SURVEILLANCE, SUBJECTIVITY AND RESISTANCE AT THE FRONTIERS OF EUROPE: A MATERIALIST ANALYSIS OF THE GREECE-TURKEY BORDERS

by

Özgün Erdener Topak

A thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology
In conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Queen’s University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada

(November, 2014)

Copyright © Özgün Erdener Topak, 2014
Abstract

The Greece-Turkey borders have become one of the main points of undocumented entry into the European Union since 2009. The borders operate through complex elements: historical processes that shape their structure, ideologies that legitimize their violent existence, techniques and technologies that allow them to be practiced over migrants, and migrants complying with or resisting these structures, ideologies, techniques, and technologies. In order to provide a comprehensive analysis of these complex elements of the border, this dissertation critically engages with Althusser’s aleatory materialism, Foucault’s analytics of power and other complementary theories, and it analyzes the four aspects of the border in individual chapters.

1. Structural-decentred aspects of the border: The dissertation analyzes the historical material processes of colonialism and racism and the contemporary material processes of neoliberal globalization and post-politics that enable the EU borders to function as a decentred totality and to exclude certain peoples and not others.

2. Practical aspects of the border: The dissertation analyzes how the border operates in practice with specific surveillance technologies (such as radar systems and EUROSUR mechanisms at the borderzones) and techniques (such as everyday racist violence in urban contexts) that produce specific biopolitical effects on migrants.

3. Subjective aspects of the border: The dissertation analyzes how migrants develop diverse subjectivities when confronted by the border’s material violence, including stranger subjectivity, abject subjectivity, religious subjectivity, nomadic subjectivity, and dissident subjectivity.

4. Contested aspects of the border: Drawing on the case of 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers in Greece, the dissertation analyzes the material conditions of possibility for political contestation of the border. The dissertation draws on fieldwork data collected from border authorities, migrants, NGO workers and political activists in Greece and Turkey in May-September 2012 and from
secondary data from publicly accessible resources. This dissertation provides a complex and nuanced understanding of surveillance, borders, and migrant subjectivities and politics through putting an emphasis on how the border is practiced, on the experiences of the affected migrants, as well as on the deeper and enduring material structures that frame the practices of the border and experiences of the migrants.
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the migrants who shared their stories with me. I also would like to thank the political activists and NGO workers who agreed to participate in this study. I am indebted to those who facilitated my fieldwork at different levels: among others, Burcak, Valy, Volkan, Pavlina, Vania, Dilaver, Serhat, Antonis, Tevfik and Panos.

My supervisor, Dr. David Lyon, played a major part in the materialization of this dissertation. I thank him for his guidance, patience and ongoing encouragement. His mentorship allowed me to develop and sharpen my thoughts, his commitments to ethical sociology influenced my scholarship, and his generous personality smoothed the difficulties of the long Ph.D. process. I could not have asked for a better supervisor. I had the privilege of being the teaching assistant of Dr. Frank Pearce in Queen’s Sociology theory courses. His surgical approach to theoretical practice and his intellectual rigour influenced me deeply. He also made agonistic interventions into my thoughts. I am very lucky to have had his interventions.

I also would like to thank my committee members, Dr. David Murakami Wood and Dr. Martin Hand. Both David and Martin were available for insightful discussions during my time at Queen’s Sociology. Their valuable inputs strengthened my arguments. Many thanks also to go Dr. Wayne Cox, my internal examiner, and Dr. Peter Nyers, my external examiner for their willingness to serve on my committee. I appreciate their constructive engagement with my work and their encouragement. I also would like to thank Dr. Annette Burfoot for her involvement in my committee and her comments.

Michelle Ellis, Anne Henderson and Wendy Schuler at Queen’s Sociology and Joan Sharpe and Emily Smith at the Surveillance Studies Centre (SSC) were excellent in providing
administrative support. Many thanks also go to Jane Rodgers for her wonderful editorial assistance.

I learned much from the activities at the SSC. Workshops, seminars and reading groups kept me up to date with the literature and expanded my knowledge in diverse fields of surveillance studies. My friends at the SSC; Sachil, Jeff, Midori, Alana, Ciara, Mohammed, Tabs, Scott and – from back in the day - Lucas, Francesca, Sarah and Kiyoshi provided support and friendship throughout different periods of the long Ph.D. process. My cohort mate Dean provided professional advice whenever I needed it.

My friends in Kingston; Mark, Karl, Mansoor, Jeff, Lisa, Tim, Dilan and Andrew, were ready for an insightful conversation to share the grad student life. My friends from ODTÜ back in Turkey: Begum, Ergun, Idil, Mehmet, and Volkan motivated me with their friendship and jokes. My ex-supervisor and friend Çağatay Topal, who greatly influenced my academic fate through introducing me to surveillance studies and the work of David Lyon back in ODTÜ, continued to inspire me while I was at Queen’s. Derya was with me during the writing period of the dissertation and endured my intensive social theorization; our everyday conversations helped me develop and reformulate my thoughts. I owe much to her special existence in my life.

My parents, Aksin Özlü and Murat Topak supported my decision to pursue my dream of studying sociology without any hesitation. While this first meant living in different cities and later living on different continents, despite the distance I never felt alone. My parents and my brother İlke have always been with me and have provided every form of support I have needed.

All errors of fact or interpretation in this dissertation are my own. I dedicate this study to the undocumented migrants of the world.
Statement of Originality

I hereby certify that all of the work described within this thesis is the original work of the author. Any published (or unpublished) ideas and/or techniques from the work of others are fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard referencing practices.

Chapter 5 appears in:

Sections of Chapter 4 appear in:

(Özgün Erdener Topak)

(November, 2014)
# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii  
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... iv  
Statement of Originality .................................................................................................................... vi  
List of Abbreviations ......................................................................................................................... ix  
Preface ............................................................................................................................................... x  

PART I: BACKGROUND AND THEORY ............................................................................................ 1  
Chapter 1 Introduction: A Materialist Theory of the Border ................................................................. 1  
  Why Materialism? ............................................................................................................................. 2  
  1.1 Structural Aspects of the Border ............................................................................................... 11  
  1.2 Practical Aspects of the Border ............................................................................................... 26  
  1.3 Subjective Aspects of the Border ............................................................................................ 32  
  1.4 Contested Aspects of the Border ............................................................................................ 38  
  Conclusion and Outline of the Dissertation ..................................................................................... 43  

Chapter 2 : Research Methods ............................................................................................................ 47  
  2.1 Research Data .......................................................................................................................... 47  
  2.2 Issues of Access and Limitations of the Fieldwork ................................................................. 55  
  2.3 Ethical Issues ............................................................................................................................ 56  
  2.4 Materialist Analysis of the Research Data .............................................................................. 58  

Chapter 3 : The Structure of European Borders: Colonial Legacies, Post-Political Turn and the Identification Dispositif ...................................................................................................................... 61  
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 63  
  3.1 Colonial Legacies, Ideologies of the Peoplehood and the Formation of the European Apartheid ... 67  
  3.2 Towards Post-Politics: VIS as an example of Post-Political Technology ................................. 78  
  3.3 Transformations in the structure of European borders: Neoliberal Globalization and Post-Politics 85  
  Towards the European Identification Dispositif ............................................................................ 100  

Chapter 4 : The European Identification Dispositif ............................................................................ 103  
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 104  
  4.1 Identification, Surveillance, Borders and New Technologies ................................................. 108  
  4.2 The New Borders of the EU ...................................................................................................... 115  
  Conclusion ...................................................................................................................................... 131  

PART II: LIFE AND DEATH AT THE GREECE-TURKEY BORDERS .................................................. 133
Chapter 5: The Biopolitical Border in Practice: Surveillance and Death at the Greece–Turkey Borderzones

Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 133

5.1 Biopolitics of borderzones .................................................................................................. 137

5.2 Surveillance and death at the Greece–Turkey borderzones .................................................. 147

Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 167

Chapter 6: Material Violence and Migrant Subjectivities .......................................................... 170

Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 170

6.1 Material Basis of Subjectivity .............................................................................................. 174

6.1.1 Material violence before the territorial borders are reached (in Turkey) ......................... 174

6.1.2 Material Violence at the Borderzones .............................................................................. 182

6.1.3 Material Violence Beyond the Borderzones (in Greece) .................................................. 182

6.2 Migrant Subjectivities ........................................................................................................... 215

6.2.1 Stranger Subjectivity ........................................................................................................ 221

6.2.2 Abject Subjectivity .......................................................................................................... 225

6.2.3 Religious Subjectivity ....................................................................................................... 233

6.2.4 Nomadic Subjectivity ....................................................................................................... 240

6.2.5 Dissident Subjectivity ....................................................................................................... 246

Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 248

Chapter 7 Resisting the Border: The 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers Event .................................. 250

A Materialist Theory of Resistance ............................................................................................ 251

7.1 The 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers Event ............................................................................. 258

7.2 Politics of Equality, Ethics of Hospitality and Collective Effervescence ............................... 262

7.2.1 Politics of Equality ............................................................................................................ 262

7.2.2 The Ethics of Hospitality and Witnessing ........................................................................ 269

7.2.3 Sacredness of the Hunger Strike ...................................................................................... 277

Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 282

Chapter 8: Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 285

Bibliography ............................................................................................................................... 295

Appendix A ................................................................................................................................. 330

Appendix B .................................................................................................................................. 331
List of Abbreviations

AI  Amnesty International
ECtHR  European Court of Human Rights
EU  European Union
FRONTEX  European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
EURODAC  European Dactyloscopy
EUROSUR  European Border Surveillance System
GCR  Greek Council of Refugees
HRW  Human Rights Watch
MSF  Médecins Sans Frontières
SIS  Schengen Information System
SYRIZA  Coalition of the Radical Left
VIS  Visa Information System
UNHCR  United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Preface

In recent years the Greece–Turkey borders have become one of the main points of undocumented entry into the European Union. Two routes have been used by migrants: the Aegean Sea route and the Evros land/river route. In response to the flow of migration, the Greek and FRONTEX border authorities have established diverse surveillance technologies at the borders, including the EUROSUR mechanisms, radar systems and a fence. The majority of migrants come from Afghanistan and Middle Eastern countries (recently mostly from Syria) as a result of wars, conflicts, and poverty. Migrants from many other Asian and African countries are also involved in smaller numbers. While migrants face great dangers while crossing the territorial borderzones, they experience various problems before the territorial borders are reached (in Turkey) and beyond the territorial borders (in Greece), including ineffective asylum systems and racist attacks.

I studied what migrants, border authorities, NGOs and political activists are doing at the borders. I also focused on what technologies, policies and laws affect what happens at the borders. I found that the Greek and FRONTEX border authorities rely on surveillance systems to detect, apprehend and in some cases push-back migrants at the borderzones. The more surveillance intensifies the more migrants risk their lives to avoid surveillance and many die in the process. I also found that despite the fact that these operations violate human rights and international refugee law, there is no effective mechanism to protect migrants from human rights abuses at the borderzones. While violence and human rights abuses against migrants are concentrated at the borderzones, I also found that migrants are confronted by various problems in Turkey and Greece. In Turkey, migrants are confronted by an ineffective asylum system and low life prospects, which force them to take the risky routes towards Greece. However, problems do
not end for migrants when they reach Greece. As a result of the EU’s asylum and border policies many migrants are trapped in Greece and they are forced to live there without any rights. Migrants experience immense problems in every aspect of their lives, including the ineffective asylum system of Greece, prolonged detention, substandard health conditions and lack of access to healthcare, low or no employment prospects, substandard housing conditions and in many cases homelessness, continuous police-sweep operations and racist attacks. I found that many migrants feel powerless and desperate as a result of the difficulties they face. But I also found that some migrants continue facing these difficulties with courage and many find refuge in their ethnic and religious community. There were also a few migrants who, often with the support of Greek political activists, engage in politics and oppose the violence of the border.

The situation at the Greece-Turkey borders is tense, risky and complex. In order to understand what is happening, however, we need a sense of the historical context and a mode of explaining events, technologies, practices, policies, ideologies, and processes that takes account of the multiple factors involved and does justice to the plight of the migrants themselves. Part I of the dissertation (Chapters 1-4) focuses on building a theory for explaining the diverse aspects of the Greece-Turkey borders and providing background to contextualize the empirical realities of the borders. Part II of the dissertation (Chapters 5-7) focuses on analyzing and theorizing the empirical realities of the border.

Chapter 1 emphasizes that a materialist perspective, which prioritizes the analysis of oppressive material structures that limit human freedom, can provide a complex and just analysis of the border. Critically engaging with Althusser’s aleatory materialism and Foucault’s analytics of power, this chapter builds a theoretical framework and identifies four main aspects of the border that needs to be analyzed: 1. Structural 2. Practical. 3. Subjective. 4. Contested. This
chapter outlines the ontological and normative commitments of the dissertation, the specific contributions of the dissertation to the relevant literatures as well as the organization of the following chapters. In individual dissertation chapters, four aspects of the border are analyzed in detail to provide a complex analysis of the Greece-Turkey borders.

Chapter 2 discusses the research methods of the dissertation and demonstrates the advantages of a materialist analysis of the research data.

Chapter 3 emphasizes that, as borders of Europe, the Greece-Turkey borders separate troubled and poor global South and East regimes from the rich EU. In order to contextualize this empirical reality, this chapter focuses on the historical and contemporary economical and ideological structures beneath the Greece-Turkey borders that allow them to exclude certain groups of people and not others and that legitimize these violent exclusions. The chapter analyzes the complex processes of colonialism and racism (historical), and neoliberal-globalization and post-politics (contemporary) to contextualize the empirical realities of the Greece-Turkey borders.

Chapter 4 maintains the focus on structural aspects of the borders and discusses the technical structures of the border. It demonstrates how diverse surveillance technologies and techniques, such as biometric databases and the EUROSUR, are established in the EU to increase the level of surveillance over peoples from disadvantaged backgrounds and to exclude them from European political space.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus of the dissertation from background-structure to practice. It analyzes how diverse technologies of the Greece-Turkey borders operate over migrant bodies at the territorial borderzones. It demonstrates how the intensification of surveillance increases the risk of death for migrants at the borderzones, and how, despite the biopolitical realities, migrants
continue to cross the borders. This chapter also emphasizes human rights violations in border surveillance practices.

Chapter 6 discusses the material conditions of migrants before they reach territorial borderzones (in Turkey) and beyond the territorial borderzones (in Greece). It demonstrates that migrants face an ineffective asylum system and low life prospects in Turkey, and some of them, out of desperation, take the riskier routes towards Greece. It emphasizes that those migrants who can somehow find their ways to Greece are confronted by many other problems such as homelessness and racist violence. Drawing on fieldwork data, this chapter discusses and theorizes the effects of these difficulties on migrants’ subjectivities. It demonstrates how many migrants avoid having a public presence in Greece and become desperate and hopeless in the process, how some others turn to their religion and ethnic community to protect their subjectivity from disintegrating, and how many, despite the dangers, still hope to attempt another crossing to reach other European countries. This chapter also emphasizes that there are a few migrants who engage in political struggle to claim their rights and leaves further discussion on these migrants to the next chapter.

Chapter 7 draws on the event of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers in Greece to discuss the conditions of possibility for political contestation of the border. It emphasizes the importances of the mass political agency of migrants; ethical solidarity and openness of the host groups; and respect for human life, for progressive social change.

Chapter 8 concludes by summarizing the findings and arguments of the dissertation.
PART I: BACKGROUND AND THEORY

Chapter 1

Introduction: A Materialist Theory of the Border

Researcher: I am researching on migrants’ problems in Greece. That is why I want to speak with them.

A migrant: They will give you some information, but you cannot understand much about migrants simply by speaking with them on the streets. You have to read more Marxism (from fieldnotes).

This introductory chapter discusses what a border is and how a border should be analyzed. The chapter first argues that a materialist theory that prioritizes the analysis of material processes over choices, actions and thoughts of individuals can provide a just and complex analysis of the border. Second, the chapter discusses what sort of materialism is useful for analyzing the diverse aspects of the materiality of the Greece-Turkey border. Critically engaging with Althusser’s aleatory materialism and Foucault’s analytics of power, this chapter identifies four aspects of the materiality of the border that needs to be emphasized: 1. Structural yet decentred aspects of the border: the analysis of the historical and contemporary material processes which enable the EU borders to function as a decentred totality and to exclude certain peoples and not others. 2. Practical aspects of the border: the analysis of how the decentred structure of the border operates in practice (what sort of technologies and techniques are involved, etc.) and produces specific effects over subjects (migrants). 3. Subjective aspects of the border: the analysis
of how subjects (migrants) develop diverse subjectivities when confronted by the material violence of the border. 4. Contested aspects of the border: the analysis of the material conditions of possibility for political contestation of the border. In short, the materialist analysis of the border involves the analysis of the structural-decentred, practical, subjective and contested aspects of the border. The materialist theory of the border developed in this chapter sets the basis for the ontological and normative commitments of the thesis, the specific contributions of the thesis to the relevant literatures as well as the organization of the following chapters. In the following chapters, the four different material aspects of the border are studied in detail to provide a comprehensive analysis of the border.

Why Materialism?

Borders are complex. They consist of historical processes that give shape to their structure; ideologies that legitimize their violent existence; techniques and technologies that allow them to be practiced over subjects; and subjects complying with or resisting these structures, ideologies, techniques and technologies. A comprehensive framework is required to analyze the complex elements that make up the border. This chapter critically engages with the aleatory materialism of Althusser and Foucault’s analytics of power and outlines a materialist theory to discuss the four complex and intersecting aspects of the Greece-Turkey borders: structural-decentred, practical, subjective and contested. It argues that a materialist perspective that understands human action as a situated activity
and that prioritizes the analysis of the complex material processes over choices, actions and thoughts of the subjects can be helpful in analyzing the Greece-Turkey borders.

In my insistence on materialism, I am not moved by ‘pure’ theoretical factors. Indeed I think that materialism provides the most comprehensive analysis of the border. But there is a more fundamental reason behind my move to materialism: to do justice to the experiences of the migrants that I met during the fieldwork. I feel obliged to make it clear that migrants do not have any real choice when making the decision to cross the border and that their ‘choice’ is a product of historical-material processes. This is not to claim that migrants do not have agency. They do have agency, even political agency, which they articulate even in the most desperate situations to oppose the violence of the border. But the motives and reasons for crossing the border—an immensely dangerous act—cannot be explained by the notion of personal choice. There are wider material processes that constrain migrants and force them to take a dangerous journey towards the EU. Wars, conflicts and poverty can be listed as some of the ‘push factors’ of migration. But even these factors tell us little about the wider material processes as they only refer to contemporary empirically observable realities. Not surprisingly, all migrants who cross the Greece-Turkey border come from countries of the Global South and East. There is a clear structural pattern here—a pattern that proves the material existence of what Balibar termed “European apartheid” (2004a). The material existence of the border continues to constrain the actions of migrants throughout their journey. In particular, it is the materiality of the surveillance technologies that constrain migrants’ passage at the
borderzones and force them to take riskier routes to avoid detection. It is the materiality of the violence that is perpetrated by the racist groups in Greece that pushes migrants to internalize abject-subjectivity, and to misrecognize themselves as if they are devoid of political speech. It is the materiality of the post-political ideologies that enables the EU authorities to reduce the social and political issue of migration into a technical matter and to treat migrants as biopolitical objects of intervention rather than political beings. In each case, we are not talking about the personal choices and thoughts of migrants; but the external, coercive, material realities that limit and give shape to migrants’ actions and thoughts. What needs to be problematized is, therefore, not the personal choices and thoughts of migrants but the complex material processes (economical, ideological, technical, legal, etc.) that constrain their actions.

Despite the material realities, it is still easy to get trapped in humanist discourses—the discourses that present human beings as free, responsible, autonomous subjects, but which in reality support the continuation of their oppression. It is very easy to find humanist discourses in the mainstream media organizations, across the liberal to conservative political spectrum. They write, ‘There is no job, why do migrants come here?’, ‘Why don't they stay in their own countries?’, ‘We cannot waste anymore taxpayer money on immigrants’, ‘We cannot take every immigrant’, ‘We are hardworking people but immigrants simply want to abuse the welfare system’, ‘We are not responsible for the wars in their countries’, etc. In each case, the myth of free individual is at play. Migrants are presented as subjects who are free to make their own
choices. If they die while crossing the border, it is their choice. There is no need to problematize the ongoing expansion of surveillance, which pushes migrants to find riskier routes. If they become impoverished inside Europe, it is again, their choice. There is no need to problematize the ongoing racism and social exclusion against migrants. After all, nobody invited them.

This is how the ideology of freedom works. Following Marx, Althusser points out that the ideology of freedom masks the “real relation (the law of a liberal capitalist economy)” under the guise of an “imaginary relation (all men are free, including the free labourers)” (Althusser, 2005a: 234). The ideology of freedom reduces problems created by structural inequalities into matters of individual choice by means of creating the myth of the free individual. When a person fails, it is his or her problem rather than the consequence of oppressive structures.

The easy passage from liberalism to racism lies here. The Neo-Nazi Party of Greece, Golden Dawn, for instance, scapegoats migrants for the ongoing economic crisis rather than focusing on the material conditions of inequality that is created by the EU-imposed austerity measures. The Party easily combines this liberal discourse with a racist one, claiming that there is “racial inequality of humans” and that “the Greek race has particular standards” (cited in Ellinas, 2013: 549). Both in liberalism and racism, the wider material processes are neglected, and the disadvantaged groups are accused of not being responsible, disturbing the order and peace, creating problems, etc. The material inequalities, which have their origins in the historical processes of oppression, such as
colonialism and capitalism (real relation) are masked under the guise of racist ideology (imaginary relation).

A materialist analysis that problematizes oppressive material processes rather than actions and thoughts of individuals can do justice to migrants’ narratives and help us understand what migrants are really experiencing and feeling. Seen in this light, the theoretical anti-humanism (or non-humanism) of the materialist perspective, rather than being a cold, mechanistic perspective, one that dismisses the importance of human experiences and feelings, is in fact key to understanding the real experiences and feelings of individuals. Althusser captures this point succinctly when he says: “It is impossible to know anything about men except on the absolute precondition that the philosophical (theoretical) myth of men is reduced to ashes” (Althusser, 2005a: 229).

From Marx and Durkheim to Lacan, Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, Agamben and Latour, many figures in social theory can be regarded as theorists of materialism, even though the ways in which these figures theorize external material processes and their effects on subjects greatly differ. While some of the materialist insights from these figures can be (and will be) used in analyzing some particular aspects of the material processes of the border, reworked versions of late Althusser’s aleatory materialism, combined with Foucault’s analytics of power form the main framework of the materialist analysis that is conducted in this thesis.

Why Althusser? Foucault’s analytics of power helps in understanding the complex material practices of power over migrant bodies. Agamben’s theory of
sovereignty helps in understanding how the sovereign suspension of rights constrains the conducts of migrants, leaving them unprotected against human rights violations.

Durkheim’s theory of religion helps in understanding the materiality of the religion in guiding migrants’ subjectivities when they are confronted by the material violence of the border. Marxist theories, such as those of Wallerstein and Balibar, are helpful in understanding how the historical-material existence of the EU borders was formed through colonialism and how it continues to operate in the neoliberal-globalized era. The theories of post-politics that are developed by neo-Marxist figures such as Mouffe, Žižek and Rancière, are helpful in understanding how the materiality of ideology works in contemporary societies, reducing political matters into technical and managerial ones. Other figures, in different ways, can also be assembled as allies of a materialist analysis.

But it is in Althusser’s aleatory materialism that we can find the analytical space to develop a comprehensive analysis of the material processes -economic structures, technologies, practices, regulations, ideologies that operate within a de-centred totality. Moreover, compared to many any other forms of materialism, Althusser’s aleatory materialism, thanks to its Marxist background, pays sufficient attention to structural-material inequalities. But, unlike reductionist forms of Marxism, aleatory materialism does this without being mechanistic, without reducing materiality into a simple essence – such as technology, law or economy.

Aleatory materialism is also helpful in understanding the complex material basis of subjectivity and how individuals (migrants) develop diverse subjectivities when faced
with material realities – although these themes are not sufficiently theorized by Althusser himself. According to this perspective, it is not the isolated thoughts of subjects but the complex material processes, such as diverse forms of material violence but also religion and politics, which are equally material, that form the basis of subjectivity. The ways in which resistance is understood in aleatory materialism is also helpful in making sense of the experiences of migrants who resist the border. Rather than the ‘autonomous’ choices of individuals (migrants), this perspective prioritizes the analysis of the political agency of organized masses combined with material circumstances (conjuncture) for progressive social change. In short, an aleatory materialist perspective is useful for understanding the four fundamental aspects of the border 1. Structural-decentred. 2. Practical 3. Subjective 4. Contested. Below, these four different aspects of the border are discussed from a materialist perspective. In the following chapters, each aspect is further analyzed.

Before beginning with the analysis of the border, it is worth saying a few words about the ways in which Althusser’s theory is utilized in this dissertation – considering that Althusser has been a very controversial figure in theory and praxis. Althusser was the leading philosopher of the French Communist Party (FCP) and an influential figure in French Marxism in postwar France. He was criticized on many fronts. His theoretical anti-humanism was criticized for leaving no room for human experiences (famously by EP Thompson), his prioritization of organized struggle over spontaneous action was criticized after the May 1968 events (famously by his student Rancière) for creating hierarchies between an elite intellectual class and masses. For many, Althusser is a
‘structuralist Marxist’, someone who reduces human experience to mystical, abstract, unified and coherent structures. For many others, he is a disguised Stalinist, who opposes humanist Marxism.\(^1\) Moreover, a personal disaster marks Althusser’s works. In late 1979, right before his aleatory materialist period, during another depression, Althusser killed his wife by strangling her.

It is perhaps problematic to recall such a controversial figure to shed light on the situation of the European borders and the experiences of migrants in the early 21\(^{st}\) century. But my motivation here is not to substantiate Althusser or to prove that ‘he is right’; but to find a comprehensive materialist theory to analyze the border and the experiences of migrants. The ways in which I use Althusser’s aleatory materialist framework provides me the analytical space to assemble other theoretical allies and utilize their theories from a materialist perspective, including Foucault, Durkheim, Agamben, Žižek and even his former student and harsh critic Rancière.\(^2\)

It is well beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive analysis of Althusser’s works, to show the continuities and discontinuities in his theory or to discuss

\(^1\) See Elliot (1987) and Montag (2013) for a discussion on the controversial status of Althusser in social theory and praxis.

\(^2\) Rancière (2011) is indeed right to criticize Althusser for his favoring of the institutional knowledge of the elite party intellectuals over the spontaneous and militant action of the masses. Rancière’s politics of equality (1999), which puts emphasis on the radical and contingent political potential of groups from disadvantaged backgrounds in challenging the established order, provides a useful framework for understanding migrants’ political agency. But politics of equality should be understood as one material element among many others (e.g. conjectural factors, ethics of solidarity). In other words, it should be understood from a materialist perspective to avoid over-emphasizing migrants’ political agency. I return to these debates first in the ‘Contested Aspects of the Border’ part in this chapter, and later in Chapter 7 where I discuss the political agency of the migrants within a materialist framework.
in detail how he responded to the particular historical challenges within the FCP or to the specific political events such as the May 1968 uprisings. In a sense, such an endeavour, although important, is not entirely necessary for the purposes of this dissertation, particularly considering that Althusser continuously revised his thoughts and written self-criticisms.

My method of reading Althusser is from the perspective of his later aleatory materialist period, when, freed from the constraints of the FCP, Althusser reworked his materialism and produced something that is compatible with other, not necessarily Marxist, materialisms. Some of his theoretical allies in this period are Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze and Derrida (Montag 2013: 9). Although Althusser’s later writings on aleatory materialism are incomplete, when combined with his earlier works, they still provide comprehensive reading protocols to theorize contemporary material realities, including borders. In that respect, it would be wrong to throw away Althusser’s earlier texts. As Montag (2013: 9-10) points out, since the early sixties Althusser sought to theorize aleatory materialism. In fact, in many of his earlier texts there are aleatory materialist elements and his other texts can be reworked by reading from an aleatory materialist perspective or through combining with the texts of other, complementary, theorists.

There is a renewal of interest in Althusser’s work in recent years, particularly towards his later aleatory materialist period (see Datta 2007, 2011; Diefenbach et. al. 2013; Hardy, 2012, 2013; Lahtinen 2011; Montag 2013). The posthumous publication of his texts (both from his earlier and later periods) provoked discussions and debates. This
study aims to contribute to these debates by demonstrating the usefulness of aleatory materialism for the study of borders. In the recent surveillance and security and border studies literatures, Althusser’s work, and in many cases Marxism in general, is often neglected (see Ball et. al. 2012; Burgess, 2010; Johnson et. al. 2011; Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2012; Salter and Mutlu, 2013). Even though, the word ‘materialism’ appears in some of these literatures it often refers to the kind of materialism that is offered by the actor-network theory – a materialism of things or objects (see e.g., Salter and Mutlu, 2013; Walters 2014). In addition to contributing to the specific domains of the EU borders (structural, practical, subjective, contested), this study also aims to demonstrate the need to provide a comprehensive materialist framework to analyze the complex set of structures, technologies, ideologies, regulations and practices that make up the borders –and to highlight the material inequalities as the single factor behind all these complex elements of the border. In that sense, this study can also be read as an addition to the social justice approaches in the study of borders (Balibar et. al. 2013; Ilcan, 2013).

1.1 Structural Aspects of the Border
Borders have no essence. The ways in which they mark the boundaries of inside and outside are subject to transformations, mutations and interruptions. Older boundaries disappear while newer ones present themselves as if they have always existed. Then the new becomes old and the old is doomed to be forgotten. Nowadays, when one speaks about the south-eastern border of Europe, the Greece-Turkey border, one is forced to
speak about undocumented migration, deaths at the border, the Schengen agreement, the Greek border guards, the EU Border Agency FRONTEX, digital border surveillance technologies and so on. Few people would remember how the ‘Greece-Turkey border’ functioned during the time of the Ottoman Empire—how religion was the main marker of identity among diverse communities of the Empire and how the borders among these communities as well as at the frontiers of the Empire were fluid and imprecise rather than fixed and stabilized (Kasaba, 2009). Fewer would remember how the Catholic Church in Venice acted as the border agency of Europe during the medieval era; conducting ‘security checks’ on Christians who were suspected of being ex-Muslim converts of the Ottoman Empire to sort legitimate Christians from illegitimate ones (Salzmann, 2012).

Continual wars for ethnic independence re-shaped the political geography of the Balkans in the 19th and early 20th centuries, erasing the Ottoman borders (Mazower, 2002). The Greco-Turkish war ended in 1922, and the Greece-Turkey Border was formed in 1923 based on an ideal of ethnically ‘pure’ demarcation. Those who were regarded as threats to this ‘purity’ were expelled from each side and the border was further stabilized (Hirschon, 2003). Yet, the formation of the EU in 1957, the accession of Greece into the EU in 1981 and the formation of the Schengen Area in 1995, have all transformed the border again and again. The Greece-Turkey border represented the limits of Europe and Western modernity ever since the Greek independence war against the Ottoman Empire; but the formation of the Schengen Area and the establishment of administrative border

---

3 Approximately 1.2 million Greeks were forced to leave Turkey to settle in Greece, and, in return, close to half a million Muslims were expelled to Turkey from Greece.
structures have truly turned the border into a border of Europe, culturally, economically as well as administratively. On the one hand, the Greece-Turkey border inherited Europe’s legacy that is based on historical processes of colonialism and one that has retained its core in the era of neoliberal globalization. On the other hand, the border’s administrative character was transformed as a result of the formation of the EU-level bureaucratic structures such as the EU Border Agency FRONTEX and the establishment of surveillance mechanisms such as the EUROSUR. Now FRONTEX units patrol the border alongside the Greek police, using EUROSUR mechanisms to defend Europe’s legacy against the global intruders: Afghans, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Syrians, Iranians, Somalis, Algerians, as well as people from many other Asian and African countries who try to reach the EU for a better life.

On May 2012, in the Greek city of Thessalonica, I was at an old coffee shop, interviewing a young Afghan migrant, who, at that time, had recently crossed the border. The young migrant was telling his border crossing story; an interpreter friend was doing the translations and I was taking notes. His story was full of horror and despair: people risking their lives to cross the Evros River, police beating migrants, degrading conditions in the detention centres, and so on. At one point, an old Greek lady from a nearby table got curious and approached our table. Pointing out to my notebook, she asked something in Greek. I told her that I am from Turkey: ‘Turkiye’, ‘Tourkia’. To my surprise she knew Turkish! She told me that her family used to live in Bafra, a town in the Samsun Province of the Black Sea Region of Turkey. She added that, after the Greece-Turkey
population exchange agreement in 1923, her family left Bafra and re-settled in Thessalonica. Although she was born after her family came to Greece, she was still able to learn (basic) Turkish from her parents. After this introduction, she reiterated her question in Turkish: “Gazetecisin? Not aliyorsun?” [Are you a journalist? You are taking notes?]. I explained to her that I am a student working on migrants’ problems in Greece. She nodded her head understandingly. Then she said farewell and left. After a while, the interview was over and we all left the table. On my way back to my hostel, I remember asking myself: Greeks, Turks, and now Afghans; who would be the next subject of the Greece-Turkey border?

It is clear that the Greek-Turkey Border has no fixed essence. Different subjects, as a result of different material processes, were forced to cross the Greece-Turkey border throughout history. Now that the Greece-Turkey Border is a border of Europe, it is the historical and contemporary material processes that make up Europe, from colonialism to the new border technologies, which give shape to it. Therefore, the fact that the border does not have any essence does not mean that it does not have any structure. In fact, these two aspects of the border do not contradict but complement each other.

Structures do change and get transformed. But it is important to analyze how the structures come into being and how they operate through complex elements in order to understand how they mark the inside/outside boundaries at a specific period. Althusser’s materialist theory provides a framework for understanding how these structures get formed as a result of material encounters between diverse elements (rather than being the
outcome of a historical necessity or telos) and how these structures operate as a decentred totality, consisting of complex material elements; each element having its relative autonomy within this totality, rather than an origin or essence determining how the structures function.

Althusser’s aleatory materialism rejects teleological and (sovereign) subject-centred explanations in the analysis of the formation of the structures. For Althusser, rather than the choices, actions and thoughts of individuals or the hidden ‘laws’ of the history (such as the notion of progress), it is the complex material encounters between diverse elements that lie at the basis of the formation of the structures (2006a). Althusser makes it clear that the encounters between diverse material elements are aleatory and contingent rather than necessary. In other words, “necessity [is] the becoming-necessity of the encounter of contingencies” (Althusser 2006a: 261). Sometimes these encounters take hold and produce something lasting – a lasting encounter, which may function as a structure, but sometimes they simply do not. Althusser (2006b: 168-170) draws on Epicurus’s theory of atoms falling in a void to illustrate his notion of the aleatory encounter. For Epicurus, atoms were falling parallel to each other in a void before there was nothing. It was as a result of the clinamen, that is, the unpredictable swerving of atoms, that the atoms first encountered each other, produced a chain reaction and gave birth to the world.

Aleatory encounters are at the heart of Althusser’s ontology. But, this does not mean that he assumes that there are only random and chaotic encounters between
material elements. According to Althusser, once the encounters take hold, they crystallize and give birth to a structure. Although this ‘structure’ and its diverse elements are by no means exempt from similar aleatory encounters, which may or may not transform their character, still, once the structure is formed it produces specific effects and functions as a totality, constraining the autonomy of the other material elements as well as the choices, actions and thoughts of the subjects who exist within that totality. As Althusser puts it “once the encounter has been effected (but not before), [there is] primacy of the structure over its elements” (2006b: 191).

Althusser refers to his study with Balibar, Reading Capital (1997), to illustrate the aleatory materialist elements in Marx’s analysis of the formation of the capitalist mode of production (Althusser, 2006b: 196-203; Balibar, 1997: 199-308; see also Hardy, 2013: 9-17 for a detailed analysis). He points out that the emergence of the capitalist economy in the Great Britain was a consequence of a series of aleatory-materialist encounters rather than being an inevitable historical necessity. The encounter between “the owners of money” and “proletarian stripped of everything but his labour power” (2006b: 197) played a certain role. But this form of encounter was already in place in the thirteenth and fourteenth century Italian states without leading to the emergence of capitalism (2006b: 198). What was also ‘required’ was the existence of “a domestic market capable of absorbing what might have been produced” (2006b: 198, emphasis original) – which existed in the mid 18th century Great Britain with its national and colonial markets. But even the combination of these three elements cannot sufficiently explain the
establishment of the capitalist economy. One should also study the dispersed histories of elements as diverse as accumulation of money, accumulation of technical means of production, accumulation of the raw materials of production, and accumulation of producers, and, how these elements are combined under the capitalist mode of production (Althusser, 2006b: 198) – because “the elements combined by the capitalist structure have different and independent origins” (Balibar, 1997: 281). It is only when the encounter between these diverse and independent elements take hold or crystallize, they form the capitalist mode of production, which begins to operate as a totality, exerting coercive influence over other material elements as well as over the subjects that are contained within it (Althusser, 2006b: 203).

Structures never remain stable, and they continuously get transformed. Today capitalist mode of production operates together with diverse material elements under a complex totality, which includes ideologies, techniques, practices, regulations, technologies, which all have their relatively autonomous role. There is no primacy of one element over another. Revising his famous Engels-inspired (and often misunderstood) notion of “determination of the last instance by the (economic) mode of production” (2005b: 111), Althusser states that “anything can be determinant ‘in the last instance’, which is to say that anything can dominate (2006a: 263).4

4 A full and closer reading of Althusser’s Contradiction and Overdetermination (2005b), in fact, shows that there is not that much difference between Althusser’s earlier statement of “determination of the last instance by the (economic) mode of production” and his later statement of “anything can be determinant ‘in the last instance.’” In the earlier essay, right after emphasizing the determinant role of the economy, Althusser also noted that “in History, these instances, the superstructures, etc. – are never seen to step respectfully aside when their work is done or, when the Time comes, as his pure phenomena, to scatter
Althusser’s concept of *decentred totality* is key to understanding the ways in which the complex structure of the capitalist social formation operates. Althusser reverses the Hegelian notion of totality which reduces the complex material elements that constitute the social life of a period into “an internal spiritual principle” that is, “epoch’s consciousness of itself: its religious and philosophical consciousness, its own ideology” (2005b: 103, emphasis original). Althusser’s notion of totality, which has its roots in Marx, is the complex unity of material elements, each having its own autonomy, rather than one element or an over-arching telos determining others—it is a decentred totality, or a complex structured whole. That is not to say that there is no domination over these diverse elements. According to Althusser, domination and complexity go together. That is, “complexity is precisely what constitutes … unity” (Althusser 2005c: 201-202).

What are the material elements that constitute the decentred totality? What makes something *material* in the first place? It is clear that the elements of the economy or mode of production (means of production and relations of production) as well as the cultural elements such as religion, ideologies, politics, ethics, and law operate as material elements within the decentred totality of the social formation. In his later writings on aleatory materialism, Althusser provides an even broader definition of materiality and includes things from simple matter to gestures, religion and politics (2006a: 262-263).

This broad definition of materialism, understood from the lens of aleatory encounters and decentred totality, provides an analytical framework for understanding the before His Majesty the Economy as he strides along the royal road of the Dialectic. *From the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the ‘last instance’ never comes*” (2005b: 113, emphasis added).
structure of the Greece-Turkey borders. As discussed above, the Greece-Turkey border, although not having an essence, has become a border of Europe through complex and aleatory processes such as the Balkan Wars and the formation of the Schengen Area, and inherited the EU’s historical legacy (of capitalism, colonialism and racism) and its contemporary economical, ideological, technical, institutional, and legal elements. These complex elements constitute the complex decentred totality of the EU borders.

Any attempt to analyze all material elements that constitute the EU borders would be insufficient. But the analysis of three elements, each having their relative autonomy, and each existing within the decentred totality of the EU borders, can be prioritized because these three elements have the most dominating powers: 1. Economical. 2. Ideological. 3. Technical. Other elements, such as the legal domain are also important. But it is these three elements that largely give shape to the other elements, including the legal domain. For instance, these elements largely direct the operation of law; determining which categories of people are subjected to the suspension of rights, how the suspension of rights is justified at the realm of ideology and how those categories that exist without legal protection are excluded by the surveillance technologies. That is not to claim that law does not have relative autonomy. For instance in 2012, the ECtHR, in *Hirsi Jamaa and others vs. Italy judgement*, ruled that the forced return of migrants back to Libya (“push-backs”) by the Italian authorities is illegal although, border authorities, particularly in Greece, continued conducting similar and even more violent operations –

---

5 ECtHR, Hirsi Jamaa and Others vs.Italy (Application No. 27765/09), 23 February 2012.
albeit in a covert way. In practice, then, law (human rights law) is undermined by sovereign authorities. It is the economical, ideological and technical elements of the EU borders that make it possible for the authorities to undermine human rights law. For these reasons, law is important in this study to the extent that it exists within the complex decentred totality of the EU borders and largely determined by the other three elements.

Three elements (economical, ideological, technical) that largely form the decentred totality of the EU borders are discussed in detail in the following two chapters (Chapter 3 and 4). But it is worth providing a brief summary here.

1. Economical: Building on its privileged position that is based on the processes of colonialism, the EU retained its hegemonic place in the world-economy during the processes of globalization and neoliberalism. The EU borders operate as apparatuses of apartheid, excluding people from the poorer regions of the world from European political space. This is not to suggest that there are no exceptions to the European apartheid. As a result of the processes of neoliberal globalization, members of the global corporate elite, even if they have their origins in the poorer regions of the world, have mobility rights in the EU. Building on figures such as Wallerstein, Balibar (e.g., Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, Balibar, 2004a; Wallerstein, 2004) and Bauman (1998, 2007), the economical foundations of the

---

6 I discuss the specific details of the suspension of human rights at the borderzones in Chapter 5.
EU borders is further discussed in chapter 3, entitled, *The Structure of European Borders: Colonial Legacies, Post-Political Turn and the Identification Dispositif.*

2. Ideological: Colonialism operated through ideologies of racism, imposing imaginary hierarchies among different peoples so as to justify their differential treatment. Ideologies of racism intersected with ideologies of nationalism and Europeanness in Europe, to justify the exclusion of peoples from disadvantaged backgrounds in the world economy. In the neoliberal-globalized era, much of the racist ideologies and corresponding imaginary hierarchies remain. Still it is mainly the peoples of the global South/East and peoples from the ex-European colonies, who are excluded at the borders of Europe. But now their exclusion is legitimized under a new format, at least at the institutional level. The ideologies of post-politics, which reduce political matters into managerial and technical issues, and structural problems into personal problems, are at play. By means of reducing migration into a managerial matter that can be solved with technical systems, particularly through new surveillance technologies, the post-political paradigm allows the expansion of border surveillance, hence, albeit indirectly, it legitimizes more migrant deaths and exclusions. The post-political paradigm also reduces migrants into objects of biopolitical management rather than accepting

7 At the local level ‘direct’ racism is often still the dominant form, as we see in the example of many right-wing populist parties of Europe, particularly in the case of Golden Dawn of Greece. One should not forget that there is a small distance between ‘direct’ racism and ‘indirect’ racism of post-politics.
them as political subjects with political rights (such as workers or refugees). Thus, again, it legitimizes the violent treatment of migrants. The neoliberal exceptions to racism (inclusion of a small group of global elite classes into the European political space) allows post-politics to be racist and race-neutral at the same time. Drawing on figures such as Žižek (e.g., 2008), Rancière (e.g., 1999) and Mouffe (e.g., 2005), the characteristics of the post-political ideology are discussed in detail in chapter 3.

3. **Technical:** Compared with the economic and ideological elements, the technical element appears to have more limited determining powers. It is largely the first two elements that give shape to the surveillance technologies and techniques, determining on which categories they operate and how this operation is legitimised. But, still, it is important to emphasize the materiality of surveillance technologies and their relative autonomy within the complex decentred totality of the EU borders, as they empirically constrain the actions of migrants at the borderzones and beyond. In chapter 4, entitled *the European Identification Dispositif*, the complex characteristics of the surveillance technologies that make up a part of the EU borders are discussed in detail.

It is worth providing more detail on how technology is conceptualized within the complex decentred totality of the EU borders, considering the insufficient theorization of
technology in aleatory materialism and the important debates between social
constructionism and technological determinism in social theory.\textsuperscript{8} As pointed out above,
the ways in which Althusser defines materiality is broad; it includes mode of production,
brute matters, gestures and ideologies. But Althusser insufficiently theorizes the
materiality of technology and its effects on human conduct. Similarly to Marx, Althusser
understands technology through the lens of ‘means of production’, which is a part of the
mode of production.\textsuperscript{9} But still, neither Marx nor Althusser dismisses the importance of
technology. Even though their theorization of technology is insufficient, they still provide
the analytical tools that help elaborate upon this important domain.

The materialist perspective understands technology as a part of the complex
totality, existing alongside with other material elements such as the economy, ideology
and law, and having its relative autonomy. Understanding technology from this
perspective helps avoid social constructionism, as well as technological determinism. On
the one hand, rather than being simply ‘constructed’ by the ‘social’, technical systems
exist as parts of the broader complex and decentred totality, having their relative
autonomy. On the other hand, technical systems themselves do not carry the power to
determine the social for they always function in interaction with other material elements.
Therefore, neither social (economical, ideological, legal) nor technical elements are

\textsuperscript{8} See Hand (2008: 59-71) for a review of these debates.
\textsuperscript{9} Marx famously pointed out that “the hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill,
society with the industrial capitalist” (Marx, 1999a) and accused of technological determinism. Such
reading, however, is misleading. Technology is only one material element, among many others, in Marx’s
understanding of complex totality.
meaningful if they are taken in isolation. These elements exist together in complex, relational and interactive ways.

It is worth noting that other theories also emphasize the materiality of technology. Actor-network theory (ANT), for instance, provides an alternative perspective by claiming that “objects have agency”, and pointing out the complex, relational and interactive ways in which technology exists (see Latour, 2005). While such emphasis on technology is important and meaningful, the empiricist stance of ANT, which lacks “depth-ontology”, leads to its “failure to see beyond the empirical face of reality” (Elder-Vass, 2008: 472). In other words, ANT ontologically prioritizes observable material existence of technologies over the materiality of pre-existing social structures, disregarding the latent existence of the latter. For ANT, it is only the “momentary associations” between the technical and social elements that the social is “gathered” (2005: 65). The characteristics of the pre-existing material structures such as “‘society’, or ‘social norm’, or ‘social laws’, or ‘structures’, or ‘social customs’, or ‘culture’, or ‘rules’, etc.” (2005: 67) simply do not matter – because their effects are not always immediately observable.\(^\text{10}\) In short, as a result of its empiricist point of view, the ANT fails to take into account the material existence of non-directly observable entities, such as ideologies. For this reason, it has limited utility for the materialist theorization of technology within the complex decentred totality of the EU borders.

\(^{10}\) Bruno Latour, the leading theorist of the ANT, even suggests that any inquiry into the characteristics of the pre-existing material structures is tautological and it produces a mystified understanding of the world (2005: 67).
Foucault, on the other hand, with his notion of dispositif, provides an alternative perspective to the materiality of technology. He defines dispositif as follows:

[A] thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions –in short, the said as much as the unsaid (Foucault, 1980a: 194).

Foucault’s emphasis on technology as a part of the complex web of material elements (which includes institutions, laws, etc.) is compatible with the aleatory materialist perspective, which understands technology as one element within the complex, decentred whole of society. However, the notion of dispositif is only meaningful when it is read from a historical-materialist perspective –one that emphasizes the potential material effects of the already existing structures, such as modes of production and ideologies. In fact, despite the empiricist readings of Foucault; Foucault, especially in his earlier period, did put attention on the role of pre-existing material structures and groups within these material structures in stabilizing and guiding the dispositifs (e.g., Dupont and Pearce 2001; Frauley 2007; Pearce and Woodiwiss, 2001). Below, in the part on practical aspects of the border, I will return to the notion of dispositif and discuss how it can be utilized from a materialist perspective.

In the recent literature on border studies, surveillance studies and critical security studies, there is an over-emphasis on practices and techniques of power, which downplays the importance of material structures that give shape to them. In a critique of these approaches, Liam O’Dowd points out that “such arguments present Europe exclusively in terms of process and ‘practices’, rather than in terms of structures or
outcomes” (2010: 1041). According to O’Dowd “this failing is rooted in a much wider lack of historical reflexivity” (2010: 1032). This dissertation contributes to the relevant literatures by critically analyzing the structural aspects of the EU borders with the notion of decentred totality and without undermining the importance of practice –which is discussed below.

1.2 Practical Aspects of the Border

An emphasis on the structural-decentred aspects of the border is not enough. One also has to study how the border is practiced at the ground level in order to understand the contemporary situation of the borders and their specific effects. The structural-decentred and practical aspects of the border, rather than contradicting each other, in fact, complement each other. Structures can only exist as long as they are practiced. And practice can only be understood within the totality of the structure that gives shape to it. Althusser formulates this complex relationship between practice and structure by pointing out that, “it is certainly thanks to practice … that one can know what exists: primacy of practice over theory.” But right after Althusser points out the importance of practice, he adds: “but in practice one only ever knows what exists: primacy of being over thought” (Althusser, 2008a: 88). That is, practice can only show what exists independent of thoughts: the material structures which give shape to practice. Elsewhere Althusser points out that, rather than following a mystified understanding of structure, one should focus on “the existence of the structure in its effects” (1997: 188, emphasis original). But, he also adds that this should not lead to empiricism –to the assumption that only the observable
effects of the structures are worth studying. Althusser also pays attention to the potentiality of complex material structures in producing effects—even when those effects are not directly observable, and they remain at the level of “latent existence beneath or behind the manifest content” (Montag, 2013: 88).

One can also draw on Foucault’s emphasis on material practices of power to highlight the importance of the notion of practice without dismissing the existence of the centred structure, which give shape to practice. In fact, in this context, Althusser and Foucault follow similar paths. Foucault suggests that one should prioritize the study of practices of power and show how power is exercised through diverse mechanisms rather than theoretically speculating on the nature of its existence:

Something called Power, with or without a capital letter, which is assumed to exist universally in a concentrated or diffused form, does not exist. Power exists only when it is put into action (Foucault, 1982: 788).

According to Foucault, power should be understood “where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions” (Foucault, 1980b: 96). In this formulation, power is something that circulates throughout society, over the minds and bodies of individuals, rather than something fixed or something owned by certain groups and put into practice by their conscious decision. For Foucault, power manifests itself in practice without the need for a subject who possesses it, who imposes it, or who manipulates it. Rather than trying to uncover a hidden truth behind the intentions of those who hold the power, Foucault’s analytics of power suggests researchers to focus on “real and effective practices” of power (1980b: 97).
However, Foucault’s emphasis on practice should not be read from an empiricist perspective. Particularly in his earlier works, Foucault put emphasis on the material structures that exist independent of practice, and that give shape to practice (Dupont and Pearce, 2001; Frauley, 2007; Pearce and Woodiwiss, 2001). For instance, in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (2002), Foucault discusses the role of structural institutions (e.g. hospital, police) and structurally positioned groups within these institutions (‘authorities of delimitation’) in shaping power and monopolizing on discourses of ‘truth’ – but also making clear that these institutions and groups can only act powerfully to the extent that they fit in the material structure of a given social formation. For instance, in his analysis on the case of Pierre Riviere, a murderer in 19th century France, Foucault demonstrates how different authorities presented different explanations on the event of the murder (1975) and how eventually a physician succeeded in establishing his own point of view – not because he was a better expert but because his explanation was a better fit with the changing conceptions of a ‘dangerous individual’ in the legal and medical discourses of the 19th century (Foucault, 1975; see also Dupont and Pearce, 2001: 145); hence the importance of ideologies that exist independent of individuals’ thoughts and actions and that constrain them.11

11 Foucault rejected using the concept of ideology and claimed that ideology 1. “stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth” 2. “refers … to something of the order of a subject” and 3. “stands in a secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant, etc.” (Foucault, 1980c: 118). But if we follow Althusser’s definition of ideology (2008b), the second and the third critiques of Foucault quickly become irrelevant. Althusser made it clear that ideology is a processes of misrecognition; in other words, it is about the unconsciousness rather than the consciousness, therefore, it refers to not to the order but to the disorder of the subject. In addition, according to Althusser, rather having secondary position to the economic base, ideology has relative
Foucault’s later writings also bear much potential for a materialist analysis of structures and practices that exist in complex ways. For instance, his notion of dispositif, as a complex ensemble of diverse material elements, is only meaningful if we take into account the pre-existence of material structures and groups positioned within those structures.\textsuperscript{12} The diverse elements of the dispositifs may not be consciously gathered by the dominant classes nor may their origin be traced to some absolute determinant (such as economy). But if we do not take into account the existence of material-social structures and dominant groups positioned within these structures we cannot explain how and why the dispositifs become stabilized and used strategically for the purposes of domination (Datta, 2007: 290).

