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Gemma Bird & Davide Schmid

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Humanitarianism and the 'Migration Fix': On the Implication of NGOs in Racial Capitalism and the Management of Relative Surplus Populations

Gemma Bird [iD][a] and Davide Schmid [iD][b]

[a]Department of Politics, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK; [b]Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK

ABSTRACT

The existing critical literature on NGOs operating in the context of European migration has interrogated their involvement in systems of state surveillance and neoliberal governmentality. We supplement this with a critical political economy perspective which reveals the implication of the humanitarian sector in broader systems of capital accumulation. We draw on two related critical literatures, on Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations (RSPs), to explore the complex role that NGOs, both large and grassroots, serve in managing displaced populations at the borders of Europe. By introducing the concepts of the 'migration fix', secondary exploitation and racialisation, we show how NGOs are implicated, often unwittingly, in the production and management of displaced people as surplus populations, through their dequalification, categorisation and containment. We conclude by exploring the political dilemmas generated by this situation with regard to the practice of NGOs, as well as the possibility for alternative forms of solidarity.

Introduction

Over recent years, international systems of migration management have become heavily reliant on camps and detention spaces intended to limit access to the host country (Oliver 2017). These spaces invariably fall short of the requirements and aims set out by states and international actors such as the European Union to meet minimal living standards and support fast processing of applications (European Commission 2018). On the southern borders of Europe, people often find themselves 'detained' in the Greek Island 'Hotspots' (see Kalir and Rozakou 2016) for lengthy periods of time, sometimes two years or more, awaiting an asylum meeting (Bird and Beattie 2019; Bird et al. 2020). This approach is part of a broader border regime which is predicated on the 'dividing and disciplining of unruly mobility' (Tazzioli 2018, 2754) through 'complex processes by which racial difference and inequality are organised and enacted' (Neely and Samura 2011, 1934), spatialising populations along the

CONTACT Gemma Bird ✉ g.bird@liverpool.ac.uk 🖃 Department of Politics, University of Liverpool, 8-11 Abercromby Square, Liverpool L697WZ, UK

lines of belonging and non-belonging.[1] Against this backdrop of dehumanising and racialised state practices, NGOs and grassroots movements have filled the gaps of support and community left by international and government actors. Solidarity movements work tirelessly to offer shelter and food (see Lafazani 2018; Stavinoha and Ramakrishnan 2020) as well as provide 'homework support, or additional schooling for children in areas that do not have enough school places' (Bird 2019). They also offer additional healthcare and legal support in the vicinity of camps and Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) that have very little formal support in this area.

The growing role played by NGOs operating in the context of European border regimes has been accompanied by a rich and growing critical literature which has interrogated how non-governmental organisations large and small have become embedded in broader systems of control and security which characterise contemporary migration policy in the Global North. Dadusc and Mudu (2020), for instance, have traced the emergence of a 'humanitarian-industrial complex' which performs key functions alongside, and often complementary to, the formal, state-led structures of migration control and management. Furthermore, scholars working in this area have investigated the implication of humanitarian actors and logics in the securitisation and governmentalisation of displaced people, studying migration and bordering regimes as systems of surveillance, security and biopolitical control (see Aradau and Tazzioli 2019; Pallister-Wilkins 2017, 2020; Vaughan-Williams 2015).

In this article, we add a distinct perspective which is developed through a critical political economy approach and seeks to situate migration – and particularly the role of NGOs and volunteer organisations – in broader structures of capitalist accumulation.[2] In particular, we draw on two related but distinct bodies of work: the growing literature on Racial Capitalism, which itself draws from the Black radical tradition and seeks to reveal the interaction between racial categorisation and capitalist accumulation (Bhattacharyya 2018; Robinson 1983); and the scholarship which has drawn on Marx's concept of Relative Surplus Populations (Bernards and Soederberg 2021; Rajaram 2018). In linking these literatures and bringing them into dialogue with migration studies, we seek to outline a framework through which border regimes and the networks of actors operating within them can be understood and critiqued as a set of power relations implicated in the reproduction of global capitalism. Our aim in doing this is not to provide a reductionist account according to which migration policy and control can be neatly traced back to an overarching imperative, for instance the profit motive. Rather, we call for an interrogation of the manifold interactions between the securitising and biopolitical logics explored by security studies; the dynamics of labour market regulation, secondary exploitation and surplus population management; as well as the structures of racialisation and white supremacy. The point,

then, is not to establish a neat 'fit' or fixed conceptualisation of the interaction between these elements, but rather to reveal the tensions and contradictions that exist between different logics and processes, such that the possibilities for political contestation and alternative forms of solidarity can also emerge. In doing so, we seek to supplement the work of border and migration studies and to demonstrate the value and importance of a critical political economy perspective for establishing a deep and rich approach to understanding humanitarian motives and practices.

We substantiate this point by applying the theories of Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations to the operations and role of NGOs and volunteer organisations working in and around the European border regime. While the purpose of this paper is to provide a theoretical intervention, we make this contribution informed by the first author's experience working in and around displacement in Greece (particularly the Aegean Island of Samos) and the broader 'Balkan Route' between 2017 and 2021. We draw on knowledge and insights from empirical materials collected through interviews, informal conversations, walking methodologies, and longer periods of time spent in spaces of refugee support as well as ongoing relationships with actors in Greece. This is in addition to ongoing experience volunteering with grassroots organisations on the ground working as an activist scholar. Whilst these materials are not referred to directly in this article, this knowledge and experience underpins the theoretical intervention we look to make here. The intervention, then, is not only an academic one but is also led by personal reflections of time spent in these roles and the conundrums attached to this as the lead author treads the boundaries between scholar, solidarian and activist.

The article is organised as follows. In the first section, we give an overview of the existing critical literature on NGOs in the context of migration control and the European border regime, as well as explain the benefits of adding a critical political economy perspective. In the second section, we introduce the two bodies of work on which we draw on in developing our argument: the literatures on Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations. We also set out the three key concepts which we derive from these bodies of work and seek to deploy in our analysis: the 'migration fix'; secondary exploitation; and the racialised differentiation of populations as 'deserving' and 'undeserving' (Shilliam 2018). In the third section, we show how each of these concepts can be deployed in the European migration context to analyse and problematise the function and everyday agency of humanitarian actors. In particular, we aim to highlight the ways in which NGOs as well as grassroots organisations sometimes wittingly and more often unwittingly participate in the production and management of racialised surplus populations as dispensable and exploitable labour. In the final section, we discuss the political implications of this analysis and the possibility of developing new forms of grassroots solidarity grounded in an understanding of racial capitalist logics.

