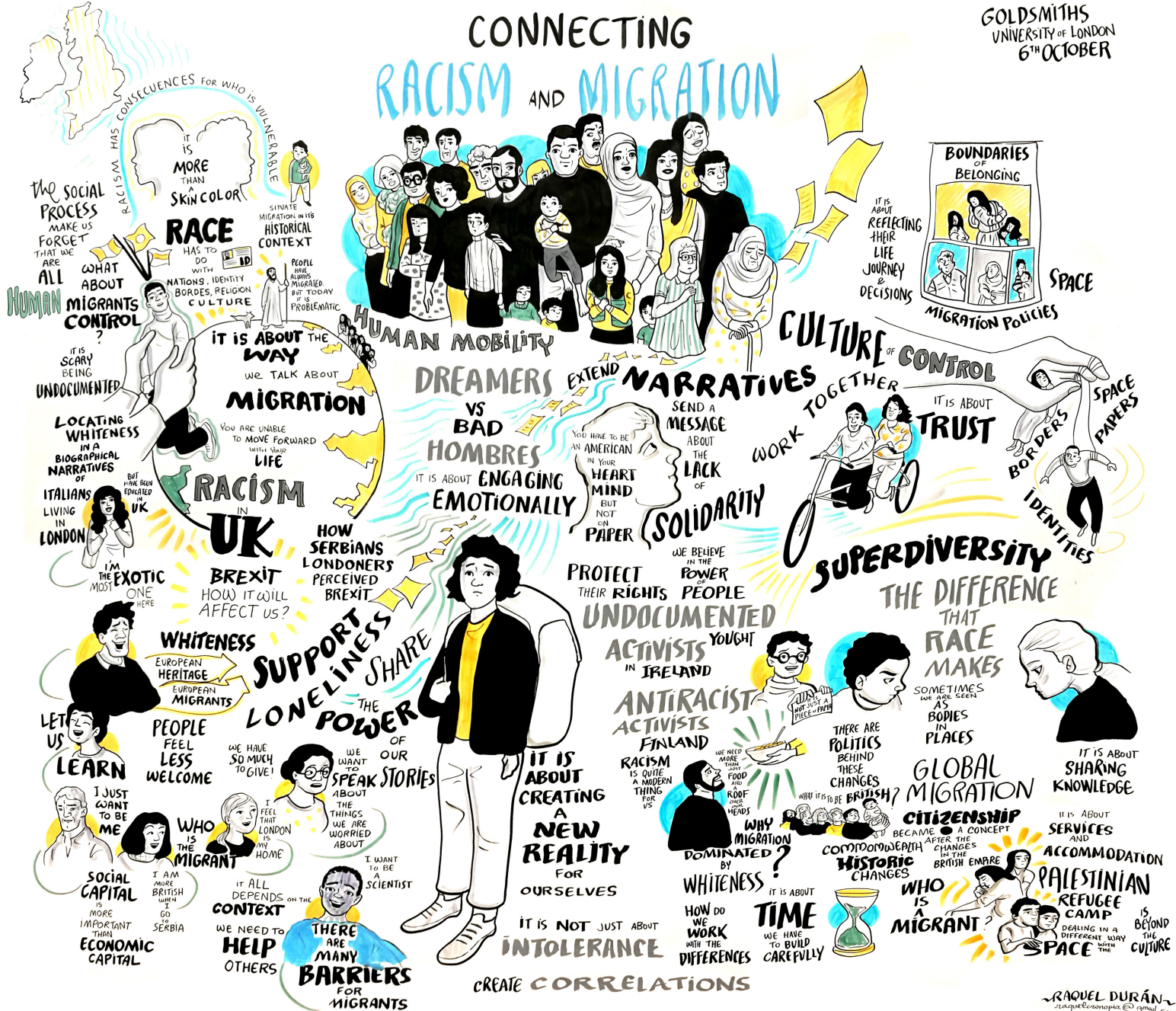


# A Conversation Connecting Racism and Migration

## International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives

GOLDSMITHS  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON  
6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER



edited by

Laura Henneke, Vanessa Hughes, Peter Rees, Ignacio Rivera, Kaoru Takahashi and Sarah Walker

**Graduate Journal of Social Science June 2019, Volume 15, Issue 1**

**Editors:**

James Beresford, University of Leeds, UK  
Alankaar Sharma, The University of Sydney, Australia  
[editors@gjss.org](mailto:editors@gjss.org)

**Guest Editors:**

Laura Henneke, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK  
Vanessa Hughe, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK  
Peter Rees, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK  
Ignacio Rivera, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK  
Kaoru Takahashi, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK  
Sarah Walker, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

**Copy Editors:**

Kamalika Jayathilaka, University of Leeds, UK  
Laura Clancy, Lancaster University, UK

**Web Editor:**

Michael En, University of Vienna, Austria

**Layout & Design Editor:**

Boka En, University of Vienna, Austria

**Cover Image:**

Raquel Durán

The Graduate Journal of Social Science (ISSN: 1572-3763) is an open-access online journal focusing on methodological and theoretical issues of interdisciplinary relevance. The journal publishes two issues per year, one of which is thematic and one of which groups innovative and instructive papers from all disciplines. GJSS welcomes submissions from both senior and junior academics, thus providing a forum of publication and exchange among different generations engaged in interdisciplinary research. GJSS is published by EBSCO publishing.

For subscription inquiries, requests, and changes, please contact [editors@gjss.org](mailto:editors@gjss.org).

All the content and downloads are published under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 3.0 license.





# Contents

## **Editorial: Connecting Racism and Migration**

<i>Ignacio Rivera</i> .....	7
Being Black, being British, being Ghanaian – A Discussion on Belonging <i>Yvette Twumasi-Ankrah</i> .....	12
The Politics of Identity and Notions of Home: How Serbian Londoners Perceived Brexit <i>Sanja Vico</i> .....	36
Safe Havens and Prison Islands: The Politics of Protection and Deterrence of Border Crossers on Lesbos Island <i>Evgenia Iliadou</i> .....	62
Space of Refuge: constructing a spatial dialogue inside the Palestinian refugee camp <i>Samar Maqusi</i> .....	89
Breaking New Ground – Let Us Learn Story <i>Dami Makinde</i> .....	119
Poem and Art works: (B)e C(o)ncious <i>Bo Thai</i> .....	124

## Contributors

**Yvette Ankrah** was awarded at the Institute of Education, UCL. She researches second generation Ghanaians, belonging, identity, race and class. Outside of academia, she is a business coach and consultant supporting women in business. She was awarded an MBE in 2017 for her campaigning work in this field. Email: [Yvette@yankrah.co.uk](mailto:Yvette@yankrah.co.uk)

**Raquel Durán** is a graphic recorder/scriber/visual facilitator based in UK. She has been working as a freelance visual facilitator since 2012, and her work includes documenting events at the University of Sussex, Borough Market and City Hall, London. Raquel has got the first award for short stories contest at Museo Thyssen Madrid in 2012. blog: <https://raquelcronopia.wordpress.com/>

**Evgenia Iliadou** (PhD student) Department of Social Policy and Criminology, The Open University (OU). My research is focusing on the refugee “crisis” and the intersectional forms of violence and social harm which border crossers experience en route to Europe. The case study of my research is Lesbos Island. My main research interests are around issues of borders, border harms, state violence and social harm. Email: [evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk](mailto:evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk)

**Samar Maqusi**: PhD Architectural Design, Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. UN-RWA HQ-A. Samar is an architect and urban specialist with 10+ years of experience in international development, including urban planning and development in conflict areas. Samar recently obtained her PhD from the Bartlett School of Architecture in London. <http://samarmaqusi.com/> Contact: [samarmaqusi@gmail.com](mailto:samarmaqusi@gmail.com)

**Sanja Vico** was awarded a PHD and is an Associate Lecturer at the Department of Media and Communications, at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her research interests include social and mobile media, migration, identities, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, social class, gender, and media audiences. Email: [s.vico@gold.ac.uk](mailto:s.vico@gold.ac.uk)

**Dami Makinde, Let Us Learn.** Dami was born in Nigeria and brought to the UK when she was 8 years old. She joined Let Us Learn in February 2015 and told her story in the Guardian newspaper in the run up to the Tigere legal challenge. Dami now works full time on the campaign and coordinates the Let Us Learn campaign team. Contact: [DamiMakinde@justforkidslaw.org](mailto:DamiMakinde@justforkidslaw.org)

**Boonyarit Daraphant, aka Bo Thai,** is an artist, activist, and a senior at University of California, Irvine. He migrated to the US from Thailand at the age of 13 in 2009. He advocates for immigrant rights, and creates poetry and artwork inspired by surrealism, graffiti, Thai art, and folk art. Instagram [@thebothai](https://www.instagram.com/thebothai)

## Editors

**Laura Henneke** is a PhD student in Visual Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London, researching the migration of transnational traders along the New Silk Road. She is co-founder of Present Spaces and an active member of Goldsmiths' Centre for Urban and Community Research. Email: [l.henneke@gold.ac.uk](mailto:l.henneke@gold.ac.uk)

**Vanessa Hughes** is a PhD candidate in Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London, researching undocumented young migrants' lives in London. She previously worked at COMPAS, Oxford University and published 'Citizenship and its Others' with Professor Bridget Anderson among others. Email: [v.hughes@gold.ac.uk](mailto:v.hughes@gold.ac.uk)

**Peter Rees** is a PhD candidate in Politics at Goldsmiths, University of London. Working in the field of political theory, his research explores the relationship between citizenship and universal rights through an analysis of contemporary conditions of rightlessness experienced by irregular migrants. Email: [p.rees@gold.ac.uk](mailto:p.rees@gold.ac.uk)

**Ignacio Rivera** was awarded a PhD in Sociology by Goldsmiths, University of London. His research focuses on how diasporic, musical and political identities are performed, contested and reaffirmed in a festival of Latin American music and politics that takes place every two years in Machynlleth, Wales. Email: [i.rivera@gold.ac.uk](mailto:i.rivera@gold.ac.uk)

**Kaoru Takahashi** was awarded a PhD in Sociology by Goldsmiths, University of London. Her research focuses on the gendered life trajectories and everyday experiences of Japanese migrant women in southeast London by using ethnographic approach. Email: [ktaka002@gold.ac.uk](mailto:ktaka002@gold.ac.uk)

**Sarah Walker** is a PhD Candidate in Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London. Her research examines the interaction between separated young people and migration regimes to explore the productive nature of borders. She has previously worked as a researcher including at COMPAS, University of Oxford, The University of Southampton and the Refugee Council. Email: [swalk002@gold.ac.uk](mailto:swalk002@gold.ac.uk)

## Peer reviewers

Miranda Armstrong (PhD candidate in Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London)

Danae Avgeri (PhD student at School of Geography, Queen Mary, University of London)

Dr. Dominika Blachnicka-Ciacek (PhD; Associate Lecturer, Goldsmiths, University of London, post-doctoral researcher, Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield and Teaching Fellow, SOAS)

Dr. Katherine Collins (Postdoctoral Researcher, Goldsmiths, University of London)

Dr. Gabriel Dattatreyan (Lecturer, Anthropology, Goldsmiths, University of London)

Daria Krivonos (PhD candidate in Sociology, University of Helsinki)

Chantelle Lewis (PhD student in Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London)

Ashjan Lulu (PhD candidate in Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London)

Dr. Angelo Martins (Associate Lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London)

Dr. Louise Owusu-Kwarteng (Programme leader and senior lecturer, University of Greenwich University of Greenwich)

# Editorial: Connecting Racism and Migration

Ignacio Rivera

---



On 23rd June 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union (EU). The vote is likely to define British politics for generations to come. Inspired by a right-wing populist agenda, the Leave campaign in the UK often based their arguments on inflammatory racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric, invoking a fictitious sense of British identity reminiscent of the imagined golden era of empire. Yet, the UK is not alone in experiencing a rise in right-wing nationalisms; one must only look at the election of Donald Trump and the electoral gains made by right-wing populist parties in countries such as Italy, France, Hungary, Germany and Austria. In each case, electoral success has come, at least in part, by riding a popular wave of nationalist and anti-immigrant sentiment.<sup>1</sup> The recent “Windrush scandal” and a generation of people harassed by hostile immigration rules of the UK Home office, is part of this wave of anti-immigrant sentiment.<sup>2</sup> It is this socio-political context that provides the point of departure for the thematic edition of this journal.

The contemporary ‘hostile environment for migrants’ in the UK was the inspiration for a one-day symposium on debates about racism and migration in the post-Brexit world, held at Goldsmiths, University of London, in October 2017.<sup>3</sup> It is from this symposium that the current special edition emerges. The aim was to create a dialogue and to encourage debate through multiple lenses including wider geographical perspectives, different scales and methods, in order to create a polyvocal space to demonstrate how the intersections of migration, citizenship, race and racism operate and are experienced. While contemporary and critical migration studies is a vibrant field, a number of scholars have pointed out that there tends to be a notable silence on race in migration discourses (Anderson, 2013; Lentin, 2014; Solomos, 2014). Within the academic literature, the figure of the migrant is often studied from the perspective of mobility. This edition suggests that it is equally important to approach migration in terms of ideas about race, gender,



class and nationality. As many scholars argue, the migrant is a construct that is inherently racialised (Anderson, 2013; Back et al., 2012). Gurminder K. Bhambra – who was a keynote speaker at our symposium – is particularly prominent in this field, highlighting that the links between race, citizenship and the boundaries of belonging are highly racialised (Bhambra, 2015). Taking into consideration Bhambra’s argument, and through the posing of specific questions in their fields of expertise, this edition aims to create a close debate between different research areas. By interrogating ‘race’ and racism as a social construction in a post-Brexit context, this edition focuses on papers that reflect upon migratory shifts, processes of racialisation and racism, their complex interconnectedness and different forms and expressions.

This edition responds to the tendency to either erase or ignore questions of race from migration by bringing together content from diverse spaces, such as the academy, political activism and the arts. Included are two academic papers focusing on the discussion of racism and migration from the perspectives of Ghanaian and Serbian diaspora communities in the UK; and two papers oriented towards the critical analysis of the politics of refugees. One concerns the EU’s humanitarian response to the so-called “refugee crisis” and the other undertakes a spatial analysis of refugee camps in Palestine.

Of the two papers on diasporic communities in the UK, Yvette Ankrah focuses on processes of identity construction among second-generation Black Ghanaians. The author interrogates the discourses and politics of belonging in the UK through an analysis of hybrid and ‘third space’ identities. In her interviews with second-generation Ghanaians living in the UK, Ankrah found that as a consequence of experiencing prejudice, racism or micro-aggressions, most of the interviewees dis-identify with any form of ‘English’ identity. However, this dis-identification can be problematic for some, since they are also considered as outsiders from the perspective of Ghanaian identity. These multiple exclusions necessitated the creation of ‘third space’ identities, as a strategy of belonging and home creation where Ankrah’s participants feel they ‘can be themselves’.

The other investigation into diaspora communities in the UK comes from Sanja Vico, who organises her discussion around questions of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Vico’s paper undertakes an analysis of the attitudes that Serbian Londoners hold about Brexit, with particular consideration of the motives behind



their voting decisions. Derived from her two-year ethnographic study alongside Serbian Londoners, Vico argues that cultural and social capital are the most important factors of vote decision. Unlike the voting trends found in the British population, income and social class are not the dominant determinants of voting decisions amongst Serbian Londoners. Vico's research finds that the attitudes and voting preferences of Serbian Londoners are primarily connected with different dispositions toward nationalism and the ambivalent role that London plays as a place that is both cosmopolitan and British.

Of the two papers that address the politics of refugees, Evgenia Iliadou's paper proposes a critical analysis of the violence inherent in the EU "humanitarian" response to the so-called "refugee crisis". Iliadou argues that instead of attempting to protect and end the suffering of refugees, the EU's "humanitarian" response applies a culture of control and violence, categorising and racialising the migrant as a means of control. Paying particular attention to the EU's "protective" response in Lesbos Island, Greece, Iliadou analyses the critical effects of this policy in relation to the permanent criminalisation and illegalisation of migrants that take place once they have crossed the border into Europe. In so doing, placing the EU's humanitarian response within a broader discourse of 'deterrence', aimed at preventing unwanted border crossings.

The second contribution to the theme of the politics of refugees comes from Samar Maqusi, who approaches the topic through a focus on the relationship between spatiality and subjectivities. In her socio-spatial analysis of Palestine refugee camps, Maqusi interrogates the effects of government policies on the physical production of these camps. Maqusi pays particular attention to the ways camp spaces are connected to themes of vulnerability and control. The author finds that the materiality of the spatial network of the camp means that refugees adopt multiple subjectivities depending upon their specific geographical and socio-political location. In response, Maqusi proposes new tools for designing 'spatial interventions' in order to improve the self-determination of refugees and create new sites of resistance.

This edition also includes an essay by the youth-led migrant organisation Let Us Learn (LUL). A project that seeks equal opportunities for young people to attend university, LUL challenges the discriminatory laws that deny people without settled immigration status access to student loans for higher education. In this ar-

ticle, LUL explain their background, their legal fight for changing rules for student loan eligibility, their political campaigns and the development of the organisation. Finally, this edition includes four poems by artist and activist Bo Thai – himself an undocumented young person from Thailand – that reflect upon the diasporic experience in connection with a variety of themes such as a sense of home, journey, memories, dreams and limbo. For instance, the poem “Traveling Man” interrogates the notion of self and freedom for a man on a permanent journey. Meanwhile the poem “A lost boy with no vision” is a reflection on the condition of a boy who is existentially trapped between the past and the present. Using different platforms, the work of both LUL and Bo Thai reflect the reality of what it means to be undocumented, highlighting how (il)legality is a shifting status and one that is subject to racialisation. We included these poems to provide an alternative approach to understanding migration and racism from conventional modes of academic knowledge production.

This edition is organised by the PhD Migration Reading Group at Goldsmiths, University of London, a student-led space for the articulation of different approaches, concepts and ideas from PhD students working on migration across different departments at Goldsmiths. We meet regularly to debate, discuss and share ideas about migration-related research. We also host lectures and conferences and take part in political action as a group. All contributors to this edition participated in the conference, either giving public presentations of their papers, political work or art. Bo Thai was not present in person as he is unable to travel due to his immigration status. His art and poems traverse the globe, while he cannot. The cover art for this edition is a graphic recording of the symposium created by illustrator Raquel Durán, who has vividly captured the dynamic conversations during the day.<sup>4</sup> Durán’s graphic recording called “connecting racism and migration” includes a variety of creative visual elements that refer to various topics discussed in the symposium such as human mobility, super diversity, barriers and control.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The current UK Prime Minister Theresa May has played an important role in creating this hostile environment. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/oct/10/immigration-bill-theresa-may-hostile-environment>

- <sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/20/the-week-that-took-windrush-from-low-profile-investigation-to-national-scandal>
- <sup>3</sup> More details about the conference: <https://cucrblog.wordpress.com/2017/11/28/a-conversation-on-connecting-racism-and-migration-a-phd-migration-reading-group-conference/>
- <sup>4</sup> See Raquel Durán's work: <https://raquelcronopia.wordpress.com/2017/10/09/1421/>

## References

- Anderson, B. (2013). *Us and Them?: The Dangerous Politics of Immigration Control*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Back, L., & Sinha, S., with Bryan, W. C. (2012). "New hierarchies of belonging." *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(2), pp.139–154.
- Bhambra, G. K. (2015). "Whither Europe? Postcolonial versus Neocolonial Cosmopolitanism Interventions." *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 18 (2), pp.187–202.
- Lentin, A. (2014). Postracial Silences. The Othering of Race in Europe. In W.D. Hund and A. Lentin. (Eds.), *Racism and Sociology* (pp. 69–104). Wien: LIT Verlag.
- Solomos, J. (2014). Sociology of Race, Racism and Ethnicity: Trends, Debates and Research Agendas. In J. Holmwood, and J. Scott (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Sociology in Britain* (pp. 396–412). London: Palgrave Macmillan.



# Being Black, being British, being Ghanaian – A Discussion on Belonging

Yvette Twumasi-Ankrah

**ABSTRACT:** Identity and belonging in Britain has been highlighted in recent times by the ‘Windrush Scandal’ and the result of the referendum on leaving the European Union (Brexit). The idea of who belongs, how they belong and where they fit in society was a key theme which ran through the empirical data gathered in my study which addresses the construction of identity amongst second-generation Ghanaians. This paper is based on my unpublished PhD and focuses on being Black, being British, being Ghanaian and belonging in different spaces. I draw on the narratives from my qualitative research and propose that negative discussions of immigrants can affect the second generation, leading to disassociation with their natal country. For my participants, the experience of degrees of belonging had been enacted across many spheres. They had to negotiate their sense of belonging in Britain, in Ghana and within Black communities in London. The argument here is that being Black, middle-class, second-generation Ghanaian and being raised in the UK creates a hybrid identity where finding space to belong is negotiated through the development of a ‘third space’ – a space where they can be themselves.

---

In May 2018 the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex (formally Prince Harry and Megan Markle, an actress of African-American and White American heritage) was held in Windsor, England – complete with a gospel choir and African-American Episcopalian minister. Their marriage and her racial background were often discussed in the media as denoting a changing Britain (Hirsch, 2017). In April 2018



the 'Windrush scandal' opened the topic of who belongs in the UK, with children of some Windrush migrants being faced with trying to prove their British citizenship despite having lived in Britain for, in some cases, almost 70 years. This led to British citizens experiencing detention at immigration centres and wrongful deportations. The 'scandal' was partly a direct result of immigration policies implemented by then Home Secretary, Theresa May (Gentleman, 2018). In 2016 following the referendum vote to leave the European Union (Brexit), an environment of open racism and hostility was created (reference?). Black identity, belonging and race has never been more topical.

The idea of who belongs, how they belong and where they fit in society was a key theme which ran through the empirical data gathered in my study. The role of the nation-state, and its view on integration and assimilation about ethnic minorities, also has a bearing on how people feel about belonging (Hamaz & Vasta, 2009). This paper is based on my unpublished PhD and focuses on issues of identity. It addresses the construction of identity amongst middle-class second-generation Ghanaians. It focuses on being Black, being British, being Ghanaian and belonging in different spaces.

The creation of a real or imagined space which enables the second-generation participants to belong, is discussed in the paper. The notion of the 'third space' (Reynolds, 2008), is also explored here. The necessity of creating this space is made apparent through the exploration of Black identity and the creation of identity as the children of migrants living in a space where they are seen as the 'other'. The argument here is that being a Black, second-generation Ghanaian and being raised in the UK creates a hybrid identity where finding a space to belong is negotiated through the development of a 'third space' – a space where they can be themselves. I propose that negative discussions about immigrants can affect the second generation, leading to disassociation with their natal country.

Overall, my thesis focuses on the intersection between middle class and ethnic identity among second-generation Ghanaians. I explore how second-generation Ghanaians construct their ethnic identity and the role of class in its construction. The study engages with the literature on diaspora, race and racism and the intersection between ethnicity and class. My research explores the work of Gans (2007) who hypothesised that a person's ethnic identity is lessened in importance the more middle class they became.

## Background

My participants are the children of migrants arriving from Ghana between the 1960s-1980s (with most parents arriving in the 1960s). They came to a country with open racial hostility epitomised by Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of blood' speech. In 1968 Powell, a Conservative party MP, called for a halt to immigration, advocated for repatriation and highlighted what he believed were the dangers posed by the immigrants to the White English population (Powell, 2007). Four years earlier saw the controversial parliamentary campaign by Conservative MP Peter Griffiths, where he won in Smethwick with the slogan "If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour" (Jeffries, 2014). Presently, this would have been termed 'old racism' – the openly hostile and direct racism which was prevalent and affected my participants' parents. While legislation had outlawed this behaviour, following the referendum on leaving the European Union held in 2016 (known as Brexit), there has been a reported resurgence of open hostility towards migrants and people of colour and a rise in race hate crimes (EHRC, 2016). In today's Britain, the children and grandchildren of these Ghanaian migrants are still subjected to racism both open and covert. A survey conducted in May 2016 by research company Opinium Research found that 47% of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people surveyed had been directly insulted, 38% treated differently in public places, e.g. shops and restaurants and others reported being on the receiving end of racist jokes or insults (Crouch & Stonehouse, 2016, p.4).

The impact of racism and racialisation affected my participants' feelings of belonging to their natal space. I argue that being perceived as 'other', experiencing racism, prejudice and microaggressions had led the majority to dis-identify with being 'English', but, for some, being seen as an outsider in Ghana meant they felt they did not belong there either. In response, many constructed an identity based on their *view* of a Ghanaian identity and their experiences as part of the second generation in the UK. My study also finds that the role of education and family is important to the development of the participants and both are sources of capital which support social mobility.

I begin by briefly reviewing the literature on the construction of Black identities and how it is enacted in the UK. I discuss race and racism in the UK and the impact of Brexit before an examination of 'the third space'. Then, I provide a summary of

my methodology before moving on to a discussion of my findings, where I explore the relationship my participants have with different identities and conclude with a discussion on how my participants construct their 'third space'.<sup>1</sup> (Crouch & Stonehouse, 2016; EHRC, 2016)

## Literature review

### The creation of Black identities

The role of duality – the idea of being in two spaces at the same time and negotiating identities within these spaces – has been addressed by writers such as W.E.B DuBois and Frantz Fanon. Their work is important to understanding my analysis, as my participants reside in the West and while born and raised in the UK experience feelings of being outsiders and of not belonging. These are not new themes and speak to how much race and place impact identity. DuBois' work focuses on African-Americans, and he believes that they always saw themselves through their own eyes as well as through the eyes of others, hence, the state of double consciousness. He believes this happens because the 'negro' is in a space where they are always the outsider and alien, facing the dual nature of both being a Negro and an American but not given the recognition as both. As he notes: 'One ever feels his twoness-an American, a negro; two souls, two warring ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder' (DuBois & Kenan, 1995). This feeling of duality is always there when they (the Black subject) are in the space they call home.

Duality is a key concept in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) but a range of ideas are surveyed in his work including the role of language, gender and racial interaction and the methods adopted to enable the individual to create a space in two cultures. His theories on duality are based on the work of DuBois. However, Fanon was a product of French colonialism, and he firmly links his views with that experience.

The feeling of being an outsider and not belonging was very much based on race; writers such as Miles (1989) have discussed racialisation and a perceived hierarchy of racial supremacy with those from Africa been placed at the bottom. As Miles highlights:

The representation of the African as Other signified phenotypical and cultural characteristics as evidence of his inferiority and the attributed condition of Africans, therefore, constituted a measure of European civilisation. (Miles, 1989, p. 30)

Black identity was not positioned in the West as positive or of high value. To counteract these views writers such as Césaire (2000), who constructed the theory of Negritude<sup>2</sup>, used Africa as a way to create a more positive Black identity. Negritude was politically situated on the left but promoted an idealised and romanticised notion of Africa which had little bearing on the realities of the continent (Marable, 1987, p. 46). Negritude is not influenced by the ideas of double consciousness and positions itself as a political stance and in direct opposition to the denigration felt by Black people at the time. Negritude was the beginning of putting Africa at the centre.

Later movements such as Pan Africanism, which came from Africa rather than outside of Africa, also sought to unify Black people and create an alternative, more positive identity. As will be noted later in this discussion, the need to create a positive Black identity which is centred around Africa is important to my participants.

## Race, class and social mobility

While my work focuses on the Ghanaian middle class, much of the literature on race and class discusses working-class identities, and indeed 'Black' is commonly seen as being synonymous with being working-class (Lacy, 2007; Lutrell, 2009; Moore, 2008). There are a few studies on the Black middle-class, most notably Lacy (2007) working in the US and Rollock et al. (2015) who focused on the UK Black Caribbean middle-class. Many of the first-generation migrants in my study experienced downward mobility, which is also found to be the case for many other migrants (see Li, 2017). In my study particularly, those that had migrated in the early 60s were 'positively selected', Li notes those that are positively selected 'come from relatively well-to-do families and possess high levels of aspiration for themselves and their children' (Li, 2017).

Occupying lower positions in the British labour market led to many migrants experiencing downward mobility, and their children starting from a lower position



in society in comparison to Whites. Despite this, the second-generation examined still manage to succeed in education, outperforming Whites (Li, 2017). However, in the labour market, Cheng and Heath (1993) have noted that the second generation can experience an 'ethnic penalty' on entering the workplace – disadvantage linked to their ethnicity. Li and Heath find in a later study a 'migration penalty', which they believe accounts for the high rates of downward mobility among the first generation (Li & Heath, 2016). The act of migrating is designed to increase social mobility for the family, and what is highlighted by my participants is the degree to which they are expected to succeed and the high level of aspirations their parents have for them. As my participants are raised in the UK, I will now explore Black identity in that context.

## Black identity in the UK

In 1948 the *HMS Windrush* brought the first wave of Caribbean migrants to the UK. There were subsequent groups that came from across the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and later the Indian subcontinent, who settled and made their lives in the UK. As noted in the introduction they did not receive a warm welcome, and the negative experiences faced by these post-war migrants and their descendants are related directly to their visible difference (Miles, 1989; Skellington & Morris, 1992). This environment was where the first generation, who are the parents of my participants, found themselves creating a new home. These migrants were part of the educational migration wave that came to the UK in the 1960s. For many, the goal had been to obtain qualifications and then return to jobs in the newly independent Ghana (see Goody & Grouthes, 1977). However, they became 'the students that stayed' as Daley termed them in her analysis of the 1991 census (Daley, 1996). Some of the factors that led to the longer-than-planned sojourn included – having a family, not completing/delaying studies and financial responsibilities to extended family in Ghana. Education was a tool used to support the success of the next generation. However, although born and raised in the UK, their children were still seen as outsiders. Brah notes the racialised views of Britishness and states:

According to racialised imagination, the former colonial Natives and their descendants settled in Britain are not British precisely because they are not seen

as being native to Britain: they can be 'in' Britain but not 'of' Britain. (Brah, 1996, p. 191).

However, these migrants and their children were not without agency. Black activists in the 1970s and 1980s fought for inclusion and equality and created a shift across institutions, for example, academia and the arts. The result of this activism was the creation of a new label – Black British – to recognise the children of settled migrants. Being 'Black British' was a political identity and part of a quest for recognition (Owusu, 1999). More recently writers such as Warmington (2014) and Olusoga (2017) have produced volumes on Black British intellectuals and historic experiences, respectively, to acknowledge their presence and ensure recognition. Policy changes also had an impact on the Black population in the UK, as will now be examined, the nation-state has a role in creating an inclusive society.