In the context of the Greece-Turkey borders, it is important to study the practices of power to understand the specific effects of the borders – without losing sight of what autonomy within the complex decentred whole of the social formation. Therefore, ideology does not necessarily ‘stand in a secondary position’ to the economy. In terms of the first critique of Foucault – the claim that ideology stands in opposition to ‘truth’; Althusser indeed positions ideology in opposition to science (see Althusser, 1990). Yet, his notion of ‘science’ refers more to the method of studying social processes from a materialist perspective rather than finding one, single, absolute truth about social reality. In fact, such understanding of scientific research (in opposition to idealist or ideological research) should be preserved for critical social science – one that problematizes the existence of oppressive material structures that constrain and limit human action.

\textsuperscript{12} Foucault’s discussion on the dispositif of imprisonment can be used to illustrate the materialist utilization of the notion of dispositif (Dupont and Pearce, 2001: 144). According to Foucault, while the dispositif of imprisonment was originally put in place to create responsible citizens out of prisoners, it failed to produce this effect, and instead, created delinquent populations. As a result of its dominant position, however, the bourgeoisie was still able to benefit from this unexpected result, using delinquents as agent provocateurs to discredit working class struggle and exploiting their labour through forcing them to perform sex-work (1995: 280; 1980a: 196). According to Foucault, various tactics deployed by bourgeoisie to moralise the working class (from imposing marriage to philanthropy) can also be considered as examples of strategic usage of the dispositifs (1980a: 202-203). Therefore, for Foucault, pre-existing structural entities (capitalism) and groups positioned within these entities (bourgeoisie) play major roles in stabilizing and guiding dispositifs.
exists at a deeper level than the practice, that is, the historical-material structures. In chapter 5, I utilize Foucault’s notion of biopolitics to analyze how the border is practiced over migrant bodies at the borderzones. Surveillance technologies and border authorities (or ‘experts’) constrain the actions of migrants at the borderzones and cause many of them to die or get injured. While some migrants die during the actual border operations (during ‘push-backs’), many others succumb while trying to evade detection, following dangerous routes in unseaworthy vessels. A complex set of surveillance technologies are used by the authorities, including patrol vessels and vehicles, planes, helicopters, radars, surveillance operational centres, geographical information systems, and a fence. Documentation of the complex ways in which these technologies are put into play and their specific effects on migrants is important to understand the current condition of borders.

The focus on “real and effective practices” of power (Foucault, 1980b: 97) at the borderzones, also helps in revisiting many of the problematic assumptions in Foucault’s later concepts such as governmentality and biopolitics. As Dupont and Pearce (2001) point out, despite his earlier focus on studying complex and material practices of power, in his later writings on governmentality and biopolitics, Foucault produced a teleological narrative, claiming that biopolitics is the product of the historical transition away from sovereign powers controlling territory and imposing practices of death towards governmental powers managing population mainly through pastoral, productive, and deterritorialized techniques. However, the material practices of power in the context of
the Greece–Turkey borderzones demonstrate that biopolitics operates through sovereign territorial controls and surveillance (e.g., Elden, 2007), practices of death and exclusion (e.g., Agamben, 1998; Dupont and Pearce, 2001; Fassin, 2009), and suspension of rights (e.g., Agamben, 1998).

A materialist emphasis on practice also permits a more nuanced understanding of contemporary borders and contributes to the literature on border studies where the location of contemporary borders has been much debated (Johson et.al. 2011; Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2012). Many researchers in the border studies literature have pointed out that now the borders are diffusing inside and beyond state territories and that they no longer only exist at the territorial edges of states (Balibar, 2002; Bigo, 2011; Broeders and Hampshire, 2013; Dijstelbloem and Meijer, 2011; Lyon 2005; Rumford 2008; Vaughan-Williams, 2010). Some others have pointed out that borders are further solidifying at the edges of states through fences and walls that are equipped with digital surveillance technologies (e.g., Brown, 2010; Rosière and Jones, 2012; Vallet and David, 2012). The empirical realities of the Greece-Turkey borderzones demonstrate that, while borders are diffusing beyond and inside state territories, their practices and effects are concentrated at the edges of state territories, i.e, at the borderzones.

These empirical realities, however, should not be understood in isolation from the broader material entities and processes that give shape to the EU borders. Otherwise one would end up producing a much more shallow empiricist analysis. The relational understanding of structure and practice, which is theorized by Althusser and Foucalt,
should be followed to avoid empiricism while studying practice. Structures need to be practiced in order to exist; but practice cannot be understood independent of the material structures that give shape to it. It is the complex decentred totality of the EU borders and its economical, ideological and technical elements that give shape to the practice at the Greece-Turkey borders, enabling surveillance and violence to operate over certain categories and not others. In that sense, the chapters on structure (Chapters 3 and 4) and practice (Chapter 5) should be read together to have a holistic understanding of the Greece-Turkey borders and their practices.

1.3 Subjective Aspects of the Border
The focus on practice cannot be limited to the borderzones, because migrants are confronted by various forms of material violence practices after they cross the border, although not all of these practices are carried out through high-tech surveillance systems. These practices include detention, immense difficulties in accessing asylum procedures, lack of proper housing and homelessness, lack of access to health care, racist attacks, lack of employment prospects and income. In chapter 6, these different forms of material violence practices are discussed. But in addition to focusing on material violence and its many forms, this chapter also focuses on the consequences of material violence on migrants’ subjectivities and demonstrates the specific ways in which migrants comply with or resist material violence at a deeper level.

When studying the subjectivities of migrants, it is important to follow a materialist perspective, one that understands human action as a situated activity and one
that prioritizes the analysis of material processes over thoughts of the subjects. Otherwise, one may end up essentializing migrant subjectivities, as if migrants can develop their subjectivities in a vacuum, isolated from the material violence they are confronted by. This is not to suggest that thoughts and diverse personal experiences of migrants are irrelevant and that there is one type of migrant subjectivity that is already determined by material processes. Material processes may be similar, but the ways in which migrants develop their subjectivities when faced with these processes differ.

Drawing on fieldwork data, in Chapter 6, five different migrant subjectivities, each developed in response to material violence, are discussed: stranger, abject, religious, nomadic, dissident. Theories of Bauman, Kristeva, Durkheim, Deleuze and Guattari and Rancière are drawn respectively to illustrate the diverse experiences of migrants. It should be stressed, however, that these theories are used descriptively in the chapter; to describe the characteristics of different migrant subjectivities. For example, Bauman’s theory of stranger (1991) is used to describe the level of exclusion that migrants experience from the Greek host communities. Kristeva’s theory of abject-subjectivity (1982) is used to describe the experiences of migrants who feel isolated and powerless. Deleuze and Guattari’s theory on nomadism (1987) is used to describe the adventurous mode of subjectivity against the violence of the border. Durkheim’s theory of religion (1995) is used to demonstrate the role of community-collectivity in shaping migrants’ subjectivities. And Rancière’s theory of politics (1999) is used to describe the subjectivities of politically active migrants. The main theoretical framework for
understanding the material basis of migrant subjectivities, however, is a reworked version of Althusser’s theory on ideological interpellation of the subjects.

In his essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (2008b), Althusser develops a theory of subjectivity that is not based on thoughts of the subjects about themselves. Rather, for Althusser, it is the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) that give shape to subjectivity. ISAs exist in many forms, including religious, educational, family, legal, political, trade-union, communications, cultural (Althusser, 2008b: 17). For Althusser, there is no essence about subjectivity; subjectivity is constructed by the ISAs. It is through their socialization within the ISAs that subjects develop an “imaginary relationship” to their “real conditions of existence” (2008b: 36), and perceive (or rather misrecognize) themselves as freely choosing subjects, or subjects with consciousness (2008b: 46). According to Althusser, ideology interpellates individuals as subjects who freely accept their subjection (2008b: 56).

Althusser’s formulation of the theory of interpellation is useful for emphasizing that there is no essence of subjectivity and that subjectivity is a product of material processes. However, two corrections need to be made for this theory to be useful for understanding the material basis of migrant subjectivity at the Greece-Turkey borders.

First, Althusser implies prioritizes the materiality of the ISAs (education, religion, politics, law, culture, etc.) in understanding the material basis of subjectivity. Althusser separates the ISAs from the RSAs (Repressive State Apparatuses), which include army, police and other institutions of violence, and prioritizes the study of subjectivities that are
developed as a result of the functioning of the ISAs. The ISAs are indeed helpful for understanding the material basis of subjectivity of the European peoples, who, at least most of the time, do not face direct intervention of the RSAs in their everyday lives, and who legitimize their subjectivity as ‘responsible subjects’ in isolation from the material processes, such as capitalism, colonialism, globalization and post-politics. But migrants face the RSAs, or material violence, more than the ISAs, throughout their journeys. Although the RSAs greatly restrict the actions of migrants, it does not prevent them from developing diverse subjectivities. For instance, when confronted by the RSAs, some migrants turn to religion to protect their subjectivity, some fall into desperation and internalize abject-subjectivity. But there are also others who become more courageous (or ‘nomadic’) and politically active in the process.

Therefore, in addition to the ISAs, the RSAs can also form the material basis for the development of subjectivities. None of the migrant subjectivities emerge out of nowhere. They are consequences of material processes. Althusser is right to emphasize the material basis of subjectivity independent of thoughts of the subjects. But ‘material’

---

13 A similar line of thought is followed by Foucault who dismisses the importance of violence in giving shape to subjectivity. Foucault separates power from violence, assuming that in violence, there are only constraints and brute force and there is no subjectivity worthy of analysis (see Foucault, 1982). Foucault’s inadequate theorization of violence goes together with his prioritization of the analysis of productive aspects of power, which are linked to regimes of subjectification, over coercive ones. Even when violence is the focus of his analysis, Foucault understands violence as the side-effect of the productive regimes of power. For instance, Foucault understands modern wars and massacres as the “underside of the power to guarantee an individual’s continued existence” (1998: 137). Similar approaches are also followed in Foucault-inspired literatures where repressive aspects of power are undermined (Walters, 2012: 71-74). What is missing in these analyses is the fact that violence, too, can operate through regimes of subjectification. That is, when they face violence, subjects may develop diverse and unexpected forms of subjectivities. Rather than understanding these subjectivities simply as the ‘undersides’ of productive regimes of power, their specific characteristics should be analyzed.
does not include only the ISAs. Various forms of material violence that are perpetrated by the RSAs have a much more material impact for migrants. One way to correct Althusser’s problematic prioritization of the ISAs over the RSAs could be through applying his later aleatory materialist perspective on his theory on ideological interpellation of the subjects. Althusser’s later definition of the material in the broadest sense—which includes brute matter to ideologies—does not establish any hierarchy between violent and non-violent material elements (2006a: 262-263). Thus, this perspective is useful for understanding the complex material basis of subjectivity that is developed in relationship to the material processes.

The second problematic point in Althusser’s theory of interpellation is that it is implicitly economistic. It mainly focuses on the sorts of ideological processes that, albeit indirectly, help reproduce capitalism; such as those that promote being compliant, useful but non-political workers. In other words, Althusser implies that every form of interpellation is related to the reproduction of capitalism—a reductionist claim. One could again, rework Althusser’s theory from his later aleatory materialist perspective. In his later period, Althusser revises his position and points out that there are “multiple interpellations in which the subject is caught up” (2006c: 241). Understood together with an aleatory materialist emphasis on contingency, this means that individuals can develop subjectivities through contingent ways without any telos or absolute determinant. The material processes give shape to and constrain the development of subjectivity but there is no one over-arching material element (such as mode of production) that determines
subjectivity. Multiple material elements can give shape to subjectivity in unexpected ways.

In the context of the Greece-Turkey borders, for instance, some migrants are already ‘caught up’ in the materiality of religion – understood in the Durkhemian sense, as the power of collectivity. It is through religion that some migrants can continue facing the material violence. In that sense, rather than reproducing capitalism, religion in fact plays a positive role in migrant communities. Some other migrants become politically active, dissident subjects, and they struggle for their political rights. Often the contingent interaction between migrants and local activist groups, who themselves act as a material entity having powers to influence migrant subjectivity, form the basis of this mode of subjectivity. There is also the nomadic mode of subjectivity, which, rather than reproducing capitalism, disturbs its logic. Despite the barriers of capitalism, nomadic subjects continue crossing the borders with courage. It is true that the most common types of migrant subjectivities, abject and stranger, indeed reproduce capitalism – as they create a submissive group of individuals devoid of political existence. But there are always unexpected ways in which migrant subjectivity, just as all modes of human subjectivity, develops. One could pass from abject to nomadic or dissident subjectivity as a result of a contingent development or one could possess multiple forms of subjectivities at the same time. Rather than understanding subjectivity from a reductionist perspective – one that is subordinated to the processes of reproduction of capitalism, one should try to
understand the complexity and diversity of subjectivity. This is the task that is undertaken in Chapter 6, entitled, *Material Violence and Migrant Subjectivities*.

In the literature, migrant subjectivity is often understood as passive and non-political. Some scholars contest this understanding by emphasizing the political potential of migrants (e.g., Nyers, 2003; Nyers and Rygiel, 2012). However, a comprehensive approach towards the diverse subjectivities of migrants and their material basis is not often sufficiently established in the literature. Drawing on the ethnographical fieldwork data from a materialist perspective, this chapter contributes to the literature by providing a complex analysis of migrant subjectivity and its material basis.

1.4 Contested Aspects of the Border
Borders are contested in many forms; individually and collectively, through politics, law, ethics and aesthetics. The very act of crossing the border without documents; mass demonstrations against the border; hunger strikes; art work, documentaries, and other forms of written, audio or visual material that criticize the inside/outside distinctions; a free legal aid or a free health assistance provided by an NGO; a free shelter offered by an humanitarian group; free food provided by a religious organization; and protection provided by political-activist groups to save migrants from the racist violence, are all examples of contesting the border. While all of these and many other forms of contesting the border exist in the context of the Greece-Turkey borders, a major political event requires special emphasis here, as this event was able to disrupt the fundamentals of the border regime. On January 2011, 300 undocumented migrants started a hunger strike in
Greece. After 45 days of suffering, migrants gained their legal status and they demonstrated to the Greek public that they are equal political beings with the capacity to act politically.

How can we study such a major political event that challenged the very basis of the border regime? The materialist theory of the border that is developed so far prioritizes material processes over actions and thoughts of the subjects. In the context of resistance, such a perspective may seem problematic at first glance. If subjects are constrained by the material processes, how can they articulate political agency and claim rights?

A materialist theory of resistance in no way dismisses the importance of the political agency of the oppressed groups. It acknowledges that while human beings are not conscious writers of their history, within certain limits and circumstances, they can transform what constraints them. The emphasis on these material limits and circumstances saves us from the naïve humanist understanding of political agency, which understands political agency independent of the material circumstances or downplays the power of these circumstances. Following this line of thought, the political agency of migrants should be understood within a complex web of interaction where many other material elements exist. Migrants, as a result of their disadvantaged structural position in the decentred totality of the EU borders, have limited possibilities for political action. There needs to be an interaction among other material elements for them to succeed in their struggle. In fact, in the event of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers the combination of three elements played a part in the success of the struggle:
1. Political subjects (migrants) organizing themselves in mass format to claim equal political rights.

2. Host groups (Greek activist groups and large segments of the Greek society) demonstrating ethical openness towards the migrants.

3. The sacredness of the event of the hunger strike which created feelings of collective effervescence among migrants and feelings of obligation to act ethically among some parts of Greek society.

A theory of resistance, therefore, rather than over-emphasizing migrants’ political agency, should focus on the *material conditions of possibility* for a successful migrant politics –so that the legacy of the resistance would live and it would inspire many other forms of resistances to come. Althusser’s Machiavelli inspired theory of resistance can shed further theoretical light on this perspective (Althusser, 1999; 2006b: 171-176).

Althusser suggests thinking of political struggle in terms of the *conjuncture*. According to Althusser, one should focus on diverse material elements and their successful or unsuccessful encounters within the conjuncture in order to point out the possibility of an encounter that can benefit the oppressed groups. In fact, for Althusser, this is the task of the critical philosophy; “philosophy is nothing but a tendency struggle, the *Kampfplatz* that Kant discussed” (1990: 193, emphasis). In contrast to idealist-ideological forms of philosophy which, directly or indirectly, reproduce the domination of oppressed groups by mystifying the real material conditions in which these groups are positioned, critical philosophy elaborates on the characteristics of material processes
which oppress individuals; but it also focuses on the material conditions of possibility for a progressive transformation of the oppressive material processes. In other words, it focuses on conjuncture.

The emphasis on conjuncture when analyzing politics is truly materialist. It is the external material forces and their aleatory combination that can produce progressive social change; not the isolated activities of individuals. But this should not mean that the theory of conjuncture dismisses political agency. According to this perspective, *fortuna* (coincidence, chance) and *virtu* (skill, technique) is required for success (Althusser, 1999: 74; 2006b: 171-176). While fortuna involves external material factors independent of political agency, virtu is related to the ways in which political agency can benefit from these material factors, or even, sometimes, combine them to *create* a conjuncture. Here virtu should not be understood from the humanist perspective; it is “not the *intrinsic essence* of individuality” (Althusser, 1999: 94, emphasis original), it is rather the ability to understand the “void of possibility” in the material encounters so that the void can be filled with political agency (Althusser, 2006b: 169; see also Datta 2011 and Hardy 2013 for a detail analysis of the void in Althusser’s aleatory materialism). Elsewhere, Althusser states that it is not *man* who makes history; it is *the masses* who make history (Althusser 2008a: 79). That is, political action can have a transformatory role when it is in the format of “*organized* mass struggle” (Althusser, 2008a: 86, emphasis original). A mass political struggle has the potential to fill the void that the aleatory encounters open and make this filling last.
In Chapter 7, building on this materialist perspective of resistance, the material conditions of possibility for migrant politics are discussed. Drawing on the complex material background of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers event, three factors, which played determinant roles in the success of the event, are identified: 1. Mass political agency of the migrants 2. Ethical solidarity efforts of the host groups 3. Sacredness of the event itself. Drawing respectively on Rancière (on politics of equality, e.g., Rancière, 1999), Derrida and Agamben (on ethics of hospitality [e.g., Derrida 2000a] and ethics of witnessing [e.g., Agamben 2002]), and Durkheim (on the collective effervescence of the event, e.g., Durkheim 1995), the specific characteristics of these three elements are theorized.

This chapter contributes to the literatures on migrant resistance and politics (e.g. Nyers and Rygiel, 2012; Tyler and Marciniak, 2013) and acts of citizenship (Isin, 2008). Following Isin (2008), the migrants’ hunger strike can be considered as an “act of citizenship.” Acts of citizenship refer to those acts where subjects regardless of legal status constitute themselves as political beings to claim the right to have rights and disrupt the institutionalized citizenship category (Isin, 2008). This chapter highlights the usefulness of a materialist perspective on migrant resistance by demonstrating the complex material basis of the political acts of migrants, beyond approaches that over-emphasize migrants’ political agency (e.g., Mezzadra, 2011; Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2013) and conventional approaches that present migrants as passive, non-political beings.
Conclusion and Outline of the Dissertation

This chapter discussed the need to follow a materialist perspective to provide a comprehensive and just analysis of the border. Critically engaging with Althusser’s theory of aleatory materialism and Foucault’s analytics of power, it designated four aspects of the border that needs to be analyzed from a materialist perspective: 1. Structural-decentred 2. Practical. 3. Subjective. 4. Contested. Below a summary of each aspect and their place in the organization of the thesis is provided.

First, it is vital to analyze the structural aspects of the border because it is largely these aspects that determine which categories of people are excluded at the border, how their exclusions are legitimized and what sort of technologies and techniques are used in these exclusions. This is not to suggest that the structure of EU borders is a unified, coherent one, and that some elements of the structure (e.g. economy) determine others. The structure of EU borders operates as a complex decentred totality, each element (e.g. economical, ideological, political, technical, legal, aesthetical, etc.) having their relative autonomy within this complex totality. Yet, despite the diversity of the elements, not every element is simply equal. While there are many elements in the structure of EU borders, the economical, ideological and technical elements have more determining powers compared to others, and, therefore, their analysis should be prioritized. In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 the structural aspects of the EU borders are analyzed in more detail. Chapter 3, entitled, The Structure of European Borders: Colonial Legacies, Post-Political Turn and the Identification Dispositif, focuses on the economical and
ideological elements of the structure of EU borders which have the most determining powers. Chapter 4, entitled, *the European Identification Dispositif*, focuses on the characteristics of the technical elements of the structure of EU borders, and the ways in which these technical elements are stabilized by the economical and ideological structures.

Second, there is no substitute for a focus on the practical aspects of the border in order to understand the specific effects of the border. The focus on practice complements, rather than being in contradiction with, the focus on structure. Structures need to be practiced in order to exist; and practice is shaped by the structure. Following this relational approach to structure and practice and focusing on the specific locality of the Greece-Turkey borderzones, in Chapter 5, entitled, *The biopolitical border in practice: surveillance and death at the Greece–Turkey borderzones*, the practical aspects of the border is analyzed. The focus on practice allows the inclusion of the analysis of the specific forms of surveillance technologies and border control techniques that are used by the border authorities at the borderzones and their specific effects on migrants, many of whom die or get injured in the process of crossings. The focus on practice also allows us to make contributions to the literature in the light of the empirical realities. While Foucault’s emphasis on material practices of power is essential for understanding how power operates over migrant bodies (i.e, biopolitics) at the borderzones, his later theory of biopolitics-governmentality does not sufficiently explain the material situation at the borderzones. Contrary to what Foucault assumed, repressive, territorial and sovereign
aspects of power, rather than pastoral, productive and delocalized ones, are at play at the borderzones. Another contribution can be made to the border studies literature in which the location of contemporary borders is much debated. The empirical realities of the Greece-Turkey borderzones demonstrate that, while borders are moving inside and beyond state territories, the practices and effects of the borders are concentrated at the edges of state territories, i.e, borderzones.

Third, the subjective aspects of the border have to be studied in order to have a deeper understanding on the effects of the border practices on migrants. It is important that a materialist perspective is applied when studying migrant subjectivities, because all migrant subjectivities emerge as a result of material violence that migrants experience rather than being the consequences of the choices and thoughts of migrants. Instead of essentializing subjectivity, a materialist analysis of subjectivity focuses on the material processes which give shape to subjectivity. This is not to claim that the material processes determine migrant subjectivities in a certain way. On the contrary, when faced with material violence, migrants contingently develop diverse subjectivities. Drawing on fieldwork data, in Chapter 6, entitled, *Material Violence and Migrant Subjectivities*, five different modes of migrant subjectivities are discussed: stranger, abject, religious, nomadic, dissident. Theories of Bauman, Kristeva, Durkheim, Deleuze and Guattari, and Rancière are utilized from a materialist perspective to illustrate the diverse experiences of the migrants.
Finally, we cannot neglect the contested aspects of the border because borders are never fully ‘successful’ and they are always contested. Furthermore, in order for a research project to be fully critical, it has to complement the analysis of oppressive structures and processes with the analysis of the material conditions of possibility for progressive social change. The major political event of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers in Greece provides a case where we can reflect on the material conditions of possibility for successful migrant politics. Again, a materialist perspective should be used to analyze this event to avoid approaches that over-emphasize the political agency of migrants. Rather than the ‘autonomous’ actions of the isolated individuals, three elements played a part in the success of this major event: 1. Migrants organizing themselves in the format of mass struggle. 2. Ethical solidarity and openness demonstrated by some segments of Greek society towards migrants. 3. Ritualistic characteristic of the event of the hunger strike. In Chapter 7, entitled *Resisting the Border: 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers Event*, drawing respectively on theories of Rancière, Derrida and Agamben, and Durkheim and utilizing these theories from a materialist perspective, the aleatory combination of these three elements is discussed.
Chapter 2: Research Methods

In this chapter, the research methods of the dissertation are discussed in four parts. First, complete details about the research data are provided. Second, issues of access and limitations of the fieldwork are discussed. Third, ethical issues are discussed. Finally, fourth, building on the previous chapter, the advantages of a materialist method in analyzing the data are discussed.

2.1 Research Data

This study draws on both first-hand fieldwork data and publicly accessible secondary data. Fieldwork data includes semi-structured interviews with the Greek, FRONTEX, and Turkish border authorities at the Evros border region (3 interviews); Turkish border authorities in Ankara (1 interview); representatives and fieldworkers from migrant-rights NGOs (20 interviews) and political groups (11 interviews) in Greece and in Turkey; and migrants who crossed the border without documents (58 interviews). All interviews were conducted between May and September 2012. Publicly accessible data includes documents and reports produced by the EU, FRONTEX, Greece, Turkey, NGOs, news agencies, and political groups as well as academic sources.

Details about the fieldwork data

a) Interviews with the border authorities. In total five interviews:
1. Three in-depth interviews with the border authorities at the Evros border region: the Greek head of the border operations in the wider area of Orestiada and North Evros; the head of the Department of Foreigners, Borders and Asylum of the Turkish National Police in Edirne; and the FRONTEX Support Officer who was involved in border controls and screening of migrants in the Alexandroupoli and Orestiada region. Interview questions focused on the technical details of the border controls (e.g. which mechanisms are used, how the cooperation between border authorities is established, who is in charge of border controls, etc.). Note that I was not granted permission to be present in actual border operations. Additional evidence about the border control activities was gathered from the migrants, NGO workers, political activists and published material (see below).

On the Turkish side, the Turkish Army patrols the border while the Turkish Police are responsible for asylum and detention procedures in relation to apprehended migrants and communication between the Turkish Army and Greek authorities. An interview with Turkish Army officials was not possible. Due to the low prospect of success and considering the possession of already comprehensive data from other related sources (mainly from the Turkish border officials in Edirne and Ankara [see below]) no request was submitted to the Turkish Army for an interview. The Greek Army is also deployed at the region but they are not involved in the border controls. Greek authorities in Athens only granted the
permission to interview with the Greek head of the border operations in the wider area of Orestiada and North Evros.

I did not request to interview officials deployed at the Aegean Sea route, because, when I was doing my fieldwork, sea crossings were almost halted. But I had the chance to speak with migrants, NGO fieldworkers, and local informants with regard to specifics of the Aegean Sea route, in addition to collecting publicly accessible data.

2. One in-depth interview with a Turkish official employed in the Border Management Bureau in Ankara. Interview questions focused on the technical details of the border controls, the latest developments in Turkey’s border control systems and cooperation among Turkish, Greek and FRONTEX authorities. Publicly accessible reports (e.g., reports of EU-funded security projects) were also gathered.

b. Twenty interviews with representatives and fieldworkers from sixteen NGOs. List of organizations interviewed:

1. Antigone (Information and Documentation Center on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence) in Thessaloniki: 1 noted/informal interview.

2. Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees in Thessaloniki: 1 in-depth audio-taped interview.
3. PRAKSIS (Programs of Development, Social Support and Medical Cooperation) in Thessaloniki: 1 in-depth audio-taped interview.

4. Odessa (NGO providing free Greek language courses to migrants) in Thessaloniki: 1 noted/informal interview.

5. The Greek Forum of Refugees in Athens: 1 in-depth audio-taped interview.


7. BABEL (Day Centre for Migrants’ Mental Health) in Athens: 1 in-depth audio-taped interview.

8. AITIMA (Legal and social support to asylum seekers and refugees) in Athens: 1 in-depth audio-taped interview.

9. MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières): In total 3 interviews; 2 in-depth audio-taped interviews in the Athens Branch and 1 in-depth audio-taped interview in the Istanbul Branch of the MSF.

10. GCR (Greek Council of Refugees): In total 2 interviews; 1 informal noted interview with a fieldworker in Athens and 1 in-depth audio-taped interview in Orestiada.

11. ARSIS (Social Organization for Youth Support) in Athens: 1 in-depth audio-taped interview.
12. Multeci-der (Mültecilerle Dayanışma Derneği/Association for Solidarity with Refugees]): In total 2 interviews; 1 in-depth noted interview in Izmir and 1 in-depth audio-taped interview with a lawyer of the NGO in Edirne.


14. SGDD/ASAM (SGDD/ASAM – Sığınmacılar ve Göçmenlerle Dayanışma Derneği/Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants) in Istanbul: 1 noted/informal interview.

15. HYD (Helsinki Yurttaşılar Derneği/Helsinki Citizen Assembly-Refugee Advocacy Support Unit) in Istanbul: 1 in-depth noted interview.

16. Greek Turkish Friendship Association in Mytilini: 1 in-depth audio-taped interview.

Interview questions focused on understanding the diverse aspects of the lives of the migrants (e.g., employment, health, legal) and the kind of support they get from the NGOs.

c. Eleven interviews with political activists from seven political groups. List of activists/groups interviewed:

1. Anti-Racist Initiative of Thessaloniki: 1 in-depth audio-taped interview.

2. Clandestina (Independent Information for Refugees and migrants coming to Europe) in Thessaloniki: 2 interviews: 1 in-depth audio-taped, 1 informal, noted.
3. DIKTYO (The Network of Social Support to Refugees and Migrants) in Athens: 1 informal interview.

4. KINISI (Motion for the Defence of Refugees’ and Migrants’ Rights) of Patras: 1 in-depth audio-taped interview was conducted with a representative from Kinisi while he was in Athens.

5. Stop Evros Wall Network in Orestiada: 1 in-depth audio-taped interview.

6. Interviews with grassroots political activists: 3 noted informal interviews.


   Interview questions were focused on understanding the ways in which migrants are confronted by racist violence, how they resist racist violence, and the role of political organizations in supporting migrants’ rights.

d. In total fifty-eight interviews were conducted with migrants: forty-two in-depth (twenty eight audiotaped and fourteen noted) and sixteen short (briefly noted or notes were taken after the interview). Origins of the migrants were:

   • Afghan (33 interviews: 22 in-depth audio-taped, 8 in-depth noted, 3 short noted);
   • Algerian (5 interviews: 2 in-depth noted, 3 short noted);
   • Kurdish (from Iran, Iraq, Turkey, 5 interviews: 1 in-depth noted, 4 short noted) \(^{14}\);

\(^{14}\) In a previous publication (Topak, 2014a), the number of Kurdish refugees is written 4, and 1 Turkish “national” is written separately. The concerned Turkish national is added to the list of Kurdish migrants in this list because he was likely to be of Kurdish origin.
• Iranian (4 interviews: 1 in-depth audio-taped, 2 in-depth noted, 1 short noted);
• Burkina Faso (3 interviews: 1 in-depth audio-taped, 1 in-depth noted, 1 short noted);
• Bangladeshi (2 interviews: 1 in-depth audio-taped, 1 short noted);
• Nigerian (2 in-depth audio-taped);
• Mauritanian (1 short noted);
• Moroccan (1 short noted);
• Pakistani (1 in-depth audio-taped);
• Palestinian (1 short noted);

In-depth interviews were either audio-recorded or noted while the migrant was speaking. Short interviews were shortly noted after the interview finished. An interpreter helped with the interviews with the Afghans. In some cases NGO workers or other migrants helped with the translations (e.g., from Arabic to Turkish or English, from Greek to English). English and Turkish was also used (e.g., English was used in interviews with migrants from Burkina Faso and Nigeria while Turkish was used in most of the interviews with the Kurdish migrants). All the interviewees were men. The interviews were conducted at NGO buildings, social buildings (including mosques, coffee shops, and buildings owned by philanthropic and political-activist groups), parks, and migrants’ houses. Interview questions were primarily interested in the concrete experiences of the
migrants at the borderzones and beyond. I organized the interview questions in four parts. 1. Migrants’ reasons for migration and their travel experiences, with particular focus on their border crossing experiences. 2. Migrants’ experiences with apprehension and detention at the borderzones. 3. Migrants’ experiences in Turkey, with particular focus on their experiences with police authorities, asylum system, and general life standards and prospects. 4. Migrants’ experiences in Greece, with particular focus on their experiences with police authorities, asylum system, accommodation and housing, employment and finances, health, racism and community life.

Details about the publicly accessible data

Particularly during and shortly after my fieldwork, the Greece-Turkey borders and the situation of migrants in Greece has attracted much attention from the human rights NGOs. Organizations such as Amnesty International, ProAsyl, Human Rights Watch, MSF, Medicins du Monde and GCR, published reports to document the diverse problems that migrants face. These reports also draw on interview data collected from migrants and authorities. These reports are widely cited throughout the dissertation to increase the scope and reliability of the dissertation. Publicly accessible material from the EU-related sources, newspapers and websites of the political-activist groups are also used. Other forms of publicly accessible data include academic materials (books, journal articles, book chapters).
2.2 Issues of Access and Limitations of the Fieldwork

- Access for interviews with border authorities was officially requested from related governing bodies. No access was granted to be actually present in border operations.

- Access for interview with most of the NGOs was requested through e-mail. In some cases, one NGO worker informally contacted another NGO worker on my behalf to facilitate the process.

- Contact with political activists was established through e-mail or personal contacts.

- Initial contact with migrants was established with the help of some contacts in the NGOs. The snowball technique was used to reach other migrants. The process of recruiting new participants ended after the interview content reached to maturity.

- All the interviewees were men and in a majority of the cases single, young men. Although attempts were made to interview families and women, those attempts were mostly unsuccessful. Some experiences of women were gathered indirectly from interviewees and published reports. However, overall, the fieldwork lacks a proper gender dimension.

- In the majority of cases the interview request was successful. Those who rejected the interview request (mostly older men and women with families) seemed to have two motives. First, for very understandable reasons, it is hard for migrant women to share their experiences with a stranger from the opposite gender.
Second, some of these migrants had already been interviewed by the NGO workers, UNHCR personnel, journalists or academic researchers but nothing much changed in their situation since their interview. These migrants, understandably, stated that they are tired of giving interviews, noting that interviews did not have any positive effect on their immediate material condition.

2.3 Ethical Issues
This study employed a methodology approved by the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) of Queen’s University (see Appendix A). All steps were taken to protect the interview data. I did not record full or real names from migrants. I did not ask any questions that might reveal their identity (only nationality was recorded). I did not ask migrants to sign the consent form. Instead, I got their consent verbally. I did not share the interview content with anyone. I transferred the interview content from the audio-recorder or from my notebook to my computer in the same day of the interview. Access to my computer was password protected. In addition, I encrypted all the interview data (audio and word documents) with TrueCrypt. Before my interviews with the border officials, I also erased the interview data about migrants and stored them online using SugarSync in encrypted format. I stored other interview material (signed consent forms, fieldnotes etc.) in secured lockers at the hotel. Not all data from the migrants are used, even when it was relevant to the arguments of this study and even though some academic and journalistic sources disclose this form of data (such as the data about the specific details of the smuggling processes). The aim here was to protect the counter-strategies of
the migrants. Only the obvious counter-strategies that are already well known by the authorities and that could be easily gathered from other reports are cited (e.g., migrants arrange smugglers somewhere in Istanbul and Izmir and use riskier routes and methods of crossing to avoid detection, such as through the forests and with small or large unseaworthy vessels).

In addition to these issues related to professional ethics, there is also the other side of ethics—which concerns the ethical issues arising from the positionality of the researcher and the experience of the fieldwork. Not every migrant was desperate. In fact, in Chapter 6 on migrant subjectivities, I discuss how some migrants were courageous and hopeful about their future. However, the majority of the migrants were impoverished. Many were relying on food provided by the philanthropic organizations and minimal amount of support they get from their friends and families. Many were trapped in Greece and they were living under continuous threat of racist violence. Face to face interaction with these migrants created feelings of having an unjustified privilege on my part due to my researcher position. After all, I was a researcher on migrants’ problems and migrants were the ones who were actually experiencing these problems. I think it is important to acknowledge that it is the external forces of material-structural inequalities that framed our positionality in this research project and to show respect to the narratives of the migrants from the perspectives of social justice and social inequality.
2.4 Materialist Analysis of the Research Data

A materialist perspective, which is outlined in the previous chapter, is used when analyzing the research data (fieldwork data and publicly accessible data). In contrast to empiricist approaches, materialist perspective first discusses the material conditions of possibility of empirical realities (discourses, practices, techniques etc.). It also prioritizes the analysis of material processes over actions and thoughts of the subjects.

In Chapters 3 and 4, the structural elements of the EU borders are discussed to contextualize the empirical realities of the Greece-Turkey borders. Academic sources are critically elaborated and synthesized to provide a comprehensive analysis of the historical, economical, ideological and technical elements that make up the EU borders.

In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, the focus is shifted from structure to practice. This is where the practices and discourses of the migrants, border authorities, NGOs and political groups become important and the interview content and other sources from these groups are widely used. The practices and discourses of these groups are analyzed from a materialist perspective.

Discourses of the border authorities: I use the discourses of the border authorities to gather specific and descriptive information about how the border controls are actually practiced (through which techniques and technologies). In other words, my focus is to understand the material practices of power (in Foucauldian terms). But I am careful to not prioritize the self-conscious discourses of the border authorities. For instance, border authorities, as a result of their structural position, claim that migrants die as a result of
smugglers and harsh geographical conditions, whereas migrants are actually dying from border control activities.\textsuperscript{15} Prioritization of material realities over self-conscious discourses of the border authorities helps to demystify such manipulative discourses. I collected further information from other sources (e.g., from NGOs and migrants) to have a proper understanding of the situation at the border and beyond.

Discourses of the NGO fieldworkers and political activists: I use the discourses of the NGO workers to have a comprehensive understanding about the diverse problems (legal, health, employment) that migrants experience. I also use the discourses of political activists to understand the ways in which migrants resist the violence of the border. Some discourses of the NGO workers and political groups are cited in Chapters 6 and 7. Unlike border authorities, these groups, as a result of their oppositional structural position, do not have to manipulate discourse. Variety of other sources (such as written NGO reports) was also used to increase the scope and reliability of the study.

Discourses of the migrants: I draw extensively on the discourses of migrants, particularly in Chapters 5 and 6 where I analyze the violence that migrants experience during their journey. Most of the data is used descriptively to analyze the specific effects of the border over the migrants. But in Chapter 6, I also critically elaborate on migrant subjectivities. When analyzing migrant subjectivities I am careful to follow a materialist perspective to avoid essentializing migrant subjectivities and to make it clear that migrants do not freely choose their subjectivities. Prioritization of material processes over

\textsuperscript{15} This discourse is shared at the EU level. See Chapter 5 for further details.
thoughts of the migrants also allows me to provide the complex material basis of migrant subjectivity and to emphasize that there is no essence of migrant subjectivity. I also follow a materialist approach in Chapter 7 when analyzing the discourses of politically active migrants. Rather than over-emphasizing their self-conscious discourses and political agency, I understand their discourses and agency within a complex material framework where other material entities exist.
Chapter 3: The Structure of European Borders: Colonial Legacies, Post-Political Turn and the Identification Dispositif

In this chapter, the historical-structural aspects of the EU borders are analyzed. The EU borders operate as a complex decentred totality. While there are many elements within this totality, the economical, ideological and technical elements have the most determining powers. In this chapter, the analysis of the economical and ideological elements and their histories are prioritized. The analysis of the technical elements will be pursued in the following chapter. The analysis of the complex characteristics of the technical elements (e.g., biometric databases, EUROSUR) is important because it is through these elements that migrants are violently excluded from European political space. But without a historical and material emphasis on the structures beyond these elements, one cannot answer the questions of why these elements are unified and why they systematically exclude certain groups and not others. In fact, in the current literatures in surveillance and security, and in border studies, there is often a lack of ontological depth, illustrated by a lack of historical-material sensibility on how structures (in this case, the structure of EU borders) are established and a lack of symbolic-material sensibility on how structures legitimate themselves in the symbolic realm through ideology.

The EU borders carry on the historical legacy of Europe that is solidified during the historical processes of capitalism and colonialism. Physical violence needs symbolic
violence in its operations. In the colonial era, symbolic violence was exerted through racism - i.e., through imposing grids of inferiority among different peoples so as to justify their differential treatment. Later, ideologies of nationalism merged with ideologies of Europeanness and secured the category of the European people at the ideological level. This core structure of European borders is still there. However, in the last couple of decades, as a result of the material processes of neoliberal globalization and post-politics, now there are post-political forms of symbolic violence in addition to the racist-nationalist ones. Hierarchies do remain but rather than being included or excluded based openly on grids of racial inferiority, now the subjects are also graded and included/excluded based on their neoliberal capacities. Ideologically positioning itself beyond the ‘old’ ideologies of left and right and joining forces with the ideology of liberal multiculturalism, the post-political vision reduces the management of the European borders into a technical and managerial rather than a political issue and depoliticizes the subjects. Rather than subjects with political identities (or names) what we have now, under post-politics, are biological beings (or biopolitical bodies) who are subject to regulation. The genealogy of the European borders discussed in this chapter can also be read as the genealogy of the European sovereignty - since it is the characteristics of European sovereignty, and its economical and symbolic elements, that give shape to the ways in which European borders operate.
**Introduction**

The surveillance practices of EU borders have gradually expanded in recent decades. Researchers have documented such diverse surveillance practices as Schengen visa policies (Bigo and Guild, 2005), carrier sanctions (Ahumada-Jaidi, 2010; van Munster, 2009), counter-terrorism legislations (Amoore and De Goede, 2008; Baldaccini, 2008), detention of migrants (Bigo, 2007), electronic identity cards (Bennett and Lyon, 2008; Lyon, 2009a), externalisation of the European borders (Bialasiewicz, 2012; Bialasiewicz et.al. 2013), biometric databases (Broeders, 2007; Muller, 2010; Topak, 2014b), preemptive screening of travellers (Broeders and Hampshire, 2013; Vaughan-Williams, 2010); establishment of the EUROSUR (Jeandesboz, 2011), and establishment and the activities of the EU Border Agency FRONTEX (Reid-Henry 2013, Marin, 2011). The actors of surveillance have also multiplied. Researchers have pointed out the increasing role of the transnational security professionals (Bigo, 2002) and private security companies (Bigo and Jeandesboz, 2010; Hayes, 2009; Hayes and Vermulen, 2012; Lyon and Topak, 2013) in directing the surveillance practices. In fact, now even biometrics software engineers and ticket sales clerks can be considered as surveillance actors (Amoore, 2008; 2011). Drawing on such approaches as Foucauldian (governmentality and dispositif), Deleuzian (assemblage and society of control) and actor-network theory, researchers in the field of surveillance, security and border studies point out the need to analyze complexities of the technical systems and the diverse actors governing these systems (e.g., Amoore, 2008; Bigo, 2002, 2011; Dijstelbloem and Meijer, 2013;

However, while the analysis of the characteristics of these techniques is important, there is a danger of getting ‘stuck in’ the empirical domain – for too much focus on the directly observable characteristics of these techniques without a theoretical elaboration on what lies beyond them, would run the risk of being a merely descriptive analysis. Althusser’s distinction between critical and descriptive theory is helpful at this point (2008b: 12-14). According to Althusser, descriptive theory focuses on observable facts to justify its theoretical claims. While, for Althusser, descriptive theory is certainly valuable for it represents facts, it also “runs the risk of ‘blocking’ the development of the theory” (Althusser, 2008b: 14). In order to move from descriptive to critical theory, one should also study the characteristics of the non-directly observable entities (e.g. ideologies and social structures) and how these entities constrain human lives, albeit such constraint is not perceived as a constraint or coercion by the subjects – for ideology never presents itself as ideological but as neutral and obvious.

This is not to suggest that researchers in surveillance, security and border studies simply produce descriptive works. Some researchers also pay attention to the historical-material context that has made surveillance techniques possible. But even in those studies, historical-material context is either briefly or implicitly presented, without a detailed and critical elaboration. In fact, it would not be unfair to claim that in the recent
literature in surveillance, security and border studies,\textsuperscript{16} there has been an over-emphasis on \textit{practices} and \textit{techniques} of power that downplays the importance of historical and material structures. In a critique about the practice approaches in the context of the European borders, O’Dowd points out that “such arguments present Europe exclusively in terms of process and ‘practices’, rather than in terms of structures or outcomes” (2010: 1041). According to O’Dowd “this failing is rooted in a much wider lack of historical reflexivity” (2010: 1032).

Practices and techniques are important for they help us to understand the complexities of the empirical world. As Althusser points out: “it is certainly thanks to practice … that one can know what exists: primacy of practice over theory.” But right after Althusser points out the importance of practice, he adds: “but in practice one only ever knows what exists: primacy of being over thought” (Althusser, 2008a: 88). That is, in practice one can only know the historical-material structures that give substance to practice. Therefore, one needs to balance the analysis of ‘techniques of surveillance’ (practice) that empirically make the EU borders and ‘historical-material structures’ (being) that unify these techniques and practices. Without an analysis of the techniques of surveillance one cannot understand ‘what exists’. And without a historical and material emphasis on the structures beyond and beneath these techniques, one cannot answer the questions of \textit{why} these techniques are unified and \textit{why} they \textit{systematically} exclude certain groups and not others.

\textsuperscript{16} For a review of these three distinct but related literatures, see e.g., Ball et. al. (2012); Johnson et. al. (2011); Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2012; Salter and Mutlu (2013).
Below, a historical materialist analysis of the structure of EU borders is provided. First, the chapter focuses on how the European borders are formed via the historical processes of capitalism and colonialism; both at the level of the (world) economy (i.e., through the expansion of capitalism into colonies by force) and at the level of ideology (i.e., through the imposition of social hierarchies among different groups, in other words: racism). Second, the chapter focuses on how this colonial legacy has retained its core, but also been transformed under the material conditions of neoliberal-globalization and post-politics. It is the post-political framework that both drives and justifies the management of European borders in the early 21st century; reducing migration into a managerial issue and migrants into depoliticized (or biopolitical) bodies. In the next chapter, the technical elements of the EU borders (from e-ID cards to FRONTEX), and how these elements are united under the neoliberal-global and post-political framework are further analyzed.

The prioritization of the analysis of the economical, ideological and technical elements of the EU borders does not mean that other elements do not have any importance. The EU borders operate as a complex decentred totality, each element (economical, ideological, technical but also legal, political, institutional, ethical, aesthetical, etc.) having their relative autonomy. For instance some EU institutions (such as the ECtHR, Fundamental Rights Agency, European Ombudsman) drawing on the regulations on human rights and refugee rights can take stances against other EU

---

17 See Chapter 1 for a theoretical discussion on the notion of decentred totality.
institutions (such as the FRONTEX and the European Commission) and Member states.\(^{18}\) Social movements against the exclusionary practices of the European borders can also have an effect on how the border operates.\(^{19}\) However, the economical, ideological and technical elements still have more determining powers compared to others, as it is through these elements that the diverse exclusion mechanisms of the EU borders are unified, legitimized and practiced.

3.1 Colonial Legacies, Ideologies of the Peoplehood and the Formation of the European Apartheid

Capitalism and colonialism historically shaped the structure of European borders.

Capitalist mode of production emerged out of the feudal mode of production as a result of the combination of a series of contingent developments. Marx (1983a: 167-168; 1983b: 461-465) demonstrates how the populations of the towns grew due to the influx of serfs running away from the authority of the aristocracy; how those serfs entered into guilds to gain skills; how the merchant class was formed as a result of the increasing trade between towns and established itself as the burgher class, which was later called the bourgeoisie, and began to hold contradictory interests with that of the landed aristocracy; how the manufacture-based production began to outmode the guild system; how the

\(^{18}\) ECtHR condemned Greece and Italy for the degrading treatment of migrants (see MSS v. Greece and Belgium 30696/09 and Hirsi Jamaa and Others vs. Italy 27765/09, while the PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) and the European Ombudsman criticized the human rights violations in FRONTEX’s activities and the lack of accountability (O’Reilly, 2013; PACE, 2013).

\(^{19}\) Drawing on the case of 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers, one major social movement against the border is analyzed in Chapter 7.
mechanization of the production reduced the need for skilled workers; and how unskilled workers from the country, who were exempt from the authority of the aristocracy, began to enter into manufacture-based production systems rather than the then outmoded guilds, to sell their labour-power. Eventually, there was the interaction of two elements, which enabled the development of capitalism: “on the one hand, the owners of money, means of production, means of subsistence, who are eager to increase the sum of values they possess, by having other people’s labour-power; on the other hand, free labourers, the sellers of their own labour-power” (Marx, 1983b: 463).

But it should be noted that such encounter was neither inevitable nor sufficient for the development of the capitalism. As Althusser (2006b) and Balibar (1997: 199-308), drawing on Marx, point out, such forms of encounter took place at earlier periods in history; for instance in the thirteenth and fourteenth century Italian states, without giving rise to capitalism. What was also ‘required’ in this context was the existence of “a domestic market capable of absorbing what might have been produced” (Althusser, 2006b: 198, emphasis original). It was in the material conditions of Great Britain of the 18th century that such a domestic market existed. Great Britain’s pioneering position in colonialism, which expanded the capitalist mode of production into colonies by force (Marx, 1983c: 479-480), played a significant role in the creation and sustainment of this domestic market.

It is in this context that the world-system theorist Wallerstein understands the development of capitalism parallel with (early) globalization – for “a capitalist system
cannot exist within any framework except that of a world economy” (Wallerstein, 2004: 24). Capitalism developed first in Europe and expanded into colonies, integrating them into the world economy. By doing so, it also created hierarchies among different states: core states owned the most profitable production processes; peripheries owned the least profitable production processes; and semi-peripheral countries stood between these two poles (Wallerstein, 2004: 28-9). Core states, occasionally, intervened into the affairs of the peripheries and semi-peripheries to sustain their hegemonic position in the world-economy. In fact, as suggested by Lenin, such intervention, in other words imperialism, constituted the highest stage of capitalism (1987). That is, as Lenin pointed out, the concentration of production and capital in large enterprises; the dominance of finance capital and creation of a financial oligarchy; the export of this capital abroad; the division of the world among big enterprises eventually ended up in “the territorial division of the whole world among the greatest capitalist powers” (Lenin, 1987: 237).

In this context, one should also emphasize the emergence and the establishment of the notion of sovereignty—which played an important role in the imperialist and colonialist expansion of capitalism by way of state power. In fact, such expansion would not have been possible without the mutual recognition of sovereignty among European states with the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). The treaty of Westphalia established the rules for inter-state relations and secured the autonomy of the sovereign states in their internal affairs. In other words, it granted the states the right to regulate their own bounded territories (Wallerstein, 2004: 42-43). This right was later stabilized with the
establishment of the bureaucratic state apparatuses that enabled the states to monopolize the legitimate use of violence within their territories (Weber 1978: 33-42). This is neither to suggest that this monopoly was not contested nor to claim that the borders among the European states remained fixed. But the notion of sovereignty was still able to put a limit on the degree of interference among the European states (Wallerstein, 2004: 43-44). It is this notion of sovereignty that eventually sustained a “European balance of power” between seventeenth and mid-twentieth centuries and enabled “the imperialist division of the world by colonialist European powers” (Balibar, 2004b: 7).

Physical violence needs symbolic violence in its operations. The imperialist expansion of the European powers into colonies developed together with the introduction of grids of inferiority among different groups so as to legitimize and sustain the global social hierarchies. Wallerstein terms this process the “construction of peoplehood” (Wallerstein, 1991: 71-85). For Wallerstein, there is no essence to terms such as ‘race’, ‘nation’ and ‘ethnicity’. These terms derive their meanings from the “structural features of the capitalist world economy” (Wallerstein 1991: 79). According to Wallerstein, the white-coloured European-origin people, as a result of their privileged positioning in the global division of labour, were able to attain an imaginary form of superiority; while non-white coloured people, as a result of their disadvantaged positioning in the global division of labour, were imaginarily degraded to an inferior status. There has been, of course, a certain amount of diversion in the ways in which these racial categories have been constructed. But even that diversion usually followed the geographical lines of the global
division of labour. For instance, Wallerstein provides the stunning example of how Japanese businessmen, unlike the local Chinese people, were regarded not as Asian but as ‘honorary White’ by the South African State in the Apartheid era (Wallerstein, 1991: 80).

