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Im/Mobile Commons and Trans/National Claims-Making: The Phenomenon of Swedish Afghans in Paris

Responding to asylum seekers' relocation from Sweden to France, migrant solidarity groups have started to share resources and information relevant to the process of deciding about and going through with the journey, and, on arrival in Paris, providing advice on how to make it through sleeping rough and the asylum process in France. The relocation of Afghan asylum seekers to France, has gained a specific form of visibility and presence, in media and in migration rights networks, that we claim has placed the route on the Swedish landscape of migration and border debate. The purpose of this article is to develop the conceptual discussions of mobile commons through an analysis of the networks of and around 'Swedish Afghans in Paris'. The article explores the ways in which national bordering scapes are both reinscribed, expanded and destabilized by migrant networks and claims. Further, we analyze the phenomenon of 'Swedish Afghans in Paris' with attention to the tensions and contradictions in regard to the politics of belonging and mobile commons. The phenomenon of Swedish Afghans in Paris forms a productive starting point for analyzing the conditions of

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commoning in the context of the Swedish bordering scape; of the ways in which belonging and nationality are claimed in complex and shifting ways; and of the ways in which these commons bridge different places transnationally. The article contributes to scholarly discussions on migrant struggles by developing a nuanced understanding of mobile commons as contestations and entanglements of bordering and claims to national belonging. Thus, we emphasize the ambivalent elements of mobile commoning.

Keywords: migration, bordering, mobile commons, politics of belonging, Afghan asylum-seekers, deportspora

1. Introduction

> Once again, Sweden stands out in Europe, this time negatively, by regularly carrying out deportations to war-torn Afghanistan, where civilians are often subjected to severe violence.
>
> Faced with the threat of deportation or being forced to live as undocumented migrants in Sweden, many of these young people choose to flee to other countries in Europe, particularly France, to seek asylum again. They are fluent in Swedish, many have lived with Swedish families, have studied at secondary school and come a long way towards graduation, have been active in sports clubs and other associations, and have put down roots in our country. Now they are being forced to leave this security behind to start afresh (LAMSF 2020, authors' translation).

The quote is from the website of a Paris-based migrant solidarity organisation. It describes the background to the solidarity and support work they have initiated in Paris, in light of the increase of a specific form of migration: Afghan asylum seekers, mainly young men, who have relocated to France after being refused asylum in Sweden. The quote also points to the erosion of an image of Sweden as a state with an inclusionary model towards migration and the provision of substantive citizenship, an image that has been conceptualized as 'Swedish exceptionalism' (Schierup and Ålund 2011, Dahlstedt and Neergaard 2019). Although this and similar images of Swedish and Nordic exceptionalism have never been anything but partially true, and also worked to exclude histories of racism, colonial violence and exclusion in the Swedish and Nordic context (Keskinen 2022), the quote is illustrative of the consequences of a restrictive transformation of the Swedish migration regime (Barker 2018, Elsrud et al. 2021).

Responding to the migration from Sweden to France, migrant solidarity groups have started to share resources and information relevant to the process of deciding about and going through with the journey, and, on arrival in Paris, providing advice on how to make it through sleeping rough and the asylum process in France. While relocation within Europe is not a new tendency within the European border regime (Innes 2015), we suggest that the specific route between Sweden and Paris/France stands out in a few ways. First, in terms of visibility in Swedish contexts: this route has been reported on in the media and been present in activist discussions, and in that way has gained a specific form of visibility and presence that places the route on the *Swedish* landscape of

migration and border debate. Building on Yuval-Davis et. al. (2019, 19), we suggest that the route to Paris has become part of a Swedish *bordering scape*. Second, through the ways in which the networks involved have mapped and enabled the route through the spreading of knowledge and information, and through building relationships of care – this is the kind of community building and a sharing of the 'tricks of the trade' (Papadopulous and Tsianos 2013, 190) which informs our understanding of these migrations and the networks formed as constituting *mobile commons* (Papadopulous and Tsianos 2013; Trimikliniotis et al. 2016). Finally, the mobilisation around the Sweden-Paris route stands out through the ways in which it simultaneously invokes, on the one hand, critiques of Swedish migration policies, and on the other, claims of belonging to Sweden and a shared sense of identity within the network expressed through the central role of the Swedish language and in articulations of a sense of 'Swedishness'. While we do not claim that this is a coherent and clearly delineated phenomenon, we chose in this article to name these networks 'Swedish Afghans in Paris' as a temporary category to enable an analytical exploration of these kinds of networks.

The purpose of this article is to develop the conceptual discussions of mobile commons through an analysis of the networks of and around 'Swedish Afghans in Paris'. The article explores the ways in which national bordering scapes are both reinscribed, expanded and destabilized by migrant networks and claims. Further, we analyze the phenomenon of 'Swedish Afghans in Paris' with attention to the tensions and contradictions in regard to the politics of belonging and mobile commons. The phenomenon of Swedish Afghans in Paris forms a complex starting point for analyzing the conditions of commoning in the context of the Swedish bordering scape; of the ways in which belonging and nationality are claimed in complex and shifting ways; and of the ways in which these commons bridge different places transnationally. The article contributes to scholarly discussions on migrant struggles by developing a nuanced understanding of mobile commons as contestations and entanglements of bordering and claims to national belonging. Thus, we emphasize the ambivalent elements of mobile commoning.