Understanding Humanitarianism

We begin with a discussion of previous interventions engaging with the role of humanitarianism in the context of bordering and migration control. In the early 2000s, an extensive critical literature developed to interrogate the expanding role of humanitarian logics in global politics and their association with state practices of security, bordering and intervention (see Calhoun 2008; Duffield 2010; Fassin 2007; Redfield 2005). Confronting the often-ambiguous character of humanitarianism, concerned with 'saving lives' whilst also implicated in the control and government of entire populations, scholars such as Fassin (2007), Duffield (2010) and Reid-Henry (2014) theorised humanitarianism as itself constituting a liberal form of power – a politics of life which operates through moral reasoning and principles. Working along similar lines, Walters (2011) introduced the concept of the 'humanitarian border' to capture the ways in which an emerging complex of governmental and non-governmental practices of humanitarianism were constituting a new kind of border regime which administered the life and mobility of displaced populations. In the aftermath of 2015, as the number of NGOs and grassroots organisations operating around an increasingly militarised European border regime grew rapidly, a new wave of critical scholarship has sought to interrogate their role and potential. Scholars have critically engaged with the work of NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and large-scale humanitarian actors operating in the area of migration by exploring the 'duality' of 'care and control' which characterises their practices (Pallister-Wilkins 2016, 2017, 21, 2019, 2020); by tracing the close connection between humanitarianism and security, defence and policing practices (Tazzioli 2016); and by revealing the methods and techniques through which humanitarian actors participate in the containment, channelling and management of displaced populations (Tazzioli and Garelli 2018). In this context, Dadusc and Mudu (2020, 5–6) introduced the concept of the 'humanitarian-industrial complex' to capture the variegated nexus of 'international and national institutions, NGOs, public and private assistance sector activities' that evolved alongside the border regime of 'Fortress Europe'. These 'humanitarian operations', they argued, 'often discipline, de-politicise and commodify the lives and subjectivities of those who allegedly receive their care' and thereby contribute to making 'border violence tolerable and less visible' (Ibid; see also Oliver 2017). Dadusc and Mudu (2020) and others (Lafazani 2018; Rozakou 2017; Stavinoha and Ramakrishnan 2020) have juxtaposed this 'humanitarian-industrial complex' to a range of smaller, grassroots and solidarity initiatives which are 'overtly antagonistic to humanitarian organisations' (Rozakou 2017, 103) and keen to avoid NGO-ification. This feeds into a broader sense in the literature, as recognised by Stavinoha and Ramakrishnan (2020), that humanitarianism cannot be understood as an 'absolute value' in which each experience looks the same and is justified on the

same ethic of care and/or solidarity. Rather, humanitarianism is better understood as an 'array of embodied, situated practices emanating from the humanitarian desire to alleviate the suffering of others' (Redfield 2005, 330) and which play out in many different ways.

The majority of critical scholarship on humanitarianism and bordering has relied on the tools of Foucauldian critique and the concepts of governmentality and bio-politics to situate the operations of NGOs within wider securitised and liberal narratives and practices (Fontanari 2019, 5; see Vaughan-Williams 2015). This has left a gap for other critical interventions to devote their attention to the implication of migration regimes and humanitarian practice in the structures of global capitalism, using the instruments of critical political economy. Scholars informed by the autonomous Marxist tradition, such as Mezzadra and Nielson (2013) and De Genova (2016, 2018), for instance, have interrogated the space of bordering and migration foregrounding the production of new political subjectivities and border struggles associated with the multiplication of labour and the government of mobility. Others have deployed the tools of critical political economy and critical geography to uncover the racialised dynamics and forms of exploitation which undergird contemporary migration regimes. Rajaram (2018, 627), for instance, has noted that 'the ways in which refugees and migrants are governed in Europe is related to their position within contemporary capitalism. This means that they are governed in ways similar to how other racialised and marginalised groups in precarious positions within capitalism are governed': namely, they are 'made surplus'. Martin (2020, 8) has similarly drawn attention to questions of carcerality and racialised hierarchies that enable distinctive economic relationships which, through 'contracting, migrants' in/voluntary work, debit cards and Assisted Voluntary Return programmes extract and circulate status value and, in the process, assemblage carceral geographies of migration control'. Franck (2018) has looked at the situation on the Island of Lesvos through the lens of 'disaster capitalism', noting how 'the bulk of humanitarian relief work has been outsourced to non-state actors . . . running operations throughout the Island, aided by several thousand volunteers'. Franck has drawn attention to the spectacle 'that rendered not only the absurdities of the European Union's border regime painfully visible but also how the crisis has become "big business"' (2018, 199–200). These and other scholars (see Bhagat 2020) have thus started to investigate the conscious and more often unconscious ways in which different support groups and actors which form part of the 'humanitarian border' (Walters 2011) participate in the creation, circulation and encampment of those populations deemed to be surplus to the requirements of capitalist accumulation.

In this article, we contribute to and extend this developing literature on migration and border regimes in relation to global capitalism as well as demonstrate the importance of this perspective to clarifying and critiquing

contemporary practices of humanitarianism. We argue that a critical political economy perspective represents a key supplement to the Foucauldian analyses of humanitarianism as a form of government and reveals key aspects of its contemporary operations: namely, the implication of NGOs, grassroots organisations and humanitarian actors in what we call the 'migration fix' – the racialised management of surplus populations within systems of global capital accumulation. In order to outline this perspective, we introduce in the following section two conceptual resources which provide a crucial contribution to such an attempt, the theories of Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations, before developing an account of the implication of NGOs in the contemporary European border regime.

Theories of Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations

This article draws from two developing literatures in critical political economy – Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations (RSP) – in developing a novel analysis of the politics and management of migration and the role that NGOs and grassroots organisations play within it. In this section, we briefly outline the two literatures in question and introduce the specific concepts which we derive from them in terms of the analysis of migration.