According to Wallerstein, while the category of race is related to division of labour in the world-economy, the idea of the nation corresponds to the “political structuring of the world-system” (Wallerstein, 1991: 80, emphasis original). States need to protect themselves both from “internal disintegration and external aggression” (Wallerstein, 1991: 81). While the treaty of Westphalia granted some sort of autonomy to European states in their internal affairs, states also needed to promote the ideologies of nationalism within their territories so as to protect themselves from internal and external threats and to legitimize their existence against competing states. Therefore, while race is related to core-periphery antinomy, nation is related to inter-state competition (Wallerstein, 1991: 82).

Finally, the category of ‘ethnicity’ or ‘ethnic group’ needs to be explained. There are often various ethnic groups within one state. Yet, these different ethnic groups are never equal in their positioning in a national economy. Although all workers are exploited under the capitalist economy, some workers are exploited more than others. According to Wallerstein, the construction of ethnicity forms the basis for this differential treatment (Wallerstein, 1991: 83). Ethnic culture of the communities prepares individuals for differential treatment by way of socialization, primarily in families. Having socialized
within their ethnic culture, individuals willingly accept their positioning in the labour market – either in the higher ranks or in the lower ranks of the market (1991: 83-84).

It should be clear then, that the material process of the expansion of the capitalist mode of production by way of European colonialism and the subsequent creation of a world-economy gave shape to the structure of European borders. Ideologies of racism sustained this structure at the symbolic level on a global scale, by means of introducing grids of inferiority among different peoples and legitimizing their differential treatment. The concepts of nation and ethnicity were also vital for the functioning of this structure. The concept of nation enabled the European states to gain consent from the different groups within their population so as to advance in the interstate rivalry, while the concept of ethnicity was established so as to justify the differential treatment of different groups within the boundaries of nation-states.

The above outlined framework of Wallerstein is essential for understanding the historical-material basis of the European borders. However, it only tells a part of the story. The construction of peoplehood is certainly related to the ways in which the capitalist world-system has established and legitimized itself. However, as Balibar points out, there are also symbolic-ideological causes for the development of the notions of nation and ethnicity that cannot simply be reduced to the economic causes of the world-system (Balibar, 2004c: 19; n17/239). In fact, Benedict Anderson is right to criticize Marxist literature for its lack of a satisfactory analysis of nationalism, other than perceiving it as an anomaly (Anderson, 1993: 17-18). The historical failure of the
international working class movements in Europe proved the power of nationalism (see e.g., van Holthoon and van der Linden, 1998). Having being recognized as the nationals of their countries with citizenship status (particularly during World War I), the working classes of the European nations ended up siding with their bourgeoisie and even willingly gave their lives for their imperialist wars. How and why did the working classes consent to be ruled by the ideologies of racism (and imperialism) rather than joining in international solidarity with the working classes of other countries? In order to answer this question, and to provide a satisfactory analysis for the power of nationalism, we have to focus on the symbolic aspects of sovereignty. The focus on the symbolic aspects of sovereignty within the political community of the nation-states balances the functionalist analysis of Wallerstein presented above, without devaluing it.

As pointed out above, nation-state sovereignty was secured in Europe by the Treaty of Westphalia at the inter-state level, which consequently enabled the expansion of the world economy by way of colonization. However, sovereignty cannot be reduced to the inter-state relations as Wallerstein seems to imply; neither can it be reduced to monarchical power, exercise of law or an exercise of control over a delimited territory (Singer and Weir, 2006: 451-452). The symbolic aspect of sovereignty also has to be taken into account. The symbolic aspect of sovereignty is related to the representation and legitimation of power, rather than its specific form (such as monarchical, constitutional, parliamentary or global) and technique (such as law or control of territory). As Singer and Weir points out: “the representation of power is implicated in
something more basic: the presentation of an orderly, meaningful, common world in which the relations of rule alone make sense” (Singer and Weir, 2006: 452).

Balibar explains the symbolic aspect of sovereignty with the notion of sacred – a term he borrows from the Durkheimian sociological tradition. According to Balibar, the sacred legitimizes state rule at the level of representation as well as at the everyday level of interaction among citizens. As he puts it: “states cannot become nation-states if they do not appropriate the sacred, not only at the level of representations of a more or less secularized ‘sovereignty’, but also at the day to day level of legitimation (Balibar, 2004c: 20; see also Balibar, 1991: 95).

According to Balibar (1991: 93), it is only through the production of individuals as homo nationalis that state power can legitimize itself internally (in the eyes of its own people) and externally (in the eyes of other competing states and other peoples). Once produced as nationals, individuals perceive themselves as a part of a collective unity, sharing the same culture and origins, and internalizing the symbolic differences between them and ‘others’. Balibar, drawing on Fichte, terms this process as the internalization of the border within individuals. As he points out: “the ‘external frontiers of the state’ have to become ‘internal frontiers’ or – which amounts to the same thing – external frontiers have to be imagined constantly as a projection and protection of an internal collective personality” (1991: 95).

We are in the terrain of ideology now. Balibar draws on Althusser’s thesis on the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) (Althusser, 2008b) to explain the processes
whereby people are produced as *homo nationalis*. According to Balibar, it is through the activities of the ISAs (particularly family and education) that individuals perceive (or, rather, *misrecognize*) themselves as belonging to a linguistic and racial community, that is more or less homogenous and unified, and, thus internalize the border. In this context, one can also add, following Anderson, the important role that maps, censuses and museums play in the educational ISAs (Anderson, 1993).

At this point we can finally ask: what sort of fictive ethnicity is at play at the EU level? The unification of Europe abolished the physical borders inside Europe for the European peoples. But did it also accomplish to abolish the symbolic borders between the European peoples? To a large extent, yes. As Delanty and Rumford (2005: 54) point out, rather than being in contradiction with each other, European identity complements national identities. That is, national identities of the European nations already include an aspect of Europeanism. For instance, for a French national, Europeanness is already a part of the French identity. The individuals of European nations, (mis)perceive themselves as a part of a common European heritage, and such perception allows them to differentiate themselves from the rest of the world.

This is not to suggest that such complementarity between national identity and European identity ended all the old rivalries and hostilities among the European nations.

---

20 While Althusser’s original formulation of ideology is mainly related to the reproduction of the labour force i.e, how individuals are mentally prepared to be the agents of capitalist economy: workers, peasants, agents of exploitation, agents of repression, etc. (Althusser, 2008b: 29), Balibar, in line with late Althusser’s emphasis on aleatory materialism, focuses on the important role that the ISAs play in construction of fictive ethnicity, rather than establishing a direct link between ideology economy (1991: 102).
We should not forget that the EU was founded on economic grounds – with the establishment of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951. When that economic ground, which is historically based on the processes of colonialism, gets destabilized, old rivalries may re-appear on the surface. The deep economic recession in Europe since late 2009 demonstrated that such possibility is not unimaginable. The austerity measures imposed by German-led European Union bureaucrats has resulted in the exponential increase of anti-European, and particularly anti-German sentiments in countries who are most affected by the crisis: Italy and Spain but most notably in Greece. Many Greek nationals now compare the austerity measures with the invasion of Greece by Germany in the World War II. 21 Therefore, European identity is a contingent structure with no assignable end, rather than a fixed and completed one. Material effects of diverse developments—whether this is an economic crisis or a social movement—can transform the European project in different and unexpected ways.

In fact, European identity, despite being largely complementary with national identities, has lots of weaknesses compared to that of national identities, which makes it vulnerable to such disruptions. For instance, the founding events of the EU, the treaties of Paris (1951), Rome (1957), Maastricht (1992) and Amsterdam (1997) largely lack the mythical and symbolic contents of national foundation narratives. The same holds true for the founding fathers of the EU, such as Robert Schumann and Jean Monnet (Delanty

21 See e.g., NBC News, 09.10.2012.
and Rumford, 2005: 100). Despite their vital importance in the EU history, these figures cannot be comparable to –say, Charles De Gaulle of France. While the memory of the Holocaust (Delanty and Rumford, 2005: 98) and the Europeanization of national ancestors (e.g., the Vikings) in national history writing (Delanty and Rumford, 2005: 99), together with the application of EU wide currency and passport provides a certain form of substance to the European identity, the unification power of this identity is still weak compared to that of national identities.

Yet, we should insist that such weakness is more of a weakness of inclusion rather than exclusion. And exclusion always effects inclusion –i.e, exclusion of certain categories solidifies the bond among those who are included. What Balibar terms, “European apartheid” can be understood from this perspective (2004a). According to Balibar, carrying on their colonial legacy, European borders operate as tools of apartheid –sorting the privileged populations from those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds. While the European peoples and people from elite parts of the world (or people from the core countries of the world-economy in Wallersteinian terms) are welcomed in Europe; other peoples from the ex-European colonies and the countries from global South and East are excluded at the borders of Europe. In this sense, ‘European citizenship’ or ‘European identity’ is linked to the ‘European apartheid’ and its exclusionary practices. As Balibar puts it: “the spectre of an apartheid [is] formed at the same time as European citizenship itself” (Balibar, 2004b: 9). European citizenship is constructed through “the subjective interiorization of the idea of the border” (Balibar, 2004b: 8) by the European
peoples—whereby European peoples have begun to understand themselves as possessing some distinct qualities that other peoples of the world do not possess. European identity may not be as solid as a national identity; yet through a way of excluding non-European others, this identity gets solidified.22

This is not to suggest that everything about the European project is exclusionary and reactionary. The European project also holds potential for transnationalism that is not based on the legacy of colonialism and racism but on the “fundamental rights to existence, work, and expression, as well as civic equality and the equal dignity of languages, classes, and sexes” (Balibar, 2004b: 9). Such potential can already be seen in the anti-austerity movements across Europe such as the Indignados movement in Spain, and in the rise of radical left parties in Europe, such as the SYRIZA in Greece.23 However, such resistances are not yet powerful and it is still the mechanisms of the apartheid that give shape to the structure of European borders.

3.2 Towards Post-Politics: VIS as an example of Post-Political Technology

While European borders continue to operate as mechanisms of apartheid, in the last couple of decades, there have also been significant transformations in the structure of European borders; both at the economical and symbolic levels. Economically, sovereignty is no longer solely located only in nation-states. Actors of globalization (such as global financial governing bodies) share the sovereign power with nation-states.

22 See also Isin (2002); Mongia (1999) and Razack (2000) on how exclusions of outsiders play a relational and pedagogical role in constructing a common insider identity.
23 More information about SYRIZA is provided in the following sections.
Symbolically, nation-states still try to hold the symbolic power of sovereignty—through promoting ideologies of nationhood-racism and excluding the others. Yet, such attempts can no longer take the form of ‘old fashioned’ racism. Racism is officially condemned in the liberal-multicultural societies of Europe because these societies need the entrepreneurial labour-power of diverse peoples regardless of their race in a globalized economy. The nationalist ideological interpellation processes are still at play, and they still attempt to produce individuals as *homo nationalis*, thus, neutralizing racism. Yet, in addition to existing nationalist ideological interpellation processes, post-politics now has a growing impact.

Post-politics reduces political matters into technical ones; and political actors into depoliticized actors. Post-politics interpellates individuals not necessarily as political subjects (e.g., as French, German, Greek nationals, European peoples or global proletariat), but as non-political subjects (e.g., entrepreneurial individuals, individuals with ethnic or sexual difference, individuals with different consumption and lifestyle habits, etc.). In the age of post-politics, growing networks of technical experts are assembled to solve social-structural problems (e.g., borders and migration, poverty, crime) while claiming to ensure respect for multicultural diversity and individual lifestyles. The material reality is that, just as racist ideology, post-politics sustains hierarchical divisions, because it does not problematize the oppressive social structures and it reduces their negative effects into matters of individual problems. But, unlike racist ideology, post-politics, at the same time, presents itself as race-neutral. It does so through
grading subjects based on their neoliberal/entrepreneurial value rather than their skin colour, or ethnic origin, thus privatizing responsibility (cf. Ilcan, 2009). Among other technologies that will be discussed in the later sections, the story of the Visa Information System (VIS) of the European Union exemplifies how post-politics works in the context of the European borders.

The VIS began to operate in 2011. It contains biometric data (fingerprints) from all visa applicants to the EU member states in a central database system. Technical details of the VIS will be discussed in the following sections. Here the ideological background of the system is outlined. In the official EU documents, it is stated that:

Any processing of VIS data should be proportionate to the objectives pursued and necessary for the performance of the tasks of the competent authorities. When using the VIS, the competent authorities should ensure that the human dignity and integrity of the persons whose data are requested are respected and should not discriminate against persons on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (European Parliament and of the Council, 2008).

Four observations can be made with regards to the VIS:

1. Racism without racism: Despite the above cited passage on non-discrimination based on race (as well as on ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.), a short look at the visa policies of the EU show that EU’s visa policies are discriminatory from the outset. Confirming Wallerstein’s racism theory, these policies mainly exclude people who come from periphery or semi-periphery countries; namely, the countries of global South and East (see van Houtum, 2010). It is these people, not the people from the richer parts of the world, who are blacklisted and forced to
comply with the compulsory visa requirement to travel to the EU. Despite these facts, however, the above-cited passage cannot be simply regarded as an obvious misrepresentation of the reality. Post-politics works at a more sinister level. It allows the EU borders to be racist and race-neutral at the same time. We are no longer concerned about the broader framework of the EU’s visa regime and how it is related to a racist ideology. All that now matters is how the consulate officers, who work as ‘migration experts’, use the VIS in non-discriminatory ways. In this formulation, there is no racism as long as the consulate officers do not ask questions about the applicants’ skin colour or ethnic origin, or openly reject their application because of their skin colour or their ethnic origin. A race-neutral and technocratic language is adopted. It is the ideology of post-politics that enables the triumph of this technocratic mode of governance, and reduces political issues into technical matters.

2. Neoliberal Exception to Racism: The same EU, which discriminates between people based on their racial backgrounds and legitimizes this discrimination within a post-political framework, at the same time offers exceptional treatment to the categories that have entrepreneurial value, even when these categories belong to disadvantaged racial backgrounds. According to the plans, as a part of the EU’s New Border Package, the Registered Traveller Status (RTS) would be awarded at

---

24 For instance, the EU visa guidelines claim that the visa applications are examined on the basis of three criteria: fulfilling the entry conditions; the risk of ‘illegal’ migration and the applicant’s intention to leave the territory of the Member States before the expiry of the visa; and risk to the security or public health of the Member States (European Commission, 2014: 51).
the EU consulates or future common application centers based on travel history and financial status (Commission of the European Communities, 2008). Those who are granted the RTS would not only be exempt from the visa requirement, in the future, they will even be exempt from regular border checks. Border gates would read the information in the RTS cards to ensure their automatic passage. Therefore, there are now neoliberal exceptions to racism (cf. Ong, 2006). These exceptions demonstrate the power of neoliberal-globalization over nation-state sovereignty. A global corporate class has emerged and has begun to transgress the old boundaries of racism. Individuals, who belong to the global corporate class, even when they come from the peripheries or semi-peripheries of the world economy, are now included in the European borders. Such inclusion is another important cause of the rise of the ideologies of racism without race. The European economies need the skills of the global entrepreneurial classes for their survival. Hence, they have to accommodate these groups within a liberal-multicultural environment. This form of inclusion, which is based on entrepreneurial criteria, allows the European states to be racist without naming race. Now people are included/excluded not overtly based on their skin colours or ethnic origin but based on their entrepreneurial potential or the lack thereof. Neoliberal interpellation processes complement racist-nationalist ones. Subjects, in addition to being interpellated as *homo nationalis*, are also interpellated as entrepreneurial, ‘responsible’, individuals. This form of neoliberal interpellation effectively masks
the existing structural inequalities as well as dividing the working classes within
themselves.

3. Disappearance of Political Subjects. We are no longer talking about political
subjects but visa applicants, registered travellers, biometric data holders, and so
on. Throughout modern history, working classes, as political subjects, have
travelled to other places to find better employment opportunities. In fact, as
Papadopoulos et. al. point out, “it is no coincidence that the word mobility not
only refers to movement but also to the common people, the working classes, the
mob” (2008: 55). In the early period of capitalism, travelling workers were
presenting a problem for the ruling classes, as these classes needed a sedentary
and disciplined workforce to better exploit them. Hence the states, whose
etymological origin derives from stasis or immobility, imposed mechanisms
mainly to control the exits of the working classes (Anderson et. al. 2010: 10).
Despite these obstacles, working classes continued to move. Perhaps they were
never greeted with proper hospitality. But the current anxieties about the ‘illegal
migrants’ are something new. As Mezzadra (2011: 125) points out, there have
always been workers living without regular status in modern European states, and
it was only after the crisis of Fordism in the 1970s, that the figure of the ‘illegal
immigrant’ emerged as a subject of control and public anxiety.25 What happened

25 This is not to disregard the nationalistic reactions that the host workers showed towards migrant workers
in modern European states. However, as Hobsbawn (1988) points out, thanks to the existence of “classical
was, with the rise of post-politics, mobility of the working classes has been reduced to a technical matter. The political character of mobility has disappeared. Jacques Rancière captures this shift from politics to post-politics succinctly in the following passage:

Objectively, we have no more immigrant people than we had twenty years ago. Subjectively, we have many more. The difference is this: twenty years ago the “immigrant” had an other name; they were workers or proletarians. In the meantime this name has been lost as a political name. They retained their “own” name, and an other that has no other name becomes the object of fear and rejection. (Rancière, 1992: 63, emphasis original).

4. Disappearance of Ethics: The disappearance of politics is accompanied by the disappearance of ethics. This reality is already evident in Rancière’s passage cited above; when he states that migrants now become “object[s] of fear and rejection”. David Lyon (2009a, 2010)’s theory of identification can shed further light on the ethical aspect here. Lyon points out how the expanding systems of digital surveillance have made people ever more indifferent to the suffering of the other (2009a, 2010). These systems reduce the responsibility towards the other to a matter of technocratic governance. In this sense, systems such as the VIS, are not only post-political technologies, they are at the same time, post-ethical.

These four characteristics of post-politics give shape, albeit at different levels, to diverse border control techniques of the EU borders, from biometric databases to the EUROSUR mechanisms. Before discussing the characteristics of these control techniques, the
characteristics of neoliberal-globalization and post-politics are discussed in more detail below.

3.3 Transformations in the structure of European borders: Neoliberal Globalization and Post-Politics

Neo-liberal globalization and post-politics, have transformed the structure of European borders at two levels. First, sovereignty, understood as having the indivisible and supreme authority within a delimited territory (Prokhovnik, 2008: 2), is no longer located solely in nation-states (e.g., Bauman, 1998, 2001, 2007; Barkan, 2013; Brown, 2010; Castells, 2010). Globalization and its actors also act as sovereign entities over the territories of nation-states.26 Second, the symbolic aspect of sovereignty has been transformed. Nation-states, despite their powerlessness against the forces of globalization, still try to hold the symbolic power of sovereignty through disseminating the ideologies of nationalism-racism and using the practices of exclusion to further solidify the unity among their peoples. But, parallel to these interpellation processes, there is now the accompanying rise of post-political interpellation processes that are in line with the requirements of the neoliberal-globalized economy.

26 This is not to imply that states exercised absolute authority over their territories ever since the emergence of the Westphalian system in 1648 and until the recent period of globalization. The reality is much more complex. Diverse set of authorities, alongside the states, continued to exercise authority, long after the treaty of Westphalia (see e.g., Agnew, 2009: 27; Latham, 2000: 5; O’Dowd, 2010: 1037). Historically states never existed in self-contained and perfectly sovereign forms and contingency, failure and impotence have always been central elements of their sovereignty. Even when states began hold sovereignty to a large degree within their territories, they did so in different ways. Yet still, the recent processes of globalization mark a transformation in the ways in which state sovereignty functions.
It would be wrong to explain the emergence and establishment of the social structure of neoliberal globalization and post-politics with a single development or origin. A complex and contingent set of developments played part: developments in the information and communication technologies which triggered the emergence of the global networked economy (Castells, 2010); hegemony of the consumption oriented, post-fordist flexible specialization production models over fordist mass production models (Harvey, 1989); neoliberal consensus, inspired by figures such as Friedrich Hayek and Chicago School intellectuals, disseminated by neoliberal think-tanks and imposed globally by Reagan of the US and Thatcher of the UK (Harvey, 2005); success of neoliberal ideologies in exploiting the discourses of freedom of the 68 youth movements under a consumerist framework (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005; Harvey 2005, Hardt and Negri, 2000); establishment of the neoliberal ideologies of ‘the end of history’ after the fall of the Soviet Union which eventually began to operate in a post-political framework, making the idea of any major transformation in the neoliberal global system unthinkable and turning political issues (whether this is income distribution, crime control or migration policies) into technical and managerial ones (Mouffe, 2005; Rancière, 2004; Žižek, 2008).

One of the consequences of these contingent and complex processes has been to transform state sovereignty. Following Latham (2000), rather than dismissing the category of sovereignty or getting trapped in the ‘either/or logic’ (in which sovereignty is defined either as a feature of the nation-state or globalization), we should understand this
transformation as a transformation in the “social structure” of sovereignty. Bauman’s concept of liquid modernity (2001; 2007) can shed further light on the characteristics of this transformation.

According to Bauman, in liquid modernity, sovereignty is shared with the global actors and processes, which are, to a large extent exempt from state control. Bauman hints at the post-politicizing aspect of globalization when he states that “the ‘economy’ is progressively exempt from political control; indeed, the prime meaning conveyed by the term ‘economy’ is ‘the area of the non-political’” (1998: 66). The dislocation of power from nation-states to globalization, however, should not mean that the nation-state sovereignty is no longer relevant. According to Bauman, the more globalization erodes nation-state sovereignty, the more nation-states resort to local projects to reclaim their sovereignty. Giving local responses to the global-structural problems becomes a central characteristic of contemporary state sovereignty. States attempt to deflect the attention of their populations through targeting the ‘internal threats’, rather than dealing with the global-structural problems. The undocumented immigrant, the refugee, the terrorist suspect, the welfare-dependent, the homeless becomes the sole (and easy) targets of the states, while those who are attached to the global capitalism, i.e., global elites, are now largely exempt from state control. Similar observations are made by Brown (2010) in her analysis of the rapid expansion of walls in the last years. For Brown, “rather than the resurgent expressions of nation-state sovereignty, the new walls are icons of its erosion” (2010: 24).
This new form of sovereignty (and its laws, practices and institutions) cannot be understood in isolation from its symbolic aspects. It is the materiality of the post-politics which grants legitimation to the violence that is exercised by the neoliberal-globalization and its agents. Theories of Mouffe, Rancière and Žižek can shed light on the characteristics of post-politics. 27 Despite the theoretical differences among them, these three figures portray the characteristics of post-politics in more or less complementary manner. 28

Mouffe points out that the dominant form of politics today “refuses to acknowledge the antagonistic dimension constitutive of ‘the political’” (2005: 2). According to Mouffe, described in such terms as “‘partisan-free democracy’, ‘dialogic democracy’, ‘cosmopolitan democracy’, ‘good governance’, ‘global civil society’, ‘cosmopolitan sovereignty’, ‘absolute democracy’” (2005: 2), this form of politics is consensual rather than antagonistic/agonistic; it imagines a reconciled society ruled by

27 Due to space limits, complementary approaches provided by figures such Badiou, Balibar and Agamben are not included here.
28 This is not to claim that these figures are entirely complementary. Although their description of the characteristics of post-politics is complementary, Mouffe, Rancière and Žižek differ in their solutions to post-politics. Mouffe advocates a radical-democratic position (see Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) insisting on the “‘chain of equivalence’ among the diversity of democratic struggles” (Mouffe, 2005: 53), while Žižek focuses more on the class aspect of the issue and calls for a radical transformation of capitalism (see Žižek, 2000; 2008; 2011). I agree with Žižek that every struggle (economical, ethnical, feminist, political, etc.) cannot simply be considered equal. For instance, in the context of EU borders, the struggle of migrants, understood as the international proletariat, is politics proper because it holds the potential to radically disrupt the fundamentals of the EU borders (although this does not mean dismissing the importance of other, especially complementary struggles, such as the struggles against austerity measures). But I am sceptical to Žižek’s emphasis on ‘radical transformation’ for its messianic implications. As Rancière (2010a; 2010b) points out, politics is a matter of political activity where groups from disadvantaged background struggle for equal rights, rather than being a matter of waiting for a messianic event. In Chapter 7, a Ranciérian (rather than Žižekian or Mouffian) opposition to post-politics is discussed by drawing on the case of 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers in Greece.
rational expertise rather than by one being consistent of political groups with contradictory and contested political projects (2005: 2-4). According to Mouffe, (neo)liberalism is to blame for the rise of such consensual politics (2005: 10). While liberal ideology, which is based on a mythical understanding of individual freedom, accepts the plurality of the perspectives; it understands these perspectives as harmonious and non-conflictual with each other, and, thus it fails to take into account their antagonistic/agonistic character.

Mouffe points out that the central problem of the consensual/liberal/post-political vision is that it reduces political matters into technical and managerial ones. According to Mouffe, such post-political vision is not only shared among liberal politicians who present liberalism as the ‘end of history’; but also among contemporary intellectuals such as Giddens and Beck (Mouffe, 2005: 36-63). Indeed, both Beck’s thesis of risk society and Giddens’s thesis of post-traditional society envisages a form of global cosmopolitan society that is free of political conflict. According to Beck and Giddens, societies should be governed by global expert opinion on how global risks (e.g., global environmental and health issues, migration, terrorism) should be managed, and beyond the ‘old’ and ‘narrow’ ideologies of right and left. Beck’s ‘sub-politics’ and Giddens’s ‘life politics’ advocate a form of politics that is individualistic and apolitical, centred on the idea of “a
dialogue between individuals whose aim is to create new solidarities and extend the bases of active trust” (2005: 48).  

Another problematic point with regards to post-politics is that it “proclaims that there is no alternative to the current neo-liberal form of globalization and that we should accept its dictats” (Mouffe, 2005: 70). The ‘there is no alternative’ attitude is internalized by many liberal parties (centre-left and centre-right) in Europe. Positioning themselves beyond the ‘old’ ideological distinctions between left and right, these parties understand politics in technical, practical and consensual terms; rather than agonistic/antagonistic, dissensual, or in short, political terms. According to Mouffe, the rise and success of the right-wing populist parties in Europe can also be understood as a consequence of the dominance of these post-political parties. In this sense, post-politics, rather than eliminating racism, create the conditions for the rise of racism – as groups who do not feel represented by the post-political parties resort to those parties who clearly mark the distinction between us/them in a rather Schmittian sense and offload the problems of the global-structural processes to the ‘outsiders’.

29 While one is tempted to read Beck’s and Giddens’s politics as sociological observations (in that case they are right: today politics is indeed individualized and reduced to the management of ‘global risks’ rather than one being concerned with the transformation of the global structural inequalities), their normative commitments to globalization and consensus-based politics demonstrates that these figures endorse globalization while simply trying to remedy its ills with more cosmopolitanism. Such form of cosmopolitanism is inevitably post-political as it reduces the political issues (migration, environmental disasters and other global ‘risks’ are all political issues as they are directly related to the global structural inequalities – see Žižek 2011) to technical matters that should be dealt with expert opinion and better dialogue. In other words, as Mouffe points out, this post-political vision views society “composed of middle classes” and, thus, it fails to take into account “the unequal power relations” (2005: 62).
Mouffe’s insights about post-politics are essential for understanding how the EU borders operate and legitimize themselves today. Firstly, by means of reducing migration into a technical and managerial issue, post-politics indirectly perpetuates global racial hierarchies—the very hierarchies that were solidified during the expansion of capitalism by way of European colonialism. There is indeed a cosmopolitan consensus within Europe about migration, which frames migration as a risk that should be dealt technically with more surveillance technologies (cf. van Munster, 2009). In this framework, migrants are not understood as political subjects, as holders of certain rights (such as workers or refugees), but simply objects to be excluded by technocratic means. Unlike what figures such as Beck assumed, this post-political vision is embedded in violence. The more the EU authorities frame migration in technical and managerial terms, the more they establish surveillance systems; and the more surveillance systems are established, the more migrants die. Migrants end up following riskier routes to avoid detection, and lose their lives on these routes. Since this is a form of indirect killing, often taking place outside of EU territories or at the blurred spaces of the borderzones, EU authorities can still play the liberal post-political card and even pretend to be ‘sorry’ about migrant deaths, blaming smugglers and harsh geographical conditions for the causes of the deaths. The post-political vision enables the EU authorities to be racist without naming race and violent without openly endorsing violence.30

30 More detail about these manipulations is provided in Chapter 5.
Secondly, by means of blocking the way for political antagonism to take place, post-politics also feeds racism inside Europe. As European working classes do not see any difference between the liberal parties of centre-right and centre-left, they resort to more radical alternatives, such as the right-wing populist parties. As a result of the propaganda disseminated by these parties, European working classes see the world through the lens of racism, rather than economic exploitation and antagonism. There are many examples of these processes in Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Denmark, and so on; but perhaps Greece is the most extreme example. Disillusioned by the post-political parties (centre-right: New Democracy, and centre-left: Panhellenic Socialist Movement [PASOK]) who have nothing to say about structural inequalities, a significant portion of the Greek working classes ended up voting for the Neo-Nazi Party, Golden Dawn, which raised its votes to 6.9% in the 2012 parliamentary elections. Golden Dawn operates as a criminal gang; their members have beaten and killed many migrants in Greece in the last couple of years (HRW, 2012). Their solution to the migration ‘problem’ is simple: establish more land mines alongside the Greece-Turkey borders and expel those who are already in Greece. The rise of racism in Greece demonstrates that the more the post-political parties portray the existing regime as having no alternative, the more working classes end up resorting to radical alternatives for realizing their antagonistic political potential. In Greece, however, a radical leftist alternative, SYRIZA, has also gained immense popularity among the working classes, raising its votes to 26.9% in 2012 elections and ranking as the second biggest party after New Democracy only by 2
percent. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, Greece is still ruled by the post-political parties, by a coalition among New Democracy and PASOK. But SYRIZA represents a hope for politics proper for the future.\(^{31}\) In opposition to the Golden Dawn, SYRIZA advocates a more structural approach to migration in Greece. They propose to push the EU to take responsibility for migrants (both by accepting more migrants and by providing aid to migrant producing countries); speed up the asylum processes and increase the asylum acceptance rates; legalize migrants who are already staying in Greece for longer periods; and terminate the inhumane border control practices such as the wall in Evros (SYRIZA, 2013).

Rancière provides a theory of politics that complements Mouffé’s analysis of post-politics. According to Rancière, politics is the never-ending struggle for equality among human beings; it is a “process of equality” or “the open set of practices driven by the assumption of equality between any and every speaking being and by the concern to test this equality” (1999: 30). Importantly, Rancière’s understanding of a speaking being does include everyone regardless of (legal, etc.) status. According to Rancière, even in the most unequal relationships that are imposed by the established order (or the order of police), there is an underlying equality between the speaking beings, for “to obey at least two things required: you must understand the order and you must obey it. And to do that, you must already be equal of the person who is ordering you” (1999: 16). It would be wrong, however, to understand Rancière’s philosophy as another form of humanism that

\(^{31}\) According to results of an opinion pool conducted in December 2013, SYRIZA ranks first with 31% of the votes. But Golden Dawn is also raising its votes to 9.1% (TVXS, 20.12.2013).
posits an essential human nature based on equality because Rancière only assumes the capability of every human being to speak on his or her own behalf as the basis of political action (May, 2006: 27).

Rancière (2010b: 68-69) provides a key example to illustrate politics of equality. He refers to the case of Olympe de Gouges, a revolutionary feminist, and her role in the French Revolution. Rancière discusses how Olympe de Gouges was able to challenge the unequal treatment of women by showing the internal contradictions of the symbolic order of her day. At that time, despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which granted every human being equal rights, women in France were excluded from political life and their existence was limited to the private and domestic sphere of the family. But the same women, when they were found to have acted against the revolution, were treated as political subjects by the regime, and sentenced to death. Olympe de Gouges showed that “if they [women] were as equal ‘as men’ under the guillotine, then they had the right to the whole of equality, including equal participation in political life” (Rancière, 2010b: 69). According to Rancière, politics of equality is practiced by different groups in contemporary societies, such as by “the clandestine immigrants held in transit zones in wealthy countries or populations in refugee camps” (Rancière, 2010b: 71). For Rancière, it is only through such political activity that these groups can challenge the internal inconsistencies of the existing regime where they are regarded as inferior subjects and can have the rights they are denied. Unfortunately, according to Rancière, this form of politics, albeit erupting in unexpected ways from time to time, has been in dramatic
decline in the last couple of decades. As with Mouffè, Rancière explains this decline with the rise of the ideologies of post-politics or post-democracy.

According to Rancière, the collapse of the Soviet Union did not result in the development of global democracy; rather “it signified the reduction of democratic life to the management of the local consequences of global economic necessity” (Rancière 2004: 4). Rancière adds that, there is now a consensus among the political parties of left and right on the reduction of politics into the management of state administrated technical adjustment policies. According to Rancière such reduction of politics means the triumph of the consensual democracy over democracy proper – where political conflicts are dismissed in the name of managing the ‘necessities’ of globalization. Yet, such consensual democracy, unlike what its proponents have propagated, has failed to bring any peace. On the contrary, the neglect of proper political problems has lead to the emergence of more violence, such as in the case of rising ethnic and religious conflicts and the re-surfacings of racism and xenophobia in Europe (Rancière, 2004: 4).

Rancière terms this consensual democracy ‘the order of the police’. It is worth noting how he differentiates the concept of police from the concept of politics. Rancière points out that the conventional definition of politics is framed in consensual terms; it is about how different individuals and groups within a certain community are designated different roles; how the institutions and procedures in this community are arranged; how the political system is legitimized, and so on. According to Rancière, all of these procedural arrangements do not constitute politics proper, rather they constitute the
system of the police (Rancière, 1999: 29). Here Rancière follows a broad definition of the police, one that was outlined by Foucault, who demonstrated how the police of the eighteenth century were tasked with the regulation of diverse domains of everyday life, including “religion, morals, health and subsistence, public peace, the care of buildings, squares, and highways, the sciences and the liberal arts, commerce, manufacture and the mechanical arts, servants and laborers, the theatre and games, and finally the care and discipline of the poor” (Foucault, 2007: 334). A key point to underline here is that the logic of the police is post-political as it de-politicizes the existence of individuals. It treats individuals not as political subjects having the capacity to speak but as biological (or biopolitical) beings whose bodies should be regulated in detail to ensure the efficiency of the order.  

Rancière’s Foucault-inspired insights on post-political police are helpful when reflecting about the ways in which the European borders are governed today. It is the logic of the police that reduces the political issue of mobility of migrants into a technical matter, and the political existence of migrants into biopolitical existence. Migrants are stripped of their political names (such as proletariat) and political rights; and they are treated merely as biological beings or as bare life (Agamben, 1998). Sophisticated surveillance technologies, cameras, database systems, radars, heart-beat detectors, operate as technologies of the police over migrant bodies to manage their existence.

32 Despite his insightful analysis of the police, Foucault’s theory of police is limited. Unlike Rancière, Foucault avoids defining politics proper, or politics of equality in opposition to the order of police and even prioritizes the benign aspects of the police under the pastoral power of governmentality-biopolitics. See Chapter 5 for further a critique of Foucault’s pastoral turn in his later works.
It is worth noting that, the logic of the post-political police is also at play in the administration of European peoples. In addition to being interpellated as national subjects (which always includes an aspect of Europeanness as suggested earlier), the post-political police order of Europe also interpellates European people as biopolitical subjects: isolated subjects with neoliberal capacities rather than collective political beings. The interpellation of subjects as self-entrepreneurial agents often serves to deflect their attention from the structural inequalities, thus it operates as an ideology. The discourses which frame the European working classes as free, responsible subjects are often used by the post-political parties in Europe to deflect their attention from the ways in which these individuals are constrained by the oppressive and exploitative structures of capitalism and racism and distances them from the working classes of other countries, that is, migrants. The post-political interpellation of European peoples operates as the other side of the post-political police lens on migrants. In each case individuals are governed as biological beings, not as political subjects. In each case, political questions such as structural inequalities and human rights are avoided. In each case, a managerial language that favours technical solutions to social problems is applied.

Against the order of the police, the post-political consensus regime, Rancière favours a politics of dissensus or disagreement that aims at equality. According to Rancière, dissensus is the process where those groups who are deemed incapable of proper speech –historically: slaves, women, workers, colonial subjects- speak and claim to have the rights they are denied to (Rancière, 2004: 5). Precisely in this sense, today
migrants hold the potential for politics proper, as migrants are the subjects who can show the internal contradictions of the post-political police regime. Their very existence shows that the concept of the human rights is contradictory at the outset, because effectively it only refers to the rights of some particular groups who already have these rights, who are in most cases, white, male property owners.

Žižek makes a similar point when he criticizes the post-political order for operating with a false universality (1997: 50-51). According to Žižek, this order presents itself as if it respects to the equal rights of all human beings whereas in reality it protects the rights of particular groups (i.e., white male property owners) under the guise of universal concepts (i.e., human rights). For Žižek, politics proper should question this false yet concrete universality on behalf of those who are excluded, those who have no part, such as the undocumented migrants (Žižek, 1997: 50). Such politics should not be confused with the postmodern politics of difference where particularity (of different identity groups) is celebrated and universality is discredited altogether for being totalitarian. For Žižek, what we need is not the dismissal of universals, but a new ‘universality to come’ based on the ideal of universal emancipation against the false universality of the post-political order.

Žižek’s analysis of post-politics (2008: 199-288) is in line with that of Rancière’s, but Žižek puts more emphasis on the ideology of multiculturalism and its false universalism—which not only prevents proper politics to take place but also triggers racism. Žižek points out that, in the absence of a leftist political alternative, there are two
regimes of politics that are in harmony with each other: the non-politics, or post-politics of multiculturalism and right-wing fundamentalism (2008: 250). The harmony between these two forms of politics might seem odd at first glance; after all, multiculturalism favours multiple identities whereas fundamentalist politics favours one form of identity over another (e.g., French identity over Algerian migrants or German identity over Turkish migrants). But Žižek insists that the multiculturalist ideal of tolerant co-existence of different identity groups can easily turn into a fundamentalist ideology. For instance, many fundamentalist groups now use the multiculturalist strategy of identity politics; claiming that they simply aim to preserve their own authentic identity (Žižek, 2008: 251). Moreover, these two perspectives share a commonality at a more substantial level: neither of these perspectives properly questions the neoliberal globalization. For Žižek, the more the material antagonisms are avoided in the name of liberal multiculturalism or manipulated by fundamentalist hatred, the more exploitation grows and racism rises.

As with Mouffe and Rancière, Žižek notes the rise of a technocratic form of governance under post-politics (2008: 236). Technocrats such as economists and public opinion specialists work together with the liberal multiculturalists to offer practical and often technical solutions to social problems. One key example here is Tony Blair’s ‘New Labour’ in England. Positioning itself beyond the ‘old’ ideologies of left and right, this party insisted that “one should take good ideas without any prejudice and apply them, whatever their (ideological) origins” (2008: 236). But this emphasis on the practical nature of ideas often serves to deflect attention from proper political questions – because
political questions are often more ‘theoretical’ in nature as they are concerned with the very framework in which the politics operates. Rather than attempting to fix social problems with technical approaches, what we need is politics proper that is centred on the ideal of universal emancipation of the excluded groups.

Towards the European Identification Dispositif

What makes the EU borders durable? Following a historical materialist perspective, this chapter demonstrated that it is the colonial legacy of Europe, which continues to operate under the conditions of neoliberal globalization and post-politics, that makes the EU borders durable today. This is not to suggest that the structure of EU borders is fixed and complete. The European project is an open ended one, which also holds the potential for transnational politics and real universality. However, under present circumstances, it is the exclusion aspect that gives substance to the EU borders and forces it to function as a mechanism of apartheid.

The EU borders have their origins in the early development of capitalism in Europe and its expansion to colonies by way of European state power. In the colonial era, the violent exploitation of the colonial spaces was legitimized through the development of imaginary racial hierarchies among different groups. Internally, ideologies of nationalism were at play to produce European populations as *homo nationalis* and to provide them a fictive identity. While the rivalries among the European states have not ended with the formation of the EU, ideologies of nationalism have merged with
ideoologies of Europeanness to secure the European political space at the expense of the violent exclusions of the others. Those exclusions constitute the European apartheid and have solidified the bonds among the European peoples. Since the 1980s, while the core of the European apartheid has remained, its structure has been transformed as a result of the processes of neoliberal globalization and post-politics. These processes have reduced the political matter of migrant mobility into a technical and managerial one, and migrant bodies into biopolitical bodies. They have also allowed the EU borders to be racist without naming race and to promote the rights of particular groups (who are in most cases white, male, property owners) while officially referring to a universal concepts of human rights.

These developments at the economical and ideological structure of EU borders give shape to the technical structure of EU borders from e-ID cards to EUROSUR mechanisms. At this point, Foucault’s notion of dispositif can be utilized from a materialist perspective to explain the diverse elements of the European borders. Foucault defines dispositif as,

a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions –in short, the said as much as the unsaid (1980a: 194).

The EU borders can be understood as a dispositif, or rather an identification dispositif, consisting of heterogenous elements such as the EUROSUR mechanisms, the institution of the FRONTEX, sovereign territorial laws, the strategies for externalizing the EU borders, the discourses of false universality disseminated by EU bureaucrats, regulations
governing visa applications and so on. The European identification dispositif is composed of all these diverse elements to identify individuals, particularly non-European ‘others’ and to exclude them from European political space. The combination of these diverse elements is neither neutral nor necessary; but still these elements function in a more or less coherent manner. There is durability rather than fluidity, systematic patterns rather than randomness, predictability rather than unpredictability in the context of the European identification dispositif.

Foucault touched on these structural aspects of the dispositif. He pointed out how social structures can stabilize the dispositifs whereby the heterogeneous character of the dispositifs serves a homogenous purpose. This line of thought can be pursued in the context of the European identification dispositif. It is the colonial legacy of Europe and its contemporary manifestation in a globalized-neoliberal and post-political context that unites the diverse elements of the European identification dispositif and makes them durable to a large extent. Once established, there is not much heterogeneity and randomness in the ways in which European identification dispositif operates. This dispositif oppresses groups from disadvantaged backgrounds from the Global South and North: the undocumented migrants. Post-political ideologies legitimate the violence that the dispositif creates and allows it to function ever more violently.

In the next chapter the specific technical characteristics of the elements that constitute the European identification dispositif are discussed.

---

33 See also the discussion on dispositif in Chapter 1.
Chapter 4: The European Identification Dispositif

This chapter utilizes the notion of dispositif to analyze the complex technical characteristics of the EU borders. Particularly during the last decade, diverse surveillance technologies were developed in the EU, including the Schengen Information System (SIS) I and II, EURODAC, Visa Information System (VIS), and EUROSUR mechanisms. Systems that are in the process of establishment include the Automated Border Control System (ABC), the Entry/Exit system (EES) and the European Electronic System of Travel Authorisation (ESTA). In addition to these EU-level systems, there are internal control systems, including electronic identification (e-ID) cards, e-residence cards and national employment and welfare databases. These systems extend the EU borders inside and beyond the EU. The EU also provides extensive funding to the member states that are positioned at the peripheries of the EU, such as Italy, Spain, and Greece, to establish such mechanisms as radar systems, aircraft, and patrol vessels and vehicles. As a result, while digital surveillance diffuses the EU border, it also concentrates its effects at the territorial borderzones.

Digital surveillance systems operate through both territorialized and deterritorialized ways to exclude unwanted populations from European political space. However, this does not mean that low-technological methods of surveillance and control lose their importance. In the context of Greece, for instance, although surveillance at the borderzones is carried out by high-tech mechanisms, internal surveillance is conducted mainly through racial profiling and detention of migrants without the involvement of
sophisticated surveillance technology. The strategy for externalizing the EU borders through agreements with neighboring states (including Turkey, Morocco and Libya) can be considered as a complementary development. The EU authorities cooperate with the authorities of the neighbouring states to expand the net of surveillance over migrants and to prevent them from reaching EU territory.

While the technologies, techniques and strategies related to the EU borders are complex and heterogeneous, they serve a single and homogenous purpose: the exclusion of populations from disadvantaged backgrounds – mainly peoples from South and East-from Europe. The materiality of the European apartheid and its post-political ideological mechanisms (which were discussed in detail in the previous chapter) frame the operations of the European identification dispositif.

**Introduction**

In the last decade, the EU has invested heavily in digital technologies to strengthen its borders (Hayes and Vermeulen, 2012; Hayes et al, 2014). The SIS and EURODAC were already in use, the VIS started its operations in 2011 and the SIS II was established in 2013. The EES, the ESTA and the ABC are in the process of development and are to be established by 2015. The national counterparts of these systems include e-ID cards, e-residence cards and national employment and welfare databases. These systems expand the surveillance powers of the EU and diffuse the EU border inside and beyond EU territories.
The fact that the EU borders are becoming mobile and diffuse does not mean that territorial controls lose their significance. On the contrary, surveillance at the territorial edges of the Schengen Area is getting ever more intensive. The EU has been developing systems such as the EUROSUR and providing substantial funding to member states that are located at the peripheries of Europe (such as Greece, Spain and Italy) to increase the level of territorial controls at the EU external borders. These EU member states have continually updated their inventory with such extensive mechanisms as radar surveillance systems, helicopters, patrol vessels, thermo-vision vans, and so on. The EUROSUR extends the level of territorial surveillance by means of enabling the FRONTEX authorities to survey the EU external borders with sophisticated aerial and satellite surveillance systems. These developments demonstrate that, while borders are moving inside and beyond state territories, their effects are crystallized at the territorial edges of states. In fact, as it will be demonstrated in the following chapter by drawing on the case of the Greece-Turkey borderzones, the practices and effects of the territorial surveillance systems are wider than the diffuse ones because territorial systems have more direct and deadly consequences for migrants.

The fact that high-tech surveillance systems operate at EU territorial borders and beyond does not mean that conventional methods of surveillance have lost their significance. In the case of Greece, for instance, while territorial borderzones are controlled by sophisticated digital surveillance mechanisms, internal control over
migrants is carried out without the involvement of sophisticated surveillance systems – through racial profiling, brutal violence and detention.

In order to expand the identification net over migrants, the EU authorities are also developing new political strategies and institutions. The externalisation of the EU borders through agreements with neighbouring countries is one central strategy that the EU authorities have developed in the last decade. Through this strategy, the EU aims to devolve the responsibility of identifying and policing migrants onto neighbouring countries, such as Morocco, Libya, Egypt and Turkey. The establishment of the EU Border Agency, FRONTEX, has also greatly changed the ways in which identification practices have been carried out in the EU. The FRONTEX units are now continually present at the EU external borders alongside with the national border authorities. In addition to their active role in the border controls, FRONTEX units also take the lead in the establishment of new technologies (such as the EUROSUR and national surveillance operational centres) and new technologically mediated surveillance techniques.

Borrowing the term from Foucault, these diverse (territorial and non-territorial, technological and non-technological) techniques of the European borders can be understood as the *identification dispositif*. For Foucault, dispositif is “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble” consisting of discrete elements (1980a: 194). Yet, the concept of dispositif cannot simply be understood in terms of its heterogeneity. Foucault emphasized that there are structures beyond the dispositif that make it durable and fixed. In the context of the EU borders, it is the materiality of the European apartheid that
operates under neoliberal globalization and ideologies of post-politics (whose details were discussed in the previous chapter) that stabilizes the European identification dispositif, making possible the violent exclusion of diverse categories of people.

These new systems operate as mechanisms of social sorting (Lyon, 2003; 2007; 2008; 2009). They facilitate the mobility of an elite group of citizens from privileged backgrounds in the world economy, while they hinder the mobility of people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the world economy. Systems such as the ESTA and ABC provide easy passage for a global elite class of citizens through removing even the need for them to interact with the border guards. On the contrary, other systems, such as the SIS I and II, VIS, EURODAC, EUROSUR and national surveillance systems and techniques, hinder the mobility of disadvantaged groups from the global Southern and Eastern countries and former European colonies. These systems and techniques put groups such as undocumented migrants, asylum seekers and visa-required travellers under continuous surveillance so as to make their exclusion automatic.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. First, the chapter draws on surveillance and border studies literatures to develop the conceptual framework for understanding the identification practices that are carried out by digital borders. Second, the chapter examines the new EU surveillance mechanisms and techniques in detail and discusses their effects on different groups. Finally, the chapter concludes by summarizing the arguments of the chapter and making connections with the next chapter.
4.1 Identification, Surveillance, Borders and New Technologies

The obsession with identification is not new. In his work on the history of identification practices in Europe, Valentin Groebner points out that: “modern identity papers can in fact be described as the combined outcome of those techniques developed between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries, as watermarked, stamped, and signed papers bearing a seal and featuring portrait” (2007: 65). With the early advancement of capitalism, surveillance intensified greatly (Papadopoulos et. al. 2008: 42-82). The dissolution of feudal relations of production produced a massive army of poor in Europe from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries: former peasants became beggars, paupers, nomads, vagrants and vagabonds. A whole series of instruments were introduced to stabilize these mobile populations and to create a disciplined workforce out of them (Marx, 1999b). The acts on vagrancy and poor laws allowed the authorities to brutally punish (through imprisoning, branding, flogging) those who refused to work, and new institutions such as poorhouses and workhouses were established to turn these mobile groups into sedentary wage labourers (Papadopoulos et. al. 2008: 42-82).

The formation of modern bureaucratic institutions made identification practices ever more systematic, routine and extensive (Dandeker, 1990; Noiriel, 2001; Torpey, 2000). The very advent of modern citizenship would not have been possible without the unambiguous identification of populations, since the distribution of rights and benefits of citizenship was limited to those who were officially recognized as citizens by the state bureaucracy. Although the status of citizenship was manipulated ideologically by the
ruling elites, to nationalize the working classes so as to prevent them from siding with the working classes of other states and to use them in their imperialist wars (see van Holthoon and van der Linden, 1998), the expansion of surveillance was nevertheless legitimized in the name of delivery of services to citizens. As modern citizenship advanced, identification documents (such as passports and national identity cards) began to be used systematically and the borders separating nation states became precise and fixed. As Torpey points out, one of the main characteristics of modern states is their aim to “monopolize the legitimate means of movement” over their territories (2000). When enforcing this monopoly, identity documents and border checks are vital instruments of modern states.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the advent of modernity and capitalism in the West owes much to colonialism. This overlap between modernity/capitalism and colonialism had consequences for surveillance as well. Modern identification techniques were either developed or mastered in the colonial contexts. Despite his overall neglect of the colonial foundations of Western capitalism (Venn, 2009), Foucault touched on this point when he stated that “a whole series of colonial models was brought back to the West, and the result was that the West could practice something resembling colonization, or an internal colonialism, on itself” (Foucault, 2003a: 103). Historical evidence proves Foucault’s observation. A whole set of surveillance techniques, including biometrics, identity cards, panoptic techniques for disciplining the workforce, cartographic methods for measuring and dividing the land, had their origins in the control of colonial subjects
and spaces by the Western powers (see Crampton 2010; Lyon 2009b; Pugliese 2010: 25-55; Zureik et. al. 2011). Colonialism continues to frame contemporary surveillance practices. Surveillance systems, such as drones, satellites, cameras and biometrics, were either developed or mastered in the neo-colonial wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine and Iraq. Subsequently, these systems have been deployed in Western contexts, at external territorial borders but also in urban contexts, to exclude peoples from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as migrants and homeless populations (Gregory, 2007; Graham, 2010).

While the colonial aspect of surveillance is rather unchanged, technical and institutional aspects of surveillance have been transformed since the 1990s. Compared to the old paper-based surveillance, new surveillance, which is backboned by digital technologies, is easier, deeper and continuous (GT Marx, 2002), with extended capabilities of social sorting (Lyon, 2003). The actors of surveillance have also become multiple. Today, not only states but also private security companies, international standard-setting organizations (such as the International Civil Aviation Organization [ICAO])\(^{34}\) and even international development organizations (such as the OECD)\(^{35}\) are involved in the development of identification systems at different levels, which usually results in systems of identification that are ever more diffuse (see Hayes, 2009; Lyon, 2009a; Bigo and Jeandesboz, 2010; Lyon and Topak, 2013).

