Contested Movements to and through EUrope

Introduction

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While drafting the call for papers for this issue of *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies*, the EUropean migration politics were facing an exceptional crisis. During summer and autumn of 2015, which came to be known as »the long summer of migration« (Kasparek/Speer 2015), more than one million refugees crossed EUrope’s external borders and moved further north along the newly established »humanitarian corridor«. In response, various EU Member States re-established systematic controls at their borders and closed several border crossing points in winter 2015/2016. At the same time, the Dublin system, which holds the southern and eastern Member States particularly responsible for processing asylum applications, was *de facto* suspended. In view of these dynamics, both the continuity of the EU’s external borders, whose partial permeability had finally become apparent, and the Schengen area in general were at stake. With this, the smooth circulation of persons and goods in the internal market – one of the neoliberal foundations of the European Union – was also at risk. In addition, the Brexit referendum posed an existential threat to the European project. David Cameron, then British Prime Minister, called to restrict the free movement of persons within the EU, and to further limit access to benefits for EU nationals who had settled in the UK. The discursive figures of »poverty migration« and »benefit tourism« shaped a debate about the future of EUrope, which was led in increasingly nationalistic terms.

Thus, on three different levels, the EU’s migration and border regime was arguably confronted with the biggest crisis since its emergence: First, the common external borders were *de facto* proven to be incontrollable. Second, the Common European

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1 People often use the term Europe when talking about the EU. By using the term EUrope, we want to thwart such a conflation and point to the fact that the EU-European project cannot be reduced to the institutions of the EU (see Stierl 2016, Fn. 1).
Asylum System, that had been installed to compensate (North-) Western European states for the elimination of the internal borders, collapsed. And third, the freedom of movement of Union citizens and the idea of a ›social union‹ were massively questioned.

Contrary to public discourses and large parts of migration studies, which predominantly treated these phenomena as separate topics, our call for papers suggested to bring them together analytically. The will to entangle the different tendencies of crisis was based on the assumption that the »complex, heterogeneous and powerful realities of migration« (Editorial Board of movements 2015) to and through Europe cannot be grasped adequately, if the various facets of the European migration and border regime are neither related to each other, nor analysed as part of overarching social transformations. The distinctions made by these regimes – e.g. between refugees in need of protection and illegalised immigrants, between legitimate asylum grounds and ›asylum abuse‹, as well as between the desired mobility of workers and so-called ›poverty migration‹ or ›benefits tourism‹ – are all effects of contested policies and knowledge in the field of migration, and therefore only comprehensible in relation to each other.

Against this background, several questions are raised in the present issue: How can the cross-border movements to Europe be linked to the highly contested regulation of migratory movements within the EU? Which modes of governing are used in reaction to the turbulent movements to and through Europe, and how do they articulate themselves in concrete practices, conflicts, and struggles? How do economic, racist, and humanitarian logics interface here, and how do they change the European migration and border regime?

In this volume, we present 14 research papers, interventions, interviews, a photo essay, and a video collage, which examine these Contested Movements to and through Europe from the perspective of Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies. They show how various differentiations – along the lines of social and legal status, race, or gender – are combined in often contradictory but highly powerful ways. They empirically situate the movements of migration in concrete social contexts and relate them to social questions, instead of isolating them as ›problem cases‹, thus avoiding the above-mentioned binary categorisations. They outline a set of approaches that al-

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2 The title of this issue of movements is inspired by an exhibition and series of events with the title Traces to and through Europe, which was organised by the initiative faites votre jeu! in the former police-prison Klapperfeld in Frankfurt am Main in Spring 2013 (grenzen.klapperfeld.de).
low investigating the contested production and ‘productivity’ of such differentiations, instead of presupposing them as pre-given.

**CRITICAL MIGRATION AND BORDER REGIME STUDIES**

In different ways, the contributions to this issue of *movements* tie in with existing research of Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies that have developed in German-speaking contexts since the 2000s (see Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe 2007; Hess/Kasparek 2010; Heimeshoff et al. 2014; Hess et al. 2016). The vantage point of this heterogeneous research field is the examination of state and non-state practices of migration control with a strong sensibility for questions of power and dominance. Researchers in this field study dynamic regimes as an interplay of different discourses, practices, actors, and subjectivities within a framework of social relations of power. They assume that the movements of migration themselves influence those relations in a relatively independent way and render them not fully controllable (see Karakayali/Tsianos 2007). They focus on social spaces and relations in which global conditions of power and dominance are reproduced, but also questioned. They look at border spaces in their different re- and deterritorialised forms (see e.g. Mezzadra/Neilson 2013; Luibhéid 1998; Rumford 2006; Walters 2002). The aim of Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies is to produce knowledge that contributes to emancipatory social movements and the struggles of migration.

Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies encompass a variety of different and sometimes contradictory approaches. Similar to other areas of study, there are discrepancies and connections between historical materialist, ethnographic, poststructuralist, and feminist approaches, gender theory, critical research on racism, as well as intersectional and postcolonial perspectives. This heterogeneity of approaches is based on a more or less consensual understanding of critical research and corresponds with a variety of specific methods, ranging from ethnographic regime analysis over discourse- and dispositive analysis to analyses and critiques of ideology and political economy.

Notwithstanding the different methodological perspectives, these approaches unite an awareness for the researchers’ own situatedness in the research process. In particular, they are characterised by a constant and open reflection of the power relations within which knowledge about migration and its regulation is produced. Needless to say, academic practice is never politically neutral. Whether researchers like it or not, whether they are aware of it or not, whether they admit and reflect it openly or not – their social position, their funding, the functions and the effects of their activities
are deeply political: Academics »are clamped into the social apparatus, their achievement is a moment of self-preservation of permanent reproduction of what is already existing, no matter how they make sense of it themselves« (Horkheimer 2003 [1937]: 213; translation by the authors).

Large parts of Migration Studies lack such a reflexive perspective. The production of knowledge in this field often caters towards the supply and demand deriving from established state and non-state actors that govern migration, or at least overlaps with their interests and adopts their terminologies and categorisations without further questioning. Partly, this also applies to the strand of Refugee Studies (»Flüchtlingsforschung«) that are currently developing in German-speaking academia. This perspective disassociates itself from more broadly defined Migration Studies and dedicates itself to the phenomenon of forced migration (see for example Kleist 2015; Z‘Flucht. The German Journal for Refugee Studies, forthcoming). It advocates an analytical and political differentiation between flight and migration, between refugees and migrants and corresponding motivations, needs, and lived realities. Thereby, it not only obfuscates that the biographies shaped by migration often include a variety of different intersecting life-situations and motivations that make a clear differentiation between refugeeism and migration impossible (Castles 2007; Picozza in this volume). It also neglects the contingent processes of production and the effects such differentiations entail. Thus, it risks reproducing an essentialising and exclusionary understanding of ›flight‹ for the purpose of an analytical perspective, which can also be instrumentalised to legitimise a politics of exclusion and control. By fostering the differentiation between allegedly legitimate – forced – mobility on the one, and illegitimate mobility that is not forced – but chosen – on the other side, it is deeply ingrained in the contemporary asylum regime (see ILO 2001; UNHCR/IOM 2001; Feller 2005; for critical perspectives on the relation between knowledge production and migration control see Hatton 2011; Chimni 1998, 2008; Hansen/Jonsson 2011; Scalettaris 2007; Scheel/Ratfisch 2014).

By contrast, research that is sensitive to issues of power does not take the legal and political differentiation between ›refugees‹ and ›migrants‹ or ›flight‹ and ›migration‹ (and their permanent actualisation and subversion) as a given, but turns these differentiations into its very research object and scrutinises their effects on the lives of migrating persons. The contributions to this issue of movements show that such a perspective does not in any way preclude to acknowledge the lived realities and power relations that are related to specific migratory practices and subject positions. In a situation in which the right to asylum is globally dismantled – Germany, for example, has recently experienced the hardest restrictions in the field of asylum law since two decades – we regard it crucial to aim at widening the gaze: This means analysing the
aforementioned dynamics in relation to the governance of other, ›unwanted‹ forms of migration and to demand rights for all migrants – regardless whether they fit into institutional or academic grids and current conjunctures of research.

