the equation, however, brings additional internal challenges. As mentioned in Section 2.1, Young (2001) claims that, in a system with longstanding and multiple structural inequalities, people are at least partly influenced by unjust power relations, which can result in a reproduction of exclusive structures. Ongoing discussions in critical diversity studies on power within organizations (e.g., Zanoni & Janssens, 2007) provide us with a valuable framework for studying power at the micro- and mesolevel, in this case within community initiatives. Critical theorists claim that, even when the intention is to include minority employees, there is always a danger of assimilating or marginalizing them (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013; van der Raad, 2013). Ely and Thomas (2001), for example, distinguish between the 'discrimination-and-fairness' perspective, which addresses discrimination by assimilating difference into sameness, and the 'access-and-legitimacy' perspective, which sees diversity mostly as a way to get access to a more diverse clientele. Even though these approaches might increase the number of minority employees within organizations, they are not truly inclusive of diversity. Inclusion can, according to Thomas and Ely (1996), be achieved through an 'integration-and-learning' perspective, which requires organizations to incorporate minority employees' perspectives and redefine 'markets, products, strategies, missions, business practices and even cultures' (p. 85). This paradigm therefore allows space for minority employees to make a difference (Janssens & Steyaert, 2001). Thus, for community initiatives to adopt an inclusive approach to refugees' participation, they need to be open to changing the initiative's mind-set and challenging its institutional relations according to newcomers' perspectives.

2.4. Reflective Capacity

Critical diversity scholars claim that the development of such an inclusive space requires reflective capacity to counteract taken-for-granted forms of exclusion (e.g., Ghorashi & Ponzoni, 2014; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007). However, the question of whether individuals can adopt this reflective capacity is quite controversial. In the Foucauldian perspective, power works through normaliz-

ing discourses and resides in every perception, judgment and act, thereby unconsciously subjecting all actors to 'disciplinary power' (Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998). Emancipation through knowledge is therefore nearly impossible (Cronin, 1996). However, 'while the power of discursive practices affects everyone, because there are competing discourses socialization into any one discourse is never complete, and resistance to specific discursive regimes is thus possible' (Foucault in Clarke, Brown, & Hailey, 2009, p. 325). Accordingly, competing discourses on refugees might be a source for resistance, but they can be a chance for inclusion only if one of the discourses is inclusive.

Similar to Foucault, Bourdieu claims that knowledge is internalized and functions below the level of consciousness as part of the repertoire of a person's *habitus* (Jenkins, 1992). Because of their bodily adherence to the taken-for-granted representation of the social world, social agents unconsciously reproduce relations of domination (Bourdieu, 1977). In his later work, Bourdieu (1999) acknowledges that the confrontation of one's habitus with a new field can lead to self-questioning, or even an awakening of consciousness. Constant negotiation of the habitus with itself might eventually lead to a modified habitus and a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1999). A created space as a specific field might therefore inspire self-questioning in people whose habitus is in tension with this field. Nonetheless, Sayer (2005) argues that Bourdieu neglects the role of everyday reflexivity through which individuals sometimes manage to resist constraints by deliberating on their situation and working on developing their dispositions, thereby changing their habitus. Moreover, as argued in Section 2.3, the problem with reproducing exclusion is not only about the reflections of minorities whose habitus are in tension with the field; it is also about dominant groups that need to develop reflective capacity. Instead of minorities 'playing the game' (Greener, 2002), the game needs to change.

A concept that acknowledges individuals' capacities to manoeuvre through everyday reflective action is referred to by critical diversity scholars as 'micro-emancipation' (Zanoni & Janssens, 2007). According to Ghorashi (2014a), taken-for-granted forms of exclusion that work through normalizing discursive processes can only be counteracted by an alternative that works in the same subtle and 'micro' manner. Micro-emancipation can be achieved through 'partial, temporal movements breaking away from diverse forms of oppression, rather than successive moves towards a predetermined state of liberation' (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992, p. 447). Ghorashi (2014a) also shows how space for such reflective actions can be created in interpersonal encounters. She suggests that delayed 'interspaces' are needed, where people take time to temporarily suspend their own taken-for-granted positions and truly listen to 'the other'. In a balancing act between sameness and difference, people should try to approach the other from his or her own position. By engaging in this dance of 'giving away' their po-

sition and thereby ‘giving way’, people might unsettle established positions and relate to the other in new ways (Ghorashi, 2014a). Finally, Ghorashi and Ponzoni (2014) argue that, to stimulate alternative discourses beyond interpersonal levels, ‘safe spaces’ need to be created on a collective level, wherein individuals can position themselves through difference, for example through storytelling, literature or music (see also Hill Collins, 1991; Ghorashi, 2014b).

The section above suggests that, to establish a truly inclusive space, community initiatives have to stimulate reflection. Alternative discourses and confronting people’s habitus with new environments can be sources for reflection. However, it is individuals’ daily reflections and the establishing of interpersonal interspaces and collective safe spaces that are required for community initiatives to open their mind-sets, challenge their institutional relations and develop inclusive approaches to refugee reception.

3. Methodology

We collected data during four months of fieldwork within a community initiative in Amsterdam East that emerged in September 2016. We chose this initiative because it is a self-organized community center that wants to give newcomers and locals the opportunity to jointly develop its program. The initiative collaborates with multiple stakeholders, including the municipality of Amsterdam and the district of Amsterdam East. It was therefore well suited for exploring the challenges and opportunities of refugee participation and inclusion in community initiatives, while considering influences from both inside and outside the initiative.

Our research employed a constructivist paradigm, which assumes there is ‘no single shared social reality, only a series of alternative social constructions’ (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicholls, & Ormston, 2014, p. 16). Therefore, we chose an interpretivist epistemological approach, which allows the exploration of meanings

and interpretations of individuals (Ritchie et al., 2014). The exploratory nature of this study required an inductive research process (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Moreover, ‘triangulation of sources’ through multimethod data collection helped us gain a nuanced and multidimensional picture of our respondents’ reality and improved our data validity (Ritchie et al., 2014).

We conducted 120 hours of participant observations during daily activities, public events and an evening of dialogue on equality. By focusing on situations with features that enabled ‘detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and questions’ (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 113), we applied a purposive sampling technique. Observations were conducted as ‘participant as observer’ (Saunders et al., 2009), meaning that researchers actively participated in the situations they observed and other participants were aware of the research activities. To further examine relevant themes and individual interpretations, we conducted informal conversations and 11 in-depth interviews, applying purposive sampling: we approached eight people with a refugee background (six volunteers and two not actively involved) and three local volunteers (one volunteer, one core team member and the initiator). Since mostly male Syrian and Iranian recent refugees were volunteering in the initiative at that time, we focused mainly on this group. Challenges and opportunities for female refugees or refugees with different backgrounds should therefore be studied in future research. Interviews took between 55 and 105 minutes. Topics discussed were the respondent’s background; reasons for joining the initiative; reasons for (not) actively participating; benefits of active participation; experiences with and perceptions on active participation; relationships within the initiative; tensions and problem-solving strategies; and future plans. Nine interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim (Saunders et al., 2009); two interviewees preferred not to be recorded but allowed us to take minutes. Five interviews were conducted in English, six in Dutch. The respondents’ characteristics can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents.