\(^{34}\) ICAO sets the technical standards of the e-passports in order to ensure interoperability across countries. Most of the new e-ID card systems also follow ICAO standards.

\(^{35}\) See for instance OECD (2009), in which the economic benefits of digital identification are provided for policy makers.
Lyon (2009a) uses the term *governing by identification* to emphasize the current ever-growing push for identification by multiple authorities. According to Lyon, from the perspective of the authorities and institutions, identities of the subjects are no longer relevant; all that matters now are their identification records (2009a). Deleuze (1992), makes a similar point when he claims that the ‘individual’ has been replaced by the ‘dividual’ in contemporary societies, which he terms ‘societies of control’. The dividual is someone whose identity is reduced to a database code or a password, someone who is continuously regulated by diffuse mechanisms of control (1992). Lyon’s and Deleuze’s insights can be used to emphasize the post-political and post-ethical aspect of the new control systems. Digital surveillance systems reduce the political identities of the subjects (e.g., workers, refugees) into technical characteristics (e.g., asylum or visa application records), hence they depoliticize the subjects. Once reduced into a technical matter, responsibility towards the other diminishes, as ethics often requires face-to-face interaction.

These characteristics of new surveillance are observable in the context of border controls. The integration of digital technologies has greatly increased the identification power of the borders. Database technology plays the main part here by making identification diffuse and automatic. Databases can store, organize, combine and share

---

36 Although digital systems represent the post-ethical institutional attitude of the EU towards migrants, they are not powerful or pervasive enough to fully prevent the ethical solidarity of the EU populations. For instance, in the case of ‘300 Migrant Hunger Strikers’ in Greece, digital systems could not prevent ordinary Greek citizens from siding with the migrants. See Chapter 7 for a full discussion on this ethics of witnessing.
massive amounts of individual data on populations. With biometrics, now even the bodies of individuals are used for identification purposes: Driven by the assumption that they are fixed and stable entities that represent true information about individuals, bodies have become “passwords” (van der Ploeg, 2005).

The current application of database and biometrics technology in the context of border controls has also challenged the locality of the borders. Borders are no longer located only at the edges of the states; they are diffused inside and outside of state territories (Amoore, 2006; Balibar, 2002; Bigo, 2011; Broeders, 2007; Côté-Boucher, 2008; Lyon, 2005; Vaughan-Williams, 2010). “The border is everywhere” as Lyon (2005) points out, which sorts and categorizes people continuously. In the context of the EU borders, on the one hand, databases extend borders outside the EU; for instance, individuals are subjected to the sovereignty of the EU member states when they file their visa applications at the EU member state embassies (Bigo and Guild, 2005). On the other hand, for those individuals who succeed in entering the EU, there is now the possibility of status checking through the searches in the databases. The driving rationale behind identification is to facilitate expulsion (Broeders, 2007). Considering the parallel development of moving migration controls inside the states through employment sanctions, excluding undocumented migrants from the public services and, using scattered security checks and police surveillance over migrants in Europe (Lahav and
Guiraudon, 2000; Faure-Atger, 2008; Carrera and Merlino, 2009), the new databases indeed turn everywhere into a border within the EU.\(^{37}\)

The fact that borders are being deterritorialized by the integration of databases does not mean that territorial controls have lost their importance. On the contrary, while ‘the border is everywhere’, the practices and effects of the border are concentrated at the territorial edges of states, i.e., borderzones. Contrary to the optimistic views after the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which depicted a globalized, borderless world, the building of walls and fences have exponentially intensified in the last decade (Brown, 2010; Vallet and David, 2012; Rosiere and Jones, 2012). During the Cold War, between 1945 and 1991, 19 international or regional walls and fences were built; between 1991 and 2001, 7 walls were added to the 13 remaining walls; and since 2001, 28 new walls and fences either have been completed or in the process of being completed (Vallet and David, 2012: 112-113). These walls are often equipped with digital systems such as radars, sensors and thermal cameras (Rosiere and Jones, 2012). The wall at the US-Mexico border is the longest and the most sophisticated one in Western contexts, but walls and fences are rising at the external borders of the EU as well. The fences around the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco were first built in 1993 and they upgraded in 1995 and 2005 to prevent migration flows. The fence at the Greece-Turkey border was completed in 2012, and in 2013, another fence project was started at the Bulgaria-Turkey border.

\(^{37}\) Similar processes are at play in other Western contexts, such as in the US and Canada (see Sparke, 2006; Bracken-Roche et. al. 2013).
Other surveillance instruments that are deployed at the edges of the EU include radar systems, aerial vehicles, patrol vessels and vehicles, thermo-vision vans, surveillance coordination centres and satellite systems. EUROSUR, which is a system developed by the FRONTEX since 2008, forms the backbone of these systems. It became partially operational on December 2013. Once in full operation, the EUROSUR will enable automatic information exchange between the FRONTEX and national border authorities about the situation at the EU external borders. In addition to supplying data from existing surveillance systems (such as radars), the EUROSUR would also gather data from drones (or optionally manned aircrafts) and satellites. These developments demonstrate that, while borders are deterritorializing, their effects are concentrated at the edges of states. In the next chapter, drawing on the case of Greece-Turkey borderzones, this argument will be further substantiated.

While high-tech sophisticated surveillance systems are now widely used at territorial borders and beyond, conventional methods of control are also at play. In the context of Greece, for example, while high-tech systems are used to control the borderzone space, inside Greece, surveillance is practiced through such methods as racial profiling on the streets (exercised both by the police and racist groups), brutal violence, and detention, rather than through high-tech systems such as the VIS or drones.

Just as every other border, European borders are embedded in material and symbolic fields. It is mainly global structural inequalities, created by European colonialism and sustained by neoliberal globalization, that force individuals to migrate or
seek asylum in the EU. Operating as tools of apartheid, border controls are driven by the effort to sustain these global-structural inequalities through keeping people from the poorer parts of the world outside of the EU or tolerating their existence as subjects without political rights. Historically, ideologies of racism have been central in legitimizing the differential treatment of non-European categories by European apartheid. However, the material processes of neoliberal globalization have made old-fashioned racism outmoded – at least superficially. Entrepreneurial criteria were introduced alongside racist ones to facilitate the mobility of global elite citizens while excluding the global poor. For instance, now there are systems such as ESTA and ABC that aim to facilitate the mobility of wealthy groups even when these groups originate from disadvantaged racial backgrounds. Ideologies of post-politics intersect with racist/neoliberal rationales to provide further legitimation to European apartheid. Ideologies of post-politics have triumphed since the end of the Cold War and establishment of the neoliberal hegemony in Europe and reduced political issues (from welfare policies to migration) into technical and managerial matters (Mouffe, 2005; Rancière, 2004; Žižek, 2008). In the context of EU Borders, the ideology of post-politics reduces the political issue of migration into a technical one and legitimizes the development of extensive surveillance technologies.

4.2 The New Borders of the EU
The Schengen Agreement is the turning point in the management of mobility in the EU. The agreement was signed in 1985 by five member states (Belgium, France,
Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany). Five years later, with the Implementing Convention, systematic border controls were abolished within the participating EU countries. Gradually all the member states and some non-member states\(^{38}\) joined the Schengen area. The exceptions in member states are the U.K. and Ireland, which refused to enter into Schengen but took part in the police cooperation; new members Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, which need to harmonize their systems with other EU countries; and Cyprus, which is at the center of political controversies because of its divided territory (Europa, 2011a). The Schengen Agreement has always been a two-way process: while abolishing the internal borders for EU populations, it introduced strict mechanisms of control at the external borders, as well as inside the member states (Guild, 2009). New surveillance mechanisms were developed and such practices as scattered police surveillance over migrants within the borders of the EU have become routinized (Faure-Atger, 2008). The strategy for externalizing the EU borders is complementary to these processes, as it is aimed at expanding the surveillance net over migrants.

Surveillance is not always conducted by high-tech methods; conventional methods of racial profiling are also at play in controlling the Schengen space. Below is an analysis of the complex characteristics of these diffuse and territorial, technological and non-technological methods of surveillance: the SIS I and II, Eurodac, VIS, EES, ABC, ESTA, e-ID cards, e-residence cards, employment and welfare databases and territorial surveillance mechanisms (Fences, EUROSUR, and national surveillance systems).

---

\(^{38}\) Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Switzerland.
Schengen Information System (SIS) I and II

The SIS is the oldest European database, beginning operation in 1995. It contains data on both people and objects. The majority of the data on people are about undocumented migrants who are to be refused entry into the Schengen area; to a lesser extent, the SIS also contains data on missing persons and people who are wanted for arrest or extradition. The data on objects mostly include stolen identity cards, vehicles and firearms. The information on people that may be stored in the SIS includes their name, date and place of birth, sex, nationality, whether they are armed or not, the reason for their registration in the SIS, and actions to be taken when they are detected. Once the information is entered by a participant state, it is shared among the other members (Joint Supervisory Authority, 2011).

According to EU law, participant states can use the SIS for entering the information about people who pose a threat to public security, public policy or national security. These vague definitions, however, opened the way for member states to use the SIS largely for storing data on undocumented migrants (including failed asylum applicants and migrants without documents). As of March 2011, 716,797 people have been registered under the category of “unwanted aliens” in the SIS (Council of the European Union, 2011). Once a person is detected in the SIS, the common procedures are to refuse the visa application at consulates, refusing entry at the Schengen borders, or if
the person is found inside the states to start expulsion processes (Statewatch, 2005; Broeders, 2007; Brouwer, 2008; Guild, 2009).

In order to expand the identifying powers of the SIS, EU authorities established the SIS II in 2013; it differs from the SIS in two respects: First, the stored information is more extensive and now also includes biometrics (digital photographs and fingerprints); Second, the SIS II allows access by new organizations, such as Europol and national security agencies (Ahumada-Jaidi, 2010). The integration of biometrics into the SIS II is worth further discussion here because it makes new searches possible. The original SIS was a ‘hit/no-hit’ system: If someone’s identity was detected in the SIS, it produced a hit in the system. This process is called a ‘verification’ (one-to-one) search. On the other hand, the SIS II, with the help of biometrics, makes ‘identification’ (one-to-many) searches possible; i.e., comparison of one person’s fingerprints against all the fingerprints in the database. As a result, the SIS II has become an investigative database for “fishing expeditions” (Baldaccini, 2008: 38).

Whenever information about an undocumented migrant is entered into the SIS or SIS II, it is automatically shared among other member states. Often the undocumented migrant does not know when his/her data gets into the system. It is only when her/his visa application gets rejected at the EU consulates or entry is denied at the external EU borders, that s/he becomes aware of his/her database record. His/her access to remedies is extremely limited (Brouwer, 2008).

---

39 See Zureik and Hindle (2004) for more information about the differences between verification and identification searches in biometric databases.
EURODAC

The EURODAC database started to function in 2003. It stores fingerprints from asylum seekers at the time of their asylum application and from people who are found crossing the external borders of the EU without documents. The EURODAC aims to prevent multiple asylum applications. When someone applies for an asylum, member states can use the EURODAC to check if that person already has an application record that has been processed by another member state. According to the Dublin Regulation, the first EU state of entry is responsible for processing the asylum claim. If a former application record is found in the system, the asylum seeker can be sent to the original location of application (Europa, 2011b). As a result of the EURODAC system and the Dublin Regulation, member states that are located at the peripheries of the EU, such as Greece, Italy and Malta, have faced disproportionate pressure from asylum claims over the years (Triandafyllidou, 2011). The newly adopted Dublin III regulation (in 2014) is unlikely to change this situation because it does not change the principle of first country of asylum.\(^{40}\)

Besides being used for the purposes of preventing multiple asylum applications, EURODAC is also used for detecting and expelling undocumented migrants. Being aware of the threat of expulsion, undocumented migrants may refuse to reveal their countries of origin and destroy their identity documents once they are detected inside the EU (Broeders and Engbersen, 2007). Now, through the fingerprint search, if the

\(^{40}\) The specific impacts of the EURODAC and Dublin Regulation on Greece are further discussed in the next chapter.
authorities can locate undocumented migrants in the EURODAC as former asylum applicants, they can also access information about their countries of origin. This information may trigger the expulsion process (Broeders, 2007).

With EURODAC, asylum seekers are only given one chance to prove that they are ‘bona-fide’ refugees and not ‘bogus’ ones. If a member state rejects their claim, their exclusion from the EU becomes almost permanent: They cannot submit another application to another member state and they have extremely limited opportunities to contest the asylum decision.

The Visa Information System (VIS) and the EU’s New Border Package
The VIS stores biometric data (fingerprints and digital photographs) from visa applicants (Europa 2011c). The VIS started its operations in the North African countries (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) in 2011; the next destinations for the VIS are the Near East (Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria) and the Gulf Region (Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen). The VIS is one of the largest biometric database systems in the world. It is estimated that, once in full operation, it will register the visa records of 20 million people annually and 70 million people in the first five years of operation (Baldaccini 2008: 41).

---

41 According to the regulations, the fingerprint of the undocumented immigrant that is sent for comparison to the EURODAC is not stored nor can it be compared against the fingerprints of those who irregularly crossed the external EU borders. But more empirical data (by independent sources) is required to show how these systems are actually used by the authorities.
The VIS has four different uses. First, it is used at consulates when travellers apply for a visa. At this step, visa officers are able to check if the applicant’s visa has been previously rejected by another member state (which might be under a different name or passport) and access the reasons for the rejection. Second, while assessing an asylum claim, EU authorities are able to access the VIS data to see if the asylum claimer already has a visa application record. The third usage is to verify (via a one-to-one search) the visa holder’s identity at the external Schengen borders; at the time of arrival at the Schengen borders, the traveller’s fingerprints are compared against the ones that have been recorded in the VIS for that person. Finally, the VIS is used within the Schengen area for the purposes of both verification and identification. On the one hand, the authorities can use the VIS inside the Schengen states in order to verify the identity of visa holders and check whether they still have valid visas. On the other hand, the authorities can also use the VIS for identification (one-to-many) checks; if the authorities find someone residing within the EU without documents, they can compare his or her fingerprints against the entire the VIS database to find out if he or she has a former visa record.

As a complementary measure, the EU also plans to establish the Entry/Exit System (EES) by 2015 as a part of its New Border Package. The EES will register the entry and exit information (entry/exit time and place, length of authorized stay) of all visitors. Biometric data will be enrolled in the first entry, which will enable subsequent checks at the borders when exiting as well as within the Schengen area. If travellers do
not leave the EU before their visas’ expiry date, “an alert available to national authorities could be issued” (Commission of the European Communities, 2008: 8). As with the SIS II, the conditions of access to the VIS are defined broadly; national authorities and Europol can access the system (Europa, 2011d; Peers, 2009).

Despite the European Council’s obligation to member states to not discriminate people against “on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” when using the VIS (European Parliament and of the Council, 2008), the EU visa policies are discriminatory in the first place. As Mau (2010) points out, while citizens from privileged states in the world economy enjoy visa-free travel through visa waiver agreements between their governments, citizens from disadvantaged backgrounds in the world economy are obliged to follow long and burdensome visa application procedures without a clear prospect of success. Moreover, the deployment of Airline Liaison Officers (ALOs) and the imposition of carrier sanctions makes it ever more difficult for the nationals of visa-required countries to reach EU territories. ALOs provide immediate information to local border authorities and airlines on issues concerning document forgery in departing EU flights. In order to avoid financial penalties from carrier sanctions, private airlines also deploy private security agents to conduct security checks before the flights and attempt to identify passengers carrying forged documents.

Other systems in the proposed New Border Package aim at making certain adjustments to the above-discussed policies and systems. The Automated Border Control
System (ABC) would grant automated passage to registered travellers even if these travellers are citizens of a visa-required country. The Registered Traveller Status (RTS) would be awarded at the EU consulates or future common application centres based on travel history and financial status. At the external EU borders, border gates would read the information stored in the RTS cards and other required documents (e-passports, visas etc.) and check them against the relevant databases. If all checks are successful, registered travellers would be able to cross the borders automatically, without the need for interaction with border guards. The EU nationals and visa-exempt travellers could also use the system for easy passage with their e-passports. For the visa-exempt travellers who are not registered travellers, the EU is developing another system: the European Electronic System of Travel Authorisation (ESTA). The aim behind the ESTA is to simplify the border passage of visa-exempt travellers through checking in advance whether they meet the necessary requirements of entry or not. Both the ABC and ESTA are planned to be implemented by 2015 (Commission of the European Communities, 2008).

Internal Digital Systems: E-ID Cards, E-Residence Cards and Employment and Welfare Databases

If systems such as the VIS and ABC assess one’s credentials of entry at the Schengen borders and beyond, and the EES in combination with the VIS determine one’s right to stay within the EU, e-ID cards constitute the next step because they regulate one’s
conditions of access to citizenship services provided by the EU states. E-ID cards are used in such different contexts as receiving a tax return, opening a bank account, accessing labour market, enrolling in an educational institution and receiving health services. However, to the extent that e-ID cards enable citizens to access these services, they at the same time exclude non-citizens from accessing the same services, thus they operate as mechanisms of “social sorting” (Bennett and Lyon, 2008; Lyon, 2009a).

Many EU states have e-ID schemes that are already active or in the process of development. Although e-ID cards are principally developed by national governments to be used in national citizenship transactions, there are plans to harmonize these systems in order to make them compatible throughout the EU (European Commission, 2010; STORK, 2011).

For in-between categories of people, such as foreign workers who have the right to work and reside without having full citizenship status, conditions of access are also usually monitored and regulated through electronic means. For instance, in Germany, every foreign worker has to register on the Central Foreigners Register database in order to work (Topal, 2008). As a complementary measure, EU governments are using employment sanctions on workplaces that employ unregistered and undocumented workers (Lahav G. and Guiraudon V. 2000). In addition to employment databases, the EU also promotes the usage of e-residence cards by foreign workers and permanent

42 As of 2009, out of the 32 countries (including 27 Member States, 3 European Economic Area Countries and 2 candidate countries), 13 countries were actively deploying e-ID cards, 12 countries were using paper-based ID cards but had e-ID card plans for the near future and 5 countries were not issuing any form of ID cards (IDABC, 2009).
residents. As with the e-ID cards, the e-residence card systems are planned to be harmonized throughout the EU states. The main aim of these internal surveillance systems is to exclude undocumented migrants, who may be former asylum seekers or visa travelers, from participating in various spheres of social life (work, health, education) – despite the fact that such exclusion violates the human rights of migrants (see PICUM, 2014). 43

**Back to Territorial Borders: Fences, EUROSUR, FRONTEX and National Surveillance Systems**

The development of the new database and ID card systems clearly move EU borders within and beyond the EU. However, this should not mean that the territorial borders are losing their importance. On the contrary, surveillance at the territorial edges of the EU is becoming ever more intensified with the construction of the fences and the development of new surveillance mechanisms such as the EUROSUR and national surveillance systems. In fact, as it will be suggested in the following chapter, compared to diffuse ones, the territorial surveillance systems are more intensively practiced and they have wider and deadlier effects on migrants. Digital systems (such as the VIS) greatly limit migrants’ chances of reaching the EU through regular ways. As a result, out of

43 Estimates vary widely on the number of undocumented migrants currently residing in the EU. Whereas the Commission claims that there are approximately 8 million undocumented migrants (European Commission 2009: 4), the results of the Clandestino Research Project, finalized in 2008 show that the range is more likely between 1.9 and 3.8 million (Clandestino Project, 2009).
desperation, many migrants, end up at the territorial borders where they encounter diverse surveillance mechanisms.

The fences around the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco are the first examples of the sealing of Europe’s territorial borders. The fences in this region were first built during 1993-1995 in order to prevent migrants from entering Spanish territory. A 1992 dated readmission agreement with Morocco provided Spain with the legal instruments to return back migrants even when they have succeeded in climbing the fences. The year 2005 marks a tragic turning point in the history of the fences in this region: In that year, the Spanish and Moroccan security forces killed at least thirteen migrants, and approximately 700 migrants who have succeeded in climbing the fence were treated in inhumane ways and deported back to their countries of origin. After these events, Spanish authorities, with the support of the EU, upgraded the fences: They increased the height and added new technologies such as movement detectors, video cameras, night vision cameras (Migreurop, 2010: 7).

While the Morocco-Spain route is still active, since 2009, migratory flows into the EU have shifted towards the Greece-Turkey Border. In order to prevent migration, Greece followed the example of Spain and constructed a fence in 2012 at the land section of its border with Turkey. As in Ceuta and Melilla, the fence is backboned by digital technologies such as radars and thermal cameras. In 2013, the Bulgarian government

---

44 The Guardian, 28.05.2014.
announced a fence project at the Bulgaria-Turkey land border; the project is planned to be completed in 2014.\textsuperscript{46}

In Greece and Bulgaria, the fences cover only limited portions of the borders.\textsuperscript{47} There are also sea borders (such as the Greece-Turkey sea border) that cannot be covered by fences. The EU and national authorities developed the EUROSUR and accompanying mechanisms (such as radar systems and aircrafts) to expand surveillance on these regions. The EUROSUR was developed since 2008 by the FRONTEX and it became partially operational in December 2013. Once fully operational, the EUROSUR will establish communication among the border authorities of the member states and FRONTEX during border operations (European Commission, 2011). In addition to using national surveillance systems (such as radars), the EUROSUR will also gather surveillance data from satellites and drones (or optionally manned aircrafts) (Hayes and Vermeulen, 2012; Hayes et al, 2014).

The EU also provides extensive funding to member states for upgrading their surveillance inventory: Between 2007-2013, over EUR 1,820 million was allocated to member states. The member states located at the peripheries of Europe (mainly Greece, Spain and Italy) received the highest amount of funding from the EBF (European Borders Fund). The norm for these countries is to have 75% of the costs of new purchases covered by funds from the EBF, with the remaining 25% coming from their own national

\textsuperscript{46} Balkan Insight, 20.01.2014.
\textsuperscript{47} The fence at the Greece-Turkey borders covers only 12.5 km land section of the 206 km-long border, while the fence at the Bulgaria-Turkey border, once completed, will cover 30 km of the 210 km long land border.
funds. This funding enabled countries to continuously add new surveillance instruments to their inventories, including helicopters, planes, patrol vessels, patrol vehicles, thermal cameras, night-vision goggles, land-based radar systems and so on (EBF, 2013).

FRONTEX units take the lead in establishing the EU-funded, sophisticated surveillance mechanisms, including the EUROSUR and radar systems, in the member states. But their activities reach well beyond that. FRONTEX units have continuous presence at the EU external borders (such as in the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea, and at the Greece-Turkey land borders), and they assist national authorities in border controls. FRONTEX units also provide training activities for the national border guards, assist them in screening the arriving migrants, and pioneer the usage of technologically mediated risk-analysis methods such as the GIS (Geographic Information System), which are used in identifying common crossing sections at the borders so that FRONTEX and national authorities can deploy their patrolling units to these sections.

These realities of the FRONTEX, fences, the EUROSUR and supporting national surveillance mechanisms demonstrate that we should be careful to not over-emphasize the deterritorialization of the border controls with the database systems. While database systems indeed extend the border within and beyond the EU, the fences, the EUROSUR and national technologies further intensify the level of controls at the external border sites. These diverse systems share one important commonality: social sorting (Lyon, 2003; 2009). Just as the database systems, the EUROSUR surveillance mechanisms sort people based on their structural backgrounds. Each year thousands of people from the
Global South and East and former European colonies end up taking risky journeys to reach EU territories (Migreurop 2009, 2010, 2011; ProAsyl 2013). All of these systems are primarily used to block them.

**Low-tech Surveillance**

High-tech surveillance systems intensify surveillance at the territorial borders and beyond, but conventional policing methods such as racial profiling on the streets and brutal violence also continue. In the context of Greece, the effects of digital systems are particularly limited: for instance, database and e-ID systems do not have any effect on migrants because migrants are already employed in ‘illegal’ workplaces in the informal economy where they are harshly exploited. Everyday surveillance over migrants is conducted through police-sweep operations. Once the migrants are arrested, the Greek police check the validity of their documents with the help of the databases. The main aim of these operations is not to establish the identity of migrants or to facilitate their expulsion (which is often not possible because the embassies of the migrants do not cooperate) but rather to discourage migrants so that they would voluntarily leave Greece. Even in the Greek airports, the places where most sophisticated surveillance technologies are located, the authorities seem to conduct surveillance primarily through conventional methods, such as through putting pressure with questions on racially profiled migrants. Racist groups also exercise surveillance over migrants: They patrol the streets with their motorcycles and harass migrants, sometimes beating and even stabbing them. Further
information about these low-tech/conventional methods of surveillance is provided in Chapter 6, where material violence and migrant subjectivities are discussed.

**Externalization of the European Borders**

Another step towards securing the political space of the EU is through the externalization of the European borders. During the last decade, under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU authorities have concentrated their efforts on involving southern Mediterranean neighbours in the security of the EU’s external borders (Bialasiewicz, 2012; Bialasiewicz, et.al. 2013). Before the Arab Spring, the EU had been long-criticized for endorsing the legitimacy of autocratic leaders in the region (such as Kaddafi in Libya). Little has changed with regards to the EU’s migration and border policies after the Arab Spring. Recently the EU has proposed ‘migration and mobility partnerships’ to Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. Morocco was the first country to sign the agreement on June 2013 (Europa 2013). The agreement facilitates the mobility of some Moroccan professionals (e.g., students, researchers, business professionals), but the main emphasis is still on migration control and readmission. The EU’s migration and border agreements with Libya are also still in effect (Europeaid, 2013). In a rather informal way, other forms of EU-initiated extra-territorial control activities are taking place in many North African countries, such as through the establishment of EU-funded surveillance systems and organization of training activities for migration and border officials.
The cooperation between the EU and Turkey has recently also significantly improved. Turkey signed a memorandum of cooperation with the FRONTEX in 2012 and initialized a readmission agreement with the EU on 2013 (to be finalized in three years, or when the EU lifts the visa requirement for Turkish citizens). Turkey has also begun to improve its border surveillance capacity with the funds provided by the EU. The memorandum of cooperation enhanced the level of cooperation among the Greek/EU and Turkish border authorities in the region. But it is the readmission agreement that would have the biggest impact on the situation. Once the agreement comes into full effect, Turkey would be obliged to take back all migrants - not only Turkish nationals - who crossed the Greece-Turkey border without documents.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, the technical characteristics of the European identification dispositif were analyzed. This dispositif includes elements as diverse as the SIS I and II, EURODAC, VIS, ESTA, ABC, e-ID cards, national databases, EUROSUR, FRONTEX, fences, drones, satellites, patrol vehicles, thermal cameras, radar systems and everyday racist violence. The dispositif operates through territorial and deterritorialized, high-tech and low-tech ways. Databases such as the VIS and EURODAC have made it possible to automatically identify individuals automatically beyond and within EU territories, while e-ID cards have reinforced mobile controls over them. But the diffusion of the borders with digital technologies should not mean that the territorial controls at the external
borders have lost their significance. In fact, with the walls, fences, EUROSUR and other national surveillance mechanisms (such as radar systems and thermal cameras), territorial controls have intensified at the edges of EU territories. Low-technological and conventional methods of surveillance are also at play, particularly in local contexts: Police authorities and racist groups use racial profiling on the streets and exercise various forms of violence over migrants without the involvement of any high-tech surveillance system.

The European identification dispositif, through territorialized and deterritorialized, technological and non-technological ways, sorts people based on their structural backgrounds and thus perpetuates existing global structural inequalities. While groups from privileged positions in global capitalism enjoy extended mobility rights, those who belong to the poorer regions of the world are excluded. It is the material-symbolic structure of Europe that gives coherence to the European identification dispositif. The historical material processes of colonialism and racism and their contemporary manifestations in the format of neoliberal-globalization and post-politics, play the main part in stabilizing the diverse elements of the dispositif and giving shape to their practices.

In this chapter, the technical characteristics of the diverse elements of the European identification dispositif have been discussed. However, one also needs to study how these elements are practiced at ground level. In order to do so, in the following chapters, the focus is the specific context of the Greece-Turkey borders.
PART II: LIFE AND DEATH AT THE GREECE-TURKEY BORDERS

Chapter 5: The Biopolitical Border in Practice: Surveillance and Death at the Greece–Turkey Borderzones

In the previous chapter diverse technical elements of the EU borders are discussed. This chapter narrows the focus of the dissertation to examine how the EU borders operate in practice at the Greece-Turkey borderzones. The Greek and FRONTEX authorities have established diverse surveillance mechanisms (from radar surveillance systems to a fence) to control the borderzone spaces and to monitor, intercept, apprehend, and push back migrants or to block their passage. The more surveillance intensified the more migrants felt the brutal reality of the EU borders. Many have died in dangerous routes to avoid detection. Many others have been injured.

Following Foucault’s emphasis on ‘biopolitics as practice’ and focusing on specific practices and effects of the border, this chapter addresses current debates in the study of borders and biopolitics. The location of contemporary borders has been much debated in the literature. This chapter provides a nuanced understanding of borders by demonstrating that while borders are diffusing beyond and inside state territories, their practices and effects are concentrated at the edges of state territories—ie, borderzones. Borderzones are biopolitical spaces in which surveillance is most intense and migrants
suffer the direct threat of injury and death. Applying biopolitics in the context of borderzones also prompts us to revisit the concept. While Foucault posits that biopolitics is the product of the historical transition away from sovereign powers controlling territory and imposing practices of death towards governmental powers managing population mainly through pastoral, productive, and deterritorialized techniques, the case of the Greece–Turkey borderzones demonstrates that biopolitics operates through sovereign territorial controls and surveillance, practices of death and exclusion, and suspension of rights. This chapter also highlights the fact that, despite the biopolitical realities, migrants continue to cross the borders.

**Introduction**

In recent years the Greece–Turkey borders have become the main points of undocumented entry into the European Union (EU). Two routes have been used by the migrants: the Aegean Sea route and the Evros land/river route. In response to the flow of migration, the Greek and FRONTEX authorities have established diverse surveillance technologies at the borders. Technologies already in use include thermal cameras, thermo-vision vans, patrol units, helicopters, planes, a fence, radar surveillance systems, the Surveillance Operational Center, and Geographical Information Systems (GIS); full operationalization of the National Coordination Center, and EUROSUR and its satellites and drones (unmanned aerial vehicles) is in process. These technologies render the borderzone space controllable. The Greek and FRONTEX authorities rely on these
technologies to monitor, intercept, apprehend, and push back migrants or to block their passage.

For the migrants, surveillance is a matter of life and death. Many migrants have drowned in unsafe vessels in the Aegean Sea and Evros (Meriç) river while trying to cross the borderzone quickly to avoid detection; many families have been separated after crossing; many have got lost at night; many have been intercepted at the borderzones, pushed back by the Greek authorities, and abandoned to death; many have tried their chances of entry multiple times, even after surviving pushback, interception, and boat incidents, each time risking their lives. Between 1994 and 2010, there were 952 migrant deaths at the Greece–Turkey borderzones (UNITED, 2010), and there have been more than 300 deaths since 2010 (Infomobile, 2012; ProAsyl, 2013). The real numbers are likely much higher, since not every case is reported. Cases of mental and physical injury have not been documented but seem to be countless (MSF, 2010).

These realities demonstrate that the Greece–Turkey borderzones are biopolitical spaces where surveillance intensifies and migrant lives are held hostage. An equally important characteristic of the borderzones is their indeterminate legal status between sovereign power and human rights. While all border control activities directly or indirectly violate human rights and international refugee law, border authorities maintain that their operation is their sovereign territorial right. While all migrant deaths and injuries directly or indirectly result from border control activities, the authorities blame human smugglers and harsh geographical conditions for the migrant deaths and injuries.
Practically speaking, then, borderzones are spaces where human rights are suspended in favor of sovereign practices, and migrants are left to die. This is not to imply that human rights do effectively exist for migrants outside of the borderzones, but rather to emphasize that human rights violations for migrants are concentrated at the borderzones.

Drawing on the empirical realities of the Greece–Turkey borderzones, this chapter addresses current debates in the study of borders and biopolitics. Within border studies, many scholars have argued that contemporary borders can no longer be understood as territorially fixed spaces that are located only at the edges of states; that borders now extend beyond and inside state territories through pre-emptive surveillance and diffused security checks (e.g., Balibar, 2002; Bigo, 2011; Broeders and Hampshire, 2013; Dijstelbloem and Meijer, 2011; Lyon 2005; Rumford 2008; Vaughan-Williams, 2010). Some others have pointed out that borders are further solidifying at the edges of states through fences and walls that are equipped with digital surveillance technologies (e.g., Brown, 2010; Rosière and Jones, 2012; Vallet and David, 2012). Moving from “the concept of the border to the notion of bordering practice” as suggested by Parker and Vaughan-Williams (2012: 729, original emphasis), this chapter provides a nuanced understanding of borders by demonstrating that while borders are diffusing beyond and inside state territories, it is at the edges of states—i.e., borderzones— that their techniques and effects are concentrated.

The characteristics of the borderzones also urge us to reconsider the concept of biopolitics, which has become a “buzzword” in diverse literatures (Lemke, 2011: 1),
often used without much critical reflection. Contrary to his methodological commitment
to studying the material and complex practices of power, Foucault implies a progressive
transformation from a sovereign mode of power that is concerned with exerting control
over territory and practices of death to a modern biopolitical one, which manages the
population primarily with productive and deterritorialized techniques of security.
However, the case of the Greece–Turkey borderzones demonstrates that sovereign
territorial surveillance, practices of death and exclusion, and suspension of rights are all
central aspects of biopolitical control.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. In the discussion that follows, the
chapter first engages with the debates in border studies and biopolitics literatures to
develop an analytical framework for understanding the biopolitics of borderzones.
Second, the chapter demonstrates how biopolitical controls operate over migrants at the
Greece–Turkey borderzones. The final section concludes by summarizing the findings
and arguments in the chapter.

5.1 Biopolitics of borderzones
The location of contemporary borders has been much debated in the literature (Johnson et
al, 2011). In line with Balibar’s renowned argument on the “vacillation of borders”
(2002: 89), many scholars have demonstrated that contemporary borders move inside and
beyond the territories of states through such techniques as visa policies, carrier sanctions,
employment of liaison officers, biometric databases, electronic identity cards, diffused
surveillance over disadvantaged groups, and profiling of travellers (e.g., Balibar, 2002;
Bigo, 2011; Broeders and Hampshire, 2013; Dijstelbloem and Meijer, 2011; Lyon, 2005; Rumford, 2008; Vaughan-Williams, 2010). Some other scholars have pointed out that borders are in the process of solidification at the edges of states, as evidenced by the global expansion of walls and fences, often equipped with digital surveillance technologies such as cameras and radars, in the last ten years (e.g., Brown, 2010; Rosière and Jones, 2012; Vallet and David, 2012).

While scholarship on ‘border is everywhere’ has shown that borders can no longer be understood simply as territorial lines, overemphasis on the diffusion of borders may run the risk of obscuring an accurate understanding of how contemporary borders function. Speaking of the Greece–Turkey borders, for example, while it is true that Schengen visa policies, carrier sanctions, liaison officers, and database technologies (such as the SIS and VIS), function as remote and mobile borders, the effects of these instruments are limited in their scope. They operate over relatively rich migrants who attempt to enter the EU from regular border crossing points, using either legal or forged documents. For many others, such instruments have deterrent effects more than diffuse ones. Having no prospect of reaching EU with legal documents and no money to afford forged documents, these migrants end up at the borderzones where they encounter diverse surveillance practices. While some of these practices (such as camera surveillance, identity checks, and police raids) are also found beyond borderzones, such
as in urban contexts, they are concentrated primarily at borderzones. Migrants experience the most extreme effects of othering and abjection in the borderzone space. In fact, many migrants succeed in reaching Greece only after multiple attempts, and, therefore, experience the same effects over and over again.

The concept of biopolitics can be utilized as an analytical tool for understanding the complex nature of contemporary borders, which operate in both diffuse and concentrated forms. Foucault defines biopolitics as “the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life” (1998: 140). This definition of biopolitics does not refer to a fixed locality; thus, any space where calculation is practiced to manage individuals can be considered a biopolitical space.

Such emphasis on calculation prioritizes the study of the practices and effects of borders. Here I am reminded of Foucault’s methodological approach, which focuses on the material practices and effects of power rather than narratives about power. This emphasis on practice should not be understood as an empiricist perspective—the one that disregards what exists at a deeper level than the empirically observable (e.g., Frauley, 2007). In the context of European borders, for instance, theorists such as Balibar and Wallerstein (e.g., Balibar, 2004a; Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991) have demonstrated how the historical and material structure of European borders was formed via colonialism and racism, and sustained its core in the neoliberal globalized era. Other theorists, such as

---

48 This is particularly true in Greece where migrants are subjected to systematic police intimidation and racist attacks organized by the neo-Nazi party, Golden Dawn. Rather than following preemptive or technological logics, these attacks follow old logics of racial violence (see HRW, 2012). More information will be provided about these non-technological forms of control in the next chapter.
Rancière (e.g., 1999) and Žižek (e.g., 2008: 199–288), in their different ways, have pointed out how this structure continued to operate within a post-political framework which reduces the political issue of migration to a managerial and technical one.49 But, following Foucault, one also has to study how this structure is practiced at the ground level in order to understand the current condition of borders and their specific effects—for structures need to be practiced in order to exist.

Following this methodological approach to practice, and drawing on empirical data, I argue that, while it is true that biopolitical practices are dispersed inside and beyond territorial borders, they are concentrated primarily at the borderzones, and have direct and brutal effects on migrants. Any biopolitical technique combined with misfortune or accident can have deadly consequences for migrants at the borderzones. This is not to suggest that borderzones clearly demarcate the ‘inside’ from the ‘outside’. Speaking of the Greece–Turkey borderzones, there have been many cases of migrants who managed to reach Greek territory but were nevertheless forcefully pushed back or returned to the Turkish side. Surveillance practices, too, not only calculate Greek territory. Turkish territories are also calculated to ensure pre-emptive control of migrants before they reach the borderlines. Therefore, rather than fixed territorial lines, borderzones should be understood as extended spaces of biopolitical management that are located at the margins of states.

49 These structural aspects of the EU borders are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.
While Foucault’s notion of biopolitics as practice is essential for understanding borderzones, his broader theory of biopolitics is somewhat vague and surprisingly teleological to fully capture all of these aspects of the borderzones. Despite his earlier methodological commitment to studying material practices of power with an archaeological and genealogical opposition to linear and totalizing narratives (Foucault, 2002; 2003b), Foucault’s analysis of biopolitics as governmentality implies a “progressive unfolding” (Dupont and Pearce, 2001: 134). According to Foucault, since the late 16th century (particularly from the 18th century onwards) there has been a transformation from sovereign powers exerting control over territories and practices of death to biopolitical and governmental ones that manage the population primarily with productive and deterritorialized techniques of security (2007; 2008). Although Foucault emphasized that we should not understand this passage as a replacement of one society by another (2007: 107), his empirical focus still implied a gradual transformation.50

To begin with, Foucault’s underestimation of territory is problematic. According to Foucault (2007), when we pass from sovereignty to biopolitics/governmentality, the primary concern of power shifts from territory to population. Following this argument, Foucault focuses on non-territorial population management techniques such as the calculation of health risks and targeted medical campaigns (2007: 10), probabilistic

50 The drawback in Foucault’s analysis is also related to his under-theorization of sovereignty (see Latham, 2000: 8; Singer and Weir, 2006). In contrast to Foucault’s argument, the end of the pre-modern regimes did not represent the end of sovereignty; rather it represented transformation in the ‘social structure’ (Latham, 2000) and ‘symbolic regime’ (Singer and Weir, 2006) of sovereignty. Rather than the end of sovereignty, what we are witnessing today is the transformation of sovereignty under the economic conditions of neoliberal globalization and the symbolic conditions of post-politics.
calculation on future criminal activities (2007: 7), and the use of statistics and political arithmetic (2007: 104–108). Even when he talks about space (for example in town planning), he is careful to point out that in the biopolitical era, space is minimally regulated in order to enable circulation and free passage, as opposed to enforcing enclosure and circumscription (2007: 18). However, as Elden (2007; 2010; 2013) points out, there is no reason why the same calculative techniques that apply to population should not apply to territory. In fact, historical evidence suggests that territorial calculation techniques emerged around the same time as population calculation techniques (Elden, 2013). Here, the term ‘territory’ should not be confused with ‘land,’ which is owned and distributed simply for economic purposes (2007: 574). As Elden puts it: “territory is more than merely land, but a rendering of the emergent concept of ‘space’ as a political category: owned, distributed, mapped, calculated, bordered, and controlled” (2007: 578).

At the borderzones, territorial calculations intensify with the help of diverse surveillance technologies. Although sovereign powers have historically applied various techniques of calculation to control territory (e.g., Crampton, 2010: 94; Elden, 2010: 809), the development of digital surveillance technologies such as cameras, drones, integrated surveillance systems, and GIS-based risk analysis methods marks a significant change in how these calculations are carried out and in their effects on different groups (e.g., Graham, 2005; Graham and Wood, 2003; Klauser, 2013; Lyon, 2007). Digital surveillance technologies automatically organize space for selective access. Migrant
bodies are monitored, categorized, sorted, and excluded as these technologies are put to use at the borderzones.

If the importance of territorial calculations and surveillance in the operations of biopolitics is clear, then we should modify another problematic point in Foucault’s biopolitics: his gradual prioritization of pastoral–productive aspects of power over repressive ones. Foucault’s model of the shift away from sovereignty towards biopolitics implies that the primary purpose of power is to foster the life capacities of bodies, rather than to exclude them by law, or punish them using practices of death and exclusion. While in Society Must be Defended (2003a) and The History of Sexuality Volume I (1998), Foucault studied the productive aspects of power together with their dark side in repressive regimes, such as in the case of Nazi racism, his later emphasis, starting with Security, Territory, Population (2007), was largely on productive aspects of power under governmentality. He stated that biopolitics is more about indirect governance of the populations (see, e.g., 2007: 87–110; 2008) with a pastoral care and concern that is recast under a modern secular format to make them productive (see, e.g., 2007: 115–185; succinctly in 1982: 782–784).\(^{51}\) Foucault’s model of biopolitics may have still involved the exclusion of populations who pose a threat to the lives and freedoms of productive subjects.\(^{52}\) But I would maintain not only that exclusion and death occupied a marginal place in his later empirical analysis (Agamben, 1998: 4–7), but that Foucault did not

---

\(^{51}\) Foucault-inspired governmentality literature largely follows this line of argument, underemphasizing the repressive aspects of power (see Walters, 2012: 71–74).

\(^{52}\) For an elaboration and review of this line of argument, see Dillon and Neal (2008).
sufficiently analyze how different groups within the ‘population’ are treated differently as a result of structural inequalities (Dupont and Pearce, 2001; Fassin, 2009).

The claim that productive and pastoral aspects of power are dominant over repressive ones is a highly questionable one, given that groups from disadvantaged backgrounds are subjected to ever more intense repression, exclusion, and exploitation today, at both national and global levels. Rather than ontologically prioritizing one form of power over another, one should, following the insights of Dupont and Pearce (2001) and Fassin (2009), take into account how material biopolitical practices are driven by, perpetuate, or mask structural inequalities. Such focus on the material–structural aspects of biopolitical practices is particularly important when studying borders—as borders always sort groups on the basis of their structural positions.

In the context of the Greece–Turkey borders, it is highly doubtful whether border control policies really increase the productivity or protect the freedom of EU populations. Rather, as with the ongoing austerity measures which have had devastating effects on Greek society, these policies seem to protect primarily the interests of the EU elites and their contractors. With regard to migrants, the picture is ever clearer. It is the practices

---

53 In fact, even when some policies increase the productivity of certain segments of the population, this still does not mean that there is any pastoral care involved. Such programs are often aimed to off-load responsibility to individuals to mask structural inequalities.

54 Here one can also find great value in the ‘surveillance as social sorting’ perspective (e.g., Lyon, 2007).

55 Major security companies have had a great influence over EU security policies. The EU has given billions of euros to these entities to undertake security ‘research’ and to develop the EUROSUR and other border technologies (see Hayes and Vermeulen, 2012; Hayes et al, 2014). It is also clear that the EU’s border and asylum policies overburden member states whose borders are external borders of the EU (Triandafyllidou, 2011). In fact, a majority of migrants who succeed in crossing the Greece–Turkey borders do not want to stay in Greece because of the economic crisis, racist violence, immense difficulties
of death and exclusion, which are all related to migrants’ disadvantaged structural positioning in the global capitalist order, rather than productive and pastoral biopolitics that are the dominant aspects of power at the borderzones.

These practices of death and exclusion can actualize themselves only after the suspension of rights—another point that remains unclear in Foucault’s work (Agamben, 1998: 5–6). Agamben’s contribution to biopolitics is essential in this context. Agamben (1998) shows how sovereign powers suspend rights to produce the biopolitical body, or bare life. Under the sovereign suspension of rights, inside and outside become indistinguishable from each other and individuals are reduced to mere biological entities deprived of political status. They are, in other words, included only through their exclusion from the political community.

The ways in which borderzones operate largely fit into these descriptions. They operate as liminal spaces, or zones of indistinction, where human rights are suspended and migrant bodies exist only in so far as they can be excluded at any time by border practices. This is not to suggest that border control authorities do not strategize their deployment of law at the borderzones. Agamben, despite his largely undifferentiated understanding of sovereignty, hints at this point when he states that today “law is in force

in accessing the asylum procedures, and extremely low asylum acceptance rates. But they are trapped inside Greece. Over the years the Dublin II regulation and the EURODAC database, which obliges migrants to claim asylum in the first EU country of arrival, has been used by the EU states to send migrants back to Greece. Since January 2011 Dublin II returns were suspended by the European Court of Human Rights because of the inhuman conditions of detention and the failure of the Greek asylum system. However, migrants are still trapped inside Greece because of intensive surveillance at Greek Airports (supported again by FRONTEX) and on the Greece–Italy sea route. The newly adopted Dublin III regulation is unlikely to have much impact on the overall situation, as it neither changes the principle of first country of asylum, nor removes de facto border controls over migrants inside the ‘borderless’ EU.
without significance” (1998: 51, emphasis in original). But a Foucauldian emphasis on strategic calculation should also be applied to fully understand the operation of law at the borderzones. Just like territory, law is also calculated at the borderzones. Although all border control activities directly or indirectly violate fundamental human rights and the international refugee law, all efforts are made by the Greek authorities to pre-empt the entry of migrants while they are still on the Turkish side, or to intercept them at the borderlines to discourage their passage—practices that they maintain as their sovereign territorial right. They then ask the Turkish authorities to apprehend migrants. While the practices of pushbacks and deportations from the Greek side also continue, they are carried out secretly and, thus, strategically. When migrants die or get injured as a consequence of these border operations—in riskier routes, in overcrowded or unsafe vessels, while rushing to avoid detection, or sometimes even during or after pushbacks and interceptions—the authorities simply deny the existence of pushbacks and blame human smugglers and harsh geographic conditions rather than referring to a sovereign right to kill migrants. Yet, practically speaking, sovereign border practices reign supreme over human rights and migrants are abandoned to death at the borderzones. These realities of the borderzones also demonstrate the impotence of the humanitarianism-driven (rather than properly political) and state-centric and state-

56 Including the right to life, the right to seek asylum, and the right to protection from ill treatment and collective expulsion—as well as the United Nations Refugee Convention, which prohibits refoulement. 57 This attitude is shared at the EU level. After the death of the 359 migrants in the October 2013 Lampedusa tragedy, the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs simply off-loaded responsibility for deaths to human smugglers and even called for more border surveillance (European Commission, 2013).
dependent regulations on human rights when these are measured against the sovereign suspension of rights (see Agamben 1998: 133–134; see also Lechte and Newman, 2013; Nyers 2006).

To sum up, territorial calculations and surveillance, practices of death and exclusion, and suspension of rights all play key roles in shaping and implementing biopolitical interventions at the borderzones. This is not to suggest that these apparatuses are successful in preventing migrant mobility and reducing migrants into homo sacers—devoid of not only protection but also agency. As I will demonstrate below, rather than preventing migration, surveillance technologies shift its route to risky areas that are harder to control; and migrants, despite the great risk, continue to cross from these areas and challenge biopolitical controls.

5.2 Surveillance and death at the Greece–Turkey borderzones

There are two crossing routes from Turkey to Greece: the Aegean Sea and the Evros land/river route. The migration route shifted from the Aegean Sea towards the Evros land river route in 2010 and has shifted back to the Aegean Sea since August 2012. There are also indications that the crossings from the Turkey–Bulgaria land route, which was unused in the previous years, are increasing. The majority of the migrants come from Afghanistan and Middle Eastern countries (recently mostly from Syria) as a result of wars, conflicts, and poverty. Migrants from many other Asian and African countries are also involved in smaller numbers.
The Greek and FRONTEX authorities have responded to migration flows by increasing surveillance capacities at the borders. Although the Greek authorities already possessed extensive surveillance equipment, they have continually updated their inventory with the financial support of the EU External Borders Fund. FRONTEX’s involvement in border controls, with its own personnel, equipment, and budget, has also greatly increased the surveillance capacity at the borders. This involvement has been continuous at the Aegean Sea since 2008 and in the Evros region since 2010. Due to the secrecy of FRONTEX operations, there is no accurate information about the degree to which FRONTEX units are involved in border operations. But even if we were to assume that FRONTEX units have not taken part in actual pushback, deterrence, and diversion measures, their technical support has certainly facilitated such operations.

The involvement of FRONTEX in Greece is a continuation of its activities at the external borders of the EU, particularly southern coastlines, since 2005. Despite ongoing criticisms by human rights groups, FRONTEX has gradually extended the scope of its activities not only in actual border operations but also through indirect means, such as new surveillance mechanisms developed in collaboration with private security corporations (particularly the EUROSUR), technologically mediated risk analysis, and cooperation agreements with the third countries. While all of these activities have directly or indirectly resulted in human rights violations, FRONTEX has not been held accountable.

---

58 See Marin (2011) for an analysis of FRONTEX’s previous operations.
There have been some efforts to make FRONTEX more respectful of human rights, especially for the principle of non-refoulement, but ultimate responsibility still lies with the hosting member states. Attempts to hold FRONTEX accountable are further impeded by the lack of an effective complaints mechanism and the lack of transparency regarding their operations and their agreements with third countries (see O’Reilly, 2013; PACE, 2013). In these efforts, the indirect consequences of FRONTEX’s surveillance and research and development activities on human rights are not problematized. Nor is the need to reinstate migrants as political subjects (rather than non-political objects of humanitarianism) emphasized, or sovereignty of the hosting states sufficiently challenged. These realities also demonstrate the need to detach human rights from the humanitarian mercy of the state and to relocate it into the sphere of equal rights in order to effectively contest the logic and practice of sovereignty.\(^59\)

The EU gives billions of euros to FRONTEX and major security corporations to develop EUROSUR and other systems to seal itself off from migrants (Hayes and Vermeulen, 2012; Hayes et al, 2014). Surveillance systems, however, cannot establish total control over border regions. Rather, they force migrants to find new and often riskier routes of crossing and to use riskier methods of entry. Prior to the construction of the fence, for instance, the 12.5 km land section of the Evros border was the most common crossing section, as it was the least dangerous one. Now that the land section of this

\(^{59}\) This is, of course, not to underestimate the importance of refugee advocacy institutions and groups in challenging border controls, but rather to point out the limits of humanitarian and state-centric and state-dependent laws and approaches.
border is ‘sealed’, many migrants cross over the Evros River and Aegean Sea using ever-riskier methods of entry and at great risk of death. Some others have begun using the Turkey–Bulgaria route, which was an unused route only a few years ago but no less dangerous. In other words, the primary effects of the technological systems are biopolitical rather than preventative.

**Surveillance at the Aegean Sea**

Migrants use boats or small ships to reach the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Patmos, Leros, Kos, Agathonisi, Farmakonisi, and Symi, which are located a few kilometers away from Turkey. In response, the Greek coast guards use patrol vessels and boats, helicopters, planes, thermal cameras, binoculars, night vision goggles, movable vehicles for coastal surveillance, land vehicles, and land-based radar surveillance systems to detect their entry. Full operationalization of the National Coordination Center (NCC) and EUROSUR is in process.

