

Struggles of Migration as in-/visible Politics

Introduction

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Ever since the Hungarian authorities enacted a temporary halt on international train travel from Keleti Station in Budapest and more or less abandoned thousands of stranded refugees, countless images, both impressive and deeply disturbing, reach us daily: Refugees by the hundreds making their way on foot through Hungary, Austria, Germany and Denmark, walking on motorways and train tracks because international train and bus travel has been shut down; overwhelming transnational willingness to support refugees by offering rides in private cars, by welcoming them and providing for them at train stations, or by organising aid convoys to Hungary, Croatia, Greece and Macedonia. But we also witness violent behaviour of border officials and camp personnel, neo-Nazis stirring up hatred, bawling ‘concerned citizens’, and the burning down of refugee shelters. During this “long summer of migration” (Kasperek/Speer 2015), Schengen and the project of the European Union as a whole have entered a severe crisis, as highlighted not only by the reinstated controls along the borders of Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Denmark, but also by the de facto suspension of the Dublin system. In the past months, through these marches and other enactments of the freedom of movement, the struggles of migration have become more dynamic every day and asserted their self-determined mobilities, thereby exposing the contradictions of the European border regime.

Since the beginning of this year, about 3.000 people drowned in the Mediterranean Sea or lost their lives under different circumstances on their way to Europe. Hundreds of thousands of refugees are forced to live under inhumane

conditions in inadequate tent camps, overcrowded initial reception centres or have to sleep rough. This is not only the case along Europe's external borders, in Greece, Italy, Morocco, Libya or Turkey, but also in Hungary, Germany or Austria. Right-wing governments such as the Hungarian one deploy military and police forces at their borders and erect walls and fences against migrants and refugees. Organised radical right-wing groups in Germany set fire to refugee shelters, abuse and attack asylum seekers. At the same time, civil society groups and religious organisations throughout the mainstream political spectrum pose demands, for example for the establishment of a legal ferry service for refugees across the Mediterranean Sea, or even turn their own vessels into rescue boats. In many European cities, solidarity networks were created throughout communities and neighbourhoods to accommodate refugees in private homes, to supply them with clothing, food, and money and to enable them to access education and basic medical care.

While Germany in particular celebrates itself as the world champion of a 'welcoming culture', the federal government reinstated national border controls over night and further restricted the right to asylum in October, after it had already tightened access to asylum in June 2015 (cf. kritnet 2015). The new acts of deprivation jeopardize the political achievements of the past few years and include the expansion of accommodation in camps and of the 'Residenzpflicht', a residence obligation restricting asylum seekers' freedom of movement, as well as the reinstatement of voucher systems. The piece of legislation also extends the list of 'safe countries of origin' to include Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro. Furthermore, it provides for the removal of social rights for some refugees. This is contradicting the decision of the Federal Constitutional Court which stated only in 2012 that the fundamental right guaranteeing basic humane living standards would also apply to refugees, suggesting that human dignity cannot be relativized, regardless of migration related considerations (BVerfG 2012; cf. Pro Asyl 2015).

Meanwhile, EU member states agreed to introduce a quota system to distribute 160.000 refugees amongst them. Leaving aside the fact that this is a marginal figure in light of current migration movements, such bureaucratic 'redistribution' seems futile given the self-determined mobilities of refugees in recent months. Apart from this quota system, the EU institutions were merely able to agree on tightening legal and security measures, further deterring and criminalising refugees. They decided to widen the definition of 'safe countries of origin' in order to include more of the EU's economically and politically unstable neighbouring countries and also extended military operations against 'human smugglers' and 'traffickers' along transit routes. These measures serve to

increasingly restrict access to the human right to asylum in the EU, while the humanitarian crisis experienced by refugees reaches a dramatic scale even in 'central' Europe.

