Security Above the Law?

Germany's Pandemic Borders and Intra-European Free Mobility

Polina Manolova, Philipp Lottholz

Abstract: The current pandemic emergency reveals how the intra-EU space of ›free‹ movement continues to be a bordered space. During the first wave of the pandemic, in the spring of 2020, EU member states introduced strict border controls and mobility restrictions as an instrument to contain the further spread of the virus. We examine exemplary border situations at one German airport, and argue that the border management and security practices of German federal authorities enforces a regime of differential bordering that has effectively suspended free mobility rights for certain categories of EU citizens. We identify such practices as part of a »spectacle of security« unfolding within an emergency-routine continuum, and we look at its effects on the conditioning of highly precarised migratory patterns of East European migrants. At the same time, we take these border situations as sites of contestation, where migrants claim rights, resist disciplining, and seek ways to circumvent punitive regulations by forging networks of mutual support. Furthermore, such episodes serve as occasions in which migrants are encouraged to openly voice their indignation with everyday exclusion, exploitation and racialised treatment.

Keywords: intra-EU migration, Covid-19, borders, securitisation, spectacle of security

As of March 2020, when the Coronavirus pandemic first broke out in Europe, governments fast-tracked unprecedented border controls and mobility restrictions across EU's internal and external borders. As a result of what were mostly uncoordinated and chaotically implemented state-level emergency measures, intra-European free mobility was effectively suspended for a large number of EU citizens, and, in the process, the livelihood trajectories of precarious groups of migrants were further endangered. Border closures had emerged as a key control measure for containing the spread of the infection, along with ›social‹ distancing and strict hygiene observance. Whereas the latter two measures quickly proved their efficacy, the importance of mobility restrictions for preventing contagion was not only put under increased scrutiny

as »ineffective in most situations«,[1] but it was also declared counterintuitive for the additional risks it poses to those on the move as well as the ›domestic‹ populations.

In this light, the need to extend the analysis of border closures and mobility restrictions from the limited lens of ›health and safety‹ to their political instrumentalisation and effects, was clearly outlined, particularly regarding aspects of migration governance through securitisation. In a recent intervention, Elspeth Guild and Didier Bigo stepped up to the task in their reflection on the need for (re-)establishing restrictions on national border crossings across Europe as a »reflex action« intended to exhibit the tight grip the sovereign power and the authorities have on managing the crisis. The ideological potential of borders in the current health crisis, the authors explain, was mobilised for the reinvigoration of popular support and the strengthening of a sense of national belonging (and security) (Guild and Bigo 2020). Michel Agier develops this line of thought further while claiming that, at the outset, the Covid-19 pandemic manifested the substitution of sanitary with securitarian borders. He interprets this move as turning the exceptional into ›ordinary‹, namely, the ineffective and unnecessary border closures within Europe have been normalised, to the point where there was no substantial public backlash, under what were mostly securitising arguments (2020). This has been rooted, in great part, in the production of a »crisis talk« (Scheel 2018: 267) and the evocation of threat narratives in which migratory flows were framed as a danger for domestic populations, this time through the trope of epidemiological risk and the hazard it poses to public health.

This emerging scenario can be grasped as what de Genova (2011) has called a »spectacle of security«, in which states seek to reassert and strengthen their control and sovereignty—or at least perceptions thereof—through the performance of bordering and other types of control measures. As de Genova and other scholars at the intersection of security and migration studies demonstrate, this focussing of security and »prevention« measures on »culprits« has led to the creation of a »security continuum« in which social groups and policy fields that are not evidently associated with a given problem become the main target of control and exclusion measures, because of their presumed guilt »by association« (de Genova 2011; Huysmans 2006: 2). The ones whose freedom of movement, safety concerns and livelihoods have continuously been sacrificed with the rationale of ensuring the »security« of Western states' citizens, have largely been asylum seekers and migrants from within and outside of the EU (ibid.). Based on the same logic, the current spectacle of security became, to paraphrase de Genova's language on the War on Terror, »fixated upon the fetish of

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[1] | World Health Organization (WHO): Updated WHO recommendations for international traffic in relation to COVID-19 outbreak, 29.02.2020.

the ›illegal alien‹ as the embodiment of nebulous ›foreign‹ menaces« and, therefore, »stages transnational mobility and . . . ›immigration‹ in general as an *utterly decisive material site* where [the fight against the pandemic] may be practically and physically realized« (2011: 151–152, emphasis added).

In this piece, we demonstrate how the spectacle of security, emerging amid the Covid-19 crisis, has become fixated on perceiving the issues of migration and mobility as »utterly decisive material sites« for the fight against the pandemic. We do so by demonstrating the ways in which ›emergency‹ border control measures, as sanctioned and conceived by German authorities, were implemented, and, in the process, (re-) interpreted and negotiated by border guards and other non-state actors. The focus on the practices of security »professionals« in less mediatised spaces (see Huysmans 2006: 8–9) does not aim at revealing a logic of intentionality when it comes to the observed violence in processes of mobility management. However, our perspective is a crucial step in problematising the securitising logic of Covid-19 border control measures.