### British Identity – politics and belonging

Belonging is linked to our own identity – how we see ourselves and where we feel at home. Yuval-Davis argues that how we construct ideas of belonging is emotional and not just cognitive – 'they reflect emotional investments and desire for attachments' (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 202). Emotional attachment is a key component of belonging– it is necessary to feel safe and at home. But there is a distinction between belonging and the politics of belonging which is succinctly argued by Yuval-Davis (2006). The politics of belonging focus on the construction of boundaries stating who belongs within those boundaries – 'the boundaries that separate the world population into 'us' and 'them' (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 204).

In Britain in 2018, the climate is one where the politics of belonging are quite complex. Britain today exists in the wake of the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist bombings (which took place in the US and London), Brexit and a vastly different international political landscape.

At this point, I will briefly discuss Brexit and the impact it will have and has had on people of colour. After over 50 years of race relations legislation, the UK has moved from some of the more blatant open displays of racism and has in some ways, created a more nuanced form of racism which is subtle and hidden. In their 2016 study, Crouch and Stonehouse found that '71% of ethnic minorities think

that racist beliefs are still widely held in the UK but are not openly talked about, and 60% believe that racial discrimination is common in the UK' (Crouch & Stonehouse, 2016, p. 3).

Following the result of the referendum on the UK remaining a member of the European Union (EU) on 24 June 2016 (known as 'Brexit') what was unleashed was a wave of what could be described as old racism – verbal and physical attacks on the streets. Belonging was yet again brought to the fore – for example, graffiti being sprayed outside of Polish centres telling them to go home (reference). By utilising the slogan of 'take back our country', the Leave campaign's theme has been interpreted by many anti-immigrant groups as support for their cause, leading to their open displays of racism as they have been emboldened and feel legitimised in their actions. The EHRC 2016 report on race '*Healing a Divided Britain: the need for a comprehensive race equality strategy*' noted:

If you are from an ethnic minority community in modern Britain, it can often still feel like you're living in a different world, let alone being part of a one-nation society. – David Isaac, CBE (EHRC, 2016)

The politics of belonging in Britain is very much a racialised discourse – but it is couched in the realm of cultural difference and class difference. The 1980s and 1990s saw multiculturalism become part of state policy; there was a duty to acknowledge cultural diversity and create fairness (Warmington, 2014, p. 73). The acknowledgement of cultural diversity was often superficial and came to be 'lambasted as multiculturalism of the three "S's:" saris, samosas, and steelbands' (Modood & May 2001, p. 306). On an educational and political level, there has been a criticism of multicultural policies with the move towards integration and social cohesion, the latter linked in England to the teaching of British values in schools. For the cohort in my study, growing up through the years of multiculturalism and being of age in this post 9/11 and 7/7 and now this Brexit climate, belonging and politics of belonging impact their lives. Conversations about difference highlight the 'other' – for visible minorities like my participants – concentrate on who does or does not belong in Britain.

The second generation needs to find ways of belonging and engaging with their natal country. Looking at the British Asian population, Gabriel, Gomez, and

Rocha (2012) see the second-generation finding new ways of being British and also creating new identities. According to the paper, they believe that the principal failing of multiculturalism is the creation of fixed, separate identities which made those who are part of the second generation feel that they did not belong. Gabriel et al., examine government policy and rhetoric in the light of the 2001 Bradford riots and the 2005 London bombings and note how 'this generation disrupts simple and linear—as well as hegemonic—definitions of what it means to be "British"' (Gabriel et al., 2012, p. 274).

## The Third Space

As my participants find ways to express their identity and labels that allow them to define themselves they are also creating another space in which they can feel at home and belong. Unlike their first-generation parents who try to recreate and enact a cultural identity in their new host country, the second generation must create or find a new way to be which combines the different cultures.

Not being able to feel truly at home in their natal country or their parents' country leads them to create an alternative space. I theorise that for the most part, many of the participants exist within a 'third space' as proposed in the work of Reynolds (2008). Reynolds' work focused on a second-generation return to the Caribbean and how it was "produced and sustained by transnational family networks" (Reynolds, 2008, p. 4). Using a transnational lens Reynolds concludes, engaging in transnational activities and sustaining links, help to sustain cross-generation relationships, this also provides a third space to which the second generation could belong; and supports return migration (Reynolds, 2008:11). Reynolds also states that the act of return is a form of 'survival strategy' for the second generation who experience discrimination, feelings of not belonging in the UK and not having access to social mobility (Reynolds, 2008, p. 14). Writers such as Stuart Hall (S Hall, 1998; 1996) and Homi Bhabha (1996) have discussed theories of a divided self and living in-between cultures, but Reynolds' (2008:11) work developed a more detailed idea of a 'third space' which focuses on the lived experience. The 'third space' for Gabriel et al. (2012) is a way of redefining Britishness, and they see the creation of this space as the way in which the second generation claims this identity.

In short, while the cultural trope for the previous generation was either assimilation or segregation, as Ranasinha suggests, the second generation has mobilised a “third” space of identification and belonging, a crucial step in the process of re-defining Britishness. This formative space is the site for the creation of what Tariq Modood calls complex forms of Britishness (Modood 2007) which articulate new and other ways of being British. (Gabriel et al., 2012, p. 277)

Hoque (2015), in his analysis of third generation Bangladeshis, found that his participants occupied a ‘third space’ which enabled them to assert their specific identities and not feel excluded (Hoque, 2015).

Later, I discuss how my participants explore British identity and the third space. In the next section, I provide details on the methods used in my study, how the participants were chosen, who they are, how the research was analysed and finally my role as a researcher.

## Methodology

The aim of the research was to explore the relationship between class and ethnic identity among second-generation Ghanaians. As my focus is the middle class, I wanted to know whether having a middle-class identity impacted on the ethnic identity of the participants.

The participants were aged between 27 and 41 years old, were mostly female and the interviews lasted between 45 minutes and four hours. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, but a small number were conducted using Skype or on mobile phones. Eighteen out of the twenty-one interviewees held a bachelor’s degree and were mostly managers, senior managers, or professionals. All the interviews took place between 2010 and 2011.<sup>3</sup>

Across the literature which focuses on the second generation, qualitative interview methods have been used. Therefore, I chose a method which positioned my study where it could be compared to others. I selected a semi-structured interview approach using a loose topic framework to speak to 21 second-generation Ghanaians who had grown up in London. Using a qualitative interview method in research can provide the researcher with a flexible framework which can be used to focus on the main research questions, as Gillham notes they can provide “a degree

of precision” whilst also encouraging “openness” from the interviewee (Gillham 2005, p.71), which was true for my research.

Table 1<sup>4</sup>

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation-level
Kwame	Male	37	Post Graduate or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Sally	Female	38	Degree or equivalent	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional
Kofi	Male	31	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Ama	Female	27	Degree or equivalent	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional
Kojo	Male	37	A Levels or equivalent	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional
Abena	Female	34	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Tracey	Female	36	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Adjoa	Female	28	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Kofi A	Male	29	Post Graduate or equivalent	Higher managerial, administrative and professional
Tony	Male	31	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Kwadwo	Male	31	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Ama A	Female	29	Post Graduate or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Ekow	Male	39	Post Graduate or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Ashantewaa	Female	27	Degree or equivalent	Higher managerial, administrative and professional
Akua	Female	37	A Levels or equivalent	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual worker
Yaw	Male	35	GCSEs	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional

Maya	Female	27	Degree or equivalent	Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional
Sarah	Female	29	Degree or equivalent	Higher managerial, administrative and professional
Ama B	Female	37	Degree or equivalent	Higher managerial, administrative and professional

## Sampling

The participants were primarily drawn from their membership of Ghanaian associations or networks with the following being the prime spaces for selection:

- Ghana Black Stars Network (GBSN)
- Star 100
- Ghanaian Londoners

These networks or groups were chosen mainly because they had members who were London based and fit my age parameters of 21 to 50. London was the focus of my search as it has the largest Ghanaian community in the UK (BBC, 2005). There was also some snowballing used to gather participants. The other criteria for my participants was that both parents must have come from Ghana and migrated to the UK, and participants must have had most of their education in England. The education system is a major institution, therefore would impact their socialisation and development as adults. The parameters for the age set reflected the age range of parents who had migrated between the late 1950s to mid-1980s which covers the postcolonial and post-coup cohorts of migrants who would have come to the UK.

I also used a sample questionnaire to establish occupational status, education levels, parents' education levels and when the first parent migrated. This information also enabled me to see the class position of the participants based on occupation and education.

Based on the occupation and education levels held by many of my participants they would fit into the category of middle class. All except three of my participants held degree level qualifications, with the majority holding professional or managerial roles (NS-SEC categories 1 and 2). While on paper they appeared to be middle class, they did not all identify readily with that label. Middle-class

identity was seen as a White identity and as noted in Lacy's work there were differences in being Black and middle class in comparison to being White middle-class (Lacy, 2007). Discussing the formation of class, Moore states "racism shapes both the structure and meaning of class in the Black community" (2008) – Black becomes synonymous with working class. My participants also occupied a dual-class location as they negotiated class in Britain *and* Ghanaian class status, which was inherited through their parents.

The results were analysed using the constant comparative method which is an inductive method to code data. It can be used to categorise and compare qualitative data for analysis purposes (Mathison, 2005), I had some key themes in a loose framework, so I compared the data from each interview to the previous interview to see what other themes emerged. For example, there was no specific theme on racism yet nearly every participant discussed the impact that it had on them.

### Researcher status

At this point, I would like to note my status as being a member of the community that I interviewed. I am a second-generation Ghanaian, and I also had to receive ethics committee approval – the committee needed to be satisfied that my membership in this group would not cause an issue with the anonymity of the participants. My membership in the community did not immediately ensure that I was given insider status. Work has been conducted on the role of insider status and Black researchers (see Twine and Warren (2000) and Phoenix (1994), but there are still gaps within the literature on intra-cultural interviewing particularly in relation to solo research projects. My membership of the previously mentioned groups/networks and personal networks provided me with the ability to access the community. While conducting the interviews, assumptions were made by participants about my own identity – this was in terms of my Ghanaian identity and my class identity. I was conscious of making sure I clarified and queried elements of the discussion especially when it was assumed I would know exactly what they meant because I shared the same background. An example would be using words in Twi<sup>5</sup> but not asking whether I understood Twi.

I was also conscious of my preconceived notions of Ghanaian identity and how my own upbringing could impact my data. In conducting the work, I needed



to spend time reflecting on how my presence affected the information I received from my participants. I was careful of how much my own narratives were shared in the dialogue with participants, but I was not surprised that they wanted to hear my views on certain topics.

In the following section, I discuss my findings and present data from the participants.

## Findings

### Being Black in the UK

At the time when many of the participants were growing up, being Black was defined as a Caribbean identity as there was a more significant presence of people of Caribbean origin in the UK. Even the term 'Black British' was created to acknowledge the children of Caribbean migrants (Thompson, 2015a, 2015b). For my participants, not only were they seen as Black but also, they had an African identity. Their African identity was predominantly presented as negative, sometimes by themselves but also by others. There was a lack of knowledge about Africa from wider society. Stereotypes of Africa were perpetrated by the media; participants particularly noted that during the 1980s images focused on famine and war and the pervading view of Africa was of an impoverished, war-torn continent. The dominant discourse of Africa as a dark and savage continent and the 'Other', is still seen in the media and across the West. While there are still negative images, perceptions about African identity seem to have shifted since the initial images on television screens in the 1980s. My participants discussed the impact on their identities as illustrated here by Adjoa.

Adjoa, 28, was born in the UK but at several points in her childhood, she had lived in Ghana for short periods of time. She settled back in the UK at the age of nine. Here, she discusses her experiences foregrounding an African identity at secondary school:

When we were in high school it wasn't cool to be African; everybody wanted to be West Indian, so everybody put on like a West Indian accent and, I don't know, like a lot of the West Indians used to make comments about Africans and dark skin

and stuff like that. But because I came from Ghana and I had a strong connection with Ghana, I love Ghana; I just decided that I don't want to be West Indian, so anything to do with West Indian-ism, so any of the slang, I refuse to use. Because my mum was like 'you can't speak Cockney' [switched to a Ghanaian accent], 'you can't do, you have to talk properly' it made the way I speak quite correct, grammatical and maybe posh, but a lot of that is because I do not want to use the slang that may be seen as trying to be Jamaican or whatever. (Adjoa, 28)

Some of these ideas relating to intra-ethnic tension between African and Caribbean groups have been explored in Owusu-Kwarteng's work. She found that while the second and third generations have better relationships than the first-generation migrants, some of the issues have not entirely died away. (Owusu-Kwarteng, 2017). Adjoa's comments also speak of class issues as she highlights 'speaking correctly' and not sounding 'cockney', which was seen as a working-class accent.

Arguably, through the exchange of cultural knowledge via mediums such as food, film, literature, sport and music, the understanding of the continent in the West has slightly shifted. Being African is now 'cool' and so is asserting an African identity, it is no longer a surprise to hear Ghanaian rhythms on commercial radio stations, as new artists like Fuse ODG have made Ghanaian music mainstream<sup>6</sup>. There has been some movement forward, however, being 'Black' still means there are many obstacles to overcome for example in education, employment, health, and the judicial system.

My participants used a range of different methods to manage and negotiate overt and subtle racism and institutions that placed barriers in their path. Excelling in education was one of the key methods used to support my participants alongside using their ethnic background to support their sense of self. Family relationships are very important to my participants but so were friendships. Friendships were discussed more by my participants than other relationships as it was here that they often felt a sense of belonging.

What I found through my analysis was that there was a tendency to form friendships with people from similar racial and class backgrounds to themselves, and it was within these groups that they establish that sense of belonging and felt more comfortable. For example, Kwadwo, 31, who experienced racism and bullying at grammar school, found friendships with other Black Africans on entering

university. He told me that he had met people who had had similar experiences when growing up or in other ways were like-minded. He formed strong bonds at university and still retains those friendships years after graduation. Adjoa was another participant who found herself forging friendships amongst other Black people, again in her case they were predominantly African:

... I went to school in predominantly White areas, but the funny thing is I don't have any white friends. So even in those schools I always ended up with the Black people who happen to be Ghanaian or Nigerian or something. They were always African. (Adjoa, 28)

Rollock et al. (2015) found similar findings in their study on the Black middle class, which focused on African Caribbean second and third-generation participants. Being with other Black people was a way to feel safe:

Black people are viewed through a narrow, restrictive lens which refuses to make multiple versions of Blackness possible. Being with other Black people, therefore, represents a certain safety from such limitations (Rollock 2012b), thus serving to reinforce an invisible cohesion among them. (Rollock et al., 2015, p. 26)

My participants must negotiate belonging as the children of migrants, as people racialised as Black, living in the Western space but also having another space to which they are connected. I now explore some of these ideas about British identity, politics and Brexit and what it also means to negotiate Ghanaian identity.

## British Identity

With my participants, their nationality was not in question as they were all holders of British passports; however, the degree to which they asserted a British identity varied amongst the cohort. Identities are fluid, and I found in my research that the choice of whether or not to assert British identity was contextual and depended on the location and why it was being asserted. In the case of one interviewee, Kofi, his affinity to Britain and a British identity was felt solely through the passport and education he held:

I have a British passport, which is handy! I've got a British education, I suppose when it comes to identity it sort of falls into the same arena as culture and what you're about, and my culture predominantly isn't British, it's Ghanaian. I suppose that's probably why if you asked me where I'm from I say Ghanaian as opposed to British. If I didn't have any of those things then maybe I would associate myself as an English boy. (Kofi, 31)

Another participant, Kwame, 38, sees being British in terms of 'cultural benefits' which he linked at the time of the interview to democracy, citizenship, freedom of movement and access to Europe. In the quote that follows he discusses the culture of Britain which he sees as a celebration of diversity as there is no uniformity of culture across the country which contrasts with Ghana:

British culture is a very interesting one because Britain as a society is a wave of migration, Britain is probably the most ethnically – [sighs] for want of a better word, most ethnically mixed society on the planet. There are very few people who can claim truly to be indigenously British. Whether Roman or Saxon or Viking or German or Dutch, Polish, there's a lot of stuff going on in Britain. So, our culture in here, our culture in Britain tends to be a hybrid of just about anything, and we celebrate, the culture's pretty much a celebration of diversity, there is very little that, you could look around the UK and say 'yes we all celebrate this in the same way'. Whereas, for instance, with somewhere like Ghana, throughout you could say that you don't shake someone's hand with your left hand, because culturally – you don't have those same kind of things in the UK. (Kwame, 38)

British identity holds some clear benefits for these participants. While they are not migrants the discourse around immigration, belonging and identity does impact on this visible group. Gans has stated, that a negative dialogue about immigrants in the host nation can have an impact on the second generation who may even internalise the negativity, including using terms such as 'fresh off the boat' to describe new arrivals (Gans, 2007:104). Negative public discourse on migration and who belongs in a country can also make those that are visibly different feel less at home. The rise in race-related incidents will also impact feelings of safety. As

noted, feelings of being safe are part of feeling at home and belonging.

In the next section I discuss the role of Ghanaian identity as my participants not only negotiate British identity and politics but also what it means to be Ghanaian and if that is a space that they can call home.

## Ghanaian identity

The Ghanaian government has courted the wider African diaspora, particularly African-Americans, to engage these groups specifically with the idea of investing in the country. The government has also created policies and programmes aimed at engaging second and subsequent generations. On one level, we see the acknowledgement of the generations born abroad as Ghanaians, but in other circumstances, particularly when there has been negative publicity (for example during the London riots in 2011 where it had been reported in the Ghana press that three young men with Ghanaian names had been arrested – the article author states that having a Ghanaian name does not make you a Ghanaian (Agbodza, 2011)) there has been a reluctance to acknowledge those born abroad as being Ghanaian. There were also some participants in my research who focused on the idea of an authentic Ghanaian identity. I noted that amongst my participants a vocabulary had been created to make it easy to differentiate between the second generation, born and raised in the UK and those who had migrated.

The term ‘Ghanaian Ghanaians’ was used by Kwame, 38, to denote those born in Ghana. Another participant, Kofi, used the term ‘Ghanaian’ in a multi-layered way in different parts of our conversation. He uses it to denote different generations, as well as those born in the UK or Ghana, so constant clarification was needed regarding who he was referring to at a given moment.

My participants found that being able to use the label ‘Ghanaian’ and to have that label accepted by others was also problematic. Some participants recounted similar experiences of visiting Ghana which highlight the dual perspective of belonging. The term ‘obruni’ means White or foreign, and this term was used to refer to participants by family, as well as strangers, on their visits to Ghana. Some took it in their stride, but others felt uneasy being couched in these terms – they disliked being seen as foreign. Even within their own families, they were made to feel that they were outsiders.

Here, Ama recounts her experience of going to Ghana and of discussing her identity in the UK:

Because the experience that I've had prior to, well even when I was 18 as well, when I've been in Ghana the local people always make this distinction that you're not a Ghanaian you're English. They keep doing that, and I'm like, well when I'm in England when I'm in London at home if someone was to come up to me and say 'oh where are you from?' and I'd just say 'I'm from England, I'm English' – I don't understand why people would come out with that answer as I just see it as, 'yeah I was born here but as you can see from my features, don't originate', but people would say 'no you're from Ghana' so you're kind of like in the middle where the people who are from Ghana say you're not really. (Ama, 27)

What Ama's case highlights is the struggle to find a space that enables the second generation to have agency over their identity. They may *choose* a definition, but then they are told by others that they cannot *use* the definition. Their identity is being labelled for them depending on location, positionality and who is doing the placing.

However, my second-generation participants are not without agency and although there is a struggle to find a space for their identity they do create the space. It is their hybridity which gives them the space where they can find alternative definitions of who they are and explore new notions of identity. Afua Hirsch, a journalist who is of Black Ghanaian and White British ancestry, went to live in Ghana, and while there in 2012 wrote an article which summarises this notion:

But being African is an increasingly complex identity. As someone who has been told she is too Black to be British, and too British to be African, I am strongly against the notion that identity can be policed by some external standard. And I am not alone. The term "Afropolitan" is beginning to enter the mainstream; one definition describes it as: "An African from the continent of dual nationality, an African born in the diaspora, or an African who identifies with their African and European heritage and mixed culture." (Hirsch, 2012)

'Afropolitan' is an apt term for many of the participants in this study. The concept provides a way to highlight not only their duality but also shows that they can

choose the various identities they inhabit rather than having them imposed externally.

## Conclusion

This article reflected on the issues relating to Black identities, being Black in Britain and British and Ghanaian identities. I explored how Black identities have been discussed within the literature and how they are constructed in British society. I explored the role of politics and policy and some of the discourse on the politics of belonging. For my participants, the experience of degrees of belonging was enacted across many spheres. They had to negotiate their sense of belonging in Britain, in Ghana and within Black communities in London.

While this study was conducted before there was a referendum to leave the European Union, the impact of this change needed to be discussed. Prior to the vote on leaving the European Union, there was less open hostility in the UK towards people who were non-White and/or European, with particular hatred aimed at Eastern European communities. The referendum changed this landscape creating an emboldened anti-immigration movement and leading to an increase in race-related incidents. In this new Brexit climate, the thin veneer of belonging, home and feelings of safety has been wiped away. In the case of my participants, they are highly skilled, adaptable, highly educated and are currently afforded the privileges that British citizenship can currently offer. This positions them similarly to their parents who made the journey to the UK, in some cases over 50 years ago. It is yet to be seen whether the climate in the UK could lead the second generation to migrate elsewhere.

What was made evident through the narratives of my participants was that there were many discussions about feeling like an outsider and not fitting in anywhere. The second generation created a space where *their* version of Ghanaian identity exists. However, *within* this third space is a linear of thick and thin identities as proposed by Cornell and Hartmann (1998).

Imagined and created identities have evolved within the context of the outsider and the 'other'. The creation of the 'cultural chameleon' was something which emerged as a form of identity. While the majority choose to assert a 'third space Ghanaian identity', they could choose to portray several of the identities they have

access to depending on the situation, for example, using the privilege of a British passport or using a Ghanaian name or wearing attire to foreground their ethnicity. The middle-class participants possessed resources which enabled a cosmopolitan approach to life and what occurs is switching between spaces at will in order to fit in and find the space called home (Brah, 1996). Belonging is about feeling at home, and 'home' was created by the participants by drawing on a multitude of resources which are used in different spaces and contexts and by creating social spaces and situations.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> A brief note on terminology and concepts: I used terms as described by my participants but acknowledge here the problems associated with some of the terms. For example, 'West Indian' is used by some of my participants to denote people from the Caribbean. I use the term Caribbean or African Caribbean to distinguish this group of the diaspora from the Ghanaian migrants and their descendants that are part of this study. My work stems from a constructionist epistemology and acknowledges that concepts such as race and class are constructed. I discuss identity as a concept - identity is not fixed but is fluid and different aspects are displayed depending on the situation. I also note the use of the term 'Black', firstly I use it to signify those people who are of African descent and it is a term that my participants also used to describe themselves. Secondly, it is not an identity that the parents migrated with, the act of migration into a majority White society is where Blackness is created. Therefore, people become 'Black'; this is an identity linked to historical views of Blackness (which has mostly been negative - see (Miles, 1989)).
- <sup>2</sup> The focus of the Negritude movement was on Black history pre-colonisation, highlighting the importance of African culture and seeking to reverse the negative trope of Africa.
- <sup>3</sup> Two participants data could not be used (one did not provide consent, another did not meet criteria but had not stated in the questionnaire) so their names are not listed.
- <sup>4</sup> The labels used in the questionnaires are from the National Readership Survey (NRS) which were mapped onto the NS-SEC categories. The NRS labels are commonly used in surveys and statistics. The NS-SEC categories were being changed at the time of the creation of the study
- <sup>5</sup> Twi is a main language spoken in Ghana.
- <sup>6</sup> The collaboration between Fuse ODG and Ed Sheeran also highlights the changes, a well-known British popstar singing in Twi and discussing his visits to Ghana in national interviews shows how things have moved forward.



## References

- Agbodza, C. (2011). *NO Ghanaians Involved In England Riots*. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/diaspora/artikel.php?ID=216080>
- BBC. (2005, 16/06/2008 ). *Ghanaian London*. Retrieved from [http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2005/05/27/ghanaian\\_london\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2005/05/27/ghanaian_london_feature.shtml)
- Bhabha, H. K. (1996). Culture's In-between. In S. Hall & P. Du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity*: Sage, 53–60.
- Brah, A. (1996). *Cartographies of diaspora: contesting identities*. London: Routledge.
- Cèsaire, A., & Kelley, R. D. G. (2000). *Discourse on colonialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Cheng, Y., & Heath, A. (1993). "Ethnic Origins and Class Destinations." *Oxford Review of Education*, 19(2), 151–165.
- Cornell, S., & Hartmann, D. (1998). *Ethnicity and race: making identities in a changing world*. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge.
- Crouch, J., & Stonehouse, M. (2016). *A question of identity and equality in multicultural Britain*. Retrieved from: [http://opinium.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/a\\_question\\_of\\_identity\\_and\\_equality\\_in\\_multicultural\\_britain\\_0.pdf](http://opinium.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/a_question_of_identity_and_equality_in_multicultural_britain_0.pdf)
- Daley, P. O. (1996). "Black-Africans: students who stayed." In C. Peach (ed), *Ethnicity in the 1991 census. Vol.2, The ethnic minority populations of Great Britain* (Vol. 2, pp. vi, 246 p.): HMSO.
- DuBois, W. E. B., & Kenan, R. (1995). *The souls of black folk*. New York: Signet Classic.
- EHRC. (2016). *Healing a divided Britain: the need for a comprehensive race equality strategy*. UK: Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black skin, White masks*: Grove Press. New York
- Gabriel, S. P., Gomez, E. T., & Rocha, Z. (2012). "Between policy and reality: multiculturalism, the second generation, and the third space in Britain." *Asia Europe Journal*, 10(4), 267–285.
- Gans, H. J. (2007). "Ethnic and Racial Identity." In M. C. Waters, R. Ueda, & H. B. Marrow (eds), *The new Americans: a guide to immigration since 1965*. Cambridge, Mass.; London Harvard University Press. 98–110.
- Gentleman, A. (2018). *The week that took Windrush from low-profile investigation to national scandal*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/20/the-week-that-took-windrush-from-low-profile-investigation-to-national-scandal>

- Goody, E. N., & Grouthes, C. M. (1977). "The West Africans: The Quest for Education." In J. L. Watson (Ed.), *Between two cultures: migrants and minorities in Britain* (pp. viii,338p). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hall, S. (1998). "Who needs identity?" In S. Hall & P. Du Gay (eds). *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage., 1–18.
- Hall, S., & Du Gay, P. (1996). *Questions of cultural identity*: London: Sage.
- Hamaz, S., & Vasta, E. (2009). *To belong or not to belong: Is that the question? Negotiating belonging in multi-ethnic London*. Retrieved from [https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2009/wp-2009-073-hamaz-vasta\\_belonging\\_multi-ethnic\\_london/](https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2009/wp-2009-073-hamaz-vasta_belonging_multi-ethnic_london/)
- Hirsch, A. (2012, 26 August 2012). *Afua Hirsch: Our parents left Africa – now we are coming home*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/aug/26/ghana-returnees-afua-hirsch-africa>
- Hirsch, A. (2017, 27 Nov 2017). *When Meghan weds Harry, Britain's relationship with race will change forever*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/27/prince-harry-meghan-markle-britishness-monarchy-relevant>
- Hoque, A. (2015). *British-Islamic identity: Third-generation Bangladeshis from East London*. London, England: Institute of Education Press.
- Jeffries, S. (2014). *Britain's most racist election: the story of Smethwick, 50 years on*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/15/britains-most-racist-election-smethwick-50-years-on>
- Lacy, K. R. (2007). *Blue-chip Black: race, class, and status in the new Black middle class*. Berkeley, CA; London: University of California Press.
- Li, Y. (2017). Persisting "Disadvantages: Barriers to Ethnic Social Mobility in the UK". In O. Khan & F. Shaheen (eds), *Minority Report: Race and Class in post-Brexit Britain*. London, England: Runnymede, 7–11.
- Li, Y., & Heath, A. (2016). "Class Matters: A Study of Minority and Majority Social Mobility in Britain, 1982–2011". *American Journal of Sociology*, 122(1), 162–200.
- Lutrell, W. (2009). "The two-in-oneness of class. In L. Weis (ed), *The Way Class Works*. London: Routledge, 60–77.
- Marable, M. (1987). *African and Caribbean politics from Kwame Nkrumah to the Grenada revolution*. London: Verso.
- Mathison, S. (2005). *Encyclopedia of Evaluation*. London: Sage.
- Miles, R. (1989). *Racism*. London: Routledge.

- Modood, T., & May, S. (2001). "Multiculturalism and education in Britain: an internally contested debate." *International Journal of Educational Research*, 35(3), 305–317.
- Moore, K. S. (2008). "Class formations." *Ethnicities*, 8(4), 492–517.
- Olusoga, D. (2017). *Black and British – A Forgotten History*. London: Pan.
- Owusu-Kwarteng, L. (2017). "'We All Black Innit?': Analysing Relations Between African and African-Caribbean Groups in Britain." *Sociological Research Online*, 22(2), 9.
- Owusu, K. (1999). *Black British culture and society: a text-reader*. London: Routledge.
- Phoenix, A. (1994). "The Intersection of Gender and 'Race' in the research process." In M. Maynard & J. Purvis (Eds.), *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*. London: Taylor & Francis. 49–72.
- Powell, E. (2007, 6 November 2007). Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech. Retrieved from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/3643823/Enoch-Powells-Rivers-of-Blood-speech.html>
- Reynolds, T. (2008). *Ties That Bind: Families, Social Capital and Caribbean Second-Generation Return Migration*. Retrieved from: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=mwp46.pdf&site=252>
- Rollock, N., Gillborn, D., Vincent, C., & Ball, S. J. (2015). *The colour of class: the educational strategies of the black middle classes*. London: Routledge.
- Skellington, R., & Morris, P. (1992). *Race in Britain Today*. London: Sage.
- Thompson, D. (2015a). "The Ethnic Question: Census Politics in Great Britain." In P. Simon, V. Piché, & A. A. Gagnon (Eds.). *Social Statistics and Ethnic Diversity: Cross-National Perspectives in Classifications and Identity Politics*. Open Access: Springer, 111–138.
- Thompson, D. (2015b). "What lies beneath: equality and the making of racial classifications." *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 31(2), 114–136.
- Twine, F. W., & Warren, J. W. (2000). *Racing research, researching race: methodological dilemmas in critical race studies*. New York; London: New York University Press.
- Twumasi-Ankrah MBE, Y. (2019). *Being Black, Being British, Being Ghanaian: Second Generation Ghanaians, class, identity, ethnicity and belonging*. (PhD Unpublished Thesis), Insititute of Education, UCL.
- Warmington, P. (2014). *Black British intellectuals and education: multiculturalism's hidden history*. Oxford, England: Routledge.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). "Belonging and the politics of belonging." *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40(3), 197–214.



