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Reflections on the Mediterranean Refugee Crisis

**Federico Rahola
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2018

Contain

- 1. The Leash and the Rip: Struggles and Conflicts
Beneath Migrants' and Asylum Seekers'
"Secondary Movements"**
by *Federico Rahola* 1-13
- 2. Reframing the Refugee Crisis:
Resistances and Solidarities**
by *Priya Singh* 14-31

The Leash and the Rip: Struggles and Conflicts Beneath Migrants' and Asylum Seekers' "Secondary Movements"

Federico Rahola *

Fortress/Borderland

The so called "EU crisis" – of refugees, asylum, migration and borders –leaves behind, as a material trace, its own specific geography. It is a new "topology" of Europe – one connecting fences, (hot)spots, detention/reception centers, informal encampments, corridors and routes –that seems to no longer correspond to any possible linear map. Such a peculiar, stirred and selected surface is produced by both the movements of migrants and asylum seekers – their either forced, chosen or sought routes –and by the superimposition of a renewed EU and EU states' border regime that, under the seal of the crisis, has been implemented to govern and control those very movements. Accordingly, the first impression is one of a battleground or a "derive", within and without EU borders, translating itself into a shifting and moving sequence of signs, names and points: Idomeni, Lesvos, Kios, Lampedusa, Ceuta and Melilla; but also Calais, Ventimiglia, the Brennero passage at the frontier between Italy and Austria, or the border-zone crisscrossing the so called "Balkan route" (the Keleti railroad station in Budapest, the town of Bihac between Bosnia and Croatia, the Austro-Hungarian border pass of Nickelsdorf, or the one of Spielfeld between Austria and Slovenia). This apparently impossible map, actually an assemblage of scattered points, may coalesce into a unified narrative of closure, and nonetheless seems to reflect a broader fragmentation, a series of creeps, scars or frictions (Tsing 2004).

From the standpoint of the external borders, it suggests and fosters the image of a Fortress, of an increasingly selective area characterized by a growing impermeability. The idea of a "spectacle of border" (De Genova, Mezzadra, Pickles, et al. 2015), at this regard, must be assumed almost literally as the theatre of barbed-wire, nocturne visors, navy vessels, shipwrecking and rescue operations (SAR), as well as of identification, detention and expulsion centers, and of special police forces of border patrolling. It is a spectacle where the (otherwise frequently made invisible) bodies of migrants and asylum seekers are in a way over-exposed, becoming almost transparent to the technologies of surveillance –through biometric data mining and scanned fingerprinting archives. But it is also the staging of a spectacle of "invasion" and, above all, it is a spectacle of race: one where a race is relentlessly produced through the management of bodies that are marked, identified, confined and illegalized as clandestine or represented as deprived and demanding subjects. Finally, it is a murderous spectacle of death - with the over 34.000 men, women and children whose death "in and

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for” migration, from 1998 to May 2018, has been documented by a survey promoted by the militant and activist network UNITED.¹

From this specific angle, the renewed EU borderscape reveals itself to be primarily a necropolitical space (Mbembe 2003). And death seems to work as the other complementary and possible side for the life of an exceeding (rather than national – as suggested by the Foucauldian notion of a thanatopolitics, Foucault 2007) population. There is something of a kind of a sovereign power in such a spectacle –in the deflected sense of an act creating an in-distinction between life and death, of a decision that may act at distance, upon a grey-zone, in terms of a “let-to-die”, and that at the same time seems to produce sovereign effects in defining a rescue-able yet detainable and deportable humanity, exceeding any binary code or dialectical opposition between exclusion and inclusion (De Genova 2010; Rahola 2011).

There exist, in many respects, analogies with the European situation of the 1930s, when a massive and growing number of stateless people wandered around the hyper-striated national geography of post First World War Europe, were rejected by every singular state (Noiriel 1998), and ended up finding space in a detention center, or an internment camp, the only possible place where to territorialize their “nothing but human” rights (Arendt 1958). The recent blockage of the Italian ports, in the last weeks of the summer of 2018, with the NGOs vessels operating in the SAR area forced to wander around without finding out a safe harbor, appears at this regard a further step into the ongoing militarization and sovereignization of external borders. Namely, as the projection outwards of a “spectacle” that over steps the land ending up investing the overall Mediterranean and transforming it into a hyper-striated and nationalized area. And it is a step that resonates with the former ongoing militarization of both external (as in the case of the fences and walls in Ceuta/Melilla, the Spaniard enclaves in Morocco) and internal EU borders (as testified by the Austrian project of a wall on the Italian frontier, paralleling the actual electrified one protecting the border between Hungary and Serbia), further improving the image of a “fortress”, as the sum of a whole range of fortified national territories. Besides, the image of an impenetrable space surrounded by peremptory frontiers is reinforced by the adoption of two further border apparatuses: the implementation of the “hotspot approach”, that is, of allegedly temporary centers and of accelerated procedures where to identify and filter migrants and asylum seekers, that operate already at the fringe of EU external borders (as in the case of Southern Italy, in Lampedusa, Trapani, Pozzallo, Taranto, and of the Greek islands, or again in Ceuta and Melilla); and the adoption of a series of renewed *refoulement* agreements signed both at a national and European level with “safe” third countries such as Turkey, Libya, or Niger, whereto possibly and directly “re-patriate”, i.e. expel, those people on the move (the so called “bogus” refugees”) whose asylum or humanitarian protection application has been denied or not taken into account – according to a process of externalization and outsourcing of EU borders whose origins go back to the late ‘90s. From this angle, we can actually argue that the European geography produced by the “crisis” and its government reveals itself to be an over all militarized (and “sovereignized”) one, giving back the impression of a homogeneous and almost sealed space.

Yet, there exists another (governmental, so to say) immediate dimension related to the spectacle of border, as well as another geography produced by the EU “crisis” of refugees, migrants and borders: one which may arguably seem less spectacular if compared to the aforementioned “sovereign” momentum, and that nonetheless reveals itself to be deeper or at least as much effective in its capacity to reshape the European space. It deals with the massive proliferation of internal borders and the uneven and hierarchized quality of the space thus produced. In order to address such a hyper-striated dimension, which corresponds to the material ground migrants and asylum seekers

do actually experience in their practices of movement and dwelling within European territories, it is worth recalling the image of an overall “borderland” (Balibar 2009; Mezzadra 2015), that is, of a highly fragmented and racialized territory, crisscrossed by a proliferation of borders and border apparatuses. Such a dimension ends up revealing itself to be as far from the original idea of EU integration, it is from the very image of a fortress, if only because it is definitely splintered and collapsed.

It is in the contradictory and mutual interplay, interference and tension between the projection of the image of a “fortress” and the actual production of a “borderland” that we must situate the reshaping of the European political space enacted by the government of EU “refugees crisis”, by conceiving it as the outcome of a specific sovereign-governmental machine, or a “sovereign machine of governmentality” (Mezzadra, Neilson 2013). While the former indicates a harshening in the logics of closure and expulsion (Sassen 2014), the latter suggests the relentless implementation of less spectacular yet equally impressive and powerful racialized processes of bordering as well as of subaltern, differential and “obscene” inclusion (or reclusion/containment) of migrant presence within EU-rope. Thus, it points to the reshaping of the material conditions of life of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers within and amidst European territories. And while the former refers to the peremptory staging of fences and walls, the second stands instead for a technique of governing migrants’ movement and presence by controlling, directing, containing, isolating and imposing a pace and forced paths to it. At a first gaze, we should argue that walls, and fences alike, pertain to an array of devices and objects that goes back to a specific and rather conventional notion of nation-state sovereign power. Wendy Brown suggested us to conceive them also as implicit symptoms of a certain lack or a weakness of sovereignty (Brown 2010), revealing its incapacity to control and govern its own borders and territory. Yet, if something similar to a sovereign act has to be detected in the very gesture of producing a certain dimension of space (and time as well), and of imposing, through borders, differential regimes of inhabiting and circulating within such a space, we could envisage a whole series of actual sovereign effects in the governmental production of current European borderscape, and assume them as the most tangible outcome of the specific “sovereign-governmental” machine corresponding to the EU governance of “refugees crisis”.

It is therefore such a specific dimension of “borderland”, conceived as an overall uneven, striated, racialized and controlled yet conflictual and contested political space, that will be mainly questioned and focused on in these pages, by firstly asking to what does it react or respond to. In the wake of different critical studies on contemporary migrations, which emphasized their autonomy (Papastergiadis 2000; Mezzadra 2006, 2011; Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos 2008; De Genova 2017), I start from the assumption that current migrant movements and practices in some ways always exceed the regulative capability of government by states’ powers, and that they also prompt those assemblages of powers towards an updated response (“movement first” could sound in this case as the translation of the Deleuzian “resistance first” into the specific framework of border politics). This is particularly true in the case of current “refugees and border crisis”, insofar as it has been triggered by a relentless “drive”, a path or a direction materializing a concrete “right to escape” (Mezzadra 2006) and filled with a thousand of practices and of more or less spectacular acts or events of border crossing (like the long march from the Keleti station in Budapest towards the German border in the summer of 2015) that openly defied and in a way forced EU government towards a renewed borderscape. To assume the European borderland primarily as an answer or a reaction to the “primacy” of such (autonomous) internal movements means therefore to detect the way those movements are framed and ‘translated’ by the EU border apparatuses and logics.

