The Return of the National?

Migration, Borders and Nationalism

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Abstract: The discussion approaches current forms of nationalism and racism in Europe in regard to the political dynamic after the so-called refugee crisis in 2015. It is structured around guiding questions about the relationship between restrictive asylum policies, racist discourses and mobilizations as well as the increasing invocation of national identity. Thereby, the debate especially focuses on Germany, where anti-migrant parties and movements have become stronger during the last five years. This contemporary conjuncture is analyzed in relation to economic and racist structures of the last decades as well as in the light of theoretical reflections on Balibar's concept of the ›national social state‹ and on global inequality. In the current anti-migrant mobilizations, gender plays a central role, linked also to colonial narratives of Western Europe as the origin of civilizing superiority. Furthermore, the discussion deals with ways of subverting and going beyond the national by reflecting on struggles against deportations and on a Europe from below.

Keywords: nationalism, racism, anti-migrant movements, gender and migration, borders and deportations, global inequality, Europe from below

In the summer of 2015, hundreds of thousands people reached the Schengen territory and claimed their right to mobility. These cross-border movements, which were highly visible in public, led to a brief opening of national borders for migrants who have usually been kept away from the EU and a previously unknown level of commitment to refugees. However, we have also witnessed a massive return of ›the national‹ in Europe and beyond. From 2013 onwards, right-wing movements and parties in Germany have become stronger, and several restrictions of basic asylum rights have been enforced without major counter-protests. Ever since the beginning of 2016, anti-migrant discourses have become omnipresent in the German media public as well. These anti-migrant discourses prepare the ground for restrictions of international mobility that were unthinkable prior to the so-called ›refugee crisis.‹ These developments are not limited to Germany: the rise to power of Trump and Orban, or the Brexit are all phenomena indicating a re-nationalization in Europe and beyond. Accordingly, current debates about migration and nationalism have not been limited

to the national scale, but have also focused on their relation to the European Union and the Global South. Taking these developments into consideration, the following discussion on the connections between nationalism and racism initially took place in May 2017, at the most recent conference of the Network for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies (kritnet) in Osnabrück, Germany. Thoughts and discussions expressed at the conference have been put into writing for this *movements* issue. The aim was to continue and deepen the ongoing debates in the context of critical migration research: What is the relationship between restrictive asylum policies, the strengthening of racist discourses and movements, and the increasing invocation of national identity? How can the current developments be confronted with a (pro-)migrant perspective and position? By incorporating gender into the analysis of current migration discourses and relating central migration policies such as deportations to the structures of globalized capitalism, it was intended to open an even more complex debate.

In order to provide an impetus for discussions at the kritnet conference and beyond, Bernd Kasparek, Maren Kirchhoff, Johanna Neuhauser, and Helge Schwiertz discussed these issues from different perspectives under the heading ›the return of the national.‹ Bernd Kasparek has been working on the transformations and crisis of the European border regime for more than ten years, focusing especially on the Frontex border agency and the Southeast European region. He recently co-edited a volume on the »summer of migration« (Hess et al. 2016) as well as a *movements* issue on racism (Espahangizi et al. 2016). Maren Kirchhoff has worked on a research project on protests against deportations in recent years (Kirchhoff 2017) and continues to explore the topic. She is also interested in the possibilities of solidarity in the context of European crisis policy. Johanna Neuhauser has recently dealt with the connection between gender, migration, and policies of migration (Neuhauser et al. 2016). In her research, she pays particular attention to global inequalities and the inclusion of perspectives from the Global South into migration research. Helge Schwiertz combines empirical studies about migratory struggles in Germany and the US with theoretical reflections of radical democracy and citizenship. Regarding the events culminating in the so-called ›refugee crisis‹ of 2015, he has analyzed the relationships of anti-migrant policies and mobilizations, as well as the potential of various counterhegemonic projects (Schwiertz/Ratfisch 2016, 2017).

Maren Kirchhoff (MK): Helge, how do you explain the recent strengthening of nationalist and racist positions in Europe and beyond?