In spite of these seemingly desperate attempts to deter and control migration, it becomes clear that the European border regime as we knew it has failed. Until the Arab Uprisings, countries of North and West Africa but also of Eastern Europe fulfilled the role as (post-colonial) wardens of the European border regime quite successfully, in return for financial compensation (cf. Buckel 2015). Moreover, through the Dublin Regulations, responsibilities for border control had been handed to the EU's southern and eastern member states, while Germany, for example, dramatically scaled down its infrastructure meant to take in and provide for refugees. But now the wardens along Europe's external borders cannot be relied on any more. Armed conflicts, for example in Libya, Syria and Ukraine have escalated and as a result of increasing migration movements, the borders of Greece and Italy have become extremely porous. Additionally, the debt crises in southern Europe prompted many people from the western Balkan states who used to work in Italy and Greece to move towards Germany, France or Austria.

However, the reasons for the crisis of the European border regime cannot merely be ascribed to the conflicts in European and non-European countries serving as Europe's border guards, conflicts that the EU itself contributed to. In particular during the past three years, the border regime *itself* produced new migratory actors, subjectivities and forms of political articulation that are at once a manifestation and a consequence of the crisis. These actors and subjectivities, their mobilisations and political struggles are at the heart of this second issue of *movements*.

Refugee Movements and the Right to Freedom of Movement

It was on the 29th of January 2012 that the Iranian Mohammed Rahsepar hanged himself with a bed sheet in an initial reception centre for asylum seekers in Würzburg, southern Germany, as he had announced. This occurred after his psychiatrist had urged to rearrange his conditions of accommodation, but without success. The suicide could have been treated as a normal, everyday occurrence, as it had often been done in similar situations. But in this case, several demonstrations followed Rahsepar's death and were able to draw the

public's attention to the accommodation conditions of refugees in Germany.

A group of young Iranian refugees began a hunger strike in Würzburg in March 2012. Employing radical methods they were able to further increase public attention: They sewed their lips shut. The protest spread to other cities where vigils were organised in erected tents ('Refugee Tent Action'). In September 2012 a group of about 50 refugees left Würzburg and walked towards the German capital. After one month on the road, the almost 600 km long foot march ended at Oranienplatz, a square in Berlin, where a tent city was set up. From that moment on, the protest had created a collective space and voiced shared political demands: The abolition of the obligation to live in camps and of the 'Residenzpflicht', as well as to end existing practices of deportation. The so-called O-Platz inspired country-wide mobilisations. Various demonstrations were initiated on this square, hunger strikes and even a tree occupation took place, and it was there that people with various backgrounds encountered one another.

Three years later, the O-Platz is an empty green space once again. The big circus tent, formerly the heart of the protest camp, was set on fire by unknown persons in June last year. Also the pavilion, a wooden house with 28 doors, was destroyed in an arson attack in April 2015. The camp had been forcibly evicted a year prior to the attack, in April 2014. Only an abandoned information container remained as the last visible sign of the protest camp in Berlin's district of Kreuzberg. Now, even this container is gone, removed by district authorities. But even though this perceptible and central site of protest has disappeared, nothing is as it was before. With the O-Platz protest camp, refugees succeeded to create a social space and an audible voice in society. Through their public and activist campaigns, they were able to turn cross-border mobility and its control, as well as state mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion into publicly and controversially debated issues.

The refugee activists' protest campaigns represent a new dimension of forms of self-organisation. The social network, the alliances and the innumerable personal connections based on friendship and solidarity that were forged during the occupation of the square between refugees, supporters and residents, have a lasting effect. In this respect, they created a movement that is a novelty for Germany. "Oranienplatz became pregnant with the asylum strike in 2012. Since then, Oranienplatz has given birth to many Oranienplatz babies and spread all over the republic. We will not stop to fight for equal rights for all. You can't evict a movement," says Napuli Langa (Staiger 2015), a prominent protagonist of the O-Platz refugee protests, who also contributes to this issue

of *movements*.