In what follows, we begin with our personal accounts of two exemplary ›border situations‹ at the Frankfurt-am-Main airport, where emergency travel restrictions have been implemented—in violation of both Covid-19-related travel regulations and the EU free movement framework—against Bulgarian labour migrants and their family members (section two). These serve as a starting point in the process of unpacking the European ›emergency‹ border regime as it developed throughout the early pandemic crisis. They also provide some tentative reflections on the securitising and performative functions of this regime, which become particularly evident on the level of everyday management practices. In section three, we discuss the enforcement of border regulations and restrictions of ›essential‹ travel by the German authorities and the ways in which they fostered a regime of differential bordering. In section four, we expose the permeability of Corona borders by looking at migrants' practices of circumventing travel regulations, and the way in which shared experiences of state control and disciplining can prompt the formation of solidarity networks. While we stress practices of solidarity and resistance, we are also interested in demonstrating and discussing the detrimental effects that bordering measures had on EU citizens, and how the restraining or dismantling of their free mobility rights have in many cases stripped them off their sources of livelihood. We finally argue that the dynamics of vulnerability and impermanence, transpiring in the implementation of the emergency border ›spectacle‹, are not new phenomenoa. Rather, they are systematically entrenched within the EU migration management practices of the past decades as well as the neoliberal instrumentalisation of free mobility.

PANDEMIC (EN)CLOSURES THROUGH SECURITISATION

The first series of border closures instated between neighbouring Schengen countries came as unilateral decisions, and took place as early as the second week of March 2020. These closures—which contradicted the EU Commission's insistence on an ›open border‹ policy—have developed in an uncoordinated chain reaction pattern sparked by Austria, Slovenia and Sweden and picked up by Germany, Hungary and Switzerland (among others). From the 18th of March onwards, the second wave of emergency travel regulations across the EU was implemented, in reaction to the EU authorities' decision to suspend ›non-essential‹ travel originating from outside of the Union. Such strengthening of the impermeability of external borders was intended to guarantee the re-establishment of unobstructed mobility within the Union.

On the 17th of March, Germany vouched to implement »far-reaching entry restrictions« for ›non-essential‹ travel[2] both at the German Schengen external borders, and also on »international air and sea transport for travel connections that have their origin outside the European Union«[3]. However, both the Minister of Interior, Seehofer, and the Chancellor, seemed determined to maintain the already introduced state border controls across internal Schengen borders. At the same time, they remained unclear on how the newly adopted restrictions would affect people travelling within the EU but from non-Schengen countries[4]. This ambiguity is especially relevant to our case study. As the situation at the various borders evolved quickly, and partly chaotically, public attention oversaw the fact that on the ground, these emergency measures were implemented using oppressive state tactics, and they resulted in a gross overstepping of the EU freedom of movement for particular groups of EU migrants.

Since 18 March, 2020, various cases of refusal of entry at different border points at German airports and land borders were reported in Bulgarian traveller forums and migration support online groups. Most people had been turned away upon arrival because they could not produce documents proving their long-term or permanent residency in Germany, which were necessary to qualify their travels as ›essential‹. While

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2 | Germany has adopted the distinction between ›essential‹ and ›non-essential‹ travel, as introduced by the European Commission. The distinction, in a broad sense, laments that non-citizens living and working in the country, or those engaged in transiting mobilities, are permitted while the rest are turned away if they cannot provide legitimate reasons (see Thym 2020).

3 | Federal Ministry of Interior, Building and Community: Bundesinnenminister Seehofer ordnet weitreichende Reisebeschränkungen im internationalen Luft- und Seeverkehr an, 17.03.2020.

4 | Bulgaria, Romania, Ireland, Croatia and Cyprus are part of the EU but no-Schengen states.

a more detailed survey of these situations is beyond the confines of this article, we focus our analysis on the situation at Frankfurt Airport, where the overstepping of emergency travel protocols and the misapplication of officially accepted restrictions was a daily reality. At Frankfurt Airport, on the 18th of March, nine Bulgarian citizens were detained upon arrival after failing to produce proof of a German address registration or a valid employment contract. The personal identification documents of the three women and six men were seized by the German Federal Police (*Bundespolizei*), and they were required to report at the airport police station three times per day while awaiting a return flight. The detainees were pressured into signing a ›refusal of entry‹ form which stipulated their denied admittance and affirmed their scheduled return on the grounds that they constituted a »threat to public policy, internal security and public health« as per Article 14 of the Schengen Borders Code, which regulates the refusal of entry of ›third-country‹ citizens.