# The Politics of Identity and Notions of Home: How Serbian Londoners Perceived Brexit

Sanja Vico

**ABSTRACT:** This paper looks at the attitudes of Serbian Londoners to Brexit and at the motives behind their voting decisions at the 2016 EU referendum in Britain. It aims to understand why these people voted the way they did and what this means for their identities and their sense of belonging. Based on two-year-long ethnographic research and in-depth interviews with forty Serbian Londoners, this paper finds that Serbian Londoners were divided on Brexit and that economic status and income were not the most important factors for understanding voting decisions, but rather social and cultural capital. Their differences in attitudes to Brexit and degrees of openness to others can further be explained by Bonikowski's (2017) argument that there may be a common repertoire of dispositions towards the nation that transcends national boundaries, which explains similarities in nationalisms among different countries. The paper also considers whether Spivak's (1987) concept of strategic essentialism can be applied to understanding how Serbian Londoners perceived Brexit. Finally, it sheds light on the ambivalent role of living in London – both a cosmopolitan and a British city – and what impact this may have on these participants' sense of belonging.

**KEYWORDS:** Brexit, identity, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, migration, Serbian Londoners, social class



## Brexit, Migration and National Identity

Studies of public opinion in Britain in the years prior to the EU referendum in June 2016, and in the wake of the vote, show that immigration was a key issue in deciding the June 2016 referendum result (Clarke, Goodwin & Whiteley, 2017). Even in the months after the vote, it was scoring high on the list of main worries for the UK adult population. In August 2016, the UK was reported to be the most concerned with immigration among the countries surveyed by Ipsos MORI (2016).

There has also been an evident hierarchy in terms of how people from different European countries are perceived. A study by Fox et al. (2015) shows that Hungarians and Romanians in Bristol face discrimination based on their Eastern European origin. This is also supported by YouGov (March 2017) data that shows Romanians are very negatively viewed in Britain, unlike, for instance, North Americans and Germans. What seems to have dominated this discussion on immigration in the wake of the Brexit vote in the UK is arguably social class (see Vico, 2017). Fox et al. (2015) find that Hungarians and Romanians in Bristol often present themselves as belonging to a higher social class as a strategy for coping with discrimination. In line with this, YouGov's data from March 2017 shows there is a sharp contrast between how the British public perceives high-skilled and low-skilled immigrants. While the majority look favourably at immigration of high-skilled professionals, they think the immigration of low-skilled workers should be limited.

The European Social Survey (ESS) of attitudes in seventeen countries towards immigration based on race/ethnicity and wealth demonstrates that the British are less accepting of migrants from poorer countries (47% against) than of migrants of different ethnic origin (41% against), and in this respect Britain is less willing to accept less well-off immigrants than most other surveyed countries (the average is 41% against) (Clarke, Goodwin & Whiteley, 2017, p. 223). If we consider all these different insights, we conclude that the "problem" is deemed to be the migration of the less well-off, and, based on this criterion, immigrants from particular European countries. Announced and implemented policies provide further evidence in this regard. The £35,000 earnings threshold for non-EU immigrants in order to settle in the UK was introduced in April 2016 (Ferguson, 2016), while, in an interview on *HARDtalk* in October 2016, Conservative MP Iain Duncan Smith said that only academics, software engineers and comparable others would be welcome, and

the earning threshold for non-EU nationals gaining a work permit also rose from £30,000 to £50,000 in January 2018 (Wright, 2018).

The narrow victory of Brexiteers, as well as several protests held in London and initiatives and petitions against Brexit, shed light on how the nation was divided and polarized on this issue. Many studies of Brexit seem to suggest that social class – particularly income and education – and age category were important determinants of EU referendum voting patterns (Antonucci, Horvath, Kutiyski & Krouwel, 2017; Clarke, Goodwin & Whiteley, 2017; Hobolt, 2016; Ford & Goodwin, 2017). Sara Hobolt finds in her research that there was “a clear educational divide in the Brexit vote. ...Only a quarter of people with a postgraduate degree voted to leave, whereas over two-thirds of those with no qualifications did so” (2016, p. 1269). Ford and Goodwin also state that Brexit voters were mainly working-class, with few educational qualifications (2017, p. 26). Other studies, however, dismiss this argument and claim that people who belong to the so-called squeezed middle class, whose economic status has been in decline, were the more likely Leave voters (Antonucci, Horvath, Kutiyski & Krouwel, 2017). Antonucci et al. challenge the portrayal of the Brexit voter as “left behind” or as an “angry globalisation loser” belonging to the working class, and find that a significant proportion of Leave voters were middle-class people with an intermediate level of education, but a declining financial situation (2017, pp. 212–213). These discussions of the driving force behind Brexit have put more emphasis on the economic status of voters than on their cultural positioning.

The people of one nation may not share the same dispositions towards the nation. What being British means to UKIP members and supporters may not be the same as for the Liberal Democrats, for example (cf. Mihelj, 2011, p. 18). National identity is never completely uncontested and has no uniform meaning (e.g. see Hall, 1990; Gilroy, 1987; Morley, 1992). “Rather than assuming that nations possess core values shared by most citizens ... the nation’s meaning [is] ... constructed and fragmented” (Bonikowski, 2017, p.148); thus, there may be more similarities between people from different countries than within one nation. Bart Bonikowski states that it would be wrong to assume that national cultures are coherent; rather, all national identities are heterogeneous and contested to some extent and in some contexts (2017, p. 149). By looking closely at nationalist sentiments in France and Germany, Bonikowski concludes that:

the similarities in nationalism across the two counties suggest that there may exist a common repertoire of dispositions towards the nation that transcends national boundaries... a French citizen is likely to imagine the nation in a manner more consistent with a similarly disposed German citizen than with another French compatriot... (2017, p. 164)

The question of Serbian national identity has always been deeply divisive (see Gordy, 2013). After the Second World War, people in this region were divided into Chetniks and Partisans, the former in support of the monarchy and identifying themselves as Serbs, and the latter backing the real-socialist regime in Yugoslavia and describing themselves as Yugoslavs. Since the fall of Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990s and a resurgence of nationalism in the region, this division into communists and Chetniks (royalists) has become much more ambiguous and has largely been replaced by the division into “First Serbia” and “Other Serbia” (see Gordy, 2013; Russell-Omaljev, 2016;), whereby “First Serbia” or nationalist Serbia refers to supporters of Milosević’s regime in the 1990s, while “Other Serbia” refers to the opponents of that regime and represented ‘civic’ Serbia (and often upheld a cosmopolitan outlook).

The social class has also played a prominent role in migration studies and was used as one of the key factors to understanding how migrants go about their lives in host societies. For instance, Val Colic-Peisker (2008) explains differences between Croatians in Australia and America mainly on the basis of their class and income. On these grounds, Colic-Peisker (2008) distinguishes between ‘ethnic transnationalism’ and ‘cosmopolitan transnationalism’, whereby the former is common among working class Croatian diaspora whose lives revolve around ethnicity, and the latter among the middle class diaspora who is oriented to their careers. Recognising this importance of social class in migration studies and the studies of ‘Brexit’, this paper draws on Pierre Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of three types of capital – economic, cultural and social, to discuss the class backgrounds of Serbian Londoners and to analyse what role, if any, class has played in their voting choice in the 2016 EU referendum. Bourdieu defines economic capital in relation to a person’s wealth, whereas cultural capital refers to a range of symbolic markers such as taste preferences, education and dialects, and social capital comprises a person’s connections and social ties (1986, p. 47). Bourdieu draws

on the cultural capital thesis to explain differences among students from different class backgrounds. His aim is to show that academic success and failure was not merely based on natural dispositions, even when students from different backgrounds have equal access to a good education. Important for this cultural capital, according to Bourdieu, is that “it always remains marked by its earlier acquisition...” (1986, p. 49).

Starting from there, in this paper, I discuss the motives of Serbian Londoners for emigrating to and settling in London. For instance, Ivana Bajic-Hajdukovic notes that the migration of Serbs to London before 1990 was political, whereas after 1990 it was economic (2008, pp. 30, 46). An economic migrant is an individual who moves from one country to another in order to improve their economic and professional prospects. Hence, the term can effectively be applied to a banker as much as to a low-skilled construction worker. However, the term economic migrant is most often used to refer to the latter – a low-skilled or unskilled person from a developing or underdeveloped country (Semmelroggen, 2015). Meanwhile, lifestyle migration mainly refers to the relatively affluent and privileged, who usually move from urban areas to rural or coastline areas (Benson & Osbaldison, 2014) or to less busy and “human-sized” cities such as Berlin (Griffiths & Maile, 2014) in search of a better way of life (Benson & O’Reilly, 2009; Benson & O’Reilly, 2015). Some other migration studies challenge any neat class categorisation of migrants, pointing out that some highly qualified people take low-skilled occupations in the new host country (Madianou & Miller, 2012; Parutis, 2011), while others dismiss migration categories altogether as “categorical fetishism” (Crawley & Skleparisb, 2018).

Given that a desire to put a cap on immigration was one of the key motives behind the Leave vote and that, Eastern European migrants in Britain have particularly been viewed unfavourably, as already explained, , I consider Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s (1987) concept of strategic essentialism and Iris Marion Young’s (1990) arguments on the ideal of city life in order to analyse and understand both attitudes of Serbian Londoners to Brexit, and whether and in what ways Brexit may have impacted their sense of belonging. Strategic essentialism refers to a temporal strategy undertaken by marginalised and discriminated groups aimed at mobilising and reinforcing their group identity and group solidarity in order to claim political recognition and subvert politics of marginalisation and discrimination (Spivak, 1987; Naficy, 1999; Georgiou, 2012). In her later work, however, Spivak (1989)



refutes this strategy of essentialising identity, because it follows the norms of the system that it aims to challenge (see Danius & Jonsson, 1993, p. 43).

On the other hand, Young argues that city life affirms group difference and hence offers a credible alternative perspective beyond the dichotomy between liberal individualism and communitarianism (Young, 2011 [1990], p. 226–227). Young criticises liberal individualism for putting too much emphasis on individuals and neutral standards, thereby disguising the fact that these are the standards of the privileged and that there is an inherent bias towards norms; it disregards persisting underlying inequalities. However, she also contests “the ideal of community” and finds it oppressive insofar as it requires all of its members to conform to the norm, seeking to reduce similarities to sameness. Therefore, both liberal individualism and communitarianism in different ways dismiss social differences. Conversely, city life, as “the being together of strangers” (Young, 2011, p. 237), implies “openness to unassimilated otherness” (p. 227). Indeed, city life allows people to be exposed to different perspectives, to public spaces that enable encounters and interactions with people who hold different opinions or belong to different ethnic or cultural groups, and to different aesthetics (p. 240).

London’s quirky, cosmopolitan and multinational character has arguably attracted more professionals among the group studied and has encouraged a cosmopolitan outlook. On the other hand, as Benedict Anderson (1992) notes, the juxtaposition of people holding different passports living cheek by jowl can also create a climate that nurtures long-distance nationalism. Hence, this paper will also shed light on the role of London in shaping the identities of these participants, and their attitudes to migration and more generally to otherness.

It is important to take all these different perspectives into account in order to understand the bigger picture of how Serbian Londoners perceived the Brexit vote and what it means for their identities and notions of home. As explained, a turbulent recent history in the region of the former Yugoslavia, including the legacy of communism, nationalist outbreaks and the civil war, as well as the constant decomposition of borders in the Western Balkans, democratic transition, and the current endeavours of these countries to join the EU, have all meant that the question of identity is deeply contentious for this group. Drawing on Bronikowski (2017), however, I argue that there are differences among the people of any nation with respect to their repertoires of dispositions towards the nation and that these

transcend national boundaries. This means that we may well find more similarities between similarly disposed Serbian and English voters in the 2016 EU referendum than among Serbian Londoners themselves. Given that social class seems to have played a crucial role in the referendum result, it is also important to first discuss class backgrounds and motives for migration among this group, in order to understand whether the existing debates on Brexit apply to them. Thus, this paper aims to contribute to a wider discussion of Brexit, as well as to migration studies, by supplementing these with novel insights, and thereby contribute to a more holistic picture of Brexit and London's migrant population. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that London predominantly voted Remain. Thus, I consider below the role of London in shaping the identities of this group and their sense of belonging post-Brexit. Before proceeding with the analysis of findings, I first explain how this research was carried out.

## Methodology

This two-year-long ethnographic research project, including online ethnography and semi-structured in-depth interviews, complemented by media maps, was conducted with 40 participants in the period between July 2015 and July 2017. An equal number of men and women were recruited, all of whom had lived in London for at least two years prior to summer 2015 when this research commenced. The sample was also evenly divided into three waves of migration which were identified in a pilot study carried out prior to this formal research. These three waves are 1945–1990; 1990–2003; and 2003–2013. Other factors such as age, profession, class, gender and generation were also taken into account when analysing the data. The participants were recruited through the snowball technique on the basis of their self-identification as Serbs and included both first- and second-generation of migrants. Importantly, these participants came from different regions and republics of the former Yugoslavia: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, and Macedonia. There were also participants who were born in the UK and some who had lived in different places around the world before they settled in London. I borrow Susan Ossman's (2013) term "serial migrants" to refer to the group of people who had changed several places before settling in London, although my application of the term differs in other

characteristics from Ossman's (2013) original meanings, as will be explained in the next section.

Given that we live our lives both online and offline, with these constituting a seamless continuum in people's lives, we bring our "offline" lives into "online" spaces, and vice versa (see Murthy, 2008, p. 849; Miller & Slater, 2000), I have on a daily basis observed and participated in both offline and online activities and interactions with my research participants on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. In interviews, the participants were asked to show me some of their interactions on instant messaging platforms such as Viber and WhatsApp, but some of the most revealing insights emerged spontaneously from ethnographic fieldwork – while "hanging out" with people in their "natural" settings. The participants selected what interactions they wanted to show me, and they would show me only the latest threads of messages, so my ability as a researcher to thoroughly examine this type of personal interaction was to some degree limited.

Thematic and discourse analyses were applied to interpret the data. I identified six patterns (central themes) in practices and interviews, implicit and explicit (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 10), which were both *data-led* (the coding was led by the topics that emerged from the data) and *theory-led* (the coding was guided by the theoretical framework). These were: London as British, London as cosmopolitan, cultural change, mobility, traditionalists, 'glocalisation' (Robertson, 1995). I also created typologies in order to describe people belonging to each of the three identified waves and the subgroups within these waves (see Berg, 2006).

## Findings and Analysis

### Serbian Londoners

There are about 70,000 Serbs living in Greater London today, according to some estimates (Serbian Council of Great Britain), but there are no official statistics. Most of the Serbs in the UK live in London (some other widely populated places would be Leicester, Birmingham, Derby and Bradford), especially more recent arrivals. As this two-year long ethnographic research study shows, there is no one single Serbian community in London. Their different personal and family histories and backgrounds make this group remarkably diverse and complex. There are scien-

tists, journalists, librarians, academics, hairdressers, surveyors, architects, artists, doctors, economists, bankers, civil servants, students, unemployed, secondary school teachers, security guards, waiters, marketing professionals, and so forth. As already mentioned, they come from most of the republics of the former Yugoslavia, while some participants were born in the UK, and others were born or had lived in other places before they settled in London, such as Latin America, the US, other European countries, Africa and Asia.

Nor is there one geographically bounded space in London that they occupy. More recent arrivals, since roughly 2003, have increasingly become very scattered around London. Although most earlier arrivals – before 1990 or during the 1990s – predominantly settled in areas of West London such as Ladbroke Grove, Notting Hill, Shepherds Bush, Ealing and Acton, today Serbs live in many different areas, such as Battersea, Clapham Common, Putney, Richmond, Highgate, Blackheath, Honor Oak, Shoreditch, Crystal Palace and South Kensington.

Other migration studies have also contested the notion of diaspora as a homogenous group and have documented the diversity among migrants of the same origin (see Ong & Cabanes, 2011; Sreberny, 2000). Annabelle Sreberny shows there is no one single Iranian ‘community’ in London; Iranians living in London are both geographically spread and internally diverse (2000, p. 185). Sreberny finds that Iranians of different political affiliations and class backgrounds tend to congregate around different areas in London, whereby they constitute multiple local Iranian communities, often dependent on a specific area of London, such as Harrow Iranian Community Centre (2000, p.186). In the case of Serbian Londoners, I have not found the location in London to be the main organising principle of Serbian ‘communities’ in London. In fact, many of my participants, particularly more recent arrivals, do not belong to any Serbian organisation or community centre in London.

Most media and migration studies have emphasised the important role of generational identities of migrants, as well as their gender and age in the ways they identify (Georgiou, 2006; Gillespie, 1995). While different class, professional, age, gender, regional and generational identities of Serbian Londoners are all relevant to understanding their attitudes, repertoires of dispositions towards the nation, and lifestyles, their motives for migration, triggered by some major events in their countries of origin, have the most significant explanatory potential. Communism (i.e. real-socialism) in the former Yugoslavia, then the civil war and the break-up

of the country, followed by international sanctions and NATO bombing, then the democratic transition after 2000, the opening of borders, and the start of negotiations on EU membership, were all major events that triggered different motives for migration. Based on this, I have identified three dominant waves of migration of Serbs to London. The first wave includes people who arrived in Britain after the Second World War and up to 1990, the second wave refers to those who came in the 1990s and shortly after, while the third wave is comprised of those who came to London after 2003.

Each of these waves is also internally diverse. As Figure 1 shows, within the first wave I have identified three groups of Serbian Londoners: royalists or Chetniks are people who were considered enemies of the state and were political refugees or asylum seekers shortly after the end of WWII; 'young adventure seekers', usually people in their twenties who travelled around Europe in the 1970s and 1980s when a Yugoslav passport granted them free entrance to most countries of both the West and the East, and who ended up in London.

The second wave was underpinned by the collapse of Yugoslavia and the civil war. Hence, unsurprisingly, this period saw the greatest influx of people from this region to London, and hence it was also the most heterogeneous wave. Apart from the refugees from the war-engulfed zones, this wave also consisted of young people from urban areas, mainly Belgrade, some of whom were men who tried to avoid conscription and/or the devastating aftermath of the war, while some were women who were taking a gap year before starting university and came to London to work as au pairs shortly before the outbreak of the war and then remained and pursued their education in Britain. Then there are people who arrived in the late 1990s and up to 2002, dissatisfied with the social, political and economic conditions set against the backdrop of the war and the regime of Slobodan Milosevic. They would usually describe themselves as "atypical Serbs" because they do not belong to any Serbian organisations or 'communities' in London, but also often in order to distance themselves from the negative connotations of nationalistic sentiments and the civil war.

The third wave of migration is smaller in scope compared to the previous two waves, and quite distinctive. These are mainly people younger than 40 who came in the period after 2000 to study or to work for international companies, except for the few who moved after marrying a UK citizen.

Most of the UK-born (second generation) in the sample were from the first wave, with the exception of three respondents who were born in the UK but whose families returned soon afterwards to Serbia, so they grew up there and came back to Britain after university. On the basis of when they came to London, one of these was analysed as a first-wave Serbian Londoner, the other two as second-wave and third-wave.

The typology of Serbian migration to London developed here differs somewhat from the insights of Ivana Bajic-Hajdukovic's (2008) and Lidija Mavra's studies of Serbian Londoners. Bajic-Hajdukovic (2008) distinguishes three waves as 1945–1970, 1970–1990 and 1990–2000, whereas Mavra (2010) considers the first wave as taking place between 1945 and the late 1960s. However, my analysis shows that people who arrived in the 1970s, even though they were not political migrants seeking asylum, today have much more in common with earlier arrivals than with, for instance, people who arrived after 2000. The participants who arrived in the early 2000 show much more in common with people who arrived in the late 1990s, because their motives for migration were similar. Meanwhile, the more recent arrivals, i.e. those who have come since roughly 2003 are different in their characteristics and behaviour to the other two identified groups.

As this ethnographic research shows, the old division into royalists and communists has maintained some relevance for the first two waves of the Serbian di-

<p>First wave (1945–1990)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Royalists (Chetniks)</li> <li>• Young adventure seekers – the 1970s and 1980s</li> <li>• UK-born</li> </ul>
<p>Second wave (1991–2002)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugees and asylum seekers</li> <li>• Urban youth – early and mid 1990s</li> <li>• Self-proclaimed “atypical Serbs” – the late 1990s and early 2000</li> </ul>
<p>Third wave (2003–2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students and young professionals</li> <li>• Married to a UK citizen</li> </ul>

Figure 1: Typology of waves of migration of Serbs to London

aspora in London insofar as there are some people within these two waves who still express strong support for the monarchy, while others often express Yugo-nostalgia. However, there is not necessarily a sharp line between them, whereas the difference between the supporters of the so-called “First” and “Other” Serbias is much more prominent.

## Categories of migrants and social class revised

Recent studies have demonstrated that the old class system constituted of three classes – working class, middle class and upper class – is no longer tenable in Britain and has been replaced by a much more complex schema (see Savage et al., 2015). The findings of my study also contribute to this altered picture of social class in twenty-first century Britain. Although most participants across the three waves belong to a broadly defined middle class, their economic capital do not always correspond to their cultural or social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), and vice versa. Ong and Cabanes (2011) also reveal this discrepancy between different types of capitals among elite Filipino migrants in London. The authors find that there are differences in economic and symbolic capital among postgraduate Filipino students in London, whereby the self-funded ‘economic elite’ is often looked down upon by the Chevening scholars, those with more symbolic capital (Ong & Cabanes, 2011, p.213).

This study further shows that traditional categories of migration, such as economic and lifestyle migrants, are not entirely applicable to the case of Serbian Londoners, because of the mix of interrelated motives that underpinned their migration project, as other migration studies also document (see Crawleya & Skleparisb, 2018; Madianou & Miller, 2012). It then concludes that economic capital was not the key indicator of voting intentions among Serbian Londoners in the EU referendum and is not the most important factor for understanding how well these migrants integrate into British society.

Other studies of migration have also revealed that some migrants are over-qualified for the jobs they undertake in Britain (see Madianou & Miller, 2012; Parutis, 2011), so there is a disparity between their cultural and economic capital (see Bourdieu, 1986). On the other hand, there are examples in my sample of people without a higher education degree who managed to start their own busi-

nesses and by the time of this research had gained considerable economic capital. Boundaries are very often blurred and permeable, which often contests some of these established categories.

Bajic-Hajdukovic (2008) posits that the migration of Serbs to London before 1990 (first wave) was political, whereas after 1990 (second wave) it was economic. On the other hand, most of my participants who arrived in the late 1970s and the 1980s were mainly people in their twenties, most of whom did not have higher education degrees, who were travelling around Europe and ended up in London. On the basis of their social class they could be considered economic migrants; however, their migration project was not necessarily driven by improving their economic prospects and finding a job, but rather by having an adventure.

Likewise, it can be argued that the migration after 2003 (third wave) could be broadly defined as lifestyle migration. However, in contrast to dominant trends in lifestyle migration studies that point to urban migrants moving to rural or coastline areas (see Benson & Osbaldison, 2014), or to less busy and more “human-sized” cities such as Berlin (Griffiths & Maile, 2014), this research shows an opposite dynamic. These people chose London as a big cosmopolitan city with many career challenges. As Mila’s (33 years old, third wave) account – talking about her holiday in California – illustrates:

It was nice, but I thought I would like California more. I had a plan to move there, but I was disappointed. ... I liked San Francisco, but it was small compared to London. I guess I like London more as I am getting older. I feel at home here. Whenever I go abroad, I get bored. ... I came to study... I loved people. Everybody was talking to me in the streets. It happened once that when I was entering the tube, someone gave me his ticket because he did not need it. ... It's like Belgrade; it is full with people at 3 am. Before, I had been going to Germany every summer, and it had always been dead there at 10 pm, and no one ever talked to you, or cared about you... So, I completely fell in love with [this] place.

Similarly, Jonathan (36 years old, third wave) was born in the UK, but shortly afterwards his family moved back to Belgrade. Although they moved around Europe and lived for a short time in other places, he spent most of his childhood and adolescence in Belgrade. He studied in Italy and then, in 2006, decided to settle in London:



It seemed like the best option in terms of what I wanted to do professionally. It seemed like the only place where I could find what I wanted to do. I started in a small research consultancy and then moved to big media companies.

These insights show us that professional reasons, such as career advancement, which are often associated with economic migrants (Semmelroggen, 2015), are for these migrants tightly linked to a desire to explore new places and a vibrant cultural scene, which are integral parts of the “self-development” and “pursuit of a better way of life”, characterise lifestyle migration (Benson & O’Reilly, 2009).

For second-wave Serbian migrants, especially those described as “atypical Serbs” and “urban youth”, socio-cultural reasons for migration such as cultural milieu in their country of origin, are intrinsically intertwined with political context. For example, Liam (47 years old, second wave) came to London in 2001 because he could not adjust to the mentality and prevailing public opinion in Serbia, which was set against a backdrop of a decade of Milosevic’s regime, international sanctions, NATO bombing and cultural decay. In line with this, Crawleya and Skleparisb also find in their study of Syrian refugees and migrants that their economic reasons for migration cannot be understood without reference to the devastating conflict and political turmoil in their country of origin (2018, pp. 53–54).

Moreover, there are examples of people from the first and second waves who came from smaller towns in the former Yugoslavia mainly for economic reasons, but who today – now they have moved up the social ladder – put more emphasis on “quality of life” in London. Thus, we need to account for these dynamics and fluidity within migration groups, rather than perceiving class and migration categories as set in stone. As Crawleya and Skleparisb emphasise, “dominant categories fail to capture adequately the complex relationship between political, social and economic drivers of migration or their shifting significance for individuals over time and space” (2018, p. 48). Once this has been made clear, we can get a better understanding of the role of social class in the Brexit vote and overall identities of this group.

Throughout this research, and particularly when respondents were asked about their voting intentions in the UK referendum on the EU and/or their opinions on Brexit, it became apparent that their openness to others did not primarily depend on their economic capital, but rather on their system of values, which

belonged much more to the domain of cultural and social capital. While the education of this group is an important factor, it is less important when taken alone than when coupled with their social capital, i.e., social ties and connections. Based on insights from fieldwork and interviews with their social circles, such as family, friends and co-workers, including analysis of online interactions and social ties, it is clear that their family histories play a major role. For example, those who backed a more civic or “Other” Serbia were passionate Remainers, whereas those who identified more with a nationalistic or “First” Serbia were mainly committed Leavers. Another important factor in this respect was whether they worked for international companies or ran their own businesses, with the former case usually related to more open viewpoints. For instance, Norman is a second-wave, middle-class 40-year-old man who came to the UK first in the early 1990s as a teenager. He did A levels in England and then moved to London to pursue BA and MA degrees. He now runs his own business. Ethnographic research on his online and offline activities shows his quite salient Serbian identity. He also voted for Brexit, because, in his words, he did not like the influence of other cultures on the British tradition.

### The politics of identity and notions of home: The ambivalent role of London as both a British and a cosmopolitan city

Another important factor to take into account in order to understand the degrees of openness and identities among these research participants is whether they have lived in other places before moving to London. This is especially the case for the third wave and to some extent for the second. There is a noticeable trend among these people to identify more with cities than with countries and, at the same time, to consider themselves cosmopolitan. I borrow Robertson’s (1995) term ‘glocalisation’ to describe this phenomenon when local and global identities are much more prominent than national (see Beck, 2002). Hence, my application of Robertson’s term is somewhat different from his original meaning that refers to the incorporation of locality within globalisation, i.e. that global and local processes are happening simultaneously, and more similar to David Conradson and Dierdre McKay’s (2007) term ‘translocal subjectivities’. ‘Translocal subjectivities’ implies that most transnational migrants have primary sense of belonging to specific places within the nation and to particular people in these locations, such

as their, rather than nation-states (Conradson & McKay, 2007, pp. 168–169). In a similar vein, Ong and Cabanes find that some Filipino migrants have attachments to their hometowns and kinship networks rather than a loyalty to the nation-state (2011, p.202). Georgiou, similarly, finds that most of her participants of Arab origin in London identify both with a transnational Arab community and as Londoners (Georgiou, 2013, p.102).

Saskia Sassen (2005) also highlights how cities are the spaces where global and local directly interact, often bypassing the national. For example, Helen (50 years old, second wave), who was a strong Remain voter, was born in Belgrade and then lived in several other countries in Europe, Africa and the US. She moved to London in 1996.

I identify as European. Any sort of nationalist insularity, whether it is Serbian or British, is something I really have trouble accepting and identifying with. There are several identities that are important to me and actually what is perhaps more important to me than countries are cities. There are certain cities that I care about, because I lived there or because I have strong links to them. So, one of those cities is Belgrade. I feel much more strongly related to Belgrade than I do to Serbia because I travelled very little within Serbia itself and when I do go to Serbia it is always to Belgrade. And, most of the people I know in Belgrade are people I can relate to, who are not insular, who are not xenophobic, who are not racist, who are open to the world and world's culture, who are democratic in outlook and who believe in rights of all people regardless of their race, gender, etc. I have a strong link to Munich and to Geneva. I don't like Switzerland. I don't feel Swiss, even though I have a Swiss passport. And I feel very strongly about London.

Mavra (2013) also observes that some Serbs in London identify as European and do so in lieu of identifying as Yugoslavs, given that the country no longer exists. However, for my participants, as Elena's account demonstrates, European identity signifies a sense of 'glocalisation' – urban (local) and cosmopolitan identity. Likewise, Mia (40 years old, first wave) was born in the UK, but her family moved back to Belgrade when she was two. They returned to England in 1989, when she was 12, just before political turmoil and the fall of Yugoslavia. She came to London to pursue an MSc degree and has stayed ever since. She also voted Remain.

I think the EU is a good thing. I like the idea of a free movement of labour. ... I am not concerned about the UK as much as for Europe. I am afraid that the UK has not set an example that other countries might follow. The EU is actually the only salvation for Serbia, if the EU falls apart, Serbia might go backwards a hundred years.