The tent city in the Sigmund-Freud-Park in central Vienna, which was erected in winter 2012, has also disappeared. Like its counterpart in Germany, the so-called *Refugee Movement Vienna* began as a protest campaign against the precarious living conditions in one of the two Austrian initial reception centres, in Traiskirchen, 30 km south of Vienna. Refugees and allied *No Border* activists organised a protest march from Traiskirchen to Vienna. The camp set up in front of the Votive Church (Votivkirche) attracted more refugees, and on the 18th of December 2012, the International Migrants Day, the church was occupied. Shortly afterwards, some of the refugees went on a hunger strike.

Even if the Viennese protest movement's ability to publicly mobilise faded toward the end of 2013, it accomplished a great deal: the campaign evoked a positive shift in the public's perception of refugees, and some of the refugee activists received residence permits. For refugees and supporters alike, the participation in the movement led to important processes of politicisation. Through political participation, forms of empowerment developed and refugees gained access to social and political networks. Manifold connections between refugees and supporter networks were generated and continue to remain significant for the mobilisation and organisation of political campaigns and actions, such as protests and demonstrations against the inhumane accommodation in camps in Traiskirchen, anti-deportation protests and struggles around the right to remain but also when seeking shelter and employment.

Similar protests by refugees and undocumented migrants emerged around the same time in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Hungary, Denmark, and Sweden, as well as in Europe's external border regions, such as Italy, Greece and Morocco. Already since 2011, people mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa organise political protests in the UNHCR-managed Tunisian desert resettlement camp of Choucha. The camp was founded after its inhabitants were forced out of Libya where they had worked until the fall of Muhammad Gaddafi. Moreover, networks of Tunisian parents have emerged, protesting the disappearance of their children after embarking on journeys to Europe in the aftermath of the Jasmine revolution.

Through their public visibility and political networking, practices of self-organisation and their political radicalism, these migration movements heralded a "new era of protest" as it was referred to in the call-out for the protest march to Berlin described above (From the Struggles Collective 2015; Ataç 2013; Schwiertz 2015). In this second issue of the journal *movements*, we wonder what the characteristics of these protest movements are, what forms of struggle

they employ against restrictive border policies, what actors, subjectivities and protests emerge in that process, and what political results and effects can be achieved by these diverse and trans-local movements.

The in-/visible Politics of Migration

While the political mobilisations described above heralded a new era of protest, they need to be understood in the light of past migration struggles. When explored through a historical lens, patterns of an *in/visible* politics of migration can be discerned.

Visible forms of protest include those collective protest campaigns that sought to generate public attention nationally and transnationally and the visibilisation of protesters as political subjects. Examples include the struggles of the 1960s and 1970s in factories and around agricultural production, in the streets, on squares and in front of courts of law (cf. Bojadžijev 2012; Karakayali 2008; Heck 2008). From the 1980s onwards and throughout the 1990s, new forms of protest emerged: church asylum, hunger strikes, airport blockades, *No Border* camps, anti-deportation and anti-detention alliances. In Europe it was in particular the movement of the *Sans Papiers* in France since the mid-1990s which used church occupations and political strikes to leave the shadowy realm of illegality and protest criminalisation and the deprivation of rights (cf. Barron et al. 2011; McNevin 2006). Also the *mega marches* in the USA during which millions of mostly undocumented migrants took to the streets in 2006 to contest their disenfranchisement and exploitation aimed at public visibility. In order for these struggles to gain public attention and become visible, the use of social media is particularly significant as is the creation of collective spaces and social infrastructure. The organisation of migrant workers in the USA that led to the establishment of *Worker Centers* (Benz 2014) or the project of the *Autonomous School* in Zurich can serve as fitting examples. The school was the result of a three-week long church occupation and has since become an important social space in the city where activists connect issues of migration with rights to employment, the city and education (cf. From the Struggles Collective 2015).