The Prose of Counter-Migration

There is a certain lack of imagination in the way the “prose” of EU migration governance (by this meaning the whole production of reports, briefings, benchmarks drafted by an heterogeneous and often conflicting set of actors that at different levels are involved in governing migrants and asylum seekers’ presence at the border or within and amidst the EU territories²) tends to represent its own “objects” of attention. Within such an objectifying and “positive” discourse, behind the persistent adoption of scientific, physical or hydraulic metaphors (flows, push and pull factors, quota), a peculiar definition has made its own way whose adoption, though going back to some fifteen/twenty years ago, significantly increased since 2014/15. It signals what is perceived as a growing “emergency” or a threat to every aspiration to a technique of government, the representation of a well-ordered geography made by synchronized, selected and governed flows and regular quota— in other words, to any possible “global compact” on migrations. It is therefore a definition that translates, by being its immediate symptom, a whole array of un- or less predictable phenomena and behaviors. The proper formula, in the EU governance jargon, is “secondary movements”, but what kinds of movements does it designate while defining them as secondary? Here is the official definition of “secondary movements” given by an EU Parliament Briefing in November 2017:

“[T]he phenomenon of migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers, who for various reasons move from the country in which they first arrived, to seek protection or permanent resettlement elsewhere.” (EPRS 2017, p.1)

To be sure, it is a very synthetic and apparently anodyne formula, one which nonetheless requests for further explanations, starting from the notion of “country of first arrival”. The reference here is at the Dublin Regulation/Convention and at the obligation it imposes to the first EU country “touched” by a newcomer migrant to identify him/her, collect his/her personal data (biographical and/or biometric, the filing of which coalesces into centralized big-data archives like SiS-EuroDac), register his/her possible asylum application and bind his/her presence and stay within its own territory. It must be added that the strict adoption of the Convention provoked a huge opposition, even at the institutional level, given the effects of congestion, disproportion and overcrowding it determines in the countries of first arrival (such as Italy, Greece, Spain).³ Leaving aside the well-evident contradictions and imbalances in European reception policies, and just reading the text, it is worth focusing here on a first significant shift. Indeed, the use of the term “secondary movements” seems to allude to an unforeseen or by the way less predictable phenomenon, one which exceeds and transgresses the restrictions on mobility and displacement imposed by the Convention. And even language registers this shift. While, to define the routes or the uncertain journeys that lead to the EU external borders, the most conventional term “flows” is preferred, by this referring to a series of even disordered yet substantially unidirectional and defined or pre-established routes, the encounter with a European territory and a EU border device translates those flows into something less linear and predictable. It is as if, by breaking on the first solid obstacle intercepted (after the many that have characterized upstream a journey as extreme as it is made irregular), these flows reorganize themselves into a multiplicity of scattered possible branches. Here, then, appears the more heteroclitic, disordered and plural “movements”. In other words, after intercepting the first border signal or device, the flows that confer predictability and uni-directionality to primary mobility re-articulate themselves in the scattered and multifarious dimension, induced or not, of “secondary movements”, becoming symptoms of a (further yet different) problem of government.

The briefing obviously does not limit itself to unconsciously recording such an evolution and, aiming to intervene on it, proceeds with a first recognition and interpretation of the phenomenon, alluding to its immediate consequences in terms of a progressive sequence of possible infractions:

“While most asylum-seekers seek protection in countries close to their countries of origin, some are compelled or choose to move onwards from or through countries in which they had, or could have sought, international protection, to other countries where they may request such protection. Such secondary or onward movements are often done in an irregular manner, that is, without the prior consent of the national authorities or without an entry visa, or with no or insufficient documentation normally required for travel purposes, or with false or fraudulent documentation.” (EPRS 2017, p.2)

It is possible to detect there at work something like an axiom, the imposition of a “rule” that defines or fixes an abstract principle– the idea that the majority of asylum seekers search for protection in countries close to their own – on whose basis it is possible to build up a gradation of exceptions or discrepancies. Nothing but the obvious truism that every exit or escape from one’s own country (unless this is surrounded by water) necessarily passes through neighboring countries, can support such a statement. Nonetheless, starting from a similar truism the text establishes a norm on whose basis to infer “rational” behavior standards – a direction, some ordered flows. In other words, it translates the mobility into ideally linear, intelligible, predictable, regulated and regular terms, and in so doing it implicitly designates the existence of a transgression to such a logic of legibility and regularity – which is nothing but the effect imposed by the logic adopted to govern such movements.⁴ However, the starting assumption notwithstanding, it is hypothetically/abstractly admitted that asylum seekers are compelled (without specifying, at least at this level, by whom or what) or (and it is different) they choose to “move onward”, and that this choice, induced or not, at various levels conflicts with the forms of mobility defined as a norm –namely, the criteria established as legitimate on the basis of the Convention (a formal authorization to internal mobility, a permit or a Visa to third country, etc.). There is no need to investigate what, unless the very application of this “abstract norm”, makes such mobility practices more and more “irregular”, since such a consequence is inscribed in the tautological circularity imposed by the initial assumption. Rather, it would be worth questioning the significance of the adjective “compelled” those unusual practices are associated with, emphasizing how, in the case of secondary movements, the word takes on a meaning that sensibly differs from the conventional and mainstream one adopted to indicate some of the most recurrent corollaries (the “trafficking”, the “human trade”) of “primary movements” when read as forced migrations.

It is as if, between the lines, behind the (trafficked, “traded”) victim and the (legitimate or not) potential refugee, an incomprehensible route and not just the escape, as expression of a simple survival instinct, was hidden: a will to move – desires and aspirations that exceed the bounded or “harnessed” institutional reception of European states, becoming synonymous, in the prose of the EU counter-migration, of as many transgressions or irregularities.

The following statement, and the specific “will to knowledge” animating the prose of the briefing, partly contributes to clarifying this (not properly unconscious) mechanism, the foreclosure of the “desiring” character and the implicitly political aspirations driving the specific migrants and asylum seekers’ movements registered as “secondary”:

“There has been growing interest among academics and stakeholders in the reasons why asylum-seekers prefer to make an application for asylum in one country over another, both in Europe and

beyond.”(EPRS 2017, p.2)

The implications of a survey on the reasons of unpredictable behaviors that appeals to an academic knowledge or to a “science of migrations” with its relative stakeholders— should be further investigated. The reference to a constellation of knowledge (and powers) to make sense of “abnormal” conduct patterns that belie the axiom of the “first (safe or not) country”, produces a list of realistic, plausible and understandable reasons (translated, in the jargon of migration studies, in terms of push and pull factors, through the profile of a rational collective actor on whose behalf every apparent infraction is read on the complementary polarities of a victimized or an irregular subject).The report therefore motivates such a “push onward” on the basis of the need for effective forms of protection, family reunification, better living and working conditions, etc. And yet we can add something about these “comprehensive” interpretations. For instance, we can underline the fictional assumption on whose basis the unitary subject enunciating them is positioned. Starting from an obvious fact: that Portugal, Italy, Greece or Spain (hence the in-famous acronym PIGS), and arguably even more so Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, are not exactly the same thing as France or Belgium, which in turn are not Germany, Denmark and Sweden, which are probably not the United Kingdom, the United States or Canada. In other words, if the secondary, “onward” movements are harnessed and bound within a space, a Convention, a set of norms and a discourse that bind them to fixed points within such a space, the existence of these very movements calls into question the very space of enunciation presupposed by the briefing, the hologram of a unitary space, federated and conceived as homogeneous. Their routes materially denounce the uneven geography of Europe and, as it has been suggested, they “vote with their feet” against the effects of any sovereign-debt restructuring or memorandums imposed by or the liberal politics governing the ongoing financial and economic crisis affecting Europe (De Genova, Tazzioli 2016).

The report can’t explicitly state nor admit all this. The knowledge it relies upon can at least induce it to recognize how these onward routes may be determined by “objectively different” material opportunities, as well as by the weight of the “colonial legacy” and by not only or not strictly “family” reunifications, and so on. Yet, such a mix of “comprehensive” knowledge does not allow it to read the routes and places chosen or inhabited by the subjects of the “secondary movements” as alternative to the geography it presupposes and to the specific model of protection or reception it envisages and supports. More precisely, the report and “its” knowledges cannot admit that the routes of those identified as the subjects of the secondary movements may be constituted “along the way”, and their rules and directions decided as they go along, inside and against any attempt to govern and know them from above: that these movements are “forced” by government interventions and border devices that they themselves contribute to trigger (according to an old rule, movements first) and against which they often react in terms of opposition, not resignation, “insurrection”. Finally, that the movements and behaviors cumulatively recorded as “secondary” are expression of an idea and a map of Europe that is radically opposed to those implicitly assumed and explicitly reproduced by the EU migration governance.

Such an implicitly opposed, alternative and contesting dimension – as it emerges in the tenacity of building up and again new border passages or informal encampments after their systematic closure, patrolling or dismantling –operates as the subtext that covertly and between the lines moves and animates the governmental prose of the report, symptomatically erupting in the successive representation of secondary movements as a “problem” and in the irregularization and criminalization of their subjects. In the final part of the report, indeed, by leaving aside any “justifiable” causes or reasons and specifically focusing on secondary movements’ implications and

immediate effects, the prose changes its tone: it alludes to alleged risks of exploitation and trafficking asylum seekers are exposed to (even though within European territories and without identifying causes and responsibilities); it denounces pressures on the reception capacities of some single countries; it evokes probable hostile reactions from the public opinion; it configures possible abuses or “misuses” of the protection system (multiple asylum applications and asylum shopping); it underlines how such movements may produce tensions and frictions among the different member states, with the consequence of a tightening of control measures, the extension of those of detention and an increase in the recourse to deportations against migrants. And, in a growing climax, it outlines a process of criminalization culminating into a list of punitive interventions to counter those internal movements— all this after reiterating the quest for harmonizing protection policies within the framework of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), in order to inhibit and limit the phenomenon:

“Whereas the main objective of CEAS instruments is to provide a common level of protection, their preambles also state that harmonisation ‘should help to limit the secondary movements of applicants for international protection between Member States’. For this purpose, some of the instruments provide for:

- the possibility to withdraw reception conditions from asylum-seekers (Article 20, Reception Conditions Directive),
- the detention of applicants (Article 8, Reception Conditions Directive), and
- the reduction of procedural guarantees under certain circumstances (Articles 31, 32, 33 and 43, Asylum Procedures Directive).” (EPRS 2017, p.8)

In addition to the implicit will to separate “the wheat from the chaff”, the potential legitimate refugees from the “bogus” ones - i.e. the economic migrants - and besides the immediate effect of using asylum as a tool for criminalizing migrations (De Genova, Tazzioli 2016), it is worth focusing here on the apparent schizophrenia characterizing the prose of the report. A “comprehensible” phenomenon, yet recorded as an “exception” to abstract criteria taken as a standard, reveals itself to be at the same time a security problem and an “irregular” behavior to inhibit, oppose, govern and repress: what does a similar ambivalence – the oscillation and deviation that the aseptic prose of the text registers between the lines – stand for?