Helge Schwiertz (HS): German society has of course not become racist all of a sudden. However, the public articulation and mobilization of racism have been severely increasing in recent years. Current conjunctures of racism and nationalism in Germany are therefore strongly related to a problematization of migration. Ever since 2014, this has become obvious through at least three interrelated developments: First, new right-wing groups and organizations have emerged, for whom it is a key issue to frame migration as an existential threat for the nation. The political party Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland,* AfD) as well as the movement *Pegida* (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident, *Patriotische Europäer Gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*) are the most visible actors of this new conjuncture. Second, mobilizations and attacks against refugees have escalated at the same time. In the year 2016 alone, there were more than 3,500 attacks against refugees and refugee accommodations — which comes down to an average of ten racist acts of violence per day (WAZ 2017). Third, the German Bundestag has passed four anti-migration reforms since 2014, which substantially restrict the rights of refugees. In their common problematization of migration, these three developments can be seen, I would argue, as part of a comprehensive anti-migrant movement.[1]

When looking at the strengthened nationalism and pogroms after the German reunification in the 1990s, parallels to the contemporary anti-migrant movement are striking. Nevertheless, we have to take a closer look and ask: What is the specific constellation of different developments in the current situation of the 2010s?

In contrast to the 1990s, a relatively open media discourse developed well into the second half of 2015. The reemergence of intra-European borders and the dying in the Mediterranean were criticized, the so-called ›Welcome Culture‹ (*Willkommenskultur*) of the civil society in Germany and other countries was celebrated, and even the antiracist slogan ›Refugees Welcome‹ became part of the hegemonic discourse for a short moment. However, since at least the beginning of 2016, an anti-migrant discourse has played out in the media as well, with support from protagonists of all political parties. Right-wing movements have pushed this shift in discourse, and, at the same time, they have profited from it.

Pegida and AfD were severely weakened with decreasing numbers in demonstration turnouts and opinion polls during the first half of 2015. However, with the racist discourse focusing on the so-called ›refugee crisis,‹ they were able to strengthen again. The ›refugee crisis‹ has emerged as an opportunity structure that has en-

1 | I draw on analyses developed together with Philipp Ratfisch (Schwiertz/Ratfisch 2016, 2017).

abled right-wing mobilizations to become more effective as an anti-migrant movement. Now, the open question remains: how will the framing of migration in public discourses develop and what effects will this have on right-wing mobilizations and organizations? Todays less prominent anti-migrant discourse could be related to a stagnation of the AfD and other right-wing mobilizations in 2017. However, a new boom in the anti-migrant discourse could rematerialize quickly.

Bernd, I have referred to the much-debated comparisons with the racist violence and the strengthened nationalism in Germany during the 1990s. Where do you see continuities and differences compared to the 1990s? In the *movements* issue that you co-edited (Espahangizi et al. 2016), you describe various conjunctures of racism: how do they relate to transformations of the nation form?

Bernd Kasparek (BK): Indeed, looking at Germany, and of course unsurprisingly, we currently find ourselves in a different political conjuncture than in the 1990s. The political discourse back then was dominated by the reunification of Germany, the ensuing nationalist delirium, and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, which led to a major realignment of the global political landscape. Differently than in the 1990s, there is no heightened interest in a racist mobilization in Germany by the parties in government. Back then, the counter-factual dogma of Germany not being a country of immigration predominated, and the call for the creation of so-called ›nationally liberated zones‹ by the neo-Nazi movements was a mere echo of the more official political belief that the migrants of the era of Fordist migration (›*Gastarbeiter*‹) would eventually return to their countries of origin. Today, Germany does understand itself as a country of immigration, and the creation of a ›Welcome Culture‹ is an official aim. Despite a new and reinforced practice of deportation and despite the harsh new realities of the German asylum system, this is not mere cynicism or lip service. The fact that migration is happening and will happen has prevailed, but the price is a more brutal and Europeanized migration and border regime, with the strongest consequences observable at the external borders of Europe.