The Greek coast guards use offshore patrol vessels (OPVs), coastal patrol vessels (CPVs), high speed coastal patrol vessels (HSCPVs), very high speed coastal patrol vessels (VHSCPVs), high speed boats for special operations (HSBSOs), and rigid inflatable patrol boats in their operations (EBF, 2007: 21–26). OPVs and CPVs are large (50–20 m long) and high-speed (25–40 knots) vessels with strong endurance. During patrols, planes and helicopters assist these vessels with their advanced maritime surveillance sensors (EBF, 2007: 21–27). HSCPVs, VHSCPVs, and HSBSOs are smaller
and faster vessels used in “urgent patrols ... mainly at night” (EBF, 2007: 26). These vessels are deployed in locations that are harder to patrol with the OPVs and CPVs, such as “mountainous areas close to the coastline, hundreds of small bays and gulfs” (EBF, 2007: 26). Movable land vehicles with sensors are also deployed in the mountainous and hilly coastal areas to detect approaching migrants. Other land vehicles include off-road vehicles, motorcycles, and vans. These units are used in apprehending migrants who have already disembarked (EBF, 2007: 27). FRONTEX units support the Greek authorities with their own patrol vessels, helicopters, and planes (MCP, 2011).

While surveillance with vessels, air units, and land vehicles continues, the Greek and FRONTEX authorities have in recent years also installed land-based surveillance systems to monitor the situation at the Aegean Sea from a distance. The rationale here is to move from “patrolling driven (based on their patrolling without any support from land based infrastructure)” to “intelligence driven (significantly supported in the detection/identification of targets by the land based infrastructure)” surveillance (EBF, 2010: 37).

The Greek coast guards already had the automatic identification system and vessels traffic management and information system. New systems include the NCC (EBF, 2009: 32; 2012: 7) and radar surveillance systems (EBF, 2010: 37–41; 2011: 35–37; 2012: 41). The NCC is at the heart of these developments; it will gather data from all of these surveillance systems to establish immediate communication with the operational centers and patrol units (EBF, 2011: 7).
The NCC will also form the basis of EUROSUR in Greece. EUROSUR is an EU-level system which has been developed by FRONTEX since 2008 and became partially operational in December 2013. Once in full operation, it will gather data from all the NCCs of the EU member states in a single center to establish continuous surveillance over the EU external borders. In addition to compiling data from existing land-based surveillance systems and air units, EUROSUR is also intended to gather data from satellites and drones.60

To summarize, surveillance at the Aegean Sea has gradually intensified over the years. The classic strategy of patrolling the sea with various types of vessels and air units is increasingly combined with ‘smarter’ systems, such as radars, satellites, and coordination centers. Expansion of surveillance over the borderzone space is driven by biopolitical rationalities of exclusion. Although when justifying the expansion of surveillance systems the Greek and EU authorities also point out the importance of these systems in search and rescue operations, their rhetoric is far from convincing. As I will demonstrate below, these systems are primarily used to intercept, apprehend, and push back migrants or to block their passage, either directly or indirectly causing many tragedies over the years. It is highly unlikely that this long-standing practice of the Greek and FRONTEX authorities would change with EUROSUR, especially given the lack of transparency and accountability surrounding their border operations. The truth is that

---

60 Ongoing technical setbacks, cost overruns, and increasing political opposition to EUROSUR may alter its development path. Due to legal restrictions, EUROSUR drones may also be replaced by optionally piloted aircraft (see Hayes and Vermeulen, 2012; Hayes et al, 2014).
even when they receive distress signals, the Greek authorities use these signals to locate and push back migrant boats towards Turkish territory instead of starting search and rescue missions (ProAsyl, 2013: 28).

**Death in the Aegean Sea**

Three methods have been used by the Greek coast guards to prevent the entry of migrants. The first is through intercepting migrants at the borderlines and discouraging their passage, sometimes even by circling their boats and causing waves. The second is through intercepting migrants in Greek territorial waters, forcing them to return to the Turkish side, and/or towing them back and abandoning them in Turkish territorial waters. The third is through arresting migrants in Greek islands, forcing them back onto their boats, and forcing them to return or towing them back to Turkish territories (AI, 2013a; HRW, 2008; ProAsyl, 2007; 2013). See for instance the following interview:

*Migrant no1:* We stayed in [a neighborhood] in Istanbul for one month. Fifteen days in [another neighborhood]. Then we go to Izmir and crossed by boat. ... Then Greek police came and searched if we had drugs. Then they threw us into sea. There were eleven people in a small boat. They gave us one paddle and told us to go back to Turkey. It was almost night. We were scared. We almost lost our way. We did not know where to go. But somehow we found Turkey.

Even when they are not intercepted by the border authorities, crossing is not easy for the migrants. Many of them drown in the sea in overcrowded boats and ships. A migrant who witnessed a boat accident in 2010 stated that “there was a big ship and a boat. I was in the big ship. The boat can carry four people, they use twelve people. Their boat was
destroyed. The water was dangerous. They cannot find the dead body. Nothing to do, just sea” (Migrant no2).

As a result of expanding surveillance and anti-smuggling regulations, the number of crossings has dropped and the main migration route has shifted towards the Evros Region since 2010. With law 3772/2009 coming into force, human smugglers are now sentenced to imprisonment of ten or more years and a fine of €20000–50000. While smuggling organizations have developed the counterstrategy of sending minors to operate the boats in order to avoid penalties, some local informants on Lesbos have stated that now even the minors, many of whom are Turkish boys from villages who have been deceived by smuggling organizations, are subjected to the same penalties.

Since August 2012, however, following the intensification of surveillance in the Evros region, the Aegean Sea route has become active again. This time, biopolitical effects are even more severe. Evidence from the latest NGO reports suggests that pushback and diversion operations continue with the same and even harsher methods, causing many tragedies (AI, 2013a; ProAsyl, 2013). These reports demonstrate that many migrants are abandoned to die in the middle of the sea upon being pushed back, some die during pushback operations (ECRE, 2014), and a majority experience ill-treatment upon apprehension and during pushbacks. It can also be inferred from migrant narratives that remote surveillance systems are now used intensively in border operations. Many migrants, for instance, state that the coastguard vessels appeared close to them suddenly without them having noticed (ProAsyl, 2013: 22).
The Aegean Sea is a biopolitical space where sovereign border practices reign supreme over human rights. While these practices violate human rights and international refugee law, the Greek authorities maintain that “the Greek coastguard has the right to prohibit the entry of illegal migrants” (cited in ProAsyl, 2013: 17). When migrants die as a consequence of these operations, the authorities deny any responsibility (ProAsyl 2013: 16).

These biopolitical realities, however, do not seem to prevent migrants from crossing the border. Even those who experience pushbacks continue risking their lives: “[after being pushed back] we go back to Istanbul. In Istanbul we found smugglers and came to Izmir again. This time it worked. After four and half hours we came to Mytilini” (Migrant no1).

In response to the intensification of surveillance and harsh penalties on smuggling, however, migrants and smugglers have begun to use ever riskier methods of entry. One new strategy involves going directly from Turkey to Italy. This new route has increased the risk of death as it involves a longer journey. Another strategy is to use small (3–7 m long) rubber inflatable, high-speed, or wooden boats that are very difficult to detect or apprehend. These boats are, however, extremely dangerous in open seas, particularly in bad weather. Because human smugglers fear getting caught on the Greek side they usually do not escort the migrants now; they ‘teach’ one migrant how to drive the boat or ship on the road and then return to the Turkish coast in another boat. This new smuggling strategy has also increased the risk of the journey for migrants, who may
easily get lost at sea or panic during pushbacks and apprehensions. Migrants encounter the concentrated biopolitical effects of European borders while crossing the Aegean Sea borderzone. They can die at any point.

The cooperation between the Greek, FRONTEX, and Turkish authorities has increased in recent years (ProAsyl, 2013: 21). Turkish Coast Guards survey the area with vessels, helicopters, mobile radars, and night vision systems (SGD, 2012: 15). Those migrants apprehended by the Turkish authorities, however, receive inadequate assistance and ineffective protection and risk being expelled to their countries of origin, where they would face the threat of persecution. Between 2004 and 2008, out of 300666 apprehended migrants only 548 managed to apply for asylum and 258 590 of them were deported back to their countries of origin (Multeci-Der, 2010: 25; see also HRW, 2008). While a circular issued in March 2010 granted apprehended migrants the right to claim asylum, due to a lack of information there is still a risk of deportation (IHAD, 2013: 7–8). Even if asylum procedures presented no obstacles to migrants, it would still not be desirable for them to claim asylum in Turkey. Even with the 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which is yet to be implemented, Turkey maintains geographical limitations to the 1951 Refugee Convention and grants refugee status only to migrants from European countries, who constitute a very small minority (Soykan, 2012).

Yet migrants who drive the boats do not seem to care. When I reminded him of the risks of driving a boat, a migrant who drove a boat in 2009 stated that: “Everything is risky. I didn’t pay money to smugglers because I drove the boat” (Migrant no3).
Potentially, non-European migrants can be resettled to third countries via the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. In practice, very few are resettled—most live in impoverished conditions (e.g., Okyayuz and Angliss, 2014), and some, out of desperation, decide to risk their lives at the Greece–Turkey borders. These realities also demonstrate that, by means of apprehending, detaining, and sometimes expelling migrants who have done nothing more than try to reach the EU, Turkish authorities take part in the production of biopolitical bodies.

**Surveillance in the Evros region**

The Evros border between Greece and Turkey is 206 km long. There is a small, 12.5-km-long stretch of land along this border, but the rest of it consists of the Evros river, which functions as a natural demarcation line between the two countries. The river itself is made up of several branches that are connected at its base, and it contains small islands in some areas. The river is muddy and dark, with a strong current. Its edges are lined with trees and bushes. The entire region is forested. In the winter, the temperature in the region falls as low as ten degrees below zero. In groups of ten to twenty people, migrants use small boats to cross the river.

In their operations the Greek authorities use patrol vehicles, long-distance day goggles, night vision goggles, thermal cameras, mobile infrared cameras, thermovision vans (equipped with thermal cameras, day and night cameras, laser rangefinders, pulse

---

62 Mainly to the USA, Canada, and Australia.
radars surface, silent generators, and communications and data transfer systems), and helicopters (equipped with infrared and visual cameras, spotter cameras, and geographical coordinate systems) (EBF, 2007; 2008: 17; 2009:12–15; 2010: 11–13; 2011: 9–12). Although it is not stated in the official documents, they also use small boats to patrol the Evros river. Helicopters survey the area to assist the land and river units, while the thermovision vans, which are positioned at sections where migrants cross frequently, gather images of the area to direct the patrol units. FRONTEX units support these activities with their own planes, helicopters, thermovision vans, and patrol vehicles (MCP, 2011).

As with the Aegean Sea, there has been a shift in recent years away from patrol-intensive controls towards remote controls in the Evros region. Integrated border management systems, such as the surveillance operational center (SOC), are at the heart of this shift. In an interview the Greek head of the border operations stated that prior to the center opening, their job was much more difficult because they had to deploy units to many different sections of the border. Now, thanks to the center, he added, they can monitor the situation at the border, communicate with patrol units, and direct these units to the areas where migrants are approaching. The center gathers images from thermal cameras and vans positioned along the borderline. Not only is the Greek section of the border surveyed; the Turkish side is subjected to even more intensive surveillance to preempt the entry of migrants while they are still on Turkish territory. The Greek head of border operations stated that once they detect migrants approaching from the Turkish
side, they first call the Turkish authorities to arrest them, and then they send patrol units to the nearby sections to prevent their entry. In the future, the SOC will form the backbone of the NCC and EUROSUR, further expanding these preemptive surveillance activities in the area.

FRONTEX units are tasked with establishing the SOC and EUROSUR at the region but they are also pioneers in using other ‘smart’ methods of surveillance. In an interview a FRONTEX officer stated that they deploy their units to specific areas of the borderzone based on methods of risk analysis. “They [FRONTEX] also have special teams here,” he said, “They stay on one hot spot ... because this border is sometimes penetrated by groups by twenty, forty, fifty illegals so you should be there at that moment. But that is why we have risk analysis and so on”63

While the FRONTEX officer did not provide further information on how exactly they choose these ‘hot’ spots to deploy their units, in a FRONTEX conference a member of FRONTEX’s risk analysis unit in the Evros region explained the central role of GIS in determining ‘hot’ spots along the border. GIS maps the location, time, and type of migrant interceptions to create geographical patterns of border crossings. These patterns are then used to deploy patrol units to specific areas (ED4BG, 2011).

The development of these ‘smart’ methods, however, does not mean conventional ones have lost their significance. The Greek government also constructed a fence

63 Interview with the FRONTEX officer (19.06.2012).
covering the 12.5 km land section of the border in December 2012. The fence has day-and-night thermal cameras that survey the area and send images to the SOC. A few years ago, the section where the fence was built was one of the most common spots for crossings, because it was the least risky for migrants. Migrants simply crossed the river on the Turkish side and walked towards Greek territory. Since the construction of the fence, however, crossings from the land section have halted. But the fence covers only 12.5 km of the 206-km-long border. Rather than stopping migration, the fence has altered the route that it takes. Even the Greek head of border operations acknowledged this point in an interview, stating that “the fence is going to be [the] solution to a problem on a particular point ... the migratory flows shifted to the river borders from the land borders. That’s where we are going to place our interest in order to prevent them from entering.”

Set in the larger context, the fence represents another step in the gradual expansion of surveillance in the region. The Evros region has been rendered calculable and controllable as a result of using the fence, SOC, GIS, helicopters, planes, thermal cameras, patrol units, and thermo-vision vans. These surveillance mechanisms have had biopolitical consequences for migrants by enabling the Greek and FRONTEX authorities to detect, intercept, apprehend, and push them back or to block their entry.

This is not to suggest that surveillance systems have established total control over the Evros region. Rather, as the Greek head of the border operations confirmed in an interview, these systems have shifted the migration route to areas that are harder to

---

64 Interview with the Greek head of border operations (Interview, 22.06.2012).
control for authorities and riskier to cross for the migrants, such as the forested sections of the Evros river; and thus, they have increased the biopolitical consequences for migrants rather than stopping their mobility.

**Death in the Evros region**

Until 2009 land mines laid by the Greek Army in 1974 in a response to Turkey’s military intervention in Cyprus were the main cause of death and injury in the Evros region. Over a hundred migrants died and 186 others were seriously injured in the minefields between 1995 and 2008 (LCMM, 2009). Most of the mines were cleared in 2009 but there are still some left. While these mines still constitute a threat to migrants, the biggest threats now are the pushback, interception, and diversion operations. These operations have a long history in the area but their tactics have changed somewhat over the years as a result of expanding surveillance.

A few years ago the most common practice was to arrest migrants on the Greek side then forcibly return them to Turkey (ProAsyl, 2007: 6). While in an interview the head of Greek border police denied the continued existence of this practice, material evidence suggests that it is still being used systematically, yet covertly. A couple of migrants who were sent back to the Turkish territories with this method stated that: “They [the Greek police] don’t listen [to] you. When you say something they were swearing, hitting you. And then they all deported us back. They look at [the] border and if there are no Turkish police they send [us] back to Turkey” (Migrant no4). Some other migrants
stated that they were transferred to the Turkish side across a bridge without being registered in Greece. NGOs reported other cases in which migrants were put on boats and sent back into the river at midnight (AI, 2012: 4; ProAsyl, 2013: 29–32).

While pushbacks from Greek territories continue, now, with the help of surveillance technologies, the Greek and FRONTEX authorities direct all of their efforts towards intercepting migrants at the borderlines before they can enter Greek territory (see also AI 2012: 4; ProAsyl, 2012a: 14). The Greek head of border operations nonchalantly confirmed this practice in an interview. He drew a simple map of the region. Pointing to the Greek side he said, “The Greek and FRONTEX forces are in this spot”, adding, “And if they observe many people [coming] from the Turkish side, they shout ‘Stop! Stop here!’ And after [that] they call the Turkish army to arrest them.”65 What he did not disclose was the fact that the border guards also shoot their guns into the air to discourage migrants from crossing the river. There were also some cases of the river patrol units damaging migrants’ boats upon interception, leaving them no choice but to swim back to the Turkish side (AI, 2012: 4).

The reason why Greek authorities acknowledge interceptions and diversions at the borderline, while denying the existence of pushbacks from Greek territory, is their belief that only the latter practice constitutes refoulement, in violation of international refugee law. They regard interceptions and diversions at the borderlines simply as their sovereign

65 Interview with Greek head of the border operations (22.06.2012).
territorial right. Thus, law is not simply suspended; it is strategically suspended at the borderzones.

As a result of ongoing pressure from the EU, Turkish authorities do seem to be responding to apprehension requests from the Greek side recently. Upon locating migrants on the Turkish side, Greek authorities call their Turkish counterparts and provide an area code using Google Earth. The Turkish authorities then direct their units to these areas to apprehend the migrants. Turkish authorities signed a memorandum of understanding with FRONTEX in May 2012, participated in numerous meetings throughout 2012 and 2013 with Greek and FRONTEX officials, initialized a readmission agreement with the EU in December 2013 (to be completed when the EU lifts visa requirements for Turkish citizens), and started to update their border surveillance systems using EU funds. While such systems as fixed thermal cameras, radars, night vision devices, sensors, patrol vehicles, communication systems, and (unspecified) aerial vehicles were already in use (SYB, 2006: 27), new projects include the establishment of integrated surveillance systems, improvement of cooperation with the Greek authorities, and training of professional border guards to replace army soldiers (DIAB, 2012: 127–130). The experiences of migrants apprehended at the Evros river by Turkish authorities are similar to those of migrants stopped at the Aegean Sea. They are confronted by an ineffective protection system and low life prospects, and they sometimes return again to risk their lives at the borderzones.
Once pushed back or blocked by the Greek authorities, however, migrants do not simply wait around to get arrested by the Turkish authorities. They return to the Turkish side, hide under trees and bushes for a while, and attempt to cross again from another section of the border. But even when migrants do not encounter border authorities, this does not mean that they have an easy passage. Being aware that they can be detected at any point, migrants rush towards the river. As in the Aegean Sea region, smugglers do not accompany them most of the time for fear of getting caught. They provide the boats, put as many migrants as they can into them, push the boats into the river, and then disappear. See for instance the following interview:

Migrant no5: They [smugglers] usually use some economics boats. Because when they send one boat it means that they are sending a boat that will not come back. They try to put more people. Not eight people. Twelve, fifteen, or twenty people, children and women
Interviewer: Why do they use boats that will not come back?
Migrant no5: They don’t want to take the risk. Because if they stay like one hour in the border they will be catch by the police. Sometimes they kick people. They say ‘go go soon’. The time when you cross the border everyone wants to go, they are hurried ... to catch a little more of Greece border. Because if the police catch you in the border, in the borderline, they will send you back to Turkey.
Interviewer: What happens if something happens and they cannot cross?
Migrant no5: If the Greek police come and return people back, then they will try again.

It is important to highlight that most of these activities take place at night, in the cold, and that the migrants often include entire families with children. Stories about this kind of crossing situation reveal extreme instances of panic and horror. Many boats get stuck in branches and are overturned in the river. Many migrants, including children who do not know how to swim, fall off the boats and drown, while the rest of the group continue the
journey. Many get trapped in the small islands in the Evros river and scream until morning, hoping that someone will hear and rescue them. Many others, who succeed in reaching the Greek side by swimming, are seriously injured. Many get separated from their families. Migrants face the biopolitical reality of Europe’s borders in its crystallized form when crossing the borderzones. They are under direct threat of death and injury.

A migrant who crossed the borderzone in a separate boat and lost his entire family during the crossing said: “we were waiting for my family inside of Greece ... the families were coming. But from one family they lost one small girl. Ten years old girl. And my parents. They did not come ... It was two o’clock of the night ... It was the last boat. Nobody saw them later” (Migrant no6). A father who lost his daughter during the crossing stated: “when we cross the river, our boat suddenly destroyed. I saved my three children and my wife. And then I tried again to save my daughter. It was night and it was dark. She disappeared.”(Migrant no7). Another migrant whose boat was overturned during the crossing stated that “we crossed with nine people. We were all men. We fall into river. We swim. But one person drowned. He did not know swimming well” (Migrant no8). Another one who crossed the border noted: “I have seen a lot of dead bodies around the river. There are sides of the river; there were trees. And you can look at the side of the trees there were dead bodies” (Migrant no9). A few others stated that they saw snakes inside and around the river (Migrant no8 and migrant no10).

There are also pre-crossing stories that need to be emphasized. The journey from Istanbul to the borderzone itself is very risky as it includes an intense amount of physical
activity, usually at night: “we came together with twenty-five, twenty-six people from Istanbul. There were families, children; black people, Pakistanis, Iranians. First we entered into a forest. We hided inside the forest until it was four or five o’clock of the night. Then the smugglers came and we crossed the border” (Migrant no11). Some migrants cannot even make it to the river. Another migrant stated: “we lost an old man in the journey. Old man was black skin[ned], he was from Sudan. It was dark night. We were going very fast. We looked for him. But he got lost. He is probably dead. Many people die” (Migrant no12). There are also migrants who die from hypothermia on the road. After crossing the river, migrants try to avoid the Greek authorities for fear of being returned to Turkey: “I hid behind the trees. Because I heard in Turkey that when they catch you they return you back to Turkey” (Migrant no12).

As in the case of the Mexico–US border (Doty, 2011), when I asked about migrant deaths and injuries, the Greek and FRONTEX border authorities did not accept any responsibility. They both presented human smugglers and harsh geographical conditions as the real causes of the deaths. To justify his argument, after the interview, the Greek head of operations showed the thermal camera records in which smugglers kick migrants and push them into the river, and a few other records showing Greek police rescuing migrants from the small islands of the river. Another significant point with regard to responsibility was the continual effort of the FRONTEX officer to underline that FRONTEX officers are “working only with Greek officers, and with their approval
and with their schedules” and that they “support not substitute”. In fact, such justification says much about the institution of FRONTEX. In addition to the secrecy of FRONTEX’s activities, there is also a loophole in FRONTEX regulation where responsibility for border operations is concerned. The final responsibility for border operations lies with the host member state. Above all, there is no mechanism to hold FRONTEX to account for the indirect yet no less violent effects of its surveillance activities—from the establishment of the surveillance centers to the application of the GIS methods—on migrant lives.

Border surveillance activities of the Greek and FRONTEX authorities, directly or indirectly, cause migrant deaths and injuries. Yet, the de facto suspension of human rights at the border zones allows the authorities to continue their operations while denying responsibility for their consequences.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the Greece–Turkey border zones are biopolitical spaces where surveillance intensifies and migrant lives are held hostage. Sophisticated surveillance mechanisms—including radar systems, a fence, surveillance coordination centres, patrol vessels and vehicles, aerial vehicles, and the GIS—have been deployed as “political technologies” (Elden, 2010: 810) to control the borderzone space. The more surveillance has intensified, the more migrants have felt the biopolitical reality of

---

66 Interview with the FRONTEX officer (19.06.2012).
European borders. Many of them have drowned in the Aegean Sea and Evros river. Many others have been injured. Technologically mediated controls would not have been possible without the suspension of human rights at the borderzones. Borderzones are spaces where sovereign practices prevail over human rights and migrants are left to die. This is not to suggest that biopolitical borders are successful. On the contrary, neither surveillance systems nor suspension of human rights can prevent migrant mobility. Despite the great risk, migrants continue crossing the borders and contesting the biopolitical regime.

For Foucault, biopolitics is the product of the historical transition from a sovereign mode of power that exerts control over territory and uses practices of death towards a modern biopolitical one which manages population mainly through pastoral, productive, and delocalized techniques. This chapter demonstrates, however, that biopolitical sovereignty operates through territorial controls and surveillance, practices of death and exclusion, and the suspension of rights. The concentration of biopolitical controls at the borderzones also prompts us to revisit debates in the border studies literature on the location of borders. While borders can no longer be located only at the edges of states, the case of the Greece–Turkey borders demonstrates that the practices and effects of the borders manifest themselves primarily at these territorial edges.

Violence against migrants is crystallized at the borderzones. But migrants continue to experience diverse forms of violence when they reach Greek territories – inside detention centers and in major Greek cities. In the next chapter, the specific details
of violence beyond the borderzones and its effects on migrants’ subjectivities will be discussed.
Chapter 6: Material Violence and Migrant Subjectivities

This chapter analyzes the effects of material violence on migrant subjectivities. Migrant subjectivities cannot be understood in isolation from material violence that migrants are confronted by. While violence against migrants is concentrated at Europe’s territorial borderzones, migrants also experience diverse forms of violence before the territorial borders have been reached (in Turkey) and beyond the territorial borders (in Greece). This violence includes an ineffective asylum system and low life prospects in Turkey and an ineffective asylum system, prolonged detention, racist violence, police-sweep operations, and poor living and health conditions in Greece. The first part of the chapter focuses on these diverse aspects of material violence. While material violence frames migrant subjectivities, it does not fully determine them. The second part of this chapter demonstrates that migrants contingently develop diverse subjectivities when confronted by material violence. Drawing on fieldwork data, five different types of migrant subjectivities are discussed: stranger subjectivity, abject subjectivity, religious subjectivity, nomadic subjectivity and dissident subjectivity. The theories of Bauman, Kristeva, Durkheim, Deleuze and Guattari, and Rancière are used to illustrate the diversity of migrant subjectivities.

Introduction

Previous chapters have demonstrated how the material structure of the Greece-Turkey border as a border of Europe was established through the processes of colonialism and
racism; how that structure continued to operate under a global-neoliberal and post-political framework; how it unified diverse surveillance instruments and techniques under an identification dispositif; and how these instruments are exercised over migrant bodies at the Greece-Turkey borderzones. In other words, so far the focus of the thesis has largely been on the structural-material and practical aspects of the border. In this chapter, this focus is maintained, and the characteristics of material violence before the territorial borders are reached, at the territorial borderzones and beyond the territorial borders are discussed. However, in order to balance the structural-material and practical analysis of the border, this chapter also takes into account the subjectivity aspect of the border. More specifically, this chapter discusses how migrants react to material violence through developing diverse subjectivities.

Since the specifics of material violence at the territorial borders has already been discussed in the previous chapter, in this chapter, more emphasis is placed on discussing material violence before the territorial borders are reached (in Turkey) and beyond the territorial borders (in Greece). While material violence against migrants is concentrated at the territorial borders, i.e., borderzones, migrants also experience diverse forms of material violence before the borderzones. In Turkey, migrants are confronted by an ineffective asylum system, substandard living conditions and various forms of social exclusion. These realities force many migrants to take risky routes towards Greece. Many die during border crossing. Those migrants who reach Greece continue to experience material violence in various forms, including an ineffective asylum system, prolonged
detention, racist violence, police-sweep operations, low or no employment prospects, extremely poor living conditions, and substandard health conditions. The majority of migrants hope to reach other EU countries via Greece, but as a result of the border controls at the Greece-Italy sea route and at the Greek airports, many are trapped inside Greece and experience diverse forms of material violence for years.

Migrants react to material violence differently. While the majority of them become hopeless and desperate, others find refuge in their religion. But there are also others who perceive material violence, particularly border crossing, as an adventure. The more material violence they face, the more fearless these migrants seem to become. Finally, there are also migrants who get more conscious about their political rights and actively engage in political struggles. These realities demonstrate that, when faced with material violence, migrants develop diverse subjectivities, which should be analyzed, and theorized.

Such an emphasis on subjectivities of migrants requires a new level of theoretical emphasis that should not contradict with what has already been theorized with regards to the structural-material and practical aspects of the border. It is clear that the theory of subjectivity should prioritize the analysis of the material-structural and practical processes that constrain actions and thoughts of the subjects. But such prioritization should not mean that there is just one type of subjectivity that is already determined by the material-structural and practical processes of power. On the contrary, as Althusser reminds us, there are “multiple interpellations in which the subject is caught up” (2006c:
Contingency plays a role in the formation of subjectivity. When faced with material processes subjects develop subjectivities that are contingent rather than determined.

The majority of theorists who have been helpful in theorizing the material-structural and practical aspects of the border (such as Althusser, Foucault and Agamben) have certain limitations in theorizing subjectivities of the groups who face material violence. In their analyses, Foucault and Althusser, for instance, prioritize the subjectivities of ‘free’ individuals (those who do not face repressive power) and largely ignore the subjectivities of oppressed groups, while Agamben, with his analogy of *homo sacer*, understands the subjectivity of oppressed groups to be largely passive. Pointing out the limitations in the theories of these theorists, in the following sections of this chapter, variety of other theoretical sources are used to illustrate the diverse types of migrant subjectivities, including Bauman (stranger subjectivity), Kristeva (abject subjectivity), Durkheim (religious subjectivity), Deleuze and Guattari (nomadic subjectivity) and Rancière (dissident subjectivity). The complex interplay among different subjectivities and the ways in which certain subjectivities are ‘misrecognized’ and others are ‘recognized’ are also discussed.

In the literature, migrant subjectivity is often understood to be passive and non-political. Some scholars contested this understanding by emphasizing the political potential of migrants (e.g., Nyers, 2003; Nyers and Rygiel, 2012). However, a comprehensive analysis of the diverse subjectivities of migrants and their material basis is not sufficiently established in the literature. Drawing on the ethnographical fieldwork
data from a materialist perspective, this chapter contributes to the literature by providing a complex analysis of migrant subjectivity and its material basis.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. Since every form of migrant subjectivity is developed as a response to material violence that migrants encounter, the chapter first focuses on the complex characteristics of material violence before the border (in Turkey), at the borderzones, and beyond the borderzones (in Greece; inside the detention centers, in urban contexts). Second, the chapter discusses how migrants respond to material violence through developing different subjectivities. The category of stranger is theorized as the encompassing mode of subjectivity for all migrants. In addition to stranger, four other types of migrant subjectivities are theorized: abject subjectivity, religious subjectivity, nomadic subjectivity, and dissident subjectivity. Finally, the chapter concludes by summarizing the findings and arguments of the chapter.

6.1 Material Basis of Subjectivity

6.1.1 Material violence before the territorial borders are reached (in Turkey)
The majority of migrants who cross the Greece-Turkey borders come from Asian and Middle Eastern countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Palestine, and recently from Syria in large numbers. In smaller numbers, migrants from many other African countries, from Algeria to Senegal, are also involved. While some migrants reach Turkey through air travel, either with tourist visas or passports, many migrants, particularly those who come from Asian countries such as Afghanistan and Bangladesh

---

67 Iranian citizens and citizens from Maghreb countries are exempt from the visa-requirement in Turkey.
and Turkey’s neighboring countries such as Iraq and Syria, take the land routes and cross Turkey’s eastern and southeastern borders. Compared to Turkey’s western borders with Greece and Bulgaria, Turkey’s borders with Syria, Iraq and Iran have been relatively porous, both as a result of the informal cross-border trade\(^{68}\) and the geographical difficulties in controlling the long and mountainous border regions. The existence of the PKK,\(^{69}\) which effectively controls many of the mountainous territories in the border regions, has also made it difficult for the authorities to establish full border controls.

This is not to suggest that border crossing is easy for migrants. As a result of the militarized nature of the borders and harsh climate conditions, migrants face grave risks. There have been cases where some migrants were shot dead by soldiers and others froze to death at altitudes reaching to 2,500 metres and temperatures as low as \(-46^\circ\text{C}\) when

\(^{68}\) Smuggling of goods, such as petroleum and cigarettes, has been an everyday business for the local populations living in border regions. Nese Ozgen (2011) divides the history of Turkey’s southeastern borders (Iraq and Syria) into five different periods. According to Ozgen (2011), between 1928-1954 the borders were indistinct and very porous; between 1952-1974, first landmines were laid and fences and army outposts were built, but informal crossings continued with the consent of the army; between 1960-1980, restrictions in crossing increased and ambushes became more frequent, the dependency on specialized border-crossers (Rezan, people who make deals with the army and who clean mines for safe passage) was also increased; between 1975-1984, restrictions were further increased and the smuggling was somewhat diverted to regular crossing posts [This period is described as the legalization of smuggling]; between 1985-1992, people living in border towns continued to engage in everyday trades across the borders but global petroleum trade was also increased; between 1989-2002, global petroleum trade was further increased; between 2003-2010, with the invasion of Iraq by the US military and the establishment of the Kurdish Regional Government in Northern Iraq, petroleum trade routes changed and new trade opportunities (such as in construction business) emerged. During this period, small border trade (of petroleum, cigarette, etc.) between border towns continued, often with the consent of the Turkish army (Ozgen, 2011). Migreurop’s report demonstrates that the smuggling of goods also continues at the Turkey-Iran border (2011). This is not to suggest that border traders have not been under risk. In a tragic event on 28 December 2011 in Uludere [Roboski, a town near the Turkey-Iraq border], Turkish army personnel killed 35 Kurdish civilians who were delivering petroleum and cigarettes from Iraq. The army officials claimed that they identified the group ‘mistakenly’ as the members of the PKK. Nobody was held responsible after the official investigation that was finalized in June 2013.

\(^{69}\) PKK (Partiya Karkên Kurdistan or Kurdistan Workers’ Party) is a Kurdish guerilla organization that engaged in armed struggle against the Turkish state between 1984 and 2013. In 2013, the PKK declared ceasefire and started peace negotiations with the Turkish state.
trying to reach Turkish territories (Migreurop, 2011: 14).\textsuperscript{70} With the start of the civil war in Syria and the large influx of Syrian refugees into Turkey, the security situation at the borders has further deteriorated. The first Syrian refugees arrived in Turkey in April 2011; As of December 2013, there were approximately 1 million Syrian refugees in Turkey (300,000 living in the camps and 700,000 living outside of the camps) (UNHCR, 2014a). Turkey initially adopted an open-door policy for Syrian refugees and allowed them to cross the border either with passports or without passports and settled them in temporary camps nearby the border. However, as the refugee flows continued, Turkish authorities introduced make-shift camps along the Syrian side of the border to control the admission of the Syrian refugees (Dincer et. al. 2013: 5). With refugees continuing to cross the border, sometimes through informal routes with the help of smugglers, the security situation has worsened,\textsuperscript{71} and this has led to further restriction of refugee mobility (Dincer et. al. 2013: 6-7). The final step towards restricting refugee mobility was the launch of the 30cm wide, 3m tall and 1.2 km long wall project on April 2014. There are also plans to construct a 2.5 km long wall at another section of the border. Although these walls can cover very small sections of the 911 km long Turkey-Syria border, the

\textsuperscript{70} In my fieldwork, I also documented some cases. A migrant who crossed the Turkey-Iran Border in 2011 stated: “I was walking 18 hours to cross the Turkey-Iran border. It was snowing; I was still walking. Three people died in the road, because of the cold weather and snow” (Migrant no13). Another migrant stated that the Iranian Army fired at them when they were crossing the border and at least three migrants in his group got killed. He added that the smugglers misled them, instructing them to not run away if the soldiers fire, claiming that the soldiers only fire into the air to scare them (Migrant no14).

\textsuperscript{71} Many reports (e.g., Tastekin, 2013; Walsh, 2013) suggest that Turkey allowed not only refugees but also foreign fighters, including members of the radical Islamist groups. This policy played a role in the worsening of the security situation at the border. In 2013, there were two car bombings, one in the regular border crossing post and the other one inside a nearby town, which, in total, killed more than 60 people.
authorities claim that they are ‘portable’ so that they can be transferred to other sections of the border whenever necessary.\textsuperscript{72} There have also been some shootings by the Turkish army at the Kurdish section of the Turkey-Syria Border (\textit{Rojava}),\textsuperscript{73} which demonstrates the increasing difficulties that migrants face in reaching Turkey. Despite these developments, the Turkish authorities still claim that they maintain the open-door policy towards Syrian nationals.\textsuperscript{74}

Despite the risks and increased restrictions, many migrants continue to cross the eastern and southeastern borders of Turkey. However, their suffering does not end when they reach Turkey. There, migrants experience an ineffective protection system and poor material conditions, and some decide to risk their lives at the Greece-Turkey border.

Even with the 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which is yet to be implemented, Turkey maintains geographical limitations to the 1951 Refugee Convention and grants refugee status only to people fleeing from Europe.\textsuperscript{75} The presence of non-European refugees, who constitute the vast majority, is at best tolerated in Turkey – until they return back to their home countries or are resettled in a third country.

Resettlement is difficult because each year countries such as United States, Canada, Australia, Sweden, Finland and Norway open up extremely small resettlement

\textsuperscript{72} Hurriyet Daily News, 27.04.2014.
\textsuperscript{73} See e.g., Hurriyet Daily News 20.05.2014 and ETHA 05.06.2013.
\textsuperscript{74} Refugee rights NGOs tell a different story. They raise serious concerns about the increasing difficulties in reaching Turkey through legal ways, noting that the restrictions would further increase refugees’ dependency on smugglers (MHK, 2014).
\textsuperscript{75} While the EU authorities have continually pushed Turkey to lift the geographical limitations during the EU accession negotiations, Turkish authorities resisted, claiming that this move would encourage further refugee flows into Turkey, and it would result in unfair “burden-sharing” with the EU states (Kirisci, 2008: 21; Okyayuz and Angliss, 2014: 44)
quotas for refugees from Turkey. Between 2000-2007 approximately 2,000 and between 2010-2012 approximately 5,000 refugees were resettled each year.⁷⁶ Certain nationalities are excluded from resettlement; for instance, since 2012, the UNHCR suspended the registration and resettlement of Afghan refugees, who constitute the largest group of asylum seekers in Turkey other than the Syrians.⁷⁷ As well, Syrian refugees initially also excluded from resettlement; recently, however, some countries have expressed interest in resettling some of the Syrian refugees from the neighboring countries. But the total number is expected to be around only 18,800 from the pool of all Syrian refugees living in the neighboring countries (UNHCR, 2014b). In total, as of June 2014, over 2.8 million Syrian refugees live in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey (UNHCR, 2014c).

The material conditions for refugees in Turkey are extremely poor. Refugees first have to register with the Turkish national police to obtain residence permits. Then, the Turkish state and the UNHCR put them through the refugee status determination interviews. During this process, which may take up to five years, the refugees wait in the ‘satellite cities’ inside Turkey (IHAD, 2013). During this waiting period, “refugees … have no legally defined right to health, education, social support, exemption from residency fees, places in orphanages or women’s shelters, or resettlement in a third country” (Okyayuz and Angliss, 2014: 61). Since there has been no unified and structural approach towards refugee rights, over the years, different cities in Turkey have developed

---

⁷⁷ Hurriyet Daily News, 08.05.2014
different approaches towards refugees. Some cities, as a result of the advocacy of some humanitarian NGOs, provide relatively better conditions, but overall, refugees face major problems in almost all aspects of their lives in Turkey, including finances, employment, health and education (Okyayuz and Angliss, 2014).

In Turkey, refugees work in informal sectors in low-paid jobs and unsafe conditions. Many, including children, over work (60-70 hours a week) without any holidays or sick leave; many get injured; and many are paid less than what the employer promises and sometimes not paid at all (Okyayuz and Angliss, 2014: 66). Due to lack of legal rights, refugees often cannot access healthcare in Turkey (Okyayuz and Angliss, 2014: 68). Refugee children also face difficulties in accessing education: Even when they somehow enroll into a public school, refugee children often experience discrimination and intolerance from their peers and teachers (Okyayuz and Angliss, 2014: 69-70).

Another problem that refugees face in Turkey is social exclusion. While some refugees are perceived as victims or subjects of philanthropy by the local populations (Okyayuz and Angliss, 2014: 70), others experience various forms of prejudice. In particular, non-Muslim and non-heterosexual refugees become targets of hatred by the local conservative populations (Okyayuz and Angliss, 2014: 71-74).

Reports with regards to the situation of Syrian refugees residing in the camps suggest that, compared to other refugees, Syrian refugees live in better material conditions. Syrians are granted “temporary protection”; they have access to “primary and secondary schools, health clinics, community centers, supermarkets, playgrounds and
even laundry rooms” (Dincer et al. 2013: 12). Refugees are also given monthly allowance of 80-100 TL (40-50 US$) per person. But even a better camp is, after all, still a camp. There are restrictions on freedom of mobility inside the camps. Security of the camps is another concern for refugees, as these camps are located very close to the border. Refugees also experience discrimination based on their ethnic and religious backgrounds inside the camps. But the biggest problem for refugees seems to be the limited capacities of the camps (IHD, 2013: 10). The camps host approximately 300,000 refugees, while the total number of Syrian refugees in Turkey is approximately 1 million. As a result, many Syrian refugees live outside of the camps, mostly in nearby cities and towns or in big Turkish cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. The material situation of those Syrians living outside of the camps is extremely poor: The majority live in poor houses; they are often employed in informal sector in low-paid jobs or not employed at all; they have limited access to healthcare; refugee children have no access to public schools; refugees are often treated with suspicion by the local groups, and they experience various forms of social exclusion (IHD, 2013).78

78 In a tragic event that occurred on May 2014 in Ankara, after an alleged accusation against Syrian refugees for beating a Turkish national, an angry crowd of people burned the house of Syrian refugees (Radikal, 09.05.2014). Another report highlights the brutal experience of some Syrian women in Turkey, which amounts to sex slavery. The report demonstrates how some Syrian families force their daughters to marry some Turkish men in exchange for money. Usually, the involved Turkish men are already legally married with Turkish women, and they take the Syrian women as kuma (fellow wife in a polygamous household) through Islamic marriage (Radikal, 27.01.2014). Other reports demonstrate how Syrian women (both the ones inside the camps and outside the camps) have become targets of sex-work mafia and how some Turkish officials in the border regions use their authority to sexually abuse some Syrian women (Vatan, 30.05.2014). There are also ongoing tensions between Turkish and Syrian workers in workplaces (Sendika, 10.05.2014).
Due to their lack of prospects of asylum in Turkey, many migrants hope to use Turkey as a transit route on their way to Europe and end up at the Greece-Turkey borderzones. But many cannot succeed; they get apprehended and deported back to their countries of origin. Access to asylum procedures for apprehended refugees is particularly limited, as the Turkish police treat this group as ‘criminals’ (IHAD, 2013). Between 2004 and 2008, only 548 out of 300,666 migrants apprehended in Turkey managed to apply for asylum, and only 67 succeeded in their application. During this same period, 258,590 apprehended individuals were deported back to their countries of origin (Multeci-Der, 2010: 25).

The new 2013 law on Foreigners and International Protection aims to improve the situation of asylum seekers in Turkey. Although the law maintains the geographical limitations for non-European asylum seekers, it introduces conditional refugee status for Convention refugees and subsidiary protection for people feeling from violence. The law also protects the principle of non-refoulement (prohibition against returning someone to a country where he or she risks exposure to torture or other forms of degrading, inhuman or cruel treatment or punishment), defines detention as an exceptional practice and establishes appeal mechanisms against detention and deportation orders. Upon filling an application, all asylum seekers (European and non-European) are entitled to the same rights, “including access to primary and secondary education up to 14 years of age, automatic inclusion in the social security system, access to primary health care, the right to social assistance, and the right to work after a period of six months, subject to the
delivery of a work permit” (FIDH 2014: 54). A civilian authority, the General Directorate of Migration Management, was formed to implement the law.

It remains to be seen to what extent these legal improvements will have practical outcomes for migrants in Turkey. For example, in practice very few asylum seekers can obtain a work permit (FIDH, 2014: 56). Even if problems in some domains can be improved, it is highly unlikely that the overall material conditions will be satisfactory for migrants in the near future, particularly considering that the new law does not put any emphasis on the long-term integration of migrants in Turkish society. Non-European refugees are still expected to leave Turkey in the long-term (Soykan, 2012). Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to see that, some migrants, out of desperation, decide to risk their lives at the Greece-Turkey borderzones for a better life in Europe.

6.1.2 Material Violence at the Borderzones
The material situation at the borderzones was discussed in detail in the previous chapter. It has been demonstrated that while migrants experience various problems before and after the border crossing, it is at the borderzones that structural violence against migrants is concentrated.

6.1.3 Material Violence Beyond the Borderzones (in Greece)
Inside the Detention Centers
Migrants face the crystalized effects of the borders when crossing the borderzones. But their suffering does not end when they reach Greek territories. Many migrants are forcefully returned to Turkish territories whenever they are apprehended by the Greek
authorities at the borderzones. Some others are transferred to police stations or unofficial detention centers near the borderzones and detained in those buildings until they are forcefully returned back to Turkey (AI, 2013a: 9; ProAsyl, 2013: 29). This is not to suggest that those who are transferred to official detention centers enjoy their rights in a safe and healthy environment. On the contrary, migrants are deprived of basic human rights, and they are forced to stay in deplorable conditions inside the detention centers.

According to Greek law, a migrant can only be detained if that migrant in question might abscond or pose a threat to public order or safety (Majcher and Flynn, 2014: 6). The authorities must examine each case separately and use detention as a last resort (AI, 2013a: 17). In practice, however, the Greek authorities indiscriminately and automatically detain all migrants. The detained migrants include vulnerable groups such as families with children, unaccompanied minors, people with serious health problems (who receive no or limited health assistance), and victims of torture (AITIMA, 2013). The Greek authorities have also gradually extended the maximum length of detention in the last years: first from 3 to 6 months in 2009 and later from 6 to 18 months in 2011 and 2012 (Majcher and Flynn, 2014: 8).

Migrants who can be deported back to their countries of origin via embassy cooperation or back to Turkey via the readmission agreement are often detained for longer periods to process their deportation. Many countries, including Egypt and Nigeria, cooperate with Greece/EU, and accept their nationals back.79 As a part of the readmission

79 Interview with the GCR lawyer in Evros (21.06.2012).
agreement, which has been in effect since 2002, Turkey also readmits some migrants who are nationals of Turkey or nationals of Turkey’s neighboring countries (Iraq, Iran, Syria and Georgia). The number of migrants who are sent back to Turkey via the readmission agreement has been relatively small. But in recent years these numbers have increased; for instance, while in 2006, 127 migrants were deported back to Turkey via the readmission agreement, in 2011, 730 migrants were deported (ProAsyl, 2012a: 16).^{80}

Some migrants in Greece are, however, released after a few days with an order to leave the country in periods ranging from seven to thirty days and six months. There is no uniform and coherent policy in this domain. But the Greek authorities usually release migrants who cannot be deported back to their home countries because of the lack of embassy cooperation or who cannot be sent back to Turkey via the readmission agreement,^{81} rather than making a decision on their protection needs. The embassies of some countries, including Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, do not cooperate with the Greek authorities; Afghanistan, on the other hand, does not even have an embassy in Greece. As a result, the majority of the migrants from those countries cannot be deported back, and they are often released in a few days after detention.^{82} Recently, as a result of the civil war, Syrian refugees seem to have been released either with a 30-days leave paper or with

---

^{80} Turkey has also initialized a readmission agreement with the EU on late 2013. The agreement is expected to come into effect in three years, when the EU lifts the visa requirement for the Turkish citizens. When the agreement comes into effect, the Turkish authorities would be obliged to readmit many migrants who crossed the Greece-Turkey Borders without documents, including those who are nationals of non-neighboring countries. See Kilic (2013) for an analysis of the readmission agreement.

^{81} Interview with the GCR lawyer in Evros (21.06.2012).

^{82} The lawyer from the GCR noted that migrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan are also often released, but she did not know whether this is a result of the lack of embassy cooperation or if there is any other reason (Interview with the GCR lawyer in Evros, 21.06.2012).
another paper that allows them to stay in Greece for six months.\textsuperscript{83} It should be noted, however, that the current situation with regards to embassy cooperation or the lack thereof might change in the future because the EU is continuously pushing many migrant-producing countries to sign readmission agreements.\textsuperscript{84}

It should also be stressed that the fact that some migrants cannot be sent back to their home countries does not always mean that these migrants would be released from detention centres quickly; sometimes the Greek authorities detain migrants for long periods. For instance, Amnesty International reported that migrants from Somalia and Eritrea are held in detention centers for long periods even though there is no possibility of sending these migrants back to their countries of origin (AI, 2013a: 18). ProAsyl (2012a: 28) demonstrated that while most Afghan nationals are released quickly, some are detained for long periods for unclear reasons.

In an interview, a lawyer from the GCR (Greek Council for Refugees) who was working in the detention centers in the Evros region noted that sometimes migrants are released quickly due to the limited capacity of the detention centers. She added that such practice is often applied prior to a visit from a committee (for example, a committee from the European Commission or the UNHCR) to avoid the criticism of overcrowding.\textsuperscript{85} In recent years, however, the Greek government has begun increasing the capacity of the

\hspace{1cm}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{83} FIDH 18.11.2013; MSF, 20.12.2013.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{84} The EU has proposed ‘migration and mobility partnerships’ to Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia in recent years. See Chapter 4 for further details.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{85} Interview with the GCR lawyer in Evros (21.06.2012).}
detention centers (AI, 2013a); thus, it is expected that few or no migrants will be released due to limited capacity in the future.

For migrants, claiming asylum inside the Greek detention centers is not only difficult, but it is also undesirable. Greek authorities detain migrants who claim asylum inside the detention centers for the longest allowed time (18 months) (ProAsyl, 2012a: 29; AI, 2013a: 18). Many migrants, particularly those who cannot be deported, such as the Afghans, are thus discouraged from applying to asylum inside the detention centers. Many others withdraw their asylum application during detention because of the extremely poor material conditions inside the detention centers (ProAsyl, 2012a: 29; AI, 2013a: 18).

Other migrants, particularly those who face the imminent threat of deportation, such as those coming from Turkey’s neighboring countries, apply for asylum as a last resort because the readmission process normally stops when a migrant claims asylum. But those migrants face various problems with the submission and registration of their claims. There are no interpreters for most needed languages, and migrants are often not fully informed about their rights. In fact, in many cases, migrants’ asylum claims are registered only after the intervention of the lawyers of the GCR, which is the only source of free legal aid in the Evros region. On April 2013, the GCR halted its operations in the region for an unspecified amount of time due to lack of funding (AI, 2013a: 18).

86 Interview with the GCR lawyer in Evros (21.06.2012)
87 Interview with the GCR lawyer in Evros; see also (AI, 2013a: 18)
The Greek government has promised, since 2010, to improve the asylum system by opening the New Asylum Service and First Reception Centers where trained and qualified personnel rather than the police would be responsible for the asylum procedures inside the detention centers. However, none of these institutions has become operational (AITIMA, 2013). Access to asylum procedures aside, it is not desirable for migrants to claim asylum in Greece due to extremely limited asylum acceptance rates in Greece. The case of Syrian migrants is illustrative of the major failure of the Greek asylum system: According to the statistics, in 2012, only 152 out of 7,927 Syrian migrants who were arrested in Greece for undocumented entry or stay applied for asylum; Among those 152 migrants, 150 of them were rejected at first instance, and only 2 of them were granted refugee status (UNHCR, 2013). In 2011, the overall refugee recognition rate in Greece at first instance was below 1%, lowest among all European Countries.

These statistics not only demonstrate the failure of the Greek asylum system inside the detention centers, but in Greece in general. While many migrants who cannot be deported, such as the Afghans, strategically do not claim asylum inside the detention centers to avoid long periods of detention; they are confronted with the same asylum system outside of the detention centers. After getting released with an order to leave the country within 30 days, some of these migrants attempt to claim asylum in Athens. Each

---

88 The reason behind the delay is related to both the ignorance of the Greek authorities about migrant rights and also to the European Union’s austerity policies targeting Greece. While the authorities from the EU Commission hypocritically condemn Greece for the delay in the opening of these services, the same EU authorities do not allow Greece to hire and employ new public staff due to austerity measures. Thanks to Apostolos Veizis for this observation.
89 Eurostat News Release, 23.03.2012.
week, they wait for hours overnight and, on Saturday at 6:00 am only 20 of them are admitted into the building where they can claim asylum.\textsuperscript{90}

Migrants also fear submitting their fingerprints to the Greek authorities because they are often aware of the EU’s Dublin System, which obliges the first EU country of arrival to have the responsibility for processing the asylum claim. Although the ECtHR suspended the Dublin II transfers to Greece in 2011 because of the inhumane conditions in detention centers and the failure of the Greek asylum system,\textsuperscript{91} migrants still fear getting expelled to Greece even if they could successfully reach other EU countries. In an interview, a migrant who did not apply for asylum told me: "Before I was thinking that if I get a pink card, they get my fingerprints and they will send me back to Greece.” He added: “Now some of my friends say it does not make any change.” But he was still reluctant to apply for asylum in Greece due to lack of employment prospects. He said: “What can we do with a pink card? There is nothing. There is no job" (Migrant no15).

