(In)coherent subjects? The politics of conceptualising resistance in the UK asylum system.

Abstract: Many accounts of resistance within systems of migration control pivot upon a coherent migrant subject, one that is imbued with political agency and posited as oppositional to particular forms of sovereign power. Drawing upon ethnographic research into the role of creativity within the UK asylum system, I argue that grounding resistance with a stable, coherent and agentic subject, aligns with oppositional narratives (of power vs resistance), and thereby risks negating the entangled politics of the (in)coherence of subject formation, and how this can contain the potential to disrupt, disturb or interrupt the practices and premise of the UK asylum system. I suggest that charity groups and subjects should not be written out of narratives of resistance apriori because they engage with 'the state': firstly, because to argue that there is a particular form that resistance should take is to place limits around what counts as the political; and secondly, because to 'remain oppositional' is at odds with an (in)coherent subject. I show how accounts which highlight a messy and ambiguous subjectivity, could be bought into understandings of resistance. This is important because as academics, we too participate in the delineation of the political and what counts as resistance. In predetermining what subjects, and forms of political action count as resistance we risk denying recognition to those within this system. [219 words]

"[W]e assume a mediation between an act and its unfolding, most often attributing the push to action to ourselves as a species [...] This is the problem with agency: it makes the subject the subject of action. What if the action did not fully belong to us?"

(Manning, 2016, 16)

1. Introduction

To bear witness to the contemporary moment of asylum (geo)politics, is to acknowledge both a proliferation and geographical expansion of increasingly violent practices of border control. The framing of migration as a 'crisis', and the concomitant discourses of securitization and anti-terrorism continue to fuel anti-immigration sentiment and policies. Across the so-called Global North, national borders have been externalized: pushed offshore through processes of interception and interdiction and moved beyond the edges of traditional state territory into camps, processing and detention centres[1]. Simultaneously the national border has multiplied internally within the state; the fraught lines of in/exclusion emerge in and through everyday sites including schools, workplaces and public transport. The border is further written upon our bodies: in the UK, a child may enter illegally at birth; the border made present in the maternity unit. The material body has also become written into the fabric of the border: biometric technologies have come to characterise contemporary bordering practices (Amoore, 2006) and there were at least 40,000 physical deaths at borders between 2006-2015 (Jones et al., 2017).

This seeping presence of the border is not unchallenged, for "border controls are and have always been resisted" (King, 2016, 2–3). Ataç et al. (2016, 528) argue that with the development of many migrant protests and solidarity movements which demand forms of public action, the world has entered into a "new era of protests". This resistance is commonly recognized as taking multiple forms, including: marches; protests; sit-ins; strikes; hunger-strikes; lip-sewing; solidarity moments; visiting detention or reception centres; support networks and the practices mapping and documenting migrant deaths. As resistance to immigration control expands, a plethora of academic work continues to emerge, commenting, critiquing and attempting to intervene within the multiple practices and policies that attempt to (de)construct the border.

Within the UK, state sponsored hostility towards migrants has a long and well documented history. In 2010 this malevolence coalesced into new form(s) as the government launched a set of policies targeted

---

[1] The definite article here for 'the' state and 'the' border, is not to signal a homogeneity, nor a false unity. Instead, it is used simply out of linguistic necessity; the paper will continue to unpack these terms further.

towards undocumented migrants (Tyler 2010). These policies emerged from the "hostile environment working group" of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government and have predominantly been implemented through the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts, which embed a broad network of border control measures throughout the UK's public services and communities. The hostile environment has further dispersed the border within everyday life by engaging a variety of groups within society, from landlords, doctors, university lecturers, schoolteachers, and police, to do some of what Rumford (2008) refers to as 'borderwork'.

By interjecting the border into trusted relationships (e.g. doctor-patient), the hostile environment extends beyond the policies that construct it, creating an atmosphere of suspicion, unease, discomfort and fear for undocumented and documented migrants, perceived migrants, those forced to act as border guards and those involved in grassroots activities supporting migrants. In dispersing the spaces of the border throughout everyday life, the hostile environment paradoxically increases the moral and physical distancing that Gill (2016) explores between those responsible for legal decisions over who has the "right" to stay in the UK and those their actions impact upon. This is in part because it forces those untrained in immigration policy to act as border guards, opening space for racist behaviour and punishing those who do not check an individual's status with heavy fines.

The UK Government's active hostility towards migrants has however, resulted in some public outcry, together with the growth and development of activist groups and charities. This is in addition to the numerous third sector groups around the UK that support and campaign for the rights of asylum seekers and immigration detainees (e.g. City of Sanctuary, and Detention Action). These groups have different ambitions, work in different spaces and draw upon different imaginings of politics, and 'the' state. Furthermore, the charities themselves are formed by the grouping of multiple subjects, who may have differing visions for the future of UK asylum policy.

This paper begins from the observation that many accounts of such resistance pivot upon a coherent migrant subject, imbued with political agency and who is posited as oppositional to particular forms of sovereign power. Drawing upon ethnographic research in a UK Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), I examine moments that arose where subject and action could not be conclusively linked, and where actions could not be tied to a deliberate challenge of an asylum system. To be clear, my argument in this paper is that these accounts, which highlight a contingent subjectivity, should be bought into understandings of resistance.

Methodology

This paper is based upon research I conducted between 2014-2016 into creativity and resistance within the UK asylum system, and included work with dispersed asylum seekers, (ex)detainees and collaborative music workshops (see Author date). As part of this wider project, I attended one music workshop within an UK IRC. IRCs are closed carceral spaces where migrants, including those categorized as asylum-seekers, are indefinitely detained, technically prior to their deportation from the state. Although the number of detainees incarcerated within IRCs is comparably small (the UK detention estate has the capacity for approximately 3,500 detainees compared with the approximately 31,400 asylum seekers dispersed across the state), the daily interactions and, close proximately of detainees and staff within IRCs make this aspect of the UK asylum system particularly pertinent to examine in this paper (Bosworth, 2014).

It is important to be clear from the start that the UK Home Office does not welcome researchers inside IRCs, and therefore place restrictions on the type of research that can be undertaken in these spaces. There is much I would like to write about in this paper regarding the politics of research access to IRCs, but I am not able to do so, due in part to my relationships with third sector organisations in this field. This lack of research access raises serious concerns around oversight and accountability in a so-called liberal democracy especially given the deaths, abuse and deprivation that have been documented inside (BBC, 2017). Due to these constraints on research within IRCs, it was not possible for me to attend more than one workshop, which places tight empirical constraints around this research paper (for further discussion on the ethics and practicalities of research in 'closed' centres of migration control see Maillet et al., 2016 and Bosworth and Kellezi, 2016). I include empirics in this paper for two reasons, first because the argument I make emerges from research in the field and second, due a political and ethical commitment to push for greater transparency and research access to these spaces. I frame the empirics in paper as *examples*, reflecting Agamben's discussion of the example as neither inductive nor deductive but instead as playing alongside the 'universal' as "it is never possible to separate its exemplarity from its singularity" (2009, 31). The examples I draw upon, are not intended to be reflection of a general picture, yet neither are they limited to their own particularities; instead the example dances between the apparent 'singular' and the 'universal', as a device to "signal something about the world", and "make intelligible" a broader political context (Amoore and Hall 2013, 97; Agamben 2009, 9).[2]

---

[2] The German for example is 'beispiel', literally meaning to play (spiel) – with (bei).