My point –as it will be already clear– is that what has been cumulatively defined as “secondary movements” do actually represent a heterogeneous and differentiated set of practices, movements and conducts that, from any angle you may look at and beyond the many different reasons and conditions they may reflect, always exceed, contest and try to subvert the European government’s strategies and the violent and harsher legal and material border apparatuses they are equipped with: that the subjects of those movements always embody an excess and enact a more or less overt and explicit form of resistance that do not coincide nor resign to the material map and the borderland the EU “sovereign machine of migration government” draws up and imposes.

The next pages will therefore focus on this latent form of “insurgency”, denied and “foreclosed” by the EU prose of the counter-migrations. The aim is that one of bringing out the struggles behind the pacified language of “secondary movements”, and to read them through the lens of what, paraphrasing the title of an outstanding book by Partha Chatterjee (Chatterjee 2004), could be defined as the “politics of the confined”. All this, however, after having noticed a final slip, almost a Freudian *lapsus*, in the prose of the report. In the last lines, indeed, the subjects of secondary movements suddenly become “absconded”,⁵ literally hidden, fugitives, clandestine—as absconded and hidden were the fugitive slaves, the maroons or *cimarrones* fleeing from the sugarcane plantations

system of Caribbean and West Indian colonial companies. Absconded is the one who flees, runs away hiding him/herself in the bush but also acting in the shadows, and thus becoming invisible within the folds of a territory and a discourse whereby, however, his/her presence filters and acts by directly contributing to animate and to intentionally subvert them both.

Within (and against) Borderland

The feeling and experience of being “absconded” should be further explored. As we have seen, it can be retraced back to the emotional and almost ontological condition of the fugitive slaves, the *maroons* who, running away from the plantations system, broke up the material chains they were tied to, often ending up gathering together in clandestine settlements or encampments whereto organize themselves in a temporary yet radically different way or society (Franklin 2010).

It is arguably nothing more than an evocative analogy, but even contemporary European borderland is filled with temporary, “informal” encampments, that are built up and dwelled by as many of the actors of the secondary movements. Sometimes those places rise, growing up even to a considerable size, nearby official and overcrowded emergency reception or containment centers (as in the case of Moria, in Lesvos island). But they also emerge within or close to several cities and towns localized on the margins of EU territory (Bihac, Thessaloniki, Sofia). It is as if they were spread out through a kind of *meiosis* or replication, working most of the times as a harsh and gloomy parallel or surplus – a side-effect, the “out of shot” or “off-screen” – of what elsewhere I have referred to as a “camp form” (Rahola 2010)⁶. But they can also spring up and rise in the urban public spaces of European core cities (Paris, Brussels, Milano, Athens), amidst parks or squares, nearby the railway stations or in vacant lots. More frequently, they are built up and assembled nearby a border or directly on a border-zone, as gathering and crossroad places or waiting rooms, dwelled by a heterogeneous, temporary and shifting population of subjects in transit.⁷

In the first case, the impression is that those (more or less) temporary encampments work mainly as an emergency, deprived, half relinquished and improvised way to get by, as a gloomy and shadowy supplement paralleling and accompanying overcrowded institutional reception or containment centers. In the latter, on the contrary, they actually seem to trigger or prompt the very existence of an official relocation/detention center, that in turn reveals itself to be an answer to govern an otherwise perceived as ungovernable use of the space, and irregular forms of inhabiting and moving within it. Indeed, though frequently hidden, these specific encampments are over-exposed to police control and stigmatized in terms of social perception and public opinion. Debated and contested, they are always represented as a security threat, a scandal, a way of dwelling/squatting embodying dangerous, unhealthy, unsafe, desperate and uncivilized practices, and thus labeled as jungles, ghettos, habitats for a (un)urban outcast. An overt or silent yet always violent process of radicalization invests the places and the people inhabiting them, by linking both and suggesting the existence of a proper space to be found in a camp, as a legitimate place producing its own “race”. Not surprisingly, they are thus constantly under siege and systematically dismantled, their dwellers evicted and re-located into institutional reception/detention centers, through spectacular and often mediatized police operations of cleansing justified for health and security reasons. Seldom, and particularly when placed at the margins –as in the case of Idomeni or Moria– they are merely forgotten, as if they were deleted or repressed once their echo has vanished.

Yet, they work also as a kind of crossroad and meeting spots where different biographies, routes and languages do encounter and share experiences on behalf of hidden passwords and maps. Though highly segregated and frequently internally splintered along national or ethnic divisions and

conflicts, they may produce their inner idioms, a kind of common jargon which reveals itself to be a form of tactical mimicry of the EU governance prose. Such a relational dimension could be further amplified by their being a peculiar contact zone, since their actual existence, in terms of production and material reproduction, is basically the outcome of a specific cooperation between migrants or asylum seekers and some NGOs, or militant and activist groups. The most outstanding instance of such a cooperation – a kind of exception in this scenario, insofar as it radically reverses the general perception of precariousness characterizing these places– is probably represented by the City Plaza Hotel in Athens, where a group of activists and refugees occupied and still manage together an abandoned four-stars hotel placed in the city center, nearby the Archeological Museum, transforming it into a second “safe” step where to decompress and reorganize projects and routes for many actors of the secondary movements passed through the Greek islands’ encampments or official centers.

There should be much more to be said about those variegated informal occupied places: more figures to be provided with and, above all, direct stories and experiences to be told. Indeed, a series of ethnographic accounts have tried to describe, give back or denounce the usually harsh conditions of life, the specific functioning and the political significance characterizing those encampments (Agier, 2018; Queirolo Palmas 2017). Here, however, I would like to briefly move on a different, cartographic or counter-mapping path, by questioning what more specifically and even directly – in a way geographically – do those places suggest and materially enact. I start from the assumption that they may represent a kind of “reverse-shot” of the “camp-form” (in French it would sound better, something like the “*contre-champ de la form camp*”). And such a more or less explicit “counter”- dimension stands basically for a kind of geographical and political gesture, one that reflects a direction and a stance that are radically opposed to the EU border regime.

In other words, taken all together, and amidst those highly different forms and practices of dwelling (a kind of “encampment-form”), reflect a drive, an intentional or desired route, made up by a series of possible passages. More precisely, they represent temporary stations along specific, inner (and forbidden) directions, thus suggesting a kind of *underground geography* cutting and crisscrossing European borderland. At stake, therefore, between such underground “spaces of representation”(made up by informal settlements and by the routes and directions they directly signal), and the actual “representation of space” defined by the idea of a borderland (made up of official reception/detention/identification centers and by the borders those material apparatuses directly embody) it is a kind of mimetic or, better, isomorphic relation: one which in turn could be read as a specific concatenation (*enchaînement*), that is, through the theoretical framework of the axiomatic set or loop of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as respectively a nomadic or “war machine” and the states’ and capital’s “apparatus of capture” (Deleuze, Guattari 1993). Within such a framework, the impression is thus of a loop without any possible last word (just a first one, movement) in a relentless and ongoing mimetic game. And the space thus produced, according to a Lefebvrian perspective (Lefebvre 1991), seems to be defined by the unstable and shifting relation between the actual “spatial practices” or migrants and asylum seekers movements – their “representational spaces” –and the shifting and violent “representations of space” materializing in the European borderland.

There should be much more to be said even about such an isomorphic relation, for instance exploring the specific “logistic reason” (made up of corridors, platforms and special zones where different yet synchronized flows, operations and exchanges run along tracing specific directions and selective geographies – Mezzadra, Neilson 2015) driving the EU apparatus of capture and the governance prose, and the relation it entails with a possible logistic “counter-reason” enacted by migrants and asylum seekers movements and spatial practices. Here, however, and always through

the lens of corridors and “mobility infrastructures”, I want to focus on a different possible further analogy. One that brings us back to the former, original meaning of absconded.

Indeed, even the absconded and fugitive slaves, the rebels of the southern US states’ plantation system, defied and fled from an apparatus of capture – one whose material translation was epitomized by a chain, as a sign of constriction, captivity and chattel, and whose blackmail, *le prix à payer*, lied in a lynching, a hangman’s noose. And in their running away, they build up a series of secret escape-routes, at times organized into regular pathways, imaginatively defined as an “underground railroad”. It was a matter of secret passages, through hidden shelter stations and steps, that has been made possible thanks to the active (yet often over-emphasized) support of white abolitionists, and whose extraordinary significance seems to go well beyond the actual figures and numbers of those who passed through them, insofar as they materially enacted a possible renewed and reversed geography, by confusing and reconfiguring the trajectory of the “color line” (H. Louis Gates Jr 2013; Blackett 2013).

Although contained and bounded, the majority of the asylum seekers and migrants inhabiting current temporary zones or encampments do always perceive themselves as on the move. Over them hangs or looms a “chain” that works rather (though not radically) differently from the material ones that captured and subsumed slave living labor under the plantations regime. More precisely, they are harnessed within the controlled, delimited, differential and flexible regime of movement defined through material and juridical border apparatuses such as the Dublin Convention, and to the specific and striated space corresponding to the EU borderland. In the very act of dismantling an informal encampment and of relocating and dispersing the dwellers into a myriad of scattered and faraway official centers, as well as in the deterritorialized archives of biometric data built up to counter “asylum shopping”, or in the alternate adoption of measures and tools to either block, contain or force subjects to a kind of brownian movement, it is possible to detect a peculiar flexible and mobile strategy that seems to reproduce and parallel the tactics of migrants’ movements.

In other words, closer to the image of a concatenation suggested by Deleuze and Guattari, to the nomadic machine enacted by those who are defined as the subjects of the “secondary movements” it corresponds an apparatus of capture that tends towards a nomadic and mobile constellation of material and juridical border devices and tools. And this, in turn, suggests that migrants and asylum seekers who are captured within the EU internal borders, by actually and materially defying them with their internal movements and spatial practices, at the same time actively prompt those apparatuses to rearticulate themselves into a border regime apt to “govern mobility through mobility” (Tazzioli 2018), by spatially and temporally containing, conducting, delimiting or addressing it.