The concept of Racial Capitalism has gained prominence in recent years as a way of interrogating the relation between race, class and capital accumulation (see Bhattacharyya 2018; Kelley 2017; Ralph and Singhal 2019; Virdee 2019). The origins of the concept date back to debates in 1970s South Africa over the political economy of apartheid and, separately, to Cedric Robinson's (1983) seminal work 'Black Marxism'. Racial Capitalism, as such, does not constitute a new general theory of capitalism *per se* (Bhattacharyya 2018, 9). Rather, it denotes a mode of investigation which centres on the role played by race and racialisation in the development of global capitalism. The key point of this literature, then, is that racism should not be understood as a relic or leftover of old prejudices, or even as mere ideology furthered for economic purposes (Bhattacharyya 2018, 107). Instead, racism needs to be understood as a continuing and active process which characterises contemporary capitalism – as, in Tilley and Shilliam's (2018, 537) words, 'a mode of classifying, ordering, creating and destroying people, labour power, land, environment and capital' (Tilley and Shilliam 2018, 537).

In this way, the concept of Racial Capitalism brings to the fore a dynamic which characterises both historical and contemporary capitalism. This is the dialectic between, on the one hand, capitalism as a homogenising force, incorporating different cultures, regional economies and populations into a global market of waged labour relations. On the other hand, capitalism is an inherently differentiating process reliant on the exaggeration of 'regional, subcultural, and dialectical differences into "racial" ones' (Robinson 1983, 59;

see also Kelley 2017). Much scholarship on Racial Capitalism has therefore explored the ways in which racialisation has and continues to operate as a way of categorising and differentiating populations in relation to their access to welfare, different forms of employment, as well as civil and political rights (Bhattacharyya (2018, 5). This serves to secure the material and symbolic benefits of white sections of society – what Du Bois (1935; see also Roediger, 1991) famously termed the 'wages of whiteness' – as well as to further differentiate between populations racialised as non-white through the operations of anti-Black racism (Ralph and Singhal 2019). In this sense, Racial Capitalism denotes, according to Bhattacharyya (2018, 5), 'a process by which capitalist formations create by default the edge-populations that serve as the other and limit of the working class'. This links to work, such as Shilliam's (2018, 6), which shows how processes of racialisation in Western societies have long operated through the shifting categorisation between 'the deserving and undeserving poor through ever more expansive terms that have incorporated working classes, colonial "natives" and nationalities'. This logic of disposability which marks 'the distinction that renders some deserving of social security and welfare and others not is racialised so as to classify collectives in order to judge individuals' (Shilliam 2018, 171). As scholars such as Bhagat (2020, 9–10) and Cross (2021, 72) have noted, this logic can clearly be traced in the area of migration, where it operates through the dichotomies of 'legal' and 'illegal' migrant, 'authentic' and 'bogus' asylum-seekers.

The second literature we draw on is organised around the concept of Relative Surplus Populations (RSP). This concept, which originates in the work of Marx (1887), denotes those segments of the working-age population which are surplus to the requirements of capital and therefore excluded, in various ways, from waged labour relations. For Marx, these populations constitute a 'reserve army of labour' which in turn fulfils a particular function in capitalist development, by providing a pool of easily accessible labour as well as serving as a tool to discipline the working class and manage wage increases and trade union demands (Marx 1887, 698–714). In recent years, this concept has been redeployed and broadened to interrogate the manifold and complex ways in which surplus and 'disposable' populations are created and governed in the processes of contemporary global capitalism (Bernards and Soederberg 2021). What this literature highlights is that surplus populations are not, by function of being 'excluded' from waged labour, situated 'outside' of capitalism. Rather, as Rajaram (2018, 628) notes, they are 'included through their exclusion as cheaply exploitable and dispensable labour' via a variety of precarious and irregular forms of work. Surplus populations can therefore take a variety of 'forms of existence' and are subject to a range of different forms of primary (low pay; irregular work) as well as secondary or 'indirect' exploitation. The concept of secondary or indirect exploitation, which relates to the

exposure to indebtedness, extortionate rents on housing and higher charges to access services and healthcare, is particularly important here as it highlights a range of less visible forms of discrimination which take place outside of employment-relations (Bernards and Soederberg 2021, 4).

The 'relative' in RSP, furthermore, directs attention to the fact that populations and social groups are not *intrinsically* in excess of the productive needs of the global economy, but rather are 'made surplus' relative to particular regimes of accumulation and as part of national and regional political projects. This 'making surplus' is carried out through specific mechanisms and techniques of categorisation, dequalification and valorisation, often operating along colonial, gendered and racialised lines and carried out by state and non-state agencies. The making of surplus populations can thereby be understood in terms of what David Harvey (2001) calls 'spatial fixes' – the ways in which capitalism seeks to momentarily manage and dislocate its crisis tendencies through the 'production and reproduction of space' (Rajaram 2018, 630; Scott 2013). Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007) famously deployed such an understanding to study the ways in which the dramatic expansion of incarceration in California since the 1980s could be understood as a 'prison fix' through which the state managed and recombined various finance, land and population surpluses. More recently, scholars such as Rajaram (2018), Martin (2020), Bird et al. (2020), Obradovic-Wochnik and Bird (2020) and Bhagat (2020) have sought to interrogate migration regimes along similar lines, focusing on how incarceration and other bordering practices are used to channel, govern, criminalise and contain migrants as 'risky' populations in particular ways, often relying on violent means (Isakjee et al. 2020).

Linking these literatures on Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations, we argue, offers a productive framework through which to interrogate contemporary migration regimes and the various forms of state and non-state agency active within it. Specifically, such an approach allows for two clear advances over the existing literature on humanitarianism in migration contexts. First, it allows for an analysis and critique of migration regimes which contextualises them within broader processes of uneven capitalist development (Rajaram 2018, 632). Concretely, this allows for a holistic analysis which connects bordering and the management of migration to the creation of particular regimes of exploitation as well as to the unfolding of nativist political projects conferring in-group benefits to populations racialised as white. Second, a framework of this kind allows for a novel interrogation of the politics of resistance and solidarity within the NGO sector as well as grassroots networks and political movements operating in the domain of migration. Reading the governing of migration through the lens of Racial Capitalism and the managing of surplus populations allows for a more nuanced account of the systems of power within which humanitarian actors and grassroots organisations operate – and, consequently, the dangers of co-

optation that they face in their everyday operations. As we discuss in the concluding section, it also opens up the positive space for thinking about the politics of migration in a way which connects labour struggles over work with the fight for citizenship rights and open borders (Kelley 2021; Walia 2021). This makes it possible to break down the distinction between 'economic' struggles against exploitation and 'political' struggles for rights and equality and contributes to imagining new forms of resistance and solidarity as well as transversal alliances between displaced people, activists and local populations (Tazzioli 2020, 141; Agustín and Jørgensen 2021).