[I am] a Londoner, definitely. I have struggled for a long time about identity, and then I realised I don't have to be a Serbian, or British, or anything. I do not need to put myself in a box. I can just be me, and that is why London is basically home because everything goes in London, you don't have to be of a particular nationality, or dress in a particular way, or behave in a particular way.

The juxtaposition of these two quotes from Mia not only provides us with an insight into the motives of people in this group who voted Remain but also shows the contextuality of identities (see Hall, 1990 ) and why London is home for most of these participants regardless of Brexit. While she identifies as a Londoner and a cosmopolitan in terms of how Brexit may affect her life prospects in Britain, she does consider what impact this may have on Serbia and thus also expresses a national identity in this more global context.

London is not only home for those – mainly third wave and some from the second wave – who mainly voted Remain, it is also home for those who voted Leave, mainly from the first wave and some within the second wave. Although all of the participants show a fascination with the city, unlike the Remain voters, who primarily perceive London as cosmopolitan, the Leave voters appreciate London as British. As an account from one participant illustrates: “London can be everything and anything, whatever you make of it” (Alexandra, 40 years old, second wave), evoking the words of Peter Ackroyd in his biography of London that “one could become anybody [in London]” (2000, p. 775). “It is in the nature of the city to encompass everything... It is illimitable. It is infinite London”, writes Ackroyd (2000, pp. 778–779). Given these limitless opportunities and ways in which people can be in the city and live in the city, in this study London has the ambivalent role. The findings seem to reaffirm Young’s arguments about “the ideal of city life” as “the being together of strangers” (2011, p. 237) that accommodates all different ways of life and being, and what Kevin Robins implies about London as “a cognitive model” or “a tool for thought”: a certain way of thinking about differ-

ence (2001, p.87). This explains London's ambivalent role and, importantly, why London is home.

In the summer of 2017, I was invited for dinner at Ivan's home in South-West London. Ivan (50 years old) came to London in the early 1980s when he was in his twenties. Today he runs his own company and enjoys a middle-class lifestyle. A Serbian satellite channel was on television in the background. At the dinner table, he was recalling his adventures from around Europe and suddenly exclaimed: "The problem you have when you live in London is that every other place becomes boring". However, if this comment is observed in context alongside other insights from my fieldwork, one is able to see the bigger picture and come to understand that London is primarily seen and appreciated as "British", as his following comment may reveal: "Whenever I go to Serbia, I eat eggs with bacon and beans, which most people there don't understand". This was, then, followed by further comments about his views of Brexit:

I voted for Britain to leave the EU. This mess has to stop. This city has changed so much in the last two decades. Now you have ghettos all around London.

Likewise, Norman (40 years old, second wave), already introduced in this paper, is also fond of London, but it is the "British aspect" of the city that he appreciates, as the following quote exposes:

When I arrived here there was almost no place where you could find espresso; there were only pubs. Now you have too many cultures here that have changed London and Britain. I like British tradition, but it's been fading away. There are too many influences of other cultures. That is why I voted for Brexit.

When I met Kate (29 years old, second wave) a few weeks before the referendum, she told me she was into two minds about how to vote, but her mother and sister, who also lived in Britain, were decided and would be voting to leave the EU. She then added she was more likely to vote to leave too. On the same occasion, she was telling me that her family enjoyed British tradition and customs very much. The whole family moved to the UK in the mid-1990s, when she was young. Some of her social media posts, such as of those about attending the Henley Regatta



Figure 2: Kate, Henley Regatta. Source: Instagram

(see Figure 2)<sup>1</sup>, also reveal an admiration for British culture as well as her insider position as someone who can experience a high-class British lifestyle.

These insights may suggest that an opposite dynamic to Spivak's (1987) strategic essentialism is at play here. Even though there is some evidence that migrants, and in particular (South-)Eastern European migrants, have been subjected to discriminated since the early 2000s (Fox et al., 2015) and arguably especially so, in the wake of the Brexit vote, this did not lead to an expression among this group of strategic essentialism as conceptualised by Spivak.

Rather than perceiving some of these participants' views of Brexit as an opposite dynamic to Spivak's strategic essentialism, I would argue that their attitudes may, in fact, be just another (negative) face of this strategy, similar to as Spivak (1989) was later concerned about. Older migrants can start viewing newer migrants unfavourably, partly as a strategy for reinforcing their own membership in a host society and reasserting their status as insiders – a strategy for coping with difference. In this way, they strive to reaffirm their position as “British”.

As a South-Eastern European myself, since early December 2015, I have experienced discrimination three times on the basis of my origins. Just a few days after the EU referendum vote, I was at the Wimbledon 2016 tennis tournament, waiting for a match to start. There was a couple in their early sixties from continental Montenegro sitting next to me. We started talking, and they mentioned that they had immigrated to Britain in the 1980s. In spite of having migration histories themselves, and in spite of having similar origins, they did not look at me favourably when I said I was not in London only for a short visit. In fact, they then followed up with a comment that I might have to leave the country.

The first time I had a similar experience was in December 2015, before the referendum vote. At a business Christmas party, a gentleman in his seventies approached me and asked if I was a Pole or a Romanian because of my accent.

He then continued by complaining that the London underground had got very crowded because of all the Eastern European migrants who were pouring into the city, concluding with the remark that I should go back “because my country needs me”. In her study of Serbian Londoners, Mavra notes that some of her participants reported they were discriminated against because they were grouped into the generic ‘Eastern European’ category, and because of their Slavic accent some thought they were Polish while they were talking on the phone in the street (2013, p.29).

Shortly after the referendum, in mid-July 2016, I was travelling to coastal Montenegro from Gatwick airport and while queuing for check-in was having a pleasant chat with an English couple in their sixties about travels, until they realised that I *actually* lived in London and would be coming *back* after a short summer vacation in Montenegro. Then they suddenly changed their tone, all the playfulness and light-heartedness disappeared in the blink of an eye, and we started to talk about Brexit.

In their study of Hungarian and Romanian diasporas in Bristol, Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy (2015) find that these people often deny that they have experienced discrimination and instead embrace the meritocratic values of a higher social class than their own and point towards their higher racial status as White Europeans, in order to “...reposition themselves more favourably in Britain’s racialised status hierarchies” (2015, p. 730). However, they conclude that while these coping mechanisms may help navigate through this hierarchical system of the privileged, they are more likely to legitimise than to challenge discrimination in the long term. This is why the strategy is normatively and effectively different from strategic essentialism as conceptualised by Spivak (1987) or from the politics of difference, as set out by Young (2011 [1990]), which essentially aim to reassert difference as a positive cultural identity, because everyone is just as specific as everyone else (Young, 2011 [1991]).

However, this theory alone cannot account for the Remain and Leave votes, because people have different dispositions towards the nation. No identity is uncontested (see Bonikowski, 2017; Hall, 1990 ; Gilroy, 1987; Morley, 1992), and Serbs have always been divided in terms of their national identity. As explained, before 1990 they were divided into supporters and opponents of Tito’s regime (Chetniks and Yugoslavs), in the 1990s into supporters and opponents of Milosevic’s regime

(First and Other Serbias). Hence, these findings reaffirm Bonikowski's argument that people within one nation may be differently disposed towards the nation.

## Conclusion

This paper has made three main arguments. First, it has shown that migrants, like nations, are not a coherent whole. There is no one single Serbian diaspora in London. Due to their different personal backgrounds, complex motives for migration and disparities between different forms of capital and social class, any attempt to categorise these people as economic or lifestyle migrants would be an oversimplified and inaccurate representation of the richness of their experiences and identities. In relation to the question of Brexit, differences among Serbian Londoners mean they were divided on Brexit.

Second, this paper has argued that the Leave vote was much more motivated by cultural changes than by economic positioning. In contrast to the data available about the general UK adult population and subsequent studies on Brexit, income was not the main determinant of voting intentions. In most cases, a more significant factor was a system of values that was more closely related to cultural and social capital. Education as one form of cultural capital also cannot explain the voting choice on its own but has to be analysed in relation to social capital. In this sense, the division into "First" and "Other" Serbias is a much better explanatory variable, with those who identified with the former more likely to support Brexit, whereas the latter were more in favour of Remain.

Finally, this paper has drawn on these insights to explain whether and how Brexit may have influenced the way these people identify and their sense of belonging. Most of my respondents consider London their home or one of their two homes (along with Serbia). While Remainers tend to emphasise London's cosmopolitan character, Brexiteers appreciate London's Britishness. Hence, London's ambivalent role is what enables the city to be perceived as home in the context of Brexit. The paper has also considered whether Spivak's (1987) concept of strategic essentialism can be applied to understanding attitudes and identities of these research participants in the wake of Brexit. It has tried to explain the Leave vote by drawing on the already-mentioned division into "First" and "Other" Serbias, but also as a strategy for coping with a fragile position of in-betweenness. The paper



has argued that the underlying aim among some Leave voters was to reinforce their “insider position” as British and their membership of British society.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Henley Royal Regatta is an annual summer rowing event taking place on the River Thames in the town of Henley-on-Thames, England.

## Acknowledgement

I thank my research participants, whom I cannot name because of the granted anonymity, for their time and for generously sharing with me their personal histories, voting intentions and views of the 2016 EU referendum result in the UK, as well as for allowing me to analyse their activities on social media. Although they may not agree with all of the interpretations and conclusions of this paper, I am very grateful for their contributions and hope to have done justice to their narratives.

## References

- Ackroyd, P. (2000). *London: The Biography*. London: Vintage.
- Anderson, B. (1992). *Long-Distance nationalism: World capitalism and the rise of identity politics*. Amsterdam: CASA.
- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). ‘Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research’. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3): 385–405.
- Antonucci, L., Horvath, L., Kutiyski, Y. & Krouwel, A. (2017). ‘The malaise of the squeezed middle: Challenging the narrative of the ‘left behind’ Brexiter’. *Competition & Change*, 21(3): 211–229.
- Bajic-Hajdukovic, I. (2008). ‘Belgrade parents and their migrant children’. PhD thesis, University College London.
- BBC News (2016). ‘Ian Duncan Smith, former Work and Pensions Secretary and Brexiter’. *HARDtalk*, October 15. Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07yqs16> (last accessed March 30th, 2018).
- Beck, U. (2002). ‘The cosmopolitan society and its enemies’. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 19 (1– 2): 17–44.

- Benson, M. & Osbaldison, N. (2014). 'New horizons in lifestyle migration research: Theorising movement, settlement, and the search for a better life'. In Benson, M. & Osbaldison, N. (Eds.) *Understanding lifestyle migration: Theoretical approaches to migration and the quest for a better way of life* London: Palgrave Macmillan, (pp. 1–26).
- Benson, M. & O'Reilly, K. (2009). 'Migration and the search for a better way of life: A critical exploration of lifestyle migration'. *The Sociological Review*, 57(4): 608–625.
- Benson, M. & O'Reilly, K. (2015). 'From lifestyle migration to lifestyle in migration: Categories, concepts and ways of thinking'. *Migration Studies*: 1–18.
- Berg, B. L. (2009). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (Seventh Edition). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bonikowski, B. (2017). 'Nationhood as cultural repertoire: Collective identities and political attitudes in France and Germany'. In M. Skey & M. Antonsich (Eds.), *Everyday nationhood. Theorising culture, identity and belonging after banal nationalism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan (pp. 147–174).
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). 'The Forms of Capital'. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood (pp. 341–358).
- Bourdieu, P. (1989). 'Social Space and Symbolic Power'. *Sociological Theory*, 7(1): 14–25.
- Clarke, H. D., Goodwin, M. & Whiteley, P. (2017). *Brexit: Why Britain voted to leave the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Colic-Peskir, V. (2008). *Migration, class and transnational identities: Croatians in Australia and America*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Conradson, D. & McKay, D. (2007) 'Translocal Subjectivities: Mobility, Connection, Emotion'. *Mobilities*, 2(2): 167–174.
- Crawleya, H. & Dimitris, S. (2018). 'Refugees, migrants, neither, both: Categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe's 'migration crisis''. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(1): 48–64.
- Danius, S. & Jonsson, S. (1993). 'An Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak'. *Boundary*, 2(20): 24–50. Retrieved from: [http://www.stephengdewyer.info/PDF%20files/Danius\\_Sara\\_Stefan\\_Jonsson\\_Gayatri\\_Spivak\\_An\\_Interview\\_with\\_Gayatri\\_Spivak\\_boundary\\_2\\_vol\\_20\\_no\\_2\\_summer\\_1993.pdf](http://www.stephengdewyer.info/PDF%20files/Danius_Sara_Stefan_Jonsson_Gayatri_Spivak_An_Interview_with_Gayatri_Spivak_boundary_2_vol_20_no_2_summer_1993.pdf) (last accessed March 30th, 2018).

- Ferguson, D. (2016). 'The non-EU workers who'll be deported for earning less than £35,000'. *The Guardian*, 12 March. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/mar/12/eu-workers-deported-earning-less-35000-employees-americans-australians> (last accessed March 30th, 2018).
- Ford, R. & Goodwin, M. (2017). 'Britain after Brexit: A nation divided'. *Journal of Democracy*, 28(1): 17–30.
- Fox, J. E., Moroşanu, L. & Szilassy, E. (2015). 'Denying discrimination: Status, 'Race', and the whitening of Britain's new Europeans'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 41(5): 729–748.
- Georgiou, M. (2012). 'Between strategic nostalgia and banal nomadism: Explorations of transnational subjectivity among Arab audiences'. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 16(1): 23–39.
- Gilroy, P. (1987). *There ain't no black in the Union Jack*. London: Routledge.
- Gordy, E. (2013). *Guilt, responsibility, and denial: The past at Stake in post-Milosevic Serbia*. Philadelphia, PA: The University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Griffiths, D. & Maile, S. (2014). 'Britons in Berlin. Imagined cityscapes, affective encounters and the cultivation of the self'. In M. Benson & N. Osbaldison (Eds.), *Understanding lifestyle migration: Theoretical approaches to migration and the quest for a better way of life*. London: Palgrave Macmillan (pp. 139–162).
- Hall, S. (1990). 'Cultural identity and diaspora'. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: community, culture, difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart (pp. 222–237).
- Hobolt, S. (2016). 'The Brexit vote: A divided nation, a divided continent'. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(9): 1259–1277.
- Ipsos MORI (September 2016). 'World's worries'. London: Ipsos Public Affairs.
- Madianou, M. & Miller, D. (2012). *Migration and new media*. New York: Routledge.
- Mavra, L. (2010). *Contesting migrant identifications: community, friendship and ethnicity among London's Serbs*. PhD thesis, King's College London.
- Mavra, L. (2013). 'Ethnicity: Fault Lines among "Our People"'. *Migracijske i etnicke teme*, 29(1): 7–37.
- Mihelj, S. (2011). *Media nation: Communicating belonging and exclusion in the modern world*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Miller, D. & Slater, D. (2000). *The Internet: An ethnographic approach*. Oxford: Berg.
- Murthy, D. (2008). 'Digital ethnography: An examination of the use of new technologies for social research'. *Sociology*, 42(5): 837–855.

- Naficy, H. (1999). *Framing Exile: From Homeland to Homepage: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*. London: Routledge.
- Ong, J. C. & Cabanes, J. (2011). 'Engaged, but not immersed: tracking the mediated public connection of Filipino elite migrants in London'. *South East Asia Research*, 19(2): 197–224.
- Ossman, S. (2013). *Moving matters: Paths of serial migration*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Parutis, V. (2011). "Economic migrants' or 'middling transnationals'? East European migrants' experiences of work in the UK'. *International Migration*, 52(1): 36–55.
- Robertson, R. (1995). 'Glocalization: Time–Space and Homogeneity–Heterogeneity'. In Featherstone, M., Lash, S., & Robertson, R. (Eds.) *Global Modernities* (pp.25–44). London: Sage Publications.
- Robins, K. (2001). 'Becoming anybody Thinking against the nation and through the city'. In Robins, K., Edwards, M. & Massey, D. (Eds.) *Debates, City*, (5)1: 77–105.
- Russell-Omaljev, A. (2016). *Divided we stand: Discourses on identity in 'First' and 'Other' Serbia. Social construction of the Self and the Other*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag.
- Sassen, S. (2005). 'The global city: Introducing a concept'. *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, XI(2): 27–43.
- Savage, M., Cunningham, N., Devine, F., Friedman, S., Laurison, D., Mckenzie, L., Miles, A., Snee, H. & Wakeling, P. (2015). *Social class in the 21st century*. London: Pelican.
- Semmelroggen, J. (2015). 'Explainer: The difference between asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants'. *The Conversation* (August 4). Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/explainer-the-difference-between-asylum-seekers-refugees-and-economic-migrants-45615> (last accessed March 30th, 2018).
- Spivak, G. (1987). *In other worlds: Essays in cultural politics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Sreberny, A. (2000). 'Media and Diasporic Consciousness: an Exploration Among Iranians in London'. In Cottle, S. (Ed.) *Ethnic Minorities and the Media: Changing Cultural Boundaries* (pp.179–196). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- The Serbian Council of Great Britain (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.serbiancouncil.org.uk/> (last accessed March 30th, 2018).
- Vico, S. (2017). 'Class pervades the way migrants are viewed in Britain'. *The Conversation* (March 28). Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/class-pervades-the-way-migrants-are-viewed-in-britain-70174> (last accessed March 30th, 2018).

Wright, R. (2018). 'UK hits cap on letting in skilled non-EU migrants'. *The Financial Times*, January 30. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/f9cea29e-05e8-11e8-9650-9c0ad2d7c5b5> (last accessed March 30th, 2018).

YouGov (2017). 'The Times Survey Results: Immigration', 20–21 March.

Young, I. M. (2011 [1990]). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.



# Safe Havens and Prison Islands: The Politics of Protection and Deterrence of Border Crossers on Lesvos Island.

Evgenia Iliadou

**ABSTRACT:** In this paper I argue that the refugee crisis, in terms of discourse and sequence of events, has been deliberately misused by the EU policymakers in order to govern unwanted human mobility and to impose and legitimize brutal, obscene and violent politics, such as the EU-Turkey Statement, the Hotspot Approach and the geographical restriction rule. Based on ethnographic research I conducted on border crossers on Lesvos, I argue here that these obscene policies produce a Kafkaesque and suffocating context with enormous and devastating consequences upon border crossers' lives. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on 1) the refugee crisis discourse; 2) the immobilisation of border crossers on Lesvos, the Prison Island; and 3) the racial profiling and segregation of people into penal and bureaucratic "categories": "vulnerable/ non-vulnerable" and "delinquents".

**KEYWORDS:** refugee crisis; externalisation; internalisation; Lesvos

---

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In 2015, images of displaced people following desperate journeys via the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea dominated the news and the social media. The mass and social media bombarded audiences with images of overcrowded dinghies floating, capsizing or sinking, and of rescues carried out by humanitarian organi-



sations. The massive border-crossings, the misery, suffering, screams, and even deaths at Lesvos, the North-Eastern edge of the European border, became a spectacle. The Aegean – similar to the Mediterranean Sea – became a deadly border (Albahari, 2016). Lesvos became the epicentre of the so-called “refugee crisis”. Over the course of 2015, approximately one million border crossers<sup>2</sup> reached Europe by sea, via Greece and Italy (Clayton & Holland, 2015). Approximately 500,000 border crossers reached Europe via Lesvos (Gillespie et al., 2016), an island with a general population of 86,436 people (Hernandez, 2016). Currently, there are 6,000 border crossers indefinitely trapped on Lesvos in limbo (UNHCR, 2018).

This paper is based on ethnographic research I conducted for my PhD thesis between October 2016 and June 2017 on Lesvos. In my thesis, I explore the multiple, and intersectional forms of harm and violence border crossers experience on Lesvos. In this paper, I am deploying interviews, observations and personal accounts, and critical reflections collected during my fieldwork. I argue that the refugee crisis, in terms of discourse and sequence of events, has been deliberately over-used by EU policymakers in order to govern unwanted human mobility and impose and legitimise brutal, obscene and violent politics, including the EU-Turkey Statement, the Hotspot Approach and the geographical restriction rule. I argue here that these obscene policies produce a Kafkaesque and suffocating context with enormously devastating consequences upon border crossers’ everyday lives. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on 1) the refugee crisis discourse; 2) the immobilisation of border crossers on Lesvos, the Prison Island; and 3) the racial profiling and segregation of people into penal and bureaucratic “categories” (“vulnerable/ non-vulnerable” and “delinquents”).

## An “Unforeseen” Crisis?

Border crossings, violence, and the pain, suffering and deaths of people seeking international protection on Lesvos remain intense, enduring and traumatic lived experiences for me which still haunt me as nightmares. I lived and worked for various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on Lesvos Island by supporting border crossers, survivors of torture, violence and trafficking including unaccompanied minors for more than a decade. This support, in the language of my profession, is commonly framed as “aid work”. Parallel to my work, I have been po-

litionally involved in local activist movements supporting border crossers. In 2008 I traversed the threshold of Pagani “reception” centre for border crossers on Lesbos in order to provide social support to people who were reaching Lesbos (Iliadou, 2012). Naively, during that period, I thought that Pagani, termed a “reception centre”, but in practice, a detention centre was the worst space in Greece. Through the passage of time and accompanying otherwise unaccompanied minors from detention centres to reception facilities, I had access to various “reception” centres within the Greek mainland. I thus observed, lived and served as an “eyewitness” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011) of what is framed as the continuum of politics of detention as well as the insult and violation of human dignity.

“Reception” centres within the Greek mainland and Lesbos before the “refugee crisis” era have systematically been condemned for the appalling, inhuman and degrading living conditions and for human rights’ abuses (Amnesty International, 2010, 2012a, Carr, 2012, 2015). Pagani was condemned as the worst detention centre in Europe during 2009, “worst than Dante’s inferno” (sic) (Carr, 2015, p. 94; Sarantidis, 2018). The living conditions there were so appalling that the European Court of Human Rights (2011) ruled that they “violated the very meaning of human dignity”. In 2010, Frontex’s Deputy Executive Director described Greece as the “hottest area of illegal immigration in Europe” (Carr, 2015, p. 88). Evros River, the natural border between Turkey and Northern Greece, became an enormous graveyard for hundreds of border crossers. This period was also framed as a “humanitarian crisis” (Pro Asyl, 2014).

Greece has been a major entry point for border crossers since the 1990s, when hundreds of thousands of Albanian border crossers arrived in the Greek mainland, in the aftermath of the collapse of the pyramid banking system in Albania (Baldwin-Edwards, Kyriakou, Kakalika, & Katsios, 2004; Dalakoglou, 2016). Moreover, from the early 2000s onwards, Greece and particularly Lesbos was an important gateway for border crossers coming from Asian and African countries, as documented by academics (Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2013; Iliadou, 2012; Lauth Bacas, 2010) and multiple reports from Human Rights Organisations. Between 2000 and 2014, Lesbos Island and the “refugee issue” did not attract as much attention as the “refugee crisis” of 2015. It was only after the death of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian refugee child, whose dead body was washed ashore upon the coasts of Turkey, that the public opinion and the cold EU technocrats were sensitised to the



phenomenon which had gradually unfolded since the 1990s in Lesvos and Greece. Thus, the beginning of the refugee crisis is chronologically located in Aylan Kurdi's death, who also became "an allegory of refugeeness" (Khosravi, 2010, p. 73). As Miriam Ticktin denotes, "The photo [of Aylan Kurdi] gave the "migrant crisis" a new face: innocence. It shamed Europe into action" (Ticktin, 2016, p. 258).

The "crisis" as a discourse and sequence of events which unfolded and was reproduced by policymakers, the media and humanitarian organisations from 2015 onwards was so overwhelming that Lesvos Island became suddenly famous. When I moved to the UK in September 2015 to conduct my PhD research on the multiple and intersectional forms of violence and harm border crossers experience on Lesvos, the vast majority of people I spoke to had never heard of Lesvos. I remember someone asking me "Lesvos? Where is that? Is it in Malta?" However, in the aftermath of the refugee crisis, Lesvos became so famous that even Skala Sykamias – a small fishing village on Lesvos – was announced as the most popular holiday destination from AFAR travel magazine, due to the spectacle of border crossing and solidarity of the local people (Cosgrove, 2016; economy65, 2017). Lesvos became a popular destination, by attracting celebrities, volunteers and 'voluntourists' (Gillespie, 2018; Rozakou, 2016), journalists and academics, NGOs and even profiteers (lesvosnews, 2015). The scale of this intervention of various actors, particularly of NGOs, was so enormous that throughout the research process even I was repeatedly asked by local people, "Are you working for an NGO?" By having first-hand lived experiences and "bearing witness" to multiple border crossings, humanitarian "crises", sufferings, pain and deaths in time and space, this "crisis" panic (in terms of discourse, intervention and humanitarianism) seemed to me incomprehensible from the beginning, whilst mixed feelings of anger and sadness overwhelmed me. How can people, the media and particularly EU and Greek policymakers be sensitised only now by the death of a single child? What about the thousands of deaths of children, women and men within the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea crossroads from 2000 onwards (see Albahari, 2015, 2016; themigrantsfiles & UNITED, n.d.)? How can these border crossings and deaths have been ignored? What "crisis" are they talking about, since the odysseys and tragedies that border crossers experience had been unfolding during the previous two decades? How can the EU and Greek policymakers speak about crisis by pretending that crisis is a sudden, unforeseen event, an "accident" and not an outcome of political decisions?

Refugee “crisis” as a term has been challenged and problematised by scholars (Albahari, 2016; Collyer & King, 2016; De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016) on the grounds that it has been misused in order for EU policymakers to justify and legitimise emergent and exceptional measures – a state of exception (Agamben, 2005) – in the name of humanitarianism but at the expense of border crossers’ lives. The “refugee crisis” language and events which have proliferated resulted in particular governmental responses (De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016, p. 5) and practices. These were manifested via the overwhelming securitisation and militarisation of the external EU borders (De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016, p. 10; Fassin, 2011), internalisation and externalisation of the borders as well as a huge humanitarian intervention particularly in Lesbos (Howden & Fotiadis, 2017) enabling what Maurizio Albahari frames as, “a moral economy of salvation; a sovereign humanitarianism (...). A way of doing nothing while pretending to fight trafficking and the lethality of the border (Albahari, 2016, p. 278).

## Safe Havens and Prison Islands

I want to be a bird to fly everywhere. To build a nest and every day I fly wherever I want. It would be a cheerful life. Birds don’t have nation they don’t have borders.” (Anonymous, 2009)

Mytilene, January 2017. It is 1 o’clock in the afternoon, and I am hastily walking down the road. A child, barely twelve years old, stands in my way. In broken English, she says, “Madam, I am from Syria. Please give me money, I am hungry.” A few steps away her mother is talking to a man, who is carrying bags full of goods. The man pulls out his wallet and gives her money. Inside a small blue car, which is parked just a few steps away, I see three men “stalking” us. They are cynically smiling. Are they secret police? Members of the Nazi Golden Dawn? Traffickers? An unspecified fear overwhelmed me. Due to my political involvement with activist networks on Lesbos, supporting border crossers, I have lived experiences of intimidation and harassment by the police, and the scene of the three men “stalking” evoked these memories. I left and started walking fast, faster than usual. Supporters of the Nazi Golden Dawn political party on Lesbos have increased significantly in comparison to the beginning of 2015 and especially in the cities of Mytilene,

Moria and the surrounding areas, where detention centres and sites “hosting” refugees either already exist or are to be established (Papanicolaou & Papageorgiou, 2016; Pazianou, 2016). As I drifted apart from the child, a woman who was passing by asked me with apathy, “Did they beg you for money?” The unknown woman was walking quickly, and at the same time, she was talking on her cell phone. “Yes,” I replied. “They beg for money all the time,” she said in a harsh and disdainful manner, and she disappeared without listening to my last few words: “do they have any other choice?”

A few hours later I followed the road which leads to the port of Mytilene, a place where I would walk in the past. However, entering the port area was impossible. The port was not the same as it used to be. It now had the appearance of a big cage, due to the high fences surrounding it and the police guarding it. In January 2017, due to the overwhelming flows on Lesvos and the lack of reception facilities in the main camp of Moria, the port was turned into an unofficial camp for approximately 300 border crossers. A former navy ship was anchored within the port serving as a peculiar “reception centre”. What an oxymoron, I thought. Although border crossers live inside a ship within the port, they are not allowed to travel, due to the geographical restriction rule implemented in the aftermath of the EU-Turkey Statement.

On 18 March 2016 in a common Statement, the EU and Greece recognised Turkey as a “safe third country” and “a first country of asylum”, even though Turkey has been criticised for the systematic violations of human rights and violence (Amnesty International, 2016). In practice, this meant that, “[a]ll new irregular migrants entering from Turkey into the Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey”, as well as “Migrants not applying for asylum or whose application has been found unfounded or inadmissible in accordance with the said directive will be returned to Turkey” (European Council, 2016). After the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement and the Hot Spot Approach (Council of the European Union, 2015), the Greek islands, and particularly Lesvos, were turned into a securitised and militarised space of governance, where multiple national and EU bodies coexist and operate: the Greek police and Coastguard, the Greek army, the European Union’s Law Enforcement Agency, the European Union Borders and Coast Guard Agency, the European Union’s Judicial Cooperation Unit, the European Asylum Support Office, the Greek Asylum service, the office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organisation of Migration and various International and Non-Governmental Organisations; the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has also been deployed in order to patrol into the Aegean Sea and “assist” in tackling the “criminal trafficking networks”, which were blamed for the deaths of hundreds of border crossers (NATO, 2016). NATO’s operations at the Aegean Sea inaugurated and established a whole new geopolitical epoch as far as the militarisation of the Aegean Sea is concerned (Garelli & Tazzioli, 2016).

Additionally, the “geographical restriction” rule was reinforced by the Greek authorities in order to “comply”, as they put it, with the EU-Turkey Statement’s terms and conditions. Under the rule of “geographical restriction”, all new border crossers arriving at the Greek Islands after 20th March 2016 are coerced by the Greek authorities to remain there until their bureaucratic and asylum procedures have been completed (Greek Council for Refugees, 2016a). As if shutting down the Balkan route and the potential of deportation or “re-admission” to Turkey was not enough, border-crossers additionally found themselves in a state of captivity by the Greek state. The geographical restriction rule indefinitely immobilised border crossers on Lesbos by creating a prison context for them, where the prison is not located only within Moria camp but everywhere on the Island. According to Katja Franko Aas, “one does not need prisons to be, or feel, incarcerated in the locality” (2007, p.293). As *Sariad*<sup>3</sup>, a Syrian border crosser, puts it, echoing most of my interviewees, “The Island is like a prison; the only difference now is that there are no fences; there is instead the sea.”