In the next section, we discuss some central elements of the background to the relocations from Sweden to France and the support and solidarity networks built by and for Afghan asylum seekers. Thereafter, we outline the theoretical framework centring the notions of bordering, commoning, and politics of belonging. A thematic analysis of the websites and social media tendencies follows, in which we address interlinked dimensions of the phenomenon of 'Swedish Afghans in Paris': the mul-

tiple meanings of the claim of 'Swedishness' as an expression of transnational ties of belonging and bordering but also as a tool for critique of Swedish Migration policies; the emergence and circulations of 'tricks of the trade' for and along the Sweden-France route. We conclude by a discussion on how the claim of 'Swedishness' may be understood in terms of an ambivalent belonging, providing a resource for this specifically situated *im/mobile common.*

2. Swedish Afghans in Paris

The migration pattern between Sweden and France can be understood both in regard to general developments in Swedish and European border regulations, and in regard to the specific assessments of Afghan asylum seekers' cases made by the Swedish Migration Agency. During the last three decades, since the early 1990s, Swedish migration policies have largely followed the general European trend and, despite differences between governments and fluctuating public opinion on migration during these years, the overarching development has been towards increasingly restrictive regulations. This long-term restrictive turn became particularly intensified in 2015/2016, when temporary residency became the norm, instead of permanent permits. In 2016, Sweden introduced a temporary migration law (SFS 2016, 752), which, with minor changes, was made permanent in the Aliens Act in 2021 (SFS 2005, 716). In accordance with this new legal framework, permanent residency can only be given after three years of temporary permits and is conditioned by an income requirement as well as by a 'well-behaved lifestyle', which means no criminal records or suspicion of involvement in crime (Swedish Migration Agency 2021a). Family reunification has been severely restricted and migration policies and welfare policies are increasingly intertwined, leading to living conditions marked by temporality and uncertainty (Jansson Keshavarz and Nordling 2022). In sum, these restrictive policies are not an issue of a provisional exception but rather constitute a clear break from the previously more liberal migration regime (Garvik and Valenta 2021).

Furthermore, conditions for the reception of asylum seekers have since June 2016 been subject to austerity and deterrence policies, where adult asylum seekers lose their daily sustenance and accommodation if their application is rejected. This is regardless of whether or not it is

possible to carry out the expulsion order[2]. Also, Sweden is increasingly focusing on the 'return' of rejected asylum seekers, and is allocating more resources to searching for undocumented people (Swedish Ministry of Justice 2021), increasing the number of detention centres (Swedish Migration Agency 2018), and joining EU-networks for collaboration around structures for deportation (Garvik and Valenta 2021).

Although the restrictive turn has been ongoing for many years, the idea of Sweden as a kind of end destination for many refugee or migration journeys has remained dominant. While many people seeking asylum are indeed hoping to be able to receive permanent residence permits in Sweden, this generalized understanding obscures the complicated processes through which people's escape routes are staked out, in general, and the restrictive shifts in Swedish migration policies, in particular. It creates a simplified notion of the migration trajectory as a simple one-dimensional journey from A to B — or from 'home' to a final destination. However, the migration trajectory could often rather be described as a complex and multi-directional set of departures, arrivals, waiting, temporary locations and grey zones (Khosravi 2010; Schapendonk et al. 2021; Yuval-Davis et al. 2019). When the route from Sweden to Paris now becomes such a distinct leg on many migration trajectories, it is long overdue to call Sweden's character as final destination into question.

2.2. Afghan asylum seekers in Sweden

The case of Afghan asylum seekers in Sweden is illustrative of the shift described above. In 2014, 92% of the Afghan applicants were granted asylum or other forms of protection, in 2017, the number had declined to 38% (Garvik and Valenta 2021, 13). Since 2015, Afghans constitute the second largest group to seek international protection in Sweden (and Europe) (Parusel 2018; Skodo 2018). In addition to facing the increasingly restrictive approach, Afghans have, yet again, suffered increased insecurity in Afghanistan as well as increased forced deportation from Iran back to Afghanistan (Skodo 2018). In Europe, the systems of asy-

2 This could regard cases of stateless people or cases where there has been a temporary halt in deportations to a specific country or region, due to changed conditions such as intensified conflicts and wars. Families with minors are somewhat exempted from the harsh effects of these policies, as they continue to get some allowance for the children and, in general, are not left without housing, although they can be subject to rapid relocations.

lum and the rejection rates differ considerably between the member states, and among the Afghans who have their asylum claims rejected, few are deported to Afghanistan and instead they often remain in legal and social limbo. Between 2013 and 2017, over 137,000 Afghans received an order to leave the EU, but official numbers state that only about 27,000 left (Parusel 2018). A number of reasons are put forward to explain this, where the increased insecurity in Afghanistan has the most explanatory value. According to numbers from 2017, Sweden was not the most restrictive member state in regard to applications from Afghan nationals (for example, Denmark, Bulgaria, and Croatia were much harsher). However, compared to France, which has a protection rate of 84%, the Swedish approach is restrictive. One reason behind this is that Swedish migration authorities, contrary to the French, recommend internal flight within Afghanistan (Parusel 2018). Moreover, research pinpoints a general 'culture of disbelief' in regard to the Swedish Migration Agency's treatment of asylum seekers (Khosravi 2009; Norström 2004; Sager 2011), where Afghans stand out as being specially targeted in recent years (Elsrud and Söderqvist Forkby 2021; Skodo 2018).

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Several EU states have in recent years terminated deportation practices to Afghanistan, and Sweden has also had these policies, though they are temporary (Parusel 2018). After NATO's evacuation from the country and the Taliban takeover, the Swedish Migration Agency issued new legal guidelines in regard to Afghan nationals (see Migration Agency 2021b). These guidelines rely heavily on the EASO report (EASO 2021), identifying vulnerable groups and risk profiles. However, it remains unclear how they will be implemented in practice. At the time of writing, September 2022, the Swedish Migration Agency's legal position allows for refused Afghans to reopen their cases and at least temporarily move from irregular status to asylum seeking status (Swedish Migration Agency 2022). This, as well as other temporary changes (i.e. the possibility for some unaccompanied minors to stay for the duration of their time at high school), seems to also motivate a movement back and forth between Sweden and other European countries (Rosengren 2021).

Unaccompanied minors in Sweden

The category of 'unaccompanied minor' has been increasingly visible in the Swedish debate and reception of refugees from around 2006 onwards (Kazemi 2021, 32). Kazemi (2021) shows that they have been portrayed as 'different from children in general' (p. 6); on the one hand as especially 'vulnerable' and in need of special treatment, on the other hand as

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criminals and liars, and as exceptionally capable as they have managed to conduct a dangerous journey without adult caretakers. The category of unaccompanied minors is a central focus of this article, as the majority of refugees categorized as unaccompanied minors have an Afghan background. In 2015, over 35 000 were registered as unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Sweden. For those arriving after November 24th, the abovementioned new legislation applied, admitting only temporary residence permits. As a consequence of the increased number of asylum seekers, the waiting for asylum was heavily prolonged, leading to many of the minors turning eighteen before their cases were assessed by the Migration Agency. Additionally, due to new practices of assessing age, many in this group were denied asylum on the basis that they were no longer minors (Kazemi 2021). This triggered debates and, resulting from extra-parliamentarian campaigning, a compromise in the form of a new temporary law, which admitted some youth a temporary right to stay, connected with conditions on studies and employment (see Elsrud 2020, Elsrud et al. forthcoming).