No.	Country of origin	Sex	Background information	Language interview	Function within initiative
1	Syria	Male	Recent refugee	English	Volunteer
2*	Syria	Male	Recent refugee	English	Volunteer
3	Iran	Male	Recent refugee	English	Volunteer
4	Syria	Male	Recent refugee	English	Volunteer
5	Syria	Male	Recent refugee	Dutch	Volunteer
6	Syria	Male	Recent refugee	Dutch	Not active as volunteer
7*	Syria	Male	Recent refugee	English	Not active as volunteer
8	Algeria	Male	Former refugee, naturalized Dutch	Dutch	Volunteer
9	Italy/Netherlands	Female	Dutch-Italian	Dutch	Core team member
10	Italy	Female	Former immigrant, naturalized Dutch	Dutch	Volunteer
11	Netherlands	Female	Dutch	Dutch	Initiator

Note: *Only summary available due to refusal to make recording.

Finally, we organized a meeting with five members of the initiative's core team and two volunteers (one local, one newcomer). This meeting served three purposes, namely, 'respondent validation' (Ritchie et al., 2014), verification of 'data saturation' (Saunders et al., 2009) and reflecting on research findings and solutions. Close engagement with the community helped us build relationships and trust with respondents, which was crucial considering this study's sensitive content. Moreover, we did not want to simply 'withdraw data' from the community; we also wanted to 'give back' to it by stimulating the community's reflexive capacity, thereby embracing the responsibility that Wright Mills (1959) had in mind for sociologists.

All data was analyzed with Atlas.ti software. We first took a 'topic-driven approach' (Ritchie et al., 2014) by developing an a priori hierarchical (two-level) code list inspired by sensitizing concepts and interview topics. We then took a 'data-driven approach' (Ritchie et al., 2014). Instead of simply 'indexing' sections, we added a third level of descriptive codes. This mixture of topic- and data-driven approaches allowed us to 'stay grounded in the data', while keeping an eye on our overarching research question (Ritchie et al., 2014). This process revealed several patterns that will be presented in the following section.

4. Empirical Findings

Before discussing the challenges and opportunities for participation and inclusion of newcomers in the initiative, we provide some contextual information about the initiative's program. The initiative is rather successful in that around 200 newcomers regularly participate in the program, which is arranged by about 100 volunteers. The program mainly consists of language courses and informal conversation lessons, during which newcomers can practice their language skills in an informal way. Local volunteers teach Dutch and English languages and lead the informal conversation lessons. Additionally, a Syrian newcomer teaches an Arabic class for Dutch people. The initiative also set up sewing and biking lessons for women and a buddy project to help newcomers find jobs. In addition to teaching positions, there are several possibilities for volunteers: every day, a different kitchen team prepares lunch for all course participants and volunteers; the bar is open daily from 10 am until 4 pm; there are several coordination tasks; and individuals can develop their own projects, such as computer lessons, singing lessons, sports activities or theatre projects.

In general, both locals and newcomers value the initiative's work, which is confirmed by the large number of people participating in it. However, recruiting newcomers as regular volunteers remains a challenge. Newcomers, if actively involved at all, mostly fulfil 'supportive tasks', for example behind the bar, in the kitchen, as a janitor, or providing sporadic help during public events. Most structured voluntary positions, such as teaching, managing, coordinating and organizing, are filled by lo-

cal. Our research revealed several challenges and opportunities for the active participation of refugees in the initiative. After presenting these, we will show how limited active participation of newcomers also makes it difficult to establish a truly inclusive participatory space within the initiative.

4.1. Opportunities for Active Participation

The newcomers we interviewed attributed various benefits to their active participation in the initiative. They all mentioned that it helped them learn the language, develop their social network and make friends. However, active participation in the initiative was part of a clear strategy towards integration for only one newcomer-respondent. He saw it as an opportunity to combine learning the language with receiving a volunteer's allowance and developing his network, thereby slowly becoming part of Dutch society. Other newcomer-respondents also acknowledged these benefits. However, this was not these newcomer-respondents' primary reason for participating. One newcomer tried to spend as much time as possible outside the asylum center. Another discovered that many newcomers did not know how to work with computers and decided to set up a course because of his fascination for computers. Some saw their voluntary engagement as an exchange for the language courses they took. An interesting finding was that feelings of inequality or the negative Dutch discourse on refugees also inspired newcomers to become active. Most newcomers who acted in the theatre project said they joined the project because they wanted to change negative discourses on refugees in society (participant observation, 23 May 2017). Another newcomer-respondent said that, through volunteering, he could give back to the Dutch, which made him feel more equal.

I don't want to hold my hand out like this all the time, to beg...I want to be equal. Equality. I don't have money yet, but I can give volunteer work. When I volunteer, I feel good. I feel a bit more equal to the Dutch. (Interviewee 5, recent male refugee from Syria, volunteer, translated from Dutch)

4.2. Controversial Values and Benefits of Active Participation

Despite the abovementioned benefits, our research revealed that active participation within the initiative was not necessarily seen by newcomers as a valuable and imperative opportunity to work towards integration. This was in part because the context of volunteer work in the Netherlands differed from newcomer-respondents' experiences in their home countries; prevalence and commitment seemed much higher in the Netherlands.

We have some people that want to protect the environment from trash....Here it's very different. Here

I see 66-year-old people that come and volunteer. I didn't know. I heard, but I didn't understand how it was exactly. (Interviewee 3, recent male refugee from Iran, volunteer)

Given the unpaid character of volunteer work, many newcomers perceived the status, value and benefits of volunteering as quite limited.

The experience is not the same. Because in paid work, you have to do too many things that you don't do in volunteer work. A company will push you more to do things. In volunteer work, they cannot push you. That's why you can learn more [in paid work]. (Interviewee 1, recent male refugee from Syria, volunteer)

All newcomer-respondents stressed that they wanted to start their new lives as soon as possible. For them, this meant reuniting with their families, receiving private housing, (re)gaining diplomas and finding paid work in their fields. Seeing the low status and limited benefits they attributed to volunteer work, many newcomer-respondents doubted active engagement in the community would increase their employability. This also had to do with the lack of matches between newcomers' backgrounds and volunteer opportunities.

People should not look for the benefits. Because, for volunteer work, they will not sign a contract. It will not help your CV if you help with painting or moving stuff or anything. Or teaching Arabic, but I study IT. What will it help? (Interviewee 4, recent male refugee from Syria, volunteer)

Active engagement in the initiative, therefore, was not very high on most newcomer-respondents' lists of priorities. Some said they might want to actively participate if the path to paid work was more clear. But in the end, many newcomer-respondents prioritized taking courses or internships in official institutions or firms instead of volunteering in the community initiative.

Because of the language course, I'm very busy and have only a little time to come here to volunteer. Because I first have to focus on Dutch. It's very important. And it's compulsory. If I want to study at the university, I have to reach a certain level. (Interviewee 6, recent male refugee from Syria, course participant, not active as volunteer, translated from Dutch)

4.3. Challenges around Matching Competences with Opportunities

Since many volunteer opportunities within the initiative did not match newcomers' backgrounds, the available positions seemed irrelevant for newcomers' professional future. Relevant positions, however, were scarce and required well-developed skills that many newcomers did

not possess yet (e.g., language skills, local knowledge, specific ways of working).