In this case, the German Federal Police applied, either purposefully or mistakenly, the EU Commission's temporary restrictions on EU-external arrivals to Bulgarians by miscategorising them as ›third-country‹ nationals (rather than EU citizens). Thus, instead of re-establishing unobstructed travel within the EU, German authorities extended the restrictions (in the case described here but also in many other occurrences at German airports that were brought to our attention) on third-country nationals to EU citizens (which, in the most part, affected those arriving from non-Schengen areas) in order to refuse entry to everyone unable to prove their residency or ›essential‹ reasons for travel. This way, Germany, together with other EU states[5], implemented severe intra-EU bordering policies that effectively suspended free mobility for certain categories of people, and made it dependent on ›ad hoc‹ implementation of case-by-case examinations (*Einzelfallprüfung*).[6] The latter has in many cases involved undue procedures with people being pushed to sign papers without receiving explanations or translations of contents in their respective languages. Thus, the official aim of reducing the flow of travellers to diminish the risk of infections was implemented at the expense of free and unconditional movement for EU citizens guaranteed by EU leg-

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5 | In the following weeks, several cases of refused entry were reported in Paris airports.

6 | The ›case-by-case‹ approach was officially introduced by the German authorities with regards to managing the arrival of all non-nationals. It stipulated a ›flexible‹ formula applied to those who cannot meet the requirements for ›essential‹ travel but who still have an ›urgent reason‹ to enter the country. In this case entrants were required to provide documentation to prove the necessity of the trip.

islation.[7] In this sense, the Federal Police appeared to enact a ›spectacle of security‹ which constructed migrants' entry into, and movement within, Germany as a potential threat to public health, and thus aimed to obstruct such movement at the expense of legal entitlements. Three of the detainees—male construction workers—were released after spending one night at the airport transit zone, upon the insistence of their Germany-based subcontractor, who assured border guards that an employment contract and an address registration will be provided shortly after their arrival on the job. All the three women and three other males were deported on a flight back to their destinations of arrival, after spending more than 48 hours at the airport, despite the assurances of their family members who confirmed their reasons for arrival, and despite the media attention that they drew in Bulgaria and the pressures put on border authorities by the Bulgarian Consulate in Frankfurt.

The punitive and exclusionary logics of the new Corona bordering regime were especially well illustrated in another individual case that took place at the Frankfurt Airport a month later. In light of numerous further cases of refusal of entry and externalisation of border controls to Bulgarian airports, the rules and possibilities of admission were better clarified, by mid-April, on the Frequently Asked Questions page of the Federal Police website. On the 17th of April, 23-old Bulgarian nurse, Diana Ivanova[8], was refused entry on the basis of Article 6, section 1 of the German »Freedom of Movement Law«, as per her inability to produce sufficient proof that her visit to take care of her mother was of an ›essential‹ nature. As per the German Federal Police's regulations, the letter produced by an Accident and Emergency doctor, diagnosing her mother's lumbar spine syndrome and recommending intravenous treatment, should have been sufficient to justify the ›essential‹ nature of Ivanova's visit. However, as it was subsequently revealed, the Federal Police officers followed up on the letter and questioned the practitioner who had issued it. As one of the officers explained in a phone call inquiring about the reasons of Ivanova's continued detention, the conversation with the practitioner led to a correction of the initial statement to the effect that Ivanova's mother's medical condition did not present an

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7 | Article 29 of the Free Movement Directive foresees emergency restrictions on free movement for the purposes of preventing the spread of diseases with an ›epidemic potential‹. The activation of this clause is, however, subject to stringent observance of principles of proportionality and guaranteed procedures for processing complaints and observing infringements (see Thym 2020). These conditionalities were not met in the German case. Even further, the border authorities did not in fact even refer to them till mid-April. Till then, travel bans were rooted in sections of Schengen law managing the arrival of third country nationals in the EU.

8 | All names are pseudonyms.

›essential‹ reason for her visit (German: *zwingender Einreisegrund*).[9] Further attempts by Ivanova's sister and mother to explain that there was no one else to help the mother master the challenges of everyday life were to no avail. Ivanova's return on a flight on Sunday, the 19th of April, could eventually not be averted.

This episode further exhibits the arbitrary implementation of the German border regulations and the complete misemployment of the ›case by case‹ approach that is otherwise praised for its flexibility. Instead of accepting the letter as a proof of the ›essential‹ nature of Ivanova's visit to her mother, the officers decided to advance an investigation until they gathered enough ›evidence‹ to argue that her entry into Germany was not ›essential‹. The questioning of the practicing physician presents an undue act of policing in which they involved a medical professional as a necessary witness or even a guarantor to vouch for the ›essential‹ nature of Ivanova's travel.