For the young people who received a negative decision from the Swedish Migration Agency, this meant drastic shifts in their everyday life. As young asylum seekers, they were cared for through the specific reception system for unaccompanied minors, which included being assigned a legal guardian, a social secretary, family homes or residential care homes [HBV hem], and having access to health care as well as schooling. The sudden shift from rather far-reaching social support to a lack of rights can be understood as one background to the continuing identification and claims of 'Swedishness' that we analyse below. Furthermore, the praxis developed during the years after 2015 was that upon receiving rejection from the Swedish Migration Agency, unaccompanied minors were also 're-aged', as the Swedish Migration Agency decided that their age was above 18 years old (Elsrud 2020; Elsrud and Lalander 2021). This has been analysed as the Swedish authorities exercising administrative violence upon these young people, through a number of different decisions, and it is another reason to why they decided to leave Sweden (Elsrud and Lalander 2021).

2.3 Migration rights networks in between Sweden and France

Upon receiving rejection and being thrown out of their 'home' municipality, the young people and the network and friendships they created through school, sport activities, associations, sheltered homes or family

homes, have mobilized in various ways in order to question and resist the rejections made by the Swedish Migration Agency. This has meant legal actions of writing letters of appeal, but also struggling for access to housing in the home municipality. Thus, upon receiving negative decisions in their asylum processes, and upon being thrown out from the municipal welfare system, the young people themselves as well as local organisations and individuals have mobilized to resist the rejections of residence permits and the destitution these young people were put in (Elsrud et al. forthcoming; Elsrud and Söderqvist Forkby 2021; Elsrud et al. 2021). A range of local networks critiquing the Swedish migration policy and giving practical support to undocumented migrants and other refugees have appeared since 2015 and its aftermath, many of them with a main focus on Afghan youth. One example is the network 'Stop expulsions to Afghanistan' that started as a call for action to stop the expulsions of Afghan youth in October 2016. The network is today loosely organized through a blog, Facebook and cooperations with local support groups (Stop deportations to Afghanistan 2022). Another example is 'Stöttepelaren' ('The Support pillar' 2022), an organisation gathering and distributing money to youth (mainly Afghan) who have arrived unaccompanied to Sweden. There are also a range of local initiatives supporting refugees and unaccompanied minors (i.e. the Österlen support association for refugees 2022; Friend Falun 2022). Furthermore, organisations such as the 'Association for unaccompanied' (2022) and 'Young in Sweden' (2022) mobilizing young people with their own experience of flight advocate for the rights of unaccompanied youth and promote their presence in the debate. As we will see in the analysis below, such networks are central to the formation of new transnational ties and claims on belonging in the case of 'Swedish Afghans in Paris'. The process of moving on from Sweden to France includes informal networking as well as larger organizations informing about escape routes and contacts with NGOs in other European countries. In Paris, for example, the organization LAMSF (*Les Amis des Migrants Suédophones en France* (LAMSF [The Swedish speaking Migrants' Friends in France]), originating from activities within the Swedish Church in Paris, has been one coordinating node among Afghans travelling from Sweden to France (LAMSF 2022a). The organization shares advice about different steps along the journey from Sweden to France, and particularly about strategies for a smooth arrival to France and contacts with the migration authorities. They are one of the many forms of mobilization that have appeared around this specific migration pattern, both in France and in Sweden, and that tend to mobilize around the specificity of the Afghan

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migrants' connection to Sweden. There are also Facebook pages devoted to the Swedish Afghan community, as well as more loosely organized networks (Swedish Afghans in France 2022; Young Afghans in Sweden - France 2022).

3. Theory and methods

In this section, we discuss borders, commoning and belonging as central aspects in the understanding of the mobilizations by and in relation to 'Swedish Afghans in Paris'. We also describe our positionalities and the material upon which our analysis in made.

3.1. Bordering and deportspora

National borders are being securitized and militarized across the globe, and at the same time borders are being externalized beyond the territorial limit of the nation-state (or, in the case of the EU, beyond the regional borders). Furthermore, borders also materialize within territories (Balibar 2004); for example, through internal immigration control (Hydén and Lundberg 2004) or through the regulation of access to welfare services or labour rights (Yuval-Davis et al. 2019). The heterogeneity and changing nature of borders have led researchers to think of borders as a series of practices, which direct the focus towards how borders appear, are sustained and produced (Parker and Vaughan Williams 2009). In line with this perspective, we understand bordering as multidirectional and intersectional, and as a complex interplay of policies and everyday institutional and individual practices that affect people's mobility in various ways (Yuval-Davis et al. 2019). Bordering takes place through assessment and categorization; through detainment and control; through expulsion and deportation; it happens in the conditioning of access and positions in regard to labour and housing markets, and it marks family life and intimate relationships (Hansen 2019; Khosravi 2010; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Sager 2011). In line with Yuval-Davis et al. (2019), we use the term 'bordering scapes' in this article to capture the situated, fluid, relational, spatial and complex space of the border, which although having a huge impact on people's everyday lives, continue to also be contested and resisted (Yuval-Davis et al. 2019).