The musical workshop I attended was organised by independent charity, who run semi-structured music sessions for staff and detainees within UK IRCs. I do not name this charity and instead refer to them with the pseudonym 'DetaineeMusicMaking'. On 24th June 2014, I undertook participant observation during an afternoon music workshop with staff and detainees at Campsfield House, an all-male IRC located close to the city of Oxford. In addition to this, I conducted eight interviews with the charities' staff and volunteers, analyzed artists' records of music workshops, attended a musical exchange workshop between Campsfield House IRC and a local youth group (for further information see Author and co-author date), including ethnography, interviews and focus groups. I further interviewed five ex-detainees from Campsfield House, three independent art teachers and two former independent music teachers.

Drawing on examples from my research in IRCs, I argue that grounding resistance with a stable, coherent and agentic subject, aligns with oppositional narratives (of power vs resistance), and thereby negates the entangled politics of the (in)coherence of subject formation, and how this can contain the potential to disrupt, disturb or interrupt the practices and premise of the UK asylum system. Importantly here, by *(in)*coherent[3] I am not claiming that a contingent subject cannot make claims to a coherent political subjectivity. By contingent, I mean a framing of the subject as always-already multiple, becoming and shaped by the intensities of life in all its forms. I consequently apply the work of Manning, who argues that when an approach to the political is framed through the subject "in the position of agency, promoting the act in terms of the volitional thrust of our own intentionality" scholars try and give agency to those oppressed by assuming a "mediation between an act and its unfolding… What if the action did not fully belong to us?" (2016, 16).

My argument resonates beyond its grounding within the UK asylum system; as I signal explicitly throughout, rethinking the subject of resistance productively intersects with wider debates on the category of the activist subject (Chatterton & Pickerill 2010), the politics of the (in)actions in the meantime (Cloke et al. 2016) and brings a focus upon the *subject* to the plethora of work within the Social Sciences engaging with the politics of emergence (Berlant 2011; Emmerson 2017; Raynor 2017).Yet this suggestion to expand how academics understand the 'resistant subject', and my engagement with a charity that works with the state, has resulted in accusations of compliancy with the UK asylum system. This is a critique that haunts me. It is grounded in with-us or against-us, often binary framings of resistance, which I do not disagree with but rather wish to expand. It is important to note, for example, that Campsfield House IRC has

---

[3] Brackets have been placed around 'in' here, to reflect that acknowledging the incoherence of a subject is not to refute that subjects can at times, make claims to a coherent subjectivity and that it is possible to locate intention within an (in)coherent subject. They are also use to signify a rebuttal of the linguistic binary between coherence and incoherence when, as will be expanded upon in the next section, the forces through which subjects emerge cannot be neatly categorised as such.

subsequently been closed down in response to sustained, and explicitly oppositional action (The Detention Forum 2020, The Campaign to Close Campsfield 2019). I want to be explicit from the start of this paper that no human is illegal, that violence is intrinsic to border control, and that finding ways to be, and live-with, otherwise is an ever increasing imperative. My own background volunteering within asylum charities in the UK over the last 10 years (including Detention Action, Kent Refugee Help, Global Link, Crossings and RAIS, and hosting refugees and asylum seekers in my spare room), informs my position here. To be clear, I do not see this limited voluntary sector activity as somehow giving me the 'credentials' to make this argument, rather that it is important to place myself and my politics firmly within this paper on resistance.

With this in mind, I begin by outlining scholarship which already critiques subject coherence and develops this by bringing it into conversation with work that explicitly posits intentionality as unable to exist prior to subject formation (Section 2). I then move to place this incoherence in the context of the state categorisations of migrants (Section 3), before examining staff-detainee relationships within UK detention centres, arguing that an attention to a splintered, (in)coherent subject within accounts of resistance allows for a critical engagement with ambiguous subjects that contain the potential to disrupt the practices and premise of the UK asylum system (Section 4). I turn to unpack the claim that charities within the UK asylum system should cohere to oppositional approaches to be considered resistant (Section 5). My argument is that charity groups and subjects should not be written out of narratives of resistance a priori because they engage with the state. Firstly, because to argue that there is a particular form that resistance should take is to place limits around what counts as the political, and secondly, because to be unambiguously oppositional is at odds with an (in)coherent subject.

2. Beyond the resistant subject

"For if the one who practices nonviolence is related to the one against whom violence is contemplated, then there appears to be a prior social relation between them; they are part of one another, or one self is implicated in another self [...] an ethics of nonviolence cannot be predicated on individualism"
(Butler, 2020, 9)

This paper builds upon a renewed engagement with conceptualizing resistance in Human Geography (c.f. Joronen 2017, Brice 2020). Previously, I have claimed that accounts of resistance in Geography "remain wedded to particular coordinates – of intention, linearity and opposition – that serve to determine in advance what comes to be termed as resistance" (Author, date, page). In this piece, I develop conceptualizations of resistance within the discipline by moving to demonstrate what a decentering of the

apriori resistant form of the coherent, agentic subject can bring to accounts of resistance in the UK asylum system. My argument here resonates with Brice (2020)'s work with transgender lives, which highlights what queer, feminist and nonrepresentational geographies can bring to accounts of resistance that refute a coherent subjectivity.

To be clear, the claim that it productive to move away from form as 'the' marker of what constitutes resistance. I am therefore hesitant to prescribe in advance a definition of resistance, agreeing with Foucault (1991, 174) that:

> "[A]nd if I don't ever say what must be done, it isn't because I believe that there's nothing to be done; on the contrary, it is because I think that there are a thousand things to do, to invent, to forge, on the part of those who, recognising the relations of power in which they're implicated, have decided to resist or escape them."

My understanding of resistance emerges from the work of Foucault, for I conceptualise it to be an inseparable part of power relations, an irreducible opposite. Relations of power entail resistance, as they would not count as relations of power if resistance were not possible; "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1978, 95). Consequently, resistance does not entail escaping power relations as the "strictly relational character of power relationships [whose] existence depends on a multiplicity of powers of resistance…present everywhere in the power network" (Foucault 1978, 95).

Multiplying the possible points of resistance, is therefore not a romanticizing of resistance, and neither is it, I argue, to render it meaningless. First, in refusing to predetermine the form of resistance apriori, alternative temporalities, subjectivities and materialities can be woven into narratives of resistance. This can open up glimpses of alternative possible futures. These futures may not be politically progressive, and yet they can serve to reconfigure and negotiate power-resistance entanglements. Second, an attention to the multiplicity of entanglements of resistance forces a focus on how an act, encounter or thought can be both resistant and compliant, and therefore how settling on it as 'resistance' can ignore the very potentialities and ambiguities that serve to unsettle any definitive sense of what the future might bring and the opening up of new possibilities for political claims (Squire 2017). Just as there is no singularity of resistance, this paper does not settle on a specific definition of resistance, for this risks excluding and ignoring the "pluralities of resistance" (Foucault 1978, 95), and also risks side-lining that "[c]entral to this question is a focus upon the we who recognise, encounter and/or name a particular configuration of forces as resistance. No one can presume to have the ability (or the right) to fully prescribe what resistance might look or feel like for anyone else (nor, indeed, our future selves)" (Author, date).