You don't really need to have specific skills, but language is a big problem. Helping in the office...well, for that you really need to have a lot of skills. (Interviewee 10, female, former immigrant from Italy, naturalized Dutch, volunteer, translated from Dutch)

Matching competences with opportunities could be further inhibited by a lack of communication or miscommunication. Many newcomers did not know whether or which volunteer positions were available, while local volunteers and the core team did not know the backgrounds and competences of all newcomers.

A final and quite striking factor that inhibited matching competences with opportunities and thereby the active participation of newcomers within the initiative was the goal of working together on integration itself. The initiator said that, in their high spirits of wanting to help, locals sometimes take over spaces that could otherwise be filled by newcomers.

If we did not steer, this space would be filled with locals that want to do something for refugees. To the extent that there would be no space for refugees anymore. (Interviewee 11, female, Dutch, initiator, translated from Dutch)

Moreover, one newcomer-respondent explained that, since newcomers were on the receiving end of the initiative's goal of working on integration, they could not take an active part in it.

It's really hard. Syrians here are the end users. The people work for them. So what can Syrians do? It's a boost for integration and for Syrians. So what can Syrians do, other than the simple things like teaching Arabic? (Interviewee 4, recent male refugee from Syria, volunteer)

4.4. Power Inequalities and Reproduction of Exclusionary Structures

So far, we have presented the challenges and opportunities for refugees' active participation in the initiative. We now turn to the question of how inclusive these participatory spaces are. Though the initiative aimed to develop a space where newcomers and locals could work together on equal terms, its focus on integration meant that images of locals who possess resources (e.g., language skills, time, networks) and refugees who lack resources (e.g., networks, skills, support) remained. Moreover, stigmatizing interactions within the initiative seemed difficult to prevent, especially during public events. One newcomer-respondent explained how participating in public events has repeatedly exposed him to being humiliated.

I don't like these things, to meet locals and newcomers. It's nothing, it's just for one hour. These are not equal relations....I felt worse because...they treat me differently. Without any reason...people came just to see me. It's a strange feeling. To answer the same questions for almost two years. It's not good. For anyone. (Interviewee 4, recent male refugee from Syria, volunteer)

What is more, as explained in Section 4.2, newcomers' perceptions and contextual embeddedness about the concept of volunteering differed from that of local volunteers. These differences seemed to go hand in hand with different volunteering styles. A member of the core team explained that newcomers' styles were more relaxed when compared with that of local volunteers, which caused some tensions.

I think most locals are Dutch, and they are much more focused on planning according to their agenda or a schedule....And they [newcomers] say, 'I will do it', but they do it in their own time. So often it is a bit last minute. So, they are a bit less, well, how should I say? Well, more loose, I guess. They do it, but not in the agreed upon way. Sometimes it's a bit difficult, you know, to always have to check whether something has been done. (Interviewee 9, female, Dutch-Italian, core team member, translated from Dutch)

The differences in volunteering styles affect the dynamics and interactions between different groups within the initiative and pose challenges regarding how this diversity should be dealt with. In general, the initiator sees cultural diversity as enrichment and wants to give newcomers the opportunity to 'put their stamp on society'. However, we found that this vision could be undermined in daily realities. The initiative must report to its funders and wants to maintain its good reputation among professionals, the media and expert groups that regularly visit the initiative or attend public events. This requires that the services and events of the initiative work well and have a certain quality. Moreover, since mostly local volunteers handle the coordination, organizational or managerial tasks, they are in a more dominant position within the initiative. Many of them said in informal conversations and interviews that, even though they would like to delegate responsibilities to newcomers, they find it difficult because they do not know whether the tasks will be done on time or in the expected manner.

On the one hand, I get angry at myself because I said I want to trust someone, but I know that I will do his or her job in the end. So, on the one hand, I feel guilty about it. And on the other hand, I am someone who, well, wants things to be done. How do you say that? That I want to see that something is done. (Interviewee 9, female, Dutch-Italian, core team member, translated from Dutch)

This leads to situations in which people in charge are frustrated by newcomers' ways of working. Many locals wish newcomers would take on responsibilities more seriously than they often do.

Participant observation on 28 March 2017: X said that 'the boys' have to bring in their own plates and chairs. X wants them to learn these things. Also, Y was upset because the fridge was 'a mess' and filled with food without name and date tags. Later, they were talking about how A [newcomer] should have done the groceries, but had not done so yet. A few hours later, A did the groceries, but this was too last minute in the eyes of X and Y. X and Y were also waiting for B [newcomer], who was apparently supposed to bring them the money for the groceries. No one knew where B was, so they started to become annoyed, since this was not the first time, according to them.

Our research showed that locals wanted to give newcomers space to work in their own manners. However, given that locals hold the leadership positions and, in these positions, have to live up to the standards of other Dutch stakeholders, newcomers would eventually have to learn the 'Dutch way of organizing'. Accordingly, the Dutch way prevails as the standard that newcomers have to adjust to. In the end, newcomers' adapting also contributes to the initiative's goal of working together on integration and can therefore be justified.

Many things work via email and, for example, by scheduling and scripting. And he [newcomer] is also learning, and so I said at one point, I cannot always send you documents through WhatsApp, so you have to check your email....Because here, in the end, many things work via email. (Interviewee 9, female, Dutch-Italian, core team member, translated from Dutch)

Everyone has an appointment book. And I told them, I think I won't get this appointment book, because I don't like to have appointments every day....And now, I feel I want this appointment book because I have too many appointments. (Interviewee 1, recent male refugee from Syria, volunteer)

As this section has shown, despite the initiative's intention to be inclusive, the dominant position of local volunteers, as well as the initiative's dependence on outside stakeholders and standards, can make it difficult to establish a truly inclusive participatory space in which newcomers can influence the initiative's ways of working.

4.5. *Creating Inclusive Spaces*

Notwithstanding the various challenges encountered in establishing inclusive participatory spaces, there were some occasions in which connections were made through improved communication and experiments. For

example, during the period in which we conducted our fieldwork, the core team introduced a 'platform': monthly meetings in which the community could evaluate the existing program and suggest new ideas. In one of those meetings, two newcomers introduced the idea of setting up computer lessons themselves (participatory observation, 14 April 2017). If, through such experiments, the number of actively involved newcomers slowly increases, this might also lead to a shift in power relations and practices. Due to this study's limited timeframe, the possibility of such progress could not be explored.

However, one possible outcome of newcomers' increased active participation could be observed during a public event where, compared to other public events, many newcomers helped the kitchen team. As usual, different roles were allocated, and a schedule made by a local volunteer was communicated to the team before the event. However, due to the high number of guests, the assigned roles and the schedule were eventually abandoned. Members of the kitchen team started doing the tasks in front of them, thereby moving back and forth between their own and other peoples' tasks. This led to a somewhat chaotic but nonetheless organic way of working. What struck the team was that this way of working turned out to be quite effective. As opposed to earlier events, when the kitchen team cleaned until 2 am, this team was already finished by 10 pm (participatory observation, 5 May 2017).

A similar way of stepping back from taken-for-granted standards while creating new ones was observed during several public events when people started dancing. People with different backgrounds who did not share a common language could still dance together, and there was never one dominant dance style. This allowed people to learn and mix each other's dance styles, eventually developing new hybrid styles of dancing (participant observation, 8 April 2017).