When analysing what we understand as a bordering scape between Sweden and France, we are inspired by theorizations of deportation and

post-deportation (Khosravi 2018) to understand the phenomenon of *re-escaping* (Elsrud 2020). In regard to 'Swedish Afghans in Paris' the term serves to illuminate the consequences of the changing Swedish migration regime we discussed in the introduction. The idea of Sweden as an 'end destination' has often, initially, shaped the experiences and expectations of both asylum seekers and support networks (Nordling et al. 2017), not least due to the relatively high level of inclusion in education and other welfare institutions during the asylum assessment period. When this idea crumbles, for the individual but also on a more collective level, the notion of re-escaping captures the sense of re-entering the migration trajectory, and it also captures the need to call the image of Sweden as an end destination into question. Re-escaping can be understood as an active choice made to avoid deportation or unliveable living conditions (also analysed by Park 2019 as 'self-deportation'). In a similar way, the concept of 'deportspora' (Nyers 2003; Khosravi 2018) captures the situation of 'forced cosmopolitan subjects' (Khosravi 2018, 10), who maintain relationships with the host country after removal through practising the language, observing national holidays, and through friendships, family ties etcetera (Khosravi 2018). The concepts of re-escaping and deportspora hence help us to highlight that the commoning we analyse is permeated by processes of bordering *as well as* processes of belonging. This will be further developed below.

3.2 Im/mobile commons

In the context of ever more restrictive and hostile European border policies, migration rights movements and critical scholarship are increasingly looking towards the ways in which migrants and migrant solidarity struggles informally create and maintain support systems and bearable living conditions (Ataç et al. 2016; Maestri and Monforte 2020; Ramírez March 2022). *Mobile commons* is a central concept in such studies; fragmented and temporary socialities and spaces for mutual support (Papadopulous and Tsianos 2013; Trimikliniotis et al. 2016). The concept sets out from a relational mobile ontology, where movement is conceptualized as a 'foundational condition of being, space, subjects, and power' (Sheller 2018, 9). People and subjects are not 'billiard balls' bumping into each other, instead they are constituted through their encounters with each other: 'Everything, including movement, is contingent on other moves' (Sheller 2018, 10). Mobilities are unevenly controlled and governed, and may be considered as a resource to which

people have a differentiated access along intersections of categorizations such as race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality and ability (Anderson et al. 2012; Sheller 2018). This uneven access and distribution are illuminated by the ways in which bordering emerges in relation to different contexts and subjects of mobilities.

The mobile commons are per definition temporary and in constant motion, as their existence is defined by the ways in which they are used, and as they cease to exist when trails and tactics are exposed — or closed down — by authorities and bordering agents (Papadopulous and Tsianos 2013). As such it may be conceptualized as a mobile *commoning*, a verb focusing on actions and doings. Commoning sets out from relations between people and things, and the concept describes processes of translation across difference, rather than predetermined units of, for example, community or land (Sheller 2018). Making an argument from the perspective of mobility studies, Mimi Sheller (2018) asserts that mobile commoning goes beyond the individual right to freedom of movement and describes it as 'a movement to make life in common, a commoning' with 'actions that are shared through acts of co-mobilization; it is unbounded and deterritorializing, it is ambiguous and amphibious' (Sheller 2018, 169). We find this entry point helpful to capture the ambivalences that constitute the mobile commoning that we analyse below — it helps us to pay attention to the ways in which solidarity, community and kinship exist in this mobile commoning in tension with, but also along with, bordering, power imbalances, notions of deservability and the idealization of the national as the foundation for belonging.

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The conceptualization of mobile commons has been criticized as it does not fully take into account the need to *stay* in order to build or rebuild communities, families and everyday life (Tyler and Marciniak 2013). In response to this, we have argued elsewhere that mobile commoning might include strategies for searching for *immobility* and often includes expansion of informal spaces for struggle and mutual support, as well as moves towards formal social rights and/or permanent residence permits. Hence, our concept of *im/mobile commons* applies to the double directions in a struggle that is both for movement and for stillness (Nordling et al. 2017).

3.3 Commoning and a politics of belonging from below

To further develop the concepts of im/mobile commons and bordering, we turn to the concept of *politics of belonging* (Yuval-Davis 2011). Accor-

ding to the feminist sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis, the politics of belonging is a dialogical concept 'involv[ing] not only the maintenence and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging by the hegemonic political powers (within and outside the community), but also their contestation, challenge and resistance by other political agents' (Yuval-Davis 2011, 20). We find this useful in order to explore and analyse the different forms of belonging constructed and claimed in the networks around Afghans moving from Sweden to Paris. However, there are tensions in these forms of belonging that need to be acknowledged. For example, in regard to a logic of humanitarianism, this might contribute to constructing the receivers of support as 'innocent victims' instead of formulating political goals that may change the structures creating suffering (Fassin 2007; Pallister-Wilkins 2021; Ticktin 2006). In line with Yuval-Davis et al. (2019), we understand belonging as fluid and relational, and it may stretch over time and place as migrants move and/or stay in contact with transnational networks and local communities. The concept relates to bordering as 'cultural, economic, political, and social activities, which are aimed at determining who belongs and who does not' (Yuval-Davis et al. 2019, 7). Belonging also relates to experiences of deportation, as deportation constitutes a forced break with the life one has lived and planned for in the host country (Khosravi 2018). Yuval-Davis emphasizes that belonging becomes mobilized for its political value when it is perceived as threatened in some way. The politics of belonging 'comprises specific political projects aimed at constructing a sense of belonging to particular collectivities, which are themselves being assembled through these projects and placed within specified boundaries' (Yuval-Davis et al. 2019, 7). We suggest that these are fruitful points of departure to analyse how networks around Afghans travelling from Sweden to Paris mobilize around claims and constructions of 'Swedishness'.

3.4 Material

Throughout the analysis we map the phenomenon of the support networks constructed by and for Afghan refused asylum seekers who go to Paris, through a patchwork of materials shared online by different groups and networks, such as these groups' and networks' webpages, blog posts, Facebook groups and debate articles in the news media. While the whole body of material forms the basis for our analysis, we will only quote and refer explicitly to material that is officially published.