Butler, writing on the force of non-violence, argues that "[b]oth violence and nonviolence arrive in the fields of moral debate and political analysis already interpreted, worked over by prior usages" suggesting that to stabilize "a definition of violence depends less on an enumeration of its instances than on a conceptualization that can take into account of its oscillations within conflicting political frameworks" (2020, 7, 15). I agree with Butler, and argue that tracing the various, and emergent in/actions that come to be termed resistance reveals an inevitable (and not inherently progressive) political force attached to its various usages. A plethora of terms have emerged to detail specific manifestations of entanglements of relations. For example, Geographers have explored: counter conduct (Conlon 2013); resilience (Munt 2012; Pugh 2014) and refusal (Jones 2012) to conceptualise the nuances of these entanglements. These nuanced accounts, also include specific work within Geography and Anthropological literature on migration activism (Conlon and Gill 2013), tactics and strategies (Gill et al. 2015, Hall 2012) and scholarship that engages with Katz' well-worn distinctions between resistance, resilience and reworking (2001). For Katz (2001): *resistance* is about opposition, a subject's intentions to consciously achieve significant change; *reworking* is concerns an alteration of power relations but not a complete change in a system, and *resilience* is about endurance, how subjects withstand the situations they are placed within. Jones (2012: 697 emphasis added) explores how these accounts of resistance play out in the context of the India-Bangladeshi border, arguing 'every action in defiance of the state or the border guards should not be understood as *resistance'*; suggesting that an engagement with Katz' work on reworking and resilience can be better placed to understand a particular situation.

Conlon (2013)'s accounts of hunger striking in detention centres, provides a further nuance of the relationship between power-resistance relations. She uses Foucault to argue that hunger-striking can be framed as a political practice of 'counter-conduct' for this form of critique is always-already entangled with governmentality. Conlon draws upon Walters' calls to attend to the multiple ways that change occurs, arguing for "great openness and sensitivity to the diverse and often relatively minor ways in which migrants are constituted, and constitute themselves […] as political subjects" (2008, 191 cited in Conlon 2013, 145). Taking inspiration from Walters (2008), Conlon reads hunger striking through Foucault's lens of governmentality, specifically framing it through counter-conduct, "a practice that enacts a right to question how subjects are governed, and that is wholly consonant with and immanent to the liberal government of society" (2013, 135). This is important for my argument, as Conlon positions counter-conduct not as a discrete act of agency but as "contingent and continuous political practices that are embedded with the rationality and technologies of government" (2013, 145). I share Conlon's commitment

to the contingent and multiple forms of critique, breaking with the aforementioned oppositional narratives of grand refusal which can undergird accounts of resistance within asylums systems.

The subject has been a continued focus of analysis within this literature on immigration control. This has often been born from a desire to recognize migrant subjects as *agentic*: "someone with an audible and corporeal presence that can be described as political" (Nyers 2007, 3). The autonomous migration literature aligns with this reinscription of agency into the migrant subject (De Genova, 2017; Mezzadra, 2011; Papadopoulos et al., 2008; Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2013). This broad body of literature has been attentive to asylum seeker and refugee activist movements for "to consider detention and deportation from the perspective of migration opens the space for the analysis of agency and resistance that, as some critics have underscored, is absent from the scholarship on camps grounded in the space of exception" (Andrijasevic, 2010, 149).

A number of scholars have critiqued the binary subjectivity upon which much scholarly attention within migration is premised. For example Walters (2008, 191) explores the "relatively minor ways in which migrants are constituted, and constitute themselves [...] as political subjects" and Tazzioli (2015, 2016) analyses how the border shapes migrant subjectivities, asserting that although the "blurred category" of the migrant neither assumes the subject has a stable identity and neither does it define it; in critical migration studies, migrant struggles are "often narrowed to direct and deliberate challenges of the border regime, according to a quite traditional model of political action and of political subjectivity as well." This she argues, results in the spaces and subjects of the political becoming presupposed. Similarly, Ní Mhurchú (2014, 12) has suggested that "[s]ubjectivity theorized in terms (always) of an ability to resist against and/or transcend the boundaries of the state reinforces a particular assumption about what and where political life (citizen-subjectivity) can be" (see also Squire 2017). These scholars broadly critique accounts where the distinction between the political and the non-political is pre-determined, which results in those who do not fit with what is expected of political agency being written as non-political. The "identity reshuffling" that migrants are subject to (e.g. migrant, asylum seeker, refugee), Tazzioli (2016, 10) argues, has implications for accounts where "people are supposed to become political subjects only to the extent that they appear on the scene of the political essentially posited as a bordered space given in advance."

In this paper I build upon this critique, agreeing with Tazzioli (2015) that:

> *"migrant struggles are narrowed to movements and subjects that deliberately challenge*
> *the border regime. Instead, I propose that border struggles include a much broader array*
> *of practices: conducts and movements that beyond [sic] their deliberate purposes of*

challenging borders, trouble, interrupt or misfire the 'grasp' of bordering effects on people's lives and the acceptability of the spatial limits that bordering categories impose."

I further develop Squire's (2017, 257) argument for an attention to "how the assumption of an intentional subject involves struggles to legitimise and delegitimise different forms of subject formation" by exploring intentionality and (in)coherent subjects in the UK asylum system, noting how the figure of the agentic, political subject who intentionally disputes, disrupts or challenges appears – in various forms (e.g. the agentic migrant, the activist, the advocate) – across many accounts of resistance within this system.

This approach to subject (in)coherence speaks beyond the specifics of resistance to UK asylum system. The state's existence relies upon categorizing individuals into citizens and non-citizens; on the verification and denial of status, which makes problematizing subjectivity within spaces where it appears to be foreclosed of particular relevance. To question the link between action and subject is therefore to more broadly question the foundations of 'the' sovereign's classifications, and how to maintain a distinction between grieveable and ungrieveable lives (Butler, 2004). In the context of the UK asylum system, this expands the responsibility for sovereign actions. By this I mean that as more spaces are bought into the realm of immigration control (e.g. schools, hospitals, universities and homeless shelters are increasingly acting as proxy immigration control), and if the action does not fully belong to a subject, then we must look for to multiple sites of responsibility where these distributed acts are taking place. Therefore, when troubling the unitary figure of a resisting subject, we also need to recognize how this draws more of us into the spaces of responsibility for sovereign actions too; we are all complicit even as we resist.

3. *Subject Categories and the incomplete lines of state classification*

Author: So you said you came here with your parents?