Having no legal status and no prospects in Greece, these migrants desperately try to reach other EU countries. The majority of them, however, fail, as a result of the border controls at the Greek airports and on the Greece-Italy route. Yet, many endlessly try. During this transit period, which may reach a couple of years or even become permanent, migrants

\textsuperscript{90} UNHCR, 23.03.2012. It should be noted, however, that for those migrants who can afford it, there are other ways of registering an asylum claim and getting the asylum application card (i.e., the pink card). Some private lawyers have ‘connections’ with the Greek authorities who are responsible for registering the asylum claims. According to the members of the Group of Lawyers, an activist lawyer organization that provides free legal aid to migrants and refugees in Greece, such ‘connections’ amount to a ‘pink-card mafia’ in Greece (Interview with the Group of Lawyers, 16.05.2012).

\textsuperscript{91} M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece.
live in extremely impoverished conditions inside Greece and under continuous threat of violence.

Before discussing the material conditions outside of detention centers, the material conditions of detention should be further explained as many migrants, including Afghans and Syrians, who cannot be deported back, frequently end up in detention centers in Greece as a result of police-sweep operations in major Greek cities, particularly in Athens since August 2012 (HRW, 2013a). While the detention centers nearby the borderzones mostly imprison those migrants who are arrested in the borderzone areas, there are many other detention centers inside Greece, such as the Amygdaleza center in Attika Region and the Korinthos detention center in the Peloponnese region where migrants arrested in various places in Greece (mostly in Athens) are detained. The detention for those who are apprehended during police-sweep operations has become ever worse in 2014. Recent reports demonstrate that the Greek authorities detain massive numbers of migrants, including those cannot be deportable, such as Afghans, Eritreans, Somalis and Syrians. The authorities threaten these migrants with detention periods reaching up to 18 months, 24 months, 36 months or even longer – until migrants ‘cooperate’ to ‘voluntarily’ return to their countries of origin.  

The material conditions inside the detention centers, both the ones in the borderzone area and inside Greece, are inhumane. In his visit to the Greek detention

---

92 Infomobile, 02.04.2014.
centers on late 2012, the UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of Migrants pointed out that:

In some of the detention facilities, the migrants had limited access to toilets; some facilities had no artificial lighting so that during the winter, migrants were in the dark from early afternoon. Most of the detention facilities visited lacked heating and hot water and the detainees complained about insufficient amounts and poor quality of food, lack of soap and other hygiene products, as well as insufficient clothing, shoes and blankets. The medical services offered in some of the facilities by KEELPNO (Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention) were highly insufficient. Some of the centres had no permanent medical staff, and relied on daily visits by KEELPNO only (SRHRM, 2013: 12).

It should be stressed that even the limited services provided by KEELPNO in some detention centers have been temporary, based on the EU funding (MSF, 2014: 12).

Normally, no medical staff is present inside the detention centers. The policemen are the only authorities to decide who needs medical attention and which medical condition is urgent (MSF, 2014: 12). In an interview, the Head of Mission of the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Greece noted that the police are unwilling to refer migrants to hospitals because of the obligation to accompany migrants during their hospital visit. According to the Greek law, the police must control migrants throughout their hospitalization period. Normally for one migrant, four police officers (6 hours in 4 shifts) are needed each day.93

MSF seems to be the only source of accessible medical help for migrants inside the detention centers. But the MSF teams normally work on a project basis in emergency situations. As the mandate of the MSF makes it clear, the task of MSF is to provide

---

93 Interview with the MSF (13.06.2012).
emergency aid, not to substitute for the public health services provided by states. Since there has been no medical care at all in the border regions, MSF teams have had ongoing projects in the border regions since 2008, but their projects get interrupted due to lack of funding (MSF, 2014: 5).

Many migrants suffer physical and mental injury during border crossing. Many arrive already sick or injured and with traumas; many are already in need of physical and psychological support. Rather than receiving proper examination and support, upon their transfer to detention centers, migrants are often forced to wait in the cold up to a day in the waiting areas. The authorities do not provide them with any extra clothes, sleeping bags or blankets. The majority of migrants do not receive any medical check-up. In an interview, the Head of Mission of the MSF in Greece, pointed out the vital importance of the initial screening for arriving migrants, particularly in winter because of the cold weather conditions. He added: “For example, two weeks ago there was a Nigerian guy who lost two hands because of frost bites. 33 years old guy. If the medical services were there in the first moment, maybe we could have saved him.”

94 http://www.msf.org/about-msf
95 In the Evros region, the MSF halted its operations when KEELPNO began providing medical services on March 2013. When KEELPNO ceased its operations due to lack of funding (AI, 2013a: 21), the MSF restarted its operations in the region on October 2013. Their latest project lasted until March 2014 (MSF, 2014: 5). Compared to their almost continual presence in the Evros region, the presence of the MSF in the Aegean Sea borderzone seems to have been more temporary. They had a project in the Lesbos Island in the summers of 2008 and 2009 when the route was highly active. After a few years of break, they had another project that lasted from October to December 2012 when the route began active again.
96 MSF, 28.02.2012.
97 Interview with the MSF (13.06.2012).
The lack of health service upon reception, combined with limited space and inhuman sanitary and hygiene conditions, worsen the health condition of the migrants who are detained. According to the data gathered by the MSF, in 2013-2014 “most common complaints were upper respiratory tract infections (24.7%); gastrointestinal disorders (14.7%); musculoskeletal problems (13.7%); skin diseases (8.5%); and dental problems (7.9%)” (MSF, 2014: 9). While the Greek authorities and the mainstream media often stigmatize migrants for bringing transmissible diseases into Greece (including HIV, malaria, hepatitis B and hepatitis C, tuberculosis, cholera, yellow fever, leprosy, syphilis and diphtheria), the MSF report highlights how the diseases that migrants have are actually caused by poor detention conditions. A report published by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) confirms MSF’s findings; it states: “No outbreaks of communicable diseases have been reported during the visit. Most migrants were reported to be healthy individuals. Nevertheless, the conditions of detainment significantly increase the risk for communicable disease outbreaks” (ECDC, 2011: 13).

Already poor mental health conditions of the migrants worsen during detention. Many migrants show symptoms of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, and almost all of them suffer from stress-related psychosomatic problems at different levels; for example, sleep problems, stomachache and lack of appetite (MSF, 2010; 2014). Migrants also experience physical and verbal abuse from the police authorities, which negatively affects their physical and mental health (MSF, 2010: 14; ProAsyl,

98 See e.g., Infomobile, 17.12.2011 Ekathimerini, 01.04.2012.
There have been also cases of violence among the detainees as a result of the poor material conditions of detention (e.g., fights over for a place to sleep) (ProAsyl, 2012a: 75).

**Trapped Between Borders**

Those migrants who avoid detention or who are released from detention mostly end up in big Greek cities, mainly Thessaloniki and Athens. Most of these migrants, such as most of the Afghans and Syrians, have orders to leave the country within 30 days to six months; these papers do not effectively grant any rights to migrants. Potentially, migrants can also apply for asylum and have the asylum seeker’s card (“the pink card”), which would entitle them to certain rights, including the right to legally stay in the country during the processing of the asylum claim, the right to access health services and the right to work. But, as noted earlier, due to the failure of the Greek asylum system and the lack of life prospects in Greece, few migrants apply for asylum in Greece after they are released.99

The majority of migrants hope to use Greece as a country of transit for other European countries (mainly Northern and Central European countries). However, reaching other European countries from Greece is extremely difficult, particularly for

99 Some migrants however do apply, even knowing what is awaiting them. Because of their traumatic experiences in crossing the Greece-Turkey borders, these migrants are too discouraged to attempt another border crossing. For instance, in an interview, a migrant told me: “I don't want to risk that again. I don't want to go because of what I saw [at the Evros]” (Migrant no16).
migrants who are poor, and the majority of them are extremely poor. As a result, many migrants are trapped inside Greece.

Greece is a part of the Schengen Area. According to the Schengen Regulation, travel within the Schengen Area should not be normally restricted with internal border checks. While member states have been able to circumvent the Schengen regulation by expanding mobile identity checks over ‘suspected populations’ such as migrants inside the Schengen Area (Faure-Atger, 2008), there have been few cases where internal border controls were permanently re-introduced. According to EU law, internal border controls can be re-introduced only temporarily for reasons of “public policy and national security” (Faure-Atger, 2008: 5). England reintroduced border checks after the July 2005 bombings and Germany did the same during the hosting of the 2007 G8 Summit (Faure-Atger, 2008: 5-6). In Greece, however, what is considered exceptional has become the norm. It is unclear how the authorities legally justify the internal border controls, but there are permanent controls in Greece’s exit points to Europe, in Greek airports (supported by the FRONTEX) and on the Greece-Italy sea route (in Patras and Igoumenitsa, as well as in Italian seaports). It is also unclear why the Greek authorities comply with the strict controls at the Greece’s exit points. The only plausible answer seems to be the threat of other EU countries expelling Greece from the Schengen Area if Greece fails to control migration flows from Greece towards other EU countries.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ E.g., Euroactiv, 29.03.2012.
Many migrants who attempt to reach other European countries via the Athens airport do not even make it to the check-in stage. In my interviews, migrants stated that the police authorities target people who are non-European looking at the entrance of the airport and tell them to ‘disappear.’ For those who succeed in finding their ways inside the airport, racial profiling continues. Authorities scrutinize the travel documents of the migrants and put pressure on them with many questions.

In an interview, a FRONTEX officer who was involved in the controls at the Evros region, including the regular land crossing points, stated that: “two weeks ago, for example in Kipi, in this cross border point, they found one Turkish citizen with a false Romanian passport. So it was easy for us to identify him because we have there a Romanian officer. So he was called to check… Come on, it was obvious (he laughs).”

When I asked the FRONTEX officer about how they exactly target ‘suspicious’ people for further checks, he was reluctant to give away any information, but he said: “It is about special police techniques. They were trained to do it; and they are applying what they are trained to do. It is up to them to do their own approach.”

There is no comprehensive data about the level of involvement of the FRONTEX in the Greek airports, but both the migrant narratives and the extensive data gathered by the FRONTEX about the ‘intra-EU

---

101 Interview with the FRONTEX officer (19.06.2012).
102 Interview with the FRONTEX officer (19.06.2012).
movements’ from the Greek airports clearly demonstrate their high level of involvement.103

Due to difficulties in leaving Greece via airport, many migrants attempt to leave Greece either via the Greece-Italy sea route (from Patras and Igoumenitsa to Italy) or through the Balkan land route (Greece, Macedonia [Former Yugoslavian Republic Of Macedonia or FYROM], Serbia, Hungary, Austria). As the surveillance and violence has increased on the Greece-Italy sea route, the Balkan land route, which had not been a widely used route in previous years, seems to have become a popular route in the last years.104 However, there is not a complete shift from the Greece-Italy sea route towards the Balkan land route (e.g., Mason, 2013). Both routes are extremely dangerous, and few migrants succeed. The fate of many is unknown.

The data on the Balkan route is particularly scarce. In my fieldwork, I spoke with migrants who were planning to take this route, but I couldn’t speak with anyone who actually had taken the route. Many migrants were already aware of the route’s dangers, but many still preferred this route to the Greece-Italy sea route, which they perceived as even more dangerous and difficult. The Balkan route is a very long route in a very harsh terrain. Migrants travel through mountainous areas in the cold. In addition to the dangers

103 The FRONTEX’s 2012 Annual Risk Analysis Report states: “As regards intra-EU movements many migrants transit through Greece via the intra-Schengen air border using fraudulent documents. They mainly use French or Greek ID-cards or passports encompassing a wide range of fraud: forged (photo substitution), counterfeit and genuine documents (imposters). Small EU airports are often targeted, either as departure or arrival points, for example from Athens to Brussels South Charleroi in Belgium, or Thessaloniki and Heraklion in Greece to German destinations. In Germany, a large proportion of asylum applications were filed by passengers on intra-Schengen flights arrived from Greek airports” (FRONTEX, 2012: 16).
104 See e.g FRONTEX (2013).
emanating from the harsh geographical conditions, migrants also face grave risks that emanate from mafia and police authorities (Fotiadis, 2013). The Balkan route consists of crossing four state borders and there is possibility of getting caught and being deported back after each border crossing. Many migrants are indeed informally deported back many times before they can succeed in reaching Austria. Although Hungary is also a EU country, the authorities there, just as the authorities in Macedonia and Serbia, often violate migrants’ rights and conduct informal deportation operations (Fotiadis, 2013; Infomobile, 26.04.2011).

Compared to the Balkan route, details of the Greece-Italy sea route are better known. Human rights NGOs published reports about the situation of migrants in Patras (ProAsyl 2012b) and those who are returned back from the Italian seaports to Greece (ProAsyl 2012c; HRW 2013b). In my fieldwork, I also spoke with many migrants who were seeking their chances to stow away on ferries bound for Italy but got caught by the authorities. I also had the chance to speak with the founding member of the Kinisi (Motion for the Defence of Refugees’ and Migrants’ Rights), an activist group that has been active in Patras since early 2000s.

Numerous documented cases demonstrate that there is systemic ill-treatment amounting to torture of migrants, including minors, by the Greek authorities in Patras (ProAsyl, 2012b). In a 2011 press release, Médecins du Monde noted the high level of brutality in the cases of ill treatment: “Blows from batons into the extremes or genitals and severe head injuries are some examples of physical police violence recorded by the
doctors of the organization” (cited in ProAsyl, 2012b: 15). Ill-treatment by the Greek authorities occurs inside the port after detection, during identity checks on the streets or when the authorities raid migrants’ shelters. Members of the neo-Nazi Party Golden Dawn have also been involved in cases of ill treatment and torture of migrants in recent years. Fascist violence against migrants particularly escalated after the alleged murder of a Greek national by an Afghani migrant on May 19, 2012 (ProAsyl, 2012b: 5).\textsuperscript{105} In addition to direct violence, such as through beatings and torture, there are also cases of violence caused indirectly by the authorities: Many migrants get injured when trying to avoid the police; for instance, while jumping from the upper floors of their shelter (ProAsyl, 2012b: 15). Despite the voluminous cases of ill-treatment and torture that are recorded by various independent NGOs, there has been no effective action by the Greek government to investigate the cases of violence and to punish the perpetrators (ProAsyl, 2012b).

In an interview, the founding member of the migrant-rights group Kinisi noted that during the last years, as the number of migrants (particularly from Afghanistan) has increased, police surveillance has also intensified. Since 2009, in addition to targeting migrants inside the port, police forces have also been raiding the shelters of the migrants. As the police destroy their shelters, migrants are forced to find new shelters. The last shelter for the migrants is an abandoned factory nearby the port.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{105} While fascist violence continues at all times, it escalates whenever there is an alleged murder of or theft from a Greek citizen by a migrant (see e.g., Mason, 2013).
\textsuperscript{106} Interview with the Kinisi (06.07.2012).
It is very difficult – almost impossible - for migrants to get inside the port because of the strict security measures. Agents of both the Special Operations Units of the Hellenic Coast Guard (KEA) and of private security patrol the port. Many migrants also get caught by truck drivers and get beaten by them. When the police authorities catch migrants, they often beat and torture them; then, they arrest and imprison them in detention centers. But since the majority of migrants, such as Afghans, are non-deportable, after a period of detention, the authorities release these migrants, forcing them back to Athens. But many migrants come back to Patras to try their chances again. Migrants who cannot pay the travel costs from Athens to Patras (30 euros by bus) come back on foot. The detention conditions in Patras, just as in other parts of Greece, are inhumane, and there are no proper and permanent health services, even in emergency situations. Humanitarian NGOs such as Médecins du Monde, Praksis and the Red Cross, which are present in Patras only temporarily, are the only sources of accessible healthcare (ProAsyl, 2012b).

Few migrants succeed in reaching inside the port; fewer yet succeed in reaching Italy alive. Interviewed migrants told cases of their friends who had died inside or above the trucks because of heat, lack of oxygen or dehydration. Few of these cases are documented. In one such case reported by a local Italian newspaper, “two Afghans died on their way to Ancona, two are in a coma and one is hospitalized with severe injuries when a group of refugees hidden inside a bus suffered from the heat and lack of oxygen (23.06.12)” (cited in ProAsyl, 2012c: 4).
For those migrants who somehow reach Italian ports (in Ancona, Bari, Brindisi and Venice) alive, surveillance and violence continue. Upon disembarkation, the Italian authorities check the vehicles, in some cases with scanning technologies. In order to avoid detection inside the trucks, some migrants get out of the trucks right after disembarkation, but it is very difficult for these migrants to leave the port area because of the fences (ProAsyl, 2012c: 17). As a result, many migrants get caught by the Italian authorities inside the port.

Italian authorities show no respect for the international protection rights of migrants, and they do not allow them to claim asylum. Rather, they force them to return to Greece (ProAsyl, 2012c). There is a readmission agreement between Greece and Italy that has been in effect since 1999. However, the agreement cannot be formally used because any formal readmission from Italy to Greece would violate the ECtHR, which in 2011, ruled that Greece is not a safe country of asylum. In practice, however, Italian authorities informally send migrants back to Greece. Sometimes they deceive migrants, telling them they will transfer them to any EU country as they wish (ProAsyl 2012c: 10), but usually they conduct readmission operations violently, through slapping, punching and kicking migrants (ProAsyl, 2012c: 13). In an interview, a migrant stated: “It was too dangerous. I tried two times. I [was caught] by the Italy police, and they returned [me] back to Greece, so I was in Patras. I tried a lot. I am tired of trying“ (Migrant no17). The

---

107 There are 28 Silhouette 300 type mobile X-ray scanners installed in major Italian ports. These scanners use H-SCAN X-ray scanning technique (ProAsyl, 2012c: 12).
migrant added that he had paid all the money he had to smugglers, and now he has no money left.

To summarize, as a result of the strict border controls in Greece’s exit points to Europe, many migrants cannot leave Greece. Almost all migrants still hope to reach another EU country one day, but for many, the transit period in Greece has become more-or-less permanent. They cannot return to their countries of origin; they cannot leave Greece either. They are trapped between borders without any rights.

Below, five aspects of the material living conditions of migrants who are trapped in Greece are discussed: employment and finances, housing and accommodation, racist violence, police-sweep operations and health conditions.

**Employment and Finances**

Employment prospects and working conditions have never been good and fair for migrants in Greece, even before the start of the economic crisis in 2009. Migrants are often employed informally in low-paid, temporary and seasonal jobs that are concentrated mainly in sectors such as construction, agriculture, tourism and care services (Karantinos and Manoudi, 2010; Maroukis, 2010). The case of migrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan working in the strawberry fields of the village of Manolada in the Peloponese region is illustrative of the situation of migrant workers in Greece in the pre-2009 period: In Manolada, migrant workers, including minors, have been living in shelters without permanent access to water or basic sanitary facilities, only to earn 22 euro per day.
(Karantinos and Manoudi, 2010: 23). Still, prior to the 2009 economic crisis, the Greek economy and the Greek authorities were content with exploiting the cheap labor of migrants. The police authorities were overlooking undocumented migrants in rural regions during the harvest collection season and in other locations of Greece during the tourist season (Maroukis, 2010: 97). Many migrants, on the other hand, needed to support their families back in their home countries, and they preferred the working conditions and salaries in Greece.

But since the break of the economic crisis in 2009 and the imposition of the austerity measures by ‘The Troika’ (The International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and European Commission), the situation has gotten much worse for migrants. The unemployment rate among Greek citizens has risen from 9.3% in 2009 to 27.5% in 2013; among Greek youth (aged 15-24) the rate was 64.9% in 2013. Among migrants, the unemployment rate is even higher; it often surpasses the average unemployment rate for Greek citizens by five percent (Maroukis, 2012: 2). Recent data suggest that migrants who are legally entitled to work in Greece have started returning back to their home countries, and many other migrants, who used to work in Greece legally, are now forced to work illegally. The case of Manolada can be used to illustrate the worsening of the already bad working conditions for migrants in Greece. On April 2013, 33 migrants were

---

108 Unlike many other European Countries, such as Germany and Netherlands, that have stricter regimes of employment sanctions that function together with increasingly digitized systems such as databases and electronic identity cards (Broeders, 2009; Lyon 2009a; Topal, 2008; Topal 2011), in Greece, informal employment of migrants seems to have been often overlooked by the police authorities (Interview with the EKA, 07.06.2012).
109 Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL. STAT.) http://www.statistics.gr/
shot by farm supervisors and eight of them were seriously injured because they were protesting not being paid for seven months. Migrants still live in the same horrendous material conditions and many of them, because they are undocumented, do not have any access to healthcare or any other right (AI, 2013b).110

With the rise of Golden Dawn in Greece, the intensity and the brutality of the racist attacks against migrants in workplaces have increased. For instance, on September 2013, members of Golden Dawn invaded a barbershop owned by a Pakistani migrant, stabbed the two Pakistani employees and one Greek customer and burned the shop. One of the Pakistani migrants nearly died during the attack as he was stabbed very close to his heart.111

Despite these realities, migrants still try to work, mostly in rural areas during the harvest season and in urban centers, mainly in Athens and Thessaloniki, selling cheap imitation products, tissues, flowers, or cleaning car windscreens. Very few of them, out of desperation, are involved in the drug trade, petty crime and sex work (Maroukis, 2012: 2). The majority of migrants, including most of the migrants I interviewed in my fieldwork, rely on food provided by the churches and the minimal amount of money they receive from their families (e.g., around 50-60 euros per month) back in their countries of origin and sometimes from their friends to survive.

110 On July 2014, the owner of the farm and the head foreman were cleared of all charges in the Greek courts. Two others, who shot migrants, were also freed pending appeal. The Guardian, 31.07.2014.
111 Greek Independent News, 06.02.2014.
Housing/Accommodation Conditions

Having extremely limited opportunities for finding a proper job in Greece, many migrants are forced to live in extremely poor conditions. Many live in parks, squares and streets when they first arrive in Athens and then later find a house through connections in their ethnic community. But there are some whose stays in parks, squares and streets have become more or less permanent because they cannot afford housing at all. Many prefer to live in parks, particularly during the summer, to save some money. But parks have become extremely dangerous in the last years, as a result of the continuous racist attacks and police-sweep operations. Many migrants, particularly minors, are also targets of the drug and sex-work mafia in parks.

More detail will be provided about the racist attacks and police-sweep operations in the next section. But it can be briefly noted that attacks and operations have made life outside of houses very dangerous for migrants. Over the years, migrants have been forced to leave certain neighborhoods, such as Aghios Panteleimon and Attiki Square, and to re-locate in places where police and racist groups do not often come. It is questionable to what extent the new locations can provide some sort of safety for migrants from the racist groups and the police, as these groups can basically infiltrate anywhere, sometimes including migrant houses and shops as well.

\[112\text{ In my fieldwork, in addition to observing the situation of migrants who dwell and live in city parks, I also visited three houses where migrants resided. All three houses had similar characteristics. Other sources in this field also suggest similar findings: Fidan (2010); Infomobile (2011); Triandafyllidou and Maroukis (2012: 151-161).}\]
Besides the racist attacks and the police operations, migrants, particularly minors, suffer a great deal from the activities of the drug and sex-work mafia. Based on what I gathered from the narratives of migrants who were living in the parks, this is how the drug networks recruit migrants: Drug dealers (mostly Greek nationals) approach a migrant who lives in a park; they give him four units of drugs, and tell him to deliver three units to some people in other Greek cities and to consume one unit by himself. This is how the mafia makes a migrant a drug addict as well abusing him as a drug courier. Sexual abuse is another horrible aspect of living in the parks. Compared to the data on the activities of the drug mafia, this domain is less known and there are various rumors around. But in interviews, some migrants stated that particularly Afghan minors (mostly boys) in parks are targeted by the sex-work mafia and sometimes by individual men. Some of these minors, out of desperation, perform sex work, sometimes in the park or sometimes in the houses of the abusers. The following report describes the existence of various forms of sexual abuse that affect migrants who sleep in the parks and streets:

In a case of an Afghan family sleeping outside during 2010, their homelessness ended up in the sexual abuse of their 7 year old child. … A young African woman fell victim to a rapist, who attacked her in the middle of the night while she was sleeping alone on a square in the centre of Athens (Infomobile, 2011).

From time to time some philanthropic organizations, such as Child Smile, temporarily help few a unaccompanied children who live in parks.\textsuperscript{113} During my fieldwork, some migrants stated that some Christian philanthropic groups also help minors temporarily. However, there has been no continual or comprehensive assistance so far.

\textsuperscript{113} Infomobile, 02.01.2012.
Migrants who stay in groups and who are older seem to have resisted the drug and sex-work mafia in the parks and streets. Without having any source of income, however, these migrants remain extremely vulnerable to various threats. Many, in fact, walk around or remain awake during the night and prefer to sleep in the early hours of the morning to minimize the risk of abuse and violence.

While some migrants are forced to live in parks for long periods, many seem to have some sort of contact with a house where they can go and, at least, sleep and remain safe to a certain extent. Most of the migrants receive some help from their ethnic community in finding these houses. Sometimes co-nationals offer hospitality (particularly to families) and host them in their houses. Many migrants go to guesthouses or shared flats, places that basically function similarly to hotels. Often a migrant rents the place from a Greek national, and then he rents the sleeping spots and rooms to other migrants. Single men pay around 2-3 euros per day (for a sleeping mattress in a room), and families pay around 200-250 euros (for a room) per month. Houses are often extremely overcrowded: There are usually 5-7 people staying in shared flats and 12-20 people staying in one room of the guesthouses. Sometimes migrants sleep in shifts and share their mattresses with others to share the costs or to help their friends. Costs include very basic facilities, usually only a mattress to sleep: Migrants pay extra (around 3-5 euros) to take a bath, kitchens are shared, and toilets often do not often function properly. Overall, there is substandard hygiene, inadequate heating and lack of hot water and ventilation in these places. The famous ‘Afghan Hotel’, which is a three-floored guesthouse that is
often visited by newcomer Afghan migrants, hosts 15-20 people in one room. Each pay 3 euros per day and 2 euro extra if they also want to have food. There is water and electricity but no heating (Fidan, 2010).

Social networks seem to be affecting the price and the quality of the places where migrants stay. Migrants who have few or no friends seem to be ending up in guesthouses, such as “the Afghan Hotel,” where conditions are worse, and rates are slightly more expensive. In shared flats, migrants let their friends stay with them, sometimes even without charge and on the basis of sharing mattresses in shifts. Shared flats are also relatively clean. In a house I visited, the total amount of rent was 350 euro for a two-bedroom unit that was shared among 7 Afghan migrants. However, with frequent visitors from their social networks who are in need of a place to stay, this number increases to 10-12. Renting a flat is difficult for migrants, as most of them do not have legal documents. Mostly those migrants who have been in Greece for more than five years have their flats already rented from a Greek landlord, and they rent the sleeping spots/rooms to newcomer migrants.

Compared to parks, houses are usually safer. Many migrants prefer to stay in houses as much as possible as they fear the police operations and racist attacks on the streets. But in my fieldwork, I spoke with some migrants who also were targeted by the police inside their houses. Two Afghan migrants who were living in a house stated that the police raided their house a couple of times, each time claiming that they were looking for drugs but instead beating them and taking their money. When I spoke with these
migrants in the park, it was around 11 pm. Even though they knew that racist groups frequently attack migrants after midnight, these two migrants still preferred to stay in the park because they regarded it as safer than their houses (Migrant no18 and migrant no19). The frequency of these home invasions is unknown, because such incidents are not reported or investigated. But considering the fact that even Greek nationals also suffer from the same practices, one can assume that these practices have become very frequent.114

Racist Violence

Racist violence, in both its physical and symbolic forms, is an everyday reality for migrants in Greece. While migrants had previously been experiencing various forms of racism in Greece, since the 2009 economic crisis and the rise of the neo-Nazi Party Golden Dawn, racist violence against them has escalated to extreme levels. The first election victory for Golden Dawn was the 2010 regional elections where the Party got 5.3% of the votes in the municipality of Athens. In the 2012 national elections, Golden Dawn increased its national votes to 6.92% and managed to enter into the Greek Parliament for the first time in its history. In the 2014 European Parliament elections the party increased its share of the vote again, now to 9.40%.

114 On January 2014, one Greek officer and three special guards were suspended for abuse of power. “According to the charges, following a routine check on foreign nationals for illegal substances, the officers proceeded to unlawfully search the national’s house. Once inside, they illegally removed 1,100 euros” (Greek Reporter 24.01.2014, emphasis added).
Just as other right-wing, populist parties of Europe, Golden Dawn follows a nationalistic, anti-immigrant rhetoric, scapegoating migrants for the economic crisis, crime, deterioration of public health services and all the other ills in the society. What differentiates Golden Dawn from other far-right parties of Europe (such as the UKIP in the UK and the National Front in France) is their explicit approval of Nazi ideology and practice. While Golden Dawn does not publicly accept the labels of ‘neo-Nazi’ and ‘fascist’, the badge of the party resembles the Nazi swastika and members of the party have praised Hitler. Golden Dawn members also use the Nazi salute. The symbolic resemblance aside, the official program of the party is truly fascist. The official party documents state that “the People is not just an arithmetic total of individuals but the qualitative composition of humans with the same biological and cultural heritage” (cited in Ellinas, 2013: 549). It is also added that “there is ‘racial inequality of humans’ and “the Greek race has particular standards” (cited in Ellinas, 2013: 549).

Golden Dawn not only supports violence against migrants ideologically; but also their members have actively been involved in various cases of violence against migrants in Greece, which resulted in the injury and even death of many. It is impossible to have accurate statistical data in this domain, as the cases of racist violence are not usually reported. But the data gathered by NGOs and other independent sources could some shed light on the intensity of the racist attacks. In only the first half of the 2011, over 500 victims of racism sought treatment in the clinics of Medicins du Monde (MDM) and Praksis (HRW, 2013a: 10-11). Between February 2013 and February 2014, Medicins du
Monde and the Greek Council of Refugees recorded 75 other cases of racist violence (MDM and GCR, 2014: 7). In many cases, the perpetrators were dressed in black uniforms with Nazi symbols and used weapons including “crowbars, expandable batons, chains, brass knuckles, knives, broken bottles, pepper spray [and] big dogs” (MDM and GCR, 2014: 8). According to a survey based on random sampling, 65% of the migrants said that they have experienced some form of racist violence in Greece, and 51% of them said that they limit their activities and avoid being present in public spaces due to fear of getting attacked (MDM and GCR, 2014: 11).

The majority of migrants do not file official complaints about the racist attacks because of their precarious legal situation. They fear that if they file a complaint the police will detain them and possibly subject them to further violence. In the few cases where migrants attempted to report cases, the police simply ignored them, telling them that “it [is] pointless to lodge a complaint if they [cannot] not positively identify the perpetrators or that they should simply organize themselves to fight back” (HRW, 2012: 13). Many migrants also believe that the police would not effectively investigate the crimes perpetrated by the members of Golden Dawn. Indeed, Golden Dawn has infiltrated the Greek police and has begun to act like the police in many neighborhoods of Athens.\footnote{The Guardian, 26.10.2012; The Guardian, 28.09.2012.} There are also reports demonstrating that over 50% of the Greek police officers voted for Golden Dawn in the 2012 elections.\footnote{Greek Reporter, 11.05.2012} It is also evident that the higher-level Greek officials supported the police-Golden Dawn merger, as they wanted to use...
Golden Dawn as a paramilitary group to suppress left-wing dissent and to discourage migrants from staying in Greece (WCC, 2014).

While the injury and death of many migrants is often ignored by the Greek government as well as by the Greek media, there has been some action against Golden Dawn after the murder of an anti-fascist Greek rapper by Golden Dawn members in September 2013. Having been pressured by anti-fascist demonstrations all over Greece, the Greek government not only arrested the killer of the rapper, but it also ordered the filing of criminal cases against the party members. During investigations in party offices, thousands of pictures showing party members with weapons (including handguns, swords and assault rifles) and posing Nazi salute were gathered. At the time of writing, six of the 18 MPs of Golden Dawn are in prison and three others are facing criminal charges. Despite these remedies, however, it is highly doubtful whether the violence perpetrated or supported by Golden Dawn against migrants would come to an end. After all, the Greek government took action against the Golden Dawn members to punish the murderers of a Greek citizen, not to charge them with the injury and death of many migrants. As the 2014 European elections demonstrate, the popularity of the Golden Dawn is still rising in Greece, and there is no reason to hope that the Party will lose its ground on the streets of Athens. In fact, Golden Dawn has managed to create a complex web of social network in Greece and has politicized many ‘citizens’ groups’ with their fascist ideology and turned

117 The Guardian, 17.01.2014
them into vigilante groups. It is those groups who have been actively fighting against migrants.

The only effective, albeit limited, support for migrants on the streets seems to be the anti-fascist, anti-authoritarian and anarchist groups. For instance, a square that is only a few blocks away from a neighborhood that Golden Dawn controls is relatively secure and safe for migrants. Many migrants, including families, sit in the square even during the afternoon. In interviews, migrants stated that the reason the square is relatively secure is the existence of a nearby squat home that is run by anti-fascists and anarchists. When the fascists wanted to take over the square and began harassing the migrants, the members of the squat mobilized other anti-fascist groups and confronted the fascists. During my fieldwork, I had a chance to speak with some activists from these organizations. They stated that they try to organize as many interventions as they can in public spaces to protect the migrants from the fascist attacks. They added that they are at a grave disadvantage as the fascists are often backed up by the Greek police. In one case among many others that attracted international media attention, the Greek police tortured fifteen anti-fascist activists because they had been involved in a clash with the members of Golden Dawn. Anti-fascist activists were protesting the vandalism of a migrant center by the Golden Dawn members when the fight broke out. The activists were then arrested by the police and transferred to the police station where they were beaten, forced to strip naked and made to bend over in front of the police officers. Some

---

118 Interviews with the Greek activists (11.06.2012).
police officers burned the activists’ arms with cigarette lighters, and others put lasers and flashlights into their eyes to keep them awake.  

**Police-sweep Operations**

Racist violence that is perpetrated by the fascist groups goes together with racist violence that is exercised through police-sweep operations. Identity checks based on racial profiling have been an everyday reality for migrants in Greece. For instance, in an interview, a migrant stated: “Almost every day they check my identity. Any time they see you, they just call you, because you are black. They stop you and ask you what are you up to. They ask you to bring your passport and your ID card” (Migrant no16). Because that particular migrant had his legal papers, after checking his identity, the police simply let him go. Those migrants whose 30-days-leave document had expired were often getting detained, but since many of these migrants, such as Afghans and Syrians, were non-deportable, they were mostly released after some hours or days in detention.

With the launch of the police-sweep operation Xenios Zeus in August 2012, however, not only has the frequency of the identity checks intensified but also the practice of prolonged detention of migrants upon identity checks has been established. Over 60,000 migrants were detained in the first five months of the operation. The Greek authorities now detain even those migrants with legal identity papers (e.g., asylum application cards and 30-days-leave notices) and those who are non-deportable (e.g.,

---

120 This truly racist operation was ironically named after the Greek God of hospitality, Zeus.
Afghans and Syrians). The rationale here is to discourage these migrants from staying in Greece and to force them to ‘voluntarily’ return back to their home countries. The practices of ill treatment, including beatings, during identity checks has also increased (see HRW, 2013a). The material conditions inside the detention centers, as explained in the earlier sections in detail, are dreadful (MSF, 2014).

**Health Conditions**

The migrants’ health conditions of migrants are extremely poor. With the intensification of the police-sweep operations and prolonged detention, the detention centers have become a long-term place of accommodation for many migrants. As noted in the earlier sections, physical and mental health conditions of migrants deteriorate during detention (MSF, 2014). Those who are outside of detention centers are forced to live in parks or overcrowded houses in substandard conditions. Migrants also experience an extreme level of racist violence that is perpetrated by the fascist groups and the police, which negatively affect their physical as well as mental health.

The majority of migrants are not entitled to receive any healthcare services because they are undocumented, although in emergency situations, they can go to hospitals. Normally, the only accessible healthcare is provided by the NGOs, including the MSF, Praxis, MDM, and Babel for mental support. Rather than developing policies to

---

121 Infomobile, 02.04.2014.
122 While the ill treatment of migrants did not attract much media attention, the Xenios Zeus operation has had international presence when some tourists from countries such as South Korea and India got beaten badly by the Greek police during the identity checks. See BBC, 09.01.2013.
provide basic healthcare to migrants, the Greek authorities stigmatize migrants, blaming them for bringing diseases into Greece. On April 2012, the Greek parliament passed an amendment to migration law to enable compulsory medical checks on migrants. Based on this amendment, the Greek police, often accompanied by the KEELPNO personnel, have begun to conduct compulsory and forced medical checks on migrants, particularly on those living in parks and streets, without showing any respect for their dignity.\textsuperscript{123} According to the Head of Mission of MSF in Greece, these compulsory checks have had a negative impact on migrants’ already limited access to healthcare. He stated: “People who are in need of medical assistance are afraid, they are hiding. More and more migrants now do not even go to NGOs, being afraid of being reported and arrested by the police.”\textsuperscript{124}

6.2 Migrant Subjectivities

The above outlined material-structural practices of violence constrain migrant subjectivities. This is not to suggest that there is one type of migrant subjectivity that is already determined by the material-structural processes. While all migrants share certain commonalities in their subjectivity, they also differ from one another in how they respond to material violence. Below, these commonalties and differences in migrants’ subjectivities are discussed. The stranger is theorized as the over-arching mode of migrant subjectivity. Four other types of migrant subjectivities are theorized to

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{123} Infomobile, 30.04.2012.
\textsuperscript{124} Interview with the MSF (13.06.2012).
\end{flushright}
demonstrate the diverse experiences that migrants have in Greece: abject subjectivity, religious subjectivity, nomadic subjectivity and dissident subjectivity.

This emphasis on diverse subjectivities of migrants does not contradict but rather complements what has already been theorized with regards to the structural, material and practical aspects of the border. Migrant subjectivities do not emerge out of nowhere; it is material-structural and practical processes that give them shape. Prioritization of the analysis of material processes over actions and thoughts of individuals does not suggest ignoring the complexity of subjectivity. On the contrary, rather than following a deterministic path, materialist theory of subjectivity takes into account the role of contingency in the formation of subjectivities. As Althusser puts it:

There is “a play and space of multiple interpellations in which the subject is caught up … Thus the individual has at his disposal a ‘play of manoeuvre’ [jeu de manoeuvre] between several positions, between which he can ‘develop’, or even, if you insist, ‘choose’, determine his course [se determiner], although this determination is itself determined, but in the play of the plurality of interpellations (Althusser, 2006c: 241, emphasis original).

However, while Althusser’s aleatory materialism is useful for understanding the complexity of subjectivity vis-à-vis material processes, Althusser puts little emphasis on analyzing the subjectivities of oppressed groups. In his influential essay on ISAs (Ideological State Apparatuses), Althusser differentiates RSAs (Repressive State Apparatuses, such as the police) from ISAs, and, he prioritizes the analysis of how ISAs produce subjects as ‘free’ beings (e.g., how education produces the compliant worker who willingly accepts his subordinate position) (Althusser, 2008b). Thus, Althusser largely ignores how RSAs can also trigger the development of different subjectivities and
thus implies that subjectivities of those who face repressive power are not worthy of analysis.

Foucault, whose work has been important in analyzing the practical aspects of the border, also prioritizes the subjectivities of ‘free’ subjects – those subjects who do not face coercive power. Foucault claims that “power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free”, adding that “slavery is not a power relationship when man is in chains (In this case, it is a question of a physical relationship of constraint)” (Foucault, 1982: 790). Even when violence is the focus of Foucault’s analysis, it is understood as the side effect of productive regimes of power that attempt to produce ‘free’ individuals. For instance, Foucault understands modern wars and massacres as the “underside of the power to guarantee an individual's continued existence” (1998: 137). In many-Foucault inspired literatures, too, the study of ‘productive’ aspects of power are prioritized and repression is simply understood as the side effect of ‘freedom’. (Walters, 2012: 71-74; see also Bigo, 2011; Rose, 1999: 233; Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero, 2008: 292; Dillon and Neal, 2008). In each case, the subjectivities of oppressed groups are omitted from the analysis, as if being exposed to direct material violence is something that prevents oppressed groups from developing subjectivities. Speaking of migrant subjectivities, the reality is, when faced with material violence, migrants develop not one, but multiple subjectivities.

Agamben, also, despite his sustained focus on repressive aspects of power and his important contributions to our understanding of how suspension of rights plays an
important part in the control of disadvantaged groups, does not pay sufficient attention to analyzing the subjectivities of oppressed groups. He simply uses the term *homo sacer* to generalize the situation of those who live without rights (Agamben, 1998). The concept of *homo sacer* not only misses the complex experiences of those who live under a generalized state of exception, but it also presents subjectivity as entirely passive. Migrants, however, are not passive victims. Despite the great risk they face and sometimes even subvert the state of exception and develop diverse subjectivities.

In the following sections, I draw on a variety of other sources to theorize the diverse subjectivities of migrants. The theories of Bauman, Kristeva, Durkheim, Deleuze and Guattari and Rancière guide the analysis. Bauman’s concept of the stranger (1991) is used to analyze the common basis of migrant subjectivity vis-à-vis the host communities. All migrants, in one way or another, fit into the category of the stranger. However, the concept of the stranger is also somewhat homogenizing. Therefore, other theoretical tools are needed to illustrate the diverse experiences of migrants. While it is important to not depict migrants as entirely passive, it is also problematic to romanticize migrant subjectivities. In fact, many migrants fit into the Kristeva-inspired theory of abject-subjectivity (1982), which puts emphasis on the condition of being lower than the subject – a condition that is characterized by being inexistent, inaudible and desperate. But there are other modes of subjectivities as well. Religious and ethnic identification among migrants is particularly strong. Many migrants turn to religion (Islam) and their ethnic communities to constitute their subjectivity. Durkheim’s emphasis on the collective-
integrative aspect of religion (1995) serves as a basis to theorize this mode of subjectivity. Other modes of subjectivities include nomadic subjectivity and dissident subjectivity. Deleuze and Guattari’s theory on nomadism (1987) is used to explore the nomadic subjectivity that is especially common among young migrants. These migrants perceive border crossing as an adventure, and this perception gives them the courage to continue facing material violence. The final type of migrant subjectivity is dissident subjectivity. This uncommon but highly significant type of subjectivity is theorized by drawing on Rancière’s theory of dissensus (1999). Migrants who participate in political demonstrations (such as hunger strikes) to claim their rights are examples for this type of subjectivity.

It is important, however, to not understand these four different types of migrant subjectivities as fixed categories. Many migrants move from one category into another and many belong to two, three or even all of these categories at the same time, in addition to belonging to the category of the stranger. For instance, a nomadic subject may become an abject subject after multiple unsuccessful attempts of border crossing or losing a family member during crossing. Abject, religious or nomadic subjects may also be turned into dissident subjects as a result of the political activities of local activist groups – who act as a material entity, having the power to influence migrant subjectivities. Many migrants can be religious and abject, religious and nomadic and even religious and dissident at the same time. There is also the context and space-dependent aspect of subjectivity. Migrants may act more like religious subjects in mosques and in their
community, nomadic while planning a new border crossing, abject after having been beaten by the police, and dissident when participating into political activities.

Therefore, just as for any other group of human beings, there is no fixed subjectivity for migrants; rather there is interplay among multiple forms of subjectivities. This reality already shows that there is no essence of subjectivity and that subjectivity is something that is formed out of material circumstances and one that is open to continuous transformation. What is equally clear, then, is that every type of subjectivity is a misrecognized subjectivity. The process of identity formation is, after all, a process of misrecognition (Lacan, 2006) where multiple and fluid becomings are reduced into fixed beings. Yet, such a process of misrecognition is never complete because subjectivities continuously emerge contingently. In these respects, migrants are not actually abjects even when they perceive themselves as abjects. Rather, they misrecognize themselves as abjects as a result of material violence. The same goes true for other subjectivities (stranger, religious, nomadic). But when it comes to dissident subjectivity, there is an exception. The fact that subjectification/identification is a process of misrecognition should not lead us to relativism about the value of different subjectivities and identifications. Some subjectivities, albeit being equally socially and materially mediated, have the potential to be built on the real material conditions. Seen in this light, the dissident subjectivity cannot simply be categorized as a misrecognized subjectivity; it is rather a recognized subjectivity – for dissident subjects recognize the material conditions of their exploitation and struggle to achieve rights.
6.2.1 Stranger Subjectivity

Bauman’s concept of the stranger, which he takes from Simmel and develops with Derridian insights, is useful as an analytical tool when making sense of the experiences of migrants’ vis-à-vis the host communities. According to Bauman, the stranger is someone who is “tabooed, disarmed, suppressed, exiled physically and mentally” (1991: 59). The stranger is an ambivalent, indeterminate, undecidable and unclassifiable category between friend and foe. The stranger is not a friend because he is uninvited; but he is not a straightforward enemy either. Host communities in liberal democracies do not regard strangers as equal political subjects. But they often do not regard them as objects of direct extermination (as in the concentration camps) either, although they approve of their extermination through indirect ways such as through hatred, exclusion, exploitation, assimilation and expulsion.

Speaking of the experiences of migrants in Greece, all migrants, in one way or another, fit into the category of the stranger. They are targets of hatred and exclusion. But the level of material violence in Greece is so extreme that it forces us to take Bauman’s analysis one-step forward. Bauman’s original formulations of the stranger seems to better explain the situation of migrants in Western European countries such as France, Germany and Denmark where integration practices over migrants are still in place and direct extermination of migrants is regarded as somewhat ‘inhumane’. In Greece, however, not only is there no policy towards integrating migrants, not even as cheap labor (cf. De Genova, 2002; Topal, 2011), but also a significant portion of the society seems to support
the direct extermination of migrants through violent ways. The rising popularity of the 
neo-Nazi Party Golden Dawn demonstrates the uniqueness of Greece compared to other 
European countries.

This is not to suggest that all segments of Greek society support the violence that 
is perpetrated by members of the Golden Dawn. The rise of the radical left Party, 
SYRIZA, demonstrates that many Greek people are indeed deeply disturbed by the 
growing fascism in Greece. As noted earlier, there are also some anti-fascist grassroots 
groups that fight against fascism to protect migrants, even sometimes at the cost of their 
own well-being. But migrants’ experiences in Greece are largely marked by their 
encounter with fascist groups, implicit or explicit supporters of the fascist groups, and the 
police, as well as the extremely poor material conditions (in the asylum system, 
employment, housing/accommodation, health) they are confronted by.

As a result of material violence, many migrants internalize the condition of being 
a stranger. In almost all interviews, migrants told of cases where they are treated or 
regarded as objects of hatred. Such cases include social stigmatization in public spaces 
(such as in squares or in public transportations) as well as more brutal cases of racist 
vviolence. Below are some interview excerpts that illustrate these experiences.

Interviewer: What problems do you have in Greece? 
Migrant no16: The problem that we have here is they do not treat us as humans. 
Interviewer: Why? 
Migrant no16: Maybe because I am black, I don’t know. Partially racism and 
partially, maybe because I am an immigrant. They don't want immigrants here … 
All the things that immigrants get in other countries, I don’t get them here.
If you take the bus, the Greek men and women don’t sit near you. One day I asked why you don’t sit here? The place is free; you don’t sit down, why? He says you are a black man; it is very dangerous. It is not true. Why do you say black men are dangerous? (Migrant no20).

In 2011 I went to Crete to work. At night there were 10 young people with motorcycles. They said: ‘If I see you, I will beat you’. It is a big problem. At night, if you are a black man, if you came from Africa, you don’t go out. You only go to your house to sleep (Migrant no20).

Fifteen days I was in Patras, I was trying to get into Italy. Three times I got caught by the police. And I broke my legs when jumping from a floor, when running from the police … I went to hospital but they are not helping. They say you have to get a pink card … Now I decided to stay in Athens for some weeks. Then I have to go back to Patras to try again … My money is stolen by the smuggler. I have only 50 euros. I can only make a journey to Patras. And from Patras, let's see how I can go (Migrant no21).

Migrant no22: I was at the beach with my family. We were speaking Farsi. Racist people came and said: ‘Here in Greece, you only speak Greek’. Then they beat me in front of my family and children. They tried to rip my clothes off. Interviewer: Did you go to the police? Migrant no22: Police? No help from the police here. The police are on the side of the racist groups. They beat me many times in the jail (Migrant no22).

Migrant no12: [After arresting me in the borderzone area], they [the Greek police] asked me: ‘Turkey?’ They took me to the police station. In the police station they beat me with sticks. ‘You look like Turki Kurdish,’ they said. I told them that I speak Arabic; Turkish people don’t speak Arabic. They still beat me. They beat me until morning. Then they kept me in a separate room. It was very cold. Two nights I couldn’t sleep. My body was broken. I cannot walk … I will go to the court, because I have the picture. Interviewer: Do you think the court will punish the police? Migrant no12: No law in this country. I don’t think they will punish.

In the villages when you are walking, especially the older people living on the border, when they see you they call: ‘Taliban, Taliban’ (Migrant no23).

When I go to supermarkets, some Greek people see me, they say ‘Taliban, Taliban’. I was against Taliban, I run away from Taliban, why do you call me Taliban? (Migrant no23).
When they see you [nearby the borderzone area], the villagers call the police. Once I asked some shepherds how to go to Athens. They gave false information. I ended up nearby the Bulgarian border. It took three days for me [to] find the route back. I almost died. I slept on the trees to avoid wolves (Migrant no24).

There was a basketball ground close to the Park. We were 20-30 Afghan people playing football. There were also Greek children playing there. Sometimes we were using [the field] sometimes the children [were] using [the field]. Four-five times the police came and they said ‘go from here, it is not your place. Children should play here’. Then the police c[a]me again and beat us. Then we c[a]me back to play again. Then there were 15 Greek people. They all came with motorcycles. They [had] sticks and everything. They beat us very badly. You can still see the injuries. They were swearing and they were shouting, ‘Go, never come here again’” (Migrant no25).

It is very dangerous to go Aghios Panteleimonas. I don't walk nearby. If I need to visit some friends I will go in [the] day, I won’t go at night” (Migrant no25).

Last year, a Greek man was killed. We were in the Victoria Square with my wife. There was a group of Greek people shouting, ‘Go to hell, Put off your scarf’. My wife was so scared” (Migrant no26).

There was a bad condition in the jail. There were families and children. They kept us in the jail yard for many hours under the sun. It was very warm … Then they got fingerprints and they put us in a jail. Jail was in very bad condition. Very dirty, dirty blankets … I was thinking that it was a mistake to come here. I never think Europe is like that … There was an Afghan husband. Three times the Greek police said his name but he didn't understand. The Greek police cannot pronounce Afghan names well. After four times, he said he is here. Then the Greek police come and they say ‘why you didn't say in the first time’ … and they were beating very badly … The police say ‘malaga malaga’125 when beating (Migrant no26).

When I first arrived to Athens. I came to Attiki. There was very bad situation. People were beaten there. Afghan people go there to use telephones. Once, there was a group of 10 people who beat an Afghan boy while he was talking on the phone (Migrant no27).

There is no night and day; any time [the] fascists could come (Migrant no27).

125 ‘Malaga’ or ‘malakas’ is a Greek swear word that means wanker, looser and stupid.
They [the Greek people] are not good people. When you are normal walking in the street, when you face with them, they will turn their face to the other side. They are scared of us. Also in [the] islands, some Afghan people work for Greek people and they are not giving money (Migrant no28).

If one migrant does crime here, they will look on all the immigrants as criminals. The police, the people, everybody (Migrant no28).

When they [fascists] attack they say ‘Taliban, Terrorist, no Muslim, no Islam in Greece’. Sometimes they also say ‘Go Muslim home’ (Migrant no28).

Sometimes the police come to [our] house, they are looking for paper. If you don't have a paper, they put you in jail. They got 9 people from my house … If you have money, you can pay a lawyer. If you don’t have money, they keep you five months or one year or maybe two years. After that they give you [the] paper for thirty days (Migrant no29).

The category of stranger explains the hatred, exclusion and violence that migrants experience in Greece. But it is somewhat reductionist. It homogenizes the diverse experiences of migrants in only one category. While the concept of the stranger can serve as the common framework for understanding migrant subjectivities, we need other conceptual tools to capture the diversity of migrant experiences.