As I was standing outside the ‘cage-port’, I saw the ferry to Athens getting ready to sail, as the last passengers were running to board. A small group of border-crossing men were showing their “papers” to the coastguard who, with a dismissive wave of his hand, indicated to them that they were not allowed to enter the port and ferry. Those border crossers were not lucky today, I thought. Maybe they will be lucky tomorrow. Who knows? And if not them, some others perhaps – some who will possess “genuine papers” or more professionally made passports purchased for a high price from traffickers – will be luckier. The more expensive the documents and passports are, the greater the chances of a successful exit from the island. You pay for what you get, after all. On the back side of the port, in the shadow of the statue which, ironically, is called the Statue of Liberty, another small group of border crossers is left outside of the ‘cage-port’ gazing at the ferry travel-

ling to Athens. They, too, had no luck today – like so many other border crossers who have been stranded within an enormous geographical, physical and psychological limbo for many months by moving here and there, back and forward on a daily basis; from Moria, Kara Tepe and PIKPA camps to Mytilene, sometimes on foot, sometimes by bus or taxi. This is what the internalisation of the borders looks like, I was thinking.

In 2003 a policy paper under the name “A New Vision for Refugees”, which included Tony Blair’s vision concerning the management of the irregular migration flows within Europe, emerged (Travis, 2003). This was Blair’s proposal at the EU-Thessaloniki Summit about the establishment of a regime of “Regional Protection Areas” or “Protection Zones” or “Safe Havens”, as well as Transit Processing Centres (TPCs) for border crossers on transit routes on Europe (Amnesty International, 2003; Hess & Kasperek, 2017; Noll, 2015; Travis, 2003). Blair’s ambivalent scheme would involve denial of entry to “asylum seekers” and “economic migrants” by returning them to the “Safe Havens”, meaning to countries outside the EU and close to migrants’ homelands (Johnston, 2003; Noll, 2015; Travis, 2003). “Safe Haven” countries would serve as a containment for border crossers arriving for the first time there, for deportee border crossers from other EU countries, as well as containment for returning border crossers, for possible resettlement in the EU (Antonakaki, Kasperek, & Maniatis, 2016; Hess & Kasperek, 2017, p. 63; Kuster & Tsianos, 2016). According to Jennifer Hyndman, the notion of “safe spaces” is not something new. It is a post-Cold War phenomenon which was applied in 1991 in Northern Iraq and also Haiti and Rwanda (Hyndman, 2003; Long, 2013). “Safe Havens” reflect the deliberate political intention of a “preventive protection” (Hyndman, 2003, p. 168), meaning the provision of humanitarian relief as far away as possible, within or closer to displaced population’ countries (Long, 2013). This demonstrates the determination of policymakers “to bring safety to people rather than people to safety, by force if necessary” (Newland in Hyndman, 2003, p. 169).

What took place in practice in the aftermath of the refugee crisis was, in Miriam Ticktin’s words, an “armed love” process (Ticktin, 2016) within the borders, an overwhelming spectacle of “protective” militarised and humanitarian response. The “armed love” process involved, instead of international protection, enormous securitisation, the militarisation of the borders and governance of irregularised border crossing. It also involved a process of externalisation and, at the same

time, internalisation; namely a process which pushes the borders of Europe outwards and inwards (De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016; Frelick, Kysel, & Podkul, 2016; Hess & Kasperek, 2017; Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016). The internalisation of borders within European countries like Greece vividly echoes Blair's "Safe Havens" vision. It includes the "safe country" concept (European Commission, 2015; Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016, p. 7), according to which countries like Turkey and Afghanistan are recognised as "safe" (European Council, 2016; European Union, 2016). The "safe country" concept has a direct effect on the asylum procedures which take place within the safe countries. It also includes bilateral and readmission agreements. With an exchange of development, capacity building and financial aid, countries which were only "transit" are now becoming "buffer zones", keeping border crossers stranded there. "Buffer states" thus become the watchdogs or, in Liz Fekete's words, the "immigration police" (Fekete, 2001) of the external frontiers of fortress Europe. After all, as the American poet Robert Frost phrases it, "Good fences make good neighbors" (Frost, 1914). Additionally, it includes the deployment of maritime patrol operations within the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea (Frontex, NATO, EU Naval Force Med) (Garelli & Tazzioli, 2016), as well as the establishment of a European Border and Coast Guard which "would consist of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, an enhanced FRONTEX, and the national border authorities, which are to share responsibility for European integrated border management" (Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016, p. 25).

From the abovementioned policies, those which crucially affected Greece and particularly Lesvos were the EU-Turkey Statement, the 'geographical restriction' rule, and the Hotspot approach. According to *Sophia*, one of my interviewees and a lawyer supporting border crossers on Lesvos, the Greek Government is determined to implement the EU-Turkey Statement and the 'geographical restriction' rule "no matter what". This is evident in the fact that activists and NGOs, as well as Law Bar Associations, have repeatedly been noting that the 'geographical restriction' is arbitrary, against the Greek Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights, an outcome of arbitrary interpretation and thus a political decision (Chios Law Bar Association, 2016). As *Sophia* stated during her interview,

Turkey does not accept refugees back if it is proved that returnees are sent from another part of Greece and not from the islands. The EU-Turkey Statement says;

‘From the Greek Islands only!’ Do not return refugees [to Turkey] from Korinthos [Greek mainland], keep them!’ [She says cynically].

In October 2016, a few months after the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, I started my fieldwork in Lesbos. Although I have lived and worked there for more than a decade, I was confronted with dreadful changes, all brought about by the “sensitive” and “deeply concerned” EU and Greek policymakers. The coasts surrounding the island and even the city centre were full of “border crossing monuments” (Iliadou, 2018) – namely disposed lifejackets, plastic dinghies, clothes and litters – indicating hundreds of border crossings. Border crossers were wandering here and there within the city centre, aimlessly, like “living dead”. Moria and Kara Tepe, the two official camps coordinated by the Greek authorities, were overcrowded. Moria camp did not resemble in any way an organised, official site. It was located within a former military base surrounded by tall fences and walls, with the police, the riot police, and G4S private security being present there. The overcrowded facilities within, around and outside Moria camp, the general disorder (the litters, plastic bottles, clothes, sleeping bags and tents) confounded any sense of the camp as an official site. I observed many dirty clothes hanging on the fences and waving like small dirty flags. I thought that these peculiar dirty “flags” are something that I have encountered in almost all “camps” I have been to in the past. A strong and intolerable smell came from a deep ditch on my right. The ditch was full of dirty clothes and sleeping bags, evidence of people who had been sleeping rough. A smell of urine emanated from the ditch, while stools were all over a small road between the canteens and the camp’s gate. “Welcome to Europe,” I thought, ashamed.

These moments are part of the everyday life of border crossers who are stranded on Lesbos in limbo. They are a vivid illustration of the “collateral casualties” of the politics of closed borders, “safe havens”, deterrence and internalisation/ externalisation of the borders. As *Maria*, a support worker for an NGO, said during her interview, “Suddenly a population who traditionally was “on the move” became a population “on hold”.”

The policies implemented in the aftermath of the “crisis” have produced misery and pain on a large scale. Without being able to move either forward or back, stranded on a small piece of earth surrounded by the deep blue sea, border cross-

ers are held as hostages on the Prison Island. Meanwhile, the only option for breaking free or having a better treatment is to be assessed as “vulnerable”.

## Racial Profiling and Segregation: The Vulnerable, the Delinquents, the Disposable

On a cold morning in January 2017 I am walking down the main street of the city centre of Mytilene. The shops are open, people are passing by, and the street is noisy and busy. The sea surrounding the city centre’s dock is calm. As I walk in front of the open shops, the big and bold headlines of a local newspaper catch my attention: “Vulnerable and troublemakers will be removed from the island” (sic). The article says that the Mayor and the Prime Minister came to an agreement in order for “vulnerable” and “delinquents” (paravatikoi)<sup>4</sup> border crossers, and those who create problems for the local community, to be transferred from Lesvos to the mainland. What an oxymoron I thought, the “vulnerable” and “deviant” together; the former are the ones that “deserve” protection and special treatment, while the latter are the “undesirable”.

The representation of border crossers in media and policy discourse through binaries such as “vulnerable” versus “delinquent” produces images of people who are either “problematic” (vulnerable) or “the problem” (deviant) per se (Judge, 2010; Nyers, 2006; Pickering, 2001). These binaries problematise border crossers who are all grouped and criminalised as ‘a problem’ and ‘problematic’ faceless population and not as people seeking international protection. As I am reading the newspaper article, I could not stop thinking of Sharon Pickering’s words: “the inherent deviancy of asylum seeking” (Pickering, 2001, p. 178), and the a priori criminalisation and stigmatisation of people seeking international protection (Bosworth & Turnbull, 2014). The focus on delinquency raises the issue of the “racialised deviant”, which represents migrants as a “problematic” population, but overlooks problematic state policies imposed at the expense of border crossers.

A few hours later I headed to Moria camp in order to meet *Yusuf*, a 50-year-old Syrian border crosser. At the edge of a small road between the canteens and Moria’s main gate, *Yusuf* was waiting for me to come. In one hand he was holding a cigarette, and in the other hand, he was holding a small plastic bag. “You look like



my daughter”, *Yusuf* told me with sadness. *Yusuf* was forcibly separated from his family in order to reach Europe.

I am already one year here, and I am still waiting. I gave my interview, and I am still waiting. *I am a Syrian*. They told me that I will receive an answer in a couple of months but still nothing. I do not know what will happen. I am already one year here.

*Yusuf* was currently living in another refugee camp on Lesbos, but the day we met, he had an appointment with an NGO employee in Moria camp, in order to be medically examined. As we were speaking, he opened his plastic bag, and he showed me his papers. He unfolded one of them and pointed at a small box at the end of the document, telling me with a strangled voice, “Do you see this? This is not good, not good at all. It says “NO”. This “NO” in this box is not good.” As I looked more carefully at his paper, I realised that he was pointing at a medical assessment. The box on the bottom of his document was referring to the “vulnerability issue”. According to the doctors of the NGO, *Yusuf* was not vulnerable enough, and they assessed him as “non-vulnerable”. “This is not good, not good at all”, *Yusuf* kept on saying, as ‘vulnerability’ would have helped him to be recognised as a refugee. Vulnerability would be his “passport”, which would allow him to travel to the mainland by breaking free from the Prison Island. After *Yusuf* left and our roads split, the echo of his strangled voice saying “This is not good, not good at all” was stuck my head.

Delinquency and vulnerability are two of the bureaucratic classifications implemented under the fast-track border procedures (Greek Council for Refugees, 2016). Especially after the implementation of the “geographical restriction”, where all border crossers were indefinitely immobilised in Lesbos, the two classifications were introduced for the bureaucratic and deportation apparatus to operate “efficiently” by prioritising and “protecting” the vulnerable and expelling all others. Both are very problematic as concepts per se, but also as policies implemented within the bureaucratic and asylum procedures. As Ann Murphy observes, “there is something about the theme of vulnerability that raises troubling issues” (Murphy in Gilson, 2016). Administrative vulnerability is not just a problematic concept but also a tool of segregation and segmentation. It acknowledges that some people

are more vulnerable than others, whose needs must be protected and safeguarded by a paternalistic state (Butler, Gambetti, & Sabsay, 2016). At the same time, the paternalistic state has the power to define who counts as vulnerable or not, to control the ways of protection and at the same time to victimise.

“Vulnerable” people in Lesvos within the bureaucratic asylum procedures must be first identified and assessed according to certain criteria by expertise, via a specific vulnerability assessment which includes medical examinations. In practice, however, due to the overwhelming numbers of people arriving and being restricted in Lesvos, vulnerability does not guarantee the protection of the vulnerable. Vulnerable people can be excluded from the administrative vulnerability scheme during the bureaucratic procedures, since among the vulnerable cases even “more” vulnerable cases are identified to whom the higher priority is given. A state of “vulnerability within vulnerability” is thus being implemented. According to Gilson (2016, p. 74), “(...) [vulnerability] characterises some and does not pertain to others, and this attribution is accompanied by a hierarchical ascription of value in terms of agency and other desirable capacities and traits”.

What I observed during my research on Lesvos, as a result of the administrative vulnerability, was various cases of people seeking international protection who were willing to do anything possible in order to be assessed as vulnerable and thus have “better” treatment – for instance, to live in accommodation outside Moria camp or to have the opportunity to travel to the Greek mainland. *Katja*, a local activist and lawyer, supporting border crossers on the island, told me with emphasis during the interview:

There are even people who are forging the vulnerability assessment by replacing the ‘no’ with a ‘yes’. Now, I do not know. There is a possibility that a case-worker can check directly into the system [via a database] if one is vulnerable. But, many refugees are forging “No” to “Yes”. This “No” and “Yes” has “killed” people.

*Katja’s* last sentence made more obvious to me that the “love” EU and Greek policymakers were distributing to the thousands of border crossers on Lesvos was actually “killing” them quietly, silently and softly. Policymakers’ “love” in the form of humanitarianism, care, and protection made me think of the irony of the expres-

sion “your love is suffocating me”. As I found, the consequences of the vulnerability criterion, for some of the border crossers on Lesbos, were even worse. As *Petros*, a humanitarian worker for an NGO highlighted during his interview,

A woman who is raped, for example, en route to Europe and is now in a state of unwanted pregnancy, apart from the fact that it is very unlikely to speak to someone it is also very unlikely that she will proceed to abortion, since pregnancy is a ‘bonus’, a ‘ticket’ for vulnerability.

As *Serafeim*, an aid worker supporting border crossers, emphasised during his interview, “vulnerability is the royal road which leads to the refugee status”, but which is paved with massive misery, suffering and pain. What perverse minds would implement obscene policies and bureaucratic criteria like vulnerability by pushing women into unwanted pregnancies, even when these are an outcome of a rape?

During fieldwork in January 2017, I was shocked and upset by the news of three border crossers’ deaths in the space of one week in Moria camp due to the cold. They were all “single men” who were living in tents, and they had not been considered to be vulnerable (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017c). Cold is unbearable for border crossers who even invent metaphors to illustrate the misery the Greek authorities coerce them to live in. “This is not an Island. It is the land of ice, an iceland. That is why I think it is so cold”, *Salif*, a border crosser from Eritrea, remarked during his interview. Playing with words “Iceland-island”, he commented on the problem of winterisation, which a week before I met him had killed the three men. *Morteza*, another border crosser from Afghanistan, stated,

Each refugee is distributed with two blankets, and I think two blankets with this weather are not enough especially when refugees sleep in the tents. Even inside the house, you cannot sleep with two blankets, how then can you sleep inside the tents? Moria camp is colder than [the city of] Mytilene.

Vulnerability is both inclusive and exclusive, it “risks sustaining the very exclusion and inequality it aims to redress” (Peroni & Timmer, 2013, p. 1057). “Single men” are excluded from the vulnerability criterion, and they do not experience equal treatment within Moria camp. They must endure long queues in order to use the lava-

tories or to receive food. They are obliged to sleep inside summer tents even during winter, just because they do not count as vulnerable. Structural violence, which is manifested in multiple ways, is a common phenomenon within detention, the camp and the Prison Island, turning all border crossers into the vulnerable by also exposing them to death. Vulnerability is a problematic concept in terms of “how it captures and expresses the complexities, tensions, and ambiguities of experiences of gender, sexuality, and power in contemporary life” (Gilson, 2016, p. 73).

As for people who are classified as “delinquents”, they do not have many chances to be granted asylum in case they are asylum seekers. In fact, deportability seems to be the corollary of delinquency. Classification on the grounds of “delinquency” (Greek Council for Refugees, 2016b; Ministry of Interior, 2016) is implemented on Lesbos in order for the “unwanted”, “unworthy” and “disposable” border crossers to be expelled. It is based on a very vague and ambivalent definition linked with border crossers’ country of origin. As *Sophia* emphasised,

They [Greek authorities] indicatively list some of those countries, so as it will be more convenient for them to implement discriminatory and racist policies. The nationalities in the list are the ones they want to treat as delinquents with rejections and deportations.

What was clear to me during my fieldwork was an obscene, inhuman and degrading treatment of all border crossers being penalised as “delinquents”. Delinquents are detained and thus coerced to live only within a prison inside Moria camp called ‘Section B’ for an uncertain period of time. What I found during my research was that the detention on the grounds of “delinquency” is in most of the cases unfounded and arbitrary. According to the NGO Greek Council of Refugees, “findings on-site do not confirm allegations of “law-breaking conduct” in the vast majority of the cases” (2016, p.16). The most well-known cases of arbitrary detention on the grounds of delinquency are that of Arash Hampay – an Iranian border crosser who went on a hunger strike for 41 days in July 2017 by demanding the release of “all arbitrarily detained refugees and migrants from Section B in Moria” (Sea-Watch, 2017) – and the “35 of Moria” case (Legal Centre Lesbos, 2017).

This racial profiling of people seeking international protection based on their country of origin raises important issues of state racism. As many of my interview-

ees, who are activists and support refugees, have noted, people being classified as “migrants with an economic profile” are facing multiple forms of discrimination. From the moment they reach Lesbos they get arrested and detained with inadequate access to legal aid. Their personal needs and circumstances are ignored. They are detained for a prolonged period until they are eventually deported. As if by irony, delinquency is also linked with migrants having an “economic profile”. Thus, delinquency is frequently linked with those nationalities that are “deportable”. Most of the riots, fires and self-harm are caused by these people in a desperate attempt for their voices and problems to be heard. As Palidda observes, “some among those who have been responsible for unlawful conduct may have been victims of excessive zealousness if not abuses, harassment or even arbitrary persecutions” (Palidda, 2006, p. 10).

### “Everything which is black and moves is arrested”

In May 2017, *Sams*, one of my interviewees, an Afghan refugee man who has been living on Lesbos since 2011 and for more than a decade in Greece, was arrested by the port police while he was taking a night walk around the port. Although he showed his refugee identification card to the authorities, the port police officers arrested him, detained him in a container for many hours and then released him, without any further explanation:

I was just walking around the Port, and I was arrested! They detained me for several hours in a container within the port, which is at the Customs Office side. They have several containers like this in which they detain people. At some point, a port police officer came to see me and said: “You should be aware that we are looking for them [migrants]”. They are doing street patrols with cars and every time they trace refugees because refugees are visible – they look like refugees – they arrest them, detain them, and after some hours they let them go on foot. They are doing it frequently you know. They just stop refugees in the streets, and they arrest them.

“Since when is it illegal to walk during the night?” *Sams* kept saying, frustrated by the fact that either with or without “papers”, all migrants and their “papers”

are treated by the authorities with disbelief (Fassin & D'Halluin, 2005; Haas, 2017). The “culture of disbelief” is diffused within the asylum system’s procedures (Haas 2017, p. 79) and also within everyday life. This everyday racialised and intimidating treatment on behalf of the police is not a new or unusual phenomenon (Amnesty International, 2012b; Karamanidou, 2016). *Jafar*, a border crosser from Afghanistan whom I interviewed in Lesvos, told me about a similar experience to *Sams* in 2014.

*Jafar* came to Lesvos in 2006 as an unaccompanied minor in order to seek international protection. With his asylum claim pending for more than six years, *Jafar* left Greece irregularly in order to seek international protection in Germany, where he was granted refugee status. In 2014 he decided to travel back to Lesvos, as a tourist this time, to visit his friends. Disappointingly, when the ship from Athens reached the port of Mytilene, he was arrested by the port police, because he “looked like” a migrant. Although he possessed a passport and the refugee identification card, the authorities did not believe him and detained him for several hours in a container located at the port police station. *Jafar* was interrogated by the port police officers; he was forced to give the names and addresses of the people he was visiting, while the bona fide of his passport was questioned:

Port police did not want to believe that my passport is a genuine one. They were looking at it and checking it over and over again, whilst they were constantly repeating: “How can this be possible? There is no way this document to be genuine.” Greek authorities did not want to believe that there are also migrants who can travel legally. For them, we all are and will always be illegal.

While the port police officers were searching *Jafar*’s bag, they discovered brochures from an activist group supporting refugees. “You arsehole! Are you involved in these things?” one of the officers shouted at him. “Since when is illegal to distribute information leaflets”, *Jafar* asked, only to receive the port police officer’s abusive answer, “Shut up you fucking arsehole!” The everyday disbelief of the genuineness of “papers” during the “transactions” with the authorities intimidate border crossers, and further evoke and inflict traumas, horror, anxiety, psychological harms and precariousness. Moreover, this also turns the official documents – and thus the refugee status – into “make-believe” and “ephemeral” (Navaro-Yashin, 2007).

Within the context of the severe securitisation and migration controls at and within the borders and border zones, massive expulsions, arrests, deportations and violence are taking place on a regular basis. “Sweep” operations by the authorities are just another violent tool of segregation and intimidation. In this context, as *Sophia* emphasises, “everything which is black and moves is arrested” as well as abused, intimidated and/or deported. As the No Border Kitchen Lesbos activist group states:

Police violence is omnipresent on Lesbos. It happens in the day, in the night, in the street, in the police station, in Moria prison and to people with and without papers. Every day on this island, people are controlled, harassed, humiliated insulted and beaten. (No Border Kitchen Lesbos, 2017).

For this reason, the vast majority of my interviewees told me that border crossers are forced to adopt “survival strategies” in order to survive. For example, they are adjusting their everyday routine in order not to be arrested and harassed by the Police. They avoid walking on the main streets of the city centre during nighttime, using shortcuts and back-ways instead in an attempt to be as invisible as possible (Coutin, 2005).

‘Crimmigration’ and illegalisation are dispersed within everyday life and endure within the refugee status itself via disbelief and intimidation. “Illegality” becomes a stigma, a stereotype from which even recognised refugees cannot escape. Within this racial profiling and illegalisation process, where “*everything which is black and moves is arrested*”, fall also activists who support refugees on Lesbos. Activists are likely to be arrested just because they look like migrants. These processes – which are an outcome of the broader EU policies over the governance of unwanted human mobility – are not just racist, but also dehumanising, as well as a vital part of the broader politics of deterrence.

## Epilogue: The Time of Waiting

What I have realised through the passage of time and my lived experiences as an activist, local, professional and researcher is that for the EU policymakers the only “refugees” who are welcome are the ones who never manage to reach Europe. The

ones who eventually arrive in Europe are exposed to obscene, degrading and humiliating treatment. What is more devastating for me is seeing border crossers being trapped in “the time of control” (Andersson, 2014) which policymakers impose. Amongst all the collateral casualties of the “refugee crisis” measures (militarisation, internalisation/externalisation of the borders, racialisation, delinquency and victimisation/vulnerability), one of the most violent and devastating appears to be the violence of enduring and indefinite waiting. This means enduring suffering, considering that border crossers get stuck multiple times within multiple transits and buffer zones, refugee camps, detentions throughout their journey to Europe. As I have observed, border crossers are in an oxymoronic constant state of breaking free from the one stage of “stuckedness” (Hage, 2009) to another and remaining at the same time still. This awkward and oxymoronic state is often phrased as “in limbo”, wherein border crossers wait, are stuck and move multiple times within multiple limbos (geographical, bureaucratic, legal, social, mental, psychological and existential) as well as from limbo to limbo. In this peculiar scheme of “limbo within limbo” – “limbo-ness” – time plays a pivotal role, since it defines the duration of one’s waiting and precariousness (Hasselberg, 2016; Khosravi, 2014; Turnbull, 2016). Time is not an “ordinary” time since it moves slowly by inflicting enduring suffering and pain to people. Time, “being stuck” and waiting are some of the most obscene forms of violence exercised upon border crossers on Lesbos Island. No wonder my border crosser interviewees give a name to this particular and peculiar time wasted inside the material and symbolic detentions: “Prison Time”. Prison Time is a wasted time which cannot be replaced. This fact is a form of violence, and it has enormous, short- and long-term, harmful mental consequences (Dorling et al., 2008; Pemberton, 2015) upon people, who watch the years and the moments – the time of their life – being wasted without being able to do anything about it. “I have not lived my life as I dreamed and as I wanted to”, *Sams* kept saying to me. While, *Thalis* a border crosser from Ghana said, “I am wasting time of my life without doing anything.”

Border crossers are intimidated, harassed and abused everywhere and at all times inside the Prison Island. Everyday life turns out to be for them everyday torture. Not only must they tolerate an enduring and never-ending bureaucracy during the registration and asylum procedures; they also have to endure dehumanisation, discrimination and segregation into bureaucratic and penal “categories” and



“sub-categories”, into “humans” and “sub-humans”. They have to endure waiting for months and some others, like *Sam* and *Jafar*, for years in order to regulate their legal status or to be deported. As they are waiting, they are forced to experience the humiliation of waiting in degrading conditions, like those in Moria camp, where queuing in order to use the lavatories, to receive food, to see doctors, to speak with the staff, to seek asylum is an everyday and devastating reality. Meanwhile, exploitation, violence, rapes, trafficking and torture within Moria camp and the Prison Island take place regularly (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017a, 2017b). Between 2016 and 2017 more than six people died in the Moria camp. Self-harm and suicide attempts there have become routine. Rapes and sexual violence are routinised too. Meanwhile, border crossers are forced into survival sex inside and outside the camp, in order to financially survive.

In the aftermath of the refugee crisis, the EU’s “humanitarian” response at the borders – which peaked after the EU-Turkey Statement – turned the everyday life of the thousands of border crossers into a living hell. Border crossers fleeing in order to seek international protection are trapped in a coercive, violent existence. Due to the coerced border controls on land and at sea, and the arbitrary push-backs and deportations, border crossers cannot easily reach Europe. The ones who manage to come are “victims” of intersectional forms of everyday violence. Moria camp and more broadly the Prison Island have become an immense graveyard of the dead, the social dead, and the “living-dead” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004).

By paraphrasing Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013, p. 171), the dream of an EU humanitarian approach to border security is a dream and an insatiable desire of the EU policymakers. However, their dream or vision is a horrifying and lurid nightmare for the thousands of border crossers.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Prof. Steve Tombs for his comments and revisions on previous versions of this paper.
- <sup>2</sup> Throughout the article I adopt the term “border crossers”, instead of the legal and bureaucratised terms “refugees”, “asylum seekers”, “irregular migrants”. In doing so I am morally and politically engaging with grassroots movements, which emphasise the fact that the problem is the border. Borders produce border controls, visas and passports, “legal” or “illegal” mobilities, bureaucratic and legal classifications of people as “refugees” or “asylum seekers”.

- <sup>3</sup> All the names being used in the paper are pseudonyms.
- <sup>4</sup> The original term used is “paravatikos”, (plural: paravatikoi) a term which in English is more precisely translated as “delinquent” and it means “deviant”. However, in some of the NGOs’ reports the term “paravatikos” is translated as “troublemaker” or “law-breaking conduct”.

## References

- Agamben, G. (2005). *State of Exception*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Amnesty International. (2003). *UK / EU/ UNHCR. Unlawful and Unworkable-Amnesty International’s views on proposals for extra-territorial processing of asylum claims*. London: Amnesty International.
- Amnesty International. (2010). *Greece: Irregular Migrants and Asylum-Seekers Routinely Detained in Substandard Conditions*. London: Amnesty International.
- Amnesty International. (2012a). *Greece: Frontier of Hope and Fear Migrants and Refugees Pushed Back at Europe’s Border*. London: Amnesty International.
- Amnesty International. (2012b). *Police violence in Greece. Not Just “Isolated Incidents*. London: Amnesty International .
- Amnesty International. (2016). *Five reasons why the EU deal with Turkey is inhumane*. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/yes-minister-it-human-rights-issue/five-reasons-why-eu-deal-turkey-refugees-inhumane>
- Andersson, R. (2014). “Time and the Migrant Other: European Border Controls and the Temporal Economics of Illegality”. *American Anthropologist*, 116(4), 795–809.
- Anonymous. (2009). *I want to be a bird ....* Retrieved from <http://birdsofimmigrants.jogspace.net/2009/12/26/i-want-to-be-a-bird/>
- Antonakaki, M., Kasperek, B., & Maniatis, G. (2016). “Counting, Channelling, and Detaining: The Hotspot Center Vial in Chios, Greece”. *Society & Space*. Retrieved from: <https://societyandspace.org/2016/11/29/counting-channelling-and-detaining-the-hotspot-center-vial-in-chios-greece/>
- Baldwin-Edwards, M., Kyriakou, G., Kakalika, P., & Katsios, G. (2004). *Statistical Data On Immigrants In Greece: An Analytic Study Of Available Data And Recommendations For Conformity With European Union Standards Contents Acknowledgments Objectives and Methodology. An analytical study of statistical data on immigration into Greece*. Greece: Migration Policy Unit.

- Bosworth, M., & Turnbull, S. (2014). "Immigration Detention, Punishment, and the Criminalization of Migration. *On Crime and International Migration*, 1–38.
- Butler, J., Gambetti, Z., & Sabsay, L. (2016). *Vulnerability in Resistance: introduction*. (J. Butler, Z. Gambetti, & L. Sabsay, Eds.). Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Carr, M. (2012). *The trouble with Fortress Europe*. Retrieved from <https://www.opendemocracy.net/matthew-carr/trouble-with-fortress-europe>
- Carr, M. (2015). *Fortress Europe: Inside the War Against Immigration*. London: Hurst.
- Chios Law Bar Association. (2016). *Assesment*. Chios.
- Clayton, J., & Holland, H. (2015). *Over one million sea arrivals reach Europe in 2015. UNHCR figures show over one million refugees and migrants reach Europe by sea in 2015, with almost 4,000 feared drowned*. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/latest/2015/12/5683d0b56/million-sea-arrivals-reach-europe-2015.html>
- Collyer, M., & King, R. (2016). "Narrating Europe 's migration and refugee 'crisis'". *Human Geography: A New Radical Journal*, 9(2), 1–12.
- Council of the European Union. (2015). *Explanatory on the " Hotspot " Approach*. Council of the European Union.
- Coutin, B. S. (2005). "Being En Route". *American Anthropologist*, 107(2).
- Dalakoglou, D. (2016). "Europe's last frontier: The spatialities of the refugee crisis". *City*, 20(2), 180–185.
- De Genova, N., & Tazzioli, M. (Eds.). (2016). *"Europe / Crisis: New Keywords of 'the Crisis' in and of 'Europe.'" Near Futures Online 1 "Europe at a Crossroads."* London: ZONE Books-near futures online.
- Dorling, D., Gordon, D., Hillyard, P., Pantazis, C., Pemberton, S., & Tombs, S. (2008). *Criminal Obsessions: Why Harm Matters More than Crime*. W. McMahon (Ed.) (second). London: Centre for Crime and Justice Studies.
- economy65. (2017). Greeks by rescuing migrants, made their village touristic destination! (in Greek). Retrieved March 23, 2018, from <http://www.economy365.gr/article/25224/oi-ellines-poy-sozontas-metanastes-ekanan-horio-toys-koryfaio-toyristiko-proorismo>
- Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). "Autoethnography: An overview". *Historical Social Research*, 36(4), 273–290.
- European Commission. (2015). Regulation Of The European Parliament And Of The Council establishing an EU common list of safe countries of origin for the purposes of Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on common procedures for granting and withdrawing in. Brussels: European Commission.