For the purposes of this article, we argue that an approach informed by these literatures provides three key concepts which can be productively deployed to the analysis and critique of the NGO/humanitarian sector in the context of migration. First, it provides the notion of the 'migration fix'. This concept captures how the uneven development of global capitalism, which results in high levels of global inequality, underemployment, mass poverty and the mass movement of people seeking better lives, is contained and channelled through particular bordering practices. Second, it highlights the importance of focusing on 'secondary' or 'indirect' exploitation as a key form of violence suffered by surplus populations through techniques of dequalification, categorisation and economic relations of hierarchisation. Lastly, it emphasises how the racialised and gendered making of 'vulnerable' as opposed to 'self-reliant' and 'deserving' and 'underserving' migrants is a key mechanism through which Racial Capitalism operates. In the section that follows, we show how each of these tools can be applied to the humanitarian sector on the borders of Europe.

Migration Fix

Harvey (1981, 2001, 24) first deployed the concept of 'spatial fix' to capture the ways in which global capitalism periodically seeks to 'resolve its inner crisis tendencies by geographical expansion and geographical restructuring'. By reaching for new export markets, moving production to cheaper spaces and increasing the size of the exploitable working population, capital is temporarily able to manage its tendency towards overaccumulation (Ibid). As noted by Scott (2013, 1091–1092), 'low-wage labour migration' from the economic periphery to the core has long served as one such spatial fix, increasing productivity and segmenting the working class along racial, national and cultural lines. Saraçoğlu and Bélanger (2019), for example, discuss how the long-term stays of Syrian refugees in Turkey in the context of the EU-Turkey deal have been used by Turkish capital to drive down wages, move further towards a system of seasonal hiring and to facilitate the control and subordination of the broader working class. This, they argue, has provided a 'spatial fix' for Turkish capital owners who had found themselves vulnerable to

economic crises and enabled them to thrive at the expense of the people they are exploiting (*Ibid*). Borders thus constitute 'extreme zones of profit extraction' (Franck 2018). They are, as Walia (2021, 14) summarises, 'a bundle of relations and mode of governance acting as a spatial fix for capital to segment labour and buffer against the retrenchment of universal social programmes. Simply put, borders manufacture divisions within the international working class'.

We build on this understanding of the 'spatial fix', as well as that of the 'prison fix' (Gilmore 2007), to put forward the concept of the 'migration fix'. In doing so, we argue that state and international actors, with the conscious and unconscious support of the 'humanitarian industrial complex', mobilise a system of bordering and encampment to manage the uneven effects of capitalist development, most notably by regulating the access of surplus populations to local labour markets. We refer to the 'migration fix' as being a distinctive kind of 'spatial fix' that sees certain spaces and zones as suitable for racialised populations seeking asylum and support, and certain areas to which access is limited (Bird et al. 2020). In this sense, the concept of the 'migration fix' stretches Harvey's original theorisation in two key ways. First, the 'migration fix' does not operate through a straightforward logic of spatial expansion but rather deploys an array of bordering, channelling and containment practices to regulate surplus populations and create opportunities for profit-extraction. Second, the rationale of the 'migration fix' is not purely economic, as in the Turkish example above. Rather, it responds to a broader range of political and social imperatives by managing various surpluses in the support of domestic interests and nativist political projects. The 'migration fix' thus relies on the ability of states to draw on a variety of governmental techniques and technologies of control to manage the mobility and rights of populations, ranging from the legal categorisation of migrants (Tazzioli and Garelli 2018) to the use of everyday practices of coercion.[3] These include approaches to map-making that show only particular functions such as camps or border crossing points and leave off directions to services such as supermarkets or employment offices as a way of spatially zoning cities (Obradovic-Wochnik and Bird 2020).

In governing the global movement of people, states and international actors often rely on the NGO sector, as well as on local volunteers and grassroots movements, to fill the gaps in their support and provision. Taking the example of Europe, where the response following 2015 has been characterised by widespread securitisation and a lack of help and support, it is clear that gaps left by state actors were filled both by large-scale NGOs and volunteers and grassroots organisations (Bird 2021). In Greece, in particular, volunteers 'have stepped in covering the gap left by the Greek state and the EU leaders to support refugees' humanitarian needs' (Kalogeraki 2018, 170). It is unsurprising that, as we see 'the state's withdrawal from key functions at the border –

including for provisions of basic humanitarian relief, [this] opens up a "market" in which actors compete for the sympathy, trust, and funds from public as well as private donors' (Franck 2018, 204). The existence and function of these groups can be understood in relation to the 'migration fix' in a number of different ways.

First, the presence of NGOs and grassroots organisations makes it possible for European states to house displaced people on islands (Mountz 2015) as well as rural, poorly supported locations, thereby keeping racialised groups outside of urban centres. Humanitarian actors do not necessarily do this out of support for EU logics of migration containment, in fact many actively condemn these logics, but rather because without them filling these gaps in provision people would be left without mental health support, food, adequate shelter, electricity, access to a hot cup of tea or education (Bird 2021). In doing so, non-state actors unwittingly participate in the 'migration fix' that enables racialised populations to be kept at the periphery, at the borders of Europe. This is not to say that they do so intentionally, nor that the choice to volunteer to support human beings is the wrong one. It does however illustrate how the concept of the 'migration fix' can shed light on the complex interactions that pertain between state and international actors, business interests and non-governmental organisations, as well as personal decision-making that asks solidarians and volunteers to either walk away and avoid supporting the 'migration fix' or to actively fill the gaps purposefully left by states.

Second, the existence and sustainability of NGOs and grassroots organisations are themselves intimately tied to the persistence of gaps in state and international provision and the making of vulnerable populations. As noted by Franck (2018, 202–203), NGOs both large and small find themselves competing in a 'crowded' environment inhabited by numerous organisations as well as profit-seeking business actors. This often drives them to adopt 'marketized logics to sustain (and expand) their activities', by attracting private donors and accessing limited available public funds (*Ibid*). Again, the point is not to accuse NGOs of 'selling out', but rather to highlight the competitive structural context in which their actions are situated and the constraints and pressures it places on them. Within this structural context, 'vulnerability becomes a commodity [and] humanitarianism needs people's suffering to sustain its operation politically and economically' (Dadusc and Mudu 2020, 11). Where we differ from Dadusc and Mudu is in suggesting that it is not only large-scale humanitarian actors that become affected by this. As we discuss in the final section, different types of organisations (including volunteers and grassroots organisations) can also find themselves unwittingly entangled within the dynamics of the 'migration fix' by reproducing categories of vulnerability that enable them to then raise funds to maintain their organisation.