IN THIS ISSUE

In this issue, we present empirical research that largely cuts across established categorisations. The contributions show how attempts to govern the diverse and contested movements to and through EUrope construct the very categories that constitute migration as a problem in the first place. Thus, they do not engage in ›migrant research‹, but are investigating processes of ›migrantisation‹ (see Labor Migration 2015; Buckel 2013: 132; Georgi/Schatral 2012: 211). The conclusive title of a series of events organised by the Precarity Office in Vienna, »if the door shuts behind you, you are a migrant« (Hansen/Zechner in this issue), and the definition of »migration = mobility + racism« (Riedner in this issue) illuminate this focus. In addition, they link the question of how movements of migration produce new emancipatory political practices by considering overarching social questions, and thus conduct migration research in terms of social research. They examine how exactly people who are problematised as migrants are positioned within intersectional relations of power, domination and exploitation in forms of government. Thus, they enrich the concept of differential inclusion (cf., for example, Mezzadra/Neilson 2013), which is often only used as the almost tautological observation that migration regimes include subjects in society in different ways.

Katherine Braun and Robert Matthies examine such intersections and show how illegalised migrants from Bolivia residing in Geneva/Switzerland can largely live without repression as a result of self-organised struggles, while other migrants are criminalised on racist grounds, although they have a legal residence status on paper. Against the background of a humanitarian welcome culture, which the city of Geneva uses to stage itself as a global city of immigration, they detect an »economisation of human rights« and the emergence of a »meritocratic citizenship« in which rights are granted or have to be acquired on the basis of »activity, self-care and entrepreneurial qualities and skills«. On the flipside, those who do not fulfil these conditions are labelled as anti-citizens and are denied full rights and the »ability to be self-responsible«.

Jacob Lind and Maria Persdotter focus on a similarly contradictory allocation of rights within the Swedish education system. Based on a discourse analysis of various policy documents, they show how different legal norms grant illegalised migrants a
right to education in Sweden, while the children of EU migrants, who are privileged via residential law, are banned from attending school. The authors uncover a tension between residence rights and social rights, which calls into question the territorial conception of citizenship rights. Similar to the contribution of Lisa Riedner, they show how social rights seem to paradoxically depend on uncertainty or »deportability« (De Genova 2002): People who can easily be deported are sometimes more likely to be granted social rights than people with a stable right of residence.

Fiorenza Picozza analytically interlaces the movements to and through EUrope in her article on the fragmented geographies of the Dublin asylum regime during the long summer of migration. By following the trajectories of so-called ›Dubliners‹, who sometimes travel through EUrope as asylum seekers, but often also as illegalised migrants, as migrant workers, or as refugees, she exemplifies the fluidity and changeability of (legal) categorisations within the Dublin regime. By interpreting this fluidity not as a failure but rather as a constituent part of the differentiating EUropean migration regime, she shows the productivity of this regime, which, with the help of specific spatial and temporal forms of governing, only then turns some migrants within the EU into refugees.

Lisa Riedner’s analysis focuses on EU-internal migration of EU citizens. Observing German and EUropean workfare regimes, she shows that EU citizens’ right to free movement and the social benefits for EU-migrants that depend on these, are increasingly predicated on the degree of activity people show within the labour market. Based on ethnographic material, interviews, and an analysis of policy-documents and taking local, national and EUropean levels into account, she illuminates how social rights are selectively withheld and how German welfare offices turn into new border agencies. Welfare offices make decisions concerning citizen’s rights to free movement, thereby mostly guided by criteria of economic exploitability.

Bue Rübner Hansen and Manuela Zechner’s paper investigate the precarisation following such a withdrawal of rights. The authors ask how EU-migrants from Southern Europe create new politics of informal reproduction. They analyse how these strategies of reproduction connect with experiences of people of former middle classes, who in the course of several crises and respective own migratory movement were ›declassed‹. In this context, they refer to political practices in different organizations of precarious EU-migrants, for example, their own experiences at the Prekär Café in Vienna.

Gabriella Alberti complements the analyses in this issue with an article that is only published on our homepage movements-journal.org. She examines the socio-economic dynamics between Great Britain and the EU and shows how the social rights of EU-migrants in the UK are increasingly designed according to the workfare-
paradigm. Here, active participation in the labour market becomes a prerequisite for accessing social rights. She argues that in this manner, a pool of precarious labour is produced in order to reduce wage costs in times of crises. As a consequence, many EU citizens turn into working poor.

The section Forschungswerkstatt consists of short research papers that are concerned with the contradictory dynamics of governing migration to and through Europe. Laura Scheinert examines how several German Temporary Humanitarian Admission Programs simultaneously constructed and subverted binary differentiations between refugees and migrants. She observes that these programs reproduce a hierarchy of rights but do not successfully or adequately address questions of political participation and democratic legitimacy.