At the same time, diverse forms of migrant struggles exist that take place in less publicly visible spaces, in the micro-political spectrum of everyday life and the private sphere. *Invisible politics* emerge out of everyday practices in the context of border and integration regimes. These practices tactically appropriate mobility and connect migration projects, thereby subverting and

questioning the order and borders of nation-states, creating trans- and post-national spaces. Such political practices are invisible as they are not captured as such by dominant regimes of visibility — they rather attempt to elude their gaze and seek to remain imperceptible.

It is precisely through these less spectacular, often invisible everyday struggles, for example for employment, housing, and the freedom of movement that the status quo is called into question. As the summer of migration has made abundantly clear, people simply enact their rights to escape and to free movement. In the absence of legal pathways, they find irregular ways to cross the European border and, having entered the Schengen Area, they circumvent the Dublin Regulation in order to arrive at a desired place that allows them to live, and not merely to survive.

Even if these mobilities do not constitute organised and thus visible mobilisations of protest, border crossings can be understood as acts of civil disobedience that call into question certain laws and the dominant prevailing order of migration policies. Other forms of invisible politics, tactics, and networks, or *imperceptible politics* as referred to by Dimitris Papadopoulos, Niamh Stephenson und Vassilis Tsianos (2008), can be found in marriage migration, migrant networks and local solidarity structures as well as in acts of destroying identity documents to evade registration. This latter manifestation of invisible politics was enacted during the *Refugee Protest March* and was as such also part of a public and collective act of protest which points to the fluid transition from invisible to visible politics. The foot marches undertaken by refugees this summer, from Hungary to Austria and Germany or via Denmark to Sweden, demonstrate that the largely invisible political practices of appropriating mobility can become visible political acts, even dominating public discourses and controversies in Europe and beyond. In this issue of *movements* we point to the ways in which forms of visible and invisible migration struggles fold into one another, inter-relate and become constitutive of one another.

New Actors, Subjects and Forms of Protest

Who are the actors of migrant struggles? How do their practices and strategies of political representation materialise? How are alliances formed? And in comparison to previous migrant protest movements, what are the differences and specifics of the present ones? The protagonists of these struggles are asylum seekers and undocumented workers, amongst them previously politicised refugees such as anarchists, communists and other left-wing opposition members

from Iran, the Kurdish areas and Syria. But amongst them are also those who started out without an explicit political biography. They experienced repression, violence and trauma in their encounter with the restrictive European border regime during their journeys and developed manifold strategies to overcome borders, and to build solidarity networks. Many refugee activists fight for a life in dignity irrespective of their legal status and have discovered the language of human rights for themselves, due to their experiences in transnational spaces.

The groups of supporters are equally diverse. They include *No Border* activists, activists of self-organised migrant groups, feminists and others who identify as part of the undogmatic or party-political left and who increasingly campaign for refugee rights. Moreover, supporters include also many NGOs, church-based charities, established migrant organisations, left-wing academics and artists, as well as some groups within trade unions and political parties. In 2015, the long summer of migration has demonstrated that many of those who are not explicitly organised in political parties, religious organisations or civil society seek to help refugees based on humanitarian or other concerns. And, not least, many refugees or those who once personally experienced flight in their past have become supporters of today's refugees.

New social and political coalitions emerged in the course of these struggles, and with them transversal forms of politics that do not essentialise differences but acknowledge the different experiences and realities of those encountering one another. A distinctive phenomenon is the merging of diverse struggles — for example those over labour, processes of gentrification, and over the right to the city, thus for the *commons* and for free access to social and public infrastructures — with the struggles of refugees for the right to remain, the freedom of movement, and social and political participation. Similar to the Occupy movement, there is little formal organisation such as in parties or associations, and often also no formalised spokespersons.