At the same time, an analysis of the »conjunctures of racism« (Demirović/Bojadžijev 2002; translation by the authors) must not be equated with analytically essentializing racism by reducing it to a state genealogy between nationalism and colonialism. This would mean discounting and ignoring the complexities of the different racisms, the dynamics in their structures, discourses and practices, and (last but not least) the importance of antiracist struggles and the social movements around migration. For Germany, this means taking into account the profound societal transformations of the last few decades. The perseverance of the social movements of migration has not

only led to a pluralization of societies, and an implicit and lived everyday practice of multiple belongings. We can even go further: the struggles connected to these transformations have left visible traces in the political, cultural, and social landscape of Germany and its institutions. In conjunction with other social relations, such as class and gender, boundaries are constantly contested, shifted, and warped.

These developments, as sketched out above, are of course (nationally) specific to the history and present of the German migration regime, the German manifestations of racism and the current role Germany occupies within the European border regime. But its abstract tendencies can similarly be detected in other countries, such as Austria and Switzerland, or any other immigration country worldwide.

If we look at the shift of the public discourse towards an anti-migrant agenda since the end of 2015, it becomes clear that Pegida, AfD, and others do not only mobilize socially rooted racisms, as Helge explained, but they also rely on gender relations. Johanna, together with others from *kritnet,* you have worked on this issue in joint publications and conferences. Can you briefly consider which role gender plays in the current ›return of the national‹?

Johanna Neuhauser (JN): By now, much has been said about the New Year's Eve in Cologne in 2015/2016 and the construction of the ›danger of male refugees traveling alone.‹ Like other feminist scholars, we have criticized the instrumentalization of gender for an anti-migrant agenda (Neuhauser/Hess/Schwenken 2016; Hess/Neuhauser/Thomas 2016). In the discourse, the frequent statement that there are predominantly men coming to Europe is linked to the topos of the invisibility of female refugees. It is easy to see that the discourse is strongly gendered, and the so-called ›refugee crisis‹ is portrayed as male. This representation is based on well-known narratives of the patriarchal Islam and the passive refugee woman. Postcolonial perspectives reveal that arguments for the protection of women of the South are embedded in the construction of »Cultural Others« (Spivak 2008; Castro/Dhawan 2009), in this case of North African Muslim men. The resulting dichotomy of civilized/uncivilized has always served the construction of borders and, as it is visible in the current discourse, especially of national border security. This use of gender for nationalist purposes is not new, but follows a long tradition of the narrative of Western Europe as the origin of modernity, progress, and civilizing superiority.

However, the great attention placed on gender in relation to migration also has more ambivalent effects, as, for example, the increased sensitivity to the need for women-specific protection and support programs show. Violence prevention measures or refugee shelters for women only are crucial elements of the political agenda

(e.g. BMFSFJ/UNICEF 2016). From a feminist point of view, this sensitivity must be judged positively, since it increases the scope for action of women's rights organizations. However, if we take a closer look at the programs, major deficits become visible and — as feminist initiatives have criticized — the implementation of measures lags behind the political promises (e.g. medica mondiale 2017). In addition, the tightening of asylum laws goes into the opposite direction, specifically towards a massive deterioration of the situation of women who have fled along the officially closed ›Balkan Route‹ since the beginning of 2016 (UNHCR/UNFPA/WRC 2016). In particular, the tightening of the requirements for family reunion prevents the entry of women and children, whose invisibility and oppression is discursively deplored at the same time.

We have spoken a lot about the increasing anti-migrant mobilizations. Bernd, in the anthology »The Long Summer of Migration« (Hess et al. 2016), you are not so much interested in dominant discourses and politics as in the social movements and organizations of the migrants themselves. When we look at the current developments from a perspective of migration: what is the relationship between the rise of nationalism and the migratory movements in the recent years?