- European Council. (2016). *EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016*. Brussels. Retrieved from <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/>
- European Court of Human Rights. (2011). *Rahimi v. Greece- 8687/08 Judgment 5.4.2011 [Section I]*.
- European Union. (2016). *Joint Way Forward on migration issues between Afghanistan and the EU*.
- Fassin, D. (2011). Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries. The Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 40(1), 213–226.
- Fassin, D., & D'Halluin, E. (2005). The Truth from the Body: Medical Certificates as. *American Anthropologist*, 107(4), 597–608.
- Fekete, L. (2001). The Emergence of Xeno-Racism. *Race & Class*, 43(2), 23–40.
- Frelick, B., Kysel, I. M., & Podkul, J. (2016). The Impact of Externalization of Migration Controls on the Rights of Asylum Seekers and Other Migrants. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, 4(4), 190–220.
- Frost, R. (1914). Mending Wall. Retrieved March 7, 2018, from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44266/mending-wall>
- Garelli, G., & Tazzioli, M. (2016). Warfare on the logistics of migrant movements: EU and NATO military operations in the Mediterranean. *OpenDemocracy*. Retrieved from <https://www.opendemocracy.net/mediterranean-journeys-in-hope/glenda-garelli-martina-tazzioli/warfare-on-logistics-of-migrant-movem>
- Georgoulas, S., & Sarantidis, D. (2013). Migration and State crimes. A critical criminological approach and a case study in Greece. *Antigone Quadrimestrale Di Critica Del Sistema Penale E Penitenziario Anno VIII – N. 1. La Detenzione Amministrativa Degli Stranieri Esperienze in Europa*, (1), 92–109.
- Gillespie, M., Ampofo, L., Cheesman, M., Faith, B., Iliadou, E., Issa, A., Skleparis, D. (2016). *Mapping Refugee Media Journeys Smartphones and Social Media Networks Research Report*. Milton Keynes.
- Gilson, E. C. (2016). Vulnerability and Victimization: Rethinking Key Concepts in Feminist Discourses on Sexual Violence. *Signs*, 42(1), 71–98.
- Greek Council for Refugees. (2016a). Fast-track Border Procedure (Eastern Aegean islands) – Greece. Retrieved March 18, 2018, from <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/asylum-procedure/procedures/fast-track-border-procedure-eastern-aegean>

- Greek Council for Refugees. (2016b). *Grounds for detention* – Greece. Retrieved from [http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/detention-asylum-seekers/legal-framework-detention/grounds-detention#footnote1\\_s45i8kj](http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/detention-asylum-seekers/legal-framework-detention/grounds-detention#footnote1_s45i8kj)
- Haas, B. M. (2017). “Citizens-in-Waiting, Deportees-in-Waiting: Power, Temporality, and Suffering in the U.S. Asylum System.” *Ethos*, 45(1), 75–97.
- Hage, G. (2009). “Waiting Out the Crisis: On Stuckedness and Governmentality”. In G. Hage (Ed.), *Waiting*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 97.
- Hasselberg, I. (2016). *Enduring Uncertainty. Deportation, Punishment and Everyday Life*. London: New York: Berghan.
- Hernandez, J. (2016). *Refugee Flows to Lesvos: Evolution of a Humanitarian Response*. Retrieved from <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugee-flows-lesvos-evolution-humanitarian-response>
- Hess, S., & Kasperek, B. (2017). “Under Control? Or Border (as) Conflict: Reflections on the European Border Regime.” *Social Inclusion*, 5(3), 58.
- Howden, D., & Fotiadis, A. (2017). “Where did the money go? How Greece fumbled the refugee crisis.” Retrieved from [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/09/how-greece-fumbled-refugee-crisis?CMP=share\\_btn\\_fb](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/09/how-greece-fumbled-refugee-crisis?CMP=share_btn_fb)
- Hyndman, J. (2003). “Preventive, palliative, or punitive? Safe spaces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, and Sri Lanka.” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 16(2), 167–185.
- Iliadou, E. (2012). “Places in Nowhere and Heterotopias. The detention Centre of Pagani in Lesvos Island as a case study (in greek).” In S. Trubeta (ed), *The refugee issue. Border studies*. Athens: Papazisis, 315–38.
- Iliadou, E. (2018). Border Crossing Monuments. Retrieved March 25, 2018, from <https://oucriminology.wordpress.com/2018/02/09/border-crossing-monuments/>
- Johnston, P. (2003). “UN Safe Havens” Plan to Curb Flow of Asylum Seekers. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1421191/UN-safe-havens-plan-to-curb-flow-of-asylum-seekers.html?mobile=basic>
- Judge, R. (2010). *Refugee advocacy and the biopolitics of asylum in Britain The precarious position of young male asylum seekers and refugees*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Karamanidou, L. (2016). “Violence against migrants in Greece: beyond the Golden Dawn.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(11), 2000–2021.
- Khosravi, S. (2010). “An Ethnography of Migrant “Illegality” in Sweden: Included yet Excepted?” *Journal of International Political Theory*, 6(1), 95–116.

- Khosravi, S. (2014). Waiting. *Migration: A COMPAS Anthology*. Retrieved from [http://compasanthology.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Khosravi\\_COMPASMigrationAnthology.pdf](http://compasanthology.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Khosravi_COMPASMigrationAnthology.pdf)
- Kuster, B., & Tsianos, V. S. (2016). How to Liquefy a Body on the Move: Eurodac and the Making of the European Digital Border. In *EU Borders and Shifting Internal Security*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 45–63.
- Lauth Bacas, J. (2010). No Safe Haven: The Reception of Irregular Boat Migrants in Greece. *Ethnologia Balkanica*, 14, 147–167.
- Legal Centre Lesbos. (2017). *FREE THE MORIA 35*. Retrieved from <http://www.legalcentrelesbos.org/2017/07/30/free-the-moria-35/>
- lesvosnews. (2015). *Innocent gazes and exploitation at the port (in Greek)*. Retrieved from <http://www.lesvosnews.net/articles/news-categories/koinonia/athoavlemmata-kai-ekmetalleyisi-sto-lima>
- Long, K. (2013). “In Search of Sanctuary: Border Closures, “Safe” Zones and Refugee Protection.” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 26(3), 458–476.
- Médecins Sans Frontières. (2017a). *A Dramatic Deterioration for Asylum Seekers on Lesbos*. Retrieved from [http://cdn.doctorswithoutborders.org/sites/usa/files/attachments/msf\\_lesbos\\_vulnerability\\_report.pdf](http://cdn.doctorswithoutborders.org/sites/usa/files/attachments/msf_lesbos_vulnerability_report.pdf)
- Médecins Sans Frontières. (2017b). *Confronting the mental health emergency on Samos and Lesbos: Why the containment of asylum seekers on the Greek islands must end*. Retrieved from [http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/2017\\_10\\_mental\\_health\\_greece\\_report\\_final\\_low.pdf](http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/2017_10_mental_health_greece_report_final_low.pdf)
- Médecins Sans Frontières. (2017c). *Three dead men in the hotspot of Moria: MSF to the Greek and EU authorities for measures (in Greek)*. Retrieved from <https://msf.gr/magazine/3-nekroi-sto-hotspot-tis-morias-ekklisi-ton-giatron-horis-synora-stis-ellinikes-kai>
- Ministry of Interior. (2016). *Police Circular: Management of the Irregular Migrants in the Reception and Identification Centres- Asylum Procedures-Implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016 (re-enforcement of refoulment in Turkey) (in Greek)*. (Ministry of Interior, Ed.). Athens: Ministry of Interior.
- NATO. (2016). *NATO’s Deployment in the Aegean Sea, (October)*, 1–2. Nato.
- Navaro-Yashin, Y. (2007). “Make-believe papers, legal forms and the counterfeit: Affective interactions between documents and people in Britain and Cyprus.” *Anthropological Theory*, 7, 79–98.

- Noll, G. (2015). *Visions of the exceptional*. Retrieved from <https://www.opendemocracy.net/gregor-noll/visions-of-exceptional>
- Nyers, P. (2006). *Rethinking Refugees: Beyond State of Emergency*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Palidda, S. (2006). "Criminalisation and Victimization of Migrants in Europe". *Dur.Ac.Uk*, 255.
- Papanicolaou, G., & Papageorgiou, I. (2016). "The police and the far right in Greece: a case study of police voting behaviour in Athens." *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 66(4), 397–419.
- Pazianou, A. (2016). «Η Χρυσή Αυγή... ξεσπαθώνει και αποκαλύπτει τον στόχο της. Πλώρη για την τρίτη έδρα του νομού». Retrieved from <http://www.emprosnet.gr/article/88412-plori-gia-tin-triti-edra-toy-nomoy>
- Pemberton, S. (2015). *Harmful societies: Understanding social harm. Harmful Societies: Understanding Social Harm*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Peroni, L., & Timmer, A. (2013). "Vulnerable groups: The promise of an emerging concept in European Human Rights Convention law." *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 11(4), 1056–1085.
- Pickering, S. (2001). "Common Sense and Original Deviancy: News Discourses and Asylum Seekers in Australia." *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 14(2).
- Pro Asyl. (2014). *Pushed Back. Systematic Human rights violations against refugees in the Aegean and at the Greek-Turkish land Border*. Berlin: Pro Asyl.
- Ruhrmann, H., & FitzGerald, D. (2016). *The Externalization of Europe 's Borders in the Refugee Crisis, 2015–2016*. University of California–San Diego.
- Sarantidis, D. (2018). *Asylum seekers in detention in Greece, The Open University*. Retrieved March 25, 2018, from <http://www.open.ac.uk/research/news/asylum-seekers-detention-greece>.
- Scheper-Hughes, N., & Bourgois, P. (2004). Introduction: Making Sense of Violence. In *Violence in War and Peace* (pp. 1–32). Blackwell.
- Sea-Watch. (2017). *Die Crew unserer Beobachtermission berichtet*. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/seawatchprojekt/videos/1893140724237333/>
- themigrantsfiles, & UNITED. (n.d.). *15 Years Fortress Europe. Interactive map of migrant and refugee deaths on the way to Europe, or trying to stay in Europe*. Retrieved from <http://15years.morizbuesing.com/>
- Ticktin, M. (2016). "Thinking Beyond Humanitarian Borders." *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 83(2).

Travis, A. (2003). *Shifting a problem back to its source*. Retrieved March 11, 2018, from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/feb/05/immigration.immigrationandpublicservices>

Turnbull, S. (2016). ““Stuck in the middle”: Waiting and uncertainty in immigration detention.” *Time & Society*, 25(1), 61–79.



# Space of Refuge: constructing a spatial dialogue inside the Palestinian refugee camp

Samar Maqusi



**ABSTRACT:** Addressing spaces of refuge (refugee camps), especially as architects, has become quite a complex issue, mainly due to a protraction of refuge (including people and space), which resulted in the emergence of scenarios of inhabitation that surpass and transgress the established relief space (refugee camps) by international and government bodies. This paper aims to unravel the impact of host-government policies on the physical form of these camps, examining, in particular, the issues of control and vulnerability. Furthermore, the paper proposes an alternative method for analyzing these camp-spaces, specifically for Palestinian refugees, as well as suggesting new tools for designing and creating the necessary spatial interventions that can enhance the self-determination of Palestinian refugees and the potential of their camp spaces to offer resistance.

**KEYWORDS:** refugee camps, spatial politics, spaces of conflict, camp evolution, spatial installations.

---

The Palestinian refuge is a longstanding humanitarian problem which emanated from the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars. The first war saw the expulsion of more than 750,000 indigenous Palestinian people from their homeland and into Near East geographies where they frantically sought refuge. In place of the indigenous Palestinian people and space, a new people and space were being formed via the transfer of new – Jewish—populations from Europe. This “transfer” is still ongoing today with the aim of eliminating any trace of Palestinian identity since the 1948



occupation.<sup>1</sup> Within the mass of global displacement we are facing today, Palestinian refugee camps stand out as exemplary spaces of refuge to be studied.

According to UNHCR's (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) 2018 figures, there are 68.5 million people forcibly displaced worldwide today, of which, 25.4 million are refugees.<sup>2</sup> Some 5.4 million refugees, nearly a quarter of the total refugee population, are Palestinians. More strikingly, Palestinian refugee camps – a total of 58 official<sup>3</sup> camps across the Near East geography (unrwa.org) – are the longest standing camps in recent history, now in their seventieth year of protracted refuge. Amongst scholars concerned with the Palestinian refuge, many (Khalili, 2005; Hanafi, 2010, 2012; Ramadan, 2010; Abourahme, 2015; Sheikh-Hassan & Hanafi, 2010; Peteet, 2005, 2015; Petti, 2013) view the Palestinian camp as a material witness to the historical conflict, and an incubator of the incessant regional and international hostilities. The former is embodied in the systematic destruction of camps across the hosting geographies, while the latter can be demonstrated by the continuing efforts of Israel. More recently the United States, aimed to compromise the Palestinian refuge by closing UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) that provides humanitarian assistance to these camps.

This paper is part of a more substantial PhD research investigating the *spatial politics* of the Palestinian camp. The research involved long-term fieldwork in Burj el Barajneh camp in Lebanon and Baqa'a camp in Jordan that represent Palestinian camps in two different hosting geographies, each emanating from the 1948 and 1967 Arab Israeli wars respectively. The spatial politics are studied by architecturally mapping the institutional mechanisms and discourse through which the camps were established, maintained, and reformed (by the host governments and the UNRWA), in relation to the refugees' own mechanisms of making space. These institutional mechanisms are analysed from the perspective of the camp's different forms of spatial "conditioning" by the authorities to maintain surveillance and control – through either its re-scaling to an ordered layout or, in many cases, eliminating it altogether, and imposing requirements for a new spatial order in its reconstruction. Furthermore, the PhD research investigates the nuances of making space inside the Palestinian camp, while negotiating both the institutional structures of management and control – represented in this research by UNRWA and the host governments – as well as the protraction of refuge which represents

the precarious political state – and grounds – that the Palestinian refugee finds himself/herself occupying. These negotiations with institutions, together with the struggle to maintain a livelihood in the face of political refuge, constitute what the paper defines as the *spatial politics* inside the Palestinian camp.

What emerges from this protraction of Palestinian refuge without any visible political solution in the near future is the “spatial scale,” which is at the intersection of space and politics and, in this specific case, between space and refuge. This spatial scale is the element by which both refugees and host governments engage with each other to negotiate and re-define power relations. UNRWA and host governments included a great deal of “absorbing a crisis” at the first instance of bringing order to the space inside the Palestinian camp. This absorption, which has lasted nearly 7 decades, was formulated around a spatial execution of intended re-settlement of Palestinians, but without the direct recognition of such spatiality – in particular, through the adoption and continuous rhetorical re-adoption of Resolution 194’s Paragraph 11 *Right of Return*,<sup>4</sup> as the guarantor of political *verbal* correctness towards the Palestinian people. To maintain a flexible absorbing spatiality, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions specified, in loose political and legal language, the approaches for implementing a settlement project encompassing both economic and spatial integration in the respective host countries. Drafted by the UNGA, and carried out by UNRWA in the form of spatial practices, these resolutions clearly state the intention of re-settling the Palestinian refugees through programmes/projects of ‘economic integration’ and a spatialised mode of production founded on self-support, with the final intention of transferring the responsibility for works and relief projects to the host governments,<sup>5</sup> thus terminating the role of UNRWA and further altering the legal status of the camp spaces and the refugees (UNRWA-A Brief History 1950–1982, p.32, UNRWA NY 1951,p.12).

One of the earliest forms of UNRWA’s elastic legal language was its adopted definition of a “refugee camp” in 1960: “A concentration of refugees and displaced persons which has been recognized by UNRWA as an official camp, which is operated by the Agency, and has in particular a camp leader and environmental sanitation services provided by the Agency” (UNRWA Archives, 1960). This definition retains a humanitarian language, acknowledging large scale space resulting from a crisis, and in need of aid and services. The definition then reformed into what

is adopted today by UNRWA as: “A Palestine refugee camp is defined as a plot of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA by the host government to accommodate Palestine refugees and set up facilities to cater to their needs. Areas not designated as such and are not recognized as camps.” The changing definition of the camp is clear: from one as a humanitarian space in need of aid services because of a conflict state, and caused by a displacement into other territories outside the previous habitat, into one where the camp resembles a space in need of “accommodation” services, through installed facilities which change over time inside the camp. The second significant change of the definition is the articulation of “space”: whereas the previous definition articulates *persons*, and *refugees*, the second adopted definition focuses on “bounded space,” *a plot of land*, and *areas*. In fact, this camp definition change, in some ways, established the grounds for increasing problems of “space” and “scale” inside the Palestinian camp. By drawing a clear line between what is camp and what is not, it affirms a changing approach towards the Palestinian camp, adopted by both UNRWA and the host governments. This change articulates the extraterritoriality of the Palestinian camp within the larger geography, thus enabling both UNRWA and the host governments to distinguish it, and validate their mechanisms of humanitarian order and control exercised inside a “distinct space,” which does not behave as other spaces. And because it is distinct, this allows those authorities to exercise mechanisms which can be extrajudicial yet justified within territoriality deemed “outside the other spaces” within that host geography. The camps thus become spaces where “power” is both exercised and experimented.

### From a *Relief Scale* to a *Political Scale*

This *relief-scale* was created by overlapping the onset – designed – humanitarian UN parameters and resolutions over space. Refugees were expected to adhere to those parameters without encroachment on the external parameter; the camp border delineated by the host government, or the internal parameters delineated by UNRWA in the form of individual family plots of 96–100m<sup>2</sup> granted to each refugee family. Any encroachment beyond those dimensions would be deemed a violation by the UNRWA and host governments.

It is important to highlight here that those UN parameters were designed with

the intention to provide aid, as well as, mitigate a crisis—using spatial means—without the direct recognition of the *political* issues associated with said space and crisis. This disregard, elimination, and abandonment of the *political* by the UN and the host governments is what allowed the relief-scale to reform itself into another scale embodied in the transition of space regulated through a grid form, into one which transgresses those imposed parameters to create its own order, which is what this paper calls the *political-scale*. The actual process of transition involves a latent negotiation with the camp as refuge and territory by continuously expanding beyond the spatial standards of humanitarianism, through acts of “spatial violation.” These acts which involve encroachment beyond the standards is where the *political* resides. The *political* in this sense is the constant management of the political state of refuge inside a host geography of “right of use,” as opposed to ownership through spatial means. More simply, it is the acquired agency through the daily negotiation that the refugee encounters his/her space, whereby he/she is always in search of ways to stretch the pre-set parameters to respond to a need for more space to accommodate the natural growth of the refugee families over time. When these spatial violations proliferate to encompass the whole camp, the host government-refugee power relations get redefined, most often after a collective demonstration whereby the gendarmes engage in conflict inside the camp to quell such demonstrations of injustice, mainly citing the “burning tires” as a serious enough justification for such force. Yet, and since the camp’s spatiality grows into a scale beyond the original UN grid of control and surveillance, the host government resorts to negotiating a peaceful settlement with the camp heads. Examples of such conflictual engagements are demonstrated later in the paper.

## Relief Scale

Relief tents, provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross as an emergency measure before the establishment and operation of the UNRWA in 1950, were the first form of shelter which decided the configuration of the Palestinian camp. The camp started as a defined plot of land, released to UNRWA from the host government for 99 years, whereby the Red Cross provided black relief tents to the refugee families, the tent size varying according to family size. The refugees would scatter their tents around their kinship, and preferably as close as possible to

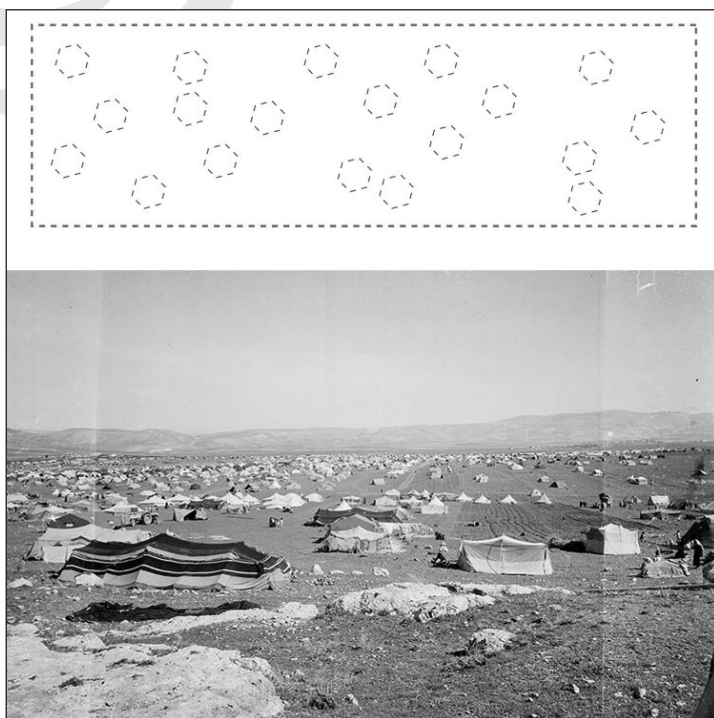


Diagram 1: 1948 Camp Layout. © Samar Maqusi, UNRWA Archives

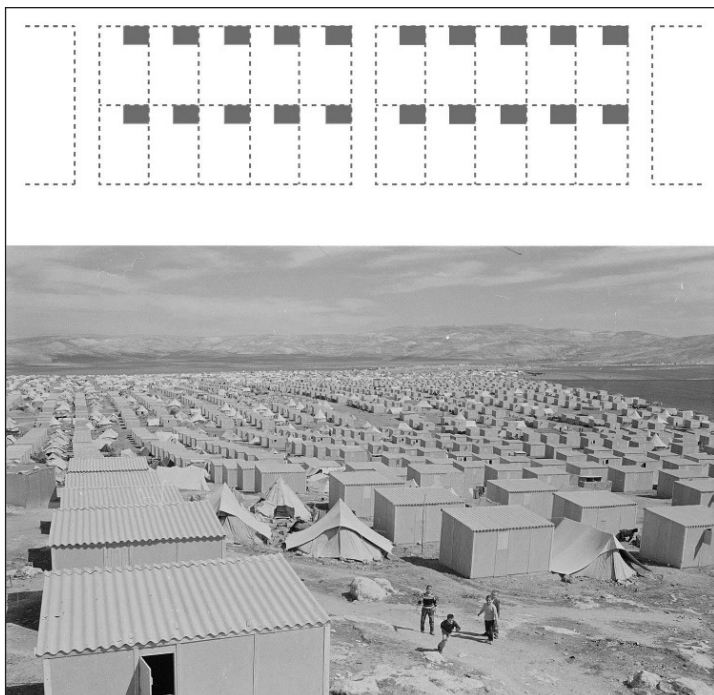


Diagram 2: 1950s Camp Layout. © Samar Maqusi, UNRWA Archives

relief services and facilities (see Diagram 1). Yet, after only five months of operation, UNRWA realized the urgent need to “develop rules and procedures and instructions to standardize action in all areas” (Assistance to Palestine Refugees, Interim report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, NY, 1951). This would become the *modus operandi* of UNRWA’s operations, one based on standards universally adopted across all five fields of operation,<sup>6</sup> thus establishing an efficiency of economy and performance for the Agency.

Within a few years, and due to a lack of tents on the world market,<sup>7</sup> as well as their fragility against what was starting to look like a prolonged refuge, UNRWA changed its spatial policy to one of organized-grid layouts, with pre-fabricated shelters, allocating a standard space-area of 96–100m<sup>2</sup> plot of land to each refugee family as a right-of-use (*intifaa*), which literally translates to usufruct, as opposed to ownership (see Diagram 2).

The implementation of this grid camp layout involved a re-organization of the “whole” of the camp, prompting UNRWA to disregard what was already built by the refugees themselves as a camp fabric, thus emphasizing the spatial relationship the refugees were meant to have with their space. The relationship imagined was one which is unpredictable for the refugees, but ordered and controlled by both UNRWA and the host governments: a negotiable apparatus which in effect excludes the refugees, and treats the space without regard to the inhabitants. This top-down approach was viewed as the most efficient in the context of UNRWA’s strained relief budget, and the host governments’ concerns regarding refugee resistance and violence.<sup>8</sup>

## Political Scale

From the early 1960s until the mid-1970s, during the established presence of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) inside Palestinian camps as sites for planning and managing the liberation and return to Palestine, concrete was pouring into the camp and many times subsidized by the PLO to ensure refugees quickly met their existential needs and could focus on achieving their emancipation. This meant that the PLO exercised management and governance over the camp, which led to a rapid transformation: from asbestos to concrete and the emergence of the early manifestations of “spatial violations” by extending walls beyond the 96–100m<sup>2</sup> ‘right-of-use’ plot demarcation (see Diagram 3).

As the 96–100m<sup>2</sup> ‘right-of-use’ plot boundaries gradually filled-

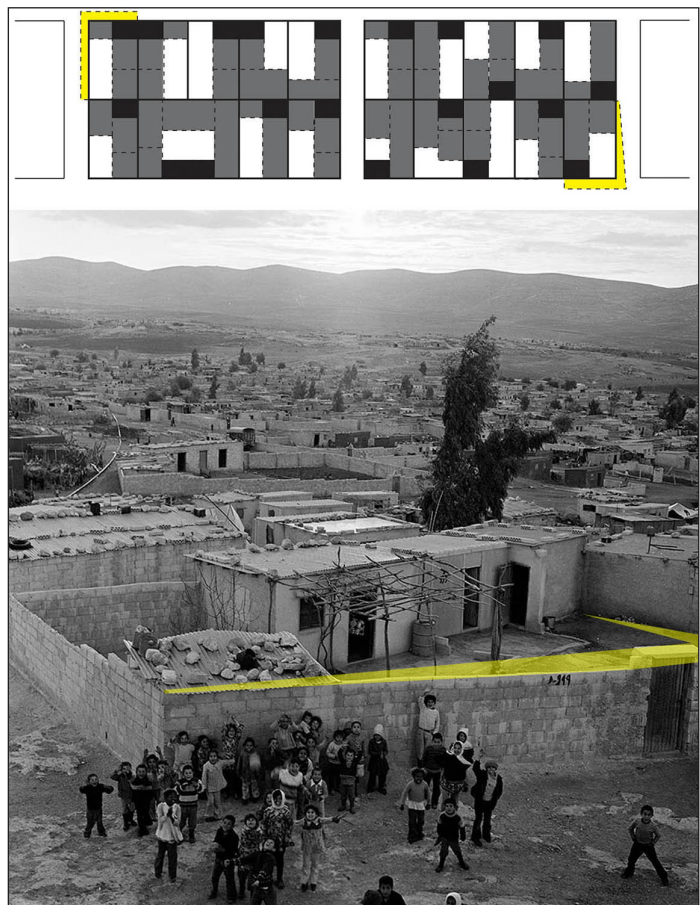


Diagram 3: 1960s-70s Camp Layout. © Samar Maqusi, UNRWA Archives



Diagram 4: 1970s Camp Layout. © Samar Maqusi, UNRWA Archives

up with concrete rooms, concrete would start to overflow beyond the wall in the form of thresholds. These thresholds (*Attabat*), where concrete appears as “excess,” were utilized to keep the muddy waters from seeping into shelters, and provide an outdoor social space. They would become the first ‘architectural-element’ to facilitate the changing scale of the camp (see Diagram 4).

This act of *spatial viola-*

*tion* through thresholds, not only began to redefine the “power relations” with the host government but was at the same time creating a space and scale beyond relief standards and notions of surveillance and control, to ones that are capable of politics. This new scale would expand spatial and socio-political notions, ones that are in need of constant negotiations inside the Palestinian camp, concribing a scale which is expandable and amorphous. “The frontier between the social and the political is essentially unstable and requires constant displacements and renegotiations between social agents. Things could always be otherwise, and therefore every order is predicated on the exclusion of other possibilities. It is in that sense that it can be called ‘political’ since it is the expression of a particular structure of power relations” (Mouffe, 2005, p.18).

As the horizontal planes became saturated with cement, the refugees devised another ‘architectural-element’ in the form of prefabricated external stairs to serve as a facilitator to vertical expansion, or *vertical spatial violation*. The external stairs are initially constructed out of temporary material, reserving the new encroached-upon space until it gradually morphs into cement. This material transformation is the moment when the demarcated “right-of-use” is truly delineated and re-



defined. A “vertical sphere” is now introduced to the spatial form in the camp and is already acting in spatial violations, in fact, one which is the product of the latter (see Diagram 5).

Today, and after 69 years of continued refuge, the Palestinian camp as “space,” and the Palestinian as “refugee” remain in a relationship that is co-constitutive. Yet, and due to the act of *spatial violations*, this relationship stays in flux, and continuously re-scales itself proportionally to economies of inhabitation and disputes of political refuge. Emanating from a culture of making space inside a regulated and protracted space of refuge, what has emerged today inside the Palestinian camp, as space and scale, is a clear demonstration of the impact of protraction of refuge over space (see Diagram 6). Here, refugees re-appropriated the architectural physicality of the camp over the span of 69 years, through producing space that challenged the United Nations’ imposed parameters and standards on space, including building materials and heights.