Finally, the benefits of role switching were observed in the initiative's theatre project, which consisted of actors with Dutch, immigrant or refugee backgrounds. During improvisational rehearsals, actors would randomly switch between the roles of 'guards' and 'people trying to pass the guards', which naturally led to temporary shifts in power relations. The group discussed their feelings afterwards and compared these exercises with real-life experiences, thereby trying to develop a script that did justice to such situations. Since many of the actors with refugee backgrounds had gone through an experience of wanting to get past guards, their input and feelings were of great importance to the development of the script (participant observation, 23 May 2017).

While these examples do not directly inform us about how to establish inclusive participatory spaces for refugees, they shed light on conditions that facilitate a (temporary) abandonment of taken-for-granted positions and standards that might create openings for a shift in power relations and new standards. This will be discussed further in the next section.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, we have explored challenges and opportunities for active participation and inclusion of refugees in community initiatives, considering the context of normalizing exclusive discourses and increasingly neoliberal policies on refugee reception. Our qualitative data, collected in a community initiative in Amsterdam East, has shown that, while there is some room for newcomers to actively participate, there are challenges that inhibit their participation. Moreover, different perceptions on volunteering, the dominant position of local volunteers and influences from external stakeholders make it difficult to establish truly inclusive participatory spaces.

The values and benefits associated with voluntary engagement seemed to diverge between different actors in the initiative. From the initiator's perspective, active participation gives refugees a chance to actively shape their own integration process. Our research showed, however, that refugees' first priority was to start their new lives as soon as possible, which for them meant regaining diplomas and finding paid jobs. Given that volunteer positions seemed to have low status in their home countries and, more importantly, that most volunteer positions in the initiative did not match their backgrounds, newcomers in this study attributed only limited benefits to active participation, which also meant that they did not necessarily see active participation as a way to work on their integration and improve their employability. Another recent study in the Netherlands has also found that newcomers attribute ambiguous images and low priority to volunteering (Bakker et al., 2018). Thus, regarding the first part of our research question (i.e., the challenges and opportunities for participation), we found that there is some space for newcomers to become active in community initiatives, but this space might not necessarily match newcomers' needs, expectations and priorities.

Active engagement in community initiatives takes a lot of time, skills and resources, which affects people's ability to participate (see also Verba et al., 1995). Given their limited resources and given the lack of benefits and future perspective they attribute to volunteering, only a few newcomers choose to become active in community initiatives. This is especially true when positions that could improve their employability are non-existent, unavailable or too demanding. A recent report on volunteer work of newcomers in the Netherlands also stresses the importance of customized volunteer positions (Bakker et al., 2018). Notably, previous research has shown that finding paid work through voluntary engagement is a challenge for migrants in the Netherlands (Slootjes & Kampen, 2017). Without an appropriate match, the recent liberal focus on refugees' activation should be adopted with great caution. The focus on participation should not turn into a standardized approach of passing refugees through voluntary programs that will not benefit their employability or integration. Accordingly, also community initiatives should reflect on

the ways in which their views on active participation and expectations towards newcomers might be influenced by liberal governance (see also Cruikshank, 1999).

The meanings different actors attribute to voluntary engagement also has implications for the second part of our research question regarding how inclusive these recent emerging participatory spaces are. Our research showed that the different meanings and functions attributed to volunteering go hand in hand with different manners of engagement. Based on perceptions of volunteering developed in their home countries, newcomers saw volunteering as a leisure activity. This clashed with the Dutch way of volunteering, which is more scheduled and organized. We also found that spaces developed by community initiatives are somewhat schizophrenic in that they aim to promote both inclusion and adaptation. The goal of integration can diminish participatory space for newcomers and pave the way for locals to take on hierarchically higher positions. Though local volunteers wanted to give newcomers space to work in their own ways, the hectic schedule and pressure from external stakeholders to live up to certain standards led to ‘cultural cloning’ (Essed, 2002), a preference for local volunteers and their way of working. Thus, through such normalization, the Dutch way of organizing can become the standard that newcomers have to adjust to. Their adjustment can then be legitimized by the goal of integration. As our data showed, confrontation with their new environment can stimulate newcomers to reflect on their habitus, work on their dispositions, and then adjust their habitus accordingly (see also Sayer, 2005). However, this process leaves little room for newcomers’ perspectives to shape services, relations and working culture within an initiative, as proposed by Thomas and Ely’s (1996) integration-and-learning perspective. Instead of changing the game, newcomers learn how to ‘play the game’ (Greener, 2002). In fact, it can be said that, based on their habitus (see also Cronin, 1996), both newcomers and locals ultimately reproduce structures of domination within an initiative. Moreover, even if some locals try to work in a reflective manner, it remains difficult to keep refugees from being confronted with exclusive stereotypes by all participants, especially during public events.

Nonetheless, there were moments in which established positions and structures were temporarily altered. Our data suggests that, in a situation of organic chaos, people might step back from their established roles more easily, which creates room for others to step in, thereby unsettling power positions and enabling new relations. The same goes for theatre and dancing, which might make it easier for people to temporarily let go of their taken-for-granted positions, be open to the input of others and together establish new creative ways. Critical diversity scholars stress the role of reflection in creating opportunities to counteract normalizing processes (e.g., Zanoni & Janssens, 2007). We found, however, that it was not so much rational processes, but passion, emotions, playfulness and organic chaos within created safe

spaces (see also Ghorashi & Ponzoni, 2014; Hill Collins, 1991) that were conducive to temporarily suspending normalizing processes. Given that a community initiative’s structure is much more fluid than that of traditional organizations, it might be difficult to stimulate reflection on a collective level. However, when compared with traditional organizations, community initiatives have the advantage of being able to organize activities that allow for micro-emancipation through playfulness to create connections.

However, as our research has shown, these moments of inclusion might not be enough to establish stable inclusive participatory spaces for refugees. Reflection is therefore still crucial to identifying the ways in which external stakeholders, organizational goals, local ways of working, and taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations might diminish inclusive participatory spaces for newcomers. Individuals and communities need to be able to connect their everyday personal realities with larger social and historically embedded structures in order to put their own perspectives in context and understand where their expectations, assumptions and taken-for-granted images stem from. This capacity to shift from one perspective to another is what Wright Mills (1959) calls ‘sociological imagination’. Both initiators and sociologists can play an important role in the development of spaces for reflection, and in so doing, create spaces in which a deeper notion of democracy is enacted. However, given community initiatives’ embeddedness in and dependence on their environments, governmental institutions and societal organizations need to be included in these reflective spaces as well. Based on this and other research, our research team developed the Refugee Academy at VU Amsterdam—an infrastructure for spaces of reflection with different societal and governmental stakeholders, including the community initiative in this study.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all respondents for sharing their personal stories. We also want to express our gratitude to the initiative BOOST Transvaal, especially the initiator and core-team members, for granting us access and taking their time to reflect with us on the research findings.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Who Undermines the Welfare State? Austerity-Dogmatism and the U-Turn in Swedish Asylum Policy

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Submitted: 24 November 2017 | Accepted: 12 February 2018 | Published: 29 March 2018

Abstract

Within the EU, the so-called “refugee crisis” has been predominantly dealt with as an ill-timed and untenable financial burden. Since the 2007–08 financial crisis, the overarching objective of policy initiatives by EU-governments has been to keep public expenditure firmly under control. Thus, Sweden’s decision to grant permanent residence to all Syrians seeking asylum in 2013 seemed to represent a paradigmatic exception, pointing to the possibility of combining a humanitarian approach in the “long summer of migration” with generous welfare provisions. At the end of 2015, however, Sweden reversed its asylum policy, reducing its intake of refugees to the EU-mandated minimum. The main political parties embraced the mainstream view that an open-door refugee policy is not only detrimental to the welfare state, but could possibly trigger a “system breakdown”. In this article, we challenge this widely accepted narrative by arguing that the sustainability of the Swedish welfare state has not been undermined by refugee migration but rather by the Swedish government’s unbending adherence to austerity politics. Austerity politics have weakened the Swedish welfare state’s socially integrative functions and prevented the implementation of a more ambitious growth agenda, harvesting a potentially dynamic interplay of expansionary economic policies and a humanitarian asylum policy.

