UCL

UCL Migration Research Unit

UCL Migration Research Unit
UCL Department of Geography
University College London
26 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AP

www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/mru

UCL Migration Research Unit
Working Papers

No. 2012/1

How does the movement of migration journey through the European border regime?

Exploring the 'becomings' of irregularity, transit space and political subjectivity in Patras, Greece

Sally Jane Hole

UCL
Migration Research Unit

How does the movement of migration journey through the European border regime?

Exploring the 'becomings' of irregularity, transit space and political subjectivity in Patras, Greece

Sally Jane Hole

This research dissertation is submitted for the
MSc in Global Migration at University College London

2011

Supervisor: JoAnn McGregor

Abstract

In mainstream discourses on migration, migrants tend to be represented as agency-less, 'passive receptacles.' By placing the strategic-analytical emphasis on the movements of people over that of control, this paper reverses the logic of state-centric discourses of power, opening up new ways of thinking about the complex contestations of so-called 'minor voices.' The paper thus adopts a 'gaze of autonomy,' setting out to explore the moments and movements of migrant agency in the transit space of Patras, Greece. This human-level study asks how the journey is *lived* by migrants, what barriers migrants meet and *negotiate,* what mechanisms of control they confront and *subvert.*

The research brings together three disparate areas of academic work: the 'mode-of-being irregular,' the spatiality of transit and 'stopping,' and the 'politics of migration.' The research methodology takes the form of a militant ethnography, designed to explore the research questions through a practice of critical solidarity with migrants. A collaborative, ethically-grounded, and politically-engaged project, the research draws on both ethnographic and PRA techniques.

The paper finds that as the movement of migration journeys through the European border regime, migrant irregularity is being produced and lived, irregular spaces of transit are in processes of formation and contestation, and new, fundamentally different, irregular political subjectivities are becoming constituted. The journey is a *productive moment,* shaping the 'becoming' of irregularity, space, and political subjectivity. Furthermore, these processes of continuous production are intricately intertwined.

In Patras, the 'irregular politics of migration' emerges out of migrants' irregularity and their spatial occupation and presence. Migrants enact themselves as new political subjectivities through their embodied, daily struggles; when they contest their irregularity, appropriate and re-make space, and exceed and escape control. In their desire to improve their lives and enact their right to mobility, migrants *put in motion* the 'becoming' of new forms of life that in turn bring forth new ways of imagining mobility, geography and politics.

Acknowledgements

List of Contents

How does the movement of migration journey through the European border regime?
Sally Jane Hole
MSc Global Migration, UCL

Introduction

Mainstream discourses on migration tend to position the migrant as a 'weak subject' rather than a purposive actor (Mezzadra 2004b). The migrant is often represented as a 'passive receptacle' of other actors' actions (Agustín 2003:1), be it a receptacle of paternalistic efforts of charity – if the migrant is to be pitied – or, more often, a receptacle of state control and regimentation – if the migrant is to be securitised (Huysmans & Squire 2009). Either way, in both discourses the agency of the migrant is repeatedly effaced (Sharma in Nyers 2006).

In this paper, I aim to reverse this agency-denying logic by adopting a 'gaze of autonomy' (Mezzadra 2011; Bojadžijew & Karakayali 2010). This means that rather than looking at how migrants are rendered 'weak,' I look for the moments and movements of migrant agency (Andrijasevic 2010). Drawing on an 'autonomy of migration' analytical framework, the paper argues that the movement of migration is primarily driven and animated by migrants' desires for life and mobility, and only secondary to this, is movement mediated by control (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008). Migrants are not 'passive receptacles' but chief protagonists (Stephenson & Papadopoulos 2006). Migrants purposively *act,* move, live, negotiate, and subvert. In this study I set out to gain an insight into the protagonists' journeys. I seek to understand how the journey is *lived* by migrants, what barriers migrants meet and *negotiate,* what mechanisms of control they confront and *subvert.* By placing this strategic-analytical emphasis on the movements of people, over that of control (Mitropoulos 2007), this paper constitutes a human-level account of how migrants journey *through* the European border regime.

The European border regime is creating a patchwork of other, marginal spaces, 'in-between' spaces or 'border spaces' (Isin & Rygiel 2007). These ever-multiplying spatialities represent the increasing consolidation of a partition between two world categories; those who are allowed to belong, who are visible and with rights, and those who are deemed residual, to be invisible, and without rights (Agier 2011). These new spatialities are taking on different meanings, engendering divergent political configurations, and bringing forth new, alternative modes of being (Agier 2011). This paper aims to contribute to an emerging trans-disciplinary literature that seeks to critically engage with these spaces of 'becoming.'

Using a militant ethnographic approach, this study explores the case of one such space: the port city of Patras, Greece. The paper does not advance that Patras is representative of these spaces, nor do I think it possible to find a 'typical' space of the border regime. Rather, Patras forms a small part of the patchwork, one context in which movements of migration are 'caught' in a constant battle with mechanisms of control (Mantanika 2009). Patras is therefore a space in which, and through which, I ground my analysis of how conflicts over movement and irregularity are played out on a daily basis.

The research brings together three disparate areas of academic work: the 'mode-of-being irregular,' the spatiality of transit and 'stopping,' and the 'politics of migration' (Squire 2011). In this paper I take these three subject areas and look at them anew, through an 'autonomy of migration' lens. I argue that at the intersection between movements of migration and mechanisms of control, migrant irregularity is being produced and lived, irregular spaces of transit are in processes of formation and contestation, and new, fundamentally different, irregular political subjectivities are becoming constituted. My research is therefore orientated towards understanding these multiple processes of continuous

production (Stephenson & Papadopoulos 2006). In other words, I am interested in the *'becoming'* of irregularity, transit space, and political subjectivity (Biehl & Locke 2010).

The paper begins with a review of relevant secondary literature. In this section I foreground the key concepts to be explored in the paper, including 'autonomy of migration,' irregularity, the different theorisations of spaces of 'stopping,' 'borderzones,' and the 'politics of migration.' A brief outline of the Greek context is also given. The paper then turns to justify the militant ethnographic methodology (Juris 2007), a research design that aims to explore my research questions through a practice of critical solidarity with migrants (Routledge 1996). A collaborative, ethically-grounded, and politically-engaged project, the research draws on both ethnographic and PRA techniques (Nyanzi *et al* 2007).

The research findings are divided into three chapters. In Chapter One I explore how multiple mechanisms of control produce irregularity in Patras, and ask how irregularity renders migrants' 'becoming'-in-the-world precarious and vulnerable. I look at how migrants *live* in this condition, and also look for the moments and movements in which they contest, or indeed appropriate, this irregularity. In Chapter Two, the spatiality of transit in Patras is investigated. The chapter looks at how space becomes constituted as a battleground between forces of control, and the sociality of migrants. Further, I explore how migrants occupy and re-configure space, affirming a presence in a city where they are 'supposed' not to exist (Coutin 2003). In Chapter Three I ask how we can understand migrants' presence and actions in Patras in political terms. I look at how migrants mobilise the politics of local activists, analysing how this relationship plays out in practice. Following this, I turn to ask whether we may re-conceptualise the political action of migrants as a new kind of politics, a 'politics of migration' that signals the 'becoming' of a different form of political subject. Drawing on

evidence from the previous chapters, I argue that migrants enact themselves as new political subjectivities when they contest their irregularity, appropriate and re-make space, and exceed and escape control. This is the *"embodiment* of politics"* [my emphasis] (Papadopoulos 2010). In their desire to improve their lives and enact their right to mobility, migrants *put in motion* new forms of life that fundamentally call into question the very bordering, ordering and management of people and mobility, geography and politics.

<u>Literature Review</u>

This review begins by looking at how 'autonomy of migration' literature opens up new ways of thinking about the space of Europe, border control, and the agency of migrants. Following this, I examine literature on the production of migrant irregularity, as well as studies that have explored how migrants experience 'being irregular.' I then explore how spaces of 'stopping' have been theorised by scholars, ranging from spaces of detention, to more 'open' spaces of transit. The review then turns to look at how migrants 'mobilise politics' (Squire 2011). I find that within an emergent 'critical migration' literature migrants are being conceived as radical political actors who problematise the very bounds of 'the political.' A brief outline of the Greek context concludes the review, in order to ground this literature in the setting of my research.

<u>The 'Autonomy of Migration'</u>

'Autonomy of migration' literature perceives that migration is not simply dictated by 'push' and 'pulls' (Andrijasevic & Anderson 2009), but is treated as a purposive life strategy by migrants (Mitropoulos 2007). Migration is an autonomous movement in the sense that it is "always-already 'preceding' a politics of control that struggles to master movement" (Squire 2011:12). People's movements, connections, and escapes *precede* their regulation (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008). From this perspective, "the inside story of migration" (Stephenson & Papadopoulos 2006:436) is one in which migrants play the chief protagonists.

Europe is often described as a 'fortress,' and there appears to be ample evidence for

this. For example, Greece is in the process of fortifying its border with Turkey, involving the digging of a 120-kilometre-long trench, and the construction of a 10-kilometre-long barbed-wire fence[1]. The logic appears to be that 'they,' physically, must be *kept out* of Europe. By drawing attention to the fortification and militarisation of Europe's borders, the 'fortress' image works to de-naturalise a European border regime that refuses entry – with increasingly high human costs – to those deemed 'undesirable' (Andrijasevic 2003; Spijkerboer 2007). Nonetheless, 'fortress Europe' is also a highly problematic concept. This is because, to speak of Europe as a 'fortress' affirms the power of the border regime to stop 'them,' in turn reifying the myth that migration is indeed controllable (Tsianos & Karakayali 2010). Such an analytic position privileges control and the *response to* migration, over the *movement* of migration (Tsianos & Karakayali 2010).

When we look from the perspective of migration, the possibility of solid and impenetrable fortress-walls is called into question. Adopting a 'gaze of autonomy' means recognising that the Greek trenches are a mere response to the forces of migration, and secondly, this movement will overcome these trenches, new routes will be forged and strategies to continue to evade control will be devised. As Hardt & Negri (2000:213) insist, "movement is *irresistible*" [my emphasis]. Scholars such as Karakayali & Karakayali (2009), Tsianos *et al* (2009), Papadopoulos *et al* (2008), and Alberti (2010) argue that in fact the journey that migrants make is rarely marked by insurmountable barriers to movement, but by differentially precarious, porous border spaces. The border is not complete, but is continuously 'flexibilised' by the movement of migration (Mezzadra 2011). When we look from this perspective therefore, we must look at how the journey is *lived* by migrants, what

---

1 'Greek plans barbed-wire fence along Turkish border,' *EU Business,* 5/8/11,
   http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/greece-immigration.bot [accessed 17/8/11].

barriers migrants meet and negotiate, what mechanisms of control they confront and undermine. This begins by looking at irregularity; how control produces this condition, and how it shapes migrants' lived experiences.

Migrant 'Irregularisation' and the 'Mode-of-Being Irregular'

As we turn to the production of irregularity, it is necessary to make a note on terminology. In this paper, irregularity is used instead of terms that pertain to 'illegality,' except when citing work that purposefully adopts the term, in which case quotation marks are deployed (Peutz & De Genova 2010). The study rejects statist discourses that criminalise migration, and rejects reifying the category – and possibility of being – 'illegal' (Koser 2007; Khosravi 2010).

Far from being a natural condition, irregularity is produced through multiple processes of 'irregularisation' (De Genova 2002; 2005). Squire (2011:13) argues that irregularity is a 'stake' produced by the "collision" of control with movements of migration. This means that rather than being a static condition (Khosravi 2010), people 'become irregular,' or are 'irregularised,' when they become a target of control (Squire 2011). As a consequence, migrants can move in and out of irregularity, depending on the presence of control in their lives. Following Goldring *et al* (2007), I conceive there to be gradations of irregularity, defined by one's owning a 'less than full,' precarious legal status. Irregularity is fundamentally *irregular*; it is unstable, unpredictable and in flux (Squire 2011; Hamilton & Placas 2011).

In his work on 'Mexican-Chicago,' De Genova (2005) puts forth that the production of 'illegality' makes possible the vulnerable condition of 'deportability.' Building on this,

7

Talavera *et al* (2010) look at how deportability is a *presence* with which migrants must constantly live, fearing that at any time they may be deported. De Genova (2005) explains how, under this relentless threat, 'illegalised' migrants are produced and disciplined for exploitation in the labour market. As migrants are 'differentially included' (Andrijasevic in Papadopoulos *et al* 2008:197) in society, with different gradations of irregularity, a "certain type of population [is produced and]... channelled towards certain sectors of the economy" as flexibilised labour (Andrijasevic 2008:1). We can ask however, whether deportability is always the driving insecurity for migrants, as De Genova argues, or whether in some contexts it is the presence of other factors that underpin migrants' vulnerability.

To be irregular becomes "a practical, materially consequential, and deeply interiorized mode of being" (Peutz & De Genova 2010:14). Scholars such as Coutin (2003; 2005), Willen (2007a; 2007b), Khosravi (2010) and Hiemstra (2010) have asked how 'being irregular' is lived and experienced. In her research in Tel Aviv, Willen (2007b:13) finds that daily life for irregular migrants is overshadowed by "looming clouds of vulnerability and indeterminacy." Portraying a highly fraught existence, Willen (2007b) analyses how embodied 'illegality' shapes migrants' subjective experiences of time, space, and self. Migrants can find themselves spending their days playing 'cat-and-mouse' with authorities (Talavera *et al* 2010), sometimes unable to feel safe from police incursion even in the private space of their home (Willen 2007b). In an attempt to disguise their 'illegality,' Hiemstra (2010) finds that migrants police themselves, where they go, how they look and how they act. Talavera *et al* (2010:171) argue that migrants feel 'branded' and "frighteningly visible," bearing a stigma that puts them under perpetual visual scrutiny (Willen 2007b). Coutin (2003) describes how 'illegality' condemns migrants to a 'space of non-existence,' Willen

(2007a) speaks of peripheral 'abject zones,' and Khosravi (2010:95) of being "included yet excepted."

Abjection is a strong theme running through this literature. Abjection constitutes a paradoxical condition of "inclusive exclusion" (Agamben 1998:8), meaning that irregularised migrants find themselves rejected and excluded from society, but at the same time held within (Kristeva in De Genova 2010). This narrative suggests a powerless position; of migrants having been "*put* in place," and acted upon [my emphasis] (Peutz & De Genova 2010:14). In contrast, this paper draws on Squire's (2011) work and counters that instead of looking only at the abject experiences of irregularity, we can look at irregularity as a *'stake'* in which migrants have a *role.* From the perspective of migration, this means looking at how migrants negotiate and subvert what irregularity means and how it is lived. Literature has also tended to focus on migrants' experiences *on arrival,* and there is a lack of research into how irregularity is lived in transit, often where migrants first find themselves becoming irregularised.

Detention Camps and Transit Camps: Spaces of 'Stopping'

Irregularised migration exists in a tension between movement and non-movement (Schapendonk 2009). Migrants' journeys are punctuated by disparate spaces of 'stopping' (Mantanika 2009). 'Stops' can take quite different spatial forms, and can be lived by migrants in very different ways. Literature has tended to focus on the more regimented space of detention, which has in turn shaped how other spaces of 'stopping' have been theorised.

In his work on detention camps, Agamben emphasises the "violence and rule by force that permeate the policing of the border" (Mezzadra in Squire 2011:13). According to

Agamben (1998; 2005), control creates spaces of 'exception' in which individuals become subject to absolute sovereign control. He argues that these abject spaces de-humanise individuals and render them 'bare life': subjects without politics, invisible, and voiceless. Numerous studies (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr 2004; Edkins & Pin-Fat 2005; McLoughlin & Warin 2008; Vaughan-Williams 2009) have built on this conceptualisation of the camp as a "diagram of power" (Walters 2010:93). The problem with Agamben's formulation of the camp however is that it perpetuates a state-centric view of power (Puggioni 2006), bolstering 'fortress'-like metaphors by affirming the *'achievability'* of control over movement and subjectivity, and by declaring the *inability* of migrants to resist (Lemke 2005, Rygiel 2011b, Bigo 2007). Agamben 'flattens' migrants and represents them as agency-less, meaning that "things are always done to them, not by them" (Walters 2008:188).

In contrast, 'autonomy of migration' literature brings to the fore the agency of migrants and their capacity to always resist control. This entails an analytical shift, re-thinking the camp, and 'stopping,' 'from below' (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008). Based on their study in the Aegean, Papadopoulos *et al* (2008:191) find that detention is a tolerated and appropriated space. 'From below,' migrants are not 'flattened' subjects, but with "surplus sociability" (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008:255) they live and participate in this space. From the perspective of migration, from the perspective of the *journey*, the detention camp is also a rest house, a communication and information centre, and a place to build support networks (Karakayali & Rigo 2010).

It is perhaps important to note here how context appears to shape what 'stopping' means in particular detention spaces. While Agamben's interest focuses on more 'closed spaces,' such as Guantánamo Bay, research on detention in Lampedusa, Italy (Andrijasevic

2010), and in the Aegean, Greece (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008), find that detention can sometimes be constituted quite differently, as spaces that migrants 'pass through' (Andrijasevic 2008). 'Stopping' thus is not always about total immobility, but rather these 'stops' can be mobile too. Karakayali & Rigo (2010) argue that in these contexts detention is more a space of circulation than exception. In these spaces control does not impose immobility, but rather it operates on a temporal level, regulating and *decelerating* the speed of migrants' movement through Europe (Papadopoulos 2011).

Other spaces of 'stopping' are created as much by migrants' own strategies for movement than they are by the European border regime (Hess 2008). These are spaces of transit. The terminology of the 'camp' is often adopted when describing the informal spaces that migrants occupy in transit, suggesting that these too are spaces of containment, exclusion and abjection, much like those of detention (Migreurop 2004; Agier 2011; Rodier 2007). But as Bigo (2007) highlights, the informal spaces of makeshift camps are in many ways *open* spaces; migrants have not been 'caught,' and 'put' there (Isin & Rygiel 2007). Thus while I recognise that these spaces are also products 'of the border' (Agier 2010), I contend that they are fundamentally very different spaces when we consider the role that migrants themselves play in creating and shaping them. In this paper 'camp' is used to describe the literal encampments that migrants live in, but I conceive these as spontaneous groupings of migrants, in contrast with spaces of containment, and quite at odds with an Agambenian conceptualisation (Mantanika 2009).