Accordingly, if the present is still a time of slavery and chains, instead of permanently blocking and capturing a body in terms of both property and immobility, current chains do rather impose a kind of indirect mark of captivity, by moving themselves and imposing a specific regime of forced mobility. It should be therefore a matter of representing the isomorphic struggle hidden at the core of the notion of “secondary movements” as the one between the “autonomous drive” pushing forwards migrants’ and asylum seekers’ harnessed yet nomadic movements, and the re-territorializing effects enacted by a border regime that becomes in turn increasingly flexible and, above all, mobile. And it should be also a matter of finding out a definition or a word to represent the overall effects of such a relation, thus synthesizing the selective transition from a fortress to a borderland – that is to say, the violent encounters through which, in the prose of EU migration governance, primary movements rearticulate themselves into secondary ones.

In the attempt to figure out such a word, and to indicate a tool capable of governing mobility by imposing a forced regime of (im)mobility, the most immediate association is that with a “leash”. Indeed, a leash circumscribes and reduces the radius of movement around it: it contains rather than confining or blocking, by imposing an inevitably and literally “secondary” regime of movement. But it is also a sign of property, of chattel, as well as of control and surveillance. Capture and captivity seem to be the terms that better recapitulate its immediate effects. Besides, a leash becomes visible, and its action perceived, only when stressed and in tension. And tension occurs when the movement reaches the limit of its range, as a border not to be trespassed.

Rarely, indeed, those who are forced or tied to a leash do accept its consequences and limitations: a special pressure is thus established at its limits. And it is possible to detect such a pressure or tension both on the internal national borders of the European Union, signaling and underlining the fractures and frictions affecting an uneven overall space, and within and amidst the national and urban spaces of European territories: every time the leash is visible, and its action triggered and actualized. But what exactly do those tensions and pressures stand for?

In an hotel squatted and self-managed by a coalition of migrants and activists; in the harsh conditions of life characterizing an encampment systematically dismantled and relentlessly rebuilt nearby Ventimiglia or Calais; in the more discrete yet deliberate act of running and getting away from an official reception center; in an attempt to get a ride and pass a bordered national frontier: in all those different and scattered acts and situations it is possible to detect a specific search for a “rip”, for routes and passages that materially configure and ideally trace a different geography, one which counters the very dimension of a borderland. To put it short, those recurrent rips are as many attempts to directly conducting oneself, and as many refuses to be captured and brought by and on a leash.

In a lecture held in March 1978, during the course he kept at the Collège de France, entitled “Security, Territory and Population” (Foucault 2007), Michel Foucault offered *en passant* a brief definition of what, in his opinion, could be conceived as an alternative and opposed attitude to the Pastoral power of the Christian Church. In order to suggest a word to indicate certain specific acts and behaviors that are idiosyncratic and reluctant to the pervasive economy of a power whose exercise aims at both governing individual souls and leading the Christian herd (*omnes et singulatim*), he eventually opted for the (rather unattractive, as he himself admitted) term “counter-conducts”. Literally, though Foucault does not explicitly state this, a counter-conduct can be conceived as an attempt to conduct oneself differently from the imposed way, and it is mainly addressed to some forms and collective practices producing an idea of subject, a dimension of space and a specific temporality that are radically different and implicitly opposed to those imposed by the pastoral power, aiming at ripping off its grip on the subjects (Rahola 2015).

Although difficult, it is not impossible to envisage as many counter-conducts among the spatial practices of migrants and asylum seekers neutralized within the category of secondary movements and forced within the European border regime: as rips against a leash, acts and tactics of a specific “politics of the confined”, signs of a possible “underground Europe” and of a space radically different and opposed to the current borderland.

Notes

¹ <http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ListofDeathsActual.pdf>

² Just to mention the most relevant: the EU Parliament and Commission, European and International agencies of border and migration control such as Frontex and Europol, international or supra-national institutions such

as the IOM or the UNHCR, several NGOs, as well as the member-states foreign and defense Cabinets and Departments.

³In order to introduce redistribution criteria, in June 2016 an EU Commission directive imposed a quota system that has been rejected or silently betrayed by several EU member states. See EU Commission, UNHCR 2016.

⁴All this belongs to the more general abstraction characterizing the language of flows, assumed essentially (and in the Marxian sense) as an operation that transfigures a series of behaviors and relationships in the abstract sign of a form, a ratio, ending up defining the reality it indicates.

⁵“An applicant who has absconded, or is *likely to abscond*, would have residence restrictions in the Member State imposed, or be detained, and would not be entitled to material reception conditions (save for emergency health care) when present irregularly in a Member State other than the one in which they are required to be present [...]” (EPRS 2017, p. 9).

⁶To put it short, the idea of a “camp-form” refers to a specific border(ed) apparatus where to detain and territorialize subjects that, for various reasons, exceed a political geography, being thus defined as “out of place”, and whose origins go back to the colonial realm finding out in the colonial subjects the first ones passible to be administratively deported and detained (see Rahola 2003, 2010, 2011).

⁷It is the case of Calais, Ventimiglia, Bolzano, Trieste, Gorizia, as well as of some Slovenian border town, or in the immediate external fringe of EU territories, like in Beograd and in the Gurubù forest surrounding Melilla, in Morocco.

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Reframing the Refugee Crisis: Resistances and Solidarities

Priya Singh *

A European Refugee Crisis?

The ‘event’—which the refugee crisis is—seems to occupy the ‘structure’— which the village community was.¹

In the summer of 2015, commonly referred to as the ‘summer of migration’, a supposed ‘European refugee crisis’ was said to have unfurled both within and outside Europe. It brought to the table both a humanitarian and a political dilemma, which necessitated comprehension in the context of the policies and practices of European Governments and the European Union in particular. People in large numbers were hosted in ‘informal camps’ or in ‘institutionalized spaces’/‘hotspots.’ In this case, hotspots refer to the EU-run reception centers in frontier member states like Italy and Greece to identify and fingerprint migrants and refugees. The rejection of asylum and confinement of the irregular arrivals in the hotspots, the dearth of legal routes to Europe encouraging the enterprise of smuggling, the annihilation of living spaces and expulsion of people to nations where their rights were not protected were some of the offshoots of the policy pursued by the European Governments and the European Union. Another aspect, which came to the forefront was the politics of ‘exhaustion,’ referring to the sheer fatigue experienced by continually displaced people, living in the shadows of uncertainty and the constant fear of threat to their lives.²

According to the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, ‘persecution, conflict, and poverty’ compelled more than a million people to take off to Europe, a figure that was unprecedented as the number of persons displaced by war and confrontation was the highest witnessed in Western and Central Europe since the 1990s, when a number of conflicts erupted in the erstwhile Yugoslavia. By late December 2015, around 972,500 people had crossed the Mediterranean Sea, according to UNHCR estimates. Moreover, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that more than 34,000 people had crossed from Turkey into Bulgaria and Greece by land during the same period.³ IOM also estimated that around 1,011,700 migrants arrived by sea in 2015, and nearly 34,900 by land.⁴ One out of two of those taking the trip to the Mediterranean, that is, half a million people were Syrians attempting to break away from the conflict in their country. Afghans comprised 20 per cent and Iraqis 7 per cent. Thus, the conflict in Syria was the biggest cause for migration to Europe, though continuing hostility in Afghanistan and Iraq also prompted people to look for safer lives in other places. In addition, there were economic migrants from Balkan countries such as Kosovo and Albania.⁵ IOM further predicted that the incoming refugee rate could be around

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17 percent higher in 2016. Roughly, 258,186 migrants arrived in Europe by the end of July 2016, in comparison with the 219,854 refugees that arrived in 2015 during the same time period.⁶ According to the latest IOM figures (2018), around 3785 migrants and refugees were estimated to have died in the Mediterranean in 2015 compared to 3283 in 2014. Deaths continue to be a fact after 2015 as IOM estimates that 5143 died at sea in 2016, 3119 in 2017, and in the first two weeks of 2018 already 194 people are recorded to have died at sea.⁷

In summary, since the civil war erupted in March 2011, around 11 million Syrians were forced to flee their homes. In 2016, approximately 13.5 million Syrians required humanitarian support within the country. The majority of those who sought to escape the violence within Syria took refuge either inside the country or in neighbouring states. According to UNHCR estimates, 4.8 million escaped to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq while 6.6 million were internally displaced inside Syria. Turkey alone played host to more than 2.7 million Syrian refugees. A million people alone requested asylum to Europe, with Germany being the most sought after country, followed by Sweden. Around 150,000 Syrians took asylum in the European Union region and member states committed to resettle another 33,000 Syrians. In response, the European Union (EU) provided humanitarian assistance as well as played the role of the host. The contribution of the individual nations varied and according to the UNHCR, 70% of the promised funding was pending. All in all, despite the supposed ‘European Refugee Crisis’ in the aftermath of the exodus of 2015, the number of Syrian refugees in Europe comprised less than 10% of the overall figure of displaced Syrians.⁸ For instance, Alcalde observed that the apparent crisis cannot be attributed to the mere number of refugees, and that the phrase ‘crisis’ has since time immemorial been employed to define migration waves. The truth lay in the unpreparedness and inability of the European governments in providing humanitarian intermediation. In reality, the year 2016 witnessed a humanitarian crisis that was prompted by the view “that the institutional structures and policies in place, at all territorial levels, were unfit to address what was presented as an emergency.”⁹

While the EU only managed to secure a peripheral position in the political sense of the term as far as the Syrian civil war is concerned, the burden of the repercussions of the war in terms of the humanitarian, economic and security aspects had to be shouldered by the EU at least in part. As Russia and the United States occupied center stage concerning the military aspects of the Syrian crisis, the European Union conspicuous by its ‘diplomatic absence’ entered into a pact regarding refugees with Turkey in March 2016. The immediate impact of the pact was a sharp decline in the number of uncontrolled migrants arriving in Greece. However, the pact got mired in litigation over the ‘concessions offered by EU and the conditions to be met by Turkey.’ This can be partly attributed to the fact that a divided EU entered into negotiations with Turkey in order to secure the retention of refugees in Turkey. Turkey, in return for keeping the Syrians in, was assured of financial support and other concessions such as visa free travel for its citizens in EU countries as well as the resumption of the negotiation process related to Turkey’s accession into the European Union. In addition, the deal was struck amidst a severe political turmoil in the country. The issues in contention were Turkey’s non-implementation of certain clauses of the UN Refugee Convention, the revived armed confrontation in south-eastern Turkey with its Kurdish minorities and the increased disrespect for human rights and rule of law within the country itself.¹⁰

This essay strives to understand the wave of forced migrations to Europe since 2015 in terms of the politics, practices and policies of the European Union, particularly with reference to the Syrian refugees, who migrated in large numbers as a consequence of the persistent civil war within their country. It is a work in progress and an extension of a piece written in the aftermath of the “summer of migration” in 2015. Since then there have been several attempts to reframe the crisis in

terms of multiple constructs, as well as throw light on the stories of movements of solidarity and resistance which in turn are intertwined with the policies of the relevant governments as well as regional and global organizations.