Keywords

asylum policy; austerity; crisis; refugee; Sweden; welfare state

Issue

This article is part of the issue “The Transformative Forces of Migration: Refugees and the Re-Configuration of Migration Societies”, edited by Ulrike Hamann and Gökçe Yurdakul (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany).

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1. Introduction

Sweden experienced an immediate drop in GDP growth during 2008 and 2009 in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, but fully recovered from the downturn more quickly than other EU countries without endangering public finances as well as managing to keep the government debt-to-GDP ratio at a comparatively low level of about 40 percent (Erixon, 2015; Stenfors, 2016). The Swedish government’s handling of the crisis was unanimously praised by international financial institutions and the country came to be held up as some sort of role model for the other EU member-states. Due to

its favourable economic and financial situation, together with its strong tradition of refugee protection dating as far back as the early-1970s, Sweden conveyed the impression of being the best-equipped EU country to cope with the “long summer of migration” in 2015 (Kasperek & Speer, 2015); a period that came to be known by the Euro-centric label “the refugee crisis”.

By September 2013, Sweden had become the first country in the world to offer permanent residency to all Syrians seeking asylum. One year after, in August 2014, Fredrik Reinfeldt, the centre-right former prime minister, called on Swedes to “open...[their] hearts to people fleeing under great stress” (Rosén, 2014). In the

same speech, however, Reinfeldt presaged that the unprecedented humanitarian effort could pose a major challenge for the financial sustainability of the welfare state. Therefore, he appealed to the population to accept, “patiently”, the increase in social expenditure resulting from the expected rise in refugee migration, alluding to the need for compensatory spending cuts in other policy areas.

In October 2015, in the context of a heated political debate on Europe and Sweden’s so-called “refugee problem” and one year after Reinfeldt’s speech, the social democratic Foreign Minister Margot Wallström, representing the newly elected red-green government, made the argument for a sudden but inevitable U-turn in asylum policy in a widely discussed interview with Sweden’s leading newspaper (Stenberg, 2015). Wallström imparted that refugee migration had reached an unsustainable level that was threatening to cause the “breakdown” of the “system”. Thereafter, “system breakdown” (*systemkollaps* in Swedish) came to be adopted as a trope across the political spectrum, from the left to the right, as well as in media debates, with 245 instances of this phrase appearing in as many Swedish newspaper articles in November 2015, just a month after the interview (source: Retriever Mediearkivet).

It was precisely that month that the announced U-turn in asylum policy was implemented by the government led by the Social Democratic Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. Refugee admissions were abruptly halted and the maximum rate of refugee acceptance was reduced to the EU-imposed minimum quota. Document checks were introduced at the border with Denmark for the first time since the 1950s, while criminal sanctions against smugglers (including activists moved by humanitarian intentions) were toughened. Since 20 July 2016, permanent residence permits for refugees who were not relocated to Sweden within the EU’s refugee quota system were replaced with temporary residence permits, and access to family reunification for recognised refugees was drastically limited. Therefore, the only way for non-relocated refugees to change their status from temporary to permanent became that of obtaining financial self-sufficiency through employment-related income. The aim of this repressive package of regulations was to make Sweden a less attractive destination for asylum seekers and refugees. In this respect, the restrictions proved to be effective as the number of asylum seekers declined drastically from a peak of 156,460 in 2015 (equivalent to the largest per capita number of applications in any EU country) to 22,410 in 2016 (OECD, 2017). The new legislation was presented as temporary in nature and motivated by the exceptional circumstances of the so-called “European refugee crisis”. In fact, the aforementioned restrictions are planned to remain in force for a three-year period until July 2019.

The policy U-turn marked a dramatic change in international and domestic perceptions of Sweden as a welcoming country for asylum seekers and refugees. The re-

alignment of Swedish asylum policy with that of the rest of the EU mirrored the consolidation of a cross-party consensus around the view of refugee migration as a potential threat for the Swedish welfare state, even in the context of the fast economic growth that the country experienced after the 2007–08 global downturn (Erixon, 2015). Indeed, the risk of a trade-off between refugee reception and the welfare state’s sustainability was first evoked by Reinfeldt’s “open-your-hearts” speech, but soon became deployed as an argument for justifying the radical shift in asylum policy implemented by the red-green government.

The aim of this article is to offer an alternative narrative of the crisis of Sweden’s historically unique combination of universalistic social policy and inclusionary multiculturalism, which has been also labelled a “Swedish exceptionalism” (Schierup & Ålund, 2011). For several decades, the Swedish model’s crisis had been repeatedly heralded as an imminent threat in both academic literature and domestic politics. Since the early 1990s, the Swedish welfare state has undergone important transformations involving a stricter conditionality of access to, and decreased generosity of, social security provisions (Palme, Ferrarini, Sjöberg, & Nelson, 2012) together with deregulation, privatisation and marketisation of nearly all public services (Hartman, 2011; Svallfors & Tyllström, 2018). Furthermore, despite the comparatively low level of income inequality, Sweden is the OECD country in which inequality has grown the fastest in percentage points since the mid-1980s (OECD, 2011). Yet, the hegemonic rhetoric of an impending “system breakdown” succeeded in obliterating over two decades of self-inflicted neoliberal restructuring and, at the same time, in shifting the blame onto, and therefore scapegoating, refugees for allegedly threatening to plunge the vestiges of the Swedish model into a crisis.

We argue for a reversal of this causality. Our argument is that the sustainability of the Swedish model has not been undermined by recent refugee migration but rather by the Swedish government’s dogmatic adherence to austerity politics. Austerity politics have weakened the Swedish welfare state’s socially integrative functions and prevented the implementation of a more ambitious growth agenda, harvesting a potentially dynamic interplay of expansionary economic policies and a humanitarian asylum policy.

In the following, we set out to address the relationship between immigration and the welfare state, with a specific focus on the recent Swedish debate surrounding the impact of refugee reception on public finances. Our discussion is narrowed to the economic aspects of refugee migration because this issue has had a major influence on the debate preceding the reform of asylum policy in Sweden. Financial considerations have been some of the underlying reasons for the reorientation of Swedish asylum policy. However, this fact is rarely discussed in the literature, which mainly focuses on the Swedish government’s anxiety over the growing xeno-

phobic and welfare-chauvinistic sentiments in the population (e.g., Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2016; Demker & Van der Meiden, 2016; Norocel, 2016; Rydgren & Van der Meiden, 2016). Thereafter, we go on to analyse policy developments in Sweden from the early-1990s onwards by explaining how austerity politics steadily weakened the effectiveness of the Swedish state-centred approach to refugee integration. Our argument is that the conditions for a “system breakdown” were not created by the increase of refugee migration but rather by the Swedish government’s unbending adherence to austerity politics. In the conclusions, we discuss possible future developments of what remains of the Swedish model in the context of the upcoming national elections scheduled for September 2018.