Kiri Santer and Vera Wriedt scrutinise the contested movements along the so-called ‘humanitarian corridor’ in the Western Balkans in 2015 and 2016. They identify profound contradictions between de jure and de facto conceptions of rights, which were articulated along the corridor between mid-2015 and spring 2016. On the one hand, thousands of refugees could cross numerous borders in a relatively fast and safe manner with state agencies sometimes operating as effective smugglers and escape agents. On the other hand, different agencies exercised repression against specific groups of migrants, showing not only the fragility, but also the basic repressive structure of the European migration and border regime.

Fritz Rickert traces back the development of the 2014 Turkish Migration Law and shows how the EU, the IOM, and the UNHCR influenced its design. At the same time, he analyses how and why the law became a prerequisite for the EU-Turkey-Deal made in March 2016, which was heavily criticised from a human rights perspective and strongly curtailed the thousands of crossings to the Greek islands. The text contributes to a deeper understanding of the history of the Turkish-European agreement, and clearly demonstrates the hegemonic aspirations of the European project.

Mathias Fiedler and Lee Hielscher examine the working conditions of the meat industry in the German state of Lower Saxony. They show how German regulations concerning contract and temporary labour enable extreme relations of exploitation, and how advice centres in turn can become resistant spaces of knowledge production and organization. In tandem with the interview conducted with Bogdan Droma on the topic of the labour struggles against the Berlin ‘Mall of Shame’, they give a vivid insight into current capitalist conjunctures. Departing from a labour struggles perspective, both contributions show how the terms of social rights have an impact on relations of exploitation and working conditions, and thereby deliver a highly aware antiracist perspective on the constraints of capitalist reproduction.
The three contributions to the section *Interventions* show how critical knowledge production can be connected to emancipatory change in diverse and complex ways. Miriam Lang’s critique is concerned with Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies in the German-speaking context. She criticises the latter’s implicit Eurocentrism, for it masks the Global South and causes for flight. She suggests to more thoroughly examine causes of flight, without linking this effort to issues focusing on preventing migration, as these perspectives are often connected in mainstream discourse. The analysis and critique of causes of flight could depart from a perspective of *Degrowth*. With the transition to a post-growth paradigm, causes of flight could be overcome, and at once better lives could be established for people in the Global South and North.

Aino Korvensyrjä encourages recent studies on the externalisation of border control to critically reflect on the scope of their analyses. Against the background of the EU-African migration agreements, she points to imaginations based on geopolitics and logics of sovereignty in critical research on externalisation and makes their implicit Eurocentrism and historical amnesia visible. She sets a postcolonial perspective against the contested history of European politics of migration control, which explicitly refers to critical and emancipatory knowledge production delivered by social movements of migrants.

Anja Breljak approaches ›the border‹ from the perspective of theories of subjectivation and phenomenology. In addition to critical considerations that stress the complex temporality, spatiality, and practice of borders in contrast to rigid and abstract perspectives, she closely looks at how ambivalent positions between autonomy and heteronomy emerge in the everyday practice of border control.

In an interview led by Nina Kullrich, Bethi Ngari of *Women in Exile* discusses the troubles of empowering and politically mobilising refugee women, for it is mostly them who have to look after their families. She shares how the feminist group founded by refugee women has nevertheless been continuously successful in accomplishing this task. They visit women in refugee camps and seek conversations. They organise workshops and participate in demonstrations together. Furthermore, Ngari reflects on the changes and challenges in collaborating with other groups in reference to gender politics. For example, some of these conflicts solidified at the ›International Conference of Refugees and Migrants‹ in Hamburg in February 2016. Finally, she tackles the question why *Women in Exile* use the term ›friends‹ to integrate allied groups into their own work.

This issue of *movements* is introduced by the photo-essay *Bitter Oranges* by Carole Reckinger, Gilles Reckinger, and Diana Reiners. It gives insight to the living conditions of migrant workers at the orange plantations in Southern Italy in the summer
of 2012. The online issue additionally contains a video-collage by Mathias Fiedler, who accompanied the labour struggle of construction workers of the Mall of Berlin (also called ›Mall of Shame‹). Bogdan Droma refers to this struggle in his interview conducted by Nadiye Ünsal, Leila Saadna and Emal Ghamsharick.

We wish to thank all authors, reviewers and our English proofreader Christina Rogers for their dedication. With the present issue of movements, we hope to foster discussions and reflections on the European migration and border regime, and to put forward a critical understanding of its capitalist and humanitarian dynamics of governance.

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