Europe Responds: the EU-Turkey Refugee Pact

Europe's refugee crisis initially drove EU member states apart. Confronted in mid-2015 with a mass inflow of asylum seekers that threatened internal political stability, member states returned to the logic of narrow national self-interest. But as attitudes toward refugees have hardened in even the most generous countries since late 2015, a new consensus seems to be emerging. The concept of shutting out migrants by reinforcing the EU's external border and persuading third countries to prevent people from crossing into the EU is gaining ground. While superficially attractive in reuniting the EU, such a Fortress Europe project would shatter on the geographic, political, and economic complexities of Europe's neighborhood. Rather than rebuilding the EU's legitimacy, it would end up creating more tensions and greater nationalist anger.¹¹

On the surface, Europe appeared to be grappling with what was perceived as its worst refugee crisis since World War II. By the end of 2015, more than 500,000 people had crossed to Europe by sea and land from the surrounding regions. The majority of the forced migrants undertook the arduous journey in order to get away from the civil war in Syria. On September 23, 2015, the EU member-states arrived at a consensus to relocate 120,000 of the refugees across the Union. It was decided that sixty-six thousand of them, who arrived in Greece and Italy after undertaking hazardous voyages across the Mediterranean, would be relocated in the coming months. Fifty-four thousand were to be shifted from Hungary to other EU states, where they had reached the country after trekking across the Balkans. The question that instinctively arose is that even though the Syrian war has been waging for more than four years, why then this sudden spurt in the flow of refugees to Europe in 2015? A number of factors could be held responsible for this development, the primary reason being that the civil war in Syria showed no signs of abating thereby prompting Syrians within Syria to leave and those in exile in Turkey to abandon any hope of going back to their land of origin. Turkey, which was home to more than two million refugees at the time, was yet to grant Syrians the legal right to work. The ruling party, AKP, perceived as friendly towards refugees had met with some setbacks at that juncture causing a degree of uneasiness among the Syrian refugees. Secondly, the UN refugee agencies in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Eastern Europe were dealing with financial constraints, as such the condition of the refugee camps was deteriorating. The refugees had saved money to pay to the smugglers. It was estimated that an individual was paying at least \$3,000 to reach Germany from the Middle East. Most significantly, the Syrians who were previously unaware of the Balkan land route, discovered it during the summer of 2015, and used the rather perilous journey to reach Europe. All this happened while the European Union was preoccupied deliberating over what would be the appropriate course of action to take.¹² In 2016, the situation had begun to change. The refugees began searching for alternative routes to reach Europe as a result of a new series of developments, such as "changing visa regulations for Syrians, intensified border controls, the Balkan route closure, the EU-Turkey agreement, and the development of hotspots on Greek islands."¹³ Those stranded in Turkey no longer had the option of using the Turkey-Greece crossing.

In November 2015, an EU-Turkey summit was held in Brussels to discuss the issue of Syrian refugees and the resultant 'crisis in Europe'. This took place almost four years after the first group of Syrians fled to Turkey. The two sides arrived at an agreement that provided concessions to both of

them. Turkey accepted the task of patrolling the European Union's southern border of Greece, containing Syrian refugees within its borders, and accepting the return of Syrians who did not qualify for international protection. The European Union on its part would provide 3 billion Euros as financial assistance to Turkey in addressing the requirements of the Syrian refugees housed in the country. In return, EU would be willing to negotiate on the possibility of visa-free travel for Turkish citizens in the EU Schengen area and begin negotiations on a renewed accession process for Turkey. The dialogue for visa free travel was initiated in December 2015 as part of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement. October 2016 was set as the likely date for abolition of visas for Turkish citizens, albeit with the clause that Turkey fulfils the criteria put forth by the European Union. Turkey has been negotiating for accession since the year 2005 and has been a candidate country since 1999. The agreement opened a new chapter in the negotiation process. The protection of basic liberties and human rights were the core issues which were expected to be discussed according to the Commission's progress report of 2015.¹⁴

In the aftermath of the summit, Turkey took some measures to meet its commitments towards assisting the Syrian refugees in the country. The Turkish police raided workshops manufacturing fake life jackets that did not meet international safety standards and would not be able to keep the possible victims afloat while taking the perilous but most popular sea route: cross the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece. As many as 300 people died in that particular route as of January 2016, according to the numbers released by the International Organization for Migration. On January 2016, another step was taken by the Turkish government and the country introduced a regulation that would relax the process for acquiring work permits for Syrian refugees in Turkey. This was initiated despite the fact that Turkey exercises what is known as the 'temporary protection regime' as far as Syrians are concerned. According to the new procedure, within six months of receiving their temporary identity cards, Syrian refugees would be eligible for applying for work permits. The legislation would benefit the self-employed as well. The caveat was that the refugees would only be allowed to work within their provinces of residence and the number of Syrian refugees would be limited to 10% of the total workforce. Though the initiatives taken by Turkey to limit the number of refugees entering Europe were welcomed, certain questions still remained unanswered. Human smuggling continued to be rampant in the coastal towns of Turkey bordering Greece. In addition, Turkish authorities took action against human trafficking of the Syrian refugees rather belatedly. Moreover, as Numan Ozcan, Director of the International Labour Organization's Turkey chapter, pointed out, "It would be unrealistic to think of work permits for Syrian refugees as a magical wand that will solve all problems," highlighting the limitations of the arrangement. According to the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) around 10% of the population in Turkey was already unemployed, which was higher than the OECD average of 7%. This implied that the arrangement would benefit those Syrians who possessed resources to start their own business, while the others would continue to struggle for jobs along with the local unemployed. Significantly, it was also felt that the turn of events in Turkey towards a more authoritarian system of governance could threaten the fundamental rights of the refugees as cries of human rights abuses reverberated in Turkey.¹⁵ Since July 2016, the country had entered into a renewable regime of extended state of emergency affecting the rights of all of its citizens. While, the state of emergency was lifted on July 19, 2018, nothing much has changed as "Erdogan remains in charge and is more powerful than ever, after narrowly winning a constitutional referendum in April 2017 that granted him an "executive presidency," abolishing the role of prime minister and parliamentary system of government."¹⁶

Prior to the internal developments in Turkey, however, on 18 March 2016, representatives of the member states of the European Union and Turkey entered into a historical pact committing to “end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU” and to substitute it with “legal channels of resettlement of refugees to the European Union.” The primary objective of the pact was to substitute “disorganized, chaotic, irregular and dangerous migratory flows by organized, safe and legal pathways to Europe.” 4 April 2016 was fixed as the starting date for the return of the Syrian and other migrants to Turkey who used it as their first arrival country. The Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos of Greece and the EU stated that “we now need to honour our commitments and ensure an orderly, well managed and safe arrival and admission to Europe.” The agreement specifies that all asylum seekers or ‘irregular’ migrants were to be returned to Turkey, which was termed as a ‘third-safe country of residence,’ supposedly in keeping with EU and international law. Furthermore, according to the draft statement for the agreement on 18 March 2016, “this will be a temporary and extraordinary measure which is necessary to end the human suffering and restore public order.”¹⁷

Turkey as a “third-safe-country of residence,” denoted a space that was beyond EU jurisdiction but which operated to control the flows of migration within the EU, restoring the Schengen Area’s ‘normative order.’ As Donald Tusk (president of the European Council) put it, the aim of the agreement was “strengthening the EU’s external borders, keeping the western Balkan’s route closed and getting back to Schengen.” Likewise, Turkey by being categorized as a “third-safe-country of residence” moved away from being a “neighbour” of the Union, to a sphere of active and autonomous administration, wherein she assumed a role for herself in the EU’s border agency FRONTEX, subletting border control. This basically created a focal point for the displaced as well as enabled confinement and scrutiny of those on the lookout for access to Europe. Moreover, the agreement suggested that for every Syrian sent to Turkey, one would be rehabilitated and given asylum in the European Union. Any Syrian not granted asylum would be kept in a ‘detention camp,’ partly funded by 6 billion Euros from the EU to assist the estimated 2.7 million Syrians who were stuck in Turkey. The detention camps were termed as “safe zones” but have been subject to severe criticism for being geopolitical constructs established for security concerns rather than having a humanitarian basis. Bill Frelick, the Refugee Rights Director at Human Rights Watch termed the process as “this means using vulnerable civilians like pawns on a chess board.”¹⁸

It is true that European Union’s actions could perhaps be analyzed from a humanitarian perspective as well, wherein the situation could be considered as exceptional and where the EU felt a sense of responsibility towards the devastating poverty, overwhelming impenetrability of borders and the overall suffering of the migrants affected, who were stranded along the boundaries of Europe. On the other hand, the migrants gathered on its borders were quickly portrayed as a risk in terms of the security of the EU and in this sense the task of the EU shifted from being humanitarian to performing a dual role where internal security became as important as saving human lives. This has been termed as the collapsing of ‘security into justice,’ wherein preserving territorial integrity is pitted against the safety of migrants. The upshot of this process is that it often plays into ‘anti-immigration’ rhetoric where the ‘migrant’ becomes coterminous with the ‘terrorist.’ Against this backdrop, the agreement with Turkey has been interpreted as the European Union’s quest for striking an equilibrium between maintaining a tight grip over its territory and displaying the bare minimum responsibility towards the migrants who arrived at it. Still, the utilization of Turkey as a “safe space” was an awkward continuation and aggravation of the process of exteriorization of accountability, wherein the European Union uses it as an enclave of camps and structures to aid migrants to remain immobile, while Turkey occupies the role of an independent migration processing entity. In this

sense, the instant objective of this pact was to safeguard the unfurling humanitarian calamity that the migration crisis had put forth by employing subtle methods of mass-evacuation within the parameters of permissibility through the facade of international treaty law and refugee law.¹⁹