BK: The connection between the current rise of nationalism and the movements of migration is complicated. We should under no circumstances assume a strict causal link between increased migration and increased nationalism. For one, we should not underestimate the mechanism of scapegoating migration, which is a constant thing in national politics. If we talk about the new rise of nationalism, we have to take the relevant scales into account. If we refer to the old, post-Westphalian nationalism that emerged over the last few centuries and came to dominate global history in the 20th century, nationalism was both a scaling up of the relevant political entity, as for example the case with Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, as well as a scaling down from the larger empires, such as the Ottoman Empire in the case of Greece, and even Turkey itself, or India with respect to the British Empire. Today, it seems to me that the rise of nationalism in countries of the EU implies only a scaling down, a withdrawing from supranational entities, as witnessed in Brexit, or at least in reacquiring political powers from Brussels by national capitals. However, the larger entities to withdraw from are not empires, but more diffuse international orders, which are strongly connected with the advance of neoliberalism and especially neoliberal globalization: regimes of free trade, of climate regulation, of international legal regimes.

And this diffuse scaling up of the international order has aligned itself mainly with an ideology of the free market, not with global democracy or global political and social rights. And what is evident at least since the global financial crisis in 2008: the promise of prosperity and wealth for everybody has not been delivered, much rather the opposite. Even in the global centers, the former middle classes have lost; or more importantly: there is no promise of a brighter future anymore. So the desire that is fueling the rise of nationalism is a double desire, one of restoring political control, perhaps even democracy to a well-known scale, i.e. the nation-state, as well as one of returning to the class compromise of the Fordist era. If we add these components, i.e. all the insignia of Benedict Anderson's (1983) »imagined communities« and the ever-present and ever-implicit racism and sexism of the Fordist order, we arrive at the particular nastiness and ugliness that we witness in the neo-nationalist movements these days.

And, to answer the second part, what is the relation with the movements of migration? Of course, migration challenges the national social order, but not in the way of the racist argument, i.e. that it increases the competition within the national container. But rather that it dissolves the convenient abstraction of the national container, shielding its occupants from the global social and economic order on which its prosperity is based, and which makes it a desirable destination for migration in the first place. We have to emphasize, again, that migration is not the root of the problems diagnosed above, such as the continuing demise of the remaining institutions of the Fordist welfare state, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, or the increased importance of global supply chains, which have transformed European labor markets.

When we talk about nationalism and the ›return of the national,‹ we refer to the nation as a politically and theoretically heavily charged concept. Which theoretical approaches to the concepts of ›nation‹ and ›nationalism‹ do you, Helge, think are particularly appropriate to capture the ›return of the national‹ in relation to migration?

HS: For understanding this relation, many analyses refer to Étienne Balibar. I think with him we can also find an answer to a question that is decisive for our subject: how can we explain the current successes of nationalist movements without one-sidedly reducing them to either racism or neoliberal politics?

To approach Balibar's concept of the nation, I would like to take a short detour. Politicians in Germany have been saying it again and again: that in regards to migration, one should take the ›anxieties and concerns‹ of citizens seriously. This rhetoric obviously turns a blind eye to the widespread racism of the perceptions and paranoia in the population when it comes to migration. And above all, it disregards the fears

of all those marked as migrants, who have to deal with racist situations every day. It is nevertheless worthwhile to take the so-called ›anxieties and concerns‹ of German citizens seriously for analytical purposes — to investigate how they are embedded in social structures. And this is where the concept of the nation comes into play.

The nation form provides a sense of affinity and relative privilege to all those who are counted in. On the one side of its bordering processes, this is enforced by marking non-members, partially excluding and subordinating them. On the other side, and closely connected to this, subjects pass according to a partly vague, partly precisely regulated national norm of belonging, which is essentially informed by racism. To some extent, this formation of »the social« that Balibar (2014: 155) describes as a »national-social state« can compensate for discrimination due to other structures of domination, such as class or gender. Thereby, those who belong to the nation enjoy symbolic as well as material privileges that moderate their subordination in the social hierarchy.

Throughout the established common sense and mainstream discourses in Germany, this security of the national subject and its privileges are now perceived to be in danger. Migration is thereby constructed and perceived as a major threat. Following the national logic in Germany, the ›citizens of fear and anger‹ (›*Angst- und Wutbürger*‹) are not fighting for a good life, but for being better off than others — for a hierarchical order, where they are subordinated, but nevertheless in a position above others. This is connected to what Bernd has called the ›double desire‹ of restoring the political and economic order of the Fordist era.