The physical form inside the Palestinian refugee camp does not take the form of the pure order of

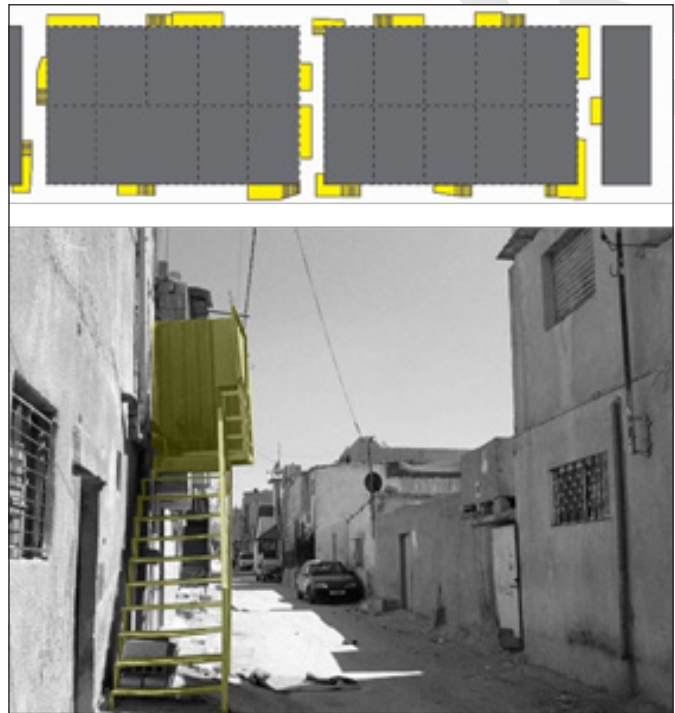


Diagram 5: 1980s-90s Camp Layout. © Samar Maqusi

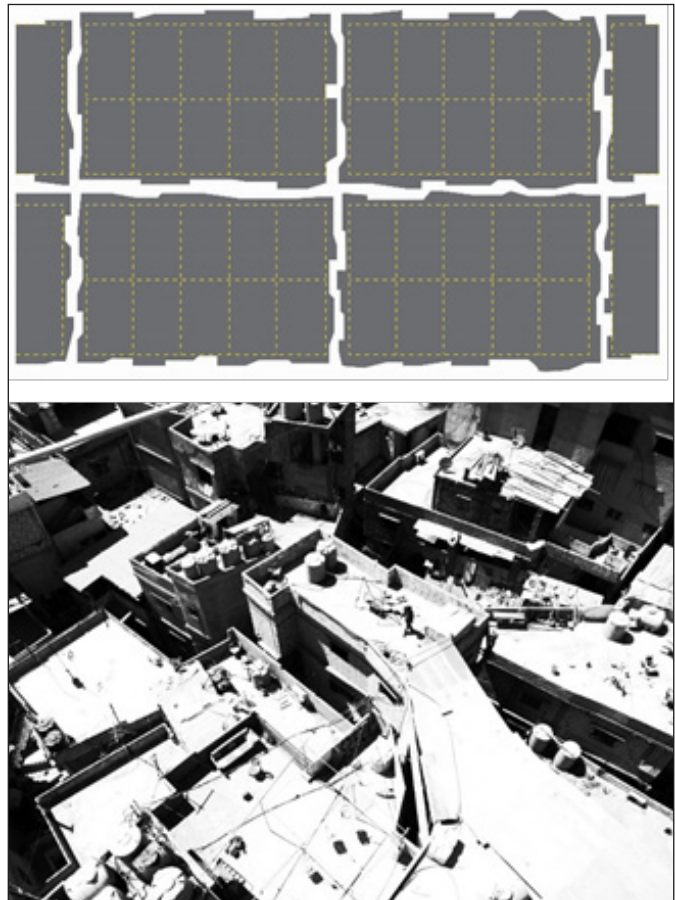


Diagram 6: Today's Camp Layout. © Samar Maqusi

architecture but instead, makes its own order out of “pure” need. Architecture in the camp is never built to attract or convince others of a possible new way of life, be it social, spatial, or economic, as one only finds himself building and inhabiting a camp space out of urgency. This, coupled with the constant contradiction camp architecture experiences with time (as protraction), ensures that any attempt at formally organizing the camp will fail, and will be met with instantaneous restructuring and deviation beyond formal lines by the refugees inhabiting the camp. This “deviation,” embodied in acts of *spatial violation*, is the actual *disruption* to UNRWA’s ‘relief scale’<sup>9</sup> planned as a spatial conduct of organization, surveillance, and control of the camp space, while with every act of spatial violation there is an act of political instrumentalization happening at the same time, for as soon as the relief scale is relegated, it becomes a Palestinian one and the refugee becomes less docile in that space.

Historically, UNRWA was promoted as a humanitarian agency devoid of any political role concerning the refugee problem, and though it never accepted an official administrative character over the refugee camp, it effectively conducted itself as a governmental body inside the camp.<sup>10</sup> By continuously trumping relief over the political, UNRWA has attributed to the proliferation of refugee acts and processes which take the role of addressing the *political* inside the camp. This role, which is very much political, takes on various forms of adaptability, yet at the same time, reserves an act of political resistance. The forms it takes are elastic assemblages, continuously forming and reforming as if trying to preserve the *political* inside the camp. Scale, interpreted on spatial and political terms plays a crucial role when negotiating and confronting the Palestinian refugee camp, and it mirrors the elasticity of this assemblage which decides the political role of the camp. This scale is very much material as it is political, and most strongly manifests itself in a spatial form which has the potential to become coercive.

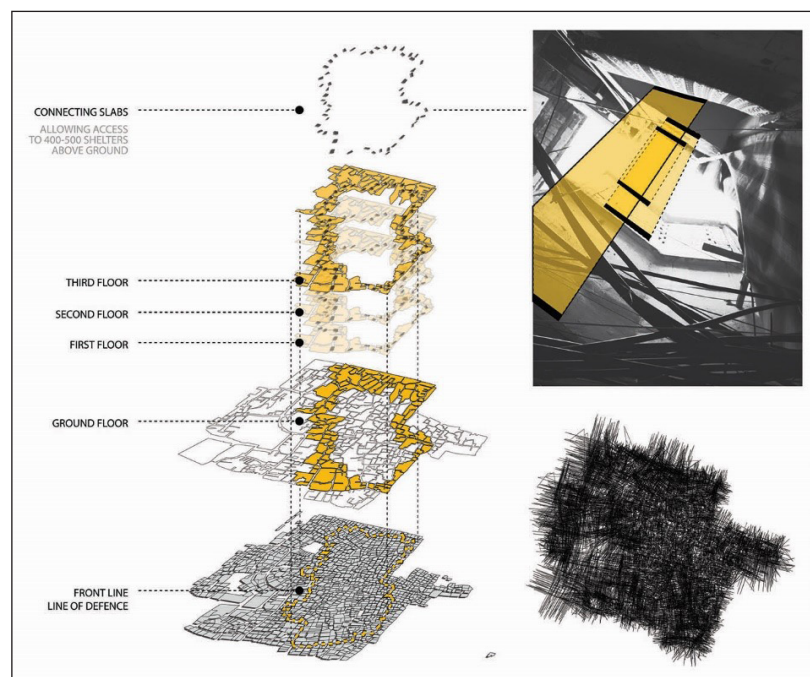
## Economies of Spatial Violations Inside the Palestinian Camp

The *economy* of spatial violations, which produces the *political* scale inside the Palestinian camp, enters various modes according to the event at hand. In the case of Burj el Barajneh camp in Lebanon, the spatial “scale,” material x form, the

camp produced up until the War of the Camps (1985–88), proved to be a principal *element* in planning movement and military strategies. To help sustain the camp in the midst of arduous and violent confrontations, the refugees were able to build ultra-circular spatial pathways which surpass the vulnerable grounds and instead operate “above-ground.” *Abou Mohammad*, who participated in the War of the Camps, recounted the days of intense battlegrounds by stating:

When the Shi’a *Amal* militiamen would attack us, we would fight them from the underground shelters. Another group would be on the first floor, a group on the second floor, a group on the third, and one on the fourth, thus avoiding the disadvantaged ground level. The way we achieved this was through drawing up a map of the whole camp, we would then identify the various elevated shelter walls which come face to face with one another, and we would then make an opening on opposing walls while extending a wooden board between the openings, thus instantly creating a connecting pathway across different shelters. Once completed, we discovered that we could enter 400–500 shelters through these passageway without our feet ever touching the ground. I could roam the whole camp without my feet ever touching the ground. (Abu Mohammad, Burj el Barajneh camp, September 2014)

Diagram showing the Elevated Pathways the refugees constructed during the War of the Camps through creating openings between adjacent walls above-ground, and stretching wooden panels to act as bridges between the opening. The refugees created multiple ‘above-ground’ pathways which connected more than 400 shelters around the camp. The camp earned a reputation of being a maze-like space adopting a motto of “who enters is lost and who exists is reborn”. © Samar Maqusi



## Responses to the “Political Scale”

The Palestinian refugees realized their inevitable protraction early on, and thus opted to build up their spaces by transgressing the UNRWA delineated lines, employing what I have called acts of *spatial violation*. These acts considered an official violation inside the camp by both the UNRWA and host governments are nonetheless tolerated and have enabled the refugees to construct a *Palestinian scale* in physical, architectural terms, which proved to be detrimental as it reached a spatial threshold over a protracted refuge deemed threatening by the host governments. This new scale, beyond UN and host country parameters, (see Rueff & Viaro, 2010) provided a camp tissue unequivocal to the refugee yet inaccessible to the host government security apparatuses. This new spatial condition prompted these host governments to adopt modes of spatial intervention meant to fragment and resize the camp's scale. This was made possible through opening new wide streets that divide the camp into smaller accessible areas (Achilli, 2015, p. 271), or, in some more violent cases, through the complete destruction of the camp, of which Nahr el Bared camp in Lebanon was the most recent case in 2007 (Sheikh Hassan and Hanafi, 2010).

### Jordanian Response

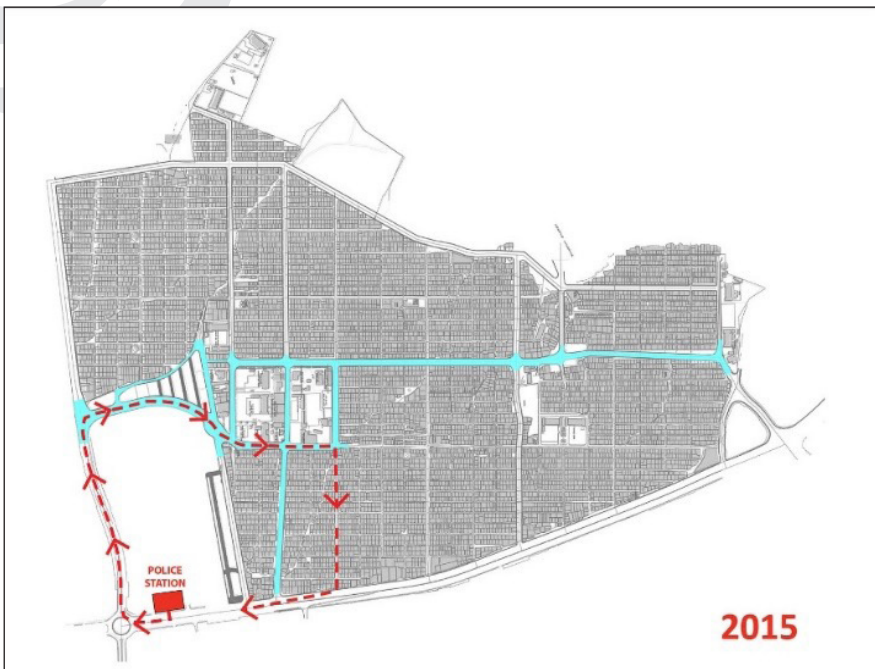
The Jordanian government has been adopting a mode of “rescaling” the Palestinian camp in Jordan by opening (through widening) existing streets that cross the camp through its middle, dividing it into distinct parts and creating a matrix of wide roads scaled to a new scale, which allow for the quick entry of police and gendarme tanks into the very centre of the camp. The host government has adopted spatial “means of control”, which Deleuze and Foucault discuss elaborately in their work. Deleuze explains: “*You do not confine people with a highway. But by making highways, you multiply the means of control. I am not saying this is the only aim of highways, but people can travel infinitely and “freely” without being confined while being perfectly controlled. That is our future*” (Deleuze, 1987). These spatial modes which control without explicitly confining, have proved very effective in the Jordanian context, allowing the host governments to instantly separate the camp from its surrounding by literally building elevated highways which circumvent the refugee camp.

Images showing a typical confrontation between the Jordanian gendarmes and Palestinian refugees in Baqa'a camp, whereby gendarmes retain their stationary position along the main street on the western edge, while refugees remain inside camp pathways at a 4m proximity as both engage in an open confrontation involving verbal denunciation, tire burning and the throwing of tear gas canisters. © Baqa'a camp

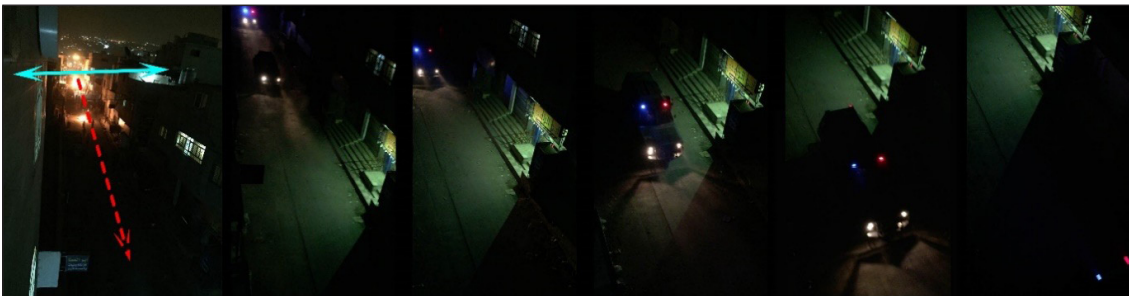


Traditionally inside Baqa'a camp in Jordan, the unfolding of confrontations in space has delineated spatial terms whereby the Jordanian gendarme station themselves along the western edge of the camp, and the refugees inside camp entrances, whereby they retain a 4-metre un-intruded space adhered to by both parties. According to refugee testimonies inside Baqa'a camp, never in the history of the camp have these conflicts resulted in the Jordanian Gendarmes' penetration into the camp's fabric,<sup>11</sup>

However, the conflict would unfold differently in recent years, as a result of the newly opened "wide streets" which bifurcate the camp, providing the gendarmes tanks with a new spatial advantage which allows them to quickly and uninterruptedly enter the camp-tissue. As the gendarme tanks unleashed their soldiers, the refugees quickly dispersed, moving towards narrow and meandering pathways to mislead and escape the soldiers (keeping in mind the soldiers are not familiar with the camp's spatial tissue, thus the camp-scale worked to the refugees' advantage during the chase). Yet, it is crucial to highlight here that the advantages of re-scaling the camp was not only concerned with this direct and quick access, but also very much concerned with cost, less incurred cost, literally less monetary and personnel cost for the government security apparatus as it employs less number of, but more violent, mechanisms. The duration of the confrontation between the gendarmes and the refugees also decreased significantly.



Map showing the “new layout” for Baqa’a camp (c.2008) drawn by DPA (Department of Palestinian Affairs). The street in blue is the new street which was commenced in 2010 and now serves as the axial street dividing the camp into two distinct “top camp and bottom camp” areas as the refugees now refer to. This road construction caused the relocation of hundreds of refugee families to an area outside the camp’s legal borders. In red, I trace the new movement the Gendarmes tanks adopted to reach the camp’s fabric. © Samar Maqusi



Entry through the New Street --- Images showing Intifada Street on the last day of the Installation opening: (L) Refugees employing a common practice of enclosing entrances into the camp tissue by burning tires, (R) The Jordanian Gendarme tanks penetrating the camp through provided access from the new street into Intifada Street, a practice spatially new to the refugees. © Samar Maqusi

## Lebanese Response

The Lebanese context has been the harshest among the five host areas for Palestinian refugees, mainly due to a violent history within Lebanon itself, and the on-

set refusal by the Lebanese government to grant Palestinians any civil rights. This has resulted in numerous historical scenarios whereby the Lebanese forces would engage in the complete destruction of the Palestinian camp. Rosemary Sayigh provides a more accurate account of Palestinian camps destroyed before and during the period of the Lebanese civil war, explaining: “Five camps have been destroyed: Nabatiyya, by an Israeli air raid in 1974; Tal al-Zatar, Jisr al-Basha, and Dbayeh by the Lebanese Forces in 1976 (though Dbayeh still stands and is still serviced by UNRWA, most of its original inhabitants have not been allowed to return); and Da’uq, the quasi-official camp at the heart



The aftermath of the 2007 conflict in Nahr el Bared, whereby the Lebanese army engaged in the complete destruction of the camp. © UNRWA

of Sabra, destroyed in 1985 by the *Amal* movement.” (Sayigh, 1995b, p.53) More recently, in 2007, Nahr el Bared camp experienced a similar fate when the Lebanese Army entered into a violent battle with *Fatah el Islam* militant group, whose members were said not to exceed 100 men.

## Confinement Measures Inside Ein el Hilweh Camp, Lebanon

In recent years, the Lebanese government has embarked on a new ‘mode of intervention’ towards the Palestinian camp, through confining the camp by building cement walls which surround the entirety of the camp, of which Ein el Hilweh camp was the most recent example. The wall itself is made up of pre-cast cement pieces, very much resembling those used by the Israeli government to build its separation barrier. Although the construction of the wall around Ein el Hilweh camp was halt-

ed several times in response to Palestinian outcries, it was nonetheless resumed and the wall completed, which includes a number of Army watch towers as well. In addition, the Lebanese government installed ‘metal gateways’ at the end of numerous pedestrian pathways which lead to outside the camp, thus controlling the entry and exit of each person trying to exit or enter Ein el Hilweh camp. During my last visit to Ein el Hilweh camp in November 2017, I was able to discuss these new measures with different refugees inside the camp, to understand the impact they have generated and imposed on their daily lives. Fulfilling my expectations, to a certain degree most the refugees ensured me that the wall itself had not hindered their movement and daily operations inside and outside the camp. It is important to highlight here that, to enter Ein el Hilweh camp, like most camps in Lebanon, you are required to pass through a Lebanese military check point, whereby your identification is requested, and your car is subject to a being searched. Therefore, it is not very surprising that most of the refugees would not necessarily find an addition of a surrounding cement wall a hindrance, but more as a measure of “casting”, which is what was mostly relayed to me. “They want the outside world to think we are troublemakers, and a threat to everyone”, is what one of the refugees told me. It is unfortunately historically true, that host governments engage in mechanisms whereby they cast the refugees as the “threat,” emanating from the fact that they have been historically treated as the “undesirables.”<sup>12</sup>

As for the ‘metal gateways’, they truly act as surveillance and control thresholds, whereby you are still able to enter and exit the camp, yet your agency over that “threshold” has been stripped away from you and given to a Lebanese soldier who now, visually and physically operates this new “means of control.” Refugees have told me that in cases of conflict erupting inside or around the camp, these gateways have been closed, and re-entry to the camp prohibited. These gateways are not operated as confining architectural elements on a daily basis, yet, and during any conflict, they will facilitate the quick confinement and further violent oppression of the refugees who will find themselves trapped inside their space. It is this “facilitation” that is the desired output for the host governments, which I also identified in the case of Baqa’a camp in Jordan, whereby the Jordanian government embarks on constructing new, wide scales, to also facilitate the quick entry and control over the camp and the refugees, deeming all these architectural elements violent, and oppressive.



Images showing the new spatial measures built by the Lebanese government in and around Ein el Hilweh camp, Saida, Lebanon. (T) The cement wall seen from outside the camp, (BL) A section of the confining cement wall around the camp, (BR) An enclosed metal gateways at the end of a pedestrian pathway leading to the outside of the camp.



## ‘Space of Refuge’: Constructing a Spatial Dialogue Inside the Palestinian Camp

To be able to reveal and illustrate the current and historical spatial conditions of the camp, an intervention utilizing spatial means was required to transcend socio-political barriers. In addition, the *intervention* needed to plug into the existing spatiality of the camp, to be able to provide a genuine and constructive new space for dialogue inside and act as a new, yet harmonious element within the larger existing camp apparatus. ‘Space of Refuge’ emerged as a spatial installation concerned with negotiating space through space-making. This was done by constructing a spatial installation which directly addressed “scale” and “production of space.” By recreating methods and materialities of construction developed and used inside the Palestinian camp, “production of space” here is seen as a *process*

within a historical element, able to both produce new-current knowledge and reveal historical ones.<sup>13</sup> In addition, a practise of transferring spatial knowledge between camps emerged as an urgent need, due to the fact that Palestinian refugees undergo systematic hindrance of movement, especially across camps, making it very difficult for most refugees to actually visit and experience the other Palestinian refugee camps, and further build an ethnographic and cultural knowledge which could encompass all 58 Palestinian refugee camps, and which can act as a form of resistance for the refugees. This spatial separation between the Palestinian refugees and their spaces of refuge across the Near East made it abundantly clear that a form of transferring the constructed spatial knowledge was needed. 'Transferring space and knowledge' is not only concerned with producing new camp spatial knowledge by undergoing an alteration but is very much concerned with an actual transference (in various forms) of the spatial knowledge between different camp spaces and between a camp space and other urban geographies concerned and affected by states of refuge (please see <http://samarmaqusi.com/index.php/work/space-of-refuge-london/>, and <http://samarmaqusi.com/index.php/work/space-of-refuge-symposium--london-/> for the 'Space of Refuge' event in London, March 2017).

### 'Space of Refuge'

Concept: The 'Space of Refuge' installation looks at the historical spatial production and subsequent evolution of Palestinian refugee camps, with particular focus upon unofficial acts of 'spatial violation' that have emerged because of the increasingly protracted nature of the refugee situation, with no sign of any political resolution to a condition that has existed since 1948. Through constructing and re-constructing spatial scales in both Baqa'a camp in Jordan, and Burj el Barajneh camp in Lebanon, the installations reveal the narrative of relationships between refugees and host governments using spatial means. Considering the precariousness of the Palestinian refugee camps, and the problem of addressing political aspects overtly inside these camps, the installations instead express their ideas through architectural forms and multi-media formats (including film and photography) in order to tackle critical issues, always with the aim of creating a more democratic form of dialogue. In short, the installations directly address issues of

inhabitation within camps in different host countries, thereby highlighting the question of what becomes of these urban spaces when they are left unresolved over a protracted period of time.

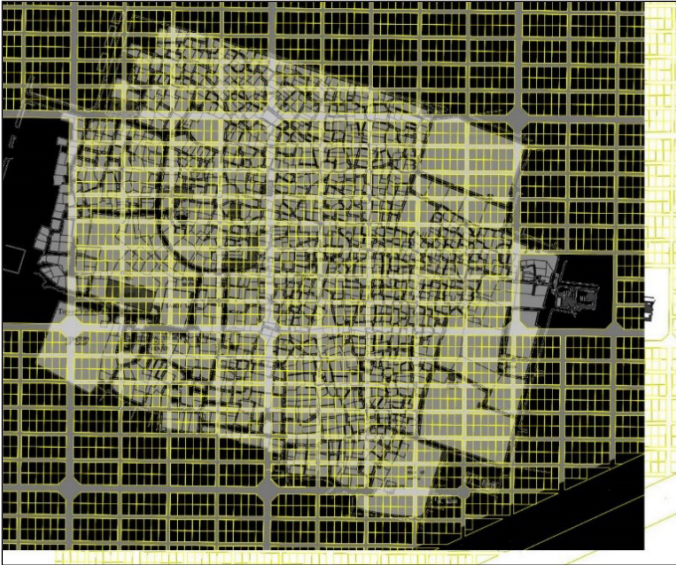
## Baqa'a Camp – Jordan

In the summer of 2015, and after two years of fieldwork in Baqa'a camp, aided by a group of volunteers – two architects and a filmmaker from London, and a group of volunteers from Baqa'a camp – we collectively built a spatial installation in one of the very few remaining 'active' public buildings in the camp, called *Jami'yet el Dawaymeh* (*Dawaymeh* Association). The building has been inactive for 22 years, and our installation event was the commencing event of its re-opening and re-activation. The *Jami'yeh* sits on an old UNRWA site which used to serve the camp as public showers when it was first established. As years went by, and refugees built their own amenities inside their UN plots, there ceased to be a need for public showers and restrooms, and thus those UNRWA service sites were left open and unused until an act of encroachment was committed. The *Jami'yeh* itself is a spatial violation encroached on a UNRWA site, re-appropriating it to become Palestinian.

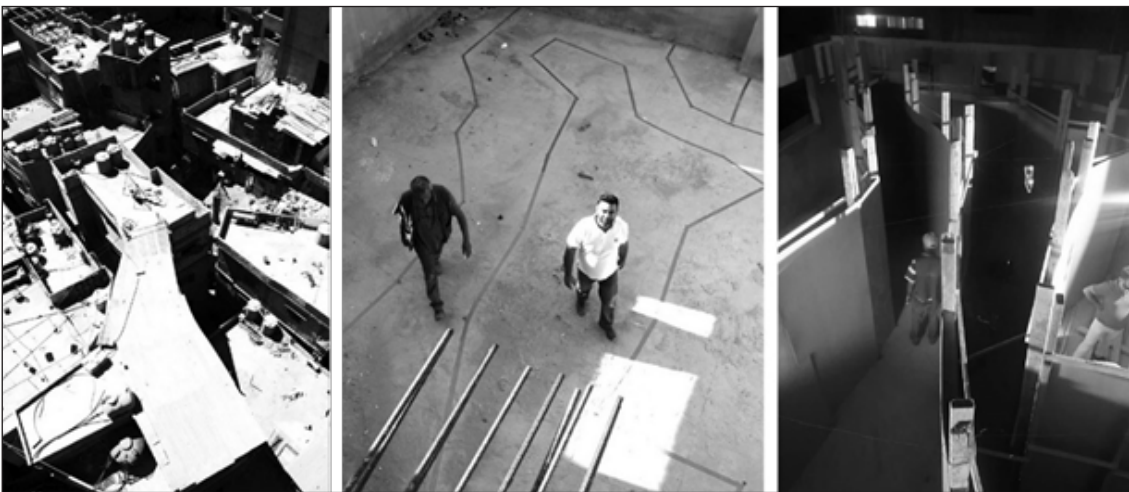
The act of building the installation was a process continuously investigating the parameters, be it socio-economical, cultural or political which determined the form and scale at which the camp developed into spatially today, and map their limits and thresholds. The installation is a superimposition of two camp scales by overlapping two spaces, the *Jami'yeh* itself was one scale demonstrating Baqa'a camp hosted in Jordan, and the spatial installation itself was the second scale demonstrating Burj el Barajneh camp hosted in Lebanon, through literally superimposing a section of Burj el Barajneh camp onto the roof of the *Jami'yeh*, the latter being the typical dimension of a UNRWA refugee plot of 100m<sup>2</sup>. By doing so, the superimposition would reveal the spatial similarities and differences of these two camp-scales, and generate a dialogue concerning spatial politics in the Palestinian camp, through the act of space-making, *vis a vis*, scale-making.

The installation merges – by superimposing – two camp spaces from two different host countries (Baq'a camp in Jordan and the Burj el Barajneh camp in Lebanon) to produce a hybrid third-space, one which can create new relations of

social and political relevance which have the potential, irrespective of its scale, to proliferate into a new order of “power relations”.



A superimposition of two camp scales, Baqa'a in yellow and Burj el Barajneh in grey: Baqa'a camp's spatial scale (in yellow) still largely retains UNRWA's grid layout of 100-square-meter plots due to the Jordanian government's control over space inside the camps, while an opposite condition exists in Burj el Barajneh camp. The superimposition of maps clearly shows the intense encroachment and utilization of space in Burj el Barajneh camp, as compared to that of Baqa'a camp, whereby one yellow shelter plot in Baqa'a camp can intersect multiple shelters from Burj el Barajneh camp. © Samar Maqusi



#### Scale Superimposition

From left: aerial view Burj el Barajneh camp; intervention site in Baqa'a camp (100-square meter roof plot); superimposition built, Baqa'a camp, August 2015. © Samar Maqusi

The idea was to promote a spatial dialogue by re-creating a spatial scale, taken from Burj el Barajneh camp, and rebuilt within Baqa'a camp's spatiality to begin a negotiation based on how the Palestinian camp's spatiality operates on the ground, and what scale it needs to reach to provide the optimum negotiating agency for the Palestinian refugees, one which is very much political, including the creation of new terms with the host governments.



Images showing the gradual process of building up the roof scale, while responding to the contracting “working space”: (TL) Jami’yeh Roof with taped layout, Top Right: Commencing of the building process, (BL) most of the wall frames erected, (BR) final building stages, Baqa’a camp, Jordan 2015. © Samar Maqusi



Images from inside the installation in Baqa’a camp, showing refugees experiencing the new scale and engaging in architectural maps, as well as films documenting camp spaces from the 1970s to today. © Samar Maqusi, (TL) Ronan Glynn



Images showcasing the superimposition onto the public pathways, as a temporary act of spatial violations on the camp's exiting physical scale, whereby refugees are able to experience and inhabit the new scale as part of their daily movement. © (L) Samar Maqusi, (R) Ronan Glynn

## Burj el Barajneh Camp – Lebanon

Burj el Barajneh never experienced the implementation of a “whole” UNRWA grid layout as Baqa’a camp did, it nonetheless underwent a re-organization through micro-scale grids, which were the 3m x 4m zinc rooms UNRWA supplied to refugee families (as material only consisting of zinc panels and wooden columns). Yet, the refugee families were required to adhere to the 96–100m<sup>2</sup> plot areas, though the application of this “plot layout” was never a comprehensive one as in Baqa’a camp.