This choice has been necessary due to ethical considerations, as we do not undertake any ethnographic research on the Internet nor want to expose details shared in confidence or in private online spaces. The material presented in the analysis hence presents a partial picture of the networks and mobilizations, as more loosely knit networks pass 'under the radar'. We also draw on our own experiences of moving in or being in close relation to these networks through activism and online engagement. Since the beginning of the 2000s, we have been active in local migration rights networks in Malmö, Sweden, together with people subject to migration control as well as with other citizens without their own experiences of this — like ourselves. Over the years, this engagement has entailed different activities, such as initiating and running campaigns, rallies and events; enabling regular social centres; layman legal counselling; supporting people in need to find access to housing, schooling, health care, economic support, lawyers, and other societal functions and institutions that are less readily available for someone with insecure legal status. In addition to these experiences, our location in the field is further shaped by our respective PhD projects which have related to and/or included our activism, and we have continued to engage in the field as both activists and researchers (see Nordling 2017; Nordling et al. 2017; Sager 2011; Sager et al. 2016; Sager et al. 2022; Söderman 2019).

4. A bordering scape from Sweden to Paris

> We were refused asylum three times in two years, the risk was that we would be deported. We did not want to be deported to Afghanistan because of the insecurity there. Sweden was like our home, but we couldn't stay there either. France sounded like an option then, said many of the young people who had fled Sweden (Dowlatzai and Fayzi 2019).

A couple of years after 2015 and the many restrictive changes to Swedish migration regulations that were introduced then and in 2016, the tendencies outlined above started to become visible in our online and local migration rights networks, as well as in the media coverage. More and more people, especially young men with Afghan background, who had been refused asylum in Sweden decided to move on to France (and sometimes also other EU-countries, e.g. Germany and Italy), to apply for asylum there. In the media, they were sometimes referred to as 'European internal refugees' (Orrenius 2020a). It seemed like the chances to get asylum or a residence permit were better for Afghans in

France than in Sweden. We saw social media posts by Afghan migrants from tent camps in Paris and from Swedish residents and citizens who posted about friends who were on their way to France. In a layman legal advice setting in Malmö, which we are active in, we met people who asked us about travelling to France, if it was a good idea and how to go about it. News articles and, eventually, books started to appear, detailing the 'Sweden-Paris route' and the difficult conditions that many Afghans found themselves in once they had arrived in Paris (Rosengren 2021; Dowlatzai and Fayzi 2019; Drewsen 2021; Orrenius 2020a, 2020b; Wirtén 2021; Söderberg 2021). The quote above was written by the then chair and deputy chair of the Swedish Association for Unaccompanied (SEF 2022), after a trip they made to collect information on the rules, housing conditions and available support in Paris. These authors themselves arrived in Sweden as unaccompanied asylum seekers, and took part in the organizing of this specific group of migrants setting out from the Swedish context.

In the online conversations and groups, we have seen how the locations of the members and the spheres of engagement of these online spaces have expanded both to Afghanistan and Iran, when people have been deported there, and to different destinations of relocation in Europe, with a special focus on Paris and France. In both open and closed social media groups, activists have shared information and knowledge, and made connections to others in similar situations. As the legal and social situations, especially for those categorized as unaccompanied minors upon arrival in Sweden, have been rapidly changing, the online networks have been dynamic and under constant negotiations (Elsrud and Söderqvist Forkby 2021). Taken together, these news reports, stories, social media posts and exchanges evoke an image of a kind of social infrastructure mapped across Sweden, the route to Paris, and Paris itself. This infrastructure is central to the phenomenon that we name 'Swedish Afghans in Paris' in order to reflect the naming practices in the networks and on social media around the phenomenon. It is an infrastructure consisting of available online and in-person advice, help and information on how to go about and plan the travel, but also of groups and people offering more material support in terms of money and equipment. This social infrastructure, or more specifically, its online presence in terms of information and debate texts by organizations and groups who form part of the infrastructure, is what we discuss and analyse in this article as an example of migrant struggles through commoning.

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in destitution. In Sweden, the conditions for this infrastructure were built through Afghan asylum seekers' engagement and practices of resistance against the restrictive changes in the Swedish migration regime. As detailed in the background section, a specific aspect of the Swedish reception of Afghan asylum seekers is that many were minors (or were on arrival), and hence stayed with families or in special accommodation centres and had a legal guardian. Therefore, many of them established close connections to Swedish citizens, both citizens in professional roles within welfare institutions and privately in family homes or solidarity networks. This is a central background to our analysis below, focusing on the ways in which Sweden and 'Swedishness' is evoked in these networks.

4.1. 'Swedish Afghans' — constructions of belonging as a resource

> Many Swedish Afghans who have lived in Sweden since 2015 [whilst waiting for the claim to asylum to be assessed – authors' comment] receive a residence permit in France within six months. In 2018, case officers could ask: 'Why didn't you get asylum in Sweden?'. More recently, that question is no longer asked. The French caseworkers have met so many Swedish Afghans and learned how the Swedish asylum process works. (…)
>
> Many Swedish Afghans are fluent in Swedish and some have requested a Swedish/French interpreter during the asylum investigation. So far, the French Migration Board does not employ Swedish/French interpreters, but with the increased flight from Sweden, this may be needed (LAMSF 2021, debate article, authors' translation).

In their descriptions of the situation for migrants across the Sweden--Paris routes, it is striking how the online solidarity networks are continuously underscoring the reallocated Afghans' belonging to Sweden. In Paris, several groups and networks have appeared that name themselves as being specifically organized to support 'Swedish Afghans' or 'Swedish speaking Afghans' (LAMSF 2022b; Swedish French Afghan Running Club 2022; Swedish Afghans in France 2022b). Many have contact with the Swedish Church in Paris (LAMSF 2022b). In Swedish networks on social media, reports on both the hardship in Paris and the sometimes successful asylum applications are often formulated as part of a larger critique of Swedish policies. The critique is put forward in terms of showing the difficulties in which the Swedish authorities have

put these people, or showing the difference in assessments of grounds for asylum. As claimed in the quote above, recognition of Afghan asylum seekers in France is taken to prove the wrong-doings of the Swedish authorities. In that sense, the critique does not challenge the state's role as a decision maker of people's right to stay within its territory or not, but it criticizes the premises for that decision. The ties to Sweden are hence articulated as a critique of Swedish migration and refugee policies — the 're-escaping' Afghans are then put forward as the very image of the restrictive turn of Swedish migration regulation and asylum assessments (see Elsrud 2020). The claims of 'Swedishness' and of critiquing the Swedish migration policies also contribute to creating and making visible the forced transnationality that the 'deportspora' of 'Swedish Afghans in Paris' is one example of.