Transit migration is not easily defined. Journeys are often fragmented (Collyer 2007), and migrants can get "caught in mobility" for long durations of time (Hess 2010:9). This means that it becomes difficult to determine *when* one becomes, or indeed stops being a

transit migrant, as one can *live in transit* for decades (Hess 2010). Sometimes migrants will 'end up' settling in these intermediate destinations, leading some to ask whether the concept is in some ways redundant (Lafazani *et al* 2011). In this paper, transit is understood from the perspective of migrants, "*with the intention* of going," even if mobility is a distant memory, or a far-off aspiration (Içduygu in Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008:3). This mind-set, this willing to leave and reluctance to settle is crucial in shaping the behaviour of migrants, as well as how they occupy space (Collyer *et al* 2010). Space is not a passive 'container' of human activities, but rather it is constituted and re-configured through social practices and power relations (Zhang 2001). Transit zones become spaces constituted, and contested, by the conflicting forces of control and the movement of migration (Squire 2011). Irregularity is produced in this highly precarious space, and irregularity is appropriated and challenged here also. Looking from the perspective of migration, I look beyond the extreme relegation that marks these spaces (Migreurop 2004), and begin to look at how these are spaces of transformation too, provoking the emergence of new social worlds, of different configurations (Agier 2011).

Studies by Hess (2008) and Collyer (2007) explore how in transit zones migrants create spaces of refuge where they may find protection, alliances and a social network. 'Dwelling-in motion' (Burrell 2008), migrants use, appropriate and re-configure space, "transform[ing]... space so as not to succumb to it" (Laacher in Agier 2011:42). Over time, these spaces become what Isin & Rygiel (2007:193) term spaces of "transient permanence." In her study of migrant camps in Calais, Rygiel (2011a) finds a space of organisation, with shelters, mosques, shops, and a barber, and in North Africa, Collyer (2007) cites how such camps have formed their own modes of government. Spaces become places, informal

settlements become villages (Rygiel 2011a), sometimes 'cities' (Melliti 1999). Yet at the same time, many migrants still maintain their intention to move on, and thus they remain, in some way, still 'on the road' (Coutin 2005).

Thus far the 'autonomy of migration,' irregularity and the spatiality of 'stops' has been reviewed. Building on this, I now turn to look at how 'autonomy of migration' literature open up possibilities for thinking about migrants as 'becoming' political actors in a 'politics of migration' that is fundamentally interwoven with embodied irregularity and space.

'Borderzones' and the 'Politics of Migration'

> Too often [migrants'] actions are subtracted from the political field, perhaps because they do not accord the imperatives of civil dialogue or public debate which, in the liberal democratic imagination, are held to delineate the sphere of political relation and expression. Indeed, criminalisation and incarceration removes the bodies of those who are interned from the domain of [the] 'public sphere' (Neilson & Mitropoulos 2007:471).

How we understand migrants as political actors depends on how we understand politics itself (Alberti 2010). As Neilson & Mitropoulos (2007) highlight, the 'public sphere' of conventional politics does not recognise irregularised migrants as political subjects. Political action is attributed to citizens, who may engage in civil dialogue and public debate, but not to those who have been deemed not to 'belong,' without citizenship rights, and therefore without political rights. This narrow, statist imagining of politics, Mitropoulos (2007:131) argues, means that political subjectivity may only be invoked "on condition of assuming the perspective of the state – or being, literally, a subject of it." 'Autonomy of migration' literature counters this, insisting that "politics does not need to be the property of the state"

(Mitropoulos in Nyers 2008b:170). Opening up space for the analysis of the agency and resistance of migrants (Andrijasevic 2010), this literature constitutes an affirmatively political reading of mobility (Andrijasevic & Anderson 2009).

Squire's (2011:11) theorisation of the 'borderzone' aims to underscore the highly political and contested nature of the border regime. She describes 'borderzones' as sites of conflict between a 'politics of control' concerned with the mastery of movement, extraction of labour, and enclosure of space, and a 'politics of migration,' which mobilises movement, labour and space *against* these processes (Squire 2011). Squire (2011) argues that 'borderzones' are the sites of intensified political struggles over the 'politics of mobility.' Rather than being agency-less, 'weak subjects,' Squire (2011) casts migrants as key actors, 'mobilising politics' in ways that shift the very meaning of 'the political.'

Rancière (2004) has been highly influential in shaping new understandings of politics. He argues that the 'political community' as it stands is not a political sphere, but a 'policed' *status quo*. According to Rancière (2004:305), it is the 'supplement' to this policed community, the "surplus subjects... who have no part," known as the *demos,* who are the true political subjects. For Rancière (2004:304) the political is "the power of those who have no qualification for exercising power," to interrupt the current order and call into question the denial of their rights and their exclusion from community. Nyers (2008a) in particular has utilised this conception of the political to argue that migrants enact themselves as political actors when they challenge their marginalisation and claim their "right to have rights" (Arendt in Varela 2009:122). Numerous studies have looked at how migrants have mobilised to claim these rights to be political. De Genova (2009:450) gives the example of the 2003 U.S. Freedom Bike Ride, when thousands of irregular migrants made themselves visible, and

called attention to the "corporeal fact of their deportable presence," and Moulin & Nyers (2007) describe how Sudanese refugees demanded political recognition from the international community by using direct action in Cairo.

Much of this literature has developed into theorisations of 'acts of citizenship' (Nyers 2003; 2006; 2008a; 2011; Mezzadra 2004a; McNevin 2009; Rygiel 2011a). Nyers (2011:185) argues that migrants claim belonging and rights despite their status, meaning that they enact citizenship in irregular ways. As Karakayali & Rigo (2010:127) argue, the very presence of migrants in community has profound impacts, destabilising conventional understandings of belonging and citizenship;

> Even when formally (ie. legally) excluded from citizenship, [migrants] are politically included in its domain to the extent that they contest the existing territorial distribution of membership and compel the legal and political space to reorganise itself around human mobility.

This literature however tends to focus on the literal mobilisations of migrants, demonstrating and protesting *as if they are already* citizens. To become a political subject is equated with becoming visible, voicing demands and making claims, as citizens do (Nyers 2008b). The role of local migrants' rights activists also complicates this situation (Rygiel 2011a). Civic activists may push particular agendas, and also have their own understandings of political action (Alberti 2010). In her study of the anti-racist movement in Athens, Zavos (2007) found that even within the radical activist *milieu*, activists were implicated in trying to direct *what* migrants' struggles *can be*, and *how* struggles may be mobilised. She found that activists "police the borders of... political imaginaries" (Zavos 2007:104), tending to re-produce the very borders between citizen and migrant that they aimed to problematise (Neilson & Mitropoulos 2007).

The difficulty with Rancière's politics is that it is only a moment, when the *demos* enact themselves. As they are awarded rights and representation, the *demos* are 'captured,' brought into the community, and policed (Stephenson & Papadopoulos 2006). The political is almost spontaneously rendered apolitical, re-taken by 'the police.' Nyers (2010:97) asks whether there is a way out of this cycle of "capture and cooptation." Rygiel (2011b) argues that while visibility may be an imperative to making claims to belonging and citizenship, in other contexts the counter-strategy of *invisibility* can be understood as an alternative mode of political action. In ways described by Scott (in Ellermann 2010:410) as "weapons of the weak," migrants resist control on a daily basis through strategies of non-compliance, sabotage and subtle evasion. This can include de-identification, such as the use of false identification, destroying papers, and erasing ones fingertips (Rygiel 2011b). For Stephenson & Papadopoulos (2006), making oneself imperceptible is an 'immanent' act of resistance.

We could argue that imperceptibility is the politics of the *journey*; the refusal to let control impede onward movement, and the *refusal* of representation and capture (Stephenson & Papadopoulos 2006; Barbagallo & Beuret 2008). According to Stephenson & Papadopoulos (2006) this is an act 'outside politics.' Further, these are acts, argue Blackman *et al* (2008:16), constitutive of new subjectivities – mobile subjectivities – that put "new alternative forms of sociability in motion." Irregular subjectivities are in a continuous process of 'becoming,' forming, emerging and transforming the world around them (Hamilton & Placas 2011), driven by the desire to exceed and escape control, and live (Biehl & Locke 2010). For some academics, this is where the 'politics of migration' lies.

The 'becoming' of new, irregular subjectivities appears to fundamentally undermine the bordering of the world, destabilises territorial conceptions of belonging and citizenship,

and challenges the management and control of humanity and mobility. These modes of being spontaneously and constantly struggle against a 'politics of control,' defiantly and incorrigibly repudiating law and the state itself (De Genova 2010). This is a quite different politics to that of the citizens' 'public sphere' of civil dialogue and debate. For some scholars, the movement of migration constitutes radical subjectivities that are political in how they re-make the world, by re-appropriating space (Karakayali & Rigo 2010), establishing different residences, and asserting a right to control their own movement, against all odds (Hardt & Negri 2000).

We may ask however, whether these radical subjectivities can be found 'in the field,' or rather they are really only theoretical constructions. In this research I set out to explore the 'politics of migration,' and understand how it intersects with irregularity and the spatiality of transit, in the specific situation of Patras, Greece. At this point it is therefore useful to give this paper some grounding in the Greek context, with a particular focus on mechanisms of control and the conditions of irregularity.

Irregularity and Control in the Greek 'Borderland'

Greece is on the South-Eastern edges of Europe, where the 'fortress' ostensibly looms. On the so-called "front line" (HRW 2009:3) of irregular migration, Greece received four-fifths of all detected migrant crossings into the E.U. in 2010 (Frontex 2011:3). Greece is a space where irregularity is produced when movements of migration meet control mechanisms both at the borderline, and in disparate ways through the national space. Most migrants enter Greece via the Greek islands near the coast of Turkey, or increasingly by crossing the land border in the eastern region of the country, by the River Evros (HRW 2008). After reports of

an estimated 350 migrants per day entering the Evros region in 2010 (FRA 2011), the E.U. deployed the Frontex Rapid Border Intervention Team (RABIT) to the region in October 2010[2].

We may understand Greece itself as a 'borderland'; a space in which the border has "widened and extended back into national territory" (Euskirchen *et al* 2009:3), penetrating the cities and towns, the airports and bus stations, the workplace and the public square. Control mechanisms put migrants increasingly permanently 'at the border' (Mezzadra 2004a). Once migrants have entered Greece, numerous bureaucratic procedures attempt to control and manage their movement. Few migrants claim asylum in Greece, despite many holding legitimate cases. The country's asylum system has been described as "broken" (HRW 2009:3), backlogged with over 47,000 asylum claims (FRA 2011), and with a national approval rate of 0.04 percent and 2 percent at appeal (HRW 2008). The European Dublin II Treaty, established in 2003, is another bureaucratic mechanism for managing migration, designed to delimit migrants' movements through Europe. Dublin II capitulates that detected irregular migrants, and asylum seekers, are the responsibility of the first European country that they enter (HRW 2008). The 'transfer' of migrants back to the country that they first arrived – or in fact, were detected – in, is facilitated by the Eurodac database which logs the fingerprints of apprehended migrants across Europe (HRW 2008). Greece thus receives a significant number of 'Dublinised' returnees from other parts of Europe (Migreurop 2010), although some Member States have in recent years suspended returns due to concern that the conditions in Greece violates Human Rights standards (FRA 2011). The Eurodac system stores irregular migrants' data for only two years, and asylum seekers data for ten years,

---

2   See 'RABIT 2010,' *Frontex,* http://www.frontex.europa.eu/rabit_2010/ [accessed 20/8/11].

differentially impeding migrants' possibilities for onward movement depending on their status (Ellermann 2010).

The treatment of migrants in Greece has been condemned as 'inhumane' (HRW 2009). Detention is systematic (FRA 2011; STEPS 2007; Pro Asyl 2007), and police brutality is commonplace (Stroux & Mantanika 2010; HRW 2009). When released from detention, migrants are issued with a 'white paper,' an administrative deportation order that prohibits migrants' movement into the port regions of Patras and Igoumenitsa[3], and gives them thirty days to leave the country (Alberti 2010). This paper however, Human Rights Watch (2008:33) observes, carries "little weight as an enforcement document," as few migrants comply with the deadline, nor adhere to the regional delimitations, whilst authorities also issue multiple white papers to the same individual. Control mechanisms are therefore far from total, but are often more *ad-hoc* in practice. This has led some to argue that Greece has a rather ambivalent stance towards its irregularised population (Triandafyllidou & Ambrosini 2011; Papadopoulos *et al* 2008).

Greece has a "vast and long-established informal economy" which has traditionally absorbed migrant labour (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008:48; Triandafyllidou & Ambrosini 2011). Greece today however is a country in recession, deeply indebted and under severe austerity measures (Kaplanis 2011). Nowadays, it is not uncommon to hear Greeks argue that the economic crisis is part of a broader national, 'societal crisis.' In the last few years the country has witnessed widespread civil unrest[4], sky-rocketing unemployment, and an alarming rise of a neo-Nazi far right[5] (Vradis & Dalakoglou 2011). This has implications for

---

3 I am grateful to PhD candidate Laurence Pillant for bringing this detail to my attention.
4 'Greek protest against austerity package turns violent,' *BBC,* 28/6/11, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13935400 [accessed 20/8/11].
5 In particular The 'Golden Dawn' neo-Nazi group has risen in prominence, and they have launched multiple

the whole of society, and particularly for those positioned on its very edges. In any case, few migrants intend on staying in Greece (Teloni 2011), subsequently drawn to the transit hubs of Patras and Igoumenitsa in the hope of moving on (Migreurop 2010). However, despite being within Schengen, the Greek-Italian border at these ports is subject to the same control system used at Europe's external borders (Migreurop 2010). In effect, at this internal Schengen border, coastguards, border guards and the police work to prevent *exit* from Greece (Pro Asyl 2007). Migrants find themselves, in a sense, "caught in mobility" (Hess 2010:9) in Greece.

planned violent attacks against migrant communities in Athens since 2008. Omonira-Oyekanmi, R. 'Xenophobic attacks on the rise in crisis-hit Greece,' *New Internationalist Magazine,* 15/7/11, http://www.newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2011/07/15/immigrants-crisis-greece/ [accessed 5/8/11].

Methodology

This research takes the form of a 'militant ethnography' (Juris 2007) conceived as an expression of critical solidarity with migrants and activists (Routledge 1996). A militant ethnographic project is designed to be collaborative, ethically-grounded, and politically-engaged (Juris 2007). This somewhat complicates the research process as I assume the dual-roles of researcher and activist (Sigona 2005). In Scheper-Hughes' (1995:411) words, this engaged, political involvement in ethnographic work transforms the detached anthropologist into a 'comrade,' an "anthropologist-*companheira*." The study is thus a highly subjective account, necessarily incomplete and situated, and I reject any pretence of being objective or representative (Hess 2008; Marshall & Rossman 2011). This is because my "'anthropological' aspirations," as De Genova (2005:14) reflects, "[are] inextricable from the politics of my social location." My position as a woman, as white and British, as a politically motivated activist, and as a Geography student, all shaped how I presented myself in the field, how I was received, and indeed how and why I was there in the first place, as well as shaping how I went on to write up the research (Zavos 2007). Critical research therefore requires reflexivity in the researcher, constantly interrogating and reflecting on one's own subjectivity (Routledge 1996).

The research motivation and research questions, through to the methodologies used, are designed in such a way to foster a collaborative subject-subject relation and dialogue (Singhal & Devi 2003). Fieldwork was conducted over five weeks in May and June 2011. This fieldwork comprised a triangulation of ethnographic and PRA (participatory rapid

appraisal) methods (Nyanzi *et al* 2007), in order to gain a "thick description" (Geertz in Clifford & Valentine 2003:10) of a small number of case studies. In his seminal text on migrant 'illegality' and 'deportability,' De Genova (2002) critiques the lack of ethnographic research into the daily lives of irregular migrants. Ethnographic methods produce rich, textured interpretive data on people's "life worlds" (Stroh 2000:202), enabling an insight into participants' lived experience of being 'illegal' and 'illegalised' (De Genova 2002). However, while traditional ethnographic methods can produce rich data, these methods are also severely time-consuming (Nyanzi *et al* 2007). Further, ethnographic studies tend to "[pay] allegiance to studying contexts *as they are"* (Nyanzi *et al* 2007:324), whereas PRA allows a quicker overview of the context and participants' perspectives, with the invested aims of social change and empowerment.

A participatory PRA approach to research aims to "'hand over the stick' of authority" (Chambers 1994:1255) to participants, giving them the power to observe, describe, analyse and present their knowledge of their lives and conditions. Underpinning the ethical grounding of the project was a conviction that informants are not a 'means to an end' (Marshall & Rossman 2011:47) and one should avoid any sort of methodology that entails going into the field to 'capture them' "as if [they] were objects" (Melliti 1999:111). Instead the researcher takes on more of a facilitator role, not seeking to extract data but empower participants in sharing their lived experience through creative modes of expression (Chambers 1994). PRA methodologies aimed to minimise the issues of power inherent in researcher-participant interactions, but still my authorial power is implicated in deciding which voices are heard, and in how *others* are represented in *my* work (Marshall & Rossman 2011). This critical dilemma is articulated by Routledge (1996:520) when he states that the

voices of participants are always "interwoven with the persona of the narrator."

Prior to entering the field, contact was established with Kinisi, the local migrants' rights group in Patras. Kinisi acted as a 'gatekeeper' (Cook & Crang 1995), introducing me to migrants they were working with, as well as to members of the activist community and those involved in the Médecin du Monde project. A snowball sampling technique was used (Laubenthal 2007). Following these contacts, I met migrants through visiting Kinisi's Greek classes and weekly meetings, and by spending time at the Médecin du Monde hospital bus, which alternated between the south and north ends of the city, providing healthcare and legal advice to migrants. As well as becoming a familiar face in these settings, I also made contact with migrants by introducing myself in areas where migrants were camping. A conscious decision was made to not use a professional translator for reasons of confidentiality and a concern that it would be too formal (Jacobsen & Landau 2003). For this reason the sample is biased towards migrants who spoke good English.

I spoke with eighteen migrants at length. This sample was weighted towards the largest migrant populations in Patras, which are Afghan, Sudanese and Algerian, but also included a number of West Africans (Senegalese and Nigerian), North Africans (Moroccan and Tunisian) and Bangladeshi. Typical of this migrant population in Patras, all participants were men, and of the eighteen migrants I spoke with, ages spanned 16 to 36 years old. During group discussions I spoke with many more migrants – my research diary notes approximately forty different characters. Of these forty, ages ranged from a nine-year-old Afghan to a 57-year-old Sudanese man. Migrants' duration of stay in Patras ranged from two days to seven years, the average being between one and three years. Of all the migrants that I

spoke with, only one self-described "lucky man"[6] *had not* been arrested and held in detention in Greece. I also spoke with seven activists involved in migrants' rights work in semi-structured interviews, four of whom were from Kinisi and three who identified themselves as anarchists. In order to guarantee anonymity, all names given are pseudonyms.

Table 1. Details of migrants cited in analysis [see appendix for full list].