Amir [4]: yeah, and my siblings – I was 13 so I didn't have a choice… subsequently they started proceedings using all this false information saying that I am a foreign criminal who doesn't have the right to remain in the country. They wrote a letter called 'intention of deportation' and upon receiving this letter, in prison, I replied … explaining to them who I am. They should have taken this into consideration, and amended their proceedings; they should have seen it as a balancing act. They put it as they did, that I am an illegal immigrant just producing crime, no right to stay in the country - yeah? That

---

[4] All names of research participants are pseudonyms.

goes absolutely in their favour. But they didn't see that this guy came at the age of 13, he has family here, siblings here, he has kids here, he went to school here. I don't know my ex-partner but I do have kids…

[Interview, Amir, ex-detainee, 28th July 2014]

Amir arrived in the UK as an undocumented child travelling with his parents. He was educated here and considers himself to be 'British'. Following a string of minor offences in his twenties, a more serious offence led him to be sentenced to four years in prison which, under the UK Borders Act (2007), made him automatically eligible for deportation. He subsequently applied for asylum as the situation in his country of origin was too unstable for him to return, and was continuously detained for four years, whilst the state tried to assign a 'category' to his complicated narrative. Amir fought against this detention and several deportation orders, asserting himself to be "effectively British", and rejecting the category the Home Office assigned to him [Interview, Amir, 8th July 2014].

Amir's life and detention can be seen to exemplify that his relationship to the UK exceeds the classificatory practices of the state. He identifies as British, was educated here and had children with a UK citizen. He had no option in coming here but had lived 'without status' for over twenty years. He fell into the category of a Foreign National Prisoner but as he subsequently claimed asylum, he was shifted into a different category. However, as Amir had been resident in the UK for the majority of his life, his asylum narrative became hard to align with the requirements set out by the state (here manifested in the 1971 Immigration Act). The repeated failure of the state to sort Amir into a category reveals that it is not just Amir who cannot readily be categorized, but that the premise of the state's binary categorisations are themselves inevitably fallible. Amir's relationship to the polity through his upbringing, family and education disrupts the clean lines of 'citizen' and 'other', his journey, his life, does not align with neat categorisations that the state affords.

However, in classifying someone as an 'asylum seeker', the UK government does not only dictate the confines of their present, they also construct, and in doing so capture, their relationship with an imagined future. An asylum seeker can become a refugee, deportee or be temporally admitted to the UK; their possible future categorisations within the polity are already determined. Amir's life disrupts the state's claim to this future as exposes the present fallacy of state. As Tazzioli notes (2015) it is "precisely to the extent that some subjects are governed as migrants that they strategically play with the condition of being governed by those specific categories". Thus embracing this inevitable failure of categorisation and

attempting to reduce a multiplicity of subject relations can make space for a politics beyond that of a "foregone conclusion"; the acknowledgement that things can be otherwise (Berlant, 2011, 232).

This has implications for the argument in this paper, that the subject of resistance should be considered (in)coherent. Attending to this subject as emergent and as always-already exceeding the categories of the state, does not mean that resistance is always to be found in challenging a subject's place within those categories (although again, this is not to state that an individual can challenge a subject-position), but also in the moments that - whether intentionally or otherwise - disrupt the certainty of the category itself: "[e]ngaging with resistance in its emergence unsettles a binary framing of intention, for it necessitates understanding the subject as shot through with multiple, incoherent forces" (Author, date)This is not to say that highlighting the limitations of categories can alter the path that an individual may take in their relation to the polity, but instead that they may alter the individual's relationship to that path, viewing it as yet to be fully determined and in doing so exposing the "hopes of potentiality embedded in the political as such" (Berlant, 2011, p. 226). Sharpe et al's (2014, 124) argument for an extension of uncertainty, that "we do not think enough about our potential to be otherwise" resonates here, as the paradoxes of Amir's life work to destabilise the very categories that the state is based upon.

4. Staff-detainee interactions during music workshops in UK IRCs

The argument that accounts of resistance need to "turn away from the notion that it is the human agent, the intentional, volitional subject, who determines what comes to be" (Manning 2016, 3) means that the relationships between staff and detainees within IRCs provides an provocative terrain for looking at resistance beyond an oppositional subject. This is due to the potential within the direct encounters that take place within music sessions between those detained and IRC staff. Within each centre there are "multiple layers of governance": there are private contractors "accountable to an onsite 'immigration manager' whose job is to check that the contract is being followed", it is this manager who ensures that the local onsite immigration officers who mediate between detainees and their immigration case-workers are doing their jobs (Bosworth, 2014, 14). This means that the individuals who have the most contact with detainees are not those trained to deal with immigration, and nor do they know anything about the detainees' immigration case. The majority of staff who have daily contact with detainees are Detention Custody Officers (DCOs), who deal with the day to day running of the IRC. Therefore, music sessions within IRCs take place in the presence of a DCO who is there for security purposes, although some DCOs do get involved in the activity. The musicians I spoke to were positive about the staff who attended their sessions,

whilst acknowledging that they were unlikely to have been exposed to anything problematic during their monitored visits inside the IRC.

To be clear, violence is inherent to immigration detention. My own obversions of staff-detainee encounters in the music workshop must be placed in the wider context of the well documented abuse, violence and bullying that characterizes immigration detention (BBC, 2017). Moreover, an interdisciplinary body of literature has critically engaged with the relationship between border control measures (including detention) and so-called softer, compassionate or humane interventions within these regimes (Pallister-Wilkins 2016, Gill 2016). One example of this is Morris (2016), who cautions against any improvement to the conditions of detention risks being incorporated into the expansion of the detention estate. Humanitarian motivations, and good intentions risk creating an 'immigration detention "improvement" complex' (Morris 2016, 51, 64; see also McNevin and Missbach 2018), whereby "humanitarian work that aims to alleviate suffering can instead paradoxically sustain the action that causes it and often do more harm than good."

Similarly, Tyler et al (2014, 3) ask: "what are the consequences of the co-option of charities and voluntary organisations within the immigration detention market?" Tyler et al. (2014) focus their attention on the relationship established by the Home Office between children's charity Barnardo's, security company G4S and CEDARS (which at the time, was a new detention centre for families[5]). Drawing on focus groups with migrant support organisations, they question whether "co-option within the newly devolved landscape of service provision undermine the capacity of migrant advocacy groups to resist and oppose the very border control regimes and politics of exclusion which they were ostensibly set up to contest?" (Tyler et al. 2014, 6). They found that many "felt that the compromise involved in entering into partnerships with state and/or corporate organisations was fundamentally eroding the capacity of advocacy organisations to effectively protest the deleterious effect of border-control mechanisms on migrants' lives" (ibid).

To be critical of the close relationship between the violence of 'the' state and the actions of charity and humanitarian groups that in some way perpetuate it, is not, I argue, antithetical to my argument for an understanding of resistance, and subjects and practices of resistance related, that recognizes both as fluid and inherently ambiguous. The moments outlined here do not equate to the necessity of legal challenges, protests, hunger strikes and activism groups, yet my argument is that there *is* political potential in including these moments, which do not necessarily have recourse to a coherent subject, in accounts of resistance within immigration detention. To pay attention to emergent and multiple resistances "is not to

---

[5] CEDARS was closed in 2016.

negate, nor to equate, the specificity of any resistant forms" (Author date). This also expands our responsibility. As more spaces are bought into the realm of immigration control (e.g. schools, hospitals, homeless shelters are increasingly acting as proxy immigration control), and if the action does not fully belong to a subject, then we must look for the multiple sites where these distributed acts are taking place. Therefore, when troubling the unitary figure of a resisting subject, we also need to recognize how this draws more of us into the space of responsibility for sovereign actions too; we are all complicit even as we resist. As Tazzioli (2015) notes, everyone is "shaped by and subjected to multiple social and juridical bordering-categories and identities."