Another central point that the networks emphasize is that this category of asylum seekers have formed ties to and in Sweden. The role of the Swedish language and a sense of Swedishness is thus also articulated in 'positive terms', as belonging, due to friendships and family ties in Sweden, knowledge of the language and society, as well as visions and plans for a future in Sweden in terms of education and work.

Engagement in the transnational networks that mobilize in Paris around the notion of 'Swedish Afghans' often overlaps with involvement in mobilizations with undocumented and/or asylum-seeking Afghans in Sweden (Elsrud et al. forthcoming; Rosengren 2021). The overall uncertain situation created by the restrictive shift in Swedish migration policies has been met by ambivalent strategies in regard to fighting for residency and/or access to social rights in Sweden, where Swedishness has been mobilized as a strategy for claims-making in an increasingly hostile environment (Elsrud and Söderqvist Forkby 2021). Thus, 'Swedishness' as a strategy of claims-making has been mobilized also whilst remaining in Sweden, not only in regards the phenomenon of Swedish Afghans in Paris which we analyse here.

The naming practices within the networks such as 'Swedish Afghans in France' (2022b) or 'Swedish French Afghan Running Club' (2022) are also illustrative for a project of constructing a sense of national belonging across borders, despite re-escaping. The names of these groups and social media groups indicate a sense of, and an evocation of, belonging in terms of identity, as the Afghan migrants in France are situated as *Swedish* Afghans. We understand this naming practice as part of a kind of continuous claim in relation to Sweden, a reminder that the refusal of asylum applications and the forced decisions to re-locate are still not accepted and still being contested. These names are continuous remin-

The naming practices within the networks such as 'Swedish Afghans in France' (2022b) or 'Swedish French Afghan Running Club' (2022) are also illustrative for a project of constructing a sense of national belonging across borders, despite re-escaping.

ders to Swedes and Swedish authorities that these expelled persons and their friends and networks regard them as belonging to Sweden. Of course, these names and these kinds of articulations are also indications of an actual belonging and longing. The claims of belonging to Sweden and of critiquing the Swedish migration policies can be understood as ways to both construct a specific *deportspora network* of Swedish Afghans in Paris, as well as using 'Swedishness' as a resource for creating a mobile common. It may also be understood as a resource, as a kind of entry point to 'Frenchness' via association with another European country.

We also see expressions of frustration and anger in relation to Sweden/'Swedishness', when people in the networks describe their time in Sweden as wasted (Rosengren 2021, 192, 128). This rejection of Sweden and 'Swedishness' can be understood as a way to deal with the lack of support that some migrants express that they have experienced, as they might not have been welcomed into the idea of 'Swedishness'[3].

We suggest that the commons created between Sweden and France is *mobile* in regard to the way in which these support practices extend beyond Sweden, hence extending the space for Swedish bordering practices and contestations. At the same time, it is a mobile common marked by claims of specific forms of belonging to Sweden.

The constructions of belonging are also permeated by ideas of deservingness (Anderson 2013), through the ways in which the right to protection tends to be framed in relation to contributions to Sweden through labour, integration, and language skills. This framing sheds light on the limits of articulating claims from within the humanitarian logics of state regulation of borders and mobility, when, as discussed above, only the premises upon which the state decides on the right to protection are questioned (the Swedish authorities not recognizing Afghan refugees), but the status quo remains unchallenged. In this way, support mechanisms and supportive claims risk drawing new boundaries and marking new exclusions, and hence need to be understood as ambivalent.

We suggest that the commons created between Sweden and France is *mobile* in regard to the way in which these support practices extend beyond Sweden, hence extending the space for Swedish bordering practices and contestations. At the same time, it is a mobile common marked by claims of specific forms of belonging to Sweden. This means that it is also permeated by bordering practices, for example through constructions of deservingess through language skills and/or attachment to Sweden through labour or education.

3 See for example the discussions in Rosengren (2021). We find it important to underline that we are not claiming to be able to say anything about the actual subjective experiences of ‚Swedishness' — or lack of that experience — among the very pluralistic and differentiated group of people connected to the notion of 'Swedish Afghans in Paris'.

4.2 'Tricks of the trade' between Sweden and France

> Pack a small backpack with a change of clothes, a pair of shoes, plenty of underwear, toothbrush, toothpaste, nail scissors, battery-operated razor, aspirin, swimming trunks (not bermudas) + swimming cap (there is free entry to swimming pools in Paris for asylum seekers). Mobile phone and power bank. If you have a computer, bring it. A textbook of French grammar and an extra simple mobile phone may be useful to have.
>
> Bring any documentation you have. Scan all papers so they don't get lost. It can be useful to be able to show some form of ID if you want to stay in a hostel, for example. In that case tazkira, LMA card, military document etc can suffice (LAMSF 2022c, authors' translation).

On their webpage, LAMSF (2022c) provides hands-on tips for persons moving on from Sweden to Paris. The information is in Swedish (although there is also some information in Dari and French) and is focused on surviving in tent camps and being in contact with the French authorities. Similarly, the network 'Stop the deportations to Afghanistan' (2018), which is based in Sweden, provides information in Swedish on how to apply for asylum in France and contacts to NGO's that support people living on the streets of Paris. Both organizations also provide information to Swedish 'helpers':

> For those of you who have the opportunity to sponsor a young person, you can provide them with an Ica card [A Swedish bank card] or paygoo. Please note that Western-Union requires a valid ID (LAMSF 2022c, authors' translation).
>
> What counts as 'helping' is unclear ['helping' here refers to the legal criteria for the regulation of 'helping' irregular migrants to move across borders, authors' comment]. But you should be aware that you are helping someone. Booking and paying for tickets can count as helping [again, in legal terms, authors' comment]. Attempt, planning and abetting are also punishable (Stop deportations to Afghanistan 2019, authors' translation).