2. Refugee Migration: Fiscal Cost or Dividend?

The hypothesis that international migration may have a potentially detrimental effect on the welfare state of receiving countries has gained substantial influence in research, particularly since the publication of a widely cited study by Alesina and Glaeser (2004). These scholars contended that roughly half of the differences in welfare state spending between European countries and the US could be explained by the decline in collective solidarity associated with the ethno-racial “fractionalisation” of the US population; i.e. its segmentation into groups differing in terms of language, religion or other cultural markers. Alesina and Glaeser projected that European countries would experience an analogous crisis of solidarity as a response to increased international immigration. They argued that immigration-induced diversity would pave the way for the downsizing of European welfare states.

The hypothesis that diversity has a negative effect on the development of welfare states has been questioned primarily on historical grounds due to the differences between the ethno-racial history of the US and the more recent immigration history of European countries (Kymlicka & Banting, 2006). Another counter-argument points to the institutional and political differences between the US and European countries. For example, Mau and Burkhardt (2009) demonstrated that ethnic diversity does not necessarily translate into distributive conflicts between groups if welfare states are institutionally designed to prevent the emergence of such conflicts. An additional factor to be taken into consideration is the political context of reception countries. Hence, Taylor-Gooby (2005) replicated the statistical analysis conducted by Alesina and Glaeser, but adding a variable considering the relative strength of the left parties in each country. He found that this was the variable with the strongest positive effect on welfare spending and that, when included in the original statistical model, the negative effect of ethno-racial fractionalisation on welfare spending lost its statistical significance. Therefore, he concluded that “the presence of the left appears to be able to insu-

late welfare systems against the impact of greater diversity among citizens” (Taylor-Gooby, 2005, p. 671).

The Swedish model has long been seen as a case in point for the capacity of left political institutions to counteract the expected negative impact of greater ethnic diversity on the welfare state. The Swedish model’s unique combination of strongly redistributive social policies and a very liberal asylum policy has epitomised the power of social-democratically inspired politics to hinder the potentially fractionalising effects of large-scale immigration. In effect, the Swedish approach to refugee integration and multiculturalism has been described as state-centred; i.e., entailing a strong reliance on the politically integrative functions of universalistic welfare institutions, encompassing the whole population and transcending ethno-racial divisions (Borevi, 2017).

A more controversial issue is whether the Swedish model has been able to yield gains from the public expenditure invested in promoting refugees’ integration into the labour market or, conversely, whether refugees represent a mere burden for the welfare state. Two recent studies based on Swedish register-data sought to estimate the so-called “fiscal cost” of refugee reception in the short- and long-term. The fiscal cost of refugee reception is defined in these studies as the difference between the sum of the taxes and fees paid by refugees, and the total costs of the transfers and services they receive from the welfare state. Joakim Ruist (2015) showed that refugees in Sweden are more likely than natives to be economically dependent on income redistribution policies. He estimated the fiscal cost of refugee migration at one percent of the Swedish GDP in 2007. This, he argues, stems partly from refugees’ overrepresentation among welfare beneficiaries, but also from their lower tax contributions associated with lower employment earnings. A study by Lina Aldén and Mats Hammarstedt (2016) focused on the cohorts of refugees who fled to Sweden between 2005 and 2007, following them longitudinally until 2012. The results from their analyses showed that the average refugee had a fiscal cost of about 200,000 Swedish kronor (about €20,000) in the first year after immigration. This cost was cut in half after seven years of domicile in Sweden. Assuming a continuation of this trend, it would take 14 years before refugee migration reaches the breakeven point; i.e., becomes a net gain for public finances. Both studies indicate that although refugee migration is far from putting the financial sustainability of the Swedish welfare state at risk, it represents a substantial and prolonged burden. Yet, despite the increasing academic and political popularity of these analyses, the issue of the economic impact of refugee migration on Swedish society is far from settled in the literature.

In a recent article, political scientist Bo Rothstein (2017) observed that in 2016 the Swedish economy grew four times faster (in terms of GDP growth) than in other Nordic countries. He contended that the previous year’s large inflow of refugees was a key driver behind this

growth. Specifically, the exceptional rate of economic growth was fuelled by what he labelled as “involuntary Keynesianism”, namely the fiscal stimulus effect associated with the increase in public expenditure in the Swedish public sector, and in local governments in particular, to sustain the public services needed to manage the large-scale intake of refugees. It is a condition which has also been dubbed “refugee Keynesianism” in the recent Swedish and European debate (Hansen, 2017a).

The view that the high degree of immigration may have a positive effect on the Swedish economy seems to be confirmed by the work of Swedish economist Lennart Erixon (2015). Erixon estimated that the increased labour supply through refugee migration has contributed considerably to the high GDP growth in Sweden in the aftermath of the 2007–08 crisis. At the same time, refugee migration has resulted in a decrease in the share of the working-age population for the total population. For this reason, Swedish economic performance was less positive in terms GDP per-capita growth than in terms of total GDP growth for the period 2008–13. Per-capita GDP growth was nevertheless higher in Sweden than in most other European countries, including the other Nordic countries (Erixon, 2015, p. 594).

Viewed from this alternative standpoint, the economic contribution of refugee migration to the host country’s economy does not seem to be adequately captured by measuring the difference between refugees’ tax payments and the costs of what they receive in terms of welfare benefits and services. This point has been also raised by Philippe Legrain (2016) who criticised the research design of studies focusing one-sidedly on the alleged fiscal costs of refugee migration. For example, Legrain observed that Ruist’s aforementioned study assumed that public spending for certain public services (e.g., defence and infrastructure) was higher for refugees than for the rest of the Swedish population, without justifying this assumption. More importantly, Legrain argued that the fiscal accountability perspective used in this kind of studies tends to underestimate the positive externalities—what he calls “dividends”—associated with refugee reception. These dividends range from fuelling consumption demand in times of economic downturn to filling gaps in the labour market and reversing demographic ageing trends in receiving countries. He added that, in order to maximise the yield of these dividends, receiving countries should develop and maintain an adequate reception system and design integration policies that effectively enhance the refugees’ potential contribution to their host societies.

In this respect, research has shown that granting permanent or temporary asylum has an influence on refugee prospects for social integration into the host societies (Dustmann, Fasani, Frattini, Minale, & Schönberg, 2017). The acquisition of host country specific human capital (e.g., proficiency in the local language and other skills that are specific to the host country economy) is a costly investment that may not give returns in the coun-

try of origin. Therefore, the returns for individual investments in human capital depend primarily on whether refugees are given a clear perspective concerning their future legal status in the host country, which in turn affects their likelihood to stay or re-emigrate.

European governments, including Sweden, have responded to the refugee crisis by setting in motion political initiatives moving in the opposite direction; i.e., restricting asylum policies, shifting from permanent to temporary residence permits and imposing limitations on family reunification. These initiatives are typically presented as responses to the receiving population’s anxiety over rising immigration levels. In the case of Sweden, the U-turn in asylum policy has been interpreted as an attempt to counteract the political discourse of, and growing support for, the extreme right-wing party of the Swedish Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna* in Swedish) (e.g., Demker & Van der Meiden, 2016). According to the latest polls, this party would receive almost one fifth of the votes if elections were to be held as this text is written.