Throughout the DetaineeMusicMaking workshop at Campsfield House IRC, moments arose that did not fit with expected, oppositional narratives of resistance. First, they took place within a music workshop permitted and regulated by the centre management (Author, date) and second, the situations that occurred did not (at least directly) challenge the IRC management, Home Office or the conditions of detention. For example, during a one of the detainees improvised a rap:

> *Sam [Detainee] then begins to rap again, much more angrily "home is where the heart is". Everyone seems relaxed and people are chatting to each other in groups rather than joining in. "Campsfield is not my home, fuck this shit, Oxford, what is Oxford? I need to be as strong as an Ox (cheering) to get through this, strong, I put my make up on…dead men don't count so I need to stay alive, alive". Michael [DetaineeMusicMaking] keeps echoing his last word and he and Joseph [IRC officer] drum along next to Sam. "Campsfield is fucking with my mind man" (shouts and cheers from the group - I look at Joseph to see he is laughing)" I need to show my respect to DetaineeMusicMaking."*

> *[Field-notes DetaineeMusicMaking Workshop, Campsfield House IRC, June 2014]*

In the moment described above, the detainee Sam is rapping about his view of Campsfield House as 'home'. Sam could be heard to be criticising by "making strange" (Foucault 1988, 155) the term 'Oxford', breaking it down to 'Ox' and playing with the word thus removing "the certainty of what we think we know" (Amoore and Hall, 2013, 100). This can be read as an oppositional account, for Sam is riling against the detention estate. Yet this is complicated by the fact that this is taking place within an institutionally approved music workshop, and therefore unlikely to exert pressure on the detention system to change. Indeed, it appears to be deemed non-concerning by the IRC officer present, who Joseph laughs along with Sam. This encounter is further nuanced by the fact that both Joseph and Sam are from the same origin country. The multiplicity of Joseph's subjectivity becomes visible here, as an IRC officer and a migrant he does not fit easily within a binary framework detainee 'vs' staff. Reading this moment through, Amoore

and Hall use of Foucault's comment that "a critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged modes of thought the practices we accept" can highlight how making strange is, "the process of denaturalizing political practices that appear inevitable or natural" (Foucault 1988, 155). In short, here the lyrics of Sam's rap, draw attention to what is normally accepted, and "unsettles what is usually certain, ordered and inevitable" (Amoore and Hall 2013, 107).

This destabilizing their apparent normality can be seen to subvert and ridicule the decision to categorise and reveal the fragility of the accepted political order as ex-detainee Bekim also recollected:

> *I remember one of the immigrants[6] there was joking with the staff, complaining about why he was staying here for so long, why he couldn't go to his family and he was saying that he was best friends with [ex-Prime Minister] Tony Blair and he would speak to him directly, and that Tony Blair would sort this out. He was joking, and laughing about it. But deep down, it wasn't a joke you know, and you could see how annoyed the staff were with him, and some of these things going on.*

> *[Interview, Bekim, ex-detainee, 13th May 2015]*

In the encounter recalled by Bekim, the detainee jokingly insists that he is in contact with Tony Blair, the Prime Minister at the time of his detention. In doing so, he is ridiculing the system and maintaining - however jokingly - that things have the potential to be otherwise. This has resonance with Foucault's claim that "one escaped from a domination of truth not by playing a game that was totally different from the game of truth, but by playing the same game differently, or by playing another game, another hand, with other trump cards" (1994, 295). This Foucault argues, is also the same with politics, playing with the present to point out that the current situation is not inevitable; to play the same cards differently is to expose a system as contingent. In the example above, which as a joke, as nothing 'serious', would not count as resistance by accounts that look for an oppositional subject as (I assume) the man does not think that he will alter anything through this action. However, in making strange an institution, in subverting its familiarity by implying, whether intentionally or otherwise, that we can imagine things to be otherwise is to render it unstable. This of course, does not mitigate that instability could result in a worse future, but to emphasize that there exists within these subversions the potential for change.

---

[6] It is interesting to note the language used here. Bekim (who now has refugee status in the UK) was keen throughout the interview to refer to immigrants as somehow a separate group from himself.

Whilst much literature on 'making the familiar strange' focuses on this apparent dichotomy between control and resistance (see Bakhtin, 1984), de Goede argues that settling on a moment as either resistance or control ignores the potential for the pluralities of resistance (2005). Refusing to view resistance as anything other than a coherent programme, limits the possibility of a "contemporary politics of dissent" (de Goede, 2005, 379). In the lyric of Sam's rap and the uneasy laughter in Bekim's reflection moments arise where an alternative political imagining becomes possible. Whilst they do not fit within accounts that focus upon an agentic, coherent subject, for they are not (we can assume), intentionally trying to overcome or reconfigure the UK's policy of detaining asylum seekers. In contrast, refusing to determine in advance a subject of resistance, and instead to engage with its continual becoming expands the capacity of the resisting subject and incorporates the laughter of Bekim and the rap lyrics of Sam. This is because a subject's (in)actions are considered to be underpinned by multiple political desires and imagined futures: acts exist within the currents of other times and other spaces; an act(ion) is a rupture, one that opens potentials and in doing so it exposes a subject's being in the world to be relational. What might it mean, for example, to weave Joseph as an officer who is also a migrant into narratives of resistance within the UK asylum system?

To address this interplay between intentionality and the destabilised subject, I draw upon the work of Ash and Simpson (2016, 48) to understand intentionality to be "an emergent relation with the world, rather than an a priori condition of experience." Viewing the subject as (in)coherent allows for an understanding that subject and action cannot always be conclusively linked: as the subject emerges through and with the world, so too does any apparent volition (rather than stating that it is impossible to locate intentionality within an (in)coherent and emergent subject). Yet such volition is multiple and unable to be conclusively grounded within a pre-existing subject, as Foucault notes: "power relations are both intentional and non-subjective…there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. *But this does not mean that it results from a choice or decision of an individual subject*; let us not look for the headquarters that presides over its rationality" (1978, 87 emphasis added). This approach moves away from accounts of intentionality that "implicate the presence of an intentional subject in advance of experience", where a coherent subject is seen to govern through "internal representational thought" (Ash and Simpson, 2016, 53). In this paper I have moved to disrupt the assumption that intentionality exists pre-subject, "the compulsory expectation that … actions must be identified from some stable, unified, and agreed-upon identity" (Butler, 2006, 21) and turn to conceptualise it as part of an emergent process located within the "perpetual process of subject *formation*" (Ash and Simpson, 2016, 56 emphasis as original).