That the main goal of the investigating police officers was to execute another act in the ›spectacle of security‹ was hinted at in the explanation given by the officer on duty, when he said: »You know, it is a matter of course that we follow up to check some of the proofs of ›essential‹ travel that we are given. You can't imagine what kinds of proof some people give us here«[10]. Given that in this case, the proof provided was a formal doctor's letter, this statement seems to suggest that basically any proof provided by travellers is regarded as potentially suspicious and can be proven to be unsubstantiated. Similarly, rather than just ensuring the provision of appropriate evidence for ›essential‹ travel, the officer seemed to hint that the deeper motivation of the police's actions is control and limitation of travel: »If we didn't run these checks, we could as well just completely give up control of our borders.« Taken together, these statements suggest that the Federal Police—as represented by the officers on duty—enforces regulations, and exerts scrutiny even beyond their mandate, with the primary goal of reducing the numbers of travellers entering Germany. They thus enact a »spectacle of security«, where the exercise of control and discipline is more important than the de facto effectiveness of the measures taken.

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9 | Phone call by Lottholz on 18 April, 14:15, inquiring the reasons for detention on behalf of Ivanova, author notes.

10 | Ibid.

DIFFERENTIAL BORDERING

The emergency transformations within the intra-EU border regime, as enacted by German authorities, has been built around the vaguely defined dichotomy of ›essential‹/›non-essential‹ travel. While the ›legitimate‹ reasons for entry were not clarified in an elaborate way, at least in initial written regulations, the border practices through which the category of ›essential‹ travel was implemented, made clear its simultaneous reliance on two guiding logics: permanence and regularity. Those able to take advantage of ›essential‹ movement rights were German passport holders and EU and third-country nationals who could provide proof for their ›habitual residence‹ in the country. As residence permits are required for EU citizens (and family members) to enact their free movement rights, the German Federal Police demanded the presentation of alternative written evidence that in most cases included two of the following: address registration, employment contract, health insurance, and, in the case of family members, a marriage certificate. Thus, the notion of habitual residence was taken as a criterion to help ensure the unobstructed return of EU nationals who have been living and working, as well as those—in the formulation of the Federal Police—whose ›home‹ or ›legal residence‹ is in the country.[11] The so-defined notion of ›essential‹ travel thus excluded a whole array of migratory categories: temporary/seasonal workers, workers in non-registered employment, long-term migrants without address registrations, and family members providing unpaid care, among others. And despite the fact that some exemptions to the ›legitimate‹ reasons rule existed on paper, making use of those, as demonstrated in the previous section, proved, in some cases, to be an almost impossible task.

The contemporary European border regime has been said to operate according to a rationale of filtering and differentiating (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) that highlights a process in which migrants are categorised and managed according to specific criteria. The different mechanisms employed in this particular case of ›emergency‹ pandemic border management point to a very similar logic: through the production of two distinct types of EU mobilities, ›essential‹ and ›non-essential‹, German (and EU) authorities have transformed free movement in a way that negates essential rights to those who cannot meet narrowly defined requirements for permanency and regularity and whose mobility claims are delegitimised and even rendered punishable. This hierarchisation of mobile subjects draws lines of delineation between the sanctioned movements of the ›permanent‹ and ›regularised‹ migrant residents, and the undeserv-

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11 | German Federal Police: FAQ page as of 18.03.2020.

ing mobile EU citizens who cannot claim legitimate residence and whose mobility is constructed as posing a direct contamination threat.

The stratification of the EU space of free mobility—the most repressive episodes of which we witnessed at German airports and land borders—is, however, not an unprecedented phenomenon triggered by Covid-19 emergency travel restrictions. On the contrary, it needs to be unpacked against the background of at least a decade-long trajectory of EU migration management that has led to the systematic entrenchment of vulnerability, impermanence, and irregularity for migrants in the EU. The global economic meltdown of 2007–2008 and the onset of austerity policies in Europe have triggered a gradual but persistent process of encroachment on access to social support for East European migrants through the introduction of stricter conditionalities and sanctions determining their regular status as workers, citizens and residents. The mechanism of controlling intra-EU migration through welfare has operated through constant re-definitions of the worker status and habitual residence, making the former extremely hard to sustain and the latter difficult to prove. The most recent surge in the German authorities' implementation of policies encroaching on migrants' social and residence rights was a political concession, given in 2014, to the pressures exerted by conservative and anti-immigration parties. Initially, such efforts were directed at the limitation of child support, but then quickly spread to other spheres of social benefits. By 2016, the German Bundesrat, this time with the initiative of the ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD), managed to fundamentally constrain criteria for the eligibility to unemployment benefits and other forms of social protection, thereby excluding newly arriving EU jobseekers and existing recipients. Some have interpreted these social policy developments as the consolidation of a »restrictive« approach towards EU migrants (Riedner 2018), and especially those coming from Bulgaria and Romania, which has disproportionately affected certain categories: newly arrived and low-skilled; racialised minorities; single parents; and dependent family members.