6.2.2 Abject Subjectivity

Abject subjectivity is very close to the stranger subjectivity. In fact, the majority of the migrant narratives cited in the stranger subjectivity section could also be included in the abject subjectivity section. But while the category of the stranger is more useful when explaining the sort of exclusion and hatred that migrants experience from the host communities, the abject subjectivity is more useful in explaining the migrants’
internalization of hopelessness and desperation, and the condition of being invisible and inaudible – a condition that is below the subject.

Abject is defined as “wretched, hopeless, miserable, submissive, despicable, rejected, cast out” (The Free Dictionary). According to Kristeva, abject is neither subject nor object; yet it constitutes the subject (1982: 1). The subject differentiates her/himself from the abject and defines the boundaries of her/his own subjectivity through this very process of differentiation. As Kristeva puts it, “Abject and abjection are … safeguards. The primers of … culture” (1982: 2). In Butler’s words, abjects form the “constitutive outside to the domain of the subject” (Butler, 1993: 3). Abjects are those who do not “enjoy the status of the subject” and who dwell in “‘unliveable’ and ‘uninhabitable’ zones of social life” (Butler, 1993: 3).

Although in Kristeva’s formulation, the process of abjection originates in the libidinal separation of the child from the maternal body (1982), when cleared from those psychoanalytical resonances (see Rose, 1999: 253; Hepworth, 2012: 433), the theory of the abject subjectivity is a powerful analytical tool to explain the subjectivity of those who are degraded to a lower status in society. Building on Kristeva, for instance, Nyers points out how refugees and migrants are rendered abjects and how they stand, in contrast to citizens, as “speechless victims, invisible and apolitical” (Nyers, 2003: 1074). In their discussion on the spaces where migrants and refugees are located, such as frontiers,

126 Against these “arbitrary designations”, in his essay on “abject cosmopolitanism”, Nyers demonstrates how migrants are indeed capable of political agency (2003). I agree with Nyers that ‘abjects’ can become cosmopolitan. In the following sections, I theorize the dissident subjectivity to illustrate the subjectivity of those migrants who engage in cosmopolitan politics.
zones and camps, Isin and Rygiel touch on a similar point (2007). They argue that these groups are “stripped of their (existent and potential) citizenship (rights of becoming political)” and they “become inaudible and invisible” (Isin and Rygiel, 2007: 183).

Many migrants in Greece, even though they have successfully crossed the border, perceive themselves as passive and speechless beings and develop a sort of subjectivity that resembles abject subjectivity. These migrants do not regard themselves as passive as homo sacers or slaves. They do not simply wait to die as if they are locked in a concentration camp, nor do they fully submit themselves to the rule of the ‘masters’. In other words, they do not perceive themselves as objects. But material violence is so pervasive that these migrants do not perceive themselves as subjects either. Neither subjects nor objects, these migrants become abjects; they become invisible and inaudible.

One example of abject subjectivity is the following story of an Afghan minor. From time to time, NGOs in Athens attempt to provide limited assistance to minors living in the parks, who constitute the most vulnerable group among the migrants. On one such occasion, an NGO fieldworker from the GCR found an Afghan minor living in the park and told him that the GCR could offer him some free legal assistance. In addition to threats from the police, racist groups, drug mafia and sex-work mafia in the park, this migrant also had had bad experiences from his fellow countrymen from Afghanistan who forced him to work without providing any money or shelter. But despite his desperate need for any sort of help, days passed and the minor never showed up at the GCR office. Then the GCR fieldworker reached out to minor and asked him why he did not come.
The minor told the fieldworker that even though he ended up on a street very close to the NGO building, he couldn’t find the exact building. The fieldworker asked him why he didn’t ask anybody around for the address. Then the minor told her that he cannot speak with anybody in Greece because people in Greece either perceive him as a thief or murderer, and they avoid him at all costs or they want to beat him.127 In an interview, a psychologist from the ARSIS, who had provided psychosocial support to minor and young migrants since 2001, also stated that minors especially are very hesitant to ask for help because they fear from everyone.128 Not only minors but the majority of the migrants, in one way or another, experience a similar condition in Greece. Their stories demonstrate how migrants internalize the condition of being abject and prefer to remain invisible and inaudible. Migrants minimize their presence in public spaces, and they become speechless, apolitical beings, below the level of a citizen subject.

Other examples of abject subjectivity include those who lose hope in Greece, those who get injured or who lose their relatives or friends during the border crossing, those who are abused by the drug mafia or sex-work mafia, those who experience psychosomatic symptoms, and most of the families. Below are some excerpts from my fieldnotes and migrant interviews that demonstrate the experience of abject-subjectivity by migrants in Greece.

In my fieldwork, I tried many times to interview families both in Thessaloniki and Athens many times. However, despite the fact that I had good contacts, most of the time I

127 Interview with the GCR fieldworker (15.06.2012).
128 Interview with the ARSIS (08.07.2012).
could not succeed. The families gave me the same response each time, which
demonstrates their level of desperation in Greece: “Many journalists came and took notes
but nothing changed.” Another group of migrants that can be included into the abject-
subjectivity category are those who suffer from psychosomatic problems. Many migrants
demonstrate symptoms of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep
problems, skin problems, lack of appetite (MSF, 2010; 2014). Just as in the other
contexts, minors and children seem to suffer most from these symptoms. In an interview,
a psychologist from ARSIS stated that minors and children wet their beds a lot.\footnote{Interview with the ARSIS (08.07.2012).}

Migrant no17: I came here three years ago. I was stupid. I went to Patras when I
come … I stayed in Patras four months. I tried to go to Italy … I don’t have good
luck … Bulgarian, Romanian, Italian drivers, when they find you, they beat you
very bad. If immigrants try to put themselves into the truck, all the truck drivers
are together. They ring the bell [horn] to alert each other.

Interviewer: The police?
Migrant no17: Once the commandos [Special Operations Units of the Hellenic
Coast Guard (KEA)] ran over me with their car. I was crying. Commando and
police beat me more. I was bleeding. There were no ambulances. Then the
ambulance came and took me to the hospital but they only gave me a serum. I
said; ‘This is an emergency’. The doctors said ‘Wait, wait. There were 10-15
people in the line. Police beat them all. All in blood. Nobody took care of us … I
wanted to complain. When I go to the police to complain. They told me: ‘We did
not invite you to Greece.’ … When they capture immigrants, they take them to
Commando house. They throw cold water over them. And they say: ‘Go out.’

Interviewer: What do you do for a living?
Migrant no17: First years I collected oranges. I earn 8-10 euros per day. But now
there is no job … We go to Alexandros Park and, we get back to home and sleep.
There is nothing to do here.

Interviewer: Where do you find money?
Migrant no17: My family sends some money from Afghanistan.

Interview: What do you plan to do?
Migrant no17: I am very tired. I will deport myself back to Afghanistan … Before
I thought about human rights, respect in the Europe. There is nothing here.
Taliban is better with immigrants. Here they think we are all criminals and thieves. We are like in a jail … Sometimes in my dream I see Patras. It is a nightmare. I wake up quickly. Even in dreams I get sick.

Since one year, I am jobless. Here all people are watching us strange. They think we are thief or we are dangerous … I had some money from my family, I spent. I don't know what will happen to me … In Greece your life is destroyed, no future here (Migrant no 30).

Two months ago, I had good friends. They became drug users. Now they sell it to other people. One becomes a drug addict to sell it to other people. Greek mafia does that. They give some money to migrants to survive and let them to use a portion of the drug. They use immigrants to carry drugs. They work with mafia and smugglers (Migrant no30).

Some of my friends lost their minds, they become drug addicts and they fight with each other. When you meet them and say hi, then they fight with you. All people got mind sick here. They fight each other … If migrants fight with other migrants and get injured then no ambulance comes (Migrant no21).

It was 1am when I went to the park and I saw lots of young boys, especially Afghan young boys. They had fun music. And then I have seen some elder people coming and paying for 5-10 euros for young boys [for sex], even minors … Greek people come, but people tell the story that even tourist people come here … When I ask Afghan people why they do this, they say ‘We are hungry; we just want food (Migrant no31).

I came here to have a good education, to continue my education. But now I lost my hope (Migrant no31).

I was hoping for the study and education. Here I lost my hope. I don't think I can improve myself here (Migrant no20).

I am a very good metal worker from Pakistan. In 2009, I found a job when I came [to Greece]. But now it is very difficult. The employers don't pay any money. They close the shops … I want to leave Greece but I cannot return back to Pakistan. I don’t know what to do (Migrant no32).

I worked in a building construction and iron company. I also did gardening in Greece … I lost my job 2,5 years ago. It’s very difficult. My friends help me. But now they also became unemployed. It’s very difficult … I am like a slave here. I
can’t find a job here. I can’t return back to Afghanistan … I am very tired. I don’t know what will happen in the future (Migrant no33).

11 years in Greece, every year I wanted to go to another country. In Greece there is black life (Migrant no22).

To some of my friends [back in Afghanistan] who don't have to leave Afghanistan, I tell my story and say; ‘Please stay in your country, please love your country’. Even if you can cross the border and become an immigrant in another country, people will never accept you as their countryman. There are people who lived 12 years here; they only have a fake card. They cannot travel. They don’t get any respect by the Greek people (Migrant no28).

Migrant no6: There were 45 people. There [were] all famil[ies] from Iran, from Bangladesh, from Pakistan. The smuggler preferred to send young people in a one boat, families in other boat, separately from each other … First the smuggler sent us. Eight people, we crossed the border … And we were waiting for my family inside Greece. They were on Turkish side. The families were coming. But from one family they lost one small girl, ten-years-old girl. And my parents. They did not come. My mother, father and sister. Four people disappeared. It was 2 o’clock of the night.

Interviewer: Did they die in the river?
Migrant no6: I don’t know. Maybe [the] Turkish police [caught] them. Maybe they returned back to Turkey. Or maybe they are dead, and I lost them.

Interviewer: Did the smugglers say anything?
Migrant no6: The smuggler just come to [the] Turkish border and then [left]. I cannot contact him.

Interviewer: Did you ask other people how your family disappeared?
Migrant no6: Nobody saw them … I was walking to Greece side and I was waiting [for] my family to come. I was crying … Then the police took us [to] jail, but they never come … Family who lost the daughter with my parents said: ‘If they come to Athens, then you will see them, because Athens is not that big’.

Interviewer: Did you contact anybody in Athens?
Migrant no6: I did not know where to go. Where should I contact? I was waiting in the Park for two years.

Interviewer: For two years you didn’t have any contact with your family?
Migrant no6: I have only one aunt in Iran. My aunt does not know where they are. They never contacted [her]. I am sure if they are alive and if they are in Turkey they will call my aunt … It’s not only my family. There are too many families. They lost their daughter, their husband. There are too many people. It’s a dangerous river.

Interviewer: You came here without any money?
Migrant no6: All my documents and my money were with my father. Interviewer: Did you tell the police that you are young? Migrant no6: I was fourteen years old. But I told them to write 19 years old to not stay in prison. Even all minors they don’t tell their real age. They say they are adults. Interviewer: Did the police ask if you need any help? Migrant no6: No, they just ask where are you from, how old are you … Then I came to Athens. Interviewer: What did you do? Migrant no6: I was waiting here for my family. Nothing changed. I was in Attiki. All Afghan people come to Attiki parks. I was just waiting for them to come. Interviewer: How did you survive for 2 years? Migrant no6: About 2 years, my aunt was sending me money. They support me from Iran. About 4 months [ago] I cannot contact my aunt. I don’t know. They changed their number. Interviewer: What do you do now? Migrant no6: Everyday I go to the Church or to mayor’s [municipality] for food. I was sleeping in the park. And just a few nights ago I find some friends here and they keep me in [their] house.

These realities demonstrate how the extreme level of material violence makes migrants hopeless and desperate, turning them into abject subjects. Sometimes rumors of hope spread among the migrants and they believe them, which also demonstrate how desperate migrants are for a small sign of hope. One such rumour was about a big Canadian ship that is believed to take Afghan migrants from Greece and bring them to Canada.

According to the rumour, Canada was in need of labour and Canadian officials particularly wanted to take Afghan migrants from Greece because of their hard work, because they were aware of the bad situation in Greece, and they respected refugee rights. Many Afghan people, including families and minors, believed in the rumor and they ended up in Patras and began searching for a big ship. After a while, a big ship arrived and the migrants desperately tried to enter the port area, telling the Greek police that the
ship was waiting for them. The Greek police told the migrants that there was no ship for them and that they should go away. Some migrants still believe in the myth of the Canadian ship, claiming that it was the Greek government that didn’t let the Canadian ship take them but one day the ship will come back again.

6.2.3 Religious Subjectivity

Abject subjectivity is perhaps the most common type of subjectivity among migrants, but it is not the only one. Religious and ethnic identification among migrants is also particularly prevalent; many migrants turn to religion (Islam) and their ethnic communities to constitute their subjectivity. We should avoid reductionist explanations when understanding migrants’ resorting to religion. It is, for instance, doubtful whether the classic Marxist thesis on religion – ‘religion as the opium of the people’ - holds fully true with regards to experiences of migrants. Religion may indeed deflect the attention of some migrants from the real material conditions, but many migrants who engage in political activities are also religious. In that sense, there is often no direct conflict between religion and politics.

Religion plays an important social role in migrant communities. Many migrants, for instance, protect themselves from being turned into abjects through resorting to religion. The communal aspect of religion helps migrants to preserve themselves as human beings with speech and audience, rather than being below the status of the subject. Durkheim’s theory of religion, which puts emphasis on the collective and integrative
aspects of religion, is useful when understanding the role that religion plays in the
everyday lives of the migrants.

According to Durkheim, religion serves as the ontological basis of human
societies. Durkheim argues that the categories through which human beings understand
the world and themselves “are born in religion and from religion; they are a product of
religious thought” (1995: 9). For Durkheim, religion has a material existence; it is a
“collective thing” (1995: 44). Through capturing individuals into its collectivity, religion
structures human consciousness and guides human actions. Durkheim’s broad definition
of religion not only involves a belief in God but it might also involve a belief in “the flag,
the country, this or that political organization or hero or historical event” (cited in
Milbrandt and Pearce 2011: 270). In that sense, religious concepts such as the sacred,
collective consciousness and collective effervescence play central roles in the
organization of contemporary societies just as they did in historical ones.

In Greece, both the doctrinal and the social aspects of religion play a part in
guiding migrant subjectivities. In interviews, many migrants stated that they resisted
getting involved in the drug trade and criminal activities because of their faith in Islam,
which bans such activities.\(^\text{130}\) Many also stated that their belief in God give them the

---

\(^{130}\) Observations of Thanos Maroukis, who is a Greece-based researcher on migration, are in line with what I observed. Maroukis points out that “the migrant smuggling networks to Europe, the petty crime, the organized crime of the drug trade and prostitution are on the doorstep of newly arrived immigrants in the last three years, threatening and also recruiting a small number of them. The deep faith in Islam is the only counterweight to this tendency” (2012: 3). Yet, we should avoid presenting this fact in moralistic terms. In other words, we should be careful to not stigmatize those few number of migrants who engage in petty theft out of desperation. As Wilhem Reich puts it: “What has to be explained is not the fact that the man who is
power to survive in Greece. In an interview, a migrant who had been in Greece for 10 years, for instance, stated that without Islam, he would have lost his mind (Migrant no34).

At a more fundamental level, the ways in which many migrants interact with each other is also religious – understood broadly as the ‘collective thing’. Migrant populations in Greece are organized around communities, such as the Afghan, Pakistani, Syrian and African communities. When they arrive Greece, migrants often find their own community. Many migrants survive through the help they receive from these communities. For instance, in an interview, a migrant from Nigeria stated: “Somebody saw me on the streets. He was black like me. And I begged him and he took me in. He kept me in his house, sheltered and fed me for some time” (Migrant no16). Many migrants also stated that they trust only their friends from their ethnic communities in Greece.

Apart from material help, such as finding a house to sleep in, such communities also play a central role in the socialization of migrants, which is also material. Migrants can meet and speak with other migrants from similar backgrounds in these communities. For instance, in an interview a migrant stated: “I come to park to speak with people because in the house you are thinking a lot alone, very bad memories” (Migrant no27). A couple of nights, I ended up staying late in one of the parks in Athens. There was music, dance and lots of laughter. Feelings of melancholy but also hopes for the future were

hungry steals or the fact that the man who is exploited strikes, but why the majority of those who are hungry don't steal and why the majority of those who are exploited don't strike.”
framing the gatherings. One particular song, ‘Afghanistan Salaam’, was illustrative of how these feelings were intersecting. My interpreter friend explained that the song is about the Afghan refugees. He added that “from this bad situation of being a refugee, they are sending him to Kabul and hope for a day that they will return.”

These forms of socialization protect migrants’ subjectivity from disintegrating altogether. Having been denied the right to exist in public as speaking beings in Greece, it is in these communities that migrants reclaim their right to speech and existence. Despite the immense amount of violence they experience because of their ethnic background, migrants get even more attached to their ethnic identity. As one migrant stated in an interview, “I am proud to be an Afghan. We are poor people, but what can we do? We are human and we are proud of ourselves. It is because of war. Who makes war? It is all the other countries. They use always their politics in my country. America, Pakistan, Iran, Russia...”(Migrant no23).

While migrants seem to find most relief in their ethnic community, which itself is religious, there is also the cosmopolitan aspect of Islam that guides migrants to understand themselves as part of a broader international community. Migrants sometimes end up in shared makeshift mosques in Athens and there is interaction among different communities. There is also interaction during Eid prayers. Such interaction plays a role in establishing solidarity among migrant communities. For instance, diverse migrant

---

131 (Fieldnotes, 05.07.2012).
communities joined forces to protest the racist attacks in Greece.\textsuperscript{132} This is not to claim that there is no conflict among Muslim migrants in Greece; fights do break out among migrants, and some migrants abuse others.\textsuperscript{133} Nevertheless, the religion of Islam still plays a role in how migrants understand themselves as part of a broader international community. Such cosmopolitan aspect of Islam religion also seems to play a role in shaping migrants’ experiences of Turkey. For instance, many migrants, even those who had had bad experiences with the Turkish authorities, said that they missed Turkey because the local populations were Muslim and because they were able to hear the sound of \textit{ezan} (the Islamic call to prayer). For instance, in an interview, a migrant stated: “there are no Mosques here [in Greece]. I cannot hear ezan. In Turkey you hear ezan all the time. Its voice makes me relaxed and I feel better. It is very beautiful in Turkey. I wish I could have stayed” (Migrant no36).

In Athens, despite the large number of Muslim migrants, there is no official mosque. Muslims pray in underground makeshift mosques that are converted from basement apartments. There are over 100 makeshift mosques in Athens, which are mostly run by unofficial imams assigned by the ethnic communities. In 2011, pressured by the demands of Muslims in Greece, the Greek parliament approved plans to build a mosque

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{132} RT News 19.01.2013
\textsuperscript{133} It is impossible to provide reliable data on this domain, as these cases are almost never reported. But in my fieldwork I spoke with some migrants who got beaten and robbed by others (E.g. A Palestinian migrant said that he was robbed by Algerian migrants [Migrant no35]). In rare cases, there are also conflicts within the same ethnic community. As noted earlier (in the abject subjectivity section), there was a case where older Afghan men forced an Afghan minor to work without pay.
\end{flushright}
in Athens, and in November 2013, the tender to build the mosque was finalized.\textsuperscript{134} Despite these developments, the fate of the mosque is uncertain. The Greek Orthodox Church and Golden Dawn members protested the mosque project, and there are still ongoing discussions.\textsuperscript{135}

Makeshift mosques are under great pressure. In an interview, an imam of an Afghan makeshift mosque stated that it is very difficult to rent a place for a mosque because when Greek property owners realize that the building would be used as a mosque they often cancel the contract. Makeshift mosques are also under the scrutiny of the police and they are often penalized because officially these places can function only as cultural centers. But the more fundamental problems seem to be the lack of funding and increasing racist attacks. Makeshift mosques rely on donations collected within the ethnic communities; and since the majority of migrants lack proper income, it is very difficult for them to support these mosques. The increasing racist attacks by Golden Dawn members against makeshifts mosques are another concern.\textsuperscript{136} These attacks are often targeted at the empty mosque property at night, but there have also been cases where Golden Dawn members attacked migrants while they were inside. In an event on August 2012, for instance, Golden Dawn members threw flares down the stairs while migrants

\textsuperscript{134} Hurriyet Daily News, 14.11.2013. \hfill \textsuperscript{135} Greek Reporter, 28.04.2014 \hfill \textsuperscript{136} Interview with the Imam (09.07.2012).
were praying inside.\textsuperscript{137} Golden Dawn members also assault worshippers during open-air prayers.\textsuperscript{138}

Imams do more than interacting with migrants who come to mosques: They also visit parks where migrants are located. Imams often instruct migrants about the need to preserve their belief in God and Islam and invite migrants to visit the mosque more often. They also guide migrants in everyday matters as well; for instance, they instruct migrants to stay away from crime and the drug trade, which are prohibited in Islam. In an interview, an imam from an Afghan mosque stated: “Afghan people are living in the park. They are targets of thieves, smugglers. When our people go, they trust us more.”\textsuperscript{139}

Imams also provide guidance about the fascist attacks: “We don't have power to fight against these people [fascists]. But we give information to Afghan people to not go to places where fascist are.”\textsuperscript{140}

Many migrants go to the Greek Orthodox Church to obtain food. Some of them develop ambivalent feelings about the church during this process. For instance, in an interview a migrant told me: “[In the church] sometimes [for] 1 hour sometimes 40 minutes they talk about Christianity and Jesus. Then they give us food. I love my religion and I respect my religion. I respect Jesus as well, as a messenger. But we never believe in Jesus as a God as these people are saying in the Church” (Migrant no15). Despite these ambivalent ideas they have about the Church, migrants are all grateful for the support of

\textsuperscript{137} Ekathimerini, 11.08.2012  
\textsuperscript{138} SET Times, 10.07.2012  
\textsuperscript{139} Interview with the Imam (09.07.2012).  
\textsuperscript{140} Interview with the Imam (09.07.2012).
the Church. In an interview, even the imam of the Afghan mosque stated that he himself
goes to the Church often. When it comes to activities of some Christian relief groups,
however, such as Helping Hands, migrants seem to be more suspicious.

More research needs to be done in this domain and from this research only the
experiences of few migrants, who never received help from these organizations, can be
presented. These migrants, who are older and more pious, were concerned that the
Christian relief organizations have a secret agenda of converting Muslims to Christianity.
They claimed that these organizations mostly target young migrants, who they find
gullible. In an interview, a migrant stated: “I think it is a crime to change children’s
minds. When you give something to children, they believe you.” He added, “the children
are deprived of everything here. Even the basic things could help changing their minds.”
(Migrant no37). The imam of the Afghan makeshift mosque was also concerned about
these groups. In an interview he claimed that these organizations deceive migrants: “They
say if you become Christian they will send you to America, Canada. They say they have
lawyers in these countries and they can help with lawyers. But after a while there is
nothing changing.”

6.2.4 Nomadic Subjectivity

There is also the nomadic mode of subjectivity, which is particularly common among
young migrants. These migrants regard border crossing as an adventure – a dangerous yet
rewarding challenge. Their perception of themselves as courageous individuals provides

\[\text{141 Interview with the Imam (09.07.2012).}\]
them with the vitality to face material violence. Many migrants find the courage to cross
the border multiple times, even after experiencing push-back and boat accidents through
developing nomadic subjectivity. Having survived once, these migrants begin to think
that they could try again, until they succeed. Many migrants have also survived the wars
in countries such as Afghanistan and Syria, and they have become fearless in the process.
Many migrants have some friends who somehow made their ways to other European
countries. Stories of those who succeeded in reaching other European countries also
motivate migrants to risk their lives in another border crossing. They believe that since
their friends succeeded, they can succeed too.

This mode of subjectivity resembles what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) theorize as
nomadic subjectivity. According to Deleuze and Guattari, nomadism is a practice of
desire that disrupts the dispositifs of power, or what they call ‘the State.’ Here ‘the State’
should not be understood from a state-centric perspective. Deleuze and Guattari follow
the Foucauldian understanding of the state as a power that operates through dispositifs –
or what they term *apparatuses of capture*. Understanding of subjectivity not as a fixed
being but as multiple becomings is central to the conceptualization of nomadic
subjectivity vis-à-vis the State. According to Deleuze and Guattari, active and productive
forces of desire exist prior to the State and they guide the becomings. The State tries to
stabilize and regulate desire and to fix becomings through assembling apparatuses of
capture. For Deleuze and Guattari, history could be read as a continuous struggle between
the State trying to direct becomings for certain ends (among which the accumulation of
capital and the repression of desire are primary) and nomadic individuals resisting these practices of capture through inventing of new strategies – what Deleuze and Guattari term *war machines*. One should not confuse war machines with the military apparatuses of the State for they are “of another species, of another nature, of another origin” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 352). The objective of the war machines is not war in the traditional sense of the word; rather, it is about inventing tools of resistance that stand opposite to and disrupt the existence of the apparatuses of capture.

The very existence of migrants indeed disrupts the apparatuses of capture – which include border authorities, police, fascist groups, surveillance technologies, and so on. But we should be careful to not romanticize the nomadic subjectivity of migrants, as it often has a temporary character. While many migrants appropriate nomadic subjectivity to face material violence, they do not fully become nomads. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, migrants ‘move’ in order to ‘settle down,’ while for true nomads movement is a continuous, never-ending process. As they put it: “If the nomad can be called deterritorialized par excellence, it is precisely because there is no reterritorialization afterward as with the migrant” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 381).142

---

142 Seen in this light, it is doubtful whether one can become fully nomad. Deleuze and Guattari are ambivalent on that question. On the one hand, they regard migrant mobility not nomadic enough, which is understandable, as migrants only move to settle down in a better place. On the other hand, they use the concept of ‘nomadic thought’ to illustrate the mental practices of ‘nomadism’ such as the ones that are articulated through music and writing, adding that “it is … false to define nomad by movement” (1987: 381). There is no doubt that mental practices can also disturb material structures – as long as they are tied to *material social movements*. These mental practices should also lead to the formation of enduring political structures, rather than being simply individualistic aesthetic experiments (otherwise they would not be different than Foucault’s experimental ethics [see 2003c; 2003d]). Without emphasizing the
Deleuze and Guattari problematically regard every form of nomadism as political. But if we define *politics* from a Rancierian perspective, that is, the collective struggle of disadvantaged groups to claim rights, not every form of nomadism can be seen as necessarily political – including what Deleuze and Guattari term ‘nomadic thought’. Migrants’ nomadism, which is clearly more material than ‘nomadic thought’ is not necessarily political either. For migrants, nomadism is a survival strategy, not a political movement. Nomadism may eventually lead to political action but the act of nomadic disruption such as through crossing the border or facing material violence is not political.

In my fieldwork, the nomadic aspect often came out during group interviews or when I reminded individual migrants about the risks of crossing borders. Many migrants, especially those who had lost their families, had witnessed people dying or had experienced other forms of material violence in Greece, were generally sad when telling their experiences. But there were others who were literally laughing at death. For instance, in a group interview, Algerian migrants were competing with one another to tell the most courageous experience of border crossing; they told how their boat began sinking at night in the Evros river and how they had to jump, how they avoided snakes inside the river, how they hid from the Greek authorities on the Greek side, how they found their way to Athens, and so on (Migrants no3, no10, no12). Some Afghan migrants, especially younger ones, acted similarly. For instance, when they were talking about their experiences of crossing the border with speedboats, which is extremely collective aspect and political agenda, the celebration of such nomadic ‘adventures’ run the risk of being another form of idealism initiated by individuals *who have the privilege to not physically move.*
dangerous, it was as if they were talking about an adventure movie or a computer game. In most of the interviews, however, the nomadism aspect came out when I reminded migrants about the risks of border crossing. When talking about their plans of border crossing, even those who were desperate (or ‘abject’) turned into nomadic subjectivity – perhaps to deflect their attention from the real dangers of crossing. For the majority of migrants, then, nomadism is not a choice, but a survival strategy to keep moving. In an interview, a Kurdish-origin migrant from Iran who was running away from the regime made that point very clear:

I will try to go to Italy from Patras until the very end. If I end up in the gallows-tree in Iran, at least I have to tell myself that I tried my luck until the very end but God did not favor me. If I don’t try, then, it will stay in me and I will feel regretful. If God does not help me, then there is nothing to do. I will say it is my fate to be executed (Migrant no38).

Here are some other excerpts from fieldnotes and migrant interviews that further illustrate nomadic subjectivity:

Interviewer: How do you plan to go to Italy?
Migrant no10: I will walk to Italy from Macedonia and Serbia. It’s cheap, you just walk.
Interviewer: Isn’t it dangerous?
Migrant points above, smiles and says, “Allah knows!”

Interviewer: How do you keep trying more and more [in Patras]?
Migrant no39: There are too many dangers, but I am trying to go. It's very dangerous. They put you in a truck. Too many people die. But we don't care, we go. We escaped from wars. Our country is not in peace.

Migrant no12: I want to go to Italy from Patras. It’s better to go, rather than stay. Interviewer: But this is too risky.
Migrant no12: If I was afraid, I don’t leave my house. Anything could happen to you at your house, too.
My life can be a book, I have seen so many things (Migrant no11).

Interviewer: You are not afraid of another dangerous trip?
Migrant no14: I was scared of these journeys. But as Afghans, we don't care that much, because we had fights in Afghanistan. We are not much scared of getting beaten by police, by fascist, by thieves. We passed lots of problems in Afghanistan … I still hope for better life, to achieve my goals I will fight … I am happy know that I have a life story. I was living with my family for 22 years. It is a good experience to be alone; at this age, it is a good experience. Now I am hopeful.

There is a book writer, he is famous, his name is Abdulkadir. He wrote a book about his experience of illegal journey. When I read, I was laughing at the book: ‘What is that?’ If I have a possibility to write a book, it will be much more interesting. He was simply trying to go from Holland to Canada with a fake passport. He got caught in Canada and they deported him back to Holland. He also had stories with Turkish police and Greece. That was 15-20 years ago. At that time, it was a very easy journey to cross Greece and other European countries, now it is very difficult; you have to play with your life if you want to get into these countries (Migrant no31).

Migrants appropriate the nomadic subjectivity to find the courage to cross the border and to survive material violence. But nomadic subjectivity is often temporary. Those migrants who succeed in crossing the border can easily become abject-subjects after they find the time to rest in a relatively safe environment (contra Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2013). In an interview, a psychologist from the ARSIS stated that when migrants are focused on crossing the border, their bodies work in survival mode, which helps them to avoid traumas and to keep on moving. But those traumas strike back eventually. He stated:

When we are under direct threat, our bodies do not allow for symptoms to occur … But once they find a safe ground where they have the time to rest, problems start to occur in very intense ways. Psychosomatic symptoms start to rise, such as difficulty in sleep, a lot of headaches, tiredness, skin problems, fear…(Interview with the ARSIS, 08.07.2012).
6.2.5 Dissident Subjectivity

The final category of subjectivity is dissident subjectivity. This mode of subjectivity is perhaps the least common among migrants, but it is the only category that bears the potential to \textit{politically} disrupt the border regime, because it is the only category that is properly political. Religion helps migrants in preserving their subjectivity; it may even provide them with the power to engage in politics, but not all religious migrants are necessarily political. Nomadism, on the other hand, is a powerful way of resisting the material violence of the border, but it is too temporary to be properly political. Dissident subjectivity has a more enduring and determinant character with clear political goals. The participants of political activities, such as the 300 Hunger Strikers event in Greece in 2011, can be included in this group. These migrants are politically conscious about their rights and they are aware of their potential for claiming rights. These migrants usually have close connections with the local activist communities, and they work in solidarity with them. Rancière’s theory on dissensus can be used to theorize this small but highly influential group of migrants – dissident subjects - who struggle for their rights.

According to Rancière, democracy cannot be understood through institutions or practices of ruling; rather it is “a practice of dissensus” (2010a: 54). The \textit{demos} is the subject of dissensus. But, the demos should not be confused with “the population, the majority, the political body or the lower classes”; rather it is “the surplus community made of those who have no qualification to rule, which means at once everybody and anyone at all” (2010a: 53). What Rancière terms the ‘surplus community’ includes
groups who are denied certain rights; when these groups claim ‘the right to have rights,’ they become political subjects with speech and audience. This very process of claiming rights is the condition of politics.

Migrants who participate in political demonstrations in Greece, such as hunger strikes, can be theorized from a Rancièrean perspective of politics and dissensus. Through these activities, migrants enact their right to have rights. On the one hand, migrants demonstrate that they do not have the fundamental human rights that the Greek citizens have. By means of turning their exclusion into a public spectacle, migrants demonstrate the internal inconsistencies of the existing regime in which there is an arbitrary hierarchy among different speaking beings. On the other hand, through the act of demonstration, migrants have rights. Despite being deprived of legal status, migrants show that they can have a public presence and speech, in short: political existence, just as citizens. Migrants who have dissident subjectivity are the opposite of migrants who have abject subjectivity. Whereas abject subjects, as a result of material violence, internalize their exclusion from the public sphere and become speechless, inexistent, inaudible, in other words unpolitical beings, dissident subjects reclaim their right to exist politically as speaking beings.

One should, however, be careful to not romanticize the dissident subjectivity. It is one thing to demonstrate the capacity to speak; it is quite another to have been recognized as a speaking being. In Greece, unfortunately, political demonstrations, including hunger strikes, often fail because there is often no audience to recognize migrants as speaking beings. But one major event succeeded: Three hundred migrants started a hunger strike
on 25 January 2011. The strike lasted for 45 days and ended with a huge victory for the migrants. The migrants not only succeeded in obtaining their residence and work permits, but they also forced the government to take important steps towards the legalization of other migrants, such as through decreasing the time required to obtain such permits. The determination of the migrants played a central role in the success of the struggle. Even after facing very serious health risks, the migrants continued their struggle. After a while, the struggle turned into a ritual that strengthened the solidarity among the migrants. The continuous support of the activist communities in Greece also played a major part in the success of the event. Their solidarity with the hunger strikers changed public perception about the migrants and helped them to achieve their goals.

More detail about dissident subjectivity is provided in the following chapter on resistance. The 300 Hunger Strikers event is used to illustrate how dissident subjects claim their rights and improve the material conditions of possibility for successful migrant politics.

**Conclusion**

This chapter followed a materialist analysis of the Greece-Turkey border and discussed the characteristics of material violence before the territorial borders are reached (in Turkey) and beyond the territorial borders (in Greece). Migrants are confronted by an ineffective protection system and poor material conditions in Turkey, which force them to take extremely dangerous routes towards Greece. Those migrants who succeed in
reaching Greece are further confronted by material violence at different levels, including an ineffective asylum system, prolonged detention, low or no employment prospects, limited or no access to healthcare, limited or no access to accommodation, substandard conditions of living, everyday racist attacks and police-sweep operations.

In order to complement the analysis of these material-structural practices of the border, this chapter also took into account the subjectivity aspect of the border. A materialist understanding of subjectivity prioritizes material-structural practices over thoughts of individuals, but it does not ignore the complexity of subjectivity developed by groups who face material violence. Drawing on ethnographical fieldwork data, this chapter theorized five different modes of migrant subjectivities to illustrate the diverse experiences of migrants: stranger subjectivity (Bauman), abject subjectivity (Kristeva), religious subjectivity (Durkheim), nomadic subjectivity (Deleuze and Guattari) and dissident subjectivity (Rancière). Finally, this chapter argued that, among these five types of migrant subjectivities, it is only the dissident mode of subjectivity that holds the potential for political resistance. The following chapter draws on the successful demonstration of the 300 Hunger Strikers to further discuss the material conditions of possibility for migrant politics.
Chapter 7 Resisting the Border: The 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers Event

Whenever the worker or proletarian disappears as a figure of political alterity, the migrant remains as a naked, unsymbolisable figure of the other (Rancière, 2004: 8).

This chapter focuses on the contested aspects of the Greece-Turkey border. While there are many ways through which migrants contest and resist the border, the 300 Migrant Strikers event in 2011 requires special attention because this event was able to challenge the underlying basis of the border regime that operates through imposing arbitrary hierarchies among different speaking beings. After 45 days of suffering, 300 migrant hunger strikers not only gained their legal rights but they also showed the Greek public that they are equal human beings. This chapter identifies three intersecting elements that played crucial roles in the success of the event: migrants organizing themselves in mass format, ethical openness demonstrated by the Greek activist groups and Greek host communities, and the ritualistic-sacred characteristic of the hunger strike. Drawing respectively on Rancière, Derrida and Agamben, and Durkheim, this chapter discusses the characteristics of these elements and their aleatory combination. This chapter complements the materialist theory of the border with a materialist theory of resistance against the border. Rather than downplaying the importance of the political agency of migrants, the materialist perspective provides a complex analysis of the material conditions of possibility for successful migrant politics.
A Materialist Theory of Resistance

Previous chapters demonstrated how the material structure of EU borders was formed through colonialism/racism and continued to operate under neoliberal-globalization/post-politics (Chapter 3); how this material structure was able to gather and fix diverse surveillance technologies and techniques under a identification dispositif (Chapter 4); how diverse surveillance technologies operate in practice at the Greece-Turkey borderzones (Chapter 5); and how material violence of the borders operates over migrants through diverse mechanisms inside Greece and how migrants develop diverse subjectivities when confronted by material violence of the border (Chapter 6).

Considering the immense amount of material violence that migrants are confronted by and the ongoing development of new surveillance technologies and techniques, anyone concerned about migrant rights may become pessimistic. However, as demonstrated in the earlier chapters, surveillance mechanisms of the EU borders are not impenetrable nor are migrants passive objects. Many migrants continue to cross the borders and survive material violence. There is hope in the survival strategies of the migrants. Much needs to done by human right activists and NGOs to support the survival strategies of the migrants and to target “the complex set of technical, il/legal and institutional apparatuses which systematically kill refugees and migrants” (Topak, 2014c). These apparatuses include:

the technical approaches to the social and political issues of refugee and migrant mobility and rights, the indeterminate legal status of the borderzones and the lack
of transparency and accountability regarding border operations—which, in practice, amounts to suspension of human rights for refugees and migrants—and the complicity of the policy-makers (Topak, 2014c).

It is a human obligation to support migrants’ rights – among which the right to life is the most fundamental one - at the borderzones by all means available. But survival alone is not enough to challenge the fundamentals of the border regime. Survival is vital when migrants are crossing the border; but it is not enough when migrants settle down – or when they are in ‘transit’ (as noted earlier, for many migrants in Greece the transit period is very long or permanent). The border operates through imposing arbitrary hierarchies among different human beings, between those who have the right to speak and those who are forced to remain speechless, those who are political and those who are treated as non-political. It is only when migrants become equal political beings that we can talk about a meaningful improvement in the border regime. There is no doubt that the ultimate goal of equality should be the abolition of all borders (Anderson et. al. 2010). Yet, this ultimate goal can only be achieved through political struggles of people on the ground, through “acts of citizenship” (Isin, 2008) practiced by “irregular citizens” (Nyers, 2013), not through waiting for a messianic event.144

143 In that context, although their reach has been limited, activities of the human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch (at the international level), ProAsyl, Migreurop (at the EU level), Greek Council of Refugees (GCR), Multeci-Der, Helsinki Citizenship Assembly (at the Turkish and Greek national levels) have been important in documenting human rights violations against the migrants at the borderzones. Political-activist groups, including StopEvrosWall, NoBorders Network, Anti-Racist Initiatives of Athens and Thessaloniki, Clandestina, Migrant Solidarity Network of Istanbul, have also played important roles in organizing demonstrations to oppose the militarization of the borders.

144 Space limits forbid a detailed review of ‘messianism’ in contemporary social theory. See Rancière (2010a; 2010b) for a critique of Agamben and Derrida. In this chapter, I use Derrida and Agamben in non-messianic ways.
A theory of resistance should focus on investigating the material conditions of possibility for political transformation of the border regime so that the legacy of resistance would live and it would inspire and guide new forms of resistances to come. In Greece, 300 migrant hunger strikers wrote such a legacy in 2011. After 45 days of suffering, migrants not only gained their legal status but they also showed the Greek public that they were equal political beings with capacity to speak. The event became successful as a result of the combination of three elements: political subjects (migrants) struggling for their rights; host groups enacting radical hospitality and, the sacred and ritualistic aspect of the hunger strike (which created what Durkheim would have called a collective effervescence). Drawing respectively on Rancière, Derrida and Agamben, and Durkheim, in the following parts, this chapter discusses how these three elements were combined and how their combination resulted in positive social change for the migrants.

The emphasis on social change and political action might at first sight seem at odds with the materialist analysis of the border that has been conducted so far. A materialist perspective suggests avoiding (sovereign) subject-centred and teleological explanations about social reality. Rather than choices, actions and thoughts of individuals or a hidden telos of history, it prioritizes the analysis of material structures and processes and their aleatory and contingent encounter with one another to understand human conduct (Althusser, 2006a; 2006b). But this is only half of the materialist analysis. Following Marx’s Eleventh Thesis – ‘philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it’ – Althusser defines the task of the
philosophy in the following words: “to think the theoretical conditions of possibility for
the resolution of existing contradictions, and thus for the unification of social practices
and their ideology” (2006a: 287). We can unpack two political strategies from
Althusser’s argument. First, taken together with Althusser’s emphasis on aleatory
encounters, the task of philosophy should be to investigate the possibility of an encounter
that would be in favor of oppressed groups. Second, philosophical insights about material
processes can also help to achieve what Althusser terms ‘unification of social practices
and their ideology.’ That is, philosophy can assist oppressed groups through guiding them
about the material conditions around them so that these groups can articulate more
powerful political contestations. In these respects, as Althusser points out, “philosophy is
nothing but a tendency struggle, the _Kampfplatz_ that Kant discussed” (1990: 193,
emphasis original).

Althusser’s writings on Machiavelli (1999; 2006b: 171-176) can shed further light
on a materialist theory of resistance. Althusser undertakes a neo-Gramscian reading of
Machiavelli and understands the Prince not as an individual person (Holden and Elden,
2005: § 24). While for Gramsci the Prince is embodied in the political party (Althusser,
1999: 13), Althusser takes a further step and understands the Prince as “a bare moment of
political creativity…a process, a technique in itself” (Holden and Elden, 2005: § 26).
According to Althusser, Machiavelli’s importance for the theorization of political
struggle comes from the fact that he was the first thinker who was able to “think in the
conjuncture” (Althusser, 1999: 18, emphasis original). This means, “taking account of all
the determinations, all the existing concrete circumstances, making an inventory, a detailed breakdown and comparison of them” (Althusser, 1999: 18).

For Althusser, this is what Machiavelli did in his theorization on the possibility for national unity in Italy, which was the problem to be overcome for a successful Prince in his time. Machiavelli took into account “a whole series of factors – not only economic, but also pre-existing geographical, historical, linguistic and cultural factors” (Althusser 1999: 11) to develop a strategy for the Prince. But he also went beyond simply listing the different factors; he also took into account the potentialities, limits, and contradictions within and between the interactions of the material elements, or “their aleatory future” (Althusser, 1999: 18).

An Alhusserian reading of Machiavelli, then, suggests thinking of political struggle in terms of the conjuncture. One should focus on diverse material elements and their successful or unsuccessful encounters in order to point out the possibility of an encounter that can benefit oppressed groups. Such emphasis on conjuncture is truly materialist: It is the external material forces and their aleatory combination that can produce progressive social change, not the activities of ‘autonomous’ individuals. However, this should not mean that the theory of conjuncture dismisses political agency. According to Machiavelli, the Prince should have two essential attributes to be successful: fortuna (coincidence, chance) and virtu (skill, technique) (Althusser, 1999: 74; 2006b: 171-176). While fortuna involves the external material factors independent of political agency, virtu is related to the ways in which political agency can benefit from
these material factors, or even, sometimes, combine them to create a conjuncture. Here virtu should not be understood from the humanist perspective: It is “not the intrinsic essence of individuality” (Althusser, 1999: 94, emphasis original); it is rather the ability to understand the “void of possibility” in the material encounters so that this void can be filled with political agency (Althusser, 2006b: 169; see also Datta, 2011 and Hardy, 2013 for a detailed analysis of void in aleatory materialism). Elsewhere, Althusser stated that it is not man who makes history; it is the masses who make history (Althusser, 2008a: 79).

That is, political action can have transformatory role when it is in the form of “organized mass struggle” (Althusser, 2008a: 86, emphasis original). Only a mass political struggle has the potential to fill the void that the aleatory encounters open and to make this filling last.

In Greece in 2011, 300 migrant hunger strikers organized themselves in the form of mass struggle to claim their rights, and they produced a conjuncture. Once again, it is important to not over-emphasize the agency and subjectivity of the migrants – as is the case in some migrant resistance literature, such as in the autonomy of migration scholarship (see e.g., Mezzadra 2011; Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2013). This scholarship “prioritize[s] the subjective practices, the desires, the expectations, and the behaviors of migrants themselves” (Mezzadra, 2011: 121). While this scholarship does not neglect the external coercive factors that limit migrants, it still provides an inadequate approach for
analyzing the material conditions of possibility for a successful migrant resistance.\textsuperscript{145} In the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers event, the migrants became successful not because of their practices, desires, expectations, but because of the interaction among three elements:

1. Migrants claiming their political rights in the format of mass struggle;
2. Radical support that migrants received from some of the host groups in Greece;
3. The sacredness of the hunger strike event itself, which created a collective effervescence.

Drawing respectively on Rancière, Derrida and Agamben, and Durkheim, these three elements and their interaction with one another other are analyzed below. This is not to imply that all of these three elements are required in \textit{every} successful migrant struggle, but rather to emphasize the complex material background of a successful migrant struggle.

\textsuperscript{145} Papadopoulos and Tsianos claim that “there is no space for romanticisation of nomadism and migration in the autonomy of migration approach. Migration grapples with the harsh, often deadly, realities of control” (2013: 184). According to Papadopoulos and Tsianos, the autonomy of migration approach does not ignore the external forces that limit migrants’ mobility; rather, it highlights that “migration is autonomous, meaning that it has the capacity to develop its own logics, its own motivation, its own trajectories that control comes later to respond to, not the other way around” (2013: 184). I would maintain that such reading of migration, despite the radical motivation behind it, is still inadequate for two reasons. First, while it is important to take into account the migrants’ logics and motivations, it is only as a result of material factors and their aleatory encounters, that migrants can have success in their motivations; in Machiavellian terms, through combining virtu with fortuna. Over-emphasizing the political agency of migrants might deflect attention from the circumstances in which migrants’ struggles take place. It may also end up downplaying the vital importance of the ethical solidarity demonstrated by the host groups and off-loading the sole responsibility for progressive politics to migrants, who are already in a position of grave structural disadvantage. Second, Papadopoulos and Tsianos, resembling Deleuze and Guattari’s writings on nomadism (1987), imply that border crossing and the condition of being in transit are themselves political acts, claiming that “the very movement \textit{itself} becomes a political movement and a social movement” (2013: 184, emphasis original). But the movement itself is not political; it is rather a survival strategy that \textit{might} form the condition of politics to come. It is when migrants struggle to establish themselves as equal beings that one can talk about politics. One should investigate the material conditions of possibility for politics rather than celebrating movement itself. There is nothing to celebrate in movement: Migrants move because they are \textit{forced} to move.
This chapter contributes to the literatures on migrant resistance and politics (e.g., Nyers and Rygiel, 2012; Tyler and Marciniak, 2013) and acts of citizenship (Isin, 2008). Following Isin (2008), the migrants’ hunger strike can be considered as an “act of citizenship”. Acts of citizenship refers to those acts where subjects, regardless of legal status, constitute themselves as political beings to claim the right to have rights and thereby disrupt the institutionalized citizenship category. This chapter demonstrates the complex material basis of the political acts of the migrants, beyond approaches that over-emphasize migrants’ political agency and conventional approaches that present migrants passive, non-political beings.

The claims in this chapter are based on two interviews I conducted with the migrant organizers and participants of the event and two interviews with the political activists who were involved in supporting the event. Additional evidence is gathered from the press statements of the hunger strikers, supporting groups and NGOs and from other scholarly material.\textsuperscript{146}

7.1 The 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers Event

The idea of organizing a hunger strike to demand legalization first emerged in Chania, Crete in late 2010. The majority of the migrants who showed an interest in the idea had been living in Greece for longer, more than five years (Karyotis and Skleparis, 2014: 7). Precarious working conditions and ongoing exploitation in workplaces played the main

\textsuperscript{146} As scholarly material, I used in particular Karyotis and Skleparis (2014), which draws on 52 interviews with the participants of the hunger strike and Walsh and Tsilimpoundi (2012), which includes some interview content with the Greek public.
role in motivating the migrants to start the hunger strike. “When the work is finished they [employers] are not giving any money [to us]. We cannot go to police to complain because we don't have papers,” a migrant participant-organizer stated in an interview. The escalation of racism after the economic crisis, which scapegoats migrants for the economic crisis and makes them targets of hatred, also played an important role in influencing the migrants’ decision.

Inspired by the legacy of migrant hunger strikes in Europe, the migrants in Crete began communicating with other migrants in Athens, Samos, Patros, Thessaloniki and began discussing the possibility of a hunger strike. Greek leftist groups played important roles in the planning of the event; they were asked for help by the migrants who were inexperienced in organizing public demonstrations. “We didn't know what to do exactly, how to start, where to start, how many people are needed. We asked for support from the Greek leftist groups,” a migrant participant-organizer stated in an interview. The migrants’ Forum in Crete, a local migrant-rights group, played the leading role in the organization of the event, and other leftist groups, including the Anti-Racist Initiatives of Athens and Thessaloniki and anarchist groups (such as Alpha Kappa, Aftonomos, Antifa, AK, Steki and squatter groups), were also involved.

After discussions in assemblies a decision was reached to host the hunger strike with 300 migrants simultaneously in two major cities, Athens and Thessaloniki. On January 25th 2011, 250 migrants started the hunger strike in the Athens Law School and

---

147 Interview with a migrant participant-organizer of the hunger strike (07.07.2012).
148 Interview with a migrant participant-organizer of the hunger strike (07.07.2012).
50 migrants did the same in the Labour Centre of Thessaloniki. Both the number of the hunger strikers and the spaces of the hunger strike had symbolic values: The figure 300 was selected to symbolically position migrants against the 300 politicians in the Greek parliament. The idea was to gain support from the large segments of the Greek society who regard the Greek politicians as the puppets of the Troika (The International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and European Commission). In this formulation, while the Greek politicians represent greed and corruption, migrants represent human equality and dignity. The figure 300 also had a symbolic place in the Greek collective consciousness with its resemblance to 300 Spartans, who still represent the importance of courage, discipline and endurance when faced with overwhelming obstacles. The symbolic value of the Athens Law School comes from its place in the history of the Greek left (Walsh and Tsilimpounidi, 2012): It was in this building that the student uprising against the military junta began in 1973. The labour Centre of Thessaloniki was also selected for its symbolic value, underlining that migrants’ struggle was a part of the working-class struggle in Greece.

Throughout the hunger strike, besides the deterioration of their health conditions, migrants were confronted by various external obstacles. For instance, the police and the racist groups attempted to interrupt the strike. However, thanks to the support and protection of the leftist groups, among them many university students, the migrants were able to continue their struggle – even though on January 28th, they were eventually forced to move from the Athens Law School to another building. Another obstacle was the
negative portrayal of the hunger strikers by the mainstream media, which highlighted the undocumented status of the migrants to give the impression that the hunger strike was an act of ‘invasion’. The mainstream political parties, including the centre-left ruling party PASOK, also attempted to discredit the migrants’ struggle by claiming that migrants had been manipulated by radical leftist groups and that they unknowingly serve these groups’ political interests rather than having their own political agency (Karyotis and Skleparis, 2014: 11). Supporters of the migrants countered these manipulations and promoted the rightful struggle of the migrants to both the Greek and the international public, which played an essential role in the increasing the popularity of the image of the migrants in the public’s perception.