Name of Migrant	Country of origin	Age	How long in Patras?
Amad	Sudan	22	2 years
Arhad	Afghanistan	19	Unknown
Asif	Afghanistan	25	2 years
Erfan	Afghanistan	32	Unknown
Farouk	Algeria	30	1 week in Patras, 1 month in Greece
Faysal	Algeria	36	18 months
Ismael	Sudan	28	1 week in Patras, 2 years in Greece
Karim	Sudan	20	2 months
Malek	Morocco	36	2 years
Mehdi	Afghanistan	16	1 year
Saïd	Afghanistan	20	Unknown

Table 2. Details of activists cited in analysis [see appendix for full list].

Name of activist	Involvement in migrants' struggles
Eleni	Member of Kinisi
Kostas	Member of Kinisi, works with Médecin du Monde
Petros	Member of Kinisi
Tellis	Anarchist solidarity work
Vassilis	Anarchist solidarity work

---

6   Research diary entry 26, 21/6/11.

Methods used included participant observation and observing participation, informal conversations and semi-structured interviews, group discussions, an informant-led tour of the city/home, a respondent diary, and a detailed field diary. This triangulation of methods produces rich data from diverse sources. This is typical of ethnographic practice, which Johnson *et al* (2006:113) describes as "a grab bag of [multiple methods]... employed to understand bits and pieces of any social or cultural system."

Participant observation was carried out in the spaces that migrants occupy in Patras: the 'camps' and abandoned buildings where they live, the Sudanese-owned café used solely by migrants, the anarchist squat *Parartima* where migrants are welcomed, by the port and along the train lines and roads where they 'work,' and in particular parks and squares in the city where they socialise. The aim of observation was to witness how migrants live and use different spaces, how they interact with each other, with local people and activists. In other environments, my role was more one of an observing participant (Bernard in Sigona 2005), for example when I participated in Greek classes at the Kinisi School, and when I joined a number of demonstrations with activists. In these situations my observation was focused on the interaction and relationships between migrants and activists.

On two occasions I asked different informants to give me a small tour of their camp, and a third informant gave me a tour of Patras from his perspective. This is a PRA technique that puts the role of teaching – the sharing, generating and analysis of data – into the hands of the informant (Chambers 1994). I also visited the Afghan camp and asked for Farsi and Pashto language lessons as a means to build up relations and trust, and observe people in this space. Again it gave migrants the opportunity to teach *me* and recognise their own skills (Chambers 1994).

Observations can reveal unforeseen tacit understandings, or taken-for-granted conditions (Maxwell 2005). For example when a group of Sudanese men insisted that their experience of Greeks has been only racism and hostility, my observation of their friend returning home with luxury cakes donated from a local bakery called into question this generalisation[7]. Observation and interview are therefore complementary techniques which together help to provide a more complete understanding of a situation (Maxwell 2005). Informal interviews, or what Burgess (in Stroh 2000:203) calls, dialogical "conversations with a purpose" were carried out *in situ.* Adhering to a PRA approach, these conversations avoided a researcher-respondent dynamic, instead aiming to foster a two-way, subject-subject exchange (Chambers 1994). These conversations had broad parameters for discussion but were necessarily open, giving participants the chance to tell me what *they* wanted to share (Cook & Crang 1995), and also giving them the opportunity to find out about me.

With 14 participants, these conversations were one-to-one, which has the advantage of being confidential and often allows for a more open, in-depth exchange (Schensul *et al* 1999). Finding a mutual space for conversation proved near impossible in a city where migrants and local people are segregated. For example the commonly assumed neutral, mutual space of a café was not a comfortable space for many migrants who expressed concern that café-owners would turn them away or be racist towards them[8]. For this reason conversations were held in *their* spaces, by the Médecin du Monde bus, at their camps or homes, or by the port.

---

7   Research diary entry 13, 1/6/11.
8   Research diary entry 13, 1/6/11.

Two informants agreed to keep a short respondent diary for me. This autobiographic method allows the participant to literally write a narrative of their lives in Patras (Latham 2010). I received one of these diaries back. This diary worked well alongside other methods since it provided useful material for returning to in later conversations (McGregor 2006). It also enabled this informant to articulate himself in French, a language he was more familiar with than English. Owing to the changeable conditions of migrants' daily lives, the second informant was unable to return the diary to me since he was forced to leave Patras hurriedly when police raided the abandoned building where he stayed[9].

On a number of occasions I facilitated spontaneous informal group discussions with three to fifteen migrants. At times chaotic, these discussions provided insight into how narratives would diverge or converge (Goss & Leinbach 1996). Group discussions revealed the dynamics of social relations within groups, and also made apparent how certain 'knowledge-stories' predominate (Goss & Leinbach 1996:115). Group discussion is a PRA technique for gathering information faster (Schensul 1999), for example one man's story of being locked in the toilets of a ferry for 36 hours on a forced return from Italy to Greece was instantaneously validated as a common experience by two other men gathered in the group[10]. It also gave me the opportunity to learn about the experiences of some migrants who did not speak English, for instance, about one Afghan man's seven-year stay in Patras via his friend's discussion[11].

Throughout the fieldwork a detailed research diary was kept. The informal nature of conversations with informants, as well as the precarious conditions of their lives, meant that

---

9   Research diary entry 18, 11/6/11.
10 Research diary entry 19, 13/6/11.
11 Research diary entry 17, 6/6/11.

recording conversations felt inappropriate (Collyer 2007). For this reason it was in the research diary that I would write-up the conversations I had had, as well as any observations made. Cook and Crang (1995) identify the research diary as a key ethnographic method. Following their example, the diary was used as a reflexive method for thinking-through doubts, concerns and feelings during the research process, including changing understandings, developing positionality, and altering expectations and relations. The research diary therefore both records primary research findings, and charts the research – and researcher's – progress.

Findings: Chapter One

'Becoming Irregular': Experiencing Irregularity in Daily Life

In order to understand irregularity in Patras, I begin by giving a brief outline of the situation for migrants in the city, and then turn to look at the multiple mechanisms of control in this context. Adapting Willen's (2007b) critical phenomenological approach to 'illegality,' I explore how irregularity is *lived* by migrants. First I look at how migrants feel 'caught' in time and space, impacting on their state of mind. Then I turn to study how irregularity defines the rhythms of days, affecting what migrants do, where they go, and indeed what they think about. Following, I find that control's unpredictable imposition of precarity undermines migrants' coping strategies, making many men feel like powerless and reduced subjects. Irregularity fundamentally shapes migrants' subjective experiences of time, space, and self, but 'becoming irregular' is not something that just happens *to* migrants. In this chapter I argue that rather, irregularity is a 'becoming' that migrants also live, negotiate and re-shape.

For the last fifteen years, migrants have come to Patras in the hope that they can set in motion their onward journey to Italy and Western Europe. Kurdish migrants began arriving in Patras in 1997, taking shelter in abandoned train wagons and containers near the port, and by 1998 a makeshift camp had begun to grow in Agyia in northern Patras (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008). The Agyia camp, increasingly populated by Afghans, endured until July 2009, when it was finally destroyed by police (HRW 2009; Migreurop

2010). During this time, a number of local activist groups also began to work with migrants. Kinisi "on the first thought... a political organisation"[12], emerged as a migrants' rights group in 2007[13]. As part of a leftist anti-racist movement[14] (Teloni 2011), Kinisi have called for the repeal of Dublin II, the creation of open shelters for refugees, the legalisation of all migrants, equal rights to migrants and refugees, and an end to repressive immigration policies[15]. Typical of Greek society, there is also a significant anarchist-autonomist movement in Patras, who have at different times rallied in solidarity with migrants' struggles.

At the time of my research there were approximately 1,000 migrants in Patras, the majority coming from Afghanistan, Sudan, and Algeria[16]. These men[17] live in a highly precarious environment. An estimated 200 Sudanese and Algerian men squat a train depot south of the city in San Andreas[18], perhaps forty Afghans camp by another depot San Dyonisios close to the port, whilst most 'habitations' are more dispersed and hidden, men squatting abandoned houses and factories throughout the city, or camping by the beaches, in car parks, in 'the jungle' or in gardens [see photos 1-3, appendix, pages 74-75]. In their effort to "get out"[19] of Greece, it is in Patras that migrants try to board lorries when they stop at traffic lights, attempting to stow themselves inside, or do the "dingle"[20], hanging from the axle of the lorry. These desperate daily attempts to leave are termed their "work"[21], chasing after trucks at strategic points near the port and the main roads.

---

12 Kostas interview, 6/6/11.
13 Personal communication with Kinisi, email, 21/4/11.
14 Also known as 'anti-ra.'
15 'Our Demands,' *Kinisi,* http://www.kinisipatras.gr/ [accessed 1/8/11].
16 Personal communication with Kinisi, email, 21/4/11.
17 It is important to note that there are no women living in these sites in Patras. Female migrants tend to stay in Athens and negotiate onward travel from there (Mantanika 2009).
18 See research diary entry 23, 17/6/11.
19 Faysal, research diary entry 20, 14/6/11.
20 Research diary entry 13, 1/6/11.
21 Research diary entry 17, 6/6/11.

The port area in Patras is controlled by the coastguard and special unit police, but lorry drivers, private company employees responsible for the ships, and ship captains, all carry out control checks as well (Migreurop 2010) [see photo 4, appendix, page 75]. In Patras however, the control of migrants' movements extends far beyond the port. Police have license to "reinforce controls in the neighbourhoods near the port" (Migreurop 2010:76), meaning, in practice, that the whole city becomes a sort of precarious 'borderland' for migrants (Euskirchen *et al* 2009). During my fieldwork the police performed a 'crackdown.' One day the San Dyonisios camp of makeshift shacks was destroyed[22], over two days police made mass arrests of an estimated 100-150 men at the San Andreas camp[23], on a daily basis the streets near the ports were patrolled and migrants rounded-up and beaten, identity documents were demanded and abandoned houses were targeted for eviction[24].

Far from an exceptional event, the crackdown formed part of a mundane routine played-out every few months. It is a "very typical" practice, one activist explained to me, "when the numbers [of migrants] are getting too high, the police do this"[25]. These repeated crackdowns however function to (re-)produce migrant irregularity and vulnerability in Patras. They constitute control mechanisms that pervade the social space of the city, irregularising migrants' everyday life (Euskirchen *et al* 2009). As a consequence, migrants in Patras begin to feel that they are permanently 'at the border' (Mezzadra 2004a). Irregularity becomes an ever-present condition, shaping how migrants experience time, space and self.

In Patras, the temporal regime of control obstructs migrants' movements in *time,* exploiting the continuum of their everyday life (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008). Patras is a space

---

22 See research diary entry 19, 13/6/11.
23 See research diary entry 25, 20/6/11.
24 Research diary entry 20, 18/6/11.
25 Vassilis, research diary entry 26, 21/6/11.

that migrants simply hope to pass *through*, but control imposes a sort of spatial *and* temporal non-movement, or limbo, on them (Coutin 2005). One informant, Faysal, 36 from Algeria, told me that he thought he would stay in Greece only "one or two weeks... and then go to Italy... but this was not the case"[26], and he has now been in Patras 18 months. For Faysal, day-to-day life is "caught"[27] in time. Laacher (2007:25) calls this the condition of "floating people," who in Patras play a 'waiting game.' In Laacher's (2007:24) words,

> Waiting is always one of the clandestin[e]'s fundamental experiences. From the start of his journey he waits to get money, and a contact... he awaits the right moment to leave, the right moment to pass. He lies in wait of being thrown out wherever he goes.

For many migrants I speak with waiting defines their lived experience of irregularity, and days are boring and empty. "I pass my time walking and reflecting,"[28] Faysal explains, every day taking a different route out of the city and into the countryside. Faysal experiences a detachment from his present reality, feeling that he is "lost"[29] in this limbo, as if "in a vacuum"[30]. Farouk, 30 from Algeria, also finds that time is something to be endured. He tells me how his empty days stretch into empty nights, as unable to sleep, he restlessly paces in the yard of his house, smoking[31]. Farouk explains to me that since his arrival in Greece one month ago, he has not had one good night's sleep, and he feels permanently exhausted and unwell[32]. The psychological impacts of feeling caught in time are evident, and things weigh heavy on Faysal's mind;

---

26 Faysal respondent diary, 6/6/11.
27 Research diary entry 12, 31/5/11.
28 Faysal respondent diary, 6/6/11.
29 Faysal respondent diary, 6/6/11.
30 Faysal respondent diary, 6/6/11.
31 Farouk, research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.
32 Farouk, research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.

> Most of the time you have nothing, you live always in the dark and with a pain in the head...[33] when I leave Greece I will erase this country [from my memory][34].

At the same time however, Faysal's "surplus sociability" *exceeds* control (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008:255). Quietly, he challenges the non-movement imposed on him through his daily walks, and he strongly rejects 'living in the dark,' contesting the temporal control over him in his affirmation that he *will* erase his 'capture' in Greece, *when* he leaves.

The rhythm and content of men's days are shaped fundamentally by their irregularity (Willen 2007b). For many migrants, days are occupied just trying to negotiate control in the city (Talavera *et al* 2010). Faysal explains how he polices himself (Hiemstra 2010), concealing his irregularity by 'keeping his head down,' avoiding spending time with other migrants, and always making himself look presentable and smart (Coutin 2011). "I prefer to be alone... I like to be anonyme [sic]"[35] he tells me, reasoning that this attracts less police attention (Talavera *et al* 2010). For Mehdi, aged 16, from Afghanistan, days are defined by his constant efforts to avoid the police and do the 'dingle':

> I get up, I wake from my dream, you know, and the first thing I think, what are the conditions today. I walk to go to check the traffic lights, see if there is a chance there that day, and then I walk to the port to see the conditions there, to see if this day the police are by the traffic lights, and then I try at the port, or if they are at the port, and then I try back at the traffic lights[36].

On a daily basis, Mehdi tries to 'pass.' He refuses the non-movement that control seeks to impose, and he refuses to let his mind 'settle' in Patras. For this 16-year-old boy, life as an irregularised migrant has become serious, and he has become more pensive and withdrawn.

---

33 Faysal respondent diary, 6/6/11.
34 Faysal, research diary entry 18, 11/6/11.
35 Faysal, research diary entry 18, 11/6/11.
36 Mehdi, research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.

He reflects;

> The conditions here have changed me, have changed how I behave, my manner. Before I was a cheater – you know, a cheater – always fooling with people, but then I cross and I'm in a camp and my friends are sitting and laughing and playing cards and I just sit to a side, and think, think – think what will be the conditions tomorrow, what are the chances to pass... what am I going to eat[37].

Mehdi embodies irregularity, experiencing the multiple vulnerabilities of being rightless in a hostile environment. The precarity of daily life leaves migrants more easily rendered as objects of control, subjected to the administrative practices of police harassment, detention and deportation (Rygiel 2011a). For Mehdi and others, daily life swings between the mundane and empty, to the acutely dangerous and fear-filled. This is because the very routines of being, of sleeping, eating and socialising, are always vulnerable to police incursion, creating a condition of extreme existential insecurity (Willen 2007b; Eurskirchen *et al* 2007).

Amad, aged 22, from Sudan, lived by the San Andreas camp. When I spoke with him, he visibly carried his insecurity, shaking as he described; "they [the police] come early when we are sleeping, I am sleeping and I hear 'kato!' [meaning 'keep down' in Greek]"[38]. Amad's intense insecurity did not reflect a fear of arrest however, and cannot be theorised as a response to the presence of 'deportability.' Rather it is control's unpredictability that undermines migrants' coping strategies here. Amad's very being was 'on edge' because he could not comprehend "*why*... the police make like this... [when] we are *just* trying to live"[39] [my emphasis]. For Amad, the unpredictable, seemingly illogical police behaviour leaves him feeling intensely vulnerable as, unexplained, shelters are raided, or friends go missing.

---

37 Mehdi, research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.
38 Amad, research diary entry 25, 20/6/11.
39 Amad, research diary entry 25, 20/6/11.

In Patras irregularity is lived in a routine insecurity that becomes, paradoxically, both perpetually startling and almost banal. As one young Afghan, Saïd, explained to me matter-of-factly, "*most* of our friends are missing – but we don't know if they are deported or in jail"[40].

Becoming irregularised is experienced as a condition of exasperating powerlessness and rightlessness. Migrants' vulnerability makes the outward confrontation of control an almost impossible feat, as Mehdi explains, "we have no power, we just have to do what they [the police] tell us, what they say, there is no negotiation"[41]. For Erfan, aged 32, who first left Afghanistan six years ago, becoming irregular has made him feel *less* of a person:

> You cannot do what you do in your own country. You lose your status, lose your identity, some lose their religion...[42] everything is different when you leave your country. You lose your rights[43].

Interestingly, this change, or loss in self-hood is experienced also in his physical embodiment, as he explains that he was once "quite fat and blonde," and now, in Patras, reduced to "brown and thin"[44].

We could thus try to define the experience of irregularity as one of abjectivity (Willen 2007a). After six years circulating in Europe and several deportations, Erfan comprehends how he is held in a peripheral status, in Khosravi's (2010:95) words, "included yet excepted." Erfan himself seems to confirm his place in the peripheries and expresses shame in being, what he calls, 'illegal':

---

40 Saïd, research diary entry 16, 5/6/11.
41 Mehdi, research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.
42 Erfan, research diary entry 13, 1/6/11.
43 Erfan, research diary entry 25, 20/6/11.
44 Erfan, research diary entry 13, 1/6/11.

> You must do what the government tells you to do. This is not our country, you cannot challenge. Law is law. You do what the police say, you are an illegal immigrant, you don't have rights – I – me too, I am an illegal immigrant![45]

Erfan's actions however contradict a simple portrayal of imposed abjection. Even if he believes that 'law is law' and he deserves to be rightless, he still desires to make his journey, committed to undermining law and control. He begins to 'own' his abjection. In a bizarre paradox, Erfan proclaims to accept his rightlessness, but at the same time he challenges this by enacting his rights to movement and settlement nonetheless.

In this chapter, I have explored how migrants in Patras live in irregularity. It shows the multiple mechanisms of control that penetrate their lives, finding that these mechanisms fundamentally shape how life is lived and experienced. We find that time, space, and self all take on different meanings in this highly precarious environment, as life becomes overshadowed by "looming clouds of vulnerability and indeterminacy" (Willen 2007b:13). Migrants, however, are not completely 'flattened,' but live and negotiate this condition as best they can. In the following chapter, I illustrate how the occupation of space becomes a way in which migrants re-shape how irregularity is lived in Patras.

---

45 Erfan, research diary entry 25, 20/6/11.

Findings: Chapter Two

The Irregular Occupation of Space

> In the beginning we tried to leave… we didn't make it this time so we tried to find a shelter.. when we realised that our 'departure' would take longer than expected we invested [a] little more in our shelter, but always as a background to our main preoccupation that was the departure (Mantanika 2009:3).