It is precisely the shrinking access to social entitlements, the narrowing down of the definition of legitimate employment, and the flexibilisation of work, that created the conditions under which East European migrants, whose mobilities are subject to the framework of formal legality, get entangled in complex dynamics of irregularisation and temporariness. Pathways of incorporation into the formal structures of the German state are extremely limited for those labouring in jobs with no contracts and no guaranteed payment, those who cannot afford to legally rent housing and create address registrations, and who are unable to access social support or meet healthcare provision requirements. This led to an extreme and intense transnationalisation of migrants' lives, whose opportunities for making a living are increasingly dependent on their readiness to navigate access to differentially formalised cross-border sources

of income and support. These realities of transnationally fragmented existence have been completely ignored by the German authorities while devising and implementing ›emergency‹ travel regulations and border control policies. In fact, the differential restrictions on entry for EU migrants—anchored in binary opposites such as ›essential‹ versus ›non-essential‹, ›regular‹ versus ›irregular‹, and ›settled‹ versus ›temporary‹—have placed ›itinerary‹ migrants' lives in complete disarray and led to their further precarisation. In the most part, Bulgarian detainees at German borders are returning workers in seasonal, short-term contracted or temporary informal employment; family members coming to provide unpaid care work for close relatives; and those who have been enduring irregular work and living arrangements in the country for years on end. The suspension (or extreme slowing down) of labour mobility during the Covid-19 crisis has disrupted the established livelihood patterns of migrating individuals, and has further endangered the social reproduction of the kin and community networks that are dependent on the earnings of their relatives at home and in host societies. For many people who are unable to take up or continue their employment in Germany, this has meant the loss of access to the only available source of income. For working parents, dependent on childcare assistance from grandparents and other relatives back home, it meant having to either provide care themselves by staying home and foregoing income, or incurring extra costs for private childcare arrangements. Overall, the interruption of established migratory patterns between Germany and Bulgaria has diminished or completely eradicated the means of survival for thousands of migrants in already vulnerable positions.

Only two weeks after the establishment of the initial emergency bordering measures, a new stage in the »spectacle of security« demonstrated that German authorities are not only negligent about the livelihoods of affected migrants, but they also in fact regard those migrants' very lives as disposable whenever required by the domestic economic imperatives. While the above-discussed effects of emergency bordering on free movement rights did not in fact catch any media attention, the economic emergency it caused among German agricultural producers and food processing businesses were heavily mediatised. Producers' associations and lobby groups pleaded that the entire sector faced an existential threat if no harvest pickers and other low-skilled workers were allowed in the country. Thus, within just a week, the political consensus shifted from a categorical health-related ban on East European casual workers' entry, towards declaring them as ›essential‹ and ›system-relevant‹ labour force which—of course, under the mandatory conditions of quarantine and segregation from the wider society—became vital for securing food supply chains and general societal stability

in Germany and other West European countries.[12] In an ironic, or rather cynical, turn of events, people whose labour mobility was denied as non-urgent only a week prior, were now redirected to new employment routes which were morally valorised and even classified as a matter of highest government priorities. As the rising infection numbers and the continuous violation of health and accommodation regulations show,[13] the re-categorisation of (some) East European workers as ›essential‹ did not lead to the observance of adequate protection measures, an implication that draws a quite literal picture of a necropolitical capitalist regime which readily sacrifices the health and life of some people to ensure incessant consumption for others (Jain 2020). This second act in the »spectacle of [economic] security« failed to provide a real alternative for the thousands of migrants who lost their livelihood support in the Corona emergency bordering regimes. It has further deepened the destitution of those forced to undertake this most dangerous form of labour mobility.

RESISTANCE, CIRCUMVENTION AND CONTESTATION

In our observations, German emergency bordering has emerged as one of the most restrictive within Europe with its ›flexible‹ approach that concentrated a great discretionary power in the hands of the Federal Police and opened up the space for the implementation of arbitrary rules. However, despite the sudden and unexpectedly harsh aggravation produced by control mechanisms, people found ways to work around and against the Covid-19 bordering measures. Studies which acknowledge the constitutive power and agency of migratory movements have questioned the omnipresence and restrictive capacity of the European border regime, and instead shifted the gaze to emergent ›border struggles‹ that mark the intersection between practices of control, reinforcement and subversion (see Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Scheel 2018). Such a standpoint visibilises the contradictions, inconsistencies and deficiencies that mark the constitution of a particular ›regime‹ of migration governance, and highlights the individual and collective capacity of migrants to challenge and subvert mechanisms of control in the pursuit of free mobility. The first set of tactics of resistance and circumvention of borders that migrants adopted in the unfolding of the pandemic crisis can be referred to as what Scheel has called »practices of ap-

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12 | In Germany, seasonal workers were placed in a two-weeks ›quasi quarantine‹ period, during which they were banned from leaving their work and living environment for the purpose of protecting the local population.