In Burj el Barajneh camp, as opposed to Baqa’a camp, the installation needed to be built on the ground, away from ascribing it to one building or form, in the common space that has a pragmatic and continuous daily use. This obviously being to produce a superimposition of scales which could not only define the existing scale with a set of existing knowledge but offer new knowledge emanating from the existing ones which allow for the production of new subjectivities. By constructing

new scales – in the form of installations – on existing ones, not only is the existing form interrupted but so is the existing spatio-movement and circulation. This rupture in space and circulation – of material, movement, concepts, discussions, etc. – through the

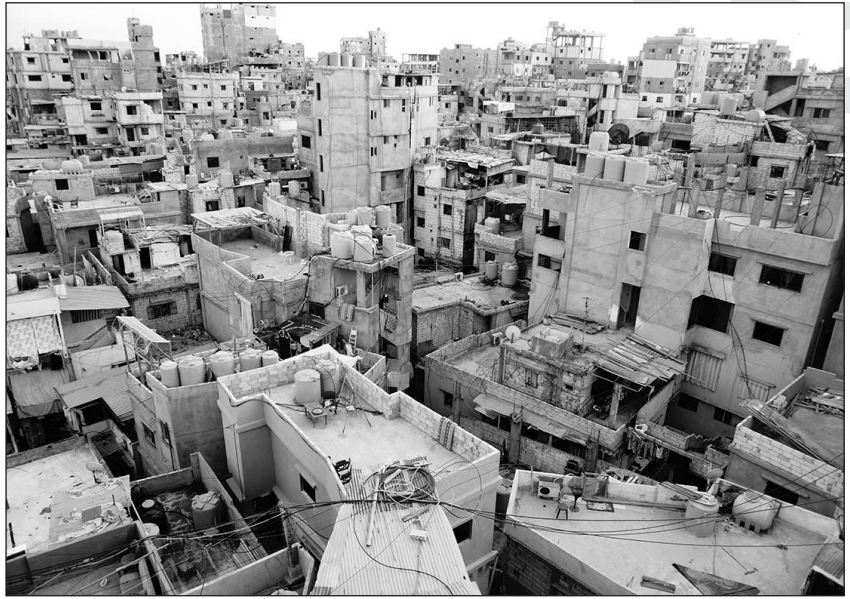


Image showing Burj el Barajneh camp's scale today, 2017. © Samar Maqusi

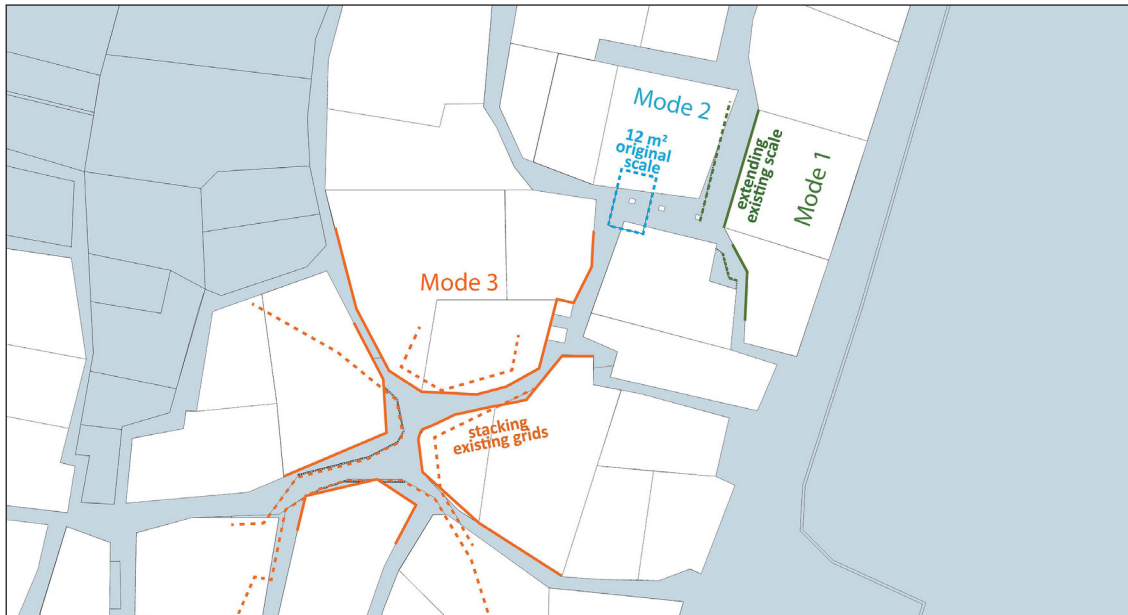
intersection of spatial scales, is exactly what this installation aimed to reveal and make visible.

Seen as an urgent need in the camp space and concerned with producing new knowledge through spatial forms inside the camp, I began to envision an exercise of “testing theory in the field” by literally transforming Foucault’s concept of grids and “lines of force” into real material forms on the ground.<sup>14</sup>

## Three Modes

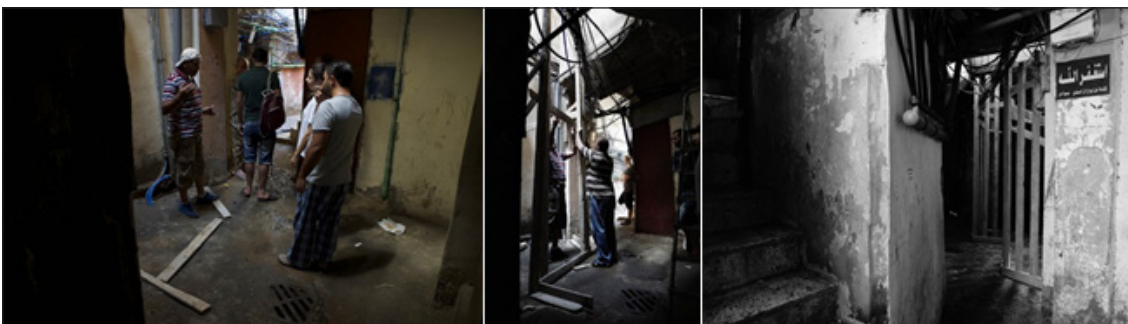
The approach to scale-superimposition in Burj el Barajneh camp differed from Baqa’a camp in that I opted to superimpose three different modes of spatial scales, each with the aim to produce different “scales” of discussion around space. The first mode involved extending the existing scale beyond the current spatial threshold, thus questioning the limits of space while concurrently revealing the ingenious skills the refugees possess in relation to building space within existing, compelling limitations. The second mode was a superimposition of the “original” UN scale the camp started from, which was the 12m<sup>2</sup>(3m x 4m) zinc room UNRWA provided for each refugee family, over the existing camp-scale, creating a literal rupture to the existing concrete forms the 3mx4m rectangle has caused in the act of intersection. This retraction to the original “applied” UNRWA scale-form in the camp allows us to retract our spatial dialogue to that first moment of scale-making

and demonstrates a superimposition of an “original” scale of efficiency, control, and surveillance over that of protracted refuge, organized armed struggle, and resilience. The third mode involved a direct application of a Foucauldian<sup>15</sup> exercise, stacking the existing grid onto itself while applying a “shifting,” to intentionally mask (cover) certain areas on the ground and reveal new ones in the form of new, potential space and knowledge.



Map showing the installation site in Burj el Barajneh camp and scale-superimposition modes (in colours). © Samar Maqusi

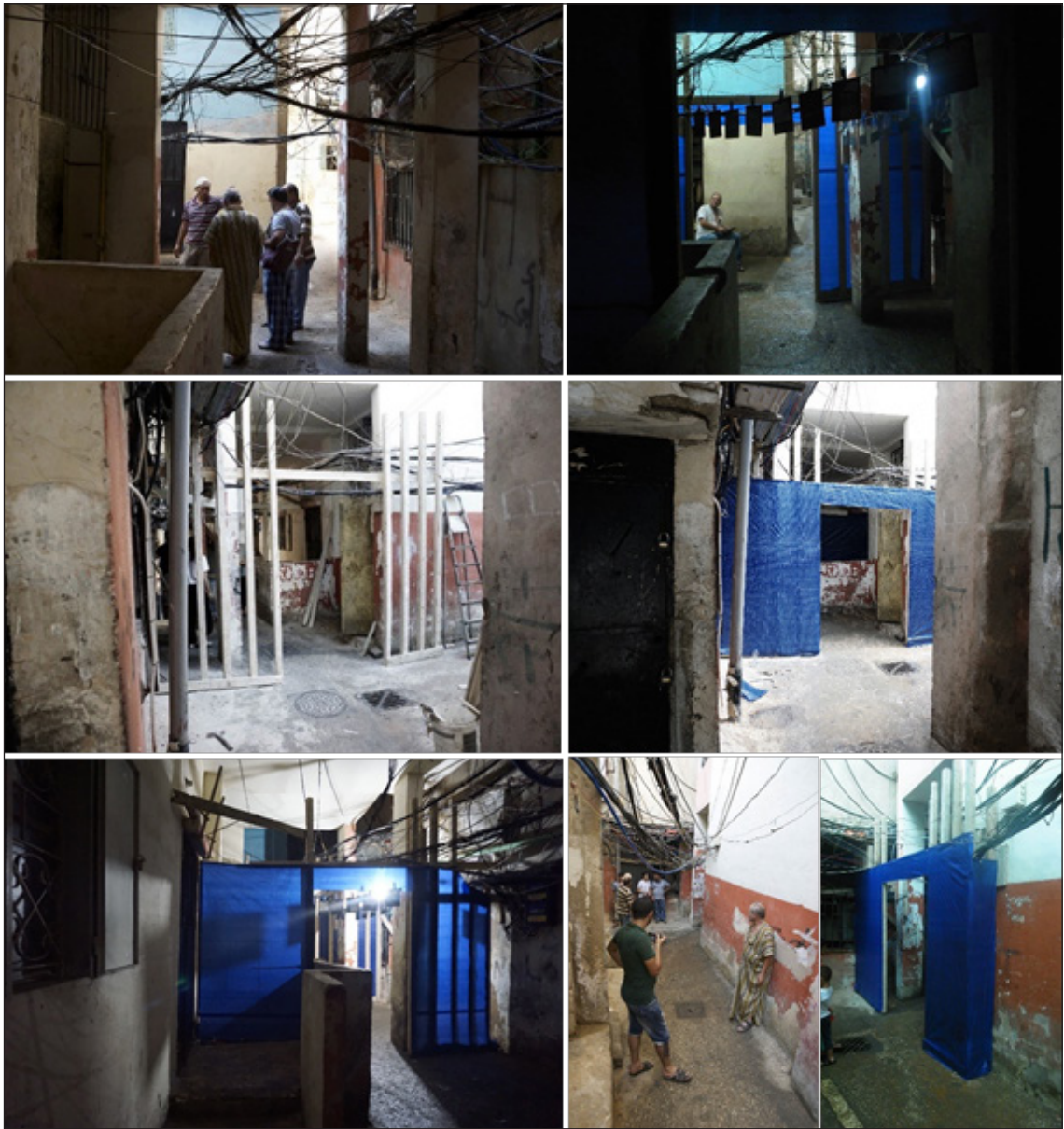
### Mode 1—Extending the existing form



Mode 1, (L) Laying out the installation outline whereby extending the existing scale of the camp-form, (C) Constructing the installation, (R) Installation piece acting as another element within the larger camp apparatus. © Samar Maqusi

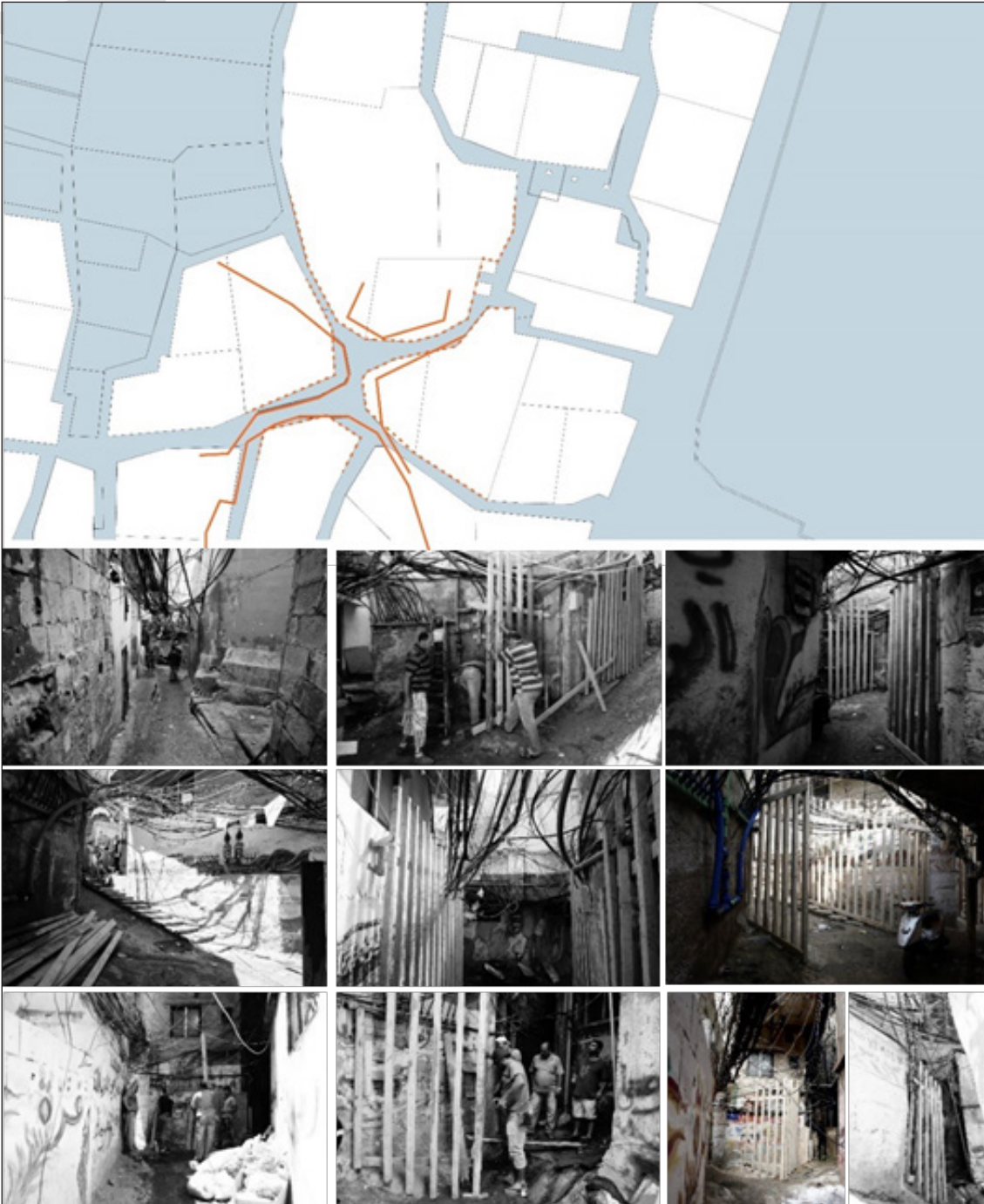


Mode 2—Superimposing the original UN-scale



Mode 2, Images showing the process of intersecting the original UNRWA-room (3mX4m), and which was the first scale to be imposed over the camp space, here intersecting with the existing generated camp-scale. © Samar Maqusi

## Mode 3— Stacking the camp grid onto itself



Mode 3, Images showing Mode 3 construction which involved a Foucauldian exercise of stacking the grid onto itself while applying a shift in order to reveal new knowledge, emanating from the existing one. © Samar Maqusi

By constructing new scales – in the form of installations – upon existing ones, not only is the existing form interrupted, but the existing spatio-movement and circulation are altered as well, forcing the inhabitants to address the intervention as part of their daily inhabitation of the camp.

Images showing the camp inhabitants going about their daily lives, while encountering the installations along the way and engaging with them in different ways, some treat them as another natural element of the camp, while others address them as new operational devices within the camp's tissue. © Samar Maqusi



Interventions inside a complex and conflictual space as those of the camps, acquire various functions and have the potential to adopt numerous subjectivities depending on their localized socio-political geography within the camp, as well as, the materiality of the spatial network they have been inserted into. Yet, what remains a common element across different camp geographies, is the simultaneous production of space and conflict, a conflict which can become productive, as history shows in the refugee camps, in redefining existing power relations. The ‘Space of Refuge’ installations were imagined first as “instruments of knowledge”, and second as “potentials” grounded within the camp’s existing materiality and apparatus. As the installations were being built within a milieu of camp-processes, they performed as *devices* bringing together a compiled-historical knowledge, while also dispersing certain knowledge to create an alternative dialogue meant to fulfil a *need*, very much associated with refuge and justice inside the camp space.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Please refer to Adalah's Discriminatory Laws Database for a list of Israeli laws. Access at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/7771>.
- <sup>2</sup> Please refer to UNHCR Figures at a Glance. Access at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html>.
- <sup>3</sup> "Official" here refers to the "official recognition" by the UNRWA and the host governments that this specific space is a refugee camp, while there are numerous informal Palestinian enclaves outside the refugee camps. Those enclaves are sometimes serviced by the UNRWA such as in Yarmouk camp in Syria, though they remain officially non-camps.
- <sup>4</sup> The 'right of return' was first outlined in UNGA resolution 194 (III) on 11 December 1948, Paragraph 11 which "Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible." Paragraph 11 (Right of Return) proceeds to change by the continuous re-adoption of the paragraph in future UNGA resolutions while the "action verb" which begins each operative paragraph undergoes a change. This can be understood by tracing the evolution of the "action verb" from what was originally adopted in resolution 194 (III) as Resolves, into the word Recognizes (Resolution 302 (IV)) to Considers (Resolution 393 (V)), and then to Endorses (Resolution 513 (VI)). By doing so, it effectively scaled down the urgency of the political problem at hand.
- <sup>5</sup> See UNGA Resolution 302 (IV) paragraph 7, UNGA Resolution 513 (VI) paragraph 4, and UNGA Resolution 1018 (XI) paragraph 5.
- <sup>6</sup> UNRWA operates in five fields, including Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza and the West Bank.
- <sup>7</sup> "Unfortunately, tents are becoming almost impossible to find on world markets at any price, and the refugees are therefore being encouraged to put up small structures for themselves" (Assistance to Palestine Refugees, Report of the Director of UNRWA, #25, Paris 1951).
- <sup>8</sup> For more on this topic, please see Misselwitz, P. and Hanafi, S. (2010) Testing a New Paradigm: UNRWA's Camp Improvement Programme, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Vol.28(2-3), pp.360-388.
- <sup>9</sup> The 'relief scale' in this research denotes to the 100m<sup>2</sup> plots distributed to each refugee family and which form the larger grid of the camp.
- <sup>10</sup> For more on UNRWA's role inside the Palestinian camps, please see Hanafi, S. (2010) *Governing Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab East: Governmentalities in Search of Legitimacy*, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs American University of Beirut.

- <sup>11</sup> This was related to me through interviews with refugees demonstrating and others living around *Intifada* street (the typical demonstration street), Baqa'a camp, August, 2014 and July, 2015.
- <sup>12</sup> For more on this topic, please see Agier, M. (2011) *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*, Polity Press, UK.
- <sup>13</sup> For more on the 'historical element,' please see Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, Vintage Books, NY.
- <sup>14</sup> For more on Foucault's grids and "lines of force", please see Chomsky, N. and Foucault, M. (1971) *Human Nature: Justice vs Power*, The Chomsky-Foucault Debate, edited by Fons Elders: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wfNI2L0Gf8>, and *What is a Dispositif* in Deleuze, G. (2007) *Two Regimes of Madness*, Semiotext(e), NY.
- <sup>15</sup> Please refer to *Human Nature: Justice versus Power: Noam Chomsky debates with Michel Foucault*, 1971. Access at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wfNI2L0Gf8>.

## References

- Abourahme, N. (2015). "Assembling and Spilling-Over: Towards an 'Ethnography of Cement' in a Palestinian Refugee Camp." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol.39(2), 200–217.
- Achilli, L. (2015). "BECOMING A MAN IN AL-WIHDAT: MASCULINE PERFORMANCES IN A PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP IN JORDAN." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.47(2), 263–280.
- Agier, M. (2011). *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government* (D. Fernbach, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972–1977* (Colin Gordon et al., Trans.) New York: Vintage Books.
- Hanafi, S. (2010). *Governing Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab East: Governmentalities in Search of Legitimacy*. *Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs*, Working Paper Series #1, American University of Beirut.
- Hanafi, S. (2012). *Enclaves and Fortressed Archipelago: Violence and Governance in Lebanon's Palestinian "Refugee Camps*. In *Lebanon: After the Cedar Revolution*. London: Hurst & Company. 105–121.
- Khalili, L. (2005). "Places of Memory and Mourning: Palestinian Commemoration in the Refugee Camps of Lebanon." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol.25(1), 30.
- Khalili, L. (2007). *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Misselwitz, P., Sari H. (2010). "Testing a New Paradigm: UNRWA's Camp Improvement Programme." *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 28(2-3), 360-388.
- Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the political*. London: Routledge.
- Peteet, J. (2005). *Landscape of hope and despair: Palestinian refugee camps*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Peteet, J. (2015). Camps and Enclaves: Palestine in the Time of Closure. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 29(2), 208-228.
- Petti, A. (2013). "Spatial Ordering of Exile. The Architecture of Palestinian Refugee Camps." *Crios, Critica degli ordinamenti spaziali*, (1), 62-70.
- Ramadan, A. (2010). "In the Ruins of Nahr al-Barid: Understanding the Meaning of the Camp." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 40(1), 49-62.
- Rueff, H., & Viaro, A. (2010). Palestinian Refugee Camps: From Shelter to Habitat. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 28(2-3), 339-359.
- Sayigh, R. (1995a). "Palestinians in Lebanon: (dis)solution of the Refugee Problem". *Race and Class*, 37(2), 27-42.
- Sayigh, R. (1995b). "Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 25(1), 37-53.
- Sheikh Hassan, I., Sari, H. (2010). (In)Security and Reconstruction in Post-conflict Nahr al-Barid Refugee Camp. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.40(1), 27-48.

# Breaking New Ground – Let Us Learn Story

Dami Makinde

---



If things had worked out as I had planned and expected when I was studying for my A-levels, I would now have finished university, and be on my way to becoming a criminologist.

Instead, I am 25 at Let us Learn, and have just finished a stint at the office of the London Mayor, where I met Deputy Mayor, Matthew Ryder, and did some amazing things, such as hold GLA's first ever young Londoners' forum. I've been to New York and Cape Town on learning exchanges and met amazing young campaigners from America and South Africa. I've helped organise an event in parliament and demonstrated outside the Supreme Court and Downing Street.

I have learned and experienced so many things that I never imagined I would. All of these will be invaluable for me whatever I end up doing for my future career. I don't regret any of them – how could I? – but I do regret the reasons why I was not able to follow the path that I had dreamed about so long and chosen for myself.

You see, I am a migrant. Until I reached 18, I didn't really appreciate what that meant, but then it was brought home to me very forcibly that in the eyes of some people, including our government, I was seen as different and did not deserve to be treated in the same way or have the same opportunities as my school friends.

In 2011, the UK government changed the law to tighten up the eligibility criteria for granting student finance to people who had been born outside the UK. I was 17 at the time, and even if I'd known about the change, I don't think I would have paid much attention as I didn't really think of myself as anything but British, as I had lived in this country for nine years by that point.

What I didn't realise was that the new law meant people like me who had lived in the UK most of our lives and been through the British education system, from primary or secondary school age, were no longer eligible for a student loan, unless



we had “settled” immigration status. The difficulty was that the government had also been making it harder and more expensive to get settled status: it now takes a minimum of 10 years of repeat applications to the Home Office for ‘limited leave to remain’ and costs many thousands of pounds.

Like many of my fellow Let us Learn campaigners who have also grown up here, I am on this 10-year journey to being eligible for British citizenship. Only then will my official immigration status reflect the way I have thought about myself for as long as I can remember.

Limited leave to remain is a form of temporary status, which can be granted to a child when they have lived in the UK for seven years, or to a young person aged 18 to 24 if they have lived at least half of their lives in the UK, without leaving the country. It has to be renewed every 2 and a half years and allows people to work and travel, but they are often denied access to benefits and have to jump through additional hoops in order to qualify for student loans.

When the rules around student loans were first changed in 2011, they put a blanket ban on anyone with limited leave to remain from receiving student finance. This had a terrible impact on thousands of ambitious young migrants, who suddenly found their career ambitions in tatters because they could no longer take up university places. However, it was an injustice which could not go unchallenged, and it led directly to the formation of the Let us Learn campaign, which was set up with the support of the award-winning children’s rights charity Just for Kids Law. I became involved soon after its launch, and our main aim has been to fight for all young people in the UK to have equal access to attend university.

One of our first tasks was to challenge the student finance issue. With our support, Just for Kids became involved in a Supreme Court legal challenge being brought by Beaurish Tigere, a 19-year-old who had been head girl and star student at her school, and found herself blocked from higher education. As interveners in the case, we were able to ensure the judges understood that Beaurish’s situation was affecting many more students, and we were able to present our stories to the court in evidence. We knew what we were arguing was right and fair, and, amazingly, the Supreme Court agreed with us. They ruled that the law change was discriminatory towards people who had already established a life here in the UK, and therefore the department for Business, Innovation and Skills should revise their student finance rules. A few months later, new rules were introduced which



meant more long-term migrants could access student finance, but the changes did not solve the problem for all of us, as there were still additional hurdles put in place. These hurdles included the need to have had limited leave to remain for at least three years (which many of us could not meet) and living at least half your life in the UK. The new regulations can be found under the “Long residence” criteria on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

Nevertheless, this was an incredible win and a pivotal moment in the life of Let Us Learn. Many more young people could now access student finance. They could now pursue their dreams of going to university and making a life for themselves. For many, they would be the first in their family to achieve this milestone.

Since the Supreme Court case, Let Us Learn has continued to champion the voice of the young migrants. From the Young Gifted and Blocked campaign, where Let Us Learners asked university Vice Chancellors to provide more scholarships for people in our situation, to our most recent #PleaseFreezeOurFees campaign. We are now asking Home Office secretary Sajid Yavid’s to call a halt to punitive increases in immigration application fees (up from £601 in 2014 to £1,533 currently) and conduct a review into the impact that spiralling costs are having on young people who have grown up in the UK and are eligible for lawful status.

The stakes for us if we lose our status because it is unaffordable are very high. We would become subject to the full force of the government’s ‘hostile environment’ which means:

- No bank account;
- No access to NHS;
- No right to rent;
- Unable to work;
- Potentially being blocked from studying, as part of an ‘immigration bail’ condition;
- Unable to travel abroad;
- Immigration detention;
- Removal back to a country we don’t remember or have any links with.

Although Let Us Learn started as an educational campaign in 2014, it has since recognised that the hurdles young migrants face go beyond education. We have also

started to voice our concerns about the impact of the hostile environment more generally, and have been vocal in our support for the Windrush generation. We see ourselves as their proud heirs: just as the Windrush migrants should be celebrated for making a vital contribution to this country's past; so we – as Britain's future doctors, teachers, scientists and lawyers – want to play a vital part in creating its future.

## Case study

### Freeze our Fees campaign

Let us Learn's latest campaign is calling for a freeze on Home Office and other fees, which have risen dramatically in recent years, putting them out of reach of ordinary families. One of our campaigners, Michelle, explains the impact these have had on her.

'I am studying law at a London university, and have many aspirations, including wanting to be a human rights lawyer and writer.

I am the oldest of four and was born in Nigeria. I came to the UK age 9, and have lived in this country for 12 years now.

I was always told by my mum and my teachers that if I worked hard, I would be able to achieve all my dreams. It is only as I have got older, I have discovered this isn't always the case. Not when you are a migrant.

When you're a migrant, you realise that hard work may not save you, not when there are policies in place to make it as difficult as possible for you to survive, for you to regularise your status and live a normal life. Rising Home Office application fees are having a detrimental effect on young migrants like me, who have been in the UK for a long time, completed their primary and secondary schooling here and are simply trying to maintain our lawful status.

In March 2016, my mum, my younger sister and I applied for our renewals. This cost over £4,000, excluding legal fees (no legal aid is available). My application by itself cost £1,311 (based on the fees at that time). My mum is a carer and earns less than £25k and thus by the time the bills are paid, and she has provided for four kids there is barely any money left. My mother's application was granted while mine and my sisters were rejected as a result of bad advice from our lawyer.

We had to apply again and pay the fees again. Having spent so much on our initial applications, my mum struggled to raise the money to make this new application. She had to choose between my sister and me because she could only afford to pay for one application. I took no part in the decision because it was too painful. Ultimately it came down to a matter of urgency; I needed my status renewed as soon as possible so I could progress to higher education whereas my sister was at college and her status did not affect her ability to carry on with her A-levels. To begin with, my sister did not know she had now fallen out of status. I carried this information with me for a month, and it was heart-breaking knowing that my sister was unaware.

Eventually, I had to tell her. She was silent, to begin with. She cried later after a successful job interview when she realised she would not be able to take it up because she no longer had immigration status. I feel like I have failed my sister. I work part-time while I am studying and my mum and I have opened a bank account, and pay in every penny we can to save for her fees.

The high fees mean my mum had to choose, choose between my sister and me, and my family now has mixed statuses. The fees go up every year, and it's incredibly worrying. I work hard, but I am anxious that the prohibitive costs will cause me to lose everything I have worked for.



# Poem and Art works: (B)e C(o)nsconscious

Bo Thai

---

## Traveling Man

Ironic ain't it to take a selfie  
But still not know who the picture reflects  
To live life artificially  
not knowing if you're really free  
Filling mundane tasks as the body moves  
Conflicting if time wasted is really waste  
Or if time sped up is haste making waste  
Wordplay to understand the big picture  
But yet can't read a simple caricature  
Is it wrong to be confused and lost but happy  
To walk many paths and just roam  
But along the way I lost sense of home  
And now I just feel like procrastinating life  
To enjoy this "journey" cause i got nowhere to be  
Guess I'm just a traveling man with no destination



## A lost boy with no vision

A lost boy with no vision  
He marched with the crowd  
And lost in his own pacing  
Blurred by obstacles and self disbelief  
Every time he speaks, he shares his whole life story  
Old memories of pain and suffering  
Rewinding on the daily for an argument  
Proving his self worth defined by his struggles  
from places to spaces, he was morphed by his very own word  
Shaped in order to fit the narrative that best sold  
He became an undocumented immigrant from Thailand with a “dream”  
Tokenized and used for the greater good  
But that good trapped him in his own past  
He lost himself by his very own word  
The lost boy with no vision  
He marched with the crowd and lost his own pacing

## I flew

I flew  
and the rest was memories  
up I went and down I came  
light I saw  
but darkness I see  
faded faces I recall  
suppressed thoughts to hold the tears  
as time pass by they are still here  
i can run, i can fly, but i can never escape  
i can hide, but soon i'm found  
and every time i fly  
i fall from the sky  
an injured bird  
once free  
stuck  
waiting  
hoping  
realizing  
remembering  
of that time I flew

## Will you leave?

Will you leave if there was a life elsewhere  
to let go of a life you came to know  
of beauty; of community; of love  
to a life you used to know  
a life you think you knew  
from a long time ago it felt like your past life  
a life buried deep within you  
of memories forgotten to ease the pain  
I live in that limbo  
struggling to prove my worth to this country  
laughing, building, and living with ones i came to love  
crying, escaping, and running away  
from the past that is catching up  
the past joys, the past laughs, the past life i used to know  
so will you leave if there was a life elsewhere  
a possibility of dignity and reunification  
a possibility being lost forever  
the time is ticking  
and it'll be in no time  
when choices wouldn't arise any longer