In short my argument here is that conceptualisations of resistance would be enriched by destabilizing the assumed coherence of subjects, and instead take seriously moments of interruption to the smooth running of the performance of the sovereign decision to draw these lines of classification. For here the decision to exclude itself is destabilised and revealed as contingent upon the constant performance by multiple actors. This is not to state that previous literature has not taken these interruptions seriously, for example, Mathiesen's (1974) work on the necessary inclusion of moments of contradiction within alternatives posited for prison systems. Mathiesen's argument however, is that these 'smaller' moments of disruption must work towards a larger goal. I argue that through the use of rap lyrics to make strange the familiarity of the IRC, Sam and the other detainees were illustrating how such dissent is always already present in the exercise of power, and how resistance to the "paradoxical logic of sovereignty" (Connolly, 2005, 29) is not that which "transcends, or overcomes, but that which destabilizes via an acknowledgement that life (and sovereign distinctions) is 'more messy, layered, and complex than any logical analysis can capture'" (Connolly 2005, 29 cited in Amoore and Hall, 2013, 106). Furthermore, IRC officer Joseph's shared history with detainee Sam can be seen to destabilize the coherent subject of resistance, imbued with intent and one who is oppositional and challenges the actions of sovereign power. Yet, we can never fully know all of this, it is only possible to capture the subject in a "dimension of its processual creativity" (Guattari, 2006, 3). Acknowledging this splintered subjectivity necessitates attention to the plurality of resistant relations that subsequently emerge, each revealing the potential to disrupt, dispute the running of the UK asylum system.

5. *Creativity, charities and the need to 'remain oppositional'*

The implications of assumed coherence extend beyond the figure of the agentic subject and resonate further into the role of charities engaged within the UK asylum system. The actions of charities – particularly those activist or campaign groups against the detention of migrants – are often seen to fall within oppositional accounts of resistance as 'anti-power', noted by Pile 1997), that is mass mobilizations, marching, group formation and strikes. Askins (2014, 353) does, however, disrupt this apparent coherence, in her focus upon the "quiet politics" and the emotional geographies of intimate actions in encounters between refugees, asylum-seekers and more settled migrants in a "befriending scheme in Newcastle, England". I build upon Askins' work to advocate a destabilised subject, with any intention attributed apriori within the context of charity groups. This is therefore to disrupt the notion that for individual or group's action to count as resistance, they must ensure that they are "in *solidarity-with* asylum seekers and refugees in the United Kingdom, because it is through this type of language and positioning that activists can ensure that they remain oppositional to, rather than facilitative of or complicity in (however

unwittingly), the governance of asylum seekers in the United Kingdom and the passivity with which they are often portrayed" (Gill, 2016, 8 emphasis as original). Here, I do not critique the importance of these forms of resistance; instead, I aim to expand the political purchase of resistance by multiplying what subjects and charities are incorporated into narratives of resistance beyond any oppositional stances. By this I mean, including within our accounts of resistance those subjects and charities that may never cohere to a predetermined oppositional form, or make a recognisable claim and yet they serve to unsettle to present, and condition the possibility for future as-yet-unknown claims to be made.

This can be further highlighted by ex-detainee Amir who, as previously noted does not 'fit' the predetermined lines of subject classification drawn by the state. Amir's concern regarding on the relationship between charities and the UK government, resonates with Gill's (2016) argument. Amir argues that activist groups should not aim to bring asylum seekers and individuals working within the immigration system together:

> When you take a sip from the Devil's Cup there is a very long spoon, they [the charities] get caught up and they get dragged into the things, and they get sold and bought... if you want be somebody protesting you don't want to be part of their policy making as they will be using you and abusing you. This is a common thing.
>
> [Interview, Amir, ex-detainee, 25th July 2014]

Amir argument suggest that an action is only able to be fully resistant if it is attached to a subject, who maintains an oppositional approach to a particular manifestation of sovereign power. Indeed Gill (2016, 172) is perhaps critical of non-revolutionary forms of activism, particularly those that aim – as DetaineeMusicMaking do – to bring staff and detainees together maintaining that "[t]his close cooperation with the management of centres opens the group to the charge of co-optation." Gill's argument should not be read as entirely dismissive of these groups working 'inside' detention however, as he acknowledges that it is possible to avoid co-option, but such groups have a duty to speak out in opposition against the centres should any evidence of abuse arise (2016).

A conceptualization of resistance where emancipation from power structures is considered possible, and which categorizes action as either supporting or overthrowing a system (Sharp et al., 2000), emerged from those working with music in IRCs who note that their work would typically not be considered to be oppositional to the IRC system:

Emily: Do you actually not do it because you reiterate a system that is failed in itself? But then what about the well-being for those people who need it, because are you going to act in the long term? I don't think if you boycott music or theatre in detention you are going to, erm, you know, do anything.

[Interview, Emily, DetaineeMusicMaking volunteer, 24th February 2016]

Adam: He [detainee] said that to me 'you're working for a bunch of criminals' and I had to say 'well, erm, I'm not actually employed by them, I'm employed by a third party, blah blah blah' but you know, the point was not lost on me!

[Interview, Adam, Ex-Music Teacher IRC, 26th November 2015]

Creative activities are not usually considered resistant practices unless they are used as a medium for political messages through their production, or circulation. This aligns with representational approaches to art and politics, such as the work of Mesch (2013), who posits that political art is that which seeks to both comment on and elicit a reaction to an issue. Marciniak and Tyler's (2014, 8) edited volume on immigration, aesthetics and protest argues (drawing upon the philosophy of Jacques Rancière) that politics is aesthetic in that it makes visible that which had been excluded: "[t]he underlying assumption of the forms of 'art-activism' […] is that the work of creating alternative forms of visibility, or disrupting prevailing norms of representation, clears the ground for the political agency of migrant populations." In this manner creative activities are seen as a means through which other claims can be made.

Following this line of argument, music taking place within the IRC would rarely count as resistance as the IRC staff are involved in monitoring their creation and circulation they cannot be considered oppositional unless through the lyrics, images or in the process of creation, they in some way are targeted at the overthrowing of the detention system, such practices are written out of accounts of resistance. This means that they are not included within the narrative of resistance – they do not position themselves as anti-state, instead they have a commitment to neutrality, yet their manner of engagement differs from activist or campaign groups.

Perhaps conversely however, DetaineeMusicMaking are a member of The Detention Forum. This forum, which is hosted by the Refugee Council, comprises "a network of organisations working together to challenge the UK's use of detention" arguing that "Immigration detention is not the answer, for anyone"

(The Detention Forum, 2020). Whilst the organisations that comprise The Detention Forum cannot be reduced to singular positions on the role of detention, the forum positions itself as a challenger to the UK government's use of immigration detention, and is highly influential, with activist members 'The Campaign to Close Campsfield' strongly contributing to the aforementioned closure of Campsfield House IRC in 2018. The group have also had traction within the UK Parliament, supporting the findings of first inquiry into immigration detention (2014-2015) and pushing the government to reduce detention capacity (The Detention Forum, 2020). How then, does DetaineeMusicMaking's commitment to neutrality fit within an oppositional framework? How can they work with the Home Office for access whilst not actively (despite being part of The Detention Forum) campaigning against detention?