Reading the Accord

In an interesting piece for *Open Democracy* entitled “Zones of turbulence in the wake of EU-Turkey’s migration agreement,” Evan Stanley Jones compared the EU-Turkey deal of March 2016 with the *1838 Treaty of Balta Limani*, or the *Anglo-Ottoman Treaty*.²⁰ The trade treaty was signed by the British with a view to abolish all Ottoman monopolies and thereby facilitate equal levels of taxation and full access to Ottoman markets for British traders. The purpose of the analogy is to state that liberalization is a method to capitalize on turmoil. The uncertainty of that period where the Ottomans felt threatened by Egypt and by the prospect of a Russian involvement led to the signing of this treaty which enabled the British merchants to benefit from trade with the Ottomans, culminating in a boost for the British economy. The political turbulence of the time was exploited by the British in the economic sense and it led to a widening disparity between the British and the Ottoman Empires. Jones contends that in the contemporary context, the ‘restoration of order’ as a consequence of the EU-Turkey pact in practice facilitates a ‘return of order for liberal markets and political economy’ in a similar fashion. While the Ottomans lost out as a consequence of the *Balta Limani* treaty back in 1838, the real losers of the EU-Turkey pact would be the migrants. Particularly, after the failed coup attempt in Turkey, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan consolidated his authority and became even more of a central player in the EU-Turkey dealings. Despite the authoritarian measures adopted by him, he came in for limited criticism by the European Union. Thus Jones concluded,

The comparison I want to make between the EU and the British in 1838 lies in how the economization of regional instability makes acceptable the braiding of human rights-violating exceptional measures with liberal humanitarianism, a mechanism which is playing itself out with massive consequence, not only on the borders of the Mediterranean, but on the streets and in the schools of Turkey.²¹

Needless to say, the EU-Turkey deal on refugees has been under close scrutiny. It has been extensively analyzed and written about. Thus far, the agreement has been widely labelled as an attempt by the EU members to regulate the influx of the refugees and asylum seekers to their advantage. According to Jeff Crisp, for instance, the three main features of the deal between the EU and Turkey clearly revealed the intent of the industrialized world in the Global North to look for other options and methods to restrict the entry of asylum seekers.²²

The first is the establishment of “safe zones” in countries of origin limiting the need and ability of people to seek asylum in other states. The second is that of “migration management” and “offshore processing” agreements, usually involving cooperation between the industrialised states and less prosperous countries in the same region. The third is that of legitimizing state strategies by securing the involvement of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other international organizations.²³

Crisp also referred to the ambiguity of some of the other clauses such as the European Union’s commitment “to work with Turkey in any joint endeavour to improve humanitarian

conditions inside Syria which would allow for the local population and refugees to live in areas which will be more safe.”²⁴ It is difficult to conceive in a concrete sense as to how the conditions within Syria can be improved by outside involvement. Moreover, the EU-Turkey deal envisions the automatic and immediate return of refugees from Greece to Turkey, which is difficult to comprehend, considering the exorbitant and perilous nature of the journey that the refugees have to undertake to reach that country if the boats are flagged while at sea. While the UNHCR and the IOM have been eagerly courted by the EU to accord legitimacy and competency to the pact, the cumbersome question that arose was how these organizations would then deal with the resettlement clause. The UNHCR on its part stated that “resettlement should not be conditional on external factors, and the protection needs of the individual remain the priority,” a statement itself rooted in ambiguity.²⁵

As Define Goenenc rightly pointed out, Syrian refugees were acutely aware of the deteriorating condition inside Syria and as such they were on the lookout for a new life in a new homeland. The risk involved in the arduous journey was no secret to them. Under these circumstances would they want to leave Europe after having undertaken a death-defying trek? Moreover, the legality of this deal continues to be questionable. Even though Turkey has ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, there is a major constraint: Turkey only grants refugee status to the people of European nationality and/or origin and as a consequence of an alteration in domestic law, it only offers temporary protection to the Syrians. As such it need not treat Syrians in conformity with the Geneva Convention or the Refugee Convention. This is apparent in the way Turkey has been handling at least some of the Syrian refugees with the use of coercive measures and arbitrary detentions. Some of the migrants have been sent back to their country of origin due to security reasons. The protests within Turkey against the refugees and the general discontent about the admissions en masse is at least partly because the EU-Turkey pact is perceived as discriminatory with Turkey having to bear the responsibility for the bulk of Syrian refugees. However, critics contend that the agreement is in reality unfair for the migrants and not Turkey or the Turkish people *per se*. Turkey is not the preferred destination due to its heavy-handed government exercising autocratic measures, rather inefficient education system to accommodate millions of Syrian children and the rampant inequality and unsafe nature of existence for the refugees. Turkey, on its part could make amends by not being involved in the civil war in Syria or elsewhere, and most importantly by addressing the vital question of inequality in living standards in the country.²⁶

The EU in its bid to control the massive influx of refugees concluded that cooperation with Turkey should be a priority as it would facilitate the fulfillment of its immediate objective of reduced or even completely no refugee entries as well as an increase in the rate of evictions. However, Carrera and Drakopolou opined that the transfer of responsibility in providing protection and the decline in the numbers of those who require such protection as they moved from Turkey to Greece were achieved at the expense of deep political, legal and ethical costs. These costs included grave ‘political instability and insecurity in Turkey,’ which did not constitute a safe haven for refugees, an incapacitated Greece, which was not in a position to receive and provide international protection to the refugees and asylum seekers, and the emergence of a new politics and policies of crisis management in the EU and European Commission that perceived the rights of the refugees and the rule of law as negotiable.²⁷

The Aftermath

The image of 3-year-old Alan Kurdi, who drowned trying to escape to Greece but ended up washed back to the shore of a fancy Turkish beach resort, brought back the world's focus on Europe's Middle Eastern refugee crisis. This was despite the fact that the crisis was not 'Europe's own' but Europe's making. Issues of compassion and humanitarian assistance are no doubt very important but equally significant is the fact that the global North is all too keen to abandon their role of amelioration of lives effected by the Syrian crisis. It would be foolish to think that what happens in the Middle East will be confined to the region, be it terror groups or refugees.²⁸

As the supposed European 'migration crisis' escalated, some of the refugees were in a quest for new/alternative routes, others got trapped in transit, while still others were trying to run away from Europe to North America. In this context, Squire and Touhouliotis raised the following questions that remain germane to the subject:

How far is Europe willing to go to fulfil its deterrent migration agenda? If the aim is to create such dire conditions that people are forced to take flight in the opposite direction, Europe may finally be succeeding with its otherwise failing approach. Yet success and failure are hard to disentangle in this context. Where deterrence fails it can still have productive effects for architecture of coercion that thrives on precariousness. And where it succeeds, deterrence fails so many people in so many ways. Driving people away or leaving them in a social and legal limbo is not an answer to Europe's so-called 'migration crisis.' A new agenda on migration is long overdue, and needs to be grounded in an appreciation of each person's inherent potential rather than in a drive to deter 'unwanted' people.²⁹

As the much-hyped EU-Turkey deal started to falter, the number of Syrian as well as other refugees began fleeing from Turkey to Greece yet again. In its initial period, the deal seemed to be working well with the number of migrants fleeing into Europe dipping. In September 2016, only a thousand or so Syrians, Afghans, Pakistani and Iraqis arrived in Greece. It became evident that the animosity between Turkey and Europe was on the rise since the Turkish state under Erdogan's presidency reacted to a failed coup attempt with extensive purges. As a consequence, the EU-Turkey migrant deal appeared to be progressively more dubious, and Europe faced the prospects of the rekindling of a disaster, which had already deranged its political scene. In an effort to frantically thwart that, European officials were quick to engage in negotiations with Turkish leaders yet again. The European Union's foreign policy head, Federica Mogherini, and its enlargement commissioner, Johannes Hahn, paid a visit to Turkey, becoming the highest-level European leaders to take a trip to Turkey since the unsuccessful coup attempt.³⁰ Analyzing the series of political maneuvers in the aftermath of the 'summer of migration' leading to the refugee agreement, Lucy Williams observed, by using Turkey merely as an expedient safeguard against surplus refugees, the EU is indignantly playing into the Turkish government's domestic politics which will keep the migrants disenfranchised and under state control, likely to be used for additional votes for the upcoming referendum seeking a regime change. As in other places, migrants in Turkey are valuable as scapegoats who render cheap labour to the market but who have no say as far as the use of resources of the state are concerned. EU's policy in the context of Turkey is therefore perceived as temporary and sceptical in nature, stimulated by the aspiration to find a collaborator to repress the "human product of global security" than by looking for a compassionate solution to actual needs of Syrians on the move.³¹ In Syria, we may die one day. Here we die every day.³²

During 1-3 September 2016, there were widespread protests and demonstrations by Syrian refugees in different cities of Greece where they were residing. The demands were along the lines of

opening the Greek borders to arriving Syrians and those who wish to leave Greece; taking better care of the refugees in the camps; and urging the authorities that the refugees be treated with dignity. The underlying message to the European Union was to open the Greek border so that they could enter the rest of Europe; they urged the EU to improve the conditions in the camps, some of which were devoid of basic facilities. Above all, they pointed out the urgent need for monetary assistance to make use of their skills and support themselves in the long run.³³

Over three years have passed by since the world was captivated by images of frantic men, women and children pouring into Europe. Today, interest in their plight has waned considerably. Borders have been shut and Syrian arrivals to Europe are mostly restricted to camps. Moreover, anti-immigrant feelings have escalated in many of the European countries, particularly as people who came to Europe with the Syrian exodus have been accused of alleged criminal links and, in some instances with terror attacks planned by terror outfits such as the Islamic State. Neither the affluent countries of Western and Northern Europe, which the refugees want to inhabit, nor Turkey, their point of exit for the Continent, appear to be in the mood to keep their promises of aid and assistance in full.³⁴ In the words of a Syrian refugee:

We fled a war, and now the European Union is making war against us, a psychological war. When we hear rumors that we'll be let into Europe, we celebrate. These leaders give us new hope, then they extinguish it. Why did you open the door to refugees? Why did you welcome people? If they had stopped it before, we would not have come. We would not have risked death, me and my children, and thousands of others, to make the crossing.³⁵