Third, the use of spatial displacement to manage the crisis tendencies of capitalism is not only relevant to the situation discussed above in which displaced people are 'peripherised' into particular spaces away from urban centres. It is also relevant for the movement of a second population which plays a key role in the humanitarian sector: the volunteers and NGO staff. Kalogeraki's (2018, 185) study in Greece found that the demographics of people most likely to volunteer their time to support displaced people are 'primarily women, young, higher educated individuals engaged in unconventional political acts, and with higher level(s) of social capital'. These are often people with a high skill set that find themselves out of employment due to multiple layers of crisis, as well as individuals considering a future role in the humanitarian sector, a role that requires previous 'in-field' experience.[4] As such, it is often the case that people taking either stipended, low paid or voluntary roles do so either to build experience in the sector which then enables them to move into more permanent roles, or turn to volunteering during gaps in employment. In the context of stagnant European economies characterised by high rates of youth precarity and unemployment, these voluntary roles themselves provide a 'fix' through which work opportunities, paid or unpaid, are generated by the need for a humanitarian response and used to manage and support surplus populations. This, in turn, is part of a racialised regime of mobility that advantages whiteness in maintaining and enforcing 'radical social inequalities among different categories of people: some groups of privileged people are allowed to move quite freely on an effectively global scale, while others cannot and find themselves subjected to a proliferation of borders and other constraints on their movements' (De Genova et al. 2021, 51). Those individuals who hold privileged passports can travel both to and from spaces of refugee support, including to take breaks and change locations, whilst those individuals being supported have to stay and bear witness to these comings and goings.

Whilst grassroots organisations are often keen to avoid being associated with the marketised approach that large NGOs are accused of, they nonetheless contribute to these dynamics insofar as they provide both labour and growth opportunities for 'young, higher educated' (Kalogeraki 2018, 185; Franck 2018, 203) individuals looking to either join the formal humanitarian sector in the future or during a break, either voluntary or forced by labour market conditions, from other forms of employment. This occurs in parallel to the role they play in the categorisation of individuals as vulnerable (Turner 2019), which supports and sustains the existence of many humanitarian organisations. Again, the point of discussing grassroots organisations in relation to the 'migration fix' is not to accuse them of complicity, but rather to call attention to the political, economic and institutional structures within which they operate and reveal the constraints and tensions this creates in their everyday practice. It is to recognise that the relationship between grassroots

and large-scale NGOs – and between these and the state – is not a simple binary, but rather a messy and complex spectrum that is both fluid and shifting, within which a variety of experiences exist.

Secondary Exploitation

The second concept we draw from the literature on Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations and deploy to the study of humanitarian practices in European migration contexts is that of secondary or indirect exploitation. As discussed above, this concept identifies a range of practices which sit alongside more direct forms of labour exploitation, such as under-paid and precarious work, and range from the exposure to indebtedness and predatory rents to obstacles to accessing public services and the lack of recognition of professional or educational qualifications (see Bernards and Soederberg 2021). Applying the concept of secondary exploitation to the European migration regime, we argue, helps to reveal a set of discriminatory practices through which displaced populations who have been made 'surplus' are restricted in their rights of access to work and public services, exposed to high levels of indebtedness and 'dequalified' by having their professional and educational credentials invalidated. These practices are made possible by regimes of mobility and immobility which constrain the ability of displaced people to find and negotiate better jobs and are enabled by state actors through the introduction of different and ever-shifting legal statuses to regulate access to labour markets. This creates a situation within which humanitarian and grassroots actors also find themselves unwittingly involved in the perpetuation of secondary exploitation in subtle but key ways.

The first form of secondary exploitation to highlight is linked to the practice of 'dequalifying' displaced people and precluding them from fully accessing the labour market in the host country. Dequalification operates both through official and informal channels. First and foremost, it is carried out through the refusal by state and EU officials to recognise a broad range of professional and educational qualifications, driving licences and other certifications which would allow access to high-skilled jobs and positions. It also goes through the implementation of particular bans on the rights of those seeking asylum to participate in the formal economy. In the UK for example, 'people seeking asylum can only apply for permission to work if they have been waiting for an initial decision on their asylum claim for over 12 months. Those who are given permission can only do skilled jobs on the Shortage Occupation List' (Gower 2021). As such, the decision to allow access to the formal economy for people seeking asylum in the UK is based not on the needs of the person seeking asylum but on the needs of the UK as the receiving state and the roles that the national economy needs filling. In this instance, access to the formal economy is restricted for the majority of people seeking asylum who then find

themselves either looking for work in the informal economy or reliant on the support of the UK state. This equates to only £39.63 per member of the household per week, which is provided not in cash but on a debit card that enables one to use the money only for food, clothing and toiletries (UK Government 2021). In contrast to the UK, 'EU law requires Member States to grant asylum seekers access to their labour market after they have been waiting for nine months for a decision on their claim. Member States can apply more favourable provisions and/or grant access to the labour market subject to conditions' (Gower 2021) – and in fact some do.

Even in states where access to the formal labour market is legally possible, however, a second form of restrictions limits access for asylum seekers and refugees. This relates to the sheer fact of their physical confinement to peripheral spaces, whether that is the use of Islands such as the Greek 'hotspots' (Tazzioli and Garelli 2018) of Lesvos, Samos, Chios, Leros and Kos, where there is limited work available, or the confinement of displaced people outside of city centres and into camps that are either too far from urban hubs to make commuting possible or rely on limited public transport facilities that make the journey to work either challenging or impossible. It is in these spaces that NGOs often find themselves filling the gaps of state provision and thus unwillingly supporting the spatial practices of marginalisation which physically reduces access to labour markets in urban hubs. This practice of peripherising displaced people often drives populations into the informal economy, creating a pool of stuck, cheap and exploitable workers to serve in the low-skill sectors of logistics, agriculture, and the care economy, or who find themselves taking on roles, often on a voluntary basis, within NGOs and grassroots organisations who exist in these spaces precisely because of the need to support displaced people.