This apparent paradox is, however, precisely the point I am making in this paper; to remain with ambiguities and accept the complications that a framing of subjects as contingent can bring to understandings of resistance. In this paper I argue that subjects or charities should not be dismissed because they are not oppositional; charities can hold multiple positions simultaneously. First, to suggest that subjects, or charities who engage with the state do not count as resistant is to delineate what counts as resistance apriori. It is to write subjects and their encounters, actions and histories out of the possibility of resistance. This perception is based upon a reductive view of resistance. To argue that charity groups should be written out of narratives of resistance because they engage with the state is to claim that there is a particular form that resistance should take, and therefore is to place limits around what counts as the political. Instead, I argue that it is important for academics and activists beyond the specificities of the UK asylum system to endure contradictions rather than to write them out of politics as an attention to ambiguities, excesses and contradictions make alternatives become possible; to transcend essentialising categories is to open the possibility to become otherwise.

Any assumption that subjects and charities must remain oppositional, is premised upon an understanding of the subject as stable. This results in "subjectivities that do not fit in the exclusionary borders of what is established to be a 'political agency' [...] disqualified as non-political" (Tazzioli 2015). Indeed this resonates with Butler's (2020, 192) discussions of vulnerability and resistance and her claim that viewing "vulnerability as part of embodied social relations and actions can help us understand how and why forms of resistance emerge as they do […] if our frameworks of power fail to grasp how vulnerability and resistance can work together, we risk being unable to identify those sites of resistance that are opened up by vulnerability." Taking inspiration from Butler therefore, it is important to move away from accounts of migrant resistance consider the state to be heterogenous, paradoxical and disjointed, the subject remains coherent and able to act in opposition. Whilst the actions of a group, and of a subject cannot be equated,

exploring both as multiple allows for the question "what if the action did not fully belong to us?" to be asked (Manning, 2016, 16). An answer, as shown through this paper, is to unsettle this narrative (through various forms). A subject, decoupled from the act, is one where intentional action cannot be determined prior to the present becoming. Seeing the subject as continually formed by lines of forces results in an irreducibly multiple subject who cannot easily be categorized into resistant/non-resistant or oppositional/supporting. Such an understanding of the subject as incomplete, comprised of an internal multiplicity of forces, means that individuals are unable to be disentangled from the forces that form them. Further, only recognizing resistance that takes a particular, oppositional, form risks denying recognition to those subjects who do not cohere to 'our' predetermined and therefore expected (in)actions. Who are 'we' to predetermine what resistance can or should look like for anyone else (including our future selves)? The multiplicity of Amir's life, the laughter of Bekim and the shared histories between Joseph and Sam - *these moments matter politically* – weaving them into accounts of resistance, allows us to illustrate how the actions done by certain embodied subjects can create ruptures regardless of whether they were intended or not (although, crucially, this is not necessarily political progressive). To write the complexity of (in)coherent subjects out of the possibility for resistance is to miss that such complex entanglements can render the present contingent, where what is given is rendered uncertain.

6. Conclusions

"Critique doesn't have to be the premise of a deduction which concludes: this then is what needs to be done […] It doesn't have to lay down the law for the law. It isn't a stage in a programming. It is a challenge directed to what is."

(Foucault, 1991, 81)

I began with the observation that many accounts of resistance within the UK asylum system have been premised on an understanding of a coherent resistant subject, imbued with intent that acts to oppose a particular manifestation of sovereign power. Exploring how the lines performed by the state are always-already incomplete, I looked at how the lives of asylum seekers exceed the categorisations of the state. I examined accounts that argue the subject is coherent, oppositional and counter to particular manifestations of power relations, together with those that place charities that do not aim for revolution as outside of the remit for resistance. Through an attention to the (in)coherent subject, decoupled from an act(ion) and where intentionality cannot be attributed apriori, I argued in this paper that to side-line subjects or actions that do not take an oppositional resistant form is to miss the politics of the entanglements of power and resistance. Far from being a justification for reality, the actions of these creative charities, individuals and activities expose subjects to be (in)coherent and the present to be

contingent, in doing so they open up possibilities for alternative imagined futures. This is not to say however, that such imagined futures are necessarily politically progressive, but in destabilising the present they show how another game can be played "another hand, with other trump cards" (Foucault 1994, 295).

This argument that what counts as resistance cannot be delineated apriori extends beyond the UK asylum system. To remain oppositional is at odds with a subject understood to be multiple and always becoming, and which is in tension with accounts of resistance across the Social Sciences that variously frame practices of resistance as anti-power. This is important for, as academics, we too participate in the delineation of the political and what counts as resistance. As (predominantly) citizens and authorized migrants, we cannot fully know or predict what political actions might look like in the UK asylum system, as it is an experience unknown to us. In committing to particular forms of political action as resistance we too risk denying recognition of those within this system, that we have a responsibility to highlight. This contributes to the wider applicability of the argument made here; that understanding resistance when premised on such a critique of a stable subject is to view the subject as comprised of an internal multiplicity which is beyond capture through classification, beyond the volitional subject and beyond any apparent oppositional action. This is important because acknowledging a splintered, (in)coherent subject allows for a critical engagement with ambiguous moments and subjects that contain the potential to disrupt the UK asylum system.

Referencesx

Agamben, G. 2009. *What Is an Apparatus?: And Other Essays*. Stanford University Press, Redwood City.

Amoore, L., 2006. Biometric borders: Governing mobilities in the war on terror. *Political Geography* 25, 336–351.

Amoore, L., Hall, A., 2013. The clown at the gates of the camp: Sovereignty, resistance and the figure of the fool. *Security Dialogue* 44, 93–110.

Andrijasevic, R., 2010. From Exception to Excess. Detention and Deportation 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, NC.

Ash, J., Simpson, P., 2016. Geography and post-phenomenology. *Progress in Human Geography* 40, 48–66.

Askins, K., 2014. A quiet politics of being together: Miriam and Rose: A quiet politics of being together: Miriam and Rose. *Area* 46, 353–354.

Ataç, I., Rygiel, K., Stierl, M., 2016. Introduction: The Contentious Politics of Refugee and Migrant Protest and Solidarity Movements: Remaking Citizenship from the Margins. *Citizenship Studies* 20, 527–544.

Bakhtin, M.M., 1984. *Rabelais and his world*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

BBC. 2017. "What I Saw When I Went Undercover: The 21-Year-Old Whistleblower at the Immigration Removal Centre." *BBC News*. Retrieved on 15th April 2020 from http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/g4s_brook_house_immigration_removal_centre_undercover.

Berlant, L.G., 2011*. Cruel optimism.* Duke University Press, Durham.

Bosworth, M., 2014. *Inside Immigration Detention.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Brice, S. 2020. Geographies of Vulnerability: Mapping Transindividual Geometries of Identity and Resistance. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 45, 3, 664-677.

Butler, J. 2020. *The Force of Non-violence.* Verso, London.

Butler, J., 2004. *Precarious life : the powers of mourning and violence.* Verso, London.

Butler, J., 2006. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity.* Routledge, New York.

Campaign to Close Campsfield. 2020. *Campaign to Close Campsfield and end all Immigration Detention.* Retrieved on 20th March 2020 from https://closecampsfield.wordpress.com/

Chatterton, P, and Pickerill, J. 2010. Everyday Activism and Transitions towards Post-Capitalist Worlds: Everyday Activism and Transitions towards Post-Capitalist Worlds. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35(4), 475–90.

Cloke, P.,May, J. and Williams A (2017). The Geographies of Food Banks in the Meantime. *Progress in Human Geography* 41(6), 703–26.