It has been a little over two years since the EU-Turkey refugee agreement was signed and disagreements between the two parties persist. While figures released by the United Nations state that Turkey has been hosting 2,900,000 refugees. Turkey, on the other hand, contends that their number of late has risen to around 3,500,000 and has now and again threatened to call off the agreement as the EU has not paid the specified amount due to her, and the removal of visa restrictions for Turkish citizens stipulated in the agreement has not been executed. For the EU, the problem centers on how to obtain the money, whereas for Turkey the more significant question has been when the money would come. As part of the settlement, Turkey was assured of €6 billion in financial assistance, to be used by the Turkish government for funding schemes for Syrian refugees. The EU Commission states that €3 billion has been given to Turkey to bear the expenses of educating half a million Syrian children. The Turkish government, in contrast, professed that it had so far obtained €1.85 billion from the EU. Turkey receives monetary aid from the EU by way of projects. The aid is not supplied to the government reserves. Since 2016, in the aftermath of the agreement, the number of refugees arriving into Europe illicitly through the Aegean Sea declined. Despite the figures being far below those of 2015 when the crisis arose, Gerald Knaus, the architect of the refugee deal and chairman of the European Stability Initiative (ESI), considers the agreement to be in jeopardy. In his opinion, during the first six months of 2017, nearly 9,000 people arrived in Europe through the Aegean Sea, whereas in the next six months the number arose to 20,000. However, the EU Commission contends that the number of refugees who reached Greece declined by 97 percent in contrast to the period prior to the agreement. Meanwhile, Syrians in Turkey continue to be deprived of official refugee status, and, consequently their state of affairs do not qualify international criteria of protection. It is estimated that almost a thousand Syrians are placed under temporary protection per day with merely 20,000 Syrians possessing work permit and no less than 800,000 working illegitimately, a sizeable number of whom are children.³⁶ While the impasse between the signatories to the agreement continues, the plight of the refugee persists.

James Hathway has observed that the model approach to implementing the Refugee Convention should take cognizance of a few core principles. Any reform programme should take into account the situation of all states and not merely the few powerful nations. The international refugee system should plan for rather than merely respond to refugee movements. Any international protection programme for the refugees should include a ‘common but differentiated responsibility,’ that is, not all states involved in the movement of the refugees should have to play the same protection roles. There should be a moving away from national towards an international system of administration of refugee protection, preferably in the form of a rejuvenated UNHCR. Finally, according to Hathway, migration is to be seen as a ‘means to protection and not as an end in itself.’ In other words, ‘protection is for the duration of risk, not necessarily permanent immigration.’³⁷

In the same spirit, the following words of the *Open Society Initiative* underline the necessity to look for an alternative migration and asylum policy:

The EU should commit to building a single asylum and migration system that establishes safe, legal means of migration. This requires the political will to recognize that existing approaches to migration have created the appearance of failure and crisis. Europe needs sustainable, affordable migration systems and popular understanding and support for these.³⁸

Marc Pierini aptly sums up the imbroglio,

The most tragic consequence of the war in Syria is the unspeakable suffering of Syrians of all creeds and ages, a trauma bound to generate frustration and resentment for generations to come. And inevitably, the EU’s foreign policy ambitions will be judged at least in part on its contribution to the alleviation of Syrians’ suffering, while at home, EU leaders seem set to pay a heavy political price for not finding a course of action that European citizens deem appropriate.³⁹

Why is the Summer of Migration Exceptional?

This certainly isn’t the first time nor will it be the last time that migrants in sizeable numbers have and will continue to enter Europe or elsewhere as a result of multiple factors, but as Manuela Bojadžijev and Sandro Mezzadra assert the “geography of the current crisis is significantly different.” Three crucial events initiated what could be termed as the European migration crisis in 2015. The first took place on April 19, 2015, when a ship carrying around 800 migrants and refugees sunk on the way from Tripoli to Italy with only 27 survivors. It is supposed to be the worst incident on the Mediterranean. It prompted considerable amount of debate regarding the condition of the vessels that were attempting to transport migrants across the sea in inclement weather conditions, devoid of technical equipment, safety amenities and so on. The second occurrence which took place on September 3, was the images of the drowned Syrian child Alan Kurdi whose body was swept back to the shore near Bodrum in Turkey after an unsuccessful attempt to touch the Greek island of Kos along with his family. The poignant and disturbing image transformed the comprehension of the events, and as Bojadžijev and Mezzadra observed “it is impossible to underestimate the effect of the circulation of that photo.” Even though anti-immigrant skeptics apportion the culpability on the father and family, questioning “what kind of father would make such a hazardous journey with a small child”, the prevailing reaction was a request for empathy and for unity with the predicament and cause of the asylum seekers crossing the waters. The third event that reinforced the narrative of the refugee crisis occurred on September 5. Countless migrants and refugees had been encamped at the Budapest Keleti railway station, and Hungarian police began refusing them entrance to the trains

and were commencing to redirect them to detention camps beyond the city. This spontaneously instigated a large number of refugees to mobilize and they began reciting ‘freedom!’ and quickly marched on to the road that lead toward Vienna in what came to be described as ‘the March of Hope’. The Hungarian authorities yielded and with devious incentives abetted the marchers toward Austria and Germany who then stated their borders to be open. The event indicated two corollaries simultaneously. Due to actual failure of the Dublin process, the EU structure was incapable to contend with the circumstances. The 2015 “long summer of migration” signified a conflict between the principles of Schengen—suggesting that asylum seekers could move to their chosen places after arriving in the EU—and those of Dublin II processes. At one go, the marchers pressed for European solidarity, embodied by a man holding the flag of the European Union at the forefront of the march, and it prompted the evolution of a throng of solidarity systems—alternatively reinforced the existence of the prevailing ones, making them discernible, throughout Europe.⁴⁰

Reframing the “European Migration Crisis”: Emerging Tropes

As the debate on the nature of the ‘European Migration Crisis’ in the aftermath of the influx of refugees in 2015 continues to be debated, one is reminded of the words of Agamben on the “state of exception” and the consequent control regime that it establishes

The concept ‘crisis’ has indeed become a motto of modern politics, and for a long time it has been part of normality in any segment of social life. [...] ‘Crisis’ in ancient medicine meant a judgement, when the doctor noted at the decisive moment whether the sick person would survive or die. The present understanding of crisis, on the other hand, refers to an enduring state. So this uncertainty is extended into the future, indefinitely. It is exactly the same with the theological sense; the Last Judgement was inseparable from the end of time. Today, however, judgement is divorced from the idea of resolution and repeatedly postponed. So the prospect of a decision is ever less, and an endless process of decision never concludes. Today crisis has become an instrument of rule. It serves to legitimize political and economic decisions that in fact dispossess citizens and deprive them of any possibility of decision.⁴¹

A short piece by Rajaram, written in the wake of the “summer of migration,” follows the same trajectory as he dismisses the crisis theory completely.

The refugee crisis in Europe is fabricated. Like most “crises,” the recent onset of people from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan trying to cross into the European Union is a representation. Anxiety and specific readings of law and humanitarianism frame this issue. This framing works inward as well as outward. Inward, it establishes a dominant regulating norm—an idea of “the refugee”—that allows for internal comparison and inequalities (people are said to have varying rights to protection). Outward, the framing helps create an understanding of a complex situation—an *abstracted* understanding—and allows for policy makers and commentators to treat “the refugee crisis” as an exceptional condition.⁴²

By and large, most academics accept that Europe has been experiencing what has been termed as a crisis. On the other hand, there is not much unanimity on the kind of crisis Europe is undergoing and the way it should be construed and constructed.⁴³ There appears to be a plethora of transposable dialogues, constructs, and accounts. All of them imply precise interpretations as well as extrapolative and analytical constructs. Though the concept ‘refugee crisis’ possibly has been the overriding construct, other terms have also been in vogue, such as ‘migrant crisis’, which in fact appropriately includes both the refugee issue and the migration to Europe in a wider sense. At times,

the concept of a 'humanitarian crisis' has been espoused that as opposed to emphasizing on the ramifications in human terms also underlines discrimination and produces divisions among 'wanted and unwanted migrants' and eventually is connected to a 'crisis of the asylum system' and/or a 'crisis of the European border' and 'border control.'⁴⁴ An indication towards the breakdown of the 'border regime' converts the crisis into a 'crisis of the EU', of 'the Schengen zone' and in the final analysis a 'crisis of the political idea of Europe'. These interchanging constructions of the crisis are also connected to other imposing interpretations of the crisis. Therefore, the refugee crisis is linked to concepts such as 'the economic crisis', 'the financial crisis', 'the debt crisis', the 'banking crisis', 'the housing crisis', and so on. In this sense, the refugee crisis is connected to the neoliberal expressions of essential austerity measures. Greece, for example, is cited as a case study of a nation that has been incapable of dealing with the influx of refugees owing to a historic nonexistence of economic accountability and is in danger of additional economic sanctions if it fails to contend with the refugee issue.⁴⁵ The fusion of austerity measures along with refugee safeguards reinforces divisions between 'genuine' refugees and 'economic migrants' who have migrated solely for money; desirable and undesirable migrants; and essentially who is justified and who is not. The most recent development is possibly toward the construct, 'security crisis' in the aftermath of the most unfortunate events in Paris and Brussels where refugees by and large became prospective extremists instantaneously, notwithstanding the reality that the culprits and planners of these attacks were European residents for a considerable period of time. The cultural undertone with respect to the crisis has led to various kinds of stereotyping of 'Muslim extremism' and the notion of fanatics 'hiding' amongst the refugees in search of safety in Europe. The descriptions and categorizations of 'strangeness', 'ontological difference', and 'un-Europeanness' of the refugees was reinforced after the episode in Cologne during the public celebrations of New Year's Eve of 2015/2016 when a few predominantly North-African (Moroccan and Tunisian) migrants were blamed for sexually abusing revelers. This in turn, conjured the idea of a 'moral crisis'. Then again, the failure of the European Union and European nations to regulate the crisis in terms of offering feasible answers/alternatives has created another category of 'the crisis of legitimacy.' The crisis continues to be constructed and reconstructed in myriad new ways.⁴⁶

Samaddar, terming "Europe as the last liberal empire" and migration "as the unconscious tool of history to end the last liberal empire in the modern age", explicates the contradictory tendencies and practices that are inherent and have been adopted by the European Union with respect to immigration and refugees and has in turn contributed to the so called European Migration Crisis. Samaddar, therefore considers the supposed European Migration Crisis to be intertwined with the currency crisis.