It is in these situations that NGOs themselves can also find themselves inadvertently participating in secondary exploitation and dequalification, often due to legal restrictions for access to the labour market mentioned above which prevent them from offering formal employment in line with the qualifications people hold. Many groups rely on displaced people to take on translation and 'cultural mediation' roles within their organisations (either on a paid or voluntary basis), and whilst this opportunity can indeed be a positive one it can also be understood through the lens of dequalification. For example, the Red Cross tells the stories of Zakaria and Ibrahim who work as volunteer translators for the organisation, not making use of their skills as a Sales Manager or as a 'specialist in electrical diagnostics for German cars' (Red Cross Talks 2015), but rather using their language skills to support others. It may be that their skill sets could be used in a more direct way within the organisation, sales skills for example being of value for fundraising, but the situation of displacement and the legal status of asylum seekers within host states come together to create a situation in which the types of roles NGOs can

and do offer to displaced people do not always take into account the skill set and previous work experience they may have. A similar dynamic has been noted by Picozza (2021, 103) in her ethnography of refugee support in Germany, where she comments that '[m]ost of the translators and cultural mediators I met were highly qualified in their own countries, but, because of the limited recognition of international degrees, continuing their studies in Europe or finding qualified employment were conditional upon specific training or educational procedures, at times even tracing back to achieving middle or high school diplomas in their new countries of residence'. This active form of legally determined dequalification combines with the persistence of racialised perceptions of value and competence to bring about a situation wherein NGOs and smaller support organisations, wittingly or unwittingly, participate in the dequalification of migrant workers by offering a narrow range of roles and responsibilities.

In the specific contexts of bordering and encampment, the lack of employment opportunities in the formal economy can also give rise to what Betts et al. (2017) call 'refugee economies' – complex environments of small-scale entrepreneurship, barter and market activities through which 'innovators . . . transform market distortions into opportunities for themselves and the wider community. Whether tapping mains electricity with "spaghetti wires", reselling food assistance, selling music downloaded onto USB keys, running computer game cafes using upcycled games consoles . . . signs of this kind of innovation abound among refugees' (Betts et al. 2017, 55–56). Yet these kinds of neoliberal celebrations of 'innovators' and 'entrepreneurs' do not recognise and respect the qualifications people had prior to seeking refuge. They also often feed into racialised assumptions that link entrepreneurship to whiteness (Turner 2020), further exacerbating the notion of the 'deserving' entrepreneurial refugee – the 'super-refugee', an entrepreneur or Olympic swimmer 'often heralded as offering an important corrective to media and political representations' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2021) – and the 'underserving' refugee constructed as being lazy. This approach focused on entrepreneurship also celebrates a particular set of jobs that for the main part exist outside of formal qualifications. As such, they can be seen as reaffirming hierarchical understandings of what types of jobs refugees can or should have access to. Accounts such as Betts et al.'s (2017: v) are correct in their assertion that the current asylum system in a number of refugee-receiving countries means that 'despite their talent . . . [people] were stuck in limbo while awaiting the outcome of their asylum claims, and denied the right to work until their bureaucratic situation was resolved'. However, the celebration of innovation and entrepreneurship sustains the notion that market logics can offer a solution to the labour exclusions facing refugees, rather than being a contributive cause of them. As Bhagat (2020, 8) notes, 'self-reliance – a neoliberal solution – arises as a way to solve refugee crises and does both material and ideological

work'. Rather than celebrating the uptake of roles in the informal economy, an account based on Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations places the emphasis on the systematic dequalification of displaced people that results from the policies of nation-states but in which support groups such as NGOs and grassroots organisations can also find themselves involved. Celebration of 'innovators' within the informal economy should not conceal the violence of neoliberal capitalism and its effects on the lives of displaced people, particularly in limiting the types of employment and labour market opportunities they have access to.

Racialisation and the 'Undeserving' Migrant

The third concept we draw from the literatures on Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations relates to the production of racialised differentiations as a way of organising and managing populations on the basis of constructed hierarchies of value, deservingness and vulnerability (Shilliam 2018). Much attention has been placed in the literature on migration regimes on the ways in which categorisations based on nationality, ethnicity and gender are key mechanisms which guide the management, relocation and control of displaced populations. The use of encampment, detention and 'hotspots' serves as 'selective mechanisms for dividing those who are deemed to deserve rights and welfare benefits, and those who do not' (De Genova et al. 2021, 52). The distinction in Western public discourse and government policy between 'asylum seekers' and 'economic migrants', young men and 'womenandchildren' (Enloe 1993), 'deserving' and 'undeserving' migrants is, as scholars have shown, shaped by colonial legacies as well as gendered and racialised differentiations (Bhagat 2020; Mayblin and Turner 2021; Shilliam 2018; Turner 2019, 2020). These categorisations filter down to the very practices and procedures which guide migration management and bordering agencies in the 'legalisation' and 'illegalisation' of particular displaced populations (Martin 2020, 8). Tazzioli and Garelli (2018), for instance, have highlighted the hierarchies that are established in government policy in Greece and Italy to separate 'economic migrants' from 'legitimate' asylum seekers – often on the crude basis of their country of birth, a policy that continues to develop as certain countries are designated safe by receiving states separate to the exploration of individual cases. Meanwhile, Turner (2020) discusses the racialised assumptions underpinning the portrayal of Syrian refugees as entrepreneurs (and thus proximate to whiteness) and African refugees as recipients of aid.

What a critical political economy framework can add to this is twofold: it extends this form of analysis into the micro-spaces of humanitarian action, to reveal the ways in which racialised differentiations are reproduced there. It can also situate these episodes in the broader structural context of Racial

Capitalism and trace the connections between bordering practices, domestic nativist politics and the needs of European capital. The racialised differentiation of displaced people along the lines of 'deserving' and 'undeserving', 'vulnerable' and 'self-reliant' migrants is therefore not merely the preserve of state actors and border officials. Instead, it runs through the entire system of migration regimes, including the work of NGOs and grassroots organisations. This becomes evident in a number of ways.

First, a number of NGOs define themselves by their provision of services to particular groups, defined by specific characteristics. For example, they will work exclusively with minors or with women. As Turner (2019, 597) has argued, this is not always a conscious choice to exclude men, but rather results from the assumption, common among humanitarian actors, that 'men experiencing displacement can perform a vision of masculinity replete with agency and independence' and are therefore less in need of support programmes. This is also often reflected in the limited availability of funding for programmes working with men. While a focus on women and unaccompanied minors is necessary to ensure that support is provided to disadvantaged groups, this also means that NGOs and grassroots organisations come to owe their existence and economic sustainability to the continued production of these vulnerable categories. As noted by Martin (2020, 8), this means that 'status decisions make migrants valuable to firms and NGOs working in the asylum sector, [as they address] the needs produced by the exclusion from work or other forms of care. Migrants' status value rests in their potential in/voluntary labour, revenue for service contractors, transaction data and waiting time'. In this way, as Dadusc and Mudu (2020, 11) comment, 'vulnerability becomes a commodity in the hands of the humanitarian-industrial complex'. The production of differentiated categories of migrants is therefore central to the entire service and humanitarian economy which has risen around the European border regime. This leads, for example, to situations in which young men in particular find themselves under-supported and thus more visible in public spaces when they have less access to formal labour opportunities. As a result, they find themselves taking on sex work roles, thus feeding into gendered and racialised media representations of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' refugees and migrants (see Damon, Arvanitidis, and Clayton 2017; Darling 2017). In this way, humanitarian organisations find themselves participating in the categorisation and hierarchisation of groups of people based on their constructed levels of need and/or vulnerability. These constructions further develop the categorisation of different groups of people along the lines of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor (Shilliam 2018).