The refugee protest movements are further characterised by the fact that refugee activists raise their voices publicly and without intermediaries. This allowed them to break with media and political discourses characterising them either as victims or criminals. The importance given to speaking-for-oneself also needs to be understood as an attempt to establish a political practice through which these social actors escape their normalising representation and paternalistic treatment, as especially NGOs were often criticised for. This has, once again, raised the question of the representation of refugees and illegalised subjects. Almost twenty years ago already, activists from *The Voice Refugee Forum* and the *Caravan for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants* had vehemently

formulated their vision of autonomous political structures and organisation for and by migrants. While the struggles of these collectives received little public acknowledgement for many years, the refugee struggles of 2012 became, at least for some time, a popular subject in the mass media.

This is related to the chosen practices of protest with which the refugee activists attempted to articulate and expose societal repressions. In embodied practices, for example when hunger-striking, they put their livelihood and their bodies on the line, often the only means available to undocumented subjects to exercise political pressure and expose those politically responsible. Through these methods and in contrast to previous protest movements, the new movement of refugees succeeded to at last become perceived by political authorities and gain some degree of attention from the state, even if they were mostly unable to achieve tangible political results.

These forms of self-representation through highly radical and determined methods were and remain the strength of the refugee movement. However, their insistence on autonomy also promoted new boundaries, differentiations and cleavages within the movement. For instance, during the *Refugee Struggle Congress* in March 2013 in Munich, conflicts arose around the distinction between *citizens* and *non-citizens*, causing the exclusions of some from political meetings. At the same time, an increasing number of (refugee) activists rejected the exclusive categorisation of members of the refugee movement based on their legal status (citizen, non-citizen, refugee, supporter, etc.). They pointed out that a human's identity and subjectivity could not merely be determined by his or her legal status, but by varied and intersectional dynamics of social stratification, such as gender, social class and origin. This perspective was introduced to the debate mainly by female refugees who had to fight for their autonomy within the movement and who, like the organisation of refugee women *Women in Exile*, articulated demands specific to women and LGBTIQ* (cf. Nadiye Ünsal in this issue).

Another important aspect of the new refugee movement is its desire to build strong transnational political ties. With the slogan "Oranienplatz is everywhere!", the refugee movement in Berlin mobilised the trans-border *March for Freedom* of Sans-Papiers and migrants that started in Strasbourg in May 2014 and ended in Brussels in front of EU institutions in June, accompanied by decentralised protests in various European countries. Already in 2011, marches and strikes took place in Italy, Greece, Spain, and France under the slogan "A Day Without Us" and a year later during the transnational migrant strike in Austria. The slogan "A Day Without Us" intended to emphasise the important

role of migrants in economic, cultural and social life (1. März/Transnationaler Migrant_innenstreik Wien 2012) and had emerged in 2006 during the mega marches in the USA.

The refugee movements' pronounced transnational orientation is at the same time embedded in local and communal structures. Often serious grievances in camps or accommodation centres for asylum seekers trigger trans-local and trans-national connections between refugees in different places as they constitute shared experiences. One example for the ways in which refugees carry protests into the midst of the European "borderland"¹ (Balibar 2009) is the group *Lampedusa in Hamburg*, a movement of refugees who arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa and struggle since 2013 for their right to stay and for social participation in the northern German city (cf. Martina Tazzioli in this issue). Lampedusa has become both a symbol of Europe's inhumane migration policies and a starting point for migrant struggles. These struggles have been inscribed in the *Charter of Lampedusa* of 2014,² a transnational declaration constituting the right to stay and move freely which has become a point of reference for many local migrant and pro-migrant movements. Transnational connections are thus established and intensified through spatial and virtual movements and the creation of ties amongst migrants through marches, social media campaigns and coalitions with support groups. It is in this sense that the refugee movement inscribes itself into the concept of the autonomy of migration which understands migration as a social and political movement forming against attempts to control and govern it (cf. Moulier-Boutang 2007; Mezzadra 2007; Karakayali/Bojadžijev 2010).