However, people rarely relate their fears of being excluded and losing privileges to the prevailing structures of the dominant society — which is an ever-remaining task for the left. Mediated by discriminatory discourses, those fears are instead turned into a concrete hatred of the ›other.‹ This hatred is directed against all those pretended to be a threat, but also against those who are perceived as responsible for it. In the words of Pegida: ›*die da oben*‹ (›the people on top‹), ›*das Merkel*‹ (chancellor Angela Merkel, with a neutral grammatical gender added in place of a female one) and the ›*Lügenpresse*‹ (›lying press‹). Alleged ›gender mania,‹ the ›islamization of the West,‹ or ›uncontrolled migration‹ become the focus according to shifting political circumstances. AfD, Trump, Le Pen, and other right-wing populists have success by presenting themselves as strong sovereigns against these alleged threats and as a true alternative to the weak political establishment.

JN: May I add something to this point? I find your analysis of the so-called fears of the relatively unprivileged citizens with Balibar very illuminative. However, it is important to mention that many research projects focus on right-wing mobilizations

and neglect to consider nationalism as a broad social phenomenon. Furthermore, it is crucial to analyze nationalism from a global perspective.

Nationalism cannot be reduced to right-wing ideologies, but must be seen as deeply embedded in the everyday life of people. Precisely what Balibar has called the privileges of the ›social and national state‹ are taken for granted by a large majority in the Global North on a daily basis. The philosopher Thomas Pogge (2011) calls this »ordinary nationalism«: the tacit acceptance of the given structures of nation-states and the legitimacy of a policy oriented towards national interests. This is particularly visible in the unequal chances of mobility, which are deeply connected with the unequal distribution of wealth as the inequality of visa rights around the world clearly reveals. How mobile you are is very closely related to where you were born. This »birthright lottery« (Shachar 2009) is hardly questioned in practice, but the comfort of the jackpot to live in the right place at the right time is considered to be a given. The concept of the »imperial way of life« (Brand/Wissen 2011) is also revealing in this context, since it indicates that capitalist patterns of production and consumption are deeply embedded not only in the everyday practices of the upper and middle classes in the Global North, but also in the emerging countries of the Global South.

MK: So you are strongly advocating to expand the view to the Global South. How do you think critical migration research will benefit from this perspective?

JN: The shift in perspective from migration to Europe towards unequal rights of moblity worldwide, draws attention to historically produced inequalities and calls into question Occidentalist perspectives. It is therefore a matter of pointing to global relations, which is, for example, already done in research on the causes of flight, such as expropriations of land and resources, European military equipment exports, neoliberal structural adjustment measures, etc.

In the scientific field, I think it is important to break with the dominant divisions of labor, as, for example, the separation between research on migration regimes on the one hand and on global inequality and therefore on questions of international development and politics on the other hand. The increased inclusion of political-economic perspectives in critical migration research could contribute to link these fields of research.

But what seems even more important to me is that by shifting the view to the global, the ethical question about the entitlement of unequal mobility opportunities and the differentiation between first-class and second-class citizens is accentuated. Nevertheless, I ask myself how we can bring this fundamental question, why some people are free to travel, while others are forcibly denied this right, into the public

debate. At the moment, the discourse and the policies seem to go exactly in the opposite direction.

HS: You are definitely right, Johanna, that this question of global inequality, which is highlighted by many refugee activists as well, should be raised more prominently in migration research and left-wing movements. Furthermore, what seems crucial to me as well is the question of emerging local spaces that contest the national-social form by developing alternative modes of belonging. Many have hopes in the movement for Solidarity Cities that could offer an approach for producing the common without national exclusions.

As a resistance to the allegedly self-evident nature of national borders, protests against deportations are a good example. Maren, you've worked a lot on such protests in recent years, can you expand on this?

MK: Deportations have been the subject of less visible resistance and public protest in the Federal Republic of Germany since the 1960s. On a daily basis, people defend themselves against deportations in various ways or repeatedly organize, e.g. protests by school classes in order to obtain a residency permit for their classmates. In doing so, regarding the definition of membership, state sovereignty has been questioned over and over again.