Second, racialised logics of differentiation frequently affect the everyday operations of NGOs and grassroots organisations themselves, from overall decisions on rules and the provision of services down to minute, everyday occurrences. These everyday occurrences can be understood through

a broader lens focused on the regulation of space, of who belongs where and when, and of who is deemed to be deserving of help and support. While we recognise, along with Dadusc and Mudu (2020, 3), that distinctions need to be made between formal humanitarianism and grassroots practices of solidarity, we also note in these examples that tensions in overcoming these hierarchies exist across the entire sector, driven by systemic racialised logics which volunteers and solidarians can unwittingly reproduce. For example, King (2019, 222) reflects on her time in the Victor Hugo squat in Calais, the attempts at horizontal decision-making and the creation of a space outside of the European border regime. She draws attention to some of the areas in which solidarity was unable to challenge hierarchies, such as the question of who takes on the role of watching the door, a situation in which 'it was often white Europeans denying access to black Africans. It felt like the people taking on the door watch, in seeking to undermine forms of domination based on gender, reaffirmed forms of domination based on race (*Ibid*)'. This example is not specific to the Victor Hugo squat, nor to Calais. The lead author has seen similar dynamics play out repeatedly in mainland Greece and on the Aegean islands of Lesvos and Samos. There are real and very necessary reasons behind these choices, beyond the risks associated with the numbers of people a space can hold and the protection of single-gender spaces: these spaces are often visited by journalists and researchers, as well as by the police and people intent on committing violence against refugees. As such, a system of watching the door is often necessary. Nonetheless, the example shows that the analytical tools of Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations generate further and often uncomfortable questions regarding how NGOs as well as grassroots solidarity initiatives can unwittingly reproduce racialised logics whilst attempting to challenge bordering and border violence. The issues of the hierarchisation of labour and volunteering thus go beyond the practical question of who can and should watch the door and links to the broader questions of whose work is valued and devalued. Whilst grassroots organisations and autonomous solidarians are generally better equipped to challenge these logics, they are not entirely immune from them either. This shows that large-scale NGOs and grassroots solidarity initiatives cannot simply be understood as a binary in their approach to displaced people, but rather need to be recognised as a spectrum of groups affected by and responding to racialised and gendered logics of labour value in different ways (Picozza 2021, 44).

The Politics of Solidarity under Racial Capitalism

In writing this paper it is important for us to not only draw on Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations to contribute to the understanding of displacement but also to contextualise these dynamics politically. Within this section, then, we think about the role of solidarity, economic

exploitation and the fact that the very logics of Racial Capitalism, particularly in the context of borders, are themselves inherently political. As Walia (2021, 213) notes, 'like the regime of private property, borders . . . are the product of, and produce, social relations from which we must emancipate ourselves'. This raises numerous questions about whether NGOs and grassroots organisations can emancipate themselves from these logics in their activities, as well as about the ways in which political and humanitarian action for rights and recognition can be connected with labour struggles against exploitation.

Recent scholarship on humanitarianism and grassroots organising has stressed that a distinction needs to be made between the formal humanitarian sector – what Dadusc and Mudu (2020) call the 'humanitarian-industrial complex' – and grassroots initiatives of solidarity and 'no-borders' activism. Where large-scale NGOs often tread an a-political line, maintaining the key humanitarian logic of 'depoliticization' (Stavinoha and Ramakrishnan 2020, 166), activist and solidarity movements position themselves as a 'political project . . . collectively organising social production in everyday life, to resistance in the face of policies that aim to control and subjugate migrants' (Lafazani 2018, 897). This example from one of the founders of the City Plaza squat in Athens highlights the underlying differences in approaches that see 'grassroots solidarity initiatives [as being] overtly antagonistic to humanitarian organisations' and keen to avoid NGO-ification (Rozakou 2017, 103). One of the key arguments of grassroots organising in the area of migration, then, is that they are grounded in solidarity rather than charity. The idea, as noted by Kothari et al. (2019, xxxiii) is that these 'collectives [are formed] . . . based on autonomous decision-making via face-to-face relations and economic exchange directed at meeting basic needs through self-reliance'. This allows these organisations to prioritise 'everyday practices of equality that undermine the ways that borders, as manifestations of domination and inequality, weave into our relationships with others' (King 2019, 218). In this way, these spaces can become sites of equity and justice. Like the authors above, we look to solidarity as the necessary political response to challenge the violent and exploitative structures of contemporary bordering and migration regimes – and to call out the actions of NGOs and humanitarian actors which support them. At the same time, we are also aware of the fact that solidarity is itself a politically contested concept and practice and that it carries with it significant difficulties and dilemmas. Our concern, in this regard, is that solidarity practices cannot always already be assumed to be immune from and antagonistic to the racial capitalist logics of the border regime and the humanitarian-industrial complex. Grassroots and solidarity initiatives are subject to and have to navigate similar structural pressures as larger NGOs, particularly when it comes to the question of whether and how to seek autonomy from the state and its legal requirements. Moreover, as we showed above, volunteer organisations are similarly susceptible to reproducing

racialised understandings and hierarchies of vulnerability and deservingness and to falling into a humanitarian logic of assistance. This tendency is particularly acute when solidarity initiatives operate under what Picozza (2021, 44) calls the 'blackmail of crisis', a 'perennial mode of 'emergency'' under which 'the focus on material urgencies and immediate management almost inevitably leads to sacrificing more long-term political interventions' and critical reflection over one's own practices. This, in turn, manifests in a number of everyday tensions and dilemmas.