Transit zones are a spatial and social effect of the simultaneous and conflicting forces of border control and the strategies of migrants (Hess 2008). As Mantanika's (2009:3) quote above illustrates, a corollary of border enforcement and the irregularised condition of migrants is that migrants do not manage to just 'pass through' Patras, but they stop, 'find a shelter,' and begin to appropriate parts of the city and create their own social spaces (Lafazani *et al* 2011). In this chapter, I look at how migrants make and re-configure transit space, whilst control constantly works to 're-take' power over the configuration of space, as exemplified in the case of the Agyia camp. I then turn to look at the diverse spaces that migrants occupy in Patras today, finding a tension between migrants' presence, and invisibility, their settlement, and will to leave. The chapter finds that in multiple ways migrants' occupation of space constitutes an embodied contestation over the meaning of irregularity and how it may be lived.

It is useful to begin this analysis by looking at the previous Kurdish / Afghani camp in Agyia, which remains symbolic of the competing forces of control and migrant agency in Patras. Standing for nine years and accommodating an estimated 2,000 migrants at one time

(Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008), the makeshift camp of 200-300 huts became an organised, established space in the city (Mantanika 2009:3-4) [see photo 5, appendix, page 76]. "It was better [then]" explains Mehdi, "it had some Afghani shops, you know, Afghani food, and a mosque. It had houses"[46]. Over the years Agyia became a space of "transient permanence" (Isin & Rygiel 2007:193), an established, yet provisional space, formed as an important defence against migrants' precarious condition of irregularity (Hess 2008; Sigona 2005). It also became a highly politicised camp. Local residents protested against the migrants' presence, declaring in their campaign, "we are not going to let the dream of the refugees become the nightmare of our city" (in Mantanika 2009:8). Importantly, at the same time, solidarity activists also began to rally, including Kinisi, humanitarian groups[47], and anarchist collectives[48]. One Kinisi activist tells me how the camp had a powerful impact on the city, "it was very strong and it had a name"[49], it had an identity.

The Agyia camp is a good example of how the movement of migration contests the imposition of existential precarity, but it also exemplifies how control works to 're-take' and re-impose the conditions of irregularity (Moulin & Nyers 2007). Thus the 'strength' and great presence that the camp asserted in the city was violently challenged in July 2009, when authorities moved in and demolished the camp[50]. The camp destruction may be understood as a spectacle of militarised border control (De Genova 2011), an affirmation of power over the configuration of space. It represented an emboldened challenge to migrants' right to space, to

---

46 Mehdi, research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.
47 Médecin Sans Frontières provided health services from a tent in the camp from May 2008 until its destruction, see 'MSF: Greece must ensure humane living conditions and medical assistance,' 13/7/09, *Doctors Without Borders,* http://www.msf.org.uk/migrants_in_greece_20090715.news?fId=migrants_in_greece_20090715 [accessed 8/7/11].
48 See research diary entry 21, 15/6/11.
49 Kostas interview, 6/6/11.
50 Personal communication with Kinisi, email, 24/3/11.

settlement, to political agency, to citizens' solidarity. As Mantanika (2009:3) observes, although the constructions in the camp were provisional in character, the space viewed as a whole looked like "a kind of village," a village that *assumed* the privileges of amenities, sociality, and safety that undermined control's imposition of precarious irregularity (Rygiel 2011a).

In Patras now we find that police target the smaller migrant camps on a regular basis, delimiting and attempting to claim management over migrants' assumption of private life and settlement. The following diary extract describes the makeshift San Dyonisios camp of perhaps 40 Afghans. The police had destroyed many of the shelters two weeks previous[51], but life was fast re-established:

> Ad-hoc shacks spread across the deserted train depot... One shack I look at, made out of wooden railway pillars stacked, plastic sheeting and pieces of material covering the roof, held down with various rubbish, including some old stereo speakers... It sleeps 6-8 men. Another man shows me the clapped-out car that he sleeps in, "my home, my bed" he laughs ironically... Their mosque is humble. Cardboard flattened, spread on the floor, maybe 6 metres squared. It sits on the gravel and over some of the disused train tracks... Some men played volleyball and cricket in the camp. Many sat around in the shade in small groups, others resting in their shacks. I see meals being prepared over a fire; spaghetti with chopped tomatoes...[52]

With resourcefulness and resilience, the men had re-built their camp in a number of weeks. They liked this position, close to the port and a good place to do the 'dingle.' The authorities however contested the migrants' presence here, and two weeks later, in what one activist terms the "final assault"[53], the police 'cleared' the camp completely. When I return afterwards I find some men cooking and sitting in the shade, but they tell me that now they

---

51 See research diary entry 16, 5/6/11. See also 'Police raid in the 'trains' of St. Dyonisios, Patras port,' 13/5/11, *Infomobile,* http://infomobile.w2eu.net/2011/05/13/12-05-11-police-raid-in-the-trains-of-st-dyonisios-patras-port/ [accessed 31/7/11].
52 Research diary entry 12, 31/5/11.
53 Kostas, research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.

just sleep in the open air[54], while others have gone to camp in a more "hidden place"[55] out of the city.

Clearances put migrants in a more vulnerable position by fragmenting their social networks and scattering them across the city, forced to hide to avoid the police. Control thus works to render migrants less *visible,* while paradoxically their presence begins to occupy dispersed pockets of life *throughout* the city[56] [see photos 2-3, appendix, pages 74-75].

> I walk along the seafront northwards. On the rocks, in the small water-side parks, little shelters, bedding, small piles of few belongings... Then there is the beach and maybe 30 migrants sitting in the sun or shade, some swimming, some using the showers. To the right the road turns to the national road and clusters of men sit in the shade along the road, watching the traffic. Between the road and beach is a large area of reed-beds, a protected area of lowland... As I walk along, two men pop out of a hedge here, another two emerge from a deserted building, three walk out from amongst the trees. Pockets of life, hidden living[57].

Irregularised migrants are often imagined as 'outside' or 'not really there,' occupying a 'space of non-existence' that control works to bolster (Coutin 2003). Arhad, 19-years-old, from Afghanistan, discerns how local people imagine his non-existence; "they want us to be invisible – *they do not want to see us"*[58] [my emphasis]. Similarly, Mehdi explains how people in Patras "cross the road when they see us," reasoning that this is because they "don't recognise us as human beings"[59].

Invisibility however is not simply imposed, but can also be a useful strategy for migrants. If police will destroy their camps then migrants will evade control and find hidden places in the city, but with resilience they will continue to exist, and continue to be present.

---

54 See research diary entry 19, 13/6/11.
55 Mehdi, research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.
56 Mantanika, research diary entry 3, 23/5/11.
57 Research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.
58 Arhad, research diary entry 16, 5/6/11.
59 Mehdi, research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.

In Patras, migrants are "absent yet there" (Coutin 2005:196). But migrants are 'absent yet there' because *they do not want to be there*, not just because they have not been recognised as being there (Mantanika 2009). Many *assume* their invisibility and use space differently, and *separately*, walking along the train tracks instead of along the pavements in the city[60], for example. Migrants' presence is so powerful, and problematic, because it makes visible their invisibility in a society that rejects them, and that *they reject* (Mantanika 2009).

In Patras, we thus find a tension between migrants' settlement, and their insistence on '*not* settling' in, or with, Greece. Perceived as their 'captor,' many men express a deep resentment towards Greece [see photo 6, appendix, page 76]. For example Asif, aged 25, from Afghanistan, gives a typical retort when he tells me with disgust; "I don't want to stay *here*, no rights, no food, no home... I *waste* two years of my life here!"[61] Migrants' vehement rejection of Greece is nonetheless coupled with an incorrigible occupation. Migrants are physically present and socially participative in Patras *despite themselves* and control. This is summarised by Ismael, from Sudan, who explains, "this is my *home* but not by choice"[62] [my emphasis]. Spaces of 'transient permanence' develop organically. The 'surplus sociability' of human agency incorporates and absorbs spaces (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008), appropriating and creating pockets of life that in their very realisation, contest abjection.

I visit an abandoned building squatted by an ever-changing number of Sudanese men [see photo 7, appendix, page 77]. The men are sociable, playful and supportive – they do more than merely exist, they live.

---

60 See research diary entry 11, 30/5/11.
61 Asif, research diary entry 19, 13/6/11.
62 Research diary entry 13, 1/6/11.

> I sit in their yard with them, on some plastic chairs and a bed, shaded by hanging blankets... They have a camping gas stove for cooking, but no electricity... For water, they have to fetch from across the road, at the train depot... I sit down, and soon a man returns from the shop with Coca Cola, chocolate and water just for me. "No no, I don't need." "No, you are our guest!" They laugh because they have never had a Greek guest, a white guest, a female guest, in two years!... One guy with dreadlocks and a nasty-looking cataract is shaving another guy carefully... They explain that they are refused at barbers in Patras... Another guy is preparing shisha... [another] begins preparing dinner[63].

Malek, aged 36, from Morocco, has spent almost two years in Patras after he had 'complications' with his visa in Dubai, subsequently finding himself irregularised in Greece. Malek wants to be *present* and participate in the city, keen to socialise and make friends with local people.

> Sometimes I go down to the port, to the beach and I sit there alone – not alone – I sit there, listen to my music for hours, I like this place... you can always find me here, this is my place [at the steps of *Gerokostopoulou* in the city centre], until 4 or 5, and then I go down to the port and I get fish – because I have so many Egyptian friends working on the boats and they give me fish for free – and I go home and cook the fish on the barbecue, have it for breakfast, and then I go to sleep – listen to Celine Dion... when I go to sleep – so I go to bed at 7[64].

These extracts contradict a 'miserablist' narrative of irregular life in Patras (Varela 2009), illustrating how migrants exceed and escape control's imposition of precarity and abjection in various ways (Biehl & Locke 2010). The Sudanese men have created a 'homely' space despite hardships, and for Malek, building a social life in the city is a strategy for dealing with the spatial and temporal limbo he finds himself held in. Different migrant groups adopt different parts of the city[65]. Many North Africans spend time in the main *plateais Olgas* and *Georgiou,* and they visit the student anarchist squat *Parartima* where they can charge their

---

63 Research diary entry 13, 1/6/11.
64 Malek, research diary entry 24, 19/6/11.
65 Although there is some segregation and hostility between different migrant groups, it is important to note that there is also significant mixing and solidarity.

mobile phones and 'hang out.' Sudanese men stay in the south side and visit a Sudanese-owned café, "a no-frills big room, with plastic chairs and tables, a TV screening Al-Jazeera[66]." In their different ways these men participate in the social life of the city, they shape and re-make spaces, and as a consequence, their embodied presence begins to destabilise commonly held ideas about foreigners and who can 'own' and belong in everyday spaces (Lafazani *et al* 2011).

In this chapter we have seen how the powers and potentials of desire, of migrants' drive to live, and enjoy, and move, ceaselessly leaks and transforms the social world around them (Biehl & Locke 2010). Space has become a 'borderzone' in Patras (Squire 2011): a site of conflict between the movement of migration, and forces of control. Despite constant police incursions migrants do not succumb to hostile space but instead they transform space in ways that contest their abjection and irregularity. This happens somehow organically, even when migrants themselves vehemently reject this space. In the following chapter I look at how this 'borderzone' involves local activists, mobilised by the struggles of migrants, before turning to ask how we can understand the 'politics of migration' from the perspective of the journey, and the movement of migration itself.

---

66 Research diary entry 15, 3/6/11.

Findings: Chapter Three

Mobilising an 'Irregular Politics of Migration'

How we understand migrants as political actors depends on how we understand politics itself (Alberti 2010). This chapter begins by looking at how migrants mobilise the politics of disparate local activist groups in Patras. We find however that this leftist activism tends to impose its own politics on migrants, revealing a tacit assumption that political subjectivity only properly belongs to citizens (Neilson & Mitropoulos 2007). Activists call for migrants to *integrate* into the 'public sphere,' to become like citizens too, to gain voice and visibility. In contrast, I argue that migrants enact themselves as political subjectivities exactly when they exceed 'traditional' political actions. Drawing on the evidence found in the previous two chapters, I argue that the day-to-day strategies of migrants, in their negotiation of irregularity, their contestation of abjection, and their occupation of space, constitutes a radical, *embodied* politics (Papadopoulos 2010). In this sense, the 'minor voices' of migrants may in fact be understood as having truly transformative political capacities (Hamilton & Placas 2011).

In recent years different activist groups have become involved in migrants' struggles in Patras, which rather than giving rise to a coherent movement of solidarity, has created a tense and complicated space of competing political voices. Kinisi, established in 2007, is a grassroots activist group made up of local people and a small number of more established migrants in the city[67]. Anarchist groups also work with migrants, welcoming them in their

_____

67 Kostas estimates that there are 50 members, 20 of whom are "more active," Kostas interview, 6/6/11. At the

open café-squat *Parartima* in the city centre[68], and disseminating political pamphlets, posters and graffiti through which they express their solidarity [see photo 8, appendix, page 77]. Anti-state and anti-capitalist, anarchists recognise migrants as precarious workers caught in a common struggle with a "common enemy"[69]. In contrast with Kinisi, one anarchist Tellis explains that this assertion of commonality and equality with migrants "meant automatically that we would not offer any sort of aid"[70]. There is some animosity between these groups. Kinisi tends to be shrugged off by the anarchists I speak with as 'just humanitarian,'[71] while anarchists are criticised for rallying in 'moments of confrontation' but otherwise, "they rarely do anything"[72].

As Alberti (2010:145) observes, tensions are typical of migrants' rights activism which often struggles to reconcile the different intents of "political engagement *with* migrants, solidarity actions and the provision of a service or a charity." Further, the very fact of these tensions points to the skewed power relations between those who are 'activists' and those who are (just) 'migrants.' This means that activists often become trapped in a relation of "paternalistic political representation," which in turn reaffirms the highly problematic hierarchisation of superior-political-citizen-activist and inferior-apolitical-migrant-just-migrant (Zavos in Zavos & Biglia 2009:157-158, 164). In this sense, activists re-produce and "police the borders of... political imaginaries" (Zavos 2007:104).

In Patras activists are caught in practices that work to re-appropriate the meanings

---

meetings that I attend there are approximately 15 local people and 2-3 migrants who are fluent in Greek, research diary entry 11, 30/5/11.

68 See research diary entry 9, 27/5/11.
69 Vassilis, research diary entry 26, 21/6/11.
70 Tellis, research diary entry 21, 15/6/11.
71 Research diary entry 21, 15/6/11.
72 Kinisi activist, Petros, research diary entry 25, 20/6/11.

and subjects of political action *vis-à-vis* migrants' struggles, in turn implicating themselves in the control and 'management' of migration (Barbagallo & Beuret 2008). The following paragraph[73] summarises the events that unfurl in the San Andreas camp as local activists are emboldened to protest against the recent police crackdown in the city. The scene well-illustrates how leftist activism is divided, conflictual, and at times irrelevant, at times damaging. We find that activists try to control and manage the terms of 'the political'; what politics may be, how it may be enacted, and by whom (Nyers 2003).

Kinisi visit the camp, having invited anarchist groups to join them, explaining that they want to "try and organise something with the migrants" in demonstration against the police brutality[74]. Anarchist groups however decide to hold a separate meeting in their squat, deciding what they are going to do, while Kinisi gather a crowd in the camp and begin to explain their visit, in Greek and English, with no Arabic translation[75]. During this confused discussion, anarchists arrive, perhaps 150 people-strong, chanting in Greek; "We are with migrants. Brush away the bosses, cops and Nazis"[76]. Fewer than ten migrants accompany them. Unable to understand Greek, nor local leftist politics well, I see what most migrants see; a confused and confrontational scene. Some migrants are scared, some are disinterested and stroll off to make their dinner, others try to understand what is happening. A crowd gathers and an activist and migrant-translator begin speaking. In a display of segregation and opposition, migrants *sit* on one side of the rail lines, listening, while activists *stand* on the other side, behind their speaker.

---

73 The paragraph is based on extracts from research diary entry 25, 20/6/11.
74 Eleni, research diary entry 25, 20/6/11.
75 Few migrants speak Greek, some speak English, but Arabic is the most widely spoken common language.
76 Translated by Ioulia from the Greek: 'Με τοyς metanaσteς eimaσte mazi. Σκοyπα σε aφentika, μπatσoyς kai Nazi.'

In this scene, I argue that we see how activists police the border of 'the political' by adopting a position of authority, spatially *imposing* their politics on migrants in San Andreas. They 'take control' of the space, marching into the camp with no prior warning and claiming the space as a political battleground in which they lead discussions in Greek, and hang their political posters and banners (Rygiel 2011a). When I visit the camp the following day, a Sudanese man asks me to translate a Greek poster that has been put on the gate to the camp[77] [see photos 9-10, appendix, pages 78]. He is right to be angered. The poster symbolises the activists' assumption to speak *for* and *about* migrants and their struggles (Lowry & Nyers 2003), whilst migrants themselves are effectively excluded from this politics, not even knowing what is being said of them. This politics in effect *dis-empowers* migrants. Perversely, the agency of migrants is effaced by the very advocates who call on them to act (Nyers 2006).

In Patras there is a clear disconnect between the political strategies of activists, and the strategies of migrants who must negotiate the precarious condition of irregularity (Rygiel 2011a; 2011b). For some groups, political action means appealing to the state and helping migrants to "fight for their rights"[78]. For others, politics is about fighting oppressive authorities, directly and with force. Both civic actions, however, presume the political requisites of voice and visibility (Nyers 2008b); to *ask* for one's rights, to be *seen* to challenge the current order. However as Stephenson & Papadopoulos (2006:436) explain, "visibility, in the context of illegal migration, belongs to the inventory of technologies pertaining to the regimes of control which police migrational flows." The spontaneous demonstration in the San Andreas camp is at odds with what migrants want, because to

---

77 Research diary entry 26, 21/6/11.
78 Kostas interview, 6/6/11.

demonstrate in this context is to make oneself visible, and therefore more vulnerable. Ismael, from Sudan, explains to me that previous police incursions have aimed to punish migrants for manifesting, resulting in camp destructions and men being forcibly moved to the Albanian border[79]. Instead of demonstrating, Ismael wants a 'quiet life,' to avoid confrontation and retain his invisibility (Hiemstra 2010). It is a protective strategy learnt from experience.

Migrants in Patras, therefore, do not adhere to the integrative attempts of leftist activists to endow them as political actors only when, and "in so far as they accept and enter the political game as it is cast" (Zavos 2007:104). This however does not mean that migrants are without political agency. Following a Rancièrean reading, conversely I argue that migrants enact themselves as political subjects when they act to defy and interrupt conventional understandings of the 'political game' itself (Nyers 2008). In Patras we find that migrants 'become political' in irregular ways, shaped by their status of being "on the road"[80] in a transit zone. From the perspective of migration, Patras is not an 'abject space' (Willen 2007a) or a 'space of non-existence' (Coutin 2003), but is a highly political, and contested 'borderzone' (Squire 2011). Patras is a site of intense conflict between a 'politics of control,' concerned with the mastery of movement, extraction of labour, and enclosure of space, and a 'politics of migration,' which mobilises *against* these processes (Squire 2011).