Conlon D, Gill N, Asylum-Network. 2015. Guest Editorial: Interventions in Migration and Activism. *ACME.* 14, 442-451.

Conlon, D. 2013. Hungering for Freedom: Asylum Seekers' Hunger Strikes - Rethinking Resistance as Counter-Conduct. In Moran, D., Gill, N., and Conlon, D. (Eds). *Carceral Spaces: Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention*, by Ashgate, Aldershot.

Conlon, D., and Gill, N. 2013. Gagging Orders: Asylum Seekers and Paradoxes of Freedom and Protest in Liberal Society. *Citizenship Studies* 17, 241–59.

Connolly, W., 2005. *Pluralism*. Duke University Press, Durham.

De Genova, N., 2017. The Incorrigible Subject: Mobilizing a Critical Geography of (Latin) America through the Autonomy of Migration. *Journal of Latin American Geography* 16, 17–42.

de Goede, M., 2005. Carnival of Money. Politics of Dissent in an era of globalising finance., in Amoore, L. (Ed.), *The Global Resistance Reader*. Routledge, Abingdon.

Dines, N., Montagna, N., Ruggiero, V., 2015. Thinking Lampedusa: border construction, the spectacle of

Emmerson, P. 2017. "Thinking Laughter beyond Humour: Atmospheric Refrains and Ethical Indeterminacies in Spaces of Care." *Environment and Planning A* 49(9), 2082–2098.

Foucault, M. 1988. *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984.* Routledge, London.

Foucault, M., 1978. *The history of sexuality.* Vintage, New York.

Foucault, M., 1991*. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Foucault, M., 1994. The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom, in: Rabinow, P. (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth, Essential Works of Foucault* Penguin Press, London.

Gill, N., 2016. *Nothing personal?: Geographies of Governing and Activism in the British asylum system.* John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.

Guattari, F., 2006. *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*. Power Publications, Sydney.

Hall, A., 2012. *Border Watch. Cultures of Immigration, Detention and Control*. Pluto Press, London.

Jones, R. 2012. Spaces of refusal: Rethinking sovereign power and resistance at the border. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102, 685–699.

Jones, R., Johnson, C., Brown, W., Popescu, G., Pallister-Wilkins, P., Mountz, A., Gilbert, E., 2017. Interventions on the state of sovereignty at the border. *Political Geography* 59, 1–10.

Joronen, M. 2017. "Refusing to Be a Victim, Refusing to Be an Enemy". Form-of-Life as Resistance in the Palestinian Struggle against Settler Colonialism. *Political Geography* 56, 91–100.

Katz, C. 2001. On the grounds of globalization: A topography for feminist political engagement. *Signs* 26, 1213–1234.

King, N., 2016*. No borders: the politics of immigration control and resistance.* Zed Books, London.

Maillet, P., Mountz, P. and Williams, K. 2016. Researching Migration and Enforcement in Obscured Places: Practical, Ethical and Methodological Challenges to Fieldwork. 18, 927-950.

Manning, E., 2016. *The minor gesture, Thought in the act.* Duke University Press, Durham.

Matheiesen, T. 1974. *The Politics of Abolition.* Martin Robertson & Company Ltd: London.

Marciniak, K., Tyler, I., 2014. Introduction, in: Marciniak, K., Tyler, I. (Eds.), *Immigrant Protest: Politics, Aesthetics, and Everyday Dissent* State University of New York Press, Albany.

McNevin, A., Missbach, A. 2018. Luxury limbo: temporal techniques of border control and the humanitarianisation of waiting. *International Journal of Migration and Border Studies* 4, 12-34.

Mesch, C., 2013. *Art and politics: a small history of art for social change since 1945*. I.B. Tauris, London.

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, London.

Morris, J. 2016. In the market of morality: international human rights standards and the immigration detention 'improvement' complex. In Conlon, D. and Himesta, N. (eds) *Intimate Economies of Immigration Detention.* Routledge, London.

Munt, S R. 2012. Journeys of Resilience: The Emotional Geographies of Refugee Women. *Gender, Place & Culture* 19, 555–577.

Ní Mhurchú, A., 2014*. Ambiguous citizenship in an age of global migration.* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Nyers, P. 2007. Introduction: Why citizenship studies. *Citizenship studies.* 11, 1-4.

Pallister-Wilkins, P. 2016. Humanitarian Borderwork. In C. Günay, & N. Witjes (Eds.), *Border Politics: Defining Spaces of Governance and Forms of* Transgressions. Springer, New York.

Papadopoulos, D., Stephenson, N., Tsianos, V., 2008*. Escape routes: control and subversion in the twenty-first century.* Pluto, London.

Papadopoulos, D., Tsianos, V.S., 2013. After citizenship: autonomy of migration, organisational ontology and mobile commons. *Citizenship Studies* 17, 178–196.

Pile, S., 1997. Introduction: Opposition, political identities and spaces of resistance, in: Pile, S., Keith, M. (Eds.), *Geographies of Resistance*. Routledge, London.

Pugh, J. 2014. Resilience, Complexity and Post-Liberalism: Resilience, Complexity and Post-Liberalism. *Area* 46, 313–19.

Raynor, R. 2017. Dramatising Austerity: Holding a Story Together (and Why It Falls Apart . . .). *Cultural Geographies* 24(2), 193–212.

Rumford, C. 2008. Introduction: Citizens and Borderwork in Europe. *Citizenship Studies* 12, 1470-1235.

Sharp, J.P., Routledge, P., Philo, C., Paddison, R., 2000. Entanglements of Power: Geographies of domination/resistance, in: Sharp, J.P., Routledge, P., Philo, C., Paddison, R. (Eds.), *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance, Critical Geographies.* Routledge, London.

Sharpe, S., Dewsbury, J.-D., Hynes, M., 2014. The Minute Interventions of Stewart Lee: The affirmative conditions of possibility in comedy, repetition and affect. *Performance Research* 19, 116–125.

Squire, V., 2017. Unauthorised migration beyond structure/agency? Acts, interventions, effects. *Politics* 37, 254–272.

Tazzioli, M., 2015. Political interruptions and spatial disobediences beyond the scene of the political. Dark Matter 12. Retrieved on 15th January 2019 from http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/2015/10/05/border-interruptions-and-spatial-disobediences-beyond-the-scene-of-the-political/

Tazzioli, M., 2016. Border displacements. Challenging the politics of rescue between Mare Nostrum and Triton. *Migration Studies* 4, 1–19.

The Detention Forum. 2020. *The Detention Forum.* Retrieved on 20th March 2020 from https://detentionforum.org.uk/about/.

Tyler I, Gill N, Conlon D, Oeppen C. 2014. The business of child detention: Charitable co-option, migrant advocacy and activist outrage. *Race and Class.* 56, 3-21

Tyler, I. 2010. Designed to Fail: A Biopolitics of British Citizenship. *Citizenship Studies* 14, 61–74.

Walters, W., 2008. Acts of Demonstration: Mapping the Territory of (Non-) Citizenship, in: Isin, E., Neilson, B (Eds.), *Acts of Citizenship*. Zed Books, London.