However, the connection between anti-deportation protests and nationalism is far from being straightforward. The ›State Project Europe‹ research group has outlined a concept of the »deeply anchored hegemony« (Buckel et al. 2014: 40; translation by the authors) of migration controls and thus of the border, which I find very helpful. Such a ›hegemony of the border‹ is expressed by the fact that national borders are regarded as quasi-natural in the public debate. Johanna has already mentioned this in relation to ›ordinary nationalism.‹ Because of this deeply anchored hegemony, the acceptance of the notion of the border is hardly affected by most social disputes. Interestingly, this is often true for anti-deportation protests, too. Frequently, deportations are questioned if they appear to be particularly brutal or unjust or if the persons concerned are perceived as very vulnerable and worth protection. Protests against such deportations often refer to specific argumentative frames pointing out why a *particular* person, family, or group should not be deported — without questioning deportations in general.

In some cases, this is even based on a very special idea of merit. In the interviews I conducted for our research project, I spoke with a politician of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) who regularly got involved in protests

against the deportation of pupils in Hamburg. In the interview, he uses the term ›Leistungsdeutsche,‹ which could be translated as ›Germans by merit.‹ To me this term symbolizes quite well the shift in relations of force in the area of migration policy in Germany, which resulted in a neoliberal ›migration management‹ system in the mid-2000s. Residency permits and options for naturalization were linked in part to (expected) economic performance. This was accompanied by a change of how belonging is conceptualized, which did not necessarily imply a fundamental limitation or questioning of deportations or national borders. And in particular, the basic exclusion from rights is not attacked thereby. This exclusion is a central feature of the nation-state, though, as Helge has already pointed out.

Nonetheless, there have always been protests against and resistance to deportations, which take the demand for equal rights as a starting point. Examples from the past 20 years are campaigns and actions by initiatives like *The Voice, alle bleiben!* (all stay!) or *no one is illegal* as well as the marches for the rights of refugees or the protests by the alliance against deportations in Osnabrück since 2013. If someone said ›I do not want to be deported,‹ the alliance was there, trying to prevent the deportation. No one asked why or how the person deserved to remain or why deportation would be inappropriate. Instead, they tried to assert a normative right to remain.

HS: You have now spoken about the connection between nationalism and protests against deportations. Can you briefly say something about the relationship between the nation and deportations?

MK: You, Helge, referred to Balibar's concept of the ›national-social-state‹ before. In connection with deportations, this is relevant in two ways: On the one hand, deportations make abstract civic rights come alive as both symbolic and material privileges. On the other hand, the circle of those to whom material concessions must be made is kept small by deportations. In this regard, what matters more than the specific deportation of people is the possibility to be deported at any time. Nicholas de Genova (2002) introduced the concept of »deportability« to emphasize this. Through deportability, illegality is established and maintained as a deeply internalized way of life. Thus, internalized in a quite similar manner to what Johanna has just said of the ›imperial way of life.‹ These subject constitutions are interconnected and bound to the constitution of society in large. Deportations and ›deportability‹ are not simply an expression of national sovereignty, but a central component of what Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2008) have called »differential inclusion«: rather than excluding people from a certain territory, it stratifies living and working conditions.

JN: I also find it important to emphasize that this fundamental inequality of the ways of life is not a coincidence, but politically promoted by dominant forces. By means of ›deportability,‹ people are taught: ›Hey, you do not really have the right to be here, unless you are useful to us.‹ Clearly, the definition of ›useful‹ corresponds to the principle of capitalist accumulation, hence the increase of profit. From the migrants' point of view, it seems contradictory that on the one hand globalization creates a world market for labor and thus motives and opportunities for migration, and on the other hand, national border regimes decide who will gain access to the national territory and labor markets. While this might be contradictory on the subjective level, it is not so much on the structural one, since, even in globalized capitalism, the labor market logic is anything but ›limitless.‹ Rather, it follows selective mechanisms of openings and closures for capital, goods, and labor. Furthermore, precisely because of its crises, capitalist accumulation needs regulation, and therefore migration policy is a crucial element. Despite this connection, it is important not to fall into the trap of economism, but to consider also the subjective dimensions of migratory movements.