Another, and perhaps more tenable, explanation for this EU-wide policy development has recently been provided by Peo Hansen (2017a), referring to the financial constraints imposed by the EU’s enduring austerity regime. According to Hansen, the governments of EU member states that decided for a rapid U-turn in their asylum policy in the face of the upsurge in refugees such as Sweden and Germany, did not fail to anticipate the latent resentment of their populations towards immigrants. Rather, they failed to anticipate the structural incompatibility between a refugee policy aimed at yielding long-term dividends and the EU-wide, short-sighted austerity regime which imposes the achievement of permanent budget surpluses to all member-states.

As explained in the next section, in the case of Sweden, the roots of this incompatibility between long-term social integration goals and short-term austerity requirements neither emerged during the refugee crisis, nor as a response to the Eurozone crisis that began at the end of 2009. They can instead be traced back to the second half of the 1990s when a series of policy changes led to a “workfarist” reorientation of the Swedish welfare state and the introduction of a new fiscal policy framework.

3. Austerity-Based Migration Policy in the Swedish Consolidation State

At the beginning of the 1990s, Sweden experienced a financial crisis that had a wide-ranging, negative impact on all sectors of the economy, as well as on society as a whole, resulting in the deepest recession and the highest level of unemployment in the post-war period (Erixon, 2015; Stenfors, 2016). That crisis and the policy responses to it are generally recognised as key factors that prompted, or at least accelerated, the retrenchment of the Swedish welfare state (e.g., Haffert & Mehrtens, 2015; Streeck, 2017).

In the mid-1990s, a newly installed social democratic government undertook severe austerity measures, introducing a new fiscal framework that institutionalised the prioritisation of balanced budgets and inflation control over full employment, thus signalling a “clear break” with the long-standing tradition of Keynesian-inspired policy which had been dominant in the country since the 1930s (Erixon, 2015, p. 569).

The introduction of the new fiscal framework resulted in a radical transformation of the Swedish model. According to Wolfgang Streeck (2017, p. 151), Sweden ceased to be the forerunner of the social democratic welfare regime to emerge as “[t]he most advanced case of modern consolidation state with a firmly established austerity regime”. The notion of “consolidation state” was proposed by Streeck (2014) as an antithesis to the Keynesian welfare state. It describes a political-economic regime characterised by a rigid adherence to austerity politics as a confidence-building strategy for retaining the trust of financial markets, and thus attracting financial investments for refinancing public debt. In addition, the consolidation state is typically based on a cross-party consensus on the idea that balanced budgets should be achieved primarily by reducing public expenditure rather than by raising taxes.

Since the introduction of the new fiscal framework in 1997, the Swedish government has been forced to run a budget surplus of one percent of GDP annually, and to hold public expenditure below a three-year rolling ceiling. The expenditure ceiling limits the room for expansionary economic and welfare policies, but does not affect revenues (Haffert & Mehrtens, 2015, p. 137). This means that any budget surplus accrued through the year can be used for reducing the tax burden, but any tax cut financed by budget surpluses entails a corresponding drop in public expenditure.

A consequence of the more restrictive fiscal policy was the achievement of stable budget surpluses during the 1998–2007 period, with the sole exception of a small deficit in 2002 during the international downturn associated with the dot-com bubble burst (Erixon, 2015, p. 573). At the same time, Sweden experienced a 20-percentage point decline in public expenditure between 1993 (the peak of the early-1990s crisis) and 2012, which was accompanied by a parallel and slower but sustained decline in public revenue by about ten percentage points (Haffert & Mehrtens, 2015, p. 137). The achievement of the targeted budget surpluses was essentially ensured by a reduction in public expenditure that was faster than that of public revenue, resulting in across-the-board cuts affecting all areas of the welfare state.

The period after the early-1990s’ crisis saw the lowering of compensation rates for all income support measures, as well as a reduction in their coverage. A report commissioned in 2012 by the Swedish parliament indicated that the Swedish model had lost its international primacy in terms of benefit generosity, concluding that its previously renowned high levels of income protection

had to be considered “part of history” (Palme et al., 2012, p. 30). The resulting decrease in redistributive impact of the Swedish welfare state was a key driver of rising income inequality as shown by the increase in the poverty rate of non-employed individuals in receipt of welfare benefits (Jonsson, Mood, & Bihagen, 2016).

Together with decreased benefit generosity and coverage, labour market policy was reorientated from an approach with a strong focus on training and upskilling the unemployed, to a more “workfarist” approach placing a stronger emphasis on job search advice and monitoring, including sanctions for non-compliance. A recent study found that although expenditure on active measures is still higher in Sweden than in other EU countries, the share of participants in training programmes declined to historically low levels after the 2007–08 crisis, while those in subsidised employment measures reached a historical high (Bengtsson, Porte, & Jacobsson, 2017). The two types of activation policy differ in that subsidised employment measures are typically less costly than training programmes, but the latter tend to be more effective from a long-term perspective; e.g., with regard to the quality of the obtained employment and earnings levels. The shift in activation policy can thus be seen “as a response to a longer trajectory of running a budget surplus and of fiscal consolidation policies” (Bengtsson et al., 2017, p. 375).

The declining generosity of welfare benefits and the cost-reducing reform of labour market policy negatively affected the situation of foreign-born individuals in particular. Since the early-1990s, newly arrived immigrants, and especially those with refugee status or family reunification as the grounds for residence permits, have had lower employment rates and higher benefit dependence rates than the rest of the population (Åslund, Forslund, & Liljeberg, 2017; Riksrevisionen, 2015).

As in other policy areas, asylum policy was also influenced by the general workfarist reorientation of the Swedish model. The refugee reception system was first reformed in 1994 by giving municipalities the power to offer newly-arrived asylum seekers the possibility of participating in non-mandatory introductory programmes, with the aim of assisting their socioeconomic integration through individually-tailored introduction plans. A major change occurred in December 2010 with the launch of the so-called “Establishment Reform” (also known as “Law on introduction activities for recently arrived immigrants”, or in Swedish: *Lag om etableringsinsatser för vissa nyanlända invandrare*). The Establishment Reform did not affect the voluntary nature of introductory programmes. Yet, participants became entitled to a new benefit, the Establishment Allowance, which is more generous than the social assistance benefits received in the case of non-participation. In reality, the Establishment Reform indicated a shift towards a more duty-based and sanction-orientated approach. In fact, claims for social assistance can be rejected by the municipalities in cases of participation refusal in the programmes, and the Estab-

ishment Allowance can be reduced, or even withdrawn, in cases of non-compliance to the individually-tailored plan (Borevi, 2017, p. 277). The main aim of the Establishment Reform was to centralise and standardise the implementation of such programmes by transferring the responsibilities for their design and administration from the municipalities to the state-controlled Public Employment Service (PES). Meanwhile, the PES was given the possibility of contracting out the actual implementation of the programmes to private actors, the so-called Establishment Pilots.