These web pages provide practical hands-on advice on how to go about supporting a young person upon removal from Sweden to France, visualizing a link between Swedish 'helpers' and 'Swedish Afghans' that will be further analysed below. They also caution that some of these actions are punishable, which can be understood in light of the trend of not only criminalizing migration, but also criminalizing solidarity with migrants (Tazzioli and Walters 2019). The information on the web

pages provides a form of mobile common stretching through the bordering scape between Sweden and France, and touching upon what to do while travelling — for example providing addresses to German support organizations along the route. This mobile common is directly linked to being a part of a 'deportspora' re-escaping from Sweden, with the experience of having learnt Swedish and having some form of support from organizations and individuals based in Sweden. As we have argued above, this form of belonging is conditioned. Solidarity networks hence become part of constituting a commoning that on the one hand risks reinforcing border regimes through the distinction of deserving/undeserving migrants, and on the other hand directs attention to the possibility of other forms of solidarity, whilst still crossed by national boundaries. Therefore, we understand these forms of support as ambivalent, where commoning created through belonging is providing new structures for migrants' survival but, at the same time, is also creating new forms of bordering.

The 'Swedish' support is also stretched to the French context, such as in the advice from Swedish citizens living in Paris, provided on Facebook and through the organization LAMSF. This also goes for more informal networks. Speaking Swedish and having an experience of living in Sweden seems to have the potential to create social bonds in the shared situation of living in the streets in Paris (Rosengren 2021). Of course, not all asylum seekers who have previously been in Sweden share such bonds, but for some this seems to work as the basis for a form of transnational commoning: a resource that adds to other everyday tricks of survival through shared language and/or experiences. This resource is on the one hand material, helping to find 'tricks' for survival. On the other hand, it serves as a form of community building. The Swedish Church in Paris invites asylum seekers to language cafés and opens up a space where 'Swedish Afghans' can find a friendly environment. Other social activities are more directly targeted at 'Swedish Afghans', such as the Swedish French Afghan running club (2022), which provides a space focusing on common interests rather than on giving support. 'Swedishness' is in this context also making visible other dimensions than 'help seeking' or 'giving support' and focuses on the collective experience of 'being away from Sweden'. The claim on Swedish belonging hence works as one base (of many) for community building in France. However, we argue that this claim of belonging is ambivalent, in that the material living conditions between 'Swedish citizens' and 'Swedish Afghans' are difficult to bridge (compare Söderman 2019). In the next section, we discuss the relationship between 'Swedish citizens' and 'Swedish Afghans' more in detail.

4.3 Belonging and bordering through transnational ties

> Today we have heard on the news how French police evacuated the famous tent camp at Porte de la Chapelle in Paris. The media has realized that this is of concern to us Swedes because many of us have young people there — those we see as our bonus sons and grandchildren ('Stop the deportations of Afghan youth' 2019, press release, authors' translation).

Ever so often, in the accounts on young unaccompanied asylum seekers facing rejected asylum applications in Sweden, there is a Swedish 'mother' or 'parent'/'grandparent' who supports them (Flemström 2021; Rosengren 2021). This is also common in the texts on Afghan youth moving on to France: Swedish families and other informal groups based in Sweden who send money or give advice based on a certain sense of a 'family tie' (Rosengren 2021). These families were often involved in the Swedish reception of young unaccompanied minors from the time of the 'summer of migration' in 2015, and received young people in their homes through an agreement with the municipalities. After the more restrictive asylum regulations were introduced, families were also involved in voluntary networks to provide homes for young people who risked being kicked out from the municipalities upon being 're-aged' by the Migration Agency, and in regard to practices of 're-escaping' (Lalander and Elsrud 2021, Flemström 2021).

In a way, the belonging through transnational personal ties and the description of these as family ties, can be understood as one element of the constitution of this specific mobile common. However, the common created through sharing of homes, and then sharing of resources upon the new family member leaving to France from Sweden, is permeated by the power structures connected to being the one who invites, and can therefore also be understood as a kind of bordering process. The mobile common that appears through an idea of family ties are marked by power asymmetries connected to 'host' and 'guest' (compare Monforte et al. 2021), where the invitation to be part of the family and to share traditions, festive events, comes with fewer stories about how the background and traditions of the 'guest' are transforming the families. Thus, it may be more accurate to think of this commoning as a practice that simultaneously contests, is crossed by borders, and creates new forms of bordering.

In a way, the belonging through transnational personal ties and the description of these as family ties, can be understood as one element of the constitution of this specific mobile common.

The 'hosts' in this context – the families, mainly the women – have also been exposed to the hostility of the migration debate, when they, in light of their public support of these young male migrants, have been accused of being fooled, naive, and even of being sexually abusing the

young people living in their homes (Asplund et al. 2022; Pahnke 2018). The debate and discourses of the common created through transnational family ties point to images of gender, nation, home and belonging that are both contested and reproduced through these practices of family and support. Some of these families also testify to how, expressed with our terminology, the bordering processes have been experienced as cutting through their transnational families and have changed their view and sense of belonging and trust with regard to the Swedish authorities (see also Elsrud et al. forthcoming). The bordering scape constituted by acts in between Sweden and France thus also transforms the actors.

The commons created by transnational family ties may also be understood as having consequences beyond the everyday family level. As argued by 34 support organizations in a debate article from October 2019 regarding repressive practices adopted towards 'unaccompanied minors' in Sweden, including deportation practices:

> The only result — apart from the ruined lives of the victims and an obvious waste of taxpayers' money — is the destruction of *Swedish* families, school classes, sports clubs, businesses and parishes all over *Sweden* (Dowlatzai et al. 2019, debate article, authors' translation and emphasis).

The quote is forwarding a rupture that not only concerns Afghans who leave Sweden, but that concerns the Swedish society as well. It is hence argued that the deportations destroy trust and sense of belonging also for Swedish citizens who are not at risk of deportation. The mobile commons appearing in relation to the bordering scape between Sweden and France can in this sense be understood also in relation to claiming other, more solidary, forms of 'being Swedish'.

However, it is important to note that being constituted as a part of a family has its limits in the context of racist differentiations of the right to family life and the values attached to different families. For example, the rupture of Swedish families tends to be understood as more severe and destructive than the ongoing severing of migrant families. This points to an ongoing and racialized bordering process at the same time as borders are being contested.