13 | See for instance Taz.de: Gurkenernte wird größter Hotspot, 27.07.2020.

propriation« (2018). These encompass strategies of in-direct contestation of border management which allow migrants to covertly undermine imposed regulations while at the same time appearing as seemingly compliant with them. By engaging with the logics and mechanisms of migration management, migrants repurpose them in a way that advances their own claims to mobility. For example, already in the first days of the border closures, when the required set of entry documents were announced, social media migrant support groups were filled with requests for the informal provision of address registrations, health insurance and employment contracts. This opened up a niche that migrant entrepreneurs have tried to fulfil with different degrees of success. Such practices of appropriation, that are often publicly discussed within normative frameworks of ›fraud‹ and ›deceit‹, reveal the extreme hardening of the intra-EU border regime whose logics and requirements drastically divert from the lived realities of East European migrants in Germany. Other informal practices of indirect contestation and subversion of Corona borders developed around the softer implementation of travel restrictions on land border checkpoints. Minibus drivers offered ›no checks‹ transfer to people caught in Bulgaria and desperate to return to their jobs and families in Germany. Others decided to try their luck and arrive in German airports that were known for their less frequent entry checks, or attempted to enter Germany via Luxembourg or Belgium, where such entry requirements has not (yet) existed, and cross the ›green‹ border on foot or by taxi.

Furthermore, migrants are not alone in their resistance and in the reassertion of their rights and dignity. In the particular situations of detentions at airports discussed above, as in many other cases, the first point of contact are often social media groups of people migrating to Germany and exchanging information, advice and contacts for help. Such groups, which have in fact become an important »infrastructure«, also served as a way to connect the detained individuals with organisations and people ready to help. Members of the Network against Deportation Hessen/Mainz provided initial support to the affected travellers and they provided detainees with contacts of other supporting actors, while also contacting Federal Police officers directly to inquire about the reasons for detention and avenues for the release of detainees. Finally, the accounts above are based on our own involvement in trying to help individual travellers contest and overturn the refusal of entry they were subjected to. Three of the detainees appealed the refusal of entry in the competent administrative court with the help of a German migration lawyer. While the results of these proceedings are still pending, the very act of submitting the appeal shows that there are practical ways to demand justice within the German legal system, as symbolic and belated as they may be.

FINAL REMARKS

The recent pandemic-motivated border closures, and the discretionary rules under which they have been implemented against Bulgarian migrants, exhibited painful analogies with the ›visa times‹ of the 1990s when, for many, the crossing of Schengen borders involved humiliating scrambling for documents, border checks, dependency on travel fixers and clandestine existence. The detained migrants and many online commentators interpreted the latest border control episodes as a confirmation that not much had changed when it came to practicing their rights. They saw it as further proof that they were still treated as second-class citizens, despite their EU citizenship status. Many were fearful that this tightening of restrictions could be a circumstantial precursor of what is to come–a more or less overt legalisation of policy mechanisms with the de facto effect of curbing low-skilled and the so-called ›poverty‹ migration to Germany, as the following statements from online discussions illustrate »It's really not that hard to get, all these restrictions are because they don't want us here any-more. That was it with the social benefits (*sotziala*) and migration.«, »God knows what awaits us after the pandemic, let's see what they have in stock for us and our families.«[14] Others, as Ivanova's mother, took it as a disciplining exercise through which state authorities were once more communicating a more widespread xenopho-bic sentiments against a migrant group that was seen as backward and undeserving: »This is how they (the Germans) treat us. For them, we are second category people. If you are Bulgarian, you are not one of them«.[15]

The articulation of migration-in-crisis rhetoric has emerged as a routine practice for the advancement of ›emergency‹ measures of border enforcement and policing, which are subsequently very hard to undo and can even be enshrined as policy changes and normalised as established approaches to migration management (de Genova et al. 2016). While the exceptional mobility regulations at German borders were dis-continued following decreasing Covid-19 infection rates, and as a result of pressure from the EU Commission and fears of further stagnating the domestic and common market, the conditions in which they were justified have not disappeared. In this light, the treatment of EU (and particularly East European) migrants during the Covid-19 pandemic presents a pertinent example for a »spectacle of security«. Furthermore, they also shed light on the wider trajectories of exploitation and dehumanisation, to which migrants have been historically subject. This stresses the urgent need to mov-

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14 | Statements in *Grupa za vzaimopomosht na balgarite v Germania* (Group for mutual help between Bulgarians in Germany) Facebook between 20.03.2020 and 21.04. 2020.

15 | Private conversation, 20.04.2020.

ing beyond victimizing narrations of their plight, and to instead look for ways of amplifying and solidarising with their struggles.

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Rezension/Ankündigung

Autor_innen

Jens Adam (PhD) holds a position as senior researcher at the U Bremen Excellence Chair Research Group »Soft Authoritarianism«. As a cultural/social anthropologist he focuses especially on current struggles around democracy and public policy, the intersections of humanitarianism and political violence as well as on contributions to a ›critical Europeanization research‹.