Resistance in this context departs from leftist activist forms, and takes irregular forms. Migrants form strategies to overcome the precarious conditions imposed on them, they evade control by assuming their invisibility, and they appropriate space and enact a right to settlement whilst also insisting on their onward movement. These daily strategies,

79 Research diary entry 23, 17/6/11.
80 Erfan, research diary entry 13, 1/6/11.

evasions, resistances, appropriations and enactments constitute migrants' immanent political struggles (Squire 2011). For migrants in Patras, in contrast with activists' designs, politics is not about voice and visibility, not about asking, or outwardly challenging, but rather it is about quietly slipping past, evading control unseen, and *escaping* (Mitropoulos 2007).

As the previous chapters have illustrated, irregularity is always contested by the 'surplus sociability' of migrants (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008). Irregularity becomes a 'stake' that is negotiated, subverted and *appropriated,* as migrants find ways to use irregularity as a resource and as a form of resistance (Rygiel 2011b). Irregularity and invisibility become important strategies for migrants who do not want to claim their rights or belonging in Greece (Rygiel 2011b), but rather want to find a means to move on. Irregular movement in fact *requires* invisibility. For example, Karim from Sudan explains to me how he wears a 'work uniform' of dark colours when he tries to do the 'dingle,' "so they can't see [me] under the lorry"[81]. In this sense, Karim subverts the 'rules of the game,' appropriating his invisibility in society by using it as a strategy for movement.

Migrants undermine control's 'management' and documentation of their identity by becoming imperceptible, de-identifying themselves. Irregularity is *chosen*[82] over claiming asylum in Greece because being *visible* and logged on the Eurodac[83] system curtails possibilities for onward migration (Ellermann 2010). The 'white paper' also becomes a site of struggle over the (de-)identification of irregularity, as authorities try to mark all migrants with identity documents, whilst migrants pretend to comply and submit to documentation but

---

81 Karim, research diary entry 26, 21/6/11.
82 The vast majority of migrants I spoke with had not claimed asylum in Greece. I only met five men from Sudan, and two from Afghanistan, who had claimed asylum and carried the 'red card' [see photo 11, appendix, page 79].
83 Research diary entry 20, 14/6/11.

in fact manipulate their identity as a counter-strategy. For example Faysal explains how de-identification is a common-sense practice for him;

> They catch me, fingerprint me – I give them a fake name, I always give a fake
> name, I am Hasan to them... and they put me in detention[84].

In a curious sense control is *tolerated* (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008), but at the same time it is subverted. False identification, destroying papers, concealing one's status as a 'migrant,' or hiding oneself completely become *irregular* means of sabotaging the bureaucratic processes of migration management (Rygiel 2011b).

The 'politics of migration' in Patras is therefore comprised of a complicated and somewhat contradictory combination of migrant imperceptibility, and migrant presence, of movement and settlement. These seemingly contrary enactments represent a strongly anti-assimilationist (De Genova 2010), irregular political agenda underwritten, first and foremost, by a commitment to mobility. As Mantanika (2009:9) observes in demonstrations in Patras, migrants tend to "only care about slogans that concern more freedom in the port," and hence their ability to leave. Strategies for movement precede all else. This is the politics of the journey. Settlement and occupation are corollaries; an excess of the movement of migration, with political implications all the same.

Paradoxically, migrants do not want to be in Patras, but their embodied presence in the city ceaselessly leaks and transforms the society around them (Biehl & Locke 2010). By occupying space, making temporary homes, and enjoying sociability, migrants "emerge within the realm in which they already exist, but to which they are not thought to belong" (Stephenson & Papadopoulos 2006:434). The incorrigible presence of migrants in Patras

---

84 Faysal, research diary entry 15, 3/6/11.

calls into question their marginalisation, regardless of their own intents to simply move on. The appropriation of space by migrants is not a mere survival strategy; it constitutes an affront and a challenge to efforts of control (Karakayali & Rigo 2010). In Patras we see small "islets of resistance" (Mantanika 2009:16); islets committed to resisting abjection and undermining control, and at the same time committed, indeed *driven* by the human desire for more than that, for life, sociality, and mobility. In this space new social worlds are becoming, emerging out of irregularity, unsettling the very bases of community. This interruption, is for Rancière (2004), the very enactment of politics.

The anti-assimilationist, irregular 'politics of migration' *undermines* the authority of the state, as migrants *take* their rights and enact themselves as political subjectivities (Nyers 2003) rather than appeal to the state to be *awarded* these rights (Barbagallo & Beuret 2008). In Patras, migrants act politically when they enact a right to space, whilst simultaneously enacting a right to 'not-settle,' a *right to mobility.* This commitment to mobility however produces political subjectivities who are becoming something different, subjects that in some way remain 'outside politics.' In Patras migrants are not seeking voice or visibility; they do not seek to enter the 'political game' nor community, even as their presence seems to call for it. Instead, by making themselves imperceptible through strategies of de-identification, migrants in Patras *refuse* representation and *refuse* to be the 'manageable,' policed subjects of control that they are 'supposed to be' in the established 'political game' (Stephenson & Papadopoulos 2006). In this sense, migrants attempt to remove themselves from political 'capture' by positioning themselves 'outside politics' (Stephenson & Papadopoulos 2006).

What we see, therefore, is the emergence of a new political subjectivity that resists being 'managed' and controlled, and asserts a right to manage oneself and one's mobility.

Migrants' actions in Patras are not 'claims to citizenship' (Andrijasevic & Anderson 2009) nor to belonging, but rather they constitute an enactment in 'becoming other' and existing outside of 'manageable' categories (De Genova 2010). These subjectivities, always in a process of 'becoming,' are putting in motion new forms of life (Blackman *et al* 2008). The lived, embodied experiences of these migrants forms a challenge to the bordering, ordering and management of movement, labour and space, simply by the fact that these subjectivities refuse to submit to this structure of life. By re-appropriating space, negotiating irregularity and asserting a right to control their own life, movement, labour and space, migrants transform life, 'breaking open alternative pathways' (Biehl & Locke 2010).

Conclusion

Building on an 'autonomy of migration' analytical framework, this paper has explored the

moments and movements of migrant agency in the transit space of Patras, Greece. In this

human-level study, I have asked how the journey is *lived* by migrants, what barriers migrants

meet and *negotiate,* what mechanisms of control they confront and *subvert.* This began, in

Chapter One, by focusing on the fundamental experience of irregularity, looking at how

control produces irregularity, as well as how migrants find ways to live *through* this

condition. Migrants' subjective experiences of 'becoming irregular' are complex. Irregularity

shapes how migrants experience time, space, and self in the city. Men often feel 'caught' in a

spatial-temporal limbo, powerless, bored and 'stuck' waiting. At the same time, this time and

space is punctuated by moments of extreme insecurity, as police incursions invade every

aspect of daily life. Uncertainty and precarity become routine; irregular life is both

perpetually startling and banal. Migrants in Patras, however, are not mere victims of

irregularisation, despite the best efforts of control mechanisms. The 'surplus sociability' of

Faysal, Mehdi, Erfan and others contests abjection and exceeds control. Migrants continue to

desire to put their lives in motion.

In Chapter Two I bring migrant agency to the fore and look at how the 'surplus

sociability' of migrants re-shapes how irregularity is lived in Patras, as migrants occupy,

appropriate and re-configure spaces of the city. Space becomes a battleground between a

movement of migration that contests the imposition of existential precarity, and mechanisms

of control that struggle to re-impose the conditions of irregularity, as exemplified in the

conflict over the former Agyia camp. Men occupy "pockets of life"[85] throughout the city, despite repeated police 'clearances.' Migrants settle, and become present and socially participative in the city, despite themselves and their plans to 'not-settle.' In these 'irregular spaces' migrants do not just exist, but they live and enjoy sociality. The embodied presence of migrants in Patras transforms the social world around them. They make visible the injustice of their invisibility in society, calling into question who may belong in community, whilst at the same time they reject this city, maintaining their commitment to mobility.

In light of these findings, Chapter Three argues that the actions of migrants in Patras must be understood as political actions. This involves looking at the 'political field' as something that necessarily extends beyond citizens. In this chapter we find that local leftist activists mobilise around migrants' struggles in an effort to bring migrants also into the policed 'political community.' Whilst these mobilisations are well-meaning, in practice the relationship between activists and migrants is highly problematic. Activists attempt to impose their politics on migrants, revealing a tacit assumption that political subjectivity only properly belongs to citizens (Neilson & Mitropoulos 2007). Activists call for migrants to *integrate* into the 'public sphere,' to become like citizens too, to gain voice and visibility. In this way, activists become implicated in policing the boundaries of the political themselves (Zavos 2007).

The *irregular* 'politics of migration' however, looks somewhat different. Migrants' political actions in Patras are constituted in their embodied struggles, their daily strategies, evasions, resistances, appropriations and enactments. Migrants are political in how they are imperceptible, *and present,* in how they enact rights to movement, *and settlement.* Migrants

---

85 Research diary entry 22, 16/6/11.

enact themselves as political subjectivities when they contest their abjection, appropriate space, and insist on taking control of their own lives and mobility. Yet we find that this is a politics that is in some ways 'outside politics,' since migrants refuse integration, representation, and political 'capture,' instead putting in motion new forms of life that operate beyond these bordered, ordered and managed socio-spatial political structures. These 'becomings' engender new forms of life with truly transformative potentials. These are forms of life that fundamentally undermine the bordering of the world, call into question territorialised conceptions of belonging and citizenship, and challenge the management and control of humanity and mobility (Mitropoulos 2007).

Looking from the perspective of migration, this paper offers an insight into how migrants journey *through* the European border regime. In particular, this study makes both an empirical and theoretical contribution to how we understand the journey as a *productive moment,* shaping the 'becoming' of irregularity, space, and political subjectivity. By placing the strategic-analytical emphasis on the movements of people over that of control, this paper reverses the logic of state-centric discourses of power, opening up new ways of thinking about the complex contestations of so-called 'minor voices' (Hamilton & Placas 2011). This constitutes both a productive and nuanced analytical position, and an ethically-grounded research practice, committed to problematising – rather than perpetuating – the inequalities of power on which the European border regime itself is both built, and sustained.

Bibliography

Literature

Agamben, G. (2005) *State of Exception,* The University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life,* Stanford University Press: Stanford.

Agier, M. (2011) *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government,* Polity Press: Cambridge.

Agier, M (2010) 'Corridors of Exile: A Worldwide Web of Camps,' http://www.lesujetdanslacite.com/CouloirsExilAgierAnglais.pdf [accessed 11/04/11].

Agustín, L. M. (2003) 'Forget Victimisation: Granting Agency to Migrants,' *Development,* 46, 30-36. doi:10.1177/10116370030463005.

Alberti, G. (2010) 'Across the Borders of Lesvos: The Gendering of Migrants' Detention in the Aegean,' *Feminist Review,* 94, 138-147. doi:10.1057/fr.2009.44.

Andrijasevic, R. & Anderson, B. (2009) 'Conflicts of Mobility: Migration, Labour and Political Subjectivities,' *Subjectivity,* 29, 363-366. doi:10.1057/sub.2009.28.

Andrijasevic, R. (2010) 'From Exception to Excess: Detention and Deportations Across the Mediterranean Space,' in De Genova, N. & Peutz, N. (eds) *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement,* Duke University Press: Durham, 147-165.

Andrijasevic, R. (2008) 'Gendered Migration and Differentiated Inclusion,' *Re-Public,* http://www.re-public.gr/en/?p=470 [accessed 19/07/11].

Andrijasevic, R. (2003) 'The Difference Borders Make: (Il)legality, Migration and Trafficking in Italy Among Eastern European Women in Prostitution,' in Ahmed et al (eds) *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration,* Berg: Oxford, 251-272.

Barbargallo, C. & Beuret, N. (2008) 'Bang to Rights,' *Mute Magazine,* http://www.metamute.org/en/Bang-to-Rights [accessed 10/07/11].

Biehl, J. & Locke, P. (2010) 'Deleuze and the Anthropology of Becoming,' *Current Anthropology,* 51:3, 317-351.

Bigo, D. (2007) 'Detention of Foreigners, States of Exception, and the Social Practices of Control of the Banoptican,' in Rajaram, P. K. & Grundy-Warr, C. (eds) *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge,* University of Minnesota: Minneapolis, 3-34.

Blackman, L. *et al* (2008) 'Creating Subjectivities,' *Subjectivity,* 22, 1-27. doi:10.1057/sub.2008.8.

Bojadžijew, M. & Karakayali, S. (2010) 'Recuperating the Sideshows of Capitalism: The Autonomy of Migration Today,' *e-flux journal,* 17, http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article_154.pdf [accessed 11/04/11].

Burrell, K. (2008) 'Materialising the Border: Spaces of Mobility and Material Culture in Migration from Post-Socialist Poland,' *Mobilities,* 3:3, 353-373. doi:10.1080/17450100802376779.

Chambers, R. (1994) 'Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Analysis of Experience,' *World Development,* 22:9, 1253-1268.

Clifford, N. & Valentine, G. (2003) *Key Methods in Geography*, Sage: London.

Collyer, M. (2007) 'In-Between Places: Trans-Saharan Transit Migrants in Morocco and the Fragmented Journey to Europe,' *Antipode,* 39:4, 668-690. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8330.2007.00546.x.

Collyer, M. *et al* (2010) 'Critical Approaches to Transit Migration,' *Population, Space and Place,* doi:10.1002/psp.630.

Cook, I. & Crang, M. (1995) *Doing Ethnographies,* Geobooks: Norwich, http://dro.dur.ac.uk/202/ [accessed 28/04/11].

Coutin, S. B. (2011) 'Legal Exclusion and Dislocated Subjectivities: The Deportation of Salvadoran Youth from the United States,' in Squire, V. (ed) *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity,* Routledge: Abingdon, 169-183.

Coutin, S. B. (2005) 'Being En Route,' *American Anthropologist,* 107:2, 195-206. doi:10.1525/aa.2005.107.2.195.

Coutin, S. B. (2003) 'Illegality, Borderlands, and the Space of Nonexistence,' in Perry, R. W. & Maurer, B. (eds) *Globalization Under Construction: Governmentality, Law, and Identity,* University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 171-202.

De Genova, N. (2011) 'Alien Powers: Deportable Labour and the Spectacle of Security,' in Squire, V. (ed) *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity,*

Routledge: Abingdon, 91-116.

De Genova, N. (2010) 'The Queer Politics of Migration: Reflections on 'Illegality' and Incorrigibility,' *Studies in Social Justice,* 4:2, 101-126.

De Genova, N. (2009) 'Conflicts of Mobility, and the Mobility if Conflict: Rightlessness, Presence, Subjectivity, Freedom,' *Subjectivity,* 29, 445-466. doi:10.1057/sub.2009.22.

De Genova, N. (2005) *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and 'Illegality' in Mexican Chicago*, Duke University Press.

De Genova, N. (2002) 'Migrant "Illegality" and Deportability in Everyday Life,' *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 31, 419-447. doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.31.040402.085432.

Edkins, J. & Pin-Fat, V. (2005) 'Through the Wire: Relations of Power and Relations of Violence,' *Millennium,* 34:1, 1-24. doi:10.1177/03058298050340010101.

Ellermann, A. (2010) 'Undocumented Migrants and Resistance in the Liberal State,' *Politics and Society,* 38:3, 408-429. doi:10.1177/0032329210373072.

Euskirchen, M. *et al* (2009) 'Big Trouble in Borderland: Immigration Rights and No-Border Struggles in Europe,' *Mute Magazine,* http://www.metamute.org/en/big_trouble_in_borderland_immigration_rights _and_no_border_struggles_in_europe [accessed 27/02/11].

Euskirchen, M. *et al* (2007) 'From Borderline to Borderland: The Changing Border Regime, Transnational Labor, and Migration Struggles in Europe,' *Monthly Review,* 59:6, http://lebuhn.in-berlin.de/Borderland.pdf [accessed 19/07/11].

FRA (2011) 'Coping with a Fundamental Rights Emergency: The Situation of Persons Crossing the Greek Land Border in an Irregular Manner, Thematic Situation Report,' *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights,* http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Greek-border-situation-report2011_EN.pdf [accessed 22/08/11].

Frontex (2011) *FRAN Quarterly: Issue 1, January-March 2011,* http://www.frontex.europa.eu/situation_at_the_external_border/art25.html [accessed 22/08/11].

Goldring, L. *et al* (2007) 'Institutionalizing Precarious Immigration Status in Canada,' *CERIS Working Paper No. 61,* http://ceris.metropolis.net/Virtual%20Library/WKPP %20List/WKPP2007/CWP61.pdf [accessed 20/07/11].

Goss, J. D. & Leinbach, T. R. (1996) 'Focus Groups as Alternative Research Practice: Experience with Transmigrants in Indonesia,' *Area,* 28:2, 115-123.

Hamilton, J. A. & Placas, A. J. (2011) 'Anthropology Becoming...? The 2010 Sociocultural Anthropology Year in Review,' *American Anthropologist,* 113:2, 246-261. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1433.2011.01328.x.

Hardt, M. & Negri, A. (2000) *Empire,* Harvard University Press: London.

Hess, S. (2010) 'De-Naturalising Transit Migration: Theory and Methods of an Ethnographic Regime Analysis,' *Population, Space and Place,* doi:10.1002/psp.632.

Hess, S. (2008) 'De-Naturalizing Transit Migration – Theory and Methods of an Ethnographic Regime Analyses,' *IMISCOE Conference: Transit Migration in the European Space,* http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/pdfs/Non_WP_pdfs/Tranist_Migration _in_Europe__Koc_University_/3%20Transit%203%20Hess_Methodology.pdf [02/05/11].

Hiemstra, N. (2010) 'Immigrant 'Illegality' as Neoliberal Governmentality in Leadville, Colorado,' *Antipode,* 42:1, 74-102. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00732.x.

HRW (2009) *No Refuge: Migrants in Greece,* http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/greece1009.pdf [accessed 22/08/11].

HRW (2008) *Stuck in a Revolving Door: Iraqis and Other Asylum Seekers and Migrants at the Greece/Turkey Entrance to the European Union,* http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/greeceturkey1108_webwcover.pdf [accessed 22/08/11].

Huysmans, J. & Squire, V. (2009) 'Migration and Security,' in Dunn Cavelty, M. & Mauer, V. (eds) *Handbook of Security Studies,* Routledge: London.