The decision to involve private actors in introductory programmes for refugees was in line with the New Public Management philosophy underpinning recent Swedish public sector reforms. Since the early-1990s, public sector agencies have been increasingly called on to adopt private sector practices and solutions in order to improve their performance as well as responsiveness to the demands of citizens who are treated as active consumers capable of making conscious and informed choices reflecting their preferences (Hartman, 2011). In this respect, “freedom of choice” was explicitly set out as a pivotal policy objective of the reform in the government proposition (Proposition 2009/10:60). Although newcomers are virtually allowed to choose their own Establishment Pilot, few of them are able to navigate the unfamiliar system, primarily due to language barriers. In this respect, the Establishment Reform has been described as inspired by a “neoliberal” notion of empowerment, expecting that newcomers should take responsibility for their own integration process, but without considering the structural barriers they face in Swedish society (Fernandes, 2015, p. 258).

Another criticised feature of the reform is the results-based remuneration system for the Establishment Pilots (Sibbmark, Söderström, & Åslund, 2016). A “registration-premium” (*startersättning* in Swedish) encouraged the exchange of refugees among Establishment Pilots through their re-enrolling in new individually-tailored introductory programmes provided by other subcontractors. Furthermore, the achievement of short-term employment goals became more important than that of longer-term social integration objectives because the Establishment Pilots can receive a “speed-premium” (*snabbhetspremie* in Swedish) upon rapid labour market integration of their “clients”. Although the remuneration-system implies compensation in the case of refugees’ enrolment in higher education, in practice they cannot afford this option because of the high resettling and accommodation costs in university cities (Pelling & Bender, 2017).

The U-turn in asylum policy at the end of 2015 created additional pressures on some newly arrived refugees to accelerate their entry into the Swedish labour market. With the suspension of the previous asylum policy, refugees who are not accepted under the EU-quota system receive a three-year temporary residence permit that can be converted into a permanent

one only if they can prove that they are able to support themselves through paid work. This self-sufficiency requirement is pressuring refugees with temporary permits to take any job, regardless of their educational background and prior work expertise. They often enter the Swedish labour market without having their qualifications recognised, as the validation procedure can take several months, and even up to several years in the case of high-skilled individuals (Riksrevisionen, 2015, p. 119).

The visible effect of the aforementioned policy changes was a sudden increase in the share of refugees registering to PES just after arriving in the country, albeit there was no parallel improvement in the transition rate to stable employment (Åslund et al., 2017, p. 125). Sweden is still marked by one of the highest gaps in employment rates between immigrants and natives across OECD countries, even though the levels of labour market participation are comparatively high for both groups (Riksrevisionen, 2015, p. 40). Disaggregated data show that this gap is due to the fact that immigration to Sweden is dominated by refugees and their family members who often face great difficulties in entering the labour market.

At the same time, refugees who manage to find employment are disproportionately concentrated in the less favourable segments of the labour market and especially in less qualified employment positions. This means that the jobs refugees do are often not commensurate with their skills, educational qualifications and prior working experience in their country of origin. The latest OECD Migration Outlook shows that Sweden has the fourth highest rate of over-qualification among immigrants in the OECD, after those of Italy, Greece and Denmark (OECD, 2017, p. 68). Available data show that this problem especially concerns the recently arrived asylum seekers and refugees. According to OECD figures, the share of recent immigrants being more skilled or educated than is needed to do their job increased by ten percentage points between 2007–2008 and 2014–2015; i.e., from 30 to 40 percent of the total (OECD, 2017, p. 69).

4. Conclusions

Almost two years after the U-turn in asylum policy, the predictions about the risk of a possible “system breakdown”, caused by the recent surge of refugee arrivals to Sweden, appear to be falsified by the exceptionally positive trend in local government finance. The latest estimates from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions indicate that the various measures targeted at refugees had the secondary effect of providing a positive fiscal stimulus to economic growth at the local level; all the more unexpected according to the dominant political narrative of “system breakdown”. In fact, 2016 was a record year for Swedish local governments in terms of aggregate budget surplus; the largest ever recorded in the 21st century (SKL, 2017a, p. 35). This budget surplus was about 25 billion Swedish kronor (about 2.5 billion Euros) in 2016, compared to 9.7 billion kronor (about 970 mil-

lion Euros) in 2015, and the increase was exclusively due to the extent of state support to municipalities receiving asylum seekers and refugees.

Small municipalities, and in particular the rural ones suffering from long-term demographic and economic decline, are those that have benefited the most in terms of central government's per capita contribution (SKL, 2017a, p. 40). It is no surprise then, that what had been anticipated to be a burden at the national level came to be often represented as an opportunity for economic growth at the municipal level. Refugee intake came to often be seen under a positive light by the local councillors of municipalities which benefitted the most from central government's support, regardless of their party affiliation (Hansen, 2017b). In these municipalities, refugee migration contributed directly to a reversal of population decline, the increase in the number of school pupils in schools that had been threatened with closure, as well as a major boost in local consumption, thereby generating further employment opportunities and revenue streams for the local population.

Yet, central government's support to refugee-receiving municipalities is only temporary, and existing measures will gradually be phased out before the long-lasting and stable integration of refugees into the local communities can create self-sustaining positive effects. The phasing out of government support to municipalities is the consequence of the more restrictive asylum policy, which has also resulted in a general decline in refugee acceptance rates. In the present situation, local authorities are urged to find alternative financial sources to keep their budgets balanced; a requirement that they are legally bound to meet under the national financial framework (SKL, 2017b).

An alternative strategy could have been to embark on a more ambitious growth agenda based on "refugee Keynesianism" (Hansen, 2017a) by investing in policy measures that enable refugees to maximise their human capital, thus helping them to secure employment opportunities commensurate with their skills and approaching greater equality with natives. This would be a strategy requiring considerable short- and medium-term public investments, but yielding long-term beneficial dividends. As discussed in previous pages, this strategy does not seem to be compatible with the financial constraints imposed by the institutional machinery of the Swedish "consolidation state" (Streeck, 2014).

As we write these concluding remarks, there is an emerging disagreement between the two main political blocs concerning the issue of changing labour market entry conditions for refugees in order to enhance their employment possibilities. For the conservative party, this would imply lowering entry-level wages in order to stimulate the creation of low-skilled jobs explicitly targeted at refugees. The Social Democratic Prime Minister Stefan Löfven criticised the conservatives' proposal for risking driving down wages across the labour market. At the same time, however, he argued that the Swedish labour

market should not be adapted to the needs of recently arrived refugees, but rather the latter should adapt themselves to the high-skill needs of the Swedish labour market (Olsson & Tedesjö, 2017).

The question remains about the role the Swedish welfare state should play in the "adaptation" process of refugees. The current policy inherited by the previous right-wing government has proven to be ineffective, and in some circumstances may have facilitated exploitative labour conditions for refugees, especially those with temporary permits. Apparently, the alternative policy advocated by the current red-green government would seek to combine lower entry-level wages with new skill-enhancement and training measures in order to match refugees with existing job vacancies in the Swedish labour market. But will this policy be feasible under the constraints dictated by the austerity regime of the Swedish consolidation state? We leave this question open, pending future political developments until the next Swedish general elections in September 2018.

Acknowledgements

The article benefited from insightful suggestions by Peo Hansen. However, the authors are alone responsible for eventual errors, omissions and opinions expressed in the article.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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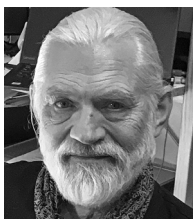
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