Ilker Ataç ist Professor am FB Sozialwesen der Hochschule Fulda. Schwerpunkte in Forschung sind Migrationspolitik und lokale Politik, soziale Bewegungen und Zivilgesellschaft, und undokumentierte Migration. Er ist Mitherausgeber der Zeitschrift *movements*.

Sanchita Basu lives in West Berlin since the 1980s. The 1990s influenced her activism. Her political standpoint developed in opposition to White feminists whose center-periphery logic she did not accept. This struggle led her to her project: Nozizwe - the first feminist educational project in Berlin for women of the ›two thirds of the world‹. Today she is the director of ReachOut, a counselling center for victims of racist, right-wing and anti-Semitic violence.

Enis Bicer is a social scientist and post-doctoral researcher. His research interests are on racism and discrimination, immigration societies, media and discourse research, intergroup conflict and social networks. Currently, he is staff member at the research project "The Threat Scenario of 'Islamist Terrorism' from the Perspectives of Politics, Media and Muslim Communities".

Lina Brink is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Augsburg. She finished her Ph.D. on media representations of protests in Egypt 2011-2014 at Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, working as a member of the junior research group »Transcultural Public Spheres and Solidarity«. Her research fields are discourse research, critical media studies, social movement studies, cultural studies, gender studies and postcolonial studies.

Jasmin Eding is a social pedagogue. She has been active in the black movement for over 30 years and is co-founder of ADEFRA e. V. (Black Women in Germany) and co-author of the book Children of Liberation: Transatlantic Experiences and Perspectives of Black Germans of the Post-War Generation (Ed. Marion Kraft 2016). She describes herself as an anti-racist-feminist-lesbian grassroots activist. ADEFRA roots is a forum by and for black women that fights against racism and other forms of discrimination.

Esin Gizem Göksoy hat Soziologie, Philosophie und Interkulturelle Kommunikation studiert. Sie promoviert am Lehrstuhl für Ethnologie an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München und untersucht die soziopolitischen Auswirkungen der ›neuen Türkei‹ in Deutschland. Sie setzt sich für antirassistische Perspektiven sozialwissenschaftlicher Forschung ein und kämpft gegen natio-ethno-kulturelle Zuschreibungen.

Helena Ayoka Grebner hat Theaterwissenschaft und Interkulturelle Kommunikation studiert und im Fachbereich Ethnologie zur Lebensrealität illegalisierter Menschen in Deutschland an der LMU in München promoviert. Sie arbeitet im flüchtlingspolitischen Bereich.

Valeria Hänsel does her doctorate at the Institute for Cultural Anthropology/ European Ethnology at the Georg-August University of Göttingen, Germany, on the reconfiguration of the European Border Regime in the Aegean. As activist she is engaged in support work on Lesvos Island. Valeria Hänsel is member of the *Network for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* and the network *deportation monitoring: aegean.bordermonitoring.eu.*

Charles Heller is a Research Fellow at the Graduate Institute in Geneva. He is co-director of the Forensic Oceanography project based at Goldsmiths, University of London, and a co-founder of the WatchTheMed platform. He is currently co-president and the Migreurop network.

Marie Hoffmann lebt in Marburg. Sie studiert Politikwissenschaft und arbeitet(e) währenddessen bei Pro Asyl und an der Philipps-Universität Marburg. Ihr Forschungsinteresse gilt in der kritischen Migrations- und Grenzregimeforschung besonders materialistischen und neogramscianischen Ansätzen. Die jüngsten zivilgesellschaftlichen Kämpfe in der deutschen und europäischen Gesellschaft nach dem Sommer der Migration bilden ihren momentanen Arbeitsschwerpunkt.

Bernd Kasparek is a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for European Ethnology and the Berlin Institute for empirical integration and migration research, both at Hum-

boldt University. His book *Europa als Grenze. Eine Ethnographie der Grenzschutz-Agentur Frontex* was published by transcript in June 2021. He is a member of the network for critical migration and border regime studies and member of the editorial board of movements.

Leoni J. Keskinkılıç ist Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Berliner Institut für empirische Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (BIM) der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin und promoviert zur Migrationsgesellschaft in Ostdeutschland am Institut für Europäische Ethnologie der HU Berlin. Sie arbeitet zu den Themen Migration und home-(un)making, Teilhabe, urbane Nachbarschaft sowie soziale und politische Ungleichheit.

Jessica Korp studied social and cultural sciences at Goldsmiths College and wrote her bachelor's thesis on collective melancholy and empire. She is involved in anti-racist self-organisation, empowerment and social engagement in cultural contexts. She is interested in postcolonial migration history, labour in late capitalism and everyday life as a stage for social interactions. She is a MA student of European Ethnology, an active member of the Activistar Film and Video Productions Collective and Sonic In(terv)entions.