¹ Étienne Balibar describes the entire EU area as *borderland*. Here, human mobility is selectively and gradually enabled or constrained through a highly differentiated and highly technicised system of categorisations and *transfer points* such as ports, airports, railway stations and motorway services. The border as social space is not only relocated into the midst of society or even attached to the bodies of mobile individuals by means of systems of biometric data storage such as EURODAC. Rather, the border itself becomes mobile and takes on a diffuse and network-like characteristics. But the traditional land border also gains a new importance as *hard border* (cf. Rumford 2006) at the external borders of the EU or the NAFTA area. Here, mobility control is less mobile, less privatised and less individualised, but tends to be more militarised (cf. Kron 2015: 13).

² "The Charter of Lampedusa is a pact achieved mainly through a constituent grass-roots process which brought together various organizations, associations and individuals in Lampedusa from the 31st of January to the 2nd of February 2014." (<http://www.lacartadilampedusa.org>).

Repression and right-wing Politics

Refugee activists both challenged the prevailing order of migration governance and claimed their rights in various ways. At the same time, these movements have come to face different forms of pressure and violence, for example through deportations of activists and attempts to criminalise the protest movement (as exemplified by the lawsuit against refugee activists in Vienna on charges of ‘human smuggling’). In addition, not only the struggles *of* migration, but also those *about* and *against* migration have become increasingly visible since 2013.

German and European racism is on the rise yet again and materialises in right-wing mobilisations and coalitions: ranging from the party *Alternative für Deutschland* (‘Alternative for Germany’, AfD), the right-wing populist mobs and gatherings of *Hogesa* (‘Hooligans against Salafists’) to PEGIDA (‘Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident’). From Berlin-Hellersdorf and Hamburg-Harvestehude to the Saxon towns of Freital and Heidenau, a new wave of racist and right-wing radicalism traverses a significant spectrum of society. This also applies to Austria, where the FPÖ and other radical right-wing formations mobilise against asylum seeker accommodations, as well as to Switzerland, where racist citizen initiatives organise against asylum seekers. In Hungary, the right-wing populist party Fidesz with President Victor Orbán even forms the government. With the right-wing UK Independence Party in Great Britain, the Front National in France or the Golden Dawn in Greece, it is clear that radical and populist right-wing parties are on the rise throughout Europe.

Presentation of the Contributions to this Issue

The contributions to this issue examine migration struggles from various perspectives. The diversity of practices of resistance does not only demonstrate the necessity to widen reductionist conceptions of political resistance, but also generates new perspectives on political processes of subjectivisation, forms of organisation and everyday practices of appropriating the freedom of movement and other rights in contestation with the contemporary border regime. Often, the protagonists of these struggles develop dynamic forms of protest and creative solidarities against the spatially diffused, decentralised and often extremely violent practices of border governance.

The contributions reflect in detail on the complex dynamics between institu-

tional mechanisms of control and the struggles of migration. Some of those who raised their voices as refugees and continue to stimulate practical and discursive interventions contribute to this issue. Other contributions reflect upon theoretical and practical questions surrounding solidarity, help and support from the perspective of supporters and scholars.

Napuli Langa examines the protest forms of refugee struggles in Germany and Europe. She conceives of these struggles as mirror images and contestations of an imperialist, colonial and capitalist past and present.

Holger Wilcke and *Laura Lambert* analyse the O-Platz in Berlin-Kreuzberg and its 18 months long occupation by refugees as a specific site of political protest. They particularly focus on the question of the political when exploring visible and invisible migration struggles at this central site of the European refugee movement since 2012.

The relationship between the visible (public) and invisible or imperceptible politics of migration struggles is also the focus of *Lisa Riedner's* contribution in which she discusses labour struggles undertaken by four Bulgarian cleaning staff members in Munich. Riedner distinguishes struggles that are carried out by means of a (publicly visible) politics of representation, for example at employment tribunals, from those invisible or imperceptible struggles that are carried out, for instance, at the workplace. Similar to Wilcke and Lambert's assessment, Riedner comes to the conclusion that 'visible' and 'invisible' struggles do not form mutually exclusive but merely different migrant strategies of resistance against the sometimes very subtle dimensions of migration governance.