Europe achieved continental unification through economic means, liberal constitutionalism, and currency union. It sets goals of peace and security that encourage everyone to be a liberal with unfettered freedom to access the market and, on the other hand, allow the European Union to follow interventionist policies near abroad. The consequences of the union are to be found in Europe's restrictive and contradictory policies and programmes relating to immigration and refugee protection. European migration crisis originates from this.⁴⁷

Samaddar elaborates upon the reason behind the categorization of the migration that took place from 2015 onwards as a crisis, as it was superimposed on multiple inherent fault lines within the European space.

Europe was the last liberal empire in history. It had achieved unification after the Second World War through dialogues on coal and steel, peace, and economic means, it established a charter of rights, it founded a European Court of human rights, it curbed nationalism, it broadly attained currency union and held peace and security as the goal of the union, and finally as Lord Dahrendorf remarked after the annus mirabilis of 1989, it encouraged everyone to be a liberal with unfettered freedom to access the market so much so that countries in the east of Europe joined one after another the union to make it a true empire two centuries after Napoleon Bonaparte had failed to create one and had provoked unwittingly the first concert of the continent in 1815. Yet crucial fault lines remained. The peaceful empire was built in the last fifty years on whiteness of skin, a particular faith called Christianity, anti-communism, stringent anti-immigration laws and practices, neoliberal tools of economic coordination, massive banks, and geopolitically what turned out to be most uncertain for the fate of the continent, that is doing away with the old fuzzy division of the continent into west, middle, and the east. The present crisis of Europe in the wake of the entry of massive numbers of migrants from the Middle East and North Africa is perched on all these fault lines. The immigrants are non-Europeans, they are predominantly Muslims, quite a lot of them are not white, and they have disturbed the seamless nature of the united space called Europe, because the old divisions into west, middle, and the east have now resurfaced in the wake of the migrant rush.⁴⁸

Solidarities and Resistances

'We are facing the biggest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. Above all, this is not just a crisis of numbers; it is also a crisis of solidarity. [...] We must respond to a monumental crisis with monumental solidarity' (UN 2016).⁴⁹

Even as the refugees continue to occupy the lowest rung of the social and economic fabric in the host states, the plethora of activities and initiatives that are being undertaken to support the refugees who have completed the perilous journey to Europe in search of asylum, traveling through the Mediterranean Sea or South-Eastern Europe necessitate a second look at the so-called European Migration Crisis.⁵⁰ There have been sustained efforts at the inclusion of migrants in the realm of citizenship rights, as Isin and Turner point out

From aboriginal rights, women's rights, civil rights, and sexual rights for gays and lesbians to animal rights, language rights and disability rights, we have experienced in the past few decades a major trend in Western nation-states toward the formation of new claims for inclusion and belonging.⁵¹

At the same time, Huysmans and Guillaume contend that there are sustained attempts in retaining the exclusive nature of citizenship vis-à-vis the migrants

While citizenship has been an instrument of crafting a people of equals, in which rights are universal and not a privilege, historically it has also been a vehicle for working differentiations within this universal people. On the one hand, citizens comprise a people united around a body of law and rights and/or a set of narratives about its origins. Both allow the people to recognize themselves as a collective unity with political status. On the other hand, citizenship is constituted in relation to those without rights or limited rights, those who remain outside of the narratives of the people's community of origin. In this continuum between inclusion and exclusion citizens are actually stratified, rather than dichotomized. Rights are often assigned differentially and citizens do have different capacities to claim rights within the citizenry body.⁵²

In addition to citizenship discourses, studies on migrant movements have also emphasized the equation between "states and markets", defining critical moments globally. In other words,

research on migration has explored the consequences of capitalism on the movements for citizenship. In the context of the large scale migration into Europe in the summer of 2015, the demonstrations or solidarity movements have also been examined in terms of a crisis of neoliberalism as changes in the capitalist methods of utilization began to have a profound impact on the mobilization of migrants. Early attempts at mobilization had articulated the need for absorption of migrants into the economy. In the aftermath of the “global crisis of 1970” a restrictive policy towards migrants was adopted which triggered a spate of demonstrations demanding a more inclusive approach. It was neoliberalism that changed the migration scenario. There were clamors against the discriminatory approach towards migrants who came under fire, becoming objects of vilification, looked upon as intruders and criminals, detrimental for global security and stability; on the other hand, states began to adopt increasingly restrictive border policies even as the neoliberal economy continued to augment the demand for inexpensive, malleable and acquiescent labour.⁵³ Migration policies within the neoliberal paradigm recognizes a degree of fluctuation in migration but at the same time is founded on suppression, in the process denying the migrant rights, for instance, personified by EU’s restrictive border policies and surveillance of the Mediterranean sea. At the same time, limited movement is acceptable as echoed by Mezzadra, “European policies on migration, despite their rhetoric, do not aim to hermetically seal European borders. Their objective and their effect is the establishment of a system of dams and eventually the production of an active process of inclusion of migrant labor by means of its criminalization.”⁵⁴ Fassin, on the other hand, contends that the migrants who do not have documents at their disposal are denied basic rights and their movements are controlled.⁵⁵ Pero and Solomos opine that demonstrations have demanded basic human rights and have opposed the abuse of such rights in makeshift detention centers, occasionally assuming a global character.⁵⁶ Simultaneously, nonetheless, as McNevin sums it, “the militarization of state and regional borders represents performances of political closure designed to assuage those made vulnerable by neoliberal economic trajectory.”⁵⁷

Certain decisive moments can be identified as far as the migration of 2015 is concerned that indicate the expression and enactment of a more inclusive variety of political participation. For instance, September 12, 2015, was an important date in the context of solidarity movements. In more than 85 cities in 30 countries across Europe, a massive number of protesters streamed under placards of “Refugees Welcome” and “Europe Says Welcome.” Citizens of various European nations participated in protest marches clearly articulating that refugees were welcome. In numerous European nations, enterprises have been initiated that involve innovative practices of daily politics that symbolize solidarity. There are countless instances that encompass acts such as “Austrian lorry drivers who joined a campaign to pick up refugees stranded in Budapest to locally organized mobilizations which provided support for arriving refugees, donating food, water, clothes, and other supplies to those in need.”⁵⁸ There is a growing perception that across Europe and beyond, the “refugee crisis’ is in fact encountering with the advent of a “welcoming culture”.⁵⁹ Della Porta observed that the humanitarian crisis in 2016 strengthened the opinion that the formal structures, at all echelons were inept at contending and dealing with the predicament. Furthermore, according to Della Porta “political opportunities are, therefore, to be located within a critical juncture that challenged existing institutions.”⁶⁰ The evolution of a ‘welcoming culture’ can be traced to the political spaces provided by both the crisis and the inability of the member states as well as the EU to provide for a logical and reasonable resolution. For Stuart Hall, crises are instants of impending transformation, but minus a specified purpose. A confluence indicates shifts amid political instants and can be explained as “a period during which the different social, political, economic and ideological contradictions that are at work in society come together to give it a specific and distinctive

shape.”⁶¹ Solidarity, in the intersection of the economic crisis and the ‘refugee crisis’, can lead to the creation and conversion of the political spaces that are accessible into options. Founded on Massey’s notion of enunciating convergences in distinct and fruitful ways, David and Karaliotas underline the significance of accepting the reasoning of the crisis and their ramifications on divergent sections to “envison articulations of solidarities/alternatives across differences in the context of the European crisis.”⁶²

As multiple analyses on the myriad ways in which the state and individuals continue to restrict and resist the inflow of migrants continue, the network of solidarities, at the same time, appear to gain momentum

[There are] No Border activists, activists of self-organised migrant groups, feminists and others who identify as part of the undogmatic or party- political left and who increasingly campaign for refugee rights. Moreover, supporters include also many NGOs, church-based charities, established migrant organisations, left-wing academics and artists, as well as some groups within trade unions and political parties. In 2015, the long summer of migration has demonstrated that many of those who are not explicitly organised in political parties, religious organisations or civil society seek to help refugees based on humanitarian or other concerns. And, not least, many refugees or those who once personally experienced flight in their past have become supporters of today’s refugee and with them transversal forms of politics that do not essentialise differences but acknowledge the different experiences and realities of those encountering one another.⁶³

Notes

¹Efthimios Papataxiarchis, “Being “There”: At the Front Line of the “European Refugee Crisis”, Part 2. *Anthropology Today*, 2016, 32: 7; Donatella della Porta, “Contentious Moves: Mobilising for Refugees’ Rights”, in Donatella della Porta (Ed) *Solidarity Mobilizations in the ‘Refugee Crisis’: Contentious Moves*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p.5. This explains the fundamental change that took place in the island of Lesbos, where millions of refugees entered Europe in 2015.

² Leonie Ansems De Vries and Marta Welander, “Refugees, displacement, and the European ‘politics of exhaustion,’” *Open Democracy*, 30 September, 2016. See <https://www.opendemocracy.net/mediterranean-journeys-in-hope/leonie-ansems-de-vries-marta-welander/refugees-displacement-and-europ> (accessed 12.01.2017)

³ “A million refugees and migrants flee to Europe in 2015,” *UNHCR/IOM*, 22 December, 2015. See <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2015/12/567918556/million-refugees-migrants-flee-europe-2015.html> (accessed 12.01.2017)

⁴ “Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts,” *BBC News*, 4 March, 2016. See <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911> (accessed 12.01.2017)

⁵ “A million refugees and migrants flee to Europe in 2015,” *UNHCR/IOM*, 22 December, 2015. See <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2015/12/567918556/million-refugees-migrants-flee-europe-2015.html> (accessed 12.01.2017)

⁶Susmita Baral, “Refugee Crisis 2016 in Europe: Death Toll and Migrant Arrival Increases, Statistics Show,” *International Business Time*, 10 August, 2016. See <http://www.ibtimes.com/refugee-crisis-2016-europe-death-toll-migrant-arrival-increases-statistics-show-2399933> (accessed 12.01.2017)

⁷ IOM. 2018. “Missing Migrants—Tracking Deaths Along Migratory Routes.” See <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>. (accessed on 12/12/2018)

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