For instance, there are a number of questions that are raised when collectives that include both displaced people and people with privileged passports seek to work together. For large-scale NGOs with vertical decision-making structures, this situation quite often leads to the creation of line management systems that place individuals in hierarchies of power and responsibility – often involving the dynamics of dequalifcation and racialised differentiation we discussed above. Small and horizontal organisations, however, also have to deal with these questions. As we have mentioned previously, small-scale NGOs frequently find themselves in a position to offer stipendiary positions to long-term volunteers who choose to travel to these spaces to offer support. Funding bodies provide support for this. At the same time, organisations also often try to bring on members of the 'beneficiary' community to volunteer within these spaces, as part of a logic of solidarity that recognises the importance of working *with* rather than *for* people. This can create situations wherein one group of 'international' volunteers, holding documents and papers, have the opportunity to be stipended whilst 'community' volunteers from the 'beneficiary' population often are not. This is often justified on the basis of not showing favouritism to beneficiaries and singling certain individuals out. Yet, as Picozza (2021, 128) notes, "by recentering white subjects at the core of [European] border contestations, [these practices] also unwittingly invisibilise refugee struggles and reproduce a particular politics of race'. Thinking through the concepts of racialised differentiation, secondary exploitation and participation in the broader 'migration fix', then, reveals the tensions and contradictions which cut through and problematise everyday practices of solidarity. These practices are indeed justifiable under humanitarian logics of 'do no harm' and avoidance of preferential treatment of beneficiaries, but can have secondary, unintended consequences that are influenced by logics of race, capitalism and borders. In this sense, an awareness of the structures of exploitation and racialisation within which humanitarian work occurs – and which solidarity has to constantly negotiate – is a necessary step for the promise of horizontal and autonomous organising to be realised.

Beyond this critical contribution, however, a critical political economy perspective on humanitarianism in the context of European border regimes also holds a positive potential. This resides in the opportunity to reconcile and connect different forms of struggle as well as to situate them into broader

understandings of the uneven dynamics of contemporary capitalism. More concretely, it allows for the political and humanitarian struggle for the recognition of rights and against borders and state violence to be linked up with material, labour struggles against exploitation as well as, more broadly, the unequal effects of neoliberal global capitalism. As Kelley (2021, xix) suggests, 'as long as we treat migrant, displaced labour as dependent wards of philanthropic largesse, we won't see them for what they are; the very heart of a global labour force whose movements are linked to war, capital flows, policies imposed by states and international financial/ economic bodies, racist and patriarchal security regimes, and the struggles of working people on every side of every border'. Engaging with these questions through the lens of Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations allows us to better account for the root causes of migration. It enables us to situate migratory movements in contexts of historical as well as contemporary legacies of colonialism, uneven capitalist development and associated movements of people (see also Walia 2021).

Translating these insights into actual practices of solidarity and effective political action is by no means an easy task. It certainly requires, as Tazzioli (2020, 141) argues, the creation of 'transversal alliances of solidarity . . . between migrants, locals and activists'. The emphasis should therefore be placed on the creation of new commonalities and forms of contentious horizontal politics between different actors (Agustín and Jørgensen 2021, 860). The lead author has seen first-hand instances of such practices being realised in grassroots organisations active on the borders of Europe. These groups attempted genuine horizontalism between members of different communities based on the principle of working together, held meetings with multiple layers of translation to ensure full participation, and created moments of collective self-reflection over how to recognise and act towards the persistence of colonial, racialised and gendered understandings in political and solidarity contexts. Yet it is also important to recognise that these individual moments of autonomous solidarity do not in themselves undo the 'migration fix' and the violence of Racial Capitalism. The persistent challenge is over how to be 'in and against' the border regime and the promise of genuine solidarity also resides in the understanding that no such thing can truly exist until the border regime is abolished.

Conclusion

In bringing this paper to a close we reaffirm the value and importance of drawing on the concepts of Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations for better understanding the situation facing migrants and refugees and the implication of NGOs, volunteers and grassroots organisations in reproducing racial capitalist logics. Drawing on the literature on Racial Capitalism and Relative Surplus Populations as our starting point, we

developed an account of the role of non-governmental and grassroots organisations in the broader 'migration fix' as well as defined the forms of secondary exploitation and the patterns of racialised differentiation which take form within it. The point of doing so is not to condemn the humanitarian sector, but rather to clarify the complexities, tensions and contradictions within which these organisations operate, related to questions of borders and exclusion but also exploitation and racialisation. These logics complicate and affect relations between support groups and displaced people, potentially implicating them in what we have termed the 'migration fix'. Following Harvey (2001), we introduced this concept to point to the processes whereby various surpluses are managed and fixed in space through political, technological and social measures. We also evidenced how these fixes are often implemented along racial lines, peripherising racialised groups and keeping them confined outside of urban hubs. In the case of housing and support for displaced people in rural locations or on small Islands, these fixes rely on the voluntary labour of NGOs and grassroots organisations to fill the gaps in state support.

Recognising and facing the complex interweaving of questions of bordering, displacement, humanitarianism and capitalism is essential if the promise of solidarity is to be realised. We argue that it is in recognising and confronting the uneven patterns of global capitalism that we can start to challenge the exploitative and dehumanising character of contemporary bordering regimes; that it is in recognising the role of support organisations in the dequalification of displaced people that an alternative approach can be developed; and that it is through challenging the status quo that a radical alternative may become possible that challenges rather than unwittingly supports the making of certain groups as surplus. It is only through a clearer diagnosis of these complexities that we can start to overcome them, and it is our hope that within this paper we have made a contribution to that task.

Acknowledgement

Notes

1. The concept of 'border regime', as opposed to simply referring to borders, is helpful because it foregrounds the complex assemblage of different actors, institutional logics and struggles which constitute the border as a distinctive political space (see Casas-Cortes et al. 2015, 69).

2. We understand critical political economy in a broad sense as an approach which seeks to reveal and study the relations of power and violence which underlie the contemporary global economy. As a critical approach, it is variously informed my Marxist, Feminist, Post-structuralist as well as Post- and De-colonial theory.

3. In formulating the concept of the 'migration fix' we are influenced by Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (2007, 26–27) theorisation of prisons as 'partial geographical solutions to political economic crises, organized by the state, which is itself in crisis.' Whilst there are important differences between carceral regimes and migration regimes, Gilmore's emphasis on the role of the state and on the combination of different political, racial and economic dynamics was crucial for us to think beyond Harvey's original formulation of the 'spatial fix'.

4. For the UNHCR, for example, this can be between 4 and 6 years for research-based roles depending on the levels of qualifications also held.

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ORCID

Gemma Bird 🔵 http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6527-3195
Davide Schmid 🔵 http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6931-505X

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