Despite the worsening of the migrants’ health, which resulted in many hospitalizations, government officials refused to negotiate with the migrants until the very last stages of the hunger strike. Instead, they forced state doctors to intervene and end the strike on behalf of the hospitalized migrants. The migrants resisted these attempts and showed their determination to die rather than ending the strike. It was only on the 44th day of the strike, when many migrants were under great risk of death, that a deal was reached with the government. The strikers did not achieve their goal of full legalization of all undocumented migrants in Greece, but they were able to obtain significant gains for themselves and for all other migrants. First, the government agreed to decrease the required time for residence permits from twelve to eight years for all migrants in Greece. In other words, migrants who could prove that they have been living continuously in
Greece for the previous eight years were granted the right to apply for residence permits. Second, the government agreed to decrease the required work credits for renewal of residence permits to 120 from 200 (same as local workers) and decrease the work credits required for insurance coverage to 50 from 80 (same as local workers). Third, for the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers in particular, the government agreed to issue a special paper that granted them the right to legally stay in Greece indefinitely (subject to renewal every 6 months), until they obtained residence permits. During this period, migrants also obtained the right to legally travel to their home countries and come back to Greece. Migrants were also promised work permits in two years.

7.2 Politics of Equality, Ethics of Hospitality and Collective Effervescence

7.2.1 Politics of Equality

The 300 Hunger Strikers succeed to achieve rights, albeit limited, because they were able to organize themselves in the format of mass political struggle. A Rancierian understanding of politics can shed light on what exactly political struggle means and how it not only helps disadvantaged groups to achieve rights but also democracy to move forward.\(^{150}\)

\(^{149}\) According to Karyotis and Skleparis (2014: 6) the government anticipated that the majority of the migrants, because of their irregular status, would not be able to provide the necessary documents to prove their continuous living status in Greece in the last eight years.

\(^{150}\) It is worth noting that Rancière, a former student of Althusser, became a harsh critic of Althusser after the May 1968 events and accused him of prioritizing theory over spontaneous militant action (Rancière 2011). According to Rancière, Althusserianism functions as a “philosophy of order” (Rancière, 2011: xix); it creates a Platonic hierarchy between the masses that needs guidance from above and an intellectual class
According to Rancière, in conventional understanding, politics is associated with order. It is about creating consent, distributing roles and hierarchies and legitimizing how this distribution is organized (Rancière 1992: 58; 1999: 28). For Rancière, these processes constitute the realm of policy, not politics. For him, politics is not about distributing and monitoring roles and places by the state and its police mechanisms; rather, politics is what *breaks* these practices (Rancière, 1999: 29-30). It is through politics that those who have no part in the order of policy contest their assigned roles and places. Political activity “makes visible what had no business being seen … it makes understood a discourse what was once only heard as noise” (Rancière, 1999: 30).

Politics, then, is always a politics of equality – in other words, equality is the universal category of politics. This is not to suggest that equality has an ‘essence.’ Equality is a universal category of politics, but “equality is not a value given in the essence of Humanity or Reason” (Rancière, 1992: 60). The universality of equality exists to the extent that subjects who need equality enact politics of equality. In that sense, we are beyond the debate between particularity and universality. The universality of equality is mediated through particular political subjects. Throughout history, particular

that supposedly has the capacity to engage in politics and administer the masses. Considering Althusser’s favoring of the ‘institutional knowledge’ of the PCF (French Communist Party) over the militant practice of the worker and student masses during and after May 1968 and his failure to see the PCF’s pacifying role on the growing militant dissent (see Elliot, 2006: 214-223), one cannot help but agree with Rancière’s criticism [Only 10 years later, Althusser criticized the role of the PCF in May 1968 in an inadequate way, see Elliot, 2006: 221-222]. But Althusser’s personal failure should not discredit his theory. Particularly when read from his later aleatory materialist period, Althusser’s theory bears much potential for understanding the contingency in social struggles and the importance of the material practices in creating a political conjuncture. In fact, Rancière’s politics of equality can only make sense within an Althusserian materialist framework; otherwise it ends up in naïve humanism.
categories, such as slaves, workers, women, colonized people, people of color, migrants have claimed their rights to be equal and demonstrated the universality of equality. According to Rancière, these groups do not share any common essence. In fact, there is no intrinsic essence of human beings for Rancière. There is only a potentiality in every human being for enacting the politics of equality – because every human being is a speaking being. For Rancière, it is only through the enactment of politics of equality that democracy can move forward and include those groups who have no part in the existing order (Rancière, 2010a).

The 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers event is an example of the politics of equality. The first motivation of the migrants was to demonstrate to the Greek public that they were also speaking beings with equal rights, and that the hunger strike was the way to publicize this long-forgotten fact. In their public statements, migrants stated: “[O]ur existence is not recognized, our work is not paid, we are being persecuted, beaten up, left at the mercy of traffickers and of police violence” (AFHS, 2011); they added: “We live by the sweat of our brow and with the dream that one day we will have the same rights as our Greek fellow workers…We ask for the same political and social rights and obligations as Greek workers…We do not have any other way to make our voices heard, to raise awareness of our rights” (AMHS, 2011a).

According to Rancière, the politics of equality requires a process of “subjectivization” (1992: 60-61). Rancière’s understanding of subjectivization is quite different from what Foucault terms “subjectification” (Foucault, 1982). It is not about
how *individuals* internalize power relations and constitute themselves as subjects (Foucault); it is rather about how *collective groups* develop oppositional identities to claim rights and contest power relations. In nineteenth-century France, the subjectivization of workers under the identity of *proletarian* helped them demonstrate that they were being treated as non-political subjects without rights—“people who make children, who merely live and reproduce without a name, without being counted as part of the symbolic order of the city” (Rancière, 1992: 61). By means of taking the name ‘proletarian’ as a political name, workers were able to contest the order of police, which functions through imposing arbitrary hierarchies among speaking beings: between those who have political rights and those who do not.

Pursuing this line of thought, Rancière argues that, the treatment of migrants as non-political subjects in today’s European societies can be explained by the failure of political subjectivization (1992: 63). The decline of the socialist alternative and the rise of neoliberal hegemony have resulted in the diminution of the political identities of the workers in Europe (Rancière, 2004). This decline has also affected migrants – who had been, albeit to a limited degree, considered as part of the working classes. Having lost their political names, migrants have become targets of xenophobic violence. As Rancière points out:

> [o]bjectively, we have no more immigrant people than we had twenty years ago. Subjectively, we have many more. The difference is this: twenty years ago the ‘immigrant’ had an other name: they were workers or proletarians. In the meantime this name has been lost as a political name. They retained their ‘own’ name, and an other that has no other name becomes the object of fear and rejection (Rancière, 1992: 63, emphasis original).
The 300 migrant hunger strikers succeeded because they were able to reinstate their political identities as workers and proletarians. In their public statements, hunger strikers always referred themselves as *migrant workers*, not simply as migrants. Their appropriation of the worker identity was also visible in the ways in which they positioned themselves as part of the Greek working classes. Here worker identity had more to do with suffering the same injustices of global capitalism than being a productive male manual worker. Migrants stressed that they suffered the same negative effects of neoliberal capitalism and the austerity measures as did the Greek workers. “Recently our lives have become even more unbearable, as salaries and pensions are cut and prices rise” (AMHS, 2011a), they pointed out. Migrants were well aware of the right-wing populist discourses that blamed them for the economic crisis and that divided the working classes, turning them against one another. They stated: “[Right-wing groups and media] are trying to make Greek workers believe that we are suddenly a threat to them, that we are to blame for the unprecedented attack from their own governments” (AMHS, 2011a). To counter these populist discourses, migrants called Greek workers to support their struggle: “[W]e ask our Greek fellow workers, everyone suffering exploitation, to stand with us. Support our struggle! Do not allow the lies, the injustice, the fascism and the despotism of political and economic elites to prevail” (AMHS, 2011a).

Political subjectivization of the migrants as workers helped them break down existing identifications that are attached to them related to criminality, such as the identity of ‘illegal.’ Migrants reframed their irregular border-crossing act not as an act of
illegality, but as the rightful act of the global proletariat who suffer from West-driven global, capitalist exploitation. In this formulation, through the act of crossing the borders migrants reclaimed their worker rights rather than committing a crime. They stated:

[W]e came here to escape poverty, unemployment, wars and dictatorships. The multinational companies and their political servants left us no choice but to repeatedly risk our lives to journey towards Europe’s door. The West that is exploiting our countries while benefiting from much better living conditions is our only chance to live decent lives, to live as human beings. Whether by regular or irregular entry, we came to Greece and are working to support ourselves and our families (AMHS, 2011a).

The worker identity also helped migrants overcome the existing identifications related to abjectivity. Just with illegality, abjectivity is a form of identity that is often attributed to migrants by the mainstream Greek media and political parties. These groups often portray migrants as entirely passive individuals lacking political agency. Officials of the ruling party PASOK played the abjection card to discredit migrants’ struggle, claiming that the migrants were manipulated by radical leftist groups rather than having their own political agency and agenda. Not only the right-wing parties, but even some parties of the left, including the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and the Democratic Left (DIMAR) expressed similar views, claiming that migrants were incapable of political agency (Karyotis and Skleparis, 2014: 11). To counter these views, the migrants issued a press statement on the 3rd day of the hunger strike:

We are not those piteous, destitute migrants, deprived of housing, work and clothes, that the media are describing. We have houses, families and jobs in the cities we left behind. We are not looking for housing here in Athens, but came to fight, for as long as our bodies will allow us, for our rights and for a life with dignity (AMHS, 2011b).
They added:

We take our decisions by ourselves during the assemblies we hold, and we do not get influenced by external factors. Nobody is hiding behind our backs or fronts. And we do not receive ‘guidance’ by anybody. We made an appeal for help, to which both Greeks and foreigners responded and stood by our side showing their solidarity, a gesture which we thank them for. We will never forget how much they are helping us in our struggle (AMHS, 2011b).

The politics of equality, enacted by the 300 migrant hunger strikers, played the primary role in the success of the struggle. However, it would be naïve to suggest that such politics was the only condition for success. It is one thing to demonstrate political agency, quite another to have that agency respected. Without the support of the Greek leftist groups and certain segments of the Greek public, the migrants’ struggle would not have achieved recognition. Rancière touches on this point when he states that European peoples – following the 1968 slogan, “We are all German Jews”- should refuse the racist identifications and create new forms of political subjectivization that makes it possible for them to side with the migrants (1992: 61-63). But Rancière does not theorize this form of ethical openness sufficiently. In fact, he downplays the importance of ethics in his critique of “the contemporary ethical trend,” claiming that writers in the field of ethics, including Derrida and Agamben, are trapped in “messianism,” and that they fail to see the progressive role of politics-as-process, enacted by groups struggling for their rights (Rancière, 2010a, 2010b).151 While Rancière is right to prioritize political activity

151 According to Rancière, Derrida obscures political activity by placing “liberal democracy as a form of government, on one side, and infinite openness to the newcomer … on the other” (2010a: 59). For Rancière, by means of understanding politics with these binary terms, Derrida disregards the possibility of
of the disadvantaged groups over ethics, this should not mean dismissing ethics altogether, as he seems to be implying. Not only does politics without an ethical ground always run the risk of being easily manipulated by power, but in order for the politics of the other, or politics of equality, to be recognized, there needs to be an ‘ethically’ open public that would be willing to accept the political existence of the other. In this sense, in addition to politics of equality, one also needs an ethics of solidarity – or hospitality (as Derrida terms it) and witnessing (as Agamben terms it).

7.2.2 The Ethics of Hospitality and Witnessing

Greek leftist groups played important roles in supporting the migrants’ struggle from its beginning to end. The support of these groups began with helping migrants to decide on the number of hunger strikers needed and the locations for the hunger strike. The symbolic value of the number 300 and the Athens Law School and Thessaloniki Labour Centre helped the migrants identify themselves with the Greek working classes and, consequently gain popularity with large segments of Greek society. Leftist groups also

disrupting the existing order via political activity that is initiated by those who are excluded; thus, he reduces politics to an “infinite wait for the Event or the Messiah” (2010a: 61). Instead of waiting for otherness and difference to come from the outside, Rancière advocates for “politics as a process,” which would “continually create ‘newcomers’, new subjects that enact the equal power of anyone and everyone and construct new words about community in the new common world” (2010a: 59). Rancière’s critique of Agamben follows a similar line (2010b). He accuses Agamben for being trapped in an “ontological destiny” (2010b: 66) by means of understanding subjectivity from the lens of homo sacer – passive victim and calling for a radical ethical engagement with the other, and thus obscuring the political potential of the other. Rancière is right to point out that neither Derrida nor Agamben properly theorize the political agency of the other. But, contrary to what Rancière assumes, Derridarian ethics of hospitality, unlike Agamben’s ethics, is not necessarily doomed with messianism. Derrida sets unconditional hospitality as the ultimate yet impossible goal of ethics, but he does not disregard the importance of conditional ethical practices, which may take the form of political struggles, in accommodating the other (Derrida, 2000). See Darling (2009) for a comparison between Agamben and Derrida on ethics. In this chapter, Agamben’s ethics is conceptualized as a part of Derrida’s ethics of hospitality.
formed a medical health team to monitor the health situation of the migrants throughout the strike and informed the public about migrants’ health.

During the strike, the migrants were under great pressure from the police, racist groups, mainstream media and political parties. These reactionary groups did everything to put an end to the strike, either through discrediting the hunger strikers in public or through physical force. It was thanks to the support of the leftist groups that the migrants were able to counter these attacks. The leftist groups not only physically protected migrants from the attacks of the police and the racist groups, but they also publicized the struggle of the migrants to the Greek and international public in a positive way.

The leftist supporters of the migrants identified themselves with internationalist leftist ideology. For them, the real antagonism is not between different ‘nations’ but between the global working classes and the global bourgeoisie. These groups maintained that both Greek workers and migrant workers suffer the consequences of the same global capitalist system that is ruled by “the multinationals and the bankers’ mafia” (OSIT, 2011). The leftist groups also use radical human rights discourses to underline the obligation to support migrants against the forces of global capitalism. They state: “[I]n the name of human dignity, we are always on the side of the oppressed, never on the side of the bosses” (OSIT, 2011).

The strong ideological commitments of these groups played an important role in challenging the perception about migrants and raising awareness of their situation. These groups emphasized the fact that, despite the increasing border controls, the cheap labour
of undocumented migrants has been historically desired by the Greek and European ruling classes and exploited in various developmental projects such as the Athens Olympics in 2004. To counter the populist discourse scapegoating migrants for ‘stealing the jobs’ of the Greek workers, these groups pointed out that the degrading treatment of migrants also affects the local workers because it lowers everyone’s minimum working standards. They stated that “[w]hen the bosses treat immigrants as human trash, and society accepts this, soon society as a whole is turned into a human rights wasteland” (OSIT, 2011). Maintaining that the solidarity among the Greek workers and migrants is the only way to contest the ongoing austerity measures and increasing exploitation, they stated:

Some time ago, we were told that there is no room for refugees, for immigrants. Now we are being told that there is room neither for civil servants, nor for industrial workers and builders … nor for agricultural workers … If we have any chance to resist the nightmare looming on the horizon for all of us, this chance depends on our solidarity with the migrants in struggle (OSIT, 2011).

It would be wrong, however, to assume that ideological commitments were the only motivating factors for these groups in their support to the migrants. Moreover, we should remind ourselves that while leftist groups played central roles in communicating with the public about migrants’ struggle, migrants’ struggle gained popular support because large segments of Greek society, which are not as ideologically committed as the leftist groups, showed affection towards migrants’ struggle. In an interview with me, a leftist supporter of the event stated: “one of the gains of the hunger strike was to show
that not only leftists but also ordinary people are also concerned about migrants. People like my grandmother came and showed their solidarity.”

There needs to be something more than ideological motivations to convince these groups to stand in solidarity with the migrants. Especially in times of economic hardship, it is easy to get trapped in nationalistic discourse. ‘Nation’ may have been a fiction in the first place, but it is a fiction that has had material effects historically. In addition to an ideological critique of nationalism, one also needs an ethical critique of nationalism, or the condition of being a ‘host’ in order to stand in solidarity with ‘the others’: strangers, migrants, refugees. Derrida discusses this condition of ethical openness towards the other in his writings on hospitality.

In his Levinas-inspired writings on hospitality, Derrida develops a forceful critique of Western understanding of hospitality, which he terms *conditional hospitality* (1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2005). According to Derrida, conditional hospitality is about regulating and monitoring the mobility and rights of the other through laws and practices, such as immigration laws and border controls. Under conditional hospitality, the other, the newcomer or the guest is obliged to follow some specific routes to enter and remain in the host state; otherwise his existence would be labeled ‘illegal’ and he would be treated as a criminal. Through setting the rules of the game and imposing conditions on entry and stay, conditional hospitality not only criminalizes people who violate immigration laws and border controls, but it also regenerates the distinction between the

---

152 Interview with a political activist (07.07.2012).
‘sovereign host’ and ‘the other’ and, thus, it reproduces ‘the national self’. In contrast to the conditional hospitality, what Derrida terms unconditional hospitality or pure hospitality does not put any conditions for entry or stay. As Derrida points out, “pure hospitality consists in welcoming whoever arrives before imposing any conditions on him, before knowing and asking anything at all, be it a name or an identity ‘paper’.” (Derrida: 2005: 7). Therefore, an ethics that is based on pure hospitality, that is an ethics of hospitality, should not make any calculations or projections about the other. It should neither judge nor try to control the actions of the other. It should simply accept the other as he or she is in order to accommodate the other in his/her full otherness.

It is important to note that for Derrida, unconditional hospitality is impossible because the only way for the unconditional hospitality to materialize itself is through law and law is in the domain of conditional hospitality. However, unlike Kant who regards sovereign-state-regulated hospitality (which includes the right to not be treated with hostility, the right to not be subjected to deathly expulsion, the right to visit but not the right to reside or right to protection from expulsion) as the necessary and sufficient requirement for a peaceful cosmopolitan world order (Benhabib, 2004: 25-48), Derrida

\[153 \text{ We need to take into account the historical context within which Kant formulated his thoughts in order to understand his notion of hospitality. Written at the end of the eighteenth century when the colonial domination of the world by Western sovereign territorial states was in process (Benhabib, 2004: 71), Kant’s formulation of hospitality bears prejudice against nations without European-type states. According to Kant, sovereign states have the right to regulate the movement over their territories as long as they respect the conditional rights of hospitality, but if there are no Western-type sovereign states established on a particular territory, then that territory is free to be exploited. As Dikec points out, “Kant’s project was a major affirmation of the exclusive use of the sovereign powers of the nation-state… ‘[D]ifferent’ political communities, different from the European nation-states, were totally outside Kant’s project for universal hospitality” (2002: 234).} \]
emphasizes the need to continuously deconstruct conditional hospitality using the principle of unconditional hospitality in order to create progressive social change. In fact, for Derrida, it is only through this process that the naturalness of the host-guest distinction and the accompanying political apparatuses such as nation states and borders can be transformed. Elsewhere, Derrida makes a similar point in his theorization of the relationship between law and justice. According to Derrida, law belongs to the sphere of violence and exclusions, whereas justice belongs to the sphere of ethics of hospitality; however, “justice requires the law” because it needs to “transform, deconstruct, criticize, improve” the law (Derrida, 1999: 72). Likewise, the ethics of hospitality is guided by the call of justice, but it needs the law to materialize itself; it is a continuous process of transforming the law so as to make the law more accommodating for the needs of the other.

This is exactly what happened in 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers event. Greek leftist groups and ordinary Greek citizens responded to the call of justice, and they stood with the migrants. The ethics of hospitality did not succeed in abolishing migration laws and border controls, nor did it succeed in breaking down the host/guest distinctions, but it helped migrants achieve better accommodation with better rights within the existing legal system and it showed that host/guest distinctions are not as stable as they seem – even at a time of an economic crisis and under intensive right-wing, populist propaganda.

Face-to-face encounters between the host and guest groups are vital for the materialization of the ethics of hospitality. The authorities know this very well. That is
why they direct all of their efforts to transfer the ‘spaces of hospitality’ outside of reach of the host groups - to camps and detention centres- sometimes even outside of the states (Darling, 2009: 656). As Diken and Lausten point out: “The camp is the materialization of the avoidance of the unprepared encounter, an attempt to avoid (the confrontation with) the other” (2005: 192). In the case of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers, however, the authorities could not succeed. Ordinary Greek people encountered the migrants and they saw them as they are: not as criminals who pose an imminent danger to their lives, but as human beings, just like themselves, whose rights were being undermined. Face-to-face interaction played an important role in the materialization of ethics of hospitality. In a Levinas-inspired passage, Derrida points out that “face-to-face (visage) is the original ethics” (Derrida 1999: 68, emphasis original). In this formulation, face-to-face interaction not only involves two parties (host and guest; migrant and citizen), but it also always involves a third element – that is, “a call for justice” (Derrida 1999: 68).

In that context, the ethics of witnessing can be considered as an important aspect of the ethics of hospitality.154 In his book Remnants of Auschwitz (2002), Agamben theorizes the ethics of witnessing by drawing on the testimonials written by the Holocaust survivors. Agamben demonstrates how they felt shame for having survived, for not experiencing the injustice of the Holocaust. “I live, therefore I am guilty,” a Holocaust

154 See Darling (2009) for a comparison between Derrida and Agamben on ethics. Darling argues that, unlike Derrida’s ethics of hospitality, which leaves room for limited ethical acts as long as they are driven towards unconditional hospitality (or justice), Agamben’s ethics makes an outright rejection of the apparatuses that produce ‘bare life,’ which basically includes every form of law, and it “denies the opportunity for imperfect, yet necessary, political formations of conditional hospitality” (Darling 2009: 650). I agree with Darling’s critique of Agamben’s ethics, and here I use Agamben’s ethics of witnessing as a part of Derrida’s ethics of hospitality.
survivor wrote, adding “I am here because a friend, an acquaintance, an unknown person died in my place” (cited in Agamben 2002: 89). For Agamben, bearing witness is the condition of ethics. It provides subjects with the ultimate shame, which obliges them to see the world from the perspective of the other – those who suffered or those who are suffering.\footnote{For Agamben, German soldiers in the concentration camps did not have the ability to bear witness (Agamben, 2002: 78).} The lesson we can draw from the memory of the Holocaust is that we are not very far away from it (Agamben, 2002: 26). Refugees and migrants, among other disadvantaged groups, are subjected to similar logic and practices in front of our eyes in various contexts. As survivors of the contemporary Holocaust, our responsibility should be to side with those who are suffering now.

Although it is problematic to present migrants as victims and nonpolitical subjects, like Jews locked in the concentration camps, and to present host populations as homogenous entity of witnesses, nevertheless, in the case of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers event, one cannot dismiss the role of ethics of witnessing in making some segments of the Greek public feel obliged to stand in solidarity with the migrants. In that context, it is important to underline that the ethics of witnessing is not a ‘choice’. It does not operate at the level of consciousness where calculations and projections take place. It operates at a deeper level, a level where feelings of shame and guilt are located. As Agamben writes: “The survivor as a thinking being knows very well that he is not guilty … but this does not change the fact that humanity of such a person, as a feeling being, requires that he feel guilty, and he does” (cited in Agamben, 2002: 89, emphasis original).
The following narrative of a Greek witness of the Hunger Strikers’ event illustrates the fight of consciousness against witnessing and how witnessing ultimately takes over consciousness and how it obliges the witness to act ethically:

I don’t want them to be invisible and I suffer with their suffering; but I don’t really want to be a witness. I can understand they had a tough journey and it makes me sad, but why do I need to face it in front of my house everyday? I know that they are victims of bad politics but what can I do? I’m not responsible for their situation, why do I need to face this everyday? Isn’t that a violation of my rights? Racism is a dangerous disease and I’m trying to fight against that in every way I can, but please not outside my house. Do not force me to be a witness. They come from every corner of the world to suffer in front of my doorstep and I wish them all the best. I wish them to be protected by their God, to find what they were dreaming. But please, I cannot feel guilty about [their] misfortune everyday. I don’t want to be a witness, but it’s beyond my powers; everyday I feel I have to come for a while and bring them water and support them with a smile (Walsh and Tsilimpoundi 2012: 96, emphasis added).

7.2.3 Sacredness of the Hunger Strike

The politics of equality enacted by the migrants and the ethics of hospitality and witnessing enacted by the Greek host groups played the main roles in the success of the hunger strike. However, there is something special about the event of the hunger strike itself that requires further analysis. It is doubtful whether, say a march organized by 300 migrants, would have the same effect as the hunger strike. The power of self-sacrifice in the hunger strike added a sacred dimension to the event and created a collective effervescence among migrants, which strengthened the bonds among them. Self-sacrifice also raised feelings of affection towards migrants in the Greek public. Durkheim’s writings on religion are useful for understanding the role of sacrifice in human societies.
and the ways in which sacrifice is linked to collective effervescence in contemporary social struggles (Pearce, 2001).  

According to Durkheim, religion serves as the ontological basis of human societies because the very categories through which human beings understand the world and themselves “are born in religion and from religion; they are a product of religious thought” (Durkheim 1995: 9). While the symbols of religion are diverse in different cultures and transform over time, the collective aspect of religion remains permanent because it is continuously reproduced in meetings, rituals and other forms of human interactions. Durkheim points out that:

There is something eternal in religion that is destined to outlive the succession of particular symbols in which religious thought has clothed itself. There can be no society that does not experience the need at regular intervals to maintain and strengthen the collective feelings and ideas that provide its coherence and its distinct individuality. This moral remaking can only be achieved through meetings, assemblies, and congregations in which the individuals, pressing close to one another, reaffirm in common their common sentiments (Durkheim, 1995: 429).

Understood in this context, Durkheim’s writings on religion suggest that religious concepts and practices such as the sacred, shared rituals, collective consciousness and collective effervescence play central roles in the organization of contemporary societies as they did in historical ones. One such practice is sacrifice. For Durkheim, sacrifice plays a key function in religious rituals as it creates feelings of collectivity among the participants (Durkheim, 1995: 340-344). Hubert and Mauss (1964) follow Durkheim’s

---

156 See Pearce (2001: 205-239) about the important role that the collective effervescence plays in social struggles.
line of thought and discuss the role and function of the ritual of sacrifice. According to them, the ritual of sacrifice mediates the relationship between the sacred and profane realms. It is about “establishing a means of communication between the sacred and the profane worlds through the mediation of a victim, that is, of a thing that in the course of the ceremony is destroyed” (Hubert and Mauss, 1964: 97). What is sacrificed in the ritual is believed to have sacred qualities. The consecration of the sacred objects or the victims during the sacrifice raises the participants of the ritual above the profane realm. Yet, the real effect of the sacrifice, just as other religious practices, is at the level of the profane and ordinary, or everyday life. The ritual of sacrifice “create[s] a bond of artificial kinship among the participants” (Durkheim 1995: 341).

Sacrifice continues to have a key presence in contemporary human societies. In a study on sacrificial practices in contemporary U.S. society, for instance, Pearce (2010) points out how the poor working classes are selected as victims of sacrifice and sent out to fight in the imperialist wars. The sacrifice of these groups is then celebrated in nationalistic rituals that create a certain form of collective effervescence in the society and strengthen the bonds among the participants, i.e, American citizens. Therefore, depending on context, the sacrifice can be just or unjust; but the motivations and outcomes of the sacrifice are always social (Pearce, 2010: 48). Self-sacrifice can also be understood from this perspective. Rather than doctrinal religious factors (such as ‘martyrdom’) or psychological factors (such as mental illness), it is often sociological factors that motivate individuals to practice self-sacrifice (Hassan, 2004; Pace, 2007).
Oppressed populations resort to self-sacrifice to overcome collective humiliation and to protest collective injustice (Hassan, 2004). There are active and passive forms of self-sacrifice. While self-sacrifice to protest against an oppressive regime is an example of passive self-sacrifice, suicide attacks are examples of active self-sacrifice (Pace, 2007).

In the case of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers we can talk about a passive form of self-sacrifice that is motivated by social factors. Although the participants of the hunger strike had religious beliefs in Islam, it was not religious indoctrination in the form of Islamic fundamentalism that guided their actions. The main motivation of the migrants was to protest the collective humiliation and injustice they were experiencing in Greece. Migrants stated: “[W]e risk our lives because, either way, there is no dignity in our living conditions. We would rather die here than allow our children to suffer what we have been through” (AMHS, 2011).

Migrants’ self-sacrifice can be categorized as a form of altruistic suicide. For Durkheim, individuals who sacrifice themselves for a supreme ideal (political, social or moral) show a strong commitment not only to the ideal but also to the group that they identify themselves with. They turn their bodies into a site of political struggle and demonstrate the determination to die for the cause of the group. Once the struggle begins, its ritualistic powers increase and it reaches beyond being a simple political struggle and becomes a sacred communal ritual.

What differentiated the migrants’ hunger strike from any other form of political protest, say a march, was this sacred aspect. Migrants placed their own lives onto the altar
of sacrifice and overcame the fear of death during the process. The collective
effervescence of the sacrificial ritual raised them beyond the level of everyday life and
turned their bodies into sacred things. The sacredness of the migrants’ bodies was
recognized by their Greek supporters. In a press release, these groups criticized Greek
authorities and mainstream media for disrespecting the sacredness of the migrant bodies
and acting immoral:

[T]he actions of the Greek government and police, with the help of the media,
transgressed every moral law. They showed no respect to the university asylum,
but, most importantly, they showed no respect to the sacred figure of the hunger
striker, who, in claiming life and dignity, only has his own life and dignity to offer
(OISMHS 2011, emphasis added).

There is no doubt that the sacredness of the hunger strike played an important part in
raising feelings of affection (thus hospitality and witnessing) in the Greek public. The
Greek public showed respect to human life and opposed the arbitrary sacrifice of the
migrants by the Greek government.

It is important, however, to underline that there is nothing to romanticize about
the hunger strike. Death or permanent organ damage is always a strong possibility, and
the non-sacrificibility of human life is not always recognized and respected. What is
equally important is to underline that although hunger strike is a deathly sacrificial ritual,
unlike some other sacrificial rituals – such as the sacrifice of soldiers in imperialist wars -
it is headed towards life, not death. In other words, what is glorified in the hunger strike
is life, not death. As Ulus Baker notes, taking his cue from Spinoza:

Living beings cannot think death. This Spinozian line of thought is not factual, it
is related to existence. Hunger strikes head towards not death, but life; they have
claims related to life, they engage with life and they affirm life. Because life is resistance. Life does not calculate or understand its end; and when the end arrives life is not there (Baker, 1996).

Conclusion

Drawing on the case of 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers in Greece, this chapter discussed the material conditions of possibility for a successful migrant struggle. Utilizing a materialist theory of resistance, the chapter argued that rather than the ‘autonomous’ actions of the migrants, aleatory encounters among three elements made it possible for the migrants to have, albeit limited, success in their struggle. These three elements are:

1. A politics of equality enacted by the migrants. Rancière’s theory of politics was used to illustrate how migrants organized themselves in the format of mass struggle to claim equal political rights and how they became political agents in the process,

2. An ethics of hospitality and witnessing enacted by the Greek host groups. Throughout the hunger strike, Greek leftist groups helped the migrants in organizing the event, protected them from racist attacks and publicized their just struggle to the Greek public. Large segments of Greek society, too, showed their solidarity with the strikers. Drawing on Derrida’s ethics of hospitality and Agamben’s ethics of witnessing, these solidarity efforts were analyzed,

3. The sacredness of the hunger strike. The power of self-sacrifice in the hunger strike created a collective effervescence. The sacrificial ritual not only strengthened bonds among the migrants and strengthened their the vitality to
continue the struggle, but it also added a sacred dimension to their struggle, which was recognized by some parts of the Greek host groups, who showed respect to human life and opposed the government’s arbitrary sacrifice of the migrants. Durkheim’s theory on religion was used to illustrate the sacred aspect of the hunger strike.

The period that followed the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers event was rather bleak for the migrants. Migrants organized many other protests – including marches, revolts (in prisons) and hunger strikes (Infomobile, 2014), but none achieved comparable success. In fact, xenophobic violence against migrants has risen, especially since the 2012 electoral victory of the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn. Many reasons can be listed for this failure. First, no event of equal volume and impact was organized by the migrants. Second, external factors distanced the Greek host groups from increasing their ethical openness towards migrants: The effects of the EU-imposed austerity measures have become ever more visible on large segments of Greek society. Third, right-wing populist groups and mainstream media have been successful in positioning migrants as the enemies of the Greek working classes. Fourth, the post-political parties of Greece, PASOK and New Democracy, were able to form a government in 2012, not the migrant-sympathetic radical left party, SYRIZA, despite its huge electoral success. Fifth, the EU’s border and asylum policies also exacerbated the rise of anti-migrant sentiments in Greek society: As a result of the border controls at Greece’s exit points to Europe, many migrants got trapped in Greece and, thus, their total population dramatically increased.
But the legacy of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers lives on. It continues to demonstrate how, against overwhelming odds, political determination and ethical openness can create a disruption within the border regime. In fact, democracy is nothing but the aggregate of these disruptions where the equality among speaking beings is reinstated. We need to establish new political structures, or strengthen the existing ones, so that the migrants’ political existence will be properly recognized. We also need to promote the establishment of ethical structures so that ethical openness towards migrants will be better materialized. In other words, we need to work on establishing the necessary material structures for a contingent migrant politics to come. Greece is the place where the mythical foundations of European civilization are located. It can also be the place where real democratic practice can take root – a practice that is based on politics of equality, ethics of hospitality and respect for the human life.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

The Greece-Turkey borders operate through complex elements: the historical material processes of colonialism and racism and contemporary material processes of neoliberal globalization that give shape to their structure, the ideologies of post-politics that legitimize their violent existence, the surveillance technologies and techniques that allow them to be practiced over migrant bodies, and migrants complying with and resisting these structures, ideologies, and technologies. Part I of the dissertation (Chapters 1-4) focused on building a theory of the border that takes into account these diverse aspects of the border, as well as providing a background to contextualize the empirical realities of the border. Part II of the dissertation (Chapters 5-7) focused on analyzing and theorizing the empirical realities of the border.

The introductory chapter argued that a materialist theory that understands human action as a situated activity and that prioritizes the analysis of oppressive material structures and practices of the border over the choices, thoughts and actions of migrants could provide a complex and just analysis of the border. The chapter insisted that the materialist perspective, rather than dismissing the importance of migrants’ experiences, feelings and agency, is key to understanding them. Throughout their journeys, migrants are confronted by visible and invisible oppressive material entities, from surveillance technologies that force them to take riskier routes in the borderzones and ideologies of post-politics that turn them into biopolitical objects of intervention to racist violence in Greece that pushes them to internalize abject subjectivity. In order to understand what
migrants are really feeling and experiencing, and how they articulate political agency in the most desperate conditions, the chapter emphasized that analyses of these material processes should be prioritized. The chapter critically engaged with Althusser’s aleatory materialism, Foucault’s analytics of power and other complementary theories to provide a complex analysis of the border and identified four aspects of the border that need to be studied: structural, practical, subjective, contested. This chapter contributes to the recent literatures in the study of borders, and to surveillance and security studies by highlighting the need to provide a complex analysis of the border and emphasizing the usefulness of the aleatory materialist perspective for this task, while pointing out that behind all the complexities of the border regime there is one determining factor: material inequalities.

Chapter 3, *The Structure of European Borders: Colonial Legacies, Post-Political Turn and the Identification Dispositif*, focused on the structural aspects of the Greece-Turkey borders that allow them to exclude certain categories of people and not others. The chapter insisted that the emphasis on the characteristics of non-directly observable structural entities is vital when studying the borders, as it is these entities that frame the operations of the observable entities of the borders (such as technologies and techniques). The chapter argued that the structure of the borders operates as a complex decentred totality where many elements (economical, ideological, legal, technical) exist with relative autonomy, with the economical and ideological ones having most of determining powers.
Building on this materialist perspective, the chapter argued that the structure of the Greece-Turkey border inherited the legacy of European apartheid. The chapter demonstrated how European apartheid was historically formed during the processes of capitalism and European colonialism and legitimized itself through the processes of national and European identity construction based on ideologies of racism. The chapter argued that although the mechanisms of the apartheid remain, in the last couple of decades, the material processes of neoliberal globalization and post-politics transformed the structure of EU and Greece-Turkey borders. The chapter demonstrated how neoliberal-globalization introduced neoliberal exceptions to racial sorting, allowing elite groups to enjoy extended mobility rights even when these groups belong to disadvantaged racial backgrounds, and how the ideologies of post-politics enabled the EU borders to be racist without naming race – through reducing the political issue of migration (and its broader racial framework) into a matter of technical governance and through reducing the political existence of migrants (as political right holders, such as workers and refugees) into depoliticized bodies. The chapter contributes to the study of borders by critically engaging with the structural elements of the border without being reductionist – without implying that there is one coherent, unified structure or that some elements of the structure (e.g., economy, ideology or technology) always determine others, and without undermining the importance of practices and techniques of the border.
Chapter 4, *The European Identification Dispositif*, continued the focus on the structural aspects of the border with a special emphasis on the technical elements of the structure. While economical and ideological elements largely frame the operations of the technical elements, particularly in the last years, technical elements have expanded in Europe, forming a European identification dispositif. The dispositif operates through diverse elements – biometric databases, EUROSUR mechanisms, radar systems, strategies for externalizing the EU borders, racial profiling - to exclude groups from disadvantaged backgrounds from European political space. The dispositif operates in territorialized and deterritorialized ways, and through high-tech and low-tech methods. It diffuses the EU border within Europe, but it also concentrates the border practices at the territorial borderzones. It introduces high-tech mechanisms of surveillance, but it also continues to use conventional methods of surveillance, such as racial profiling and police-sweep operations. The chapter contributes to the study of borders by providing a comprehensive analysis of the technical elements of the borders and their material basis.

Part II of the dissertation begins with Chapter 5, *The Biopolitical Border in Practice: Surveillance at the Greece-Turkey borderzones*. This chapter focused on the specific locality of the Greece-Turkey borderzones to analyze how the diverse mechanisms of the European identification dispositif operate in practice. The chapter demonstrated how the development of new mechanisms of surveillance (such as radar systems, EUROSUR mechanisms and the border fence) expanded territorial surveillance at the borderzones and how this expansion forced migrants to find ever-riskier routes of
entry. Utilizing the concept of biopolitics from a materialist perspective, this chapter contributes to the literatures of border studies and biopolitics. The location of contemporary borders has been much debated in the literature. This chapter provides a nuanced understanding of borders by demonstrating that while borders are diffusing beyond and inside state territories, their practices and effects are concentrated at the edges of state territories— that is, the borderzones. While Foucault posits that biopolitics is the product of the historical transition away from sovereign powers controlling territory and imposing practices of death towards governmental powers managing population mainly through pastoral, productive, and deterritorialized techniques, the case of the Greece–Turkey borderzones demonstrates that biopolitics operates through sovereign territorial controls and surveillance, through practices of death and exclusion, and through suspension of rights.

In Chapter 6, Material Violence and Migrant Subjectivities, the dissertation pursues further the question of material practices of power. But it also balances the materialist analysis by emphasizing the effects of the material practices on migrant subjectivities. Migrant subjectivities cannot be understood in isolation from the material violence that migrants are confronted by; while violence against migrants is concentrated at the borderzones, it also exists before the territorial borders are reached (in Turkey) and beyond the territorial borders (in Greece). This chapter first demonstrated the diverse characteristics of material violence, such as the ineffective asylum system, low life prospects and social exclusion in Turkey, and the ineffective asylum system, prolonged
detention, substandard health conditions, low life prospects, and racist violence in Greece. In the second part, drawing on migrant narratives, the chapter focused on the diverse subjectivities of migrants. While all migrant subjectivity develops in response to material violence, there is not one over-arching type of migrant subjectivity. The chapter demonstrated five different types of migrant subjectivities: stranger subjectivity, abject subjectivity, religious subjectivity, nomadic subjectivity and dissident subjectivity. This chapter contributes to the study of migrant subjectivities by demonstrating the complexity of migrant subjectivity and its material basis.

Finally, Chapter 7, Resisting the Border: 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers Event, focused on migrant resistance and politics against the Greece-Turkey borders. The chapter first pointed out that, while migrants resist borders in diverse ways, the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers event in Greece requires special emphasis because this event was able to challenge the fundamentals of the border regime, which operates through imposing arbitrarily hierarchies between different speaking beings, between those who have rights and those who do not. Utilizing a materialist perspective, the chapter emphasized that migrant political agency should be understood not as an independent entity, but within a materialist framework where other material entities also exist. Focusing on the complex material background of the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers event, the chapter identified and analyzed three elements that played crucial roles in the success of the event: the migrants organizing themselves in mass format, ethical openness demonstrated by the Greek activist groups and the Greek public, and the ritualistic-sacred
characteristic of the hunger strike. This chapter contributes to the literature on migrant politics by demonstrating the complex material basis of migrants’ political acts and the material conditions of possibility for a successful migrant politics.

This dissertation makes two main empirical and theoretical contributions to the recent literatures in surveillance, security, citizenship and border studies. First, it demonstrates the importance of focusing on practices of surveillance and borders with an ethnographical emphasis that takes into account how techniques of power are exercised and the experiences of the affected subjects. This focus on practice allows the dissertation to provide a complex and nuanced understanding of surveillance, borders, and migrant subjectivities and politics and to re-evaluate the ongoing debates in related literatures, such as the debates centred on the location of contemporary borders, the specific effects of surveillance systems, and subjectivities and political acts of migrants. Second, the dissertation demonstrates the need to understand practices and empirical realities from a materialist perspective, which takes into account the decentred totality of ideologies, technologies, regulations, economic processes and histories that frame practices and empirical realities. This focus on materialism enabled the dissertation to analyze the complexities of the empirical realities and practices without undermining the existence of deeper and enduring material structures.

This dissertation demonstrated how the Greece-Turkey borders, as borders of Europe, operate as mechanisms of apartheid and violently exclude peoples from disadvantaged backgrounds – mainly people from global South and East. This reality
does not mean that there is no hope. The same Europe also holds potential for transnational politics that is based on equality among people and respect for human life. The event of 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers in Greece illustrates how this transnationalism can materialize itself. The event demonstrated the importance of three things for future politics in Europe.

First, politics of equality and political subjectivization. The migrants succeeded in their struggle because they were able to constitute themselves as equal political beings through the very act of political demonstration. Through enacting politics of equality migrants created a disruption within the existent symbolic order that imposes arbitrary hierarchies among different speaking beings. Migrants’ appropriation of the worker identity played a central role in the success of their struggle, because this identity allowed them to break down the identities imposed on them by the reactionary groups, such as the identity of the abject or the illegal. Migrants’ self-subjectivization as workers helped them to gain support from the Greek working classes. Here worker identity should not be understood from a narrow perspective, one that is centred on the figure of the productive male factory worker; rather it includes diverse groups of people who suffer the injustices of the global capitalist system. Solidarity among the working classes of Europe regardless of status holds a radical potential for the future. Anti-austerity struggles in Europe, from Spain to Greece, and the rise of radical left parties demonstrated that the European working classes are not passive victims of neoliberal globalization and post-political ideology, and that they have the capacity to struggle for a radical transformation of the
European project. The European project operates through false universality: it officially
endorsesthe universal notion of human rights only to preserve the rights of particular
subjects who are, mostly, white, male, property owners. A new universality, based on the
ideal of the universal emancipation of the working classes, should be established.

Second, ethics of solidarity. The migrants’ struggle in Greece demonstrates that,
in addition to politics of equality and political subjectivization, there needs to be an ethics
of hospitality and witnessing to convince people to side with one another and to break
down the fictive racist identities that divide them. Ethical practices may take diverse
forms, from human rights activism (aimed at true universality) to providing shelter to
migrants; they also should include creating the conditions for ethics of witnessing to take
place to combat ignorance. Justice should drive ethics, but justice requires law in order to
materialize itself: The establishment of regulations to protect migrants from violence,
particularly at the borderzones but also beyond, should also be the goal of these ethical
practices.

Third, respect for human life. Migrants are selected as the sacrificial victims of
the neoliberal-globalized world order. They are forced to suffer the consequences of the
material processes that are developed independent of them. A new ethico-politics that
respects human life and that opposes the arbitrary sacrifice of migrants at the hands of
oppressive material processes and their agents should be established.
The successes of these political and ethical practices will shape the future of the European borders. Although partially determined by the past, the future is always aleatory and uncertain, open to unexpected developments.
Bibliography


AFHS (2011) “Message by the assembly of fifty hunger strikers in Thessaloniki to the mayor and the members of the city council”, 


AI (2013a) *Frontier Europe: human rights abuses on Greece’s border with Turkey*. London: Amnesty International, 

AI (2013b) “Greece: Despair pervades camps after 33 migrant workers shot in Manolada”, Amnesty International News Releases, 22 April 2013, 


DETECTOR (Detection Technologies, Terrorism, Ethics and Human Rights) project funded by the European Commission the Seventh Framework Research Programme


299


Ekathimerini, 01.04.2012. “Compulsory health checks for migrants” http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dci/_w_articles_wsite1_1_01/04/2012_435856

Ekathimerini, 11.08.2012, Flares thrown into makeshift mosque near Piraeus http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dci/_w_articles_wsite1_1_11/08/2012_456571


305


ETHA 05.06.2013, “TSK Sinirda 13 Yasinda bir Cocugu Oldurdu”,
http://etha.com.tr/Haber/2014/06/05/guncel/tsk-sinirda-13-yasindaki-bir-cocugu-oldurdu/


Infomobile, 02.04.2014. “Announcement of new rule on detention duration causes wave of protests”, http://infomobile.w2eu.net/2014/04/02/announcement-of-new-rule-on-detention-duration-causes-wave-of-protests/


Infomobile (2014) Information with, about and for refugees in Greece. http://infomobile.w2eu.net/


314


MCP (2011) “Presentation to the Cabinet (6/9) by the Minister of Citizen Protection, Christos Papoutsis, on the integrated border management program to combat illegal immigration”, Ministry of Citizen Protection, Athens, http://www.hec.gr/node/1260


Pearce F. (2010) “Obligatory Sacrifice and Imperial Projects.” In William Chambliss,


Radikal, 27.01.2014. “‘Suriyeli kuma ticareti: Kira veremiyorsan kızını ver!’”,

Radikal, 09.05.2014, “Ankara’da Suriyeli Gerginliği”,
http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/ankarada_suriyeli_gerginligi-1191077


RT News 19.01.2013. “Thousands march in Athens protesting racist attacks in Greece”  


Okyayuz M. and Angliss J. (2014) “Political–legal changes to Turkish asylum policy: a  
solution to the problems of asylum seekers?” in Okyayuz M, Herrmann P and Dorrity  
Verlag für Sozialforschung, 36–84.


of Solidarity to the 300 Migrant Hunger Strikers Thessaloniki,  
http://hungerstrike300.espivblogs.net/2011/01/30/thursday-january-27-2011-the-  
greek-state-tortures-hunger-strikers/

OSIT (2011) Solidarity with the 300 Migrants on Hunger Strike, Open Solidarity  
Initiative of Thessaloniki, http://allilmap.wordpress.com/2011/01/21/solidarity-  
with-the-300-migrants-on-hunger-strike/


O’Dowd L. (2010) “From a ‘borderless world’ to a ‘world of borders’: ‘bringing history  

OI/5/2012/BEH-MHZ concerning Frontex”,  
rk

SGD (2012) “Nisan 2012”, Sahil Guvenlik Dergisi, Turkish Coast Guard Command,  
Ankara.

323


Topak, OE (2014c) “No limits to brutality: deaths at the Greece-Turkey borders”, Opendemocracy, 19 May 2014, [http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/%C3%B6zg%C3%BCn-topak/no-limits-to-brutality-deaths-at-greeceturkey-borders](http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/%C3%B6zg%C3%BCn-topak/no-limits-to-brutality-deaths-at-greeceturkey-borders)


UNHCR (2013) “Syrians in Greece: Protection Considerations and UNHCR

UNHCR (2014a) “2014 UNHCR country operations profile – Turkey”,
http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e48e0fa7f.html

http://www.unhcr.org/52b2f6bae5.html

UNHCR (2014c) “Syria Regional Refugee Response”,
http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php

UNITED (2010) “Fortress Europe: a deadly exodus”, United for Intercultural Action,
http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/pages/map_FortressEurope_Owni.htm


van Munster R. (2009) Securitizing Immigration: The Politics of Risk in the EU,
Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Vallet É. and David CP. (2012) “Introduction: the (re)building of the wall in international

and the Simulation of the Sovereign Ban”, Environment and Planning D: Society and
Space, 28: 1071-1083.

Vatan, 30.05.2014. “Multeci Kampinda Fuhus Iddasi”,
http://www.gazetevatan.com/multeci-kampinda-fuhus-iddiasi--642582-vasam/

Venn C. (2009) “Neoliberal Political Economy, Biopolitics and Colonialism:


Appendix A

General Research Ethics Board Approval

January 31, 2012

Mr. Ozgun Topak
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Sociology
Queen’s University
Kingston, ON K7L 3N7

GREB Ref #: GSOC-092-12; Rome # 6006487
Title: "GSOC-092-12 Re-Bordering the EU: The case of Greece-Turkey Border"

Dear Mr. Topak:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "GSOC-092-12 Re-Bordering the EU: The case of Greece-Turkey Border" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Adverse Event Report). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementations of new procedures. To make an amendment, access the application at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Amendment to Approved Study Form. These changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or Irvingg@queensu.ca for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
General Research Ethics Board

cc: Dr. David Lyon, Faculty Supervisor
    Dr. Rob Bournish, Chair, Unit REB
    Anne Henderson, Dept. Admin.
Appendix B

List of Cited Migrants

Migrant no1: Afghan, crossed the border in 2008 (Interview, 10.06.2012).
Migrant no2: Afghan, crossed the border in 2010 (Interview, 14.06.2012).
Migrant no3: Algerian, crossed the border in 2009 (Interview, 14.05.2012).
Migrant no4: Afghan, crossed the border in 2011 (Interview, 08.07.2012).
Migrant no5: Afghan, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 12.06.2012).
Migrant no6: Afghan, crossed the border in 2010 (Interview, 14.06.2012).
Migrant no7: Afghan, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 14.06.2012).
Migrant no8: Algerian, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 17.05.2012).
Migrant no9: Afghan, crossed the border in 2011 (Interview, 15.06.2012).
Migrant no10 Algerian, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 14.05.2012).
Migrant no11: Iranian, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 11.05.2012).
Migrant no12: Algerian, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 14.05.2012).
Migrant no13: Afghan, crossed the border in 2011 (Interview, 15.06.2012).
Migrant no14: Afghan, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 07.06.2012).
Migrant no15: Afghan, crossed the border in 2011 (Interview, 04.07.2012).
Migrant no16: Nigerian, crossed the border in 2010 (Interview, 09.05.2012).
Migrant no17: Afghan, crossed the border in 2009 (Interview, 10.06.2012).
Migrant no18: Afghan, crossed the border in 2007 (Interview, 05.07.2012).
Migrant no19: Afghan, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 05.07.2012).
Migrant no 20: Migrant from Burkina Faso, crossed the border in 2010 (Interview, 09.05.2012).
Migrant no21: Afghan, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 07.06.2012).
Migrant no22: Iranian, crossed the border in 2001 (Interview, 10.05.2012).
Migrant no23: Afghan, crossed the border in 2011 (Interview, 08.06.2012).
Migrant no24: Kurdish (Turkish national), crossed the border in 2004 (Interview, 16.05.2012).
Migrant no25: Afghan, crossed the border in 2010 (Interview, 04.07.2012).
Migrant no26: Afghan, crossed the border in 2010 (Interview, 05.07.2012).
Migrant no27: Afghan, crossed the border in 2011 (Interview, 12.06.2012).
Migrant no28: Afghan, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 05.07.2012).
Migrant no29: Afghan, crossed the border in 2008 (Interview, 08.07.2012).
Migrant no30: Afghan, crossed the border in 2010 (Interview, 16.06.2012).
Migrant no31: Afghan, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 05.07.2012).
Migrant no32: Pakistani, crossed the border in 2009 (Interview, 07.06.2012).
Migrant no 33: Afghan, crossed the border in 2003 (Interview, 10.05.2012).
Migrant no34: Moroccan, crossed the border in 2002 (Interview, 17.05.2012).
Migrant no35: Palestinian, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 07.07.2012).
Migrant no36: Afghan, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 04.07.2012).
Migrant no37: Afghan, crossed the border in 2011 (Interview, 08.07.2012)
Migrant no38: Kurdish (from Iran), crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 08.06.2012).
Migrant no39: Afghan, crossed the border in 2012 (Interview, 05.07.2012).