As does Langa, *Nadiye Ünsal* emphasises the importance and necessity of creating new alliances between migrant and pro-migrant groups. She problematises the ways in which different actors (self-)assign unequivocal positions within the refugee protests. More specifically, she explores the power relationalities that have developed between refugees and supporters at the O-Platz protests along the lines of race, gender, and citizenship.

Lisa Doppler advocates the creation of broad and diverse solidarity networks as a response to deportations. Her contribution discusses the often difficult but necessary formation of plural alliances in Osnabrück in order to develop collective strategies of blocking deportations by means of civil disobedience.

The practice of formulating solidarities between migrants and non-migrants is at the heart of *Rosine Kelz's* theoretical exploration. She makes the case for a non-sovereign conceptualisation of the subject as the theoretical foundation for non-paternalistic forms of solidarity. She then engages with the question of

what thinking and acting in solidarity against a national-racist, homophobic, exclusive and securitised Europe might mean.

In her contribution, *Aleksandra Vedernjak-Barsegiani* searches for and discovers collective practices and productive forms of solidarity in the practice of ‘caring for one another’ of Georgian migrants in Austria, through which they open up novel spheres of political practice.

As a ‘Dublin deportee’, *Ekaterina Lemonjava* recounts in her interview with *Carla Küffner* how she organised a hunger-strike in four deportation centres in Poland. Through these collective protests, she and other inmates gained rights and dignity even in captivity and evoked public attention and sympathy.

The contribution by *Nina Violetta Schwarz* also broaches the issue of resistance practices of detained refugees. Revolving around the situation in the Republic of Cyprus, she shows how imprisoned asylum seekers resist the repressive strategy of ‘making them wait’ in both visible and invisible ways, thereby making their voices heard.

To be heard and to be publicly acknowledged are also central ambitions of the undocumented youths who organise politically in New York. In his article, *Helge Schwiertz* follows their political campaigns on the right to education and the right to stay. He shows how these undocumented youths have developed new political subjectivities and have found ‘positions to speak’ through practices of self-empowerment.

Ibrahim Kanalan reviews in his contribution ten years of protest and struggle for rights and visibility practiced by refugee youths in Germany. He discusses conflicts around paternalistic behaviour displayed by NGOs but also within the refugee movement.

Visibilising the violent excesses of the European border regime is one of the main concerns of the activist project *Watch the Med Alarm Phone*. *Maurice Stierl* recounts the emergence of this alarm hotline for refugees in distress at sea. As a political intervention in a contested space, the initiative established a critical international presence and gaze in the Mediterranean Sea.

Besides the visibilisation of precarious mobilities, the many turbulent forms and often invisible struggles of migration are at the heart of *Martina Tazzioli*’s contribution. Her analysis of the numerous irregularised migratory movements in European spaces is conducted through the method of *counter-mapping* which allows to illustrate the elusive and even deceiving mobilities as well as Europe’s crisis of legitimacy.

Everyday migrant practices and subversive mobilities are also discussed in *Stephan Scheel's* article. His contribution makes the case for the revision of and a critical reflection on the post-operaist concept of the autonomy of migration.

Ilker Ataç, Helge Schwiertz and *Anna Köster-Eiserfunke* discuss in their interview with the Canadian migration scholar *Kim Rygiel* whether and in what ways *citizenship* can and should be employed as an analytical category when studying migration struggles for rights and political subjectivisation.

Finally, *Nicolas de Genova* offers a critical analysis of right-wing populist and racist movements such as PEGIDA. De Genova argues that PEGIDA should not (merely) be regarded as a specifically German phenomenon but must be placed in the wider context of what he refers to as xenophobic and islamophobic 'patriotic Europeanism'.

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