Stefanie Kron, PhD in Sociology (Freie Universität Berlin), is a Professor for Social Work at the Evangelische Hochschule Berlin. She specializes in international migration movements & migration politics, sanctuary & solidarity cities, transnational labor struggles & ethnographic research methods. Recent publications: With Henrik Lebuhn (2020): Building Solidarity Cities. From Protest to Policy, in: Feyzi Baban & Kim Rygiel (Eds.): Fosterin Cultural Pluralism through Solidarity Activism in Europe. Everyday Encounters with Newcomers. Cham (Switzerland): Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 81–105. With Stefania Maffeis (2021): Die Stadt als Sicherer Hafen: Kosmopolitismus und gelebte Solidarität, in: Susemichl, Lea /Jens Petz Kastner (Hg.): Unbedingte Solidarität. Münster: Unrast. S. 159-172. Moving cities Map (city profiles Barcelona & Zaragoza): moving-cities.eu.

Philipp Lottholz is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Collaborative Research Centre/Transregio 138 "Dynamics of Security" and the Institute for Sociology, Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany. His research focuses on peace, conflict, security and political and social change in post-Socialist Eastern Europe and Central Asia. His work has been published in International Peacekeeping, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding and Central Asian Survey.

Stefania Maffeis is Professor for Political Theory at the University of Applied Sciences for Social Work (EHS) in Dresden. She has written extensively on Hannah Arendt's political theory and its transnational reception, on the political philosophy of migration as well as on the approach of the transnational circulation of ideas. She teaches and researches within the field of political and social philosophy, focusing on the topics of migration and transnational citizenship. In her current research project she analyses intellectual and political struggles in Europe on the implementation of a human right to free global movement.

Polina Manolova is a sociologist working on intra-EU migration, technologies of migration governance, precarious employment and migrants' structural incorporation in urban contexts. Currently, she is a postdoctoral fellow and lecturer at the Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, researching and teaching on issues of migrant incorporation, EU citizenship, intra-EU inequalities and global regimes of labour and social reproduction. She is a member of a newly-formed network for critical approaches to intra-EU regimes of migration, labour and social reproduction (www.eumignet.de) and 'Radio Migrant: voices from South-East Europe' podcast.

Alejandra Nieves Camacho is a student of the Master's program in International Relations at Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt Universität and the University of Potsdam. Her research interests are migration, racism and gender studies. She is a former member of the research project "The Threat Scenario of 'Islamist Terrorism' from the Perspectives of Politics, Media and Muslim Communities". Currently Alejandra is a research assistant at the German Center for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM) in the Migration Department.

Felicitas Qualmann studied Intercultural Conflict Management and Area Studies Asia/Africa. Her research interests are racism and discrimination, colonial continuities, and decolonial protest, as well as conflict transformation. Currently, she is a research associate in the BMBF funded project: „The Threat Scenario of 'Islamist Terrorism' from the Perspectives of Politics, Media and Muslim Communities". Felicitas is a member of Berlin Postkolonial.

Lisa Riedner is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis at the University of Munich (LMU). Her research interests lie in ethnography and regimes of intra-EU migration, labour and social reproduction with specific focus on urban spaces and racism. Her publications include the monograph "Arbeit! Wohnen! Urbane Auseinandersetzungen um EU-Migration" (2018, edition assemblage, open access). She is a co-editor of *movements*.

Gonca Şahin is a PhD student in the Gender Studies Program at Kadir Has University. Her research interests are migrant networks, transnationalism, informal labor, queer refugees, and intersectionality. Currently, she is working in an NGO where she focuses on economic empowerment and social cohesion of refugee and local women.

Helge Schwiertz is a postdoctoral research associate at the Chair of Sociology and Social Theory at Universität Hamburg and corresponding member of the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS) at Osnabrück University. His key research areas are social and political theory, theories of radical democracy, citizenship, and solidarity, social movements and urban protests, racism and migration. He leads the international research project *Enacting Citizenship and Solidarity in Europe »From Below«: Local Initiatives, Intersectional Strategies, and Transnational Networks* [ECSEuro] and is a co-editor of *movements.*

Nadiye Ünsal is a PhD candidate working on coloniality of power and migration and currently the communications manager of the Antidiskriminierungsverband Deutschland *e.V.* and a lecturer. She is part of self-organized intersectional community movements (e.g. Coalition against Racism Berlin). She has organized commemoration activities for the victims of the National Socialist Underground-Complex and victims of racist police violence. She is a member of the *Activistar Film and Video Productions Collective.*

Tijana Vukmirović studied Literature, Gender Studies and Political Science. She is active in the field of migration and intersectionality and works in migrant-diasporic organizations. She came to Germany in the 1990s to live with her "Gastarbeiter"-grandparents and still does not have a German passport. Yugoslav-Berliner and is active as a language mediator since childhood. She is a member of the Activistar Film and Video Productions Collective.