Isin, E. & Rygiel, K. (2007) 'Abject Spaces: Frontiers, Zones, Camps,' in Dauphinee, E. & Masters, C. (eds) *The Logics of Biopower and the War on Terror: Living, Dying, Surviving,* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 181-204.

Jacobsen, K. & Landau, L. B. (2003) 'The Dual Imperative in Refugee Research: Some Methodological and Ethical Considerations in Social Science Research on Forced Migration,' *Disasters,* 27:3, 185-206. doi:10.1111/1467-7717.00228.

Johnson, J. C. *et al* (2007) 'The Active Participant-Observer: Applying Social Role Analysis to Participant Observation,' *Field Methods*, 18:2, 111-134. doi:10.1177/1525822X05285928.

Juris, J. S. (2007) 'Practicing Militant Ethnography with the Movement for Global Resistance in Barcelona,' in Shukaitis, S. *et al* (eds) *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations, Collective Theorization,* AK Press: Edinburgh, 164-178.

Kaplanis, Y. (2011) 'An Economy That Excludes the Many and an "Accidental" Revolt,' in Vradis, A. & Dalakoglou, D. (eds) *Revolt and Crisis in Greece: Between a Present Yet to Pass and a Future Still to Come,* AK Press: Edinburgh, 215-228.

Karakayali, J. & Karakayali, S. (2009) 'Liminal People,' *Dossier Border Politics – Migration in the Mediterranean,* http://www.migration-boell.de/web/migration/46_2196.asp [accessed 10/05/11].

Karakayali, S. & Rigo, E. (2010) 'Mapping the European Space of Circulation,' in De Genova, N. & Peutz, N. (eds) *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement,* Duke University Press: Durham, 123-146.

Khosravi, S. (2010) 'An Ethnography of Migrant 'Illegality' in Sweden: Included yet Excepted?' *Journal of International Political Theory,* 6, 95-116. doi:10.3366/E1755088210000479.

Koser, K. (2007) *International Migration: A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Laacher, S. (2007) 'The Power to Name and the Desire to be Named,' in Ossman, S. (ed) *Places We Share: Migration, Subjectivity, and Global Mobility,* Lexington Books: Plymouth, 17-26.

Lafazani, O. *et al* (2011) 'National Case Study: Thematic Study on Urban Interaction Spaces and Social Movements – Greece,' *Ge.M.I.C,* http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_21078_472365812.pdf [accessed 21/07/11].

Latham, A. (2010) 'Diaries as a Research Methods,' in Clifford. N. & Valentine, G. (eds) *Key Methods in Geography,* Sage Publications Ltd: London, 189-202.

Laubenthal, B. (2007) 'The Emergence of Pro-Regularization Movements in Western Europe,' *International Migration,* 45:3, 101-133. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2007.00412.x.

Lemke, T. (2005) "A Zone of Indistinction" - A Critique of Giorgio Agamben's Concept of Biopolitics,' *Outlines,* 1, 3-13, http://www.outlines.dk/contents/Outlines051/Lemke05.pdf [accessed 17/04/11]

Lowry, M. & Nyers, P. (2003) 'Global Movements for Refugee and Migrant Rights,' *Refuge*, 21:3, 2-4.

Mantanika, R. (2009) 'Displacement and the Visibility of the Invisibles, Transit Zones and the Emergence of Political Public Space,' *Paper delivered at the LSE Hellenic Observatory PhD Symposium,* 25/06/09, http://www2.lse.ac.uk/europeanInstitute/research/hellenicObservatory/events/phd_Symposia/4thSymposium/phd09_Panels.aspx [accessed 21/04/11].

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2011) *Designing Qualitative Research, 5th Edition,* Sage Publications Ltd: London.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005) *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach,* Sage Publications Ltd: London.

McGregor, J. (2006) 'Diaries and Case Studies,' in Desai, V. & Potter, R. B. (eds) *Doing Development Research,* Sage Publications Ltd: London, 200-206.

McLoughlin, P. & Warin, M. (2008) 'Corrosive Places, Inhuman Spaces: Mental Health in Australian Immigration Detention,' *Health & Place,* 14:2, 254-264. doi:10.1016/j.healthplace.2007.06.008.

McNevin, A. (2009) 'Doing What Citizens Do: Migrant Struggles at the Edges of Political Belonging,' *Local-Global: Identity, Security, Community,* 6, 67-77, http://mams.rmit.edu.au/zmvzm4wu8tuv1.pdf [accessed 11/04/11].

Melliti, M. (1999) 'Pantanella: A Song Along the Road,' in Parati, G. (ed) *Mediterranean Crossroads: Migration Literature in Italy,* Associated University Press: Cranbury, 106-120.

Mezzadra, S. (2011) 'The Gaze of Autonomy: Capitalism, Migration and Social Struggles,' in Squire, V. (ed) *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity,* Routledge: Abingdon, 121-142.

Mezzadra, S. (2004a) 'Citizenship in Motion,' *Makeworlds,* http://www.makeworlds.org/node/110 [accessed 10/05/11].

Mezzadra, S. (2004b) 'The Right to Escape,' *Ephemera,* 4:3, 267-275, http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/4-3/4-3mezzadra.pdf [accessed 11/04/11].

Migreurop (2010) *European Borders: Controls, Detention and Deportations,* http://www.migreurop.org/IMG/pdf/rapport-migreurop-2010-en_-_2-121110.pdf [accessed 06/01/11].

Migreurop (2004) 'From European Migration and Asylum Policies to Camps for Foreigners,' http://www.noborder.org/files/040719eu_camps_map.pdf [accessed 03/05/11].

Mitropoulos, A. (2007) 'Autonomy, Recognition, Movement,' in Shukaitis, S. *et al* (eds) *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations, Collective Theorization,* AK Press: Edinburgh, 127-136.

Moulin, C. & Nyers, P. (2007) "We Live in a Country of UNHCR" - Refugee Protests and Global Political Society,' *International Political Sociology,* 1:4, 356-372. doi:10.1111/j.1749-5687.2007.00026.x.

Neilson, B. & Mitropoulos, A. (2007) 'Exceptional Times, Nongovernmental Spacings, and Impolitical Movements,' in Feher, M. (ed) *Nongovernmental Politics,* Zone Books: New York, 469-481.

Nyanzi, S. *et al* (2007) 'Ethnography and PRA Among Gambian Traditional Birth Attendants: A Methods Discussion,' *Qualitative Research,* 7:3, 317-326. doi:10.1177/1468794107078512.

Nyers, P. (2011) 'Forms of Irregular Citizenship,' in Squire, V. (ed) *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity,* Routledge: Abingdon, 184-198.

Nyers, P. (2010) 'Missing Citizenship,' *International Political Sociology,* 4:1, 95-98. doi:10.1111/j.1749-5687.2009.00093_6.x.

Nyers, P. (2008a) 'In Solitary, In Solidarity: Detainees, Hostages and Contesting the Anti-Policy of Detention, *European Journal of Cultural Studies,* 11:3, 333-349. doi:10.1177/1367549408091847.

Nyers, P. (2008b) 'No One is Illegal Between City and Nation,' in Isin, E. F. & Nielsen, G. M. (eds) *Acts of Citizenship,* Zed Books: London, 160-181.

Nyers, P. (2006) 'Taking Rights, Mediating Wrongs: Disagreements Over the Political Agency of Non-Status Refugees,' in Huysmans, J. *et al* (eds) *The Politics of Protection: Sites of Insecurity and Political Agency,* Routledge: Abingdon, 48-67.

Nyers, P. (2003) 'Abject Cosmopolitanism: The Politics of Protection in the Anti-Deportation Movement,' *Third World Quarterly,* 24:6, 1069-1093. doi:10.1080/01436590310001630071.

Papadopoulos, D. (2011) 'The Autonomy of Migration,' *SOAS Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies Seminar,* 23/02/11.

Papadopoulos, D. (2010) 'Insurgent Posthumanism,' *Ephemera,* 10:2, 134-151, http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/10-2/10-2papadopoulos.pdf [accessed 02/09/11].

Papadopoulos, D. *et al* (2008) *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the Twenty-First Century,* Pluto Press: London.

Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, A. (2008) *Transit Migration: The Missing Link Between Emigration and Settlement,* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.

Peutz, N. & De Genova, N. (2010) 'Introduction' in De Genova, N. & Peutz, N. (eds) *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement,* Duke University Press: Durham, 1-32.

Pro Asyl (2007) *"The truth may be bitter but it must be told": The Situation of Refugees in the Aegean and the Practices of the Greek Coast Guard,* http://www.proasyl.de/fileadmin/proasyl/fm_redakteure/Englisch/Griechenland bericht _Engl.pdf [accessed 22/08/11].

Puggioni, R. (2006) 'Refugees Reception and the Construction of Identities: Encountering Kurdish Refugees in Italy,' *Borderlands e-Journal,* 5:2, http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol5no2_2006/puggioni_reception.htm [accessed 11/04/11].

Rajaram, P. K. & Grundy-Warr, C. (2004) 'The Irregular Migrant as Homo Sacer: Migration and Detention in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand,' *International Migration,* 42:1, 33-64. doi:10.1111/j.0020-7985.2004.00273.x.

Rancière, J. (2004) 'Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?' *South Atlantic Quarterly,* 103:2-3, 297-310. doi:10.1215/00382876-103-2-3-297.

Rodier, C. (2007) 'The Migreurop Network and Europe's Foreigner Camps,' in Feher, M. (ed) *Nongovernmental Politics,* Zone Books: New York.

Routledge, P. (1996) 'Critical Geopolitics and Terrains of Resistance,' *Political Geography,* 15:6-7, 509-531. doi:10.1016/0962-6298(96)00029-7.

Rygiel, K. (2011a) 'Bordering Solidarities: Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movements and Camps at Calais,' *Citizenship Studies,* 15:1, 1-19. doi:10.1080/13621025.2011.534911.

Rygiel, K. (2011b) 'Governing Borderzones of Mobility Through e-borders: The Politics of Embodied Mobility,' in Squire, V. (ed) *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity,* Routledge: Abingdon, 143-168.

Schapendonk, J. (2009) 'Moving and Mediating: A Mobile View on Sub-Saharan African Migration Towards Europe,' in Fernández-Ardèvol, M. & Hijar, A. R. (eds) *Communication Technologies in Latin America and Africa: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*, IN3: Barcelona, 293-318.

Schensul, J. J. (1999) 'Focused Group Interviews,' in Schensul, J. J. *et al* (eds) *Enhanced Ethnographic Methods: Audiovisual Techniques, Focused Group Interviews, and Elicitation Technique*s, Altamira Press: Lanham, 51-114.

Schensul J. J. *et al* (1999) *Enhanced Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews and Questionnaires,* Altamira Press: Lanham.

Scheper-Hughes, N. (1995) 'The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology,' *Current Anthropology,* 36:3, 410-420.

Sigona, N. (2005) 'Locating the 'Gypsy Problem,'' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 31:4, 741-756.

Singhal, A. & Devi, K. (2003) 'Visual Voices in Participatory Communication,' *Communicator,* 39:2, 1-15, http://utminers.utep.edu/asinghal/Articles%20and%20Chapters/singhal_devi.pdf [accessed 21/04/11].

Spijkerboer, T. (2007) 'The Human Costs of Border Control,' *European Journal of Migration and Law,* 9, 127-139

Squire, V. (2011) *The Contested Politics of Mobility: Borderzones and Irregularity,* Routledge: Abingdon.

Stephenson, N. & Papadopoulos, D. (2006) 'Outside Politics/Continuous Experience,' *Ephemera,* 6:4, 433-453. http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/6-4/6-4stephenson-papadopoulos.pdf [accessed 09/05/11].

STEPS (2007) 'The conditions in centres for Third Country Nationals (Detention Camps, Open Centres as well as Transit Centres and Transit Zones) with a particular focus on provisions and facilities with special needs in the 25 EU Member States,' *European Parliament, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs,* http://www.libertysecurity.org/IMG/pdf_eu-ep-detention-centres-report.pdf [accessed 22/08/11].

Stroh, M. (2000) 'Qualitative Interviewing' in Burton, D. (ed) *Research Training for Social Scientists: A Handbook for Postgraduate Researchers,* Sage: London.

Stroux, S. & Mantanika, R. (2010) 'Schengendangle: Undocumented Refugees in the City of Igoumenitsa,' *Schengendangle Blog,* http://schengendangle.jogspace.net/files/2010/02/schengendangle.pdf [accessed 19/04/11].

Talavera, V. *et al* (2010) 'Deportation in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: Anticipation, Experience, and Memory,' in De Genova, N. & Peutz, N. (eds) *The Deportation*

Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement, Duke University Press: Durham, 166-195.

Teloni, D. (2011) 'Grassroots Community Social Work With The 'Unwanted': The Case of Kinsi and the Rights of Refugees and Migrants in Patras, Greece,' in Lavalette, M & Ioakimidis, V. (eds) *Social Work in Extremis: Lessons for Social Work Internationally,* Policy Press: Bristol, 65-80.

Triandafyllidou, A. & Ambrosini, M. (2011) 'Irregular Immigration Control in Italy and Greece: Strong Fencing and Weak Gate-Keeping Serving the Labour Market,' *European Journal of Migration and Law,* 13, 251-273. doi:10.1163/157181611X587847.

Tsianos, V. *et al* (2009) 'Transnational Migration Theory and Method of an Ethnographic Analysis of Border Regimes,' *Working Paper No 55 Sussex Centre for Migration Research,* http://www.sussex.ac.uk/migration/documents/mwp55.pdf [accessed 19/04/11].

Tsianos, V. & Karakayali, S. (2010) 'Transnational Migration and the Emergence of the European Border Regime: An Ethnographic Analysis,' *European Journal of Social Theory,* 13:3, 373-387. doi:10.1177/1368431010371761.

Varela, A. (2009) 'Residency Documents for All! Notes to Understand the Movement of Migrants in Barcelona,' *Refuge,* 26:2, 121-132.

Vradis, A. & Dalakoglou, D. (2011) 'Spatial Legacies of December and The Right to The City,' in Vradis, A. & Dalakoglou, D. (eds) *Revolt and Crisis in Greece: Between a Present Yet to Pass and a Future Still to Come,* AK Press: Edinburgh, 77-88.

Walters, W. (2010) 'Deportation, Expulsion, and the International Police of Aliens,' in De Genova, N. & Peutz, N. (eds) *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement,* Duke University Press: Durham, 69-100.

Walters, W. (2008) 'Acts of Demonstration: Mapping the Territory of (Non-)Citizenship,' in Isin, E. F. & Nielsen, G. M. (eds) *Acts of Citizenship,* Zed Books: London, 182-206.

Willen, S. S. (2007a) 'Exploring 'Illegal' and 'Irregular' Migrants' Lived Experiences of Law and State Power,' *International Migration,* 45:3, 2-7. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2007.00408.x.

Willen, S. S. (2007b) 'Toward a Critical Phenomenology of 'Illegality': State Power, Criminalization, and Abjectivity among Undocumented Migrant Workers in Tel Aviv, Israel,' *International Migration,* 45:3, 8-38. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2007.00409.x.

Zavos, A. (2007) 'Moving Relationships / Shifting Alliances: Constructions of Migration in

the Leftist Anti-Racist Movement in Athens,' *Annual Review of Critical Psychology,* 6, 89-109, http://www.discourseunit.com/arcp/arcp6/Zavos.pdf [accessed 28/06/11].

Zavos, A. & Biglia, B. (2009) 'Embodying Feminist Research: Learning From Action Research, Political Practices, Diffractions, and Collective Knowledge,' *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 6:1, 153-172. doi:1080/14780880902901380.

Zhang, L. (2001) *Strangers in the City: Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks Within China's Floating Population,* Stanford University Press: Stanford.

Media / Webpages

'Greek plans barbed-wire fence along Turkish border,' *EU Business,* 05/08/11, http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/greece-immigration.bot [accessed 17/08/11].

'Greek protest against austerity package turns violent,' *BBC,* 28/06/11, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13935400 [accessed 20/08/11].

'MSF: Greece must ensure humane living conditions and medical assistance,' 13/07/09, *Doctors Without Borders,* http://www.msf.org.uk/migrants_in_greece_20090715.news? fId=migrants_in_greece_20090715 [accessed 08/07/11].

Omonira-Oyekanmi, R. 'Xenophobic attacks on the rise in crisis-hit Greece,' *New Internationalist Magazine,* 15/07/11, http://www.newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2011/07/15/immigrants-crisis-greece/ [accessed 05/08/11].

'Our Demands,' *Kinisi,* http://www.kinisipatras.gr/ [accessed 01/08/11].

'Police raid in the 'trains' of St. Dyonisios, Patras port,' 13/05/11, *Infomobile,* http://infomobile.w2eu.net/2011/05/13/12-05-11-police-raid-in-the-trains-of-st-dyonisios-patras-port/ [accessed 31/07/11].

'RABIT 2010,' *Frontex,* http://www.frontex.europa.eu/rabit_2010/ [accessed 20/08/11].

Initial Research Proposal, 28/02/11

The struggle between EU 'politics of control' and a 'politics of migration'?
Migrant solidarity and resistance in Europe's border camps:
The case of Patras and Igoumenitsa, Greece.

Aims and objectives:

- To gain an insight into the day-to-day life of migrants in an informal camp.
- To analyse the meanings attached to the transitory space/place of 'the camp' for migrants and activists.
- To investigate the motivations of activists in mobilising against border control in Europe, in Greece, in the camp.
- To explore the relationship between migrants and activists in the camp.
- To theorise the above research areas in terms of the 'autonomy of migration;' the movement of migration.

Research questions:

1. How does EU immigration policy attempt to externalise and exclude certain people?

    1.a. What is the logic behind EU immigration control – security, stability, identity?
    1.b. What is the practice? How is externalisation enacted; the role of Frontex, Dublin II, Readmission Agreements?

2. How do migrants and solidarity groups challenge or subvert this border regime?

    2.a. What methods, language and ideology are used by different groups?
    2.b. What is the nature of various solidarity groups – Greek or pan-European? What type of politics informs their mobilisation and their solidarity acts?
    2.c. Is this resistance reactionary, or can it be understood as *shaping* the migration regime – the migrant of agency, resourcefulness, a political actor?
    2.d. Can migration be understood as a social *movement*?

3. In what ways is the camp constituted as a site of contestation and resistance?

3.a.   How/do migrants construct a feeling of 'home' or belonging in the camp? Can this be seen as a form of protest and resistance? Acts of citizenship?

3.b.   Can we understand the camp as a permanent transitory social and political *place* belonging to migrant groups, rather than just a space of 'bare life,' part of the system of border control?

3.c.   In the camp, what do the day-to-day struggles between a 'politics of control' and a 'politics of migration' *look* like?