5. Concluding discussion

In this article, we have analysed different aspects of a phenomenon that we have called 'Swedish Afghans in Paris'. We argue that this is an arti-

culation of ambivalent belonging that can be understood in relation to im/mobile commons. We have discussed commoning as permeated by borders, but also ways in which borders are contested. This is done through references to 'Swedishness' as a form of belonging, through 'tricks of the trade' and through the creation of transnational ties.

What appears here is an im/mobile commoning providing ambivalent forms of belonging. On the one hand, it is transnational, made through different strategies for sharing information and tricks of the trade. On the other hand, we trace in the material an ambivalent use of notions of 'Swedishness' as a resource, when 'Swedishness' is used both when criticizing Swedish policies in general, but also sometimes to more specifically criticize only the deportations of 'well-integrated' Afghan refugees. In a similarly ambivalent way, it is used as a resource for creating bonds between those located in Paris and their friends and families in Sweden, as well as Swedish citizens living in France, but it also excludes those who are not accepted as 'Swedish'.

In an increasingly restrictive bordering scape, 'Swedishness', continuous contacts with families and friends, and the practising of the Swedish language, may be understood as ways for individual migrants and their networks to contest the rupture that the refused asylum application and the following re-escaping constituted. It is a commoning that also contains elements of defining national belonging through certain values, hence contributing to notions of deserving/undeserving migrants. However, such understandings of nationality, simultaneously extend the idea of who belongs to Sweden and on what terms.

Furthermore, the practices of advice on how to cross borders without papers on the route from Sweden to France and what to bring in order to make rough sleeping on the streets of France a bit more bearable, point to how commoning is contributing to the making of a *deportspora network.* The deportspora network in this case is not constituted by people expelled to their so-called country of origin, but the situation of Afghans who self-deport or re-escape to Paris still resonates with the situation of deportees. The self-deported or re-escaped Afghans also find themselves in a situation that entails a continuous precarity in regard to one's social position, access to housing, labour market and to social services. Another parallel between the experiences of post-deportation and self-deportation/re-escaping is the experience of discrimination and stigmatization (Khosravi 2018). Thus, the concept of deportspora contributes to capturing the specific elements in this particular commoning, and how they are marked by constructions of a sense of belonging to the same national context (Sweden in this case) that have made very

clear that these migrants are neither wanted nor deserving. Thus, in the commoning and in the constituting of a deportspora network, there is a continouos contestation of the state practices of expulsion. Through adding the concept of a politics of belonging to this discussion we wish to highlight the agency present within such ambivalent migrant struggles, whilst not romantisicing it as something beyond and/or independent of constructions of national borders and belongings.

We suggest that the concept of the politics of belonging adds to and deepens the understanding of im/mobile commoning in the sense of claims-making. It illustrates some aspects of the im/mobility of the common: mobile through the movement and expansion across territories, immobile in the sense that a part of the network is solidly situated in Sweden.

Tensions around visibility and invisibility are also important aspects of how im/mobile commons are created and sustained, as well as how they relate to the concept of the politics of belonging. For while im/mobile commons remain as knowledge and information among concerned migrants and their allies, we see in the networks around 'Swedish Afghans in Paris', formulations and practices that make a point of also publicly invoking 'Swedishness'. In this regard, we suggest that the concept of the politics of belonging adds to and deepens the understanding of im/mobile commoning in the sense of claims-making. It illustrates some aspects of the im/mobility of the common: mobile through the movement and expansion across territories, immobile in the sense that a part of the network is solidly situated in Sweden. At the same time, it is a limited and conditioned claim, it has not provoked any changes in the legislation or regulations, and although it has figured in the media, it has had limited effect in an overall media climate characterized by a general hostility towards migrants and migrations. Further, as pointed out above, it is a specific 'Swedishness' that is claimed, one that is related to language skills, integration into local communities, families and associations.

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Tytuł: Nie/mobilne dobra wspólne i trans/narodowe zgłaszanie roszczeń: fenomen szwedzkich Afgańczyków w Paryżu

Abstrakt: W odpowiedzi na relokację ze Szwecji do Francji osób ubiegających się o azyl ze Szwecji, grupy solidarności z migrantami zaczęły dzielić się zasobami i informacjami istotnymi dla procesu odbywania podróży, a po przyjeździe do Paryża udzielały porad, jak przetrwać noc na ulicy i proces azylowy we Francji. Relokacja afgańskich azylantów do Francji zyskała specyficzną formę widoczności i obecności w mediach i sieciach zajmujących się prawami migracyjnymi, co, jak twierdzimy, przyczyniło się do umieszczenia szwedzkiego krajobrazu w debacie nad migracją i granicami. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest rozwinięcie konceptualnych dyskusji na temat mobilnych dóbr wspólnych poprzez analizę sieci „szwedzkich Afgańczyków w Paryżu". Artykuł bada sposoby, na jakie narodowe krajobrazy pograniczne są zarówno na nowo wpisywane, pozszerzane, jak i destabilizowane przez sieci i roszczenia migrantów. Następnie analizujemy zjawisko „szwedzkich Afgańczyków w Paryżu" zwracając uwagę na napięcia i sprzeczności w odniesieniu do polityki przynależności i mobilnych dóbr wspólnych. Fenomen szwedzkich Afgańczyków w Paryżu stanowi produktywny punkt wyjścia dla zbadania warunków uwspólniania w kontekście krajobrazu szwedzkiego pogranicza; sposobów, na jakie przynależność i narodowość poddawane są roszczeniom w złożony i zmieniający się sposób; oraz sposobów, w jakie te dobra wspólne łączą różne miejsca transnarodowo. Artykuł stanowi wkład w akademickie dyskusje na temat walk migranckich, rozwijając przy tym zniuansowane rozumienie mobilnych dóbr wspólnych jako form kontestacji i wzajemnego uwikłania grodzeń i roszczeń do przynależności narodowej. Dzięki temu podkreślamy ambiwalentne aspekty mobilnego uwspólniania.

Słowa kluczowe: migracja, grodzenia, mobilne dobra wspólne, polityka przynależności, afgańscy uchodźcy, deportspora