HS: Besides those structures of regulating migratory labor forces in the interest of exploiting them, we have to keep in mind the struggles related to them, the relative autonomy of migration that subverts attempts of control — but also creates conflicts between different hegemony projects. This could result, for example, in restrictive migration policies following the preferences of nationalist forces, which are inefficient in the logic of more neoliberal forces.

Maren, we have talked a lot about nationalism and the connection with capitalism. In this context, the relation to the European level is crucial, too. Lately, I have the impression that the discourse tends towards the direction of presenting the EU and a pro-European policy as opposed to nationalism and right-wing politics.

MK: I would absolutely agree with you, and this is clearly reflected in the French presidential elections, which in the public discourse were directly linked to the future of the European Union. I was also relieved that Le Pen did not win the first round with a clear majority, and that Macron won the election. Still, I find the discourse about the election in France and also about the previous elections in the Netherlands problematic. In a way, this also shows how marginalized we are as left-wing movements in Europe. The question ›Yes or no to the EU‹ falls way too short. ›Yes to the EU‹ can mean exactly: ›Yes to the EU-Turkey deal,‹ ›Yes to the Dublin Regulation and the externalization of migration control,‹ ›Yes to the European austerity policy,‹

et cetera. Asking ›Yes‹ or ›No‹ does not at all tackle the orientation of these European policies. In my opinion, this is also a weak point of the Pulse of Europe movement.

In my view, the essential question is not: EU — yes or no? But rather: In what kind of society do we want to live, and how can living together in solidarity be developed in Europe and beyond? What would a policy look like that neither reverts to national positions, nor continues with the disastrous European policies that try to regulate the multiple crises that we have been experiencing since 2009? In recent years, there have been numerous discussions among the radical left under the slogan ›Europe from below.‹

I believe that the movements of migration and solidarity are a good example of such a Europe from below. However, from my point of view, the question that is still open is: How can this be sustained and stabilized? And what does this mean for the constitution of the EU?

BK: What is missing these days is not only a left-wing political project for Europe, but even a vision. Certainly, none of us would like to return to the era of the nation-state in Europe, but an uncritical affirmation of the European Union as it is, is also not an option. But it is exactly this perceived binary opposition that has hindered the development of such a vision. European social democracy has largely followed the neoliberal agenda of the European project, especially in the last couple decades, and even on the level of organization, the social-democratic left has not kept up with Europeanization. There is no functioning Europe-wide trade union association, no organization around the classical fields of left-wing politics, such as labor and social security. In consequence, these are also the fields that have undergone the least Europeanization. Labor market and welfare policies remain firmly in the hands of the nation-state within the EU.

The results of this become most evident in regards to migration. During the era of Fordist migration, migration policy was largely set by the labor and welfare ministries in the nation-state. It was only in the 1970s that this competence gradually passed to the ministries of the interior, resulting in what we today call the securitization of migration policy. This is why today in Europe migration policy is nearly synonymous with border, with police, with Schengen.

What does this mean for a left-wing project for Europe? From a perspective of migration, the European project as it stands is highly ambivalent. For the migrations that preceded the formation of the EU were largely migrations within the larger European space. The creation of European citizenship and the establishment of the freedom of movement as well as the freedom to settle have erased these migrations as

migrations. Today, they are perceived as European mobility, and one that is actively encouraged, at least in Western and Central Europe (though people from Eastern European countries are confronted with the ›poverty migration‹ discourse, see Fiedler et al. 2017). For all the migrations from outside the European Union, however, migration has become increasingly problematized, even though the particular genesis of social and political rights for European citizens could function as a model for a different Europe. Once we again erase the — in the end — arbitrary distinctions drawn up by the category of migration and return to the question of rights and belonging in Europe, a different vision for society in Europe would emerge. In the end, it is not about drawing up a different, more humanitarian migration policy for Europe, but rather to take the experiences and the history of migration in and to Europe seriously in order to arrive at a different post-national project for Europe.

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