4.   How is the relationship between migrants and activist groups negotiated?

4.a.   What tensions and challenges arise?

4.b.   Problems of advocacy and solidarity between the 'mobility rich' and the 'mobility poor'?

Literature discussion:

Greece is said to be a country on the frontline of irregular migration into the EU. In the words of the EU border patrol agency Frontex, Greece is under "urgent and exceptional migratory pressure" (Frontex Press Kit: The Idea Behind RABITs, 1), receiving four-fifths of all detected migrant crossings into the EU (Frontex 2011). In October 2010 Greek authorities welcomed the first deployment of the Frontex Rapid Border Intervention Team (RABITs) to the Greece/Turkey border region, and in January this year the Greek government announced their plans to build a three metre-high wall along this border[86]. Numbers of irregular migrants in Greece is further exaggerated by the EU Dublin II Regulation, which means that Greece receives a large number of so-called 'Dublinised' migrants (Migreurop 2010:61) returned from other European member states. The country's asylum system is reported to be backlogged with over 50,000 asylum claims, and it has been internationally condemned for its "broken asylum system and appalling detention conditions" (Ward 2011).

    For a multiplicity of reasons, many migrants do not want to settle in Greece, but strive to get to Western Europe. This has seen the establishment of informal camps in and near transport hubs and ports to the rest of the Europe. It is this context that I seek to research. Literature required for review will include background information on EU border control and methods of externalisation. The rest of this discussion will outline the outcome of this politics of control: literature on camps, on migration as a social and resistance movement, and on solidarity mobilisations.

    The use of the term 'camp' in the EU context has been driven by the work of Migreurop, who have called for the camp to be understood as "all sites where foreigners are marginalized" through institutionalised "mechanisms of exclusion" (Rodier 2007:446). This means that detention centres, lodging centres, prisons and informal settlements, as 'camps,' may be analysed together, all constituted as spaces of immobility and exclusion. The work of

---

86 'Plans for a wall on Greece's border with Turkey embarrass Brussels,' 11/1/11, *The Guardian,*
   http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jan/11/greece-turkey-wall-immigration-stroobants [accessed
   26/2/11].

Agamben has been influential in studies of the camp. He conceptualises the camp as a space of exception, which denies political subject-hood and reduces the individual to the 'bare life' of mere biological existence (Rygiel 2011:3). His emphasis on the totalising power of the state over the individual however, 'flattens' the individual, presenting them as victims who are agency-less (Rygiel 2011:3).

More recent work on the 'autonomy of migration' challenges this. Work by Rygiel (2011) and Papadopoulos, Stephenson & Tsianos (2008) counter that migrants have agency and use mobility as a resource. They are not merely 'acted upon.' In Rodriguez's (in Rygiel 2011:3) words, the "battle for the border" is two-way. Some argue that migrants are the primary actor, with control measures as a "mere response": "Escape comes first... power and control follow," explains Papadopoulos (in Rygiel 2011:4). The camp in all its forms is appropriated by migrants. The politics of migration "incorporates, digests, and absorbs these spaces" (Tsianos, Hess & Karakayali 2009:5). The camp thus becomes a very different place to Agamben's; it becomes a social space and a site of contestation between a "politics of control" and a "politics of migration" (Rygiel 2011:1). Questions of a new form of citizenship in these places, if border-crossing is a political act in itself, indeed if citizenship should be an aspiration, and if migrants *want* to be understood as political actors, are raised (Papadopoulos seminar). Much of this work is being theorised by academics also involved in activism in this area, which raises its own questions.

Solidarity movements themselves have been relatively under-theorised in the literature, tending to be dominated by activists relaying their own experiences of the movement (Alberti 2010, Alldred 2003). Euskirchen et al (2009) explores the No Borders movement across Europe, emphasising its decentralised nature, radical politics and engagement with discourse politics, while Alldred (2003) gives a potted history of the group. Alberti's (2010:145) work begins to illuminate difficulties encountered between migrant and solidarity groups, finding a nuanced margin between "political engagement *with* migrants, solidarity actions and the provision of a service or a charity." She concludes with an acknowledgement of the difficulty of the different social positionalities, of 'mobility rich' and 'mobility poor,' in the dynamic of solidarity (Alberti 2010:146). For me this is a key point which I hope to explore further in my own research.

Methodology and data analysis:

The project will triangulate a number of qualitative research methods. This will include in-depth interview and participant observation, a participatory photography project, and the analysis of blogs, image and film disseminated by solidarity groups. Interview and observation will give an understanding of the situation in the camp, relations between migrants and activists, motivations for activists. The photography project will be used with migrants. It will be flexible to allow them to present what is important for them. They will be asked to take photos that include where they live and how they feel about them, and places and things that symbolise border control. Analysis of blogs and internet literature by activist groups will aim to better understand discourses of resistance, politics, and methods of subversion – image, language, mapping, and film.

Timetable for research

April - mid-May	background reading, write-up methodology and literature review, organise practicalities of research in Greece, presentation preparation begin forming interview schedule etc
May (11)	presentation
Mid-May - mid-June	finalise interview schedule and research practicalities, primary research in Greece - allow 1 week to orientate, get to know people -2-3 weeks for qualitative research - primary analysis for second interviews etc
Mid-June - end of June	analysis of blogs of solidarity groups etc organising data, transcription of interviews, data analysis
June - July	re-write literature review write up findings,
August - mid-September (12)	pull the thesis together

Outcomes, rationale, value of research

Today's climate of hostility to immigration and increased European externalisation requires countering with a human-level account of what this means for individuals and mobility. The burgeoning camps of Europe well illustrate how EU-level policy is creating marginalised subjects. Camp-clearances, local backlashes, and protests on both sides, make this a timely, and political, subject of research. There is limited research into migrant solidarity groups organising in a pan-European manner, but this problem of EU border control is creating a Europe-wide resistance movement. This research will give an insight into how these groups are forming, rallying and subverting politics of control, and how they work with and relate with migrant activism in their own struggles.

Preferred supervisor

JoAnn McGregor.

Proposal Bibliography

Alberti, G. (2010) 'Open Space Across the Borders of Lesvos: The Gendering of Migrants'
    Detention in the Aegean,' *Feminist Review,* 94, 138-147.

Alldred, P. (2003) 'No Borders, No Nations, No Deportations,' *Feminist Review,* 73, 152-
    157.

Euskirchen, M., Lubuhn, H., & Ray, G. (2009) 'Big Trouble in Borderland: Immigration
    Rights and No-Border Struggles in Europe,' *Mute Magazine.*
    http://www.metamute.org/en/big_trouble_in_borderland_immigration_rights
    _and_no_border_struggles_in_europe [accessed 27/02/11].

Frontex (2010) 'FRAN Quarterly, Issue 3, July-September 2010, *Situation at the External
    Borders, Frontex.*
    http://www.frontex.europa.eu/situation_at_the_external_border/art22.html [accessed
    27/02/11].

Migreurop (2010) 'European Borders: Controls, Detention and Deportations,' 1-128.
    http://www.migreurop.org/IMG/pdf/rapport-migreurop-2010-en_-_2-121110.pdf
    [accessed 06/01/11].

Papadopoulos, D. 'Autonomy of Migration Seminar,' *SOAS, London,* 16/02/11.

Papadopoulos, D., Stephenson, N., & Tsianos, V. (2008) *Escape Routes: Control and
    Subversion in the 21st Century,* London: Pluto Press.

'Plans for a wall on Greece's border with Turkey embarrass Brussels,' 11/01/11, *The
    Guardian,* http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jan/11/greece-turkey-wall-
    immigration-stroobants [accessed 26/02/11].

Rodier, C. (2007) 'The Migreurop Network and Europe's Foreigner Camps,' in Feher, M.
    (ed) *Nongovernmental Politics,* New York: Zone Books.

Rygiel, K. (2011) 'Bordering Solidarities: Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement
    and Camps in Calais,' *Citizenship Studies,* 15: 1, 1-19.

Tsianos, V., Hess, S., & Karakayali, S. (2009) 'Transnational Migration Theory and Method
    of an Ethnographic Analysis of Border Regimes,' Working Paper No 55, *Sussex
    Centre for Migration Research.*

Ward, B. (2011) 'Greece's Asylum Crisis can't be Fixed without Reforming Dublin Rules,'
    Human Rights Watch, http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2011/01/28/greece-s-asylum-
    crisis-can-t-be-fixed-without-reforming-dublin-rules [accessed 27/02/11].

Auto-Critique

The final project departed from the initial proposal in three notable ways: irregularity came to the fore, and 'the camp,' and the role of activists became subject to some revision in the project.

The presence of police and control in migrants' lives was intense in Patras. The 'mode-of-being irregular' was not a subject that I initially envisaged as part of the project, but precarious irregularity was such a fundamental experience for migrants that I felt that a grounded project, looking from the perspective of migration, would surely have to recognise this aspect. One of the tensions that emerged during my writing was trying to understand how I could reconcile the vulnerability of irregularity with migrant agency. In a sense I felt caught in a language that would not allow me to speak of agency, and this required a bit of mind-bending, because at the same time I saw no 'bare life' in Patras, and it was the resilience and 'surplus sociability' of migrants that I wanted my project to foreground.

In the field I found that most migrants in Patras do not live in 'camp-like' settings now, but rather their habitations are more diverse and dispersed. This reflects the changeable nature of the context; indeed the two encampments that stood when I was there have since been demolished. The different spaces that I found migrants occupying in Patras forced me to rethink the applicability of 'camp' theorisations. Ideas surrounding transit, and the space of the city started to take on more importance. Nonetheless, I feel that this developed into a real strength in the work; the spatiality of migrants' lives in Patras was found to be far more diverse and complicated, not easily reduced to a space of containment, nor a clearly defined space of segregation or marginalisation.

These two revisions also entailed methodological changes. My initial plans to run a photography project and to ask migrants to keep diaries was undermined by migrants' precarious conditions. Migrants feared being targeted by police if they were seen with cameras, and few felt that they had the time to write a diary. Gaining an understanding of how migrants felt about the spaces they occupy was also difficult because they rarely wanted to talk about the humiliating situation they were in *now*, but focus on their future. Observation over time began to give a better insight.

There was a contradiction in my original proposal; it wanted to look from the perspective of migration, but also from the standpoint of activists. I was aware that I would have to take one road depending on what I found during research. Although some anarchists were open with me, I found that it would require much longer in the field – and a stronger grasp of the Greek context – in order to better understand the politics of their solidarity. My final chapter thus focused on how migrants perceived activists, since I had a better grasp of this perspective. The paper did not intend to be critical of these activists, but I found their relationships with migrants troubling, as chapter three outlines. In this sense my 'militant ethnography' is allied more to migrants than activists.

Appendix

1. Fieldwork photos

2. Tables of all informants

3. Activist interview schedule

4. Interview transcript extract

5. Respondent diary

6. Research diary extract

Photo 1

The San Andreas camp in a train depot in the south of Patras. Approximately 200 Sudanese and Algerian migrants lived here until the police crackdowns began during my fieldwork. In the subsequent month the camp was completely cleared and all the trains taken away.

Photo 2

Dispersed living in the gardens of Patras.

Photo 3

"Hidden places"

Photo 4

A migrant's view of Patras port and the ferries to Italy; from behind a metal fence and razor-wire.
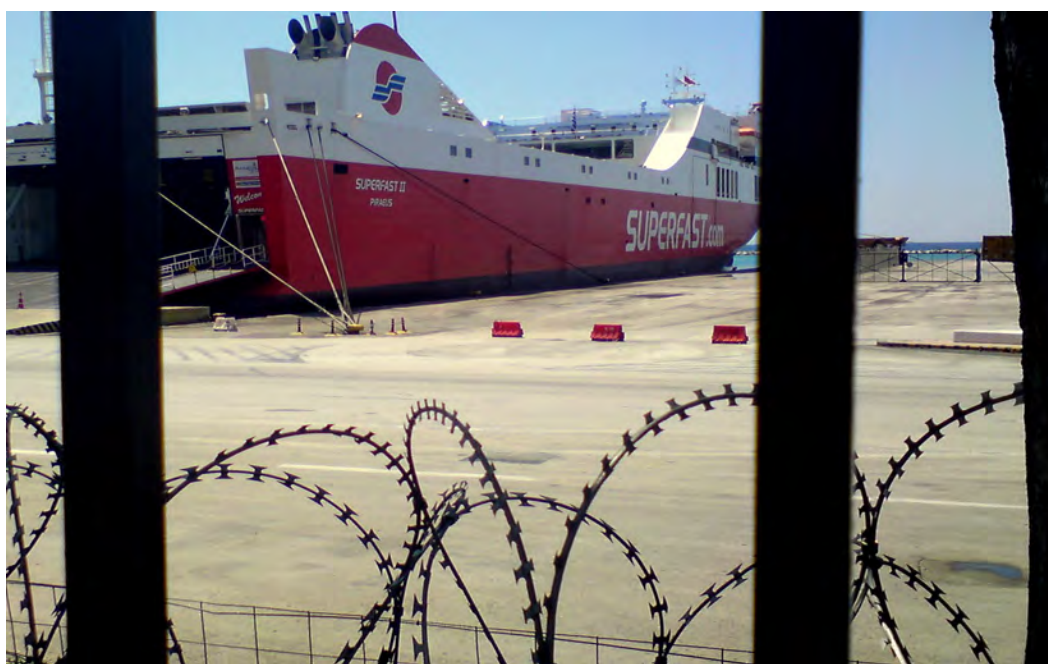
Photo 5

Photo courtesy of Milos Bicanski. The Agyia camp before its destruction.

Photo 6

Drawing made by a Sudanese migrant in 2009, posted on the wall of Kinisi. The drawing depicts migrants 'doing the dingle.' The speech bubble reads, "Don't worry I'm not trying to kill myself... I'm just want to leave Greece [sic]."

Photo 7

The yard of an abandoned building where a group of Sudanese men live. Despite having little, they were very hospitable and proud to welcome me – indeed they asked *me* to take photos.

Photo 8

Typical anarchist graffiti by the port in Patras. It reads, "Common struggles, locals and migrants."

Photo 9

Poster hung by activists at the gates of the San Andreas camp. Migrants approached me in the camp asking for a translation. The poster reads, "Stop racist attacks. Out the fascists."

Photo 10

An anarchist banner at the gates of the San Andreas camp. The banner reads, "The immigrants are our class brothers. Brush away cops and bosses."

Photo 11

The 'red card' of an Afghan asylum seeker. This photo was taken in the San Dyonisios before the camp clearance.

Tables of all informants

All names are pseudonyms.

Name of Migrant	Country of origin	Age	How long in Patras?
Abdi	Sudan	19	5 months
Abdula	Afghanistan	33	7 years
Abdullah	Sudan	34	8 months
Adin	Sudanese	26	2 years
Amad	Sudan	22	2 years
Ansar	Afghanistan	26	3 years
Anwar	Afghanistan	25	3 years
Arhad	Afghanistan	19	Unknown
Asif	Afghanistan	25	2 years
Dominic	Nigeria	25	1 month, 3 years in Greece
Emad	Afghanistan	31	3 years
Erfan	Afghanistan	32	Unknown
Fallou	Senegal	23	7 months
Farouk	Algeria	30	1 week in Patras, 1 month in Greece
Faysal	Algeria	36	18 months
Ismael	Sudan	28	1 week in Patras, 2 years in Greece
Jalili	Afghanistan	20	Unknown
Kamran	Afghanistan	20	1 week in Patras, 1 year in Greece
Karim	Sudan	20	2 months
Khaled	Algeria	29	14 months
Malek	Morocco	36	2 years
Mehdi	Afghanistan	16	1 year
Mo	Bangladesh	23	1 year
Mohammad	Afghanistan	21	Unknown
Mohammed	Sudan	34	2 years
Mustafa	Afghanistan	29	2 years
Rahmat	Afghanistan	19	Unknown
Saïd	Afghanistan	20	Unknown
Sara	Afghanistan	28	Unknown
Yousef	Algeria	25	9 months

Name of activist	Involvement in migrants' struggles
Dimitris	Anarchist solidarity work
Eleni	Member of Kinisi
Kostas	Member of Kinisi, works with Médecin du Monde
Maria	Member of Kinisi, works with Médecin du Monde
Petros	Member of Kinisi
Tellis	Anarchist solidarity work
Vassilis	Anarchist solidarity work

Kostas interview schedule:

1) Why did you get involved in migrant rights work?
- why do you think this is an important issue?
- personal motivations?
- political?
- charitable?
- personal view on the problems and solutions
- I can give my rationale...

2) Tell me about Kinisi
- how did it form?
- when?
- what do they do?
- Greek school?
- outings?
- political actions?
- what type?
- who is involved?
- founding members?
- do new people get involved?
- do other organisations collaborate?
- NB making contact when coming to Patras etc?
- how does the group work?
- you have your weekly meetings?
- based on consensus?
- chair?
- do they get funding?
- where from?
- one migrant said to me that they didn't want to visit Kinisi because they thought it was allied to the government...
- what is their aim?
- is it a political group?
- integrationist?
- awareness-raising?
- more humanitarian?
- how to reconcile these different aims?
- are there tensions in the group about this?

3) How do Kinisi reach migrants?
- do they have a particular target group?
- migrants who want to stay in Greece?

- certain groups more receptive?
- how do migrants find out about them?
- I was surprised that you hadn't visited the Afghan camp - why not?
- don't you think you need to be familiar with people's conditions?
- how well known do you think Kinisi are amongst the local population?

4) What about your experience working with MDM?
- what are you doing yourself?
- personal views on the project?
- it is certainly helping some people practically
- how do migrants know about the bus?
- in the Afghani camp nobody seemed to know about it when I asked

5) Do you know of other activists involved in migrant-issues?
- eg, no borders? paratima?
- do Kinisi collaborate or are there differences?
- what are these differences?
- ideological?
- practical- what should be done?
- I know in Calais there has been a divide between radicals/humanitarians
- perhaps this relation has been different at different times?
- for example, how did groups work together/or not during 2009 clearance?
- what are you views on more radical groups?
- to what extent are they active?
- to what extent do they work with/for migrants?

6) Tell me your experiences of local attitudes towards migrants
- hostility?
- hospitality?
- ignorance?

7) What about the local media? national media?
- sensationalist?
- bad language towards migrants?
- how would you say this has changed over time?

<u>Interview transcript extract:</u>

I: What made you get involved in this work?

K: OK well it's a difficult question. Well I was motivated by the condition of living of these people. And also, the situation at that time was- was a bit precarious for them at that time because they lived in the big camp-

I: -this was- how long was that big camp there?

K: It was... think 5 or 6 years. But at first, at the beginning, a few people were living there, and so... it... became very known in the last years- in the last 2 years.

I: So when there was quite a big Kurdish population here- quite a while ago- when I've read things I've heard that it was first the Kurdish population that was coming here- did they stay there?

K: Yes and the camp was created here by Kurdish people, but when I started to be involved in 2007 only- I think practically only Afghan people were living there.

I: And actually I didn't know exactly where it was but today I saw on Google Maps, the satellite pictures are from 2009 and I could see it.

K: Yes. It's very close to the place where the [Medecin du Monde] bus parks. And... at that time Kinisi begun. I held- there was the meetings of the new team and at that time we have not a name yet so- I came to see what was happening and to try to help.

I: So did you help to establish Kinisi? Were you there when Kinisi began?

K: Well yes, second or third meeting, I was there.

I: Yeah so it emerged out of the situation in the camp that Kinisi wanted to do something, and what- yes what were their aims then? Was it quite political motivations or kind of humanitarian- yeah trying to help things on a day-to-day basis or?

K: The... On the first thought- the main thought was to be a political organisation, I mean we had political motivation and most people- many people of Kinisi were already politically active, either- some in a political organisation or no organisation but-

I: -yeah, it's quite difficult not to be political!

K: Yeah. Yes of course, but the first thought- when I wasn't there yet, there was a dispute because some people wanted to make an organisation like an NGO and to have some humanitarian actions and to take some programmes from the European Union, things like this, and- but the majority didn't want to do something like this so- they didn't stay... So we started to... We tried to be known to the public opinion of Patras, we stated our positions and... started to go to the camp to give some food, some other stuff, and to show- to get in contact with these people. In that month- in the beginning of 2008 I think, two big demonstrations were made about the situation of the refugees and I think it was a- it was very interesting because nobody expected refugees to be in the centre of the city making a big demonstration so-

I: -but did Kinisi kind of instigate that?

K: What?

I: Did Kinisi kind of make that happen or?

K: Well in the first one, not exactly. We didn't estimate the situation very well, we were afraid about the refugees, but the refugees were the ones who instigated- they were motivated mostly by some people from Diktio of Athens who had come here-

I: -OK, oh right, yeah. I've met Regina and-

K: -and some others were there also, and we met them- they met us in the centre. But the demonstration was quite big and it was impressive. And the second one we also were there in the camp from the start and... from that time the public opinion changed a bit, started to- told me that there is other opinions... that these people had a voice and had some rights and...

I: So was it a march?

K: A march?

I: Was it- the action that you did, what was it, it was a- did you have banners? When you say you had two demonstrations what was the demonstration? So in England people normally go on a march so they have their banners and they walk around the street, or sometimes they might target a particular- you know they might go to an embassy, the parliament or...

K: Yes. I don't remember exactly what was on the banners but the aim was not to- was to protect the camp, to stop it being destroyed by the police. And it was a bit difficult for the refugees to have a slogan, to shout something, because they didn't know Greek- I remember that they were shouting 'asilo, asilo!' which means asylum because it was- I think some Afghan from Athens had come here from Diktio and he made them shout something. [laughs]

I: And so how has it progressed as an organisation? How has Kinisi progressed or how have things changed, or what your aims are- or how the situation has changed and made you-

K: -well, first about our reactions. We had the school.

I: How long has the school been going?

K: It's 3 years I think, yes, at least, 3 years. It was.. after some months Kinisi was created we had also the school, and in general we try to have actions- not only for the refugees who live in the road without any- without houses- but also for the immigrants who are integrated a bit in the city because they also had things to fight about. The two things that- especially I'm thinking the summer of 2008 when the camp was destroyed, it was a very big dispute within the city, about the camp, so our actions were targeting this aspect.

I: So like the local attitude?

K: Mhmm yes. We used to go every Saturday to the camp to give some food and old clothes and we had contact with the people there, we tried to- to intervene public opinion with the press releases... We had made a protest in the streets, in the squares, in October 2008 I think we organised our first festival, Antiracist festival. And the spring of 2010 the second one.

I: And you've decided to not do one this year, is that?

K: Er.. we wanted to do, but we... we haven't the time to get involved as much, it was needed... But we feel we want to make it on a regular basis, every year, finally we didn't manage it.

I: Yes I mean presumably everyone is- I mean they're volunteers-

K: -yes-

I: - so it's difficult to- for people to give the time. How many people make up Kinisi?

K: Well... about 50 I would say in total, yes but, 20 are more active, probably. On our mailing list we have 70 people I think, but anyway some of them don't come.

I: Yeah, and I was interested to see at the meeting- I suppose I thought it might have been

quite a lot of students but actually it was quite an age range, so it's reaching different people.

K: Yes. Mhmm. Yes we have people of all ages.

I: And do you think people are quite aware of the organisation in the city?

K: Yes.

I: People that I have spoken to seem to know.

K: Yes most people know.

I: And with migrants, how do you- how do you let them know about you? Do you wait for people to come to you a bit, or wait for word of mouth or do you try- I mean there are so many migrants here- do you try to go out and try to let people know that you can offer some support, or- I know you can't help everyone here!

K: We try to find them, and- well it was more easy when the camp- they were more concentrated. Also when the camp of the Africans was created we went there.

I: This one now?

K: No the- African people, there.

I: Oh.

K: Yes... We went there several times and so that it was better- it was better to have a contact with people from Sudan mainly because they were more politically aware, most of them, and they were like a team- something that we couldn't see in the Afghans, sometimes... But, so, we informed them about the school and we have tried to motivate them to fight for their rights, they have come in one of the demonstrations, last month. It was one demonstration when there was the hungerstrike of the 300 in Athens, so they came out with a banner- solidarity to the hungerstrike. We have told them to make a text with their demands, but it was not very easy because the population is mixed and they don't want the same things. We had one text from one of them but it was not something that could unify all of them. And... it's difficult, something like this.

I: Yeah I mean I can see how it's difficult in the sense that so many of the migrants I have spoke to- the majority of them- they don't want to be here, they don't want to be in Greece-

K: -yes, that's the problem-

I: - you know they say they are just here- they're stuck here. So actually they're not- they would like their situation here to be better but actually more than that they're just saying 'let us out'-

K: -yes-

I: -so it's kind of not about asking for rights from Greece but more than just saying- er [distraction]- and with the language as well I suppose, you know if you don't want to be staying in this country you don't have the same motivation to learn a language, to integrate. Some Algerians have said to me that they want to [learn Greek] because they want to work so they can get out, but- yes I see in that Greek class, these people, you get the sense these people they are integrating so much more because it's just, it's an investment in being here isn't it, to make an effort to learn the language and- it seems to be in quite a contrast to a lot of the Afghanis who I have spoken with.

K: And now... and our goals anyway, as I told you, what we made was influenced by what was happening at the time but what we demand is asylum to the refugees who come from countries at war... and then that- about the situation in Patras we demands from the government to create some open centres of hospitality for them, to host them. It's something which is very difficult of course. But sometimes the municipality council

have taken some decisions to create a camp, but organised, and not a prison, a camp where they could come-

I: -a reception centre-

K: -yes. But it's difficult because the local- the people don't want something like this. What the municipality-

I: -local people don't want it because it would encourage people to come or?

K: Yes, like this. It was the reason that the former mayor told that it can't be done, a thing like this, in Patras, because it would encourage people to come.

I: Which is different, in Igoumenitsa they have said that they will, or they have made a statement that there is a plan, to build some reception centres?

K: Lately you mean?

I: Yes last week or so.

K: About the detention centres, not what we demand.

I: Do you think there is a danger that there is not much difference between a reception centre and a detention centre?

K: -there is! In fact it's difficult to have what you want, but we just wanted a place like a camp where they could live but without any police.

I: Just with some conditions I suppose.

K: Yes. Not a screening centre where they would- you understand- where they would be filed and everybody...

I: Yeah, I understand.

K: Perhaps it could be more easy for the minors to create something like this, but it would just be for the minority. And sometimes there will be here 2,000 people so I don't know, it would be very difficult to find a solution for all of them.

I: Yeah. And what is the attitude- so the local municipality say that they couldn't do it because of local opinion?

K: Mhmm.

I: But do you think- I mean that's an easy way out for them isn't it, to say this. You don't know what they think themselves. Do you think there's a reluctance there in themselves as well?

K: Yes probably. And now the municipality demand from government to solve the problem...

Respondent diary – translated from French

I thought on the first day that I arrived in Greece that I would only stay one or two weeks here and then go to Italy and continue my journey, but this was not the case. I have been here 18 months. I chose a life with principles and to try to find work, to live suffering instead of a life of a drugs cartel, which would earn money quickly and let me pass. Me I chose to stay true to my principles, therefore I fight to win my life honestly, and to find a solution. In three months I find no work at all but I am very lucky to have friends on the outside who help me. I pass my time walking and reflecting. I know that I am in a vacuum, but it is what I prefer. With these people there is no solution. I think only of leaving this country in any manner. There is no smoke without fire. I know that Europe is not a paradise but I know that peace of some sort exists and this is my aim. It is not money that makes happiness, and happiness I am sure is not in Greece. The people here look at me like I am a being from another planet, with no culture. They never see the good side, they judge thousands by the act of a single person. They are too complicated and they think they are superior to others. For me this is a lack of civilisation. There is no home for me here. I must accept my destiny and try to improve my situation with them. I try to learn their language. I don't like my life here, it is trying all the time but it is my aim to survive in spite of all conditions. I didn't finish my studies to be a loser and for racism to have her end. There is one difference between human beings. The difference is the good and the bad. I don't know dear Sally if I give you what you want. Here I am lost.

The adventure begins:
I couldn't leave Algeria by air so I took the 'Annaba' bus east to the Tunisian border. I had a visa for Turkey in my passport. I took a taxi from the border and I easily passed and went to reserve my plane ticket on 'Air Turkish'. I was in Tunisia 6 hours and in Turkey one day. Then I went to 'Edirne' on the Greek border. I was in the military in the past so it was easy for me to pass to 'Orestiada.' All the people just want money of course. The police captured me and held me in a camp for 18 days, badly treated and only eating once a day, and bad food as well. I just eat bread. But everything goes OK. I leave the camp and take a train for 'Alexandropouli,' and another train for 'Thessaloniki' and still another for 'Athina.' Hell faced me there, where you see people thieving to live, chaos with police, chasing you for 10 days, wow, very annoying, I had to leave that city. I went to 'Patra' in the end, finally ate and took a breath, but there is nothing interesting in this city so I visited many cities in search of work, but found nothing. I decided to leave the country whatever the cost. I went to 'Macedonia' twice and 'Albania' twice but all the same, I returned to 'Patra.' I make a path from town to town. I try to improve myself with these people but there are no means and the majority are racist and the media always gives a mad image of all foreigners. I don't need to say that most of the time you have nothing, you live always in the dark and with a pain in the head, but fortunately I have friends who help me and I thank them with all of my heart.

<u>Research diary extract, entry 22</u>

16/6/11

Patras harbour 13:00

Yesterday evening I saw Farouk at Plateia Georgiou. He didn't seem well. At first I thought he was stoned, but as we chatted, it seemed more just that he was tired, tired of his life here, quite miserable.

Farouk has been here the same amount of time as I, before, he was in Corinthos one month. He's living with 7 Algerians and he says they are good friends, he mimes interlinking the fingers of his two hands into a fist. He's exhausted and tells me that he didn't sleep last night; he was getting up, smoking, trying to sleep again, walking, listening to music, smoking, trying to sleep, getting up, smoking. He is troubled. I don't want to talk with him about his situation because I see it is a big weight on him. "I don't know what I do."

He doesn't want to return to Algeria. He says he needs money and to take a wife, and this means finding work in Europe. He left his girlfriend Layla in Algeria, her family telling him they will only let them marry if he has money. "I want to give my wife a good life, she needs money. I am not a bad man." But he has no way to make money here. Well, he says he could if he were to sell drugs, like some Algerians do, "but I'm not a bad man, I don't want to do this." Yet Farouk doesn't seem to see a way forward, no escape route. I suggest that if he learnt Greek perhaps he could find work. "No!" he retorts, screwing up his face, "I don't want to stay here – I can't stay here, there's no work..."

We listen to music on my MP3 player. He says thank you. Why I ask. "For the music, it made me happy." He tells me a shadow-puppet story (with a flamingo, a pigeon in a tree and a fox) that he made when he worked as a children's entertainer. In these playful exchanges he seems to forget for a moment, his eyes brighten, he smiles, he becomes a personality; an entertainer. But quickly he lulls back into reflections, his eyes dull. He's not in a good way.

"You're a good women, you are my friend, will you help me? I need to find a wife – I can pay it's not problem," he writes 30-40 on a piece of paper, meaning the age of the woman, "she doesn't need to be beautiful, just a good heart. I'm 32, I must marry"....

The beach 15:00

As we drive past Carrefour from Krini this morning at 10:00 I see 3 young men sleeping at a bus stop, one on the bench, two on the floor in the shade, laying on cardboard.

I go to visit MDM at their north station. At 2pm they have seen maybe 5 people today, Ahmed tells me. Maria tells me that people are afraid to come because of the police behaviour over this week. She recognises that the project need to think around this, because people are still here and needing help, but it's difficult. She says that they have had several migrants run-away from hospital when they have taken them there, "they are afraid but actually they are safer there, sometimes they let them stay a few more nights." Kostas tells

me that one man came yesterday with a serious infection that needed intravenous antibiotics, but he ran away from the hospital, leaving them very concerned for his health...

I walk along the seafront northwards. On the rocks, in the small waterside parks, little shelters, bedding, small piles of few belongings. I see one Roma family under a tree, cooking their lunch. Then there is the beach and maybe 30 migrants sitting in the sun or shade, some swimming, some using the showers. To the right the road turns to the national road and clusters of men sit in the shade along the road, watching the traffic. Between the road and beach is a large area of reed-beds, a protected area of lowland that Regina spoke about. As I walk along, 2 men pop out of a hedge here, another 2 emerge from a deserted building, 3 walk out from amongst the trees. Pockets of life, hidden living, dispersed. This weeks police operation works to 'invisibilise' these boys that bit more.

Patras port, 18:00

Returning to MDM after this walk, I see Khaled. He tells me that the day after he tells me about the free internet on his phone, CU stopped it!
    Outside I see more familiar faces and say 'salaam alaykum!' I speak with Mehdi, he remembers me from speaking at the bus in my first week. He's at MDM to get antibiotics - he has a mosquito bite on his leg that has got infected to the size of his fist, he mimes. He asks me where I have been all these days, I tell him, generally around, and him? "I was in jail for 7 days, in Pyrgos." He was caught on a lorry when it boarded the boat, the police arrested him and took him to Pyrgos. He said that in jail he got bread once a day, and was in a cell on his own, the other cell full of Pashto (he is the first Afghani to describe himself as Hazara). He says that he asked for the police to put some people in his cell, "so I can pass my time, talk, be distracted," but he was left on his own, with his mobile taken off him. Eventually they released him, at midnight, and he walked to the main road, and "thanks to God" managed to hail a bus to Rio. From Rio he walked back to where he is camping now, arriving at 3, then he "slept and relaxed."
    He tells me he's not staying by the trains now but in 'the jungle' up past where I walked today – maybe 50 minutes from the port. He says he has a tent and stays with just a few friends, the police haven't found them yet, "it's a hidden place." He confirms that all the boys are scattered now, sleeping all over, separated.
    He wants to tell me about his friend, a 15yo that he knows from Afghanistan. This boy, 3 months ago, had a quite horrific 'accident.' He jumped on the back of a lorry, and a the lorry behind drove into the back of him. It broke both his arms – now they have metal to replace the shattered bones, he can moves his arms but can't lift – broke both his legs, and was deafened in one ear. After a month in hospital he was arrested and imprisoned. Mehdi is really worried about him and went to the lawyer at MDM today to ask if they can do anything. He was told that his friend can only be helped if he claims asylum in Greece, then they can get him out of jail...
    I ask if his friend's parents know. He pauses, "unfortunately his father died when he was very young, and his mother has married another man and has another family now." The boy has one older sister, and she rings Mehdi and asks how her brother is. "I tell her he is

here with me and everything is OK - this situation, I have been made to lie."

Mehdi has been in Greece 11months and 8 days. He's a good time keeper. He jokes that perhaps he will manage to leave on the day it turns 1 year. He tells me that Greece has changed him, "the conditions here have changed me, have changed how I behave, my manner. Before I was a cheater – you know, a cheater – always fooling with people but then I cross and I'm in a camp and my friends are sitting and laughing and playing cards and I just sit to a side, and think, think – think what will be the conditions tomorrow, what are the chances to pass... what am I going to eat."

I ask if he ever finds work. "Only ever the orange harvest, then there is work." Near Argos, boys got work for a month, it's piece-rate. He says he took under €200 for a months work – paying €50 for rent, eating €50 a month at least, and then there is transport there and back.

He explains the leaving times of the different ferries, listing the different companies, destinations and travel times. As we stand by the bus he points out the truck that got him to Italy once, driving past. Do you try to pass every day? "I get up, I wake from my dream, you know, and the first thing I think, what are the conditions today. I walk to go to check the traffic lights, see if there is a chance there that day, and then I walk to the port to see the conditions there, to see if this day the police are by the traffics lights, and then I try at the port, or if they are at the port, and then I try back at the traffic lights." He says it's very difficult now, so much control. He has been on 5 lorries and then found at security. He tells me that jumping on the lorries, the drivers don't know because they can't see, but cars that are passing will often hoot their horn, he tuts.

He tells me that one time he got on a lorry and he found a good place to hide. It was a lorry transporting oranges, and he describes how he emptied some crates, put the spare oranges in other crates and filled the crate space, putting a crate on top of his head to hide. When the driver checked the lorry and called if anyone was there, he stayed quiet. But when the truck went through control the driver was ordered to unpack all the contents, and Mehdi was found.

Once he got to Italy, to Venice (36 hour journey). He says he had to stay very still for some 5 hours while they waited at the port, left, arrived at Igoumenitsa and left again. But then he lay out and slept. But security found him on the other side and put him on a boat back. He too was locked in the toilets – "this is what they do every time." "I hit the door with my foot, hit, hit, I say, I am so hungry, please give me some food. So they gave me a small [he mimes a handful] chips and a bottle of water."

I say I can't imagine the feeling, it must be exciting to feel like you're getting out, and then, you get caught... He smiles, "we have no power, we just have to do what they tell us, what they say, there is no negotiation... This is our life – this is not a life!"

I ask if he knows about the previous camp. "Yes yes, it was better, it had some Afghani shops, you know, Afghani food, and a mosque. It had houses [he mimes streets/alleys]. Some people from these times they tell me that if you wanted to pass to Italy it takes 1-2 days trying to go and you go." I say I met Abdullah, a man who had been here 7 years. He says he knows many like this, one man he